

Dear readers

In one way or another you have during the last years been in contact with the EU Civil Society Contact Group: you were already a reader and user of the weekly mailing or the act4europe Bulletin, you participated in one of our events or you meet us on another occasion. That is why today you receive the new EU Civil Society Contact Group weekly mailing.

Our weekly mailing keeps you posted about the EU Civil Society Contact Group activities and provide you with information on EU policy developments relevant for civil society organisations. It will monitor

- European Parliament elections in June 2009: Find our [toolkit](#) here.
- EU budget review 2008-2009: [A value based EU budget for the future!](#)
- [Civil dialogue: How to make it work better!](#)
- Transparency of EU policy making: [Lobby register](#) and [access to documents](#)
- The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and its article 11 on participatory democracy

... and other relevant developments.

This new weekly mailing replaces two existing tools: the weekly mailing that was an internal information tool and our bi-monthly Bulletin that existed since 2002 and saw its last publication in summer 2008. The weekly mailing will keep its established format: a few short paragraphs and links to further information.

This weekly mailing is also the last one that I write as coordinator of the EU Civil Society Contact Group. Today is my last day in this position. My successor Laetitia Sedou will take over at the beginning of February. The next "weekly" mailing will therefore only be in your Inboxes in two weeks time.

We hope you'll find the information provided useful. You are welcome to use the paragraphs for your own newsletters or websites.

Regula Heggli

Coordinator EU Civil Society Contact Group

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## EU Civil Society Contact Group lunch debate "Gender Budgeting – an instrument for good governance"

More than 25 participants from NGOs but also the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee participated in the lunch debate on Gender Budgeting as an instrument for good governance organised by the EU Civil Society Contact Group. The debate was timely as 2009 will see the European Commission proposal for the EU budget reform and its discussion in the Council. The meeting addressed the following questions:

What is gender budgeting?

What are practical examples of gender budgeting?

How can gender budgeting be implemented in a European setting?

Five academic and NGO speakers gave an encompassing presentation of gender budgeting as a tool for good governance.

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Find all presentations on our [website](#).

## EU citizen's unaware of upcoming European Parliament elections

A poll commissioned by the European Parliament from Eurobarometer in October / November 2008 delivers interesting results concerning the European elections:

The knowledge of the election date has increased

- 54% of the respondents declare 'not to be interested', while 44% are interested in the elections
- 34% of the respondents are likely to vote, while 15% say they will probably not vote. The European Parliament remains the most trusted of the EU institutions
- 73% of respondents think that they are badly informed about the activities of the European Parliament

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Find here the [summary of results](#) and other [related documents](#).

Read an article on the poll on [EurActiv](#) or [euobserver](#).

Go to the new European Parliament website on the 2009 elections:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009>

Find the EU Civil Society Contact Group election toolkit on our [website](#).

We will let you know as soon as the translated version are online.

## European Parliament defends public access to EU documents

This week the European Parliament adopted a resolution on public access to EU documents. The resolution states "that the Parliament should be at the forefront of publicity, transparency and openness in the EU" and announces an extraordinary action plan before the European elections in June 2009: should be available on the website in all official languages

- Parliamentarians' activities, participation and attendance at parliamentary work, via search criteria
- Parliament's activities in plenary, committee, delegations by improving the existing legislative observatory
  - Parliamentarian's allowances and spending

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Find the resolution [here](#).

Read an article about the issue on [EurActiv](#).

Find here the Ombudsman report on "[Public access to information in EU databases](#)"

Find here the EU Civil Society Contact Group [briefing on the 2007 Green Paper](#) on the issue and our [contribution to the 2007 consultation](#).

## Czech, German and Polish stances on the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty

The Czech Parliament has paused ratification of the Lisbon treaty for procedural reasons. At the same time, the head of the EU affairs committee in the Czech senate, Ludek Sefzig, said that the senate was willing to support the new Treaty of the Irish protocols were valid for all member states. Polish president Lech Kaczynski reaffirmed that he will put his signature under the parliamentary ratification of the Lisbon Treaty before the Irish have voted a second time. The German constitutional court has announced an exceptionally long hearing on the Treaty in order to discuss if it breaches the German constitution.

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Read euobserver articles about the [Czech](#), [Polish](#) and [German](#) situation.

Find here a [ratification map](#) from the Robert Schumann foundation.

## Has the EU failed to connect with citizens?

Read an interview with Conny Reuter, president of the Social Platform and its representative in the EU Civil Society Contact Group on civil dialogue, the new European report on the issue and the changes needed on EurActiv:

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[Interview](#)

[Summary](#)

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The EU Civil Society Contact Group brings together eight large European platforms of public interest organisations 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.

[www.act4europe.org](http://www.act4europe.org)



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