

ASA 2009 MANIFESTO

Preamble

- The European Union (EU) was founded after World War II in order to ensure peace, freedom, security and prosperity. Although these concerns are still present, they take a different form from those of sixty years ago, and as such must be reaffirmed.
- In addition, the EU has moved on to tackle new challenges: security and stability beyond its borders; a sustainable, fair and democratic Europe.
- The EU we envision would bridge the gap between masses and elites while simultaneously creating synergies across borders. We want to encourage a greater interest in EU affairs among EU citizens through increased participation.
- Policies should be constructed and implemented allowing for bottom-up and top-down communication. Furthermore, we support the existing concept of a European Dimension, which should be more broadly adopted.
- Based on the following principles and proposals, we demand an intensified process of integration towards a closer union in order to address the identified challenges.

Principles

1) Updating past principles

- Updating the EU's promise of *prosperity*: to enhance opportunities for individual citizens; to foster an innovative and progressive society.
- Updating the EU's promise of *freedom*: to focus more on the protection of cultural diversity, minority rights and intercultural dialogue without undermining national sovereignty.
- Updating the EU's promise of *peace and security*: to focus on transnational sources of internal security with regard to issues like energy dependence, organized crime, terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs).

2) A fair and open European society

- To aim for equal opportunity among citizens, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation; to enhance the development of human rights.
- To ensure a more open and tolerant society by campaigning against discrimination; to encourage intercultural dialogue and the prosecution of hate crimes.

3) A sustainable EU

- To aim for a more sustainable economy: prosperity in itself is not enough, it must be compatible with the preservation of the environment and a sustainable level of population growth.

4) A democratic EU

- To ensure participatory democracy as well as representative democracy, through the inclusion of local, national, transnational civil society groups and the implementation of transparency requirements.
- To extend and promote the rule of law, including EU law, as a necessary prerequisite for a sound democracy; to help member states fight against corruption and abuses of power.

Proposals

5) The EU in the world

- The external dimension of the EU should be shaped according to the values expressed by the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the European Community (TEC) and the results successfully achieved through its domestic policies. Thus, the external dimension of the EU should be inspired by the Social Market Economy.
- To face global challenges in a united way, even if it means delegating more sovereignty to the EU level: especially in the area of foreign policy and external representation of the EU. The EU must remain ambitious in the long term. In the meantime, it should build capacity to carry out its foreign policy.
- The EU should be a leader in proposing pioneering solutions to global social, political and economic challenges, such as environmental pollution, arms proliferation, insufficient labour conditions and ineffective financial regulation. The EU seeks functional cooperation whilst maintaining its independence of other countries.

- The EU should pursue its long-term goals, including enlargement, in accordance with its fundamental values at all levels of international cooperation.
- The European Commission should have full negotiating competence on policies with external relevance in sectors for which a common market exists, as in the case of trade policy. The EU should use the full potential of its economic power in negotiating with third parties and speak with one voice, in the energy sector for example, in order to establish the best conditions for the agreement.
- The EU should have legal personality, as proposed by the Lisbon Treaty. The EU should become a member of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- We favour the direction taken by the Lisbon Treaty in strengthening the power of the office of the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (HRCFSP), because the functions of the Commissioner for External Relations and High Representative are combined. The Permanent President of the European Council [2.5 years] should have a purely representative role.

6) European Knowledge Society

- The European Knowledge Society we want builds on the framework of the Lisbon Agenda, targeting competitiveness and the promotion of equal opportunities. Moreover concerns regarding citizenship and the legitimacy of European institutions should also play a significant role.
- Better promotion of existing programs:

- Ø Greater publicity and distribution of information (on *Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci* and *Grundtvig*) provided by *Europe Direct* offices.
 - Ø Creating Junior European Ambassadors in schools and youth centres to promote programs.
 - Ø Standardisation of (electronic) application forms.
 - Ø Improving accessibility by making websites more user-friendly.
 - Ø Providing support for international offices at Universities.
 - Ø Creation of career centres.
 - Ø Development of the network of Chambers of Commerce to act as knowledge platforms.
- Creation of an official Erasmus Alumni Agency:
 - Ø Offering to Universities advice on how to organise alumni associations.
 - Ø Coordination of different alumni organisations.
- Public-private partnership (PPP) and research networks:
 - Ø Gathering public and private funds for joint research projects. Existing public research centres would benefit from private funds in exchange for patents or similar benefits, based on the development of the findings and subsequent benefits, as a return on investments.
 - Ø Developing an integrated market for exchange and the pooling of patents and intellectual property while diminishing red tape.
 - Ø Establishing networks of public funded laboratories needed to build up capacity to respond to market demands.
 - Ø Funding (*Framework Programme* style) and promoting of transnational initiatives by creating a centralised databank of ongoing research.

- Stimulation of sector-specific platforms for education professionals in order to share experiences and to tackle obstacles better.
- Promotion of individual electronic initiatives targeting young education professionals (technical assistance, vouchers for website trainings).
- Promotion of languages in the scope of a European Dimension:
 - Ø Strengthening the *Lingua* programme.
 - Ø Providing an interactive online database of methods and materials for language teachers with a European Dimension.
 - Ø Supporting stronger mobility through collective projects amongst teaching professional in primary and secondary schools.
 - Ø Promoting *Teletext* subtitles and the digitalisation of media.
 - Ø The EU should organize a poetry competition on the occasion of the “*European Day of Languages*”, celebrated on September 26th, with Europeans participating in a foreign language. This would celebrate language diversity and promote the active use of languages. This would go hand in hand with a pan-European editor project.
- Adding a “European Dimension” in curricula
 - Ø High-school curricula: Inclusion of a course on local, national and EU institutions in a multilevel-governance system.
 - Ø Improving foreign language education at primary level.
 - Ø Introducing a European dimension to literature, art, history classes throughout the education system
- The creation of a “*European skills passport*” seems necessary to allow a harmonized recognition of qualifications achieved in the member states and support life-long learning initiatives.

7) Communication

- Increased visibility of EU politicians. Direct contact/presence of EU representatives in the national media. More active involvement of Members of the European Parliament (MEP) in their national settings (better balance about involvement in local politics and informing citizens on EU policies).
- Increase transparency of Council meetings.
- Expand the use of targeted EU information tailored for specific groups such as students, passengers/travellers, retired people, workers, handicapped, women, minorities.
- Making better use of the existing intermediary structures at national or local level to disseminate information: Universities/Schools, Tourist information centres, Health services, Post offices, Job centres.
- EU television channel with independent cross-national editing teams and mixed-funding system (public-private).
- Creation of a European School of Journalism (courses on EU affairs, journalism internships in several EU countries), with a cross-national faculty and students from EU and non-EU countries, and with independent administrative and budgetary structures.
- Fostering a European public sphere.
 - Ø Cross-national exchange of civil servants.
 - Ø Development of the *open method of coordination* (OMC) as a way to foster dialogue among national actors in specific policy areas which are still under national competence.
 - Ø Increase consultation of social actors by the Commission at the policy formulation stage.

- Ø Support of civil society networks – creation of meeting/chatting platforms for specific professions (NGOs, artists, etc.).
- Ø Fostering cooperation between national cultural institutes.
- Ø Open lists for European elections.

8) Integration: Unity and Diversity

- The EU should further promote the mutual understanding among its citizens by hosting a “*European Film Month*” on the topic “Unity and Diversity”.
- The EU should start an initiative “*Europeans Without Borders*” in order to create an inclusive platform and community for all Europeans wishing to promote mobility and exchange of ideas across Europe.
- The EU should support the creation of a magazine and website dedicated to the theme “Unity in Diversity” which would allow a borderless communication and exchange for Europeans.
- The EU should create stronger links between national employment agencies and career centres to enable Europeans to better access and navigate the pan-European job market.
- The EU should initiate the creation of a “*European Social Security file*” for mobile workers to encourage greater mobility in our knowledge-based society without losing individual entitlements.

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