

# **Citizens facing up to the European Union**

*Innovation and European Governance: a roadmap to overcome the crisis*

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## AUTHORS

The authors are French and Belgian. For this reason they have some experience of the sociology of the two states which did not ratify the constitutional treaty and whose sociology will have to be carefully considered if one wants to overcome the crisis.

They also have, collectively, a long vision of the history of the European construction since their senior member was a collaborator of Jean Monnet and others were very closely involved in the evolution of the Union, from treaty to treaty, in the questions of sustainable development and environment, of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, of services of general economic or non economic interest and of participatory democracy, and in the work of the Convention on the future of Europe.

They worked or are still working all over the world and are active at the interface, on the one hand, between European Institutions and civil society and, on the other hand, between commercial companies and civil society. They have a thorough knowledge of the evolution of civil society, companies and trade unions in Europe, and of the manner in which these entities interact amongst themselves and with the European Institutions.

They are members of the Permanent Forum of European Civil society.

*The next step in the preparation of this book will be the debate to be held at the European Parliament on March 30, 2006 (room A3G3), of which the conclusions will be included in the final version.*

*If you wish to attend the debate, please contact:*

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## Summary

Instead of providing solutions, the Union's authorities have become, in the opinion of many citizens, the source of problems. Instead of being a "protector", the Union has become a "threat". To get Europe out of the current crisis, it is necessary that the roadmap that will be defined by the European Council in June 2006 should open up spaces of innovation. The roadmap should not relate only to the constitutional treaty but should include other initiatives that would place the constitutional treaty II in a **new** and broader **context**. The crisis, opened by the 'No' to the constitutional treaty expressed by two founder-states, created a shock in the political world but also in the trade-union organisations and NGO's active on the European project. This is why we believe that one must innovate in terms of governance and adopt a two-stage approach. Firstly, it is up to trade unions, commercial enterprises and civil society, to assemble in an "**Estates-General of Networks' Europe**", in order to consider together the questions related to globalization and to agree on what Europeans want to construct together, going beyond questions relating solely to the Union's institutions. Only then will a Third Convention (Convention III) and an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) – that could be summoned only by a decision of the European Council – be in a position to take up afresh the question of the "Constitution".

The authors have adopted the idea of a "Declaration of Interdependence" and, in order to create a "new context", propose that a **Solemn Declaration of Interdependence by the European citizens** be approved.

**Convention III**<sup>1</sup> itself would not have as its unique object the constitutional treaty but would attempt to redefine of a "societal contract"<sup>2</sup> founded on an ethics of responsibility, and would propose new criteria to measure progress. Such a contract and such criteria also belong to the new context.

The enlargement process such as it exists today is – paradoxically – not speedy enough to respond to the urgent demands that will come in particular on the energy and democratic levels. The moment has come – and the roadmap should deal with it – to launch the creation of the second "Olympic Ring", an **Alliance of the Three Seas**<sup>3</sup>, inspired by the experiment of the original European Coal and Steel Community. This step will also create a "new context" as regards the Union's borders and future referendums on the constitutional treaty.

One needs a **genuine Constitution**, and as soon as possible. Nine proposals are made which include a *final* treaty signed by the Member States "to carry" the Constitution, a Pan-European consultation on a "Constitution", the election of the President of the Commission by universal suffrage, the reshaping of the Economic and Social Committee, etc.

The European crisis is profound. It concerns the relation that Europeans have with the world (globalization), the European Institutions (European governance), multinational enterprises (the power of market), cultural diversity and our own roots (the local level). One needs a response to the changing nature of capitalism, the crisis of the European project, the question of its borders and the search for convergences in developing the European Social Model. It is necessary to offer solutions that improve management (governance), restore confidence, show that we can again improve the European social model and contribute to promote peace, democracy within and outside the Union, as well as the dialogue between multi-cultural Europe and the other parts of the world.

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1 Convention I wrote the Charter of the Fundamental Rights. Convention II wrote the draft Constitutional Treaty. Convention III is the convention that we propose to be convened by the European Council after the Estates-General of Networks' Europe.

2 The name "societal contract" is used to specify that such a contract should be discussed amongst and agreed by all actors within the society and not only by those who are commonly designated by "social partners" i.e. the employers and the trade unions.

3 Caspian, Mediterranean and Black Seas.

## Europe's Calendar for a "New Context"

