

# Problems and prospects concerning European citizenship

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This staff working document supplements the Commission's fifth report on Citizenship of the Union (1 May 2004 – 30 June 2007). It contains additional information relating to the chapters of the report as follows:

## Chapter 1: Introduction

- **Previous reports on citizenship:** the Commission's Fifth Report on Citizenship of the Union was preceded by four reports. To recall, the First Report covered a brief period (1 Nov - 21 Dec 1993) immediately following the coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty. The Second Report (1994-1996) identified raising citizens' awareness and enforcement of their rights as key challenges. The Third Report (1997-2001) highlighted advances made in the area of public information as well as dedicating space to fundamental rights. The Fourth Report (1 May 2001-30 April 2004) focused on key legislative developments in the areas of free movement and residence and electoral rights and took stock of advances with regard to fundamental rights and equal treatment. The Fifth Report covers the first three years of an EU of 25 Member States as well as the subsequent enlargement to Bulgaria and Romania. Taking the baton from the Annex to the Fourth Report, which took note of the European Parliament's request that all rights pertaining to Union citizenship – including "the judicial dimension" - should be taken into account in the reporting exercise, the Commission hereby makes reference to the adoption on 4 November 2005 by the European Council of the Hague programme which set the objectives to be implemented in the area of freedom, security and justice in the period 2005-2010.
- **Perception of Union Citizenship: public opinion surveys (Eurobarometer):** a 2007 Flash Eurobarometer public opinion survey commissioned by the European Commission gauged the perception and awareness of Union citizenship in the 27 Member States. It reveals that 78% of EU citizens have heard about the term "citizen of the European Union" while 41% say that they know what Union citizenship means. The less well known rights remain electoral rights relating to European Parliament elections (54%). These results have remained largely stable over the past 5 years. However, there is a persisting gap between citizens' awareness of the existence of individual rights and their actual knowledge of the content of such rights. Only 31% of respondents consider themselves well informed about their rights. While this is relatively low, it represents a 9% increase over 5 years. Significantly, **more than half (51%) of respondents have never heard of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights**" and only 8% claim to know what it is.

## Chapter 2: Citizenship of the Union

- **Information, Communication and Education:** the need and demand for information on EU issues has continued to increase. Three citizen-centred key initiatives geared towards improving communication and information has been adopted by the Commission: the Action Plan to improve communicating European by the Commission, the Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate and the White Paper on a European Communication Policy, which seek to improve the way that the Commission communicates its activities to citizens. These initiatives set out a long-term plan to reinvigorate European democracy and help the emergence of a European public sphere, where citizens are given the information and the tools to actively participate in the decision making process and gain ownership of the European project.

- **Assistance in the enforcement of rights, advice and problem solving services:** a host of EU services cover different citizens' needs, ranging from general information (Europe Direct), to specific information for citizens exercising their free movement rights (the Your Europe portal), to more targeted-oriented websites (such as Eures for workers, Ploteus for students etc) as well as advice services (like the Citizens Signpost Service) and problem solving services (such as SOLVIT and FIN-NET). The main development in this area relates to the "Dialogue with Citizens website" which was merged in 2005 with the "Dialogue with business" website and the Public-service.eu site to create a new portal called "**Your Europe**" for citizens and businesses.
- **Education, Training, Youth and Active Citizenship:** the work programme **Education & Training 2010** is geared at ensuring "that the learning of democratic values and democratic participation by all is effectively promoted in order to prepare people for active citizenship". An intensive reflection process was initiated by the Commission with the support of its Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning. A **research project on Active Citizenship for Democracy** was carried out. The Commission also supported a significant number of **education projects to foster active citizenship**. The **Lifelong learning Programme 2007-2013** will closely link with the Union's policy priorities, and will include civic education and Active Citizenship as an area to focus on. As the promotion of active European citizenship is one of the key priorities of the **Youth in Action programme 2007 – 2013**, a particular action was established to facilitate the structured dialogue with young people by means of seminars at regional, national and European level; youth events of the Presidencies of the European Union and European Youth Week. The first **Community action programme to promote active European citizenship** was adopted to promote the values and objectives of the European Union and to bring citizens closer to the Union. **The Europe for citizens' programme** responds to the need to improve citizen's participation in the construction of Europe.

### Chapter 3: Free Movement and rights of residence

- **Statistics on citizens who have exercised their right of free movement:** as of 1 January 2006, there were approximately 8.2 million EU citizens who were exercising their right to reside in a Member State of which they were not nationals.
- **The European Year of Workers' Mobility 2006:** the 2006 European Year of Workers' Mobility initiated a wide-ranging debate to sensitise all relevant stakeholders to the rights of workers in the area of freedom of movement, to the tools that exist (such as the European Job Mobility portal EURES) and to promote freedom of movement.

### Chapter 7: Equal Treatment

- **Actions to combat discrimination:** the European Commission launched the following initiatives in the period 2004-2007: the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. The European Union has carried out a Europe-wide information campaign "For Diversity – Against Discrimination" since 2003. The campaign comprises pan-European, national and regional measures. Since 2001, the European Commission has maintained a permanent structural dialogue with civil society organized in the Platform of European Social NGOs ("Social Platform"). Under the Community Action Program against discrimination 2001-2006 and the Program for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS (2007-2013) four bigger umbrella organizations of NGOs, five smaller European organisations representing people with disabilities and a network of Roma NGOs receive Community funding for the same purpose. Based on a Council Decision dated 23 March 2007, the European Community was among the first signatories of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which reinforces the rights of disabled citizens. The adoption of this Convention constitutes a landmark for the European Community in that it will, for the first time, become party to a comprehensive UN human rights treaty. Lastly, the Commission has also joined forces with the Council of Europe in the context of the 2006-2007 Council of Europe

campaign "All different-all equal". It is worth noting that the fight against discrimination has been listed as one of the areas for cooperation in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in May 2007 between the EU and the Council of Europe.