

EU Civil Society Contact Group regular meeting next Monday, October 27

The regular EU Civil Society Contact Group meeting next Monday will among other items discuss

- Different European civil society events such as the citizen are Agora, the Civic Days and the European Social Forum.
- Common messages for the European Parliament elections in 2009.
- And EU Civil Society Contact Group's strategic plan for the coming years.

Find the entire agenda [here](#).

Dublin between Nice and Lisbon

In last weeks Council meeting Irish leader Brian Cowen promised to his colleagues to present an action plan on how Ireland could contribute to solve the blockage of the Lisbon Treaty in December. The Irish government is currently consulting with the EU Council legal services on possible opt-outs from the new Treaty for Ireland. European Parliamentarian Colm Burke (EPP, Ireland) proposes that the Irish would vote again on the Lisbon Treaty on October next year and would in addition to voting Yes or No on the Lisbon Treaty, be offered an opportunity to vote on the key opt in/opt out issues of:

- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- European Security and Defence Policy

Read about the Irish governments message tot the Council on <http://euobserver.com/18/26942> and <http://euobserver.com/18/26953>

Read about Burke's [proposal on <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/interview-hold-second-lisbon-vote-opt-outs/article-176592>

Reflection Group on Future of Europe

The European Council last week approved the composition of the 'wisemen group'/reflection group, chaired by Felipe Gonzalez Marquez, former Spanish Prime Minister, and co-chaired by the CEO of Nokia and the former president of Latvia. Two former trade unionists (French Nicole Notat and Solidarnosc Lech Walesa) are among the members. Disappointingly, no NGO activists were nominated

See the list of the members at the end of the Council Conclusions on http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/103441.pdf

Impartiality of European Commission in question

In an open letter to the newly appointed trade commissioner Catherine Asthon, European Parliamentarian Jens Holm, (GUE/NGL, Sweden) criticises the intimate relationship between the Directorate-General for trade and Business Europe. He invites the new commissioner to

- Treat Business Europe as the lobbying organization that it is.
- Remove Business Europe from your premises at the Charlemagne building. They can afford to rent an office on the local property market.
- Join the fight against poverty and for sustainable development through closer cooperation with developing countries and aid organizations in Europe.

New research from Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) reveals the close involvement of the European employers' federation, BusinessEurope, in drawing up the Global Europe trade strategy. Corporate Europe Observatory also urged the Commission to end the close relationship with business.

Find the open letter on <http://www.guengl.org/showPage.jsp?ID=6721&AREA=27&HIGH=1>
Find Corporate Europe Observatory's research on <http://www.corporateeurope.org/>

Worst EU Lobbying Award 2008 -Vote for most problematic lobbying tactics

The Worst EU Lobbying Award is the annual award for deceptive, manipulative or unethical lobbying organised by Cooperate Europe Observatory, Friends of the Earth Europe, LobbyControl and Spinwatch. You can cast your vote in two categories

- the most problematic lobbying tactics
- and the MEP, Commissioner of Commission official whose background may hinder him/her to work in the public interest

In each category five nominees - selected out of 54 nominations by citizens and groups from around Europe - are proposed. Voting closes on November 30. The winners ceremony takes place in Brussels on December 9.

To vote go to www.worstlobby.eu

"How can the EU listen to its citizens?", Tuesday November 4th 2008, 10-12.30

"Community X Change is an innovative project which has brought together 30 randomly selected citizens from across the North of England to deliberate on the future of rural areas using the Citizens Jury model. Most of the group are aged between 13 and 17 and have met over the last one and a half years for in depth deliberation leading to the production of a set of recommendations. Last year some of the group took part in the European Citizens Panel a unique attempt to bring together 90 citizens from 10 different regions to make recommendations on the future of rural areas." A seminar will explore the learning from the initiative described above

When? Tuesday November 4, 10.00-12.30

Where? European Parliament, Brussels (room tbc)

Registration: pbinclusion@btinternet.com

For project background see Community X Change website <http://www.ruralsos.org.uk/>

European Citizens Panel website <http://www.citizenspanel.eu/>

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The EU Civil Society Contact Group brings together eight large European NGO platforms in the following fields: culture (culture action europe), development (CONCORD), environment (Green 10), human rights (HRDN), lifelong learning (EUCIS-LLL), public health (EPHA), social (Social Platform) and women (EWL). Together we work to develop the dialogue between civil society organisations and the EU institutions as an essential part of strengthening participatory democracy.