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In June 2009, elections for the European Parliament will be held for the first time simultaneously in 27 EU Member States. One of the "Now – interacting with the European Parliament" campaign objectives is to increase the citizens' knowledge of the EP throughout the Member States and to encourage them to vote.

The project team is announcing an Essay Competition with the aim to collect texts, presenting in an original and convincing way the stakes, related to the future of the European Union and the importance of the June elections in this context.

Topic of the essay: "EP 2009 Vote: Beyond the Sugar Cubes" *

Requirements: the text should be no longer than **2 000 characters** (with spaces), should be submitted in **English** together with the author's short CV and contact details.

Eligible participants: citizens of all the 27 EU Member States, aged **18 years** (before **31 March 2009**) up.

Evaluation procedure: a selection committee, composed of representatives of the project's partnering organizations, implementing the initiative, will determine the winning essays in accordance with the following criteria:

- » Relevance to the topic and the focus – the 2009 European elections;
- » Knowledge of the competences of the European Parliament;
- » Originality;
- » Authenticity of the text, which has not been published prior to this competition.

Application dates and procedure: the essays should be sent via email at parliament@europe.bg with subject "Essay competition" **no latter than 10 March 2009**. The winners will be announced on **18 March 2009**.

Awards: the winner will be invited to participate in a **public event in France**, due to take place in April 2009 and organized by the project's partnering media Yvelines Radio. The best five essays will be published on the project's website <http://parliament.europe.bg> in English, as well as in their original language (if other than English).

Additional information: More information about the European Parliament and its mechanisms is available at <http://parliament.europe.bg>, as well as through the project's interactive educative module on <http://learning.gateway.bg>.

European Essay Competition, Devoted to the 2009 European Parliament Elections

** "We will sweeten Europe" is the motto of the Czech Presidency of the EU (January – June 2009). The interpretations and translations of this phrase are various and are a suitable starting point for the participants in the Essay Contest, as the forthcoming new EP five-year term elections will take place precisely within the Czech EU Presidency.*