

Civil Society Contact Group lunch debate "Working with a closed-door EU Council: How to improve relations between NGOs and the Council?", December 15

The EU Civil Society Contact Group is happy to invite you to a lunch debate on "How to improve relations between NGOs and the Council?". The meeting will address the following questions

- * How do different NGO sectors work with the Council?
- * What lessons have they learned over the years?
- * What recommendations can we jointly make to NGOs, the Councils and the national governments?

After the EU Civil Society Contact Group survey on NGO access to the Council, the meeting will provide the opportunity to discuss the recommendations drafted on the basis of the findings.

Find the program and details here

<http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Invitation%20to%20CSCG%20lunch%20debate%20on%20NGO-Council%20working%20relations%202.pdf>.

Civil Society Contact Group regular meeting, December 2

The Civil Society Contact Group representatives are meeting next Tuesday, December 2, for their last regular meeting of 2009. It will be the occasion to share the sector's perspectives for 2009 and also to discuss what the members want to work on together during the next year.

Find the agenda here <http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/Agenda2%20December2008.pdf> .

Lisbon Treaty topical on political agenda in Sweden, Austria and the Czech Republic

The Czech constitutional court this week ruled that the disputed parts of the Lisbon Treaty are not violating the Czech Constitution. The judges have though not examined the entire treaty. This led to speculations that other issues could be pointed out as contradicting the constitution.

The court argued that the Lisbon Treaty

- * does not change the fundamental direction of the EU and
- * does not cut the sovereignty of the Member States

Czech president Vaclav Klaus judged the verdict as 'subjective and political'.

The Austrian foreign minister Ursula Plassnik also this week quit her post because the new governing coalition did not rule out future referenda on EU treaties.

On November 20th the Swedish parliament approved the Lisbon Treaty.

Read more about the ruling of the Czech court on <http://euobserver.com/9/27183> and on <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/lisbon-treaty-given-green-light-czech-court/article-177515>

Read about Plassnik's decision on <http://euobserver.com/843/27171>

Read about the Swedish approval on <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/swedes-approve-lisbon-treaty-czechs-irish-squabble/article-177403> and <http://euobserver.com/18/27154>

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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.