

Plan D

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Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate

On

13 October 2005 the European Commission launched its Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate as a foundation for a debate on the future of the European Union (EU). Plan D seeks to foster communication and debate on the activities of the EU by addressing the need to listen to citizens' expectations.

The European Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate sets out a process aimed at encouraging wider debate on the future of the EU, between the EU institutions and citizens.

Objectives

A debate on the future of Europe should address the needs and expectations of citizens in order to maintain trust and involvement in representative democracy. Plan D is therefore about dialogue, debate and listening to citizens' needs and expectations. It also seeks to encourage communication on the activities of the EU by addressing target audiences, (for example young people), and using mass media, like television and the internet, the latter as an interactive forum for political debate. A specific Eurobarometer survey on the future of Europe will be presented by the European Commission in order to learn from the concerns expressed by citizens.

Plan D should result in a new consensus on the European project and basically addresses two issues:

- assisting national debates on the future of Europe ;
- presenting initiatives to strengthen dialogue, public debate and citizen participation.

Assisting national debates on the future of Europe

National

debates should focus on examining and discussing the added value and benefits for citizens of concrete achievements and projects of the EU.

The

European Commission emphasises its wish to assist Member States in the organisation of events aimed at raising the profile of citizen participation in these Europe-wide debates. Co-operation with other EU institutions and bodies as well as national, regional and local parliaments plays an important role in this respect.

Initiatives to strengthen dialogue, public debate and citizen's participation

Plan D

proposes 13 specific EU initiatives and actions in order to strengthen and stimulate dialogue, public debate and citizen's participation. The European Commission is to play a significant role in these initiatives, in partnership with the other European institutions and bodies.

Specific

EU actions include visits by commissioners to Member States and national parliaments, support for citizens' projects, a drive for more openness over Council meetings, the creation of a network of "European Goodwill Ambassadors" to raise the profile of the European debate, as well as support for projects to increase voter participation.

Feedback process

A

feedback process on the results of the national debates will take place in 2006 in order to let citizens' participation have a direct impact on the political agenda of the EU. The feedback will take the form of a set of conclusions and an overall synthesis of the outcome of national debates, as well as the organisation of a European Conference on the future of Europe on 9 May 2006.

Background

After

the rejection of the European Constitution by French and Dutch voters in June 2005, the Heads of State and Government called for a "period of reflection" in order to enable Member States to initiate national debates on the future of Europe. Plan D seeks to facilitate this process of national debate by putting in place a framework for dialogue and debate.

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