

Prof. Jerzy Buzek: "We need the kind of initiatives that you are organising"

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Video Message by Prof. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament for the presentation of the book "Europe 2020 - Civic Visions" in April 2010 in Brussels, Paris and Milan, organised by the European Institute, the Center for Policy Modernisation and Europe Gateway:

I am grateful to the European Institute of Bulgaria for offering me the opportunity to comment on the launching of the book "Europe 2020 - Civic Visions".

This remarkable collection of proposals touches upon a concept which is very dear to me: the concept of citizenship.

To me an active citizen is someone who does not take things for granted, who questions power, who takes an active role in improving the community of which he is part and who respects the rules when they stem from real democracy.

But why should we discuss about citizenship in the European context? Two reasons are fundamental.

First, the EU has slowly, but steadily, moved from being a top-down project driven by elites into an entity shaped from the citizens. This change started when the European Parliament was first democratically elected in 1979 and continues to this day. The Treaty of Lisbon helps making the concept of citizenship more European. One important element is the citizens' initiative. We need to look enthusiastically at these new opportunities.

Secondly, we need the kind of initiatives that you are organising today because Europe has to be visionary and ambitious: it is only through the pluralism and variety of proposals that you are proposing today that the EU will remain free and dynamic.

For this reason I congratulate and thank you.

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EP President Jerzy Buzek addresses this special video message to the participants in the presentation of the book "Europe 2020 - Civic vision", which summarizes the two-year campaign "Interacting with the European Parliament". Illustration: European Institute Board Chair Vladimir Kissiov hands in the invitation to EP President Jerzy Buzek during his visit to Bulgaria on 3 March 2010.