

European Democracy - Mission Possible? Video recordings from the Europe 2020 - Civic Visions international conference

Published at: 05-02-2010



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Panel 1, "European Democracy – Mission Possible?"

- European democracy is a long avenue, an ongoing debate. It will not be achieved any soon, and it is not clear whether by 2020.

At this stage the European identity does not exist and a European demos cannot be formed. It could be created from above and this should be a goal for the coming decade.

- The citizens' initiative is a very positive development and expectations to it are high, perhaps too high. Therefore it will need to prove itself with the necessary precaution to focusing on the proper issues, so that the enthusiasm is not wasted away. Another key aspect will be the Commission's response to this initiative.

- Although the EU is not a polity, it is materially present in the lives of the European citizens. By 2020 the vision is consolidation of what has been achieved. The citizens of Europe have numerous rights but are unaware of a large part of them. The desired output is rights becoming effective and coming to the table, fully fulfilled.

- The EU has accomplished a level of transparency and it is desirable that the member states follow this trend. It is desirable that the citizens' organizations get more involved in the ex-post evaluation of the impact of legislation, not just in its shaping.

- Mainstreaming of the civil rights and fundamental freedoms in all- policies is yet an unfinished process. More attention needs to be paid to placing policies at the different levels.

Although not a polity, the EU is a powerful political system. The democratic crisis does not derive from lack of interest of the citizens to the EU and it is not a rejection, but uncertainty whether it could be sufficiently protective of their interests and rights.

- The uniqueness of the Union is in that it is composed of democratic states, voluntarily associated. The EU itself is not a democratic state and it will probably not become one, because that would need a political culture shared by all people. The tools of democracy are made available, now it is up to the citizens to decide to what extent they want to use them.

- Democratization of the EU requires strengthening of the European polity. On the side of the

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- The challenge in the vision to national politicians to assume their responsibility for better connecting with their constituencies and translate the European affairs to them in a way that builds the common identity.

- Some of the existing mechanisms are still discouraging the citizens from participation because they do not trust the authenticity of the results and need further regulation and improvement, such as lobbying.

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