



RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

LYMEC Congress
Barcelona
1-4 May 2008

POLICY PAPER ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Introduction

The situation of young people on today's labour markets in Europe is a major challenge for policy shapers on all levels of governance. The participation in the labour market of all possible persons including the younger generation is an important contributor to economic growth, though the situation in several European countries is worrying. Increased participation is furthermore needed in order to limit as much as possible the negative consequences of a declining labour force in Europe from 2010 onwards.

The social consequences of high youth unemployment rates are enormous. Several researches show that having or not-having a job is a major determinant for a person's happiness. Next to that young people who are unemployed are statistically seen as a higher risk for juvenile criminality and socially unaccepted behaviour.

There are both social and economic reasons why youth employment should be on the top of the agenda. LYMEC as a youth organisation needs to have developed opinion on this matter, even more so now that we are asked to give young liberals' inputs to several discussions on this topic, like the one taking place in the Youth Forum.

Facts:

- *The ratio of youth-to-adult unemployment rate is 3.*
- *In total, with about 7,4 million unemployed young people in the EU, young people aged 15-29 represent 38,5% of the total unemployed.*
- *There is a significant gender gap in youth employment in the EU with the employment rate of young women in 2006 being 5,9% lower than of their male peers.*
- *In the age group 15-24 in 2006 the EU-15 average unemployment rate was around 16%, the EU-27 average around 17% with the highest numbers amounting up to almost 30% (Poland) and the lowest down to nearly 6% (the Netherlands).*

Background

The employment rate for young people depends on many different social - and economic issues. Policies are currently made on several different levels; the EU only has a role of coordination and can serve as a platform for best-practise

exchange. In the future this should remain the same: employment policies have to be decided and executed on the national or even local level.

Policies will have to be shaped and existing ones to be improved in a larger area. With youth employment comes education, transition from education to the labour market, social security systems, age discrimination and equal opportunities.

General assessment

Participation of all different categories of people at the labour market is an important key to economic growth and a possible solution to challenges that come with our ageing societies. The full participation of youth and starters is the category that this paper focuses on.

Looking at the unemployment rate of young people it is obvious that the levels are way too high and that young people are at risk. The causes of youth unemployment are various and differ very much from state to state. There are however certain overarching problems that can be defined.

Education

The transition from finishing education to full employment is seen as one of the most important moments on a young person's life. This is the moment where knowledge acquired during a period of education (formal and non-formal) has to be transformed into employment possibilities. Often the education does not match the requirements of the employers. Even worse are the high amounts of early-school leavers that have no to little chances at the labour market

Young Entrepreneurship

Over half of the EU's young people wish to start up a business within five years according to Eurobarometer. At the same time there are severe barriers that withhold these youngsters from really starting the business. Many young people are not considering it any longer once they are faced with the enormous administrative burden and difficulties to get loans because of short credit records. Furthermore skills required for starting up a business are not always sufficiently taught during primary and secondary education.

Age discrimination on the labour market

Today's labour markets in Europe often suffer systems that overprotect older people. Discrimination on the basis of age is done in both legal and illegal ways. These practices that are often the result of collective bargaining agreements between different social parties are very harmful for young people.

Employment costs

High employment costs are a problem for many labour markets in Europe. Employment costs generally consist of a salary, the patronal part of social security costs and taxes as well as possible secondary benefits for employees.

These costs combined with an often high level of regulation make it sometimes unappealing for employers to attract new employees on long-term contracts, leading to high frictional unemployment, high levels of temporary jobs and other ways to avoid committing long-term contracts (internships etc.). More vulnerable groups on the labour market such as women and young people are affected the most by high barriers for employers to recruit new people.

Dialogue

In Europe's current societies where unionisation is decreasing fast especially amongst young people, Trade Unions can no longer be seen as the only representative voice of workers. Young workers and starters often do not longer engage themselves in Unions and this has serious consequences for their representative voices. Civil Society organisations can play an active role in discussions around youth employment, intergenerational solidarity and other social-economic challenges.

The LYMEC Congress, meeting from 1-3 May in Barcelona, concludes the following:

- When implementing the Lisbon Strategy and possible further EU coordination plans on innovation related to social-economic policies, special attention has to be drawn to young peoples' participation in the labour market as a part of boosting labour participation in general;
- The EU should develop individual targets for member states so that the EU-27 average youth employment rate goes down from 17% to 10% by 2020;
- National policies will have to be developed in order for European states to focus on early-school leaving and the transition from education to employment when improving education policies;
- European states urgently have to start cutting Red Tape for starting up businesses. Ambitious programmes in some countries where it has to be possible to set up a business in one day could serve as an example for other member states;
- The EU has to take legal steps against member states practicing policies of legal age discrimination within national labour law;
- The EU has to urge its member states to cut employment costs in order to increase employment. This can be done by absolute cuts on taxes and social charges for employers and alternatively by transforming current tax regimes from taxing labour and production to taxing consumption;
- New forms of dialogue will have to be created on all levels of governance that are concerned with youth employment. It has to be recognised that trade union can no longer be seen as the only voice for young people in various policy discussion

YOUNG LIBERALS' VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

The LYMEC Congress

Whereas:

- The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, is the oldest organisation working for European integration. It is an international organisation with legal personality recognised under public international law and has observer status with the United Nations.
- The main areas of work of the Council of Europe include the protection of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and the promotion of cultural cooperation and diversity, education, youth exchanges and fair sport.
- The Council of Europe gathers 47 European Member States, whereas the European Union now counts 27 Member States and 3 candidate countries. With the exception of Belarus, Kosovo and the Vatican, all European states have now acceded to the Council of Europe.
- Jean-Claude Juncker delivered a report in April 2006 on the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union at the request of the Heads of State and Government
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the EU and the Council of Europe on 10-11 May 2007, reinforcing cooperation between the two institutions on culture and education as well as on the international enforcement of justice and human rights.
- The European Court of Human Rights is the jewel of the Council of Europe, since every citizen can appeal to it when its basic and fundamental rights have been abused
- The EU is due to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights when the Lisbon Treaty will be ratified by all its Member States.
- There is a substantial overlap between the competences and geographical scope of the Council of Europe and European Union, notably in the context of the growing significance of the EU's Neighbourhood policy and recent EU enlargements.
- The Council of Europe is facing decreasing political relevance for EU Member States in the context of the EU's continuous enlargement
- EU's neighbours, notably in the south of the Mediterranean and Western Asia, would largely benefit from the experience accumulated by the Council of Europe over the past 60 years in the field of human rights (European Convention on Human Rights).

Concludes:

- Since the EU enlargement process is due to last and will not cover the whole European continent in the near future, the Council of Europe should remain

the main and most important institution for the protection of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and fair sport on the European continent.

- The EU bodies should recognise the Council of Europe as the reference source for human rights and intercultural dialogue in Europe.
- The EU should take all the necessary legal steps in order to adhere to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible, which inter alia passes by the swift ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all its Member States
- The hierarchy in legal system resulting from EU adhesion to the ECHR should be transparent for all EU citizens
- The Council of Europe should consider the possibility of opening adhesion to the European Convention on Human Rights to non-European EU neighbours such as Southern Mediterranean countries

Asks the LYMEC Bureau and its Member Organisations to:

- Raise political awareness about the significance of the Council of Europe as the reference institution for human rights and intercultural dialogue, and work together with the relevant bodies of the Council of Europe to help achieving this aim
- Issue a statement at the occasion of the Council of Europe's 60th anniversary in May 2009

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Whereas:

- The stated goals of the Bologna process are to facilitate student mobility through the reduction of mobility restraints and to improve employability by providing comparable degree and quality assurance standards among the member countries of the European Union;
- International study experience and knowledge of foreign languages is deemed absolutely necessary for students in order to succeed in today's labour markets and

Noting that:

- Standardization of university degrees alone does not imply standardization of studying conditions nor an improvement over existing studying conditions;
- Student mobility is severely impacted by uncoordinated modularization and intense workloads of the new undergraduate degree required by the Bologna process. Student mobility is decreased due to the lack of harmonisation of financial costs for access to studies.
- Governments and universities are forcing the implementation of the Bologna process without proper quality assurance and in an "à la carte" approach, with certain action lines being implemented and others ignored, thus further degrading study conditions contrary to the goals of the process;
- The individualization of curricula by students according to their personal preferences, needs and interests is impeded by the rigidity brought by the implementation of modularized courses;
- Universities are forced to reduce the quantity and quality of the range of subject taught in order to comply with new study structures, thus eliminating competences in study subjects in which they have acquired specialized and unique knowledge;
- The acceptance of the new undergraduate degrees by employers is hindered by reduction in expertise compared to the older and longer degrees;
- Student mobility within the ERASMUS program of the European Union and other programmes for student exchange is further hindered by the continuing existence of strict Visa requirements among European

countries. An unnatural barrier has been created to European students in rejecting countries outside of the Council of Europe in joining the Bologna process.

- The tightening of degree curricula has a potentially adverse impact on the commitment to social and political activities by students;
- Students' concerns are not properly taken into account in political discussions in many Bologna member states and participating higher education institutions;

LYMEC

Calls all actors concerned with the implementation of the process for joint quality assurance to be taken into account when implementing the Bologna process. Quality assurance should be the main topic of the next Follow-Up-Conference and the whole process should be revised in reference to aims and outcome;

Demands from all actors concerned with the implementation of the process that students as main stakeholders of the reform process should be included in political and administrative discussions on all levels;

Calls the member states for more autonomy for universities when establishing new degree courses in order to promote competition and diversity;

Calls the member states for the abolition of VISA requirements among European countries. Calls for an opening of the Bologna process to countries outside of the Council of Europe;

Calls the universities to foster mobility through more cooperation with other European Universities, local exchange programs and scholarships, joint and double degree programs as well as more language courses;

Calls the universities to implement ECTS via the learning outcome approach by linking the credit points to a properly measured student workload, thus improving comparability and allowing mobility without discontinuance;

Wants to actively encourage student mobility by facilitating contacts to other young liberals across Europe in the context of Erasmus and other exchange-programs;

Encourages its member organisations - especially through the European Liberal Students Network (ELSN) - to exchange good practices and to report regularly on major problems within their respective countries;

Calls ELSN and the LYMEC bureau to develop a student campaign targeted at campuses on the above issues (production of a leaflet).

LYMEC RESOLUTION ON CROSS BORDER HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN THE EU

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Whereas:

- Health systems are the responsibility of EU Member States
- In most cases, healthcare services are to be considered as an economic activity and thus submitted to Community law
- The European Court of Justice ruled that in some cases EU citizens can seek healthcare in other Member States with the cost being covered by their own health systems
- Health services were excluded in spring 2006 from the Services Directive (the so-called "Bolkestein Directive")
- After repeated delays, the proposal for a framework directive for cross-border healthcare in the EU was shelved on December 2007 due to internal disagreement within the Commission (including serious reservations from VP Margot Wallström) and heavy criticism from the Party of European Socialists

Considering that:

- In some instances healthcare may be better provided in another Member State, e.g. for rare conditions or specialised treatment
- In border regions, the nearest facility may be situated in another country
- The proposed directive is not about liberalising health services but about codifying the circumstances under which people can legitimately be covered by their national health systems for treatment they receive abroad
- Community action on facilitating cross-border health services does not mean harmonising national health or social security systems, it only creates more competition between national systems and through this way fosters their efficiency

The LYMEC Congress concludes that:

- EU citizens should be entitled to exercise their right to seek healthcare in other Member States if they think that the foreign healthcare system provides a better service than their own national system (quality, rapidity...), with the cost that would normally be covered in their own country being covered by their own national health system
- The ELDR Party and ALDE Group should maintain political pressure on the European Commission so that the foreseen draft framework directive for cross-border healthcare is put forward as soon as possible to the European Parliament's agenda

And asks the LYMEC Bureau to:

- Put forward a resolution on this topic at the next ELDR Congress
- Take public positions on the matter, when appropriate

LYMEC INTERNAL MOTION

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

European Parliament elections of June 2009: European Liberal Youth's top 3 issues

Whereas:

- Elections to the European Parliament will be held around the month of June 2009 in the 27 member states of the EU, using varying election days according to local custom.
- Provided that the Treaty of Lisbon is ratified, 496 million Union citizens will elect 751 MEPs, topping the 2004 election which was the biggest trans-national election in history.
- If ratified the Lisbon Treaty will also substantially increase the power of the European Parliament and therefore the relevance of the elections.
- The internal motion approved by the ELDR Congress in October 2007 invites European liberal democrats to put forward a common candidate to the presidency of the European Commission in 2009 and mandates the ELDR Bureau to submit at the next ELDR Congress in 2008 a proposal of political platform on which ELDR member parties could campaign jointly for the European Parliament elections of June 2009.

Considering that:

- European citizens generally lack interest for EP elections, as illustrated by the low levels of turnout, because EP elections have no clear stake: the political party which wins EP elections is not the party that will have the lead over the formation of the European Commission and over its political agenda, and it is not clear who are the European leaders of each political family.
- A political organisation needs to make clear its priorities if it wishes to be clearly identifiable on the political scene: long wordy manifestos of European political parties are not read by the average European citizen and are less effective than a limited list of top priorities on which they would develop a pan-European campaigns
- LYMEC must play a key role in influencing the agenda/manifesto of the ELDR Party for the 2009 EP elections

The LYMEC Congress voted on its top three issues for these elections:

- Reform the EU Budget: scrap the Common Agricultural Policy, set new priorities for the EU budget (specifically: energy security, sustainability, innovation) in preparation for the EU Financial Perspectives 2013-2020

- Promote civil rights across Europe: promote individual rights (minorities, abortion, gay rights, cultural/linguistic rights ...) across borders, strengthen EU data protection policy, make sure that the EU joins the Council of Europe and European Convention on Human Rights
- Build a strong and credible EU foreign and trade policy: a strong and visible EU foreign policy (in the framework of what allows the new Reform treaty), accompanied by a strong EU trade policy

The LYMEC Bureau will focus its political work until June 2009 on these top 3 issues and will develop campaign material related to them. It will also attempt to put these issues as high as possible on the agenda of the ELDR Party for EP elections

A CALL FOR FORCEFUL STANDS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

During the current decade, the issues of climate change and emissions of greenhouse gases have rapidly increased in importance. In the past year, the complex issue of how to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases has become one of the top priorities today, much due to the IPCC and the Stern reports.

LYMEC calls for forceful measures in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by the governments of Europe. Thus, LYMEC calls for the following measures:

LYMEC urges governments to stop further large scale investments in greenhouse gas producing energy sources. These sources should gradually be replaced by energy sources not producing greenhouse gases, such as wind power, solar energy, hydropower, bio energy and nuclear power.

MUTUAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE PACT

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Taking into account that:

- Europe heavily relies on external energy supplies,
- energy is vital for our economy
- even with the continued development of renewables, energy independence for Europe will not be achievable in the next decades,

Noting that:

- in the distant (OPEC) and not so distant (Russia) past the cut-off of energy supplies has been used for political blackmail,
- the Treaty of Lisbon mentions „energy solidarity“ but remains ambiguous on the topic,
- at the same time 4 out of 5 EU citizens want true energy assistance [1]

LYMEC calls on all EU member states to sign a Mutual Energy Assistance Pact. In the case of natural disasters, terrorist attacks, sabotage or the suspension of deliveries by third parties this pact shall facilitate mutual access to energy providers, networks and strategic reserves. Not only is Mutual Energy Assistance expected by EU citizens, it is also of fundamental importance to safeguard the heavily interwoven European economy

LYMEC calls on all EU members to obtain a normal amount of reserves.

[1] „In case there is a sudden shortage of gas or oil in an EU Member State, what would you personally favor?

The affected Member State should be able to rely on the reserves of other EU Member States as well - 79 %

The affected Member State has to rely on its own reserves only - 17 %
DK / NA - 5 %“

Flash Eurobarometer 206a, April 2007, The Gallup Organization

OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS OF CHINESE OPPRESSION

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Whereas

- The Games of the XXIX Olympiad will be held in Beijing, China, from the 8th to the 24th of August 2008.
- China was awarded the Games conditional on fulfilling its promises to improve its human rights record.

Observing that

- China still maintains an appalling human rights record, most notably in the fields of freedom of speech, access to information, persecution of political opposition, discrimination of minorities, and widespread use of torture and the death penalty.
- China employs a strategy of systematic oppression against minorities such as the Uyghurs and the Tibetans, including the recent brutal repression against the freedom-seeking Tibetan people's quest for self-determination.
- China is providing financial and diplomatic support to the Sudanese government and blocking UN approval for peace-keeping forces to intervene against the ongoing genocide in Sudan's western Darfur province.
- China poses a constant threat against the security and independence of Taiwan, which by the Chinese government is considered part of the People's Republic of China.
- China refused to exert any pressure against the Burmese government during the crack-down against the monks' peaceful protests in Burma last year.
- 1.5 million Beijing residents have been displaced from their homes for the Olympics event, according to the Geneva-based group, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions.
- Special laws and decrees have been introduced for the Olympics to strengthen control over NGOs, banning any protests during the Games, and banishing "undesirable" people (such as beggars, vagrants and the mentally ill) from the city of Beijing.

Regretting that

- The IOC remains passive with regard to China's ongoing human rights abuses, refusing to put any pressure on China to deliver on its promises to improve its human rights record.

Noting that

- There are mounting calls for a boycott of the opening and closing ceremony of the Beijing Games.
- Several big names have pledged to stay away from Beijing for the entire duration of the Games.

Considering that

- The Dalai Lama has spoken out against an outright international boycott of the Beijing Olympics, fearing it would do more harm than good.

LYMEC - European Liberal Youth calls on

- The EU and Member State to adopt a common position of symbolic protest against the Chinese communist regime by refraining from visiting Beijing during the Games, and at the very least boycott the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games
- Encourages the Member States to have the same standing position in case absence of agreement at European level.

RESOLUTION ON EU-U.S. ECONOMIC RELATIONS: FREE TRADE AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Considering that:

- Free trade ensures the lowest possible prices for consumers.
- Free trade ensures that the resources are utilized as efficiently as possible.
- Political commitment thus far has fallen far behind economic realities when it comes to transatlantic economic integration.

Believing that:

- The U.S. is the most important ally of the EU when it comes to fighting for a society that is, and in the future continues to be, characterized by liberty, democracy and a free market economy.
- Economic integration between the U.S. and the EU will enhance world economic growth.
- Global free trade is our ultimate goal.

LYMEC calls for:

- An EU-U.S. free trade agreement that could and must take effective measures to facilitate market access for third countries.
- An EU-U.S. free trade agreement characterized by no tariffs on goods is established within the framework of the Transatlantic Economic Council.
- A transatlantic regulatory regime on the basis of mutual recognition of domestic standards should be established.
- An EU-U.S. single market for financial services should be established.
- The EU and the U.S. make a serious commitment in order to achieve a new WTO agreement within the framework of the Doha round.
- Further convergence of accounting standards, intellectual property rights and patent law is required in order to achieve further EU-U.S. economic integration.

RESOLUTION ON MOLDOVA AND TRANSNISTRIA

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

The European Liberal Youth (LYMEC),

Having regard to

- Its previous Resolution on Transnistria adopted by the Congress on 7-9 April 2006 in Winterthur, Switzerland;
- The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Moldova which entered into force on 1 July 1998, as amended;
- The EU-Moldova European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, adopted on 22 February 2005;

Whereas

- Since 2007 the European Union has shared a border with Moldova;
- The 1992 war in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova led to the establishment of the *de facto* independent Republic of Transnistria within the internationally recognised borders of the Republic of Moldova;
- Human rights violations by the authoritarian regime continue to occur in Transnistria;
- Moldova's efforts to overcome its frozen conflict with the breakaway region have not been successful;
- Russia financially supports Transnistria and has taken punitive economic measures against Moldova;
- Russia still refuses to withdraw troops based in Transnistria, which it is legally obliged to do;
- Many young Moldovans, due to a lack of domestic opportunities, leave their country to find work abroad;
- The EU has intensified its engagement in Moldova, for example by establishing the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine and by appointing a EU Special Representative for the Republic of Moldova;

Resolves that

- Moldova should become a solid, stable and prosperous part of the EU's neighbourhood, attractive to its citizens and with a long-term perspective to join the European Union;
- This cannot be achieved without liberal reforms in Moldova and a final settlement to the frozen conflict in Transnistria;
- Such settlement to the conflict necessitates an even greater involvement of the EU, as well as compromise and cooperation on all sides;

Calls on Moldova to

- Strongly commit to implementing the EU-Moldova Action Plan and carry out radical domestic reforms in areas such as sustainability of the social security system, rule of law and anti-corruption, thereby creating a better environment for business;

- Start earnest negotiations with the Transnistrian authorities without up-front conditions;

Calls on the Transnistrian authorities to

- Work constructively with Moldova and the international mediators on reaching a settlement to the conflict;

Calls on the European Union to

- Give more technical aid for reforms in Moldova;
- Provide greater financial assistance to the customs and border services of Ukraine and Moldova;
- Devise incentives for the Transnistrian business community to work constructively with Chisinau;
- Impose diplomatic and financial sanctions against the Transnistrian leadership;
- Increase its profile, appeal and visibility in Moldova by, *inter alia*, negotiating a visa facilitating agreement with Moldova and increasing funding for exchange programmes;
- Strengthen cooperation between Moldova and Transnistria at non-official levels by, *inter alia*, organising educational exchange and business clinics with participation from both sides;
- Provide greater funding and support to Transnistrian civil society and independent media;
- Prepare to provide troops for a new international peacekeeping force in Moldova; Recognise Moldova as a potential applicant country.

Calls on Russia to

- Agree with Moldova, the EU, the OSCE and other parties on the deployment of an international peacekeeping and policing operation, and withdraw all remaining troops; and
- Exert influence on the Transnistrian leadership to start negotiations with Moldova and accept a reasonable political settlement of the conflict.

A CALL FOR EUROPEAN COORDINATION IN IRAQI REFUGEE CRISIS

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

The situation for large parts of Iraq's civilian population has radically deteriorated due to the ongoing violence and the hardships of war in the area. As a result of this, many Iraqis have already fled their country and many more continue to do so in significant numbers. According to UNHCR, tens of thousands of Iraqis flee each month and, the UNHCR estimates that a million will have fled during 2007 alone. The Middle East has not seen such a number of refugees in motion since 1948.

LYMEC calls for strong measures to be taken to help the Iraqi refugees.

LYMEC recognizes the extent of the Iraqi stream of refugees and the importance of a clear policy of the European governments in addressing this issue. Many people today have failed to grasp the extent of this current tragedy.

LYMEC notes that a large majority of the Iraqi refugees fulfil the standards for protection set forth by the Geneva Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

LYMEC declares an urgent need for a coordinated European policy for welcoming more Iraqi refugees into the EU. LYMEC believes that following a liberal policy in this matter, with full respect to our obligations under applicable international law, is a demonstration of our commitment to human rights.

„FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT“-PRIZE FOR BLOGGERS

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Taking into account

- that European Citizenship also means active participation,
- that internet blogs become ever more important for the exchange of political ideas,
- that the creation of a true european public is vital for the further development of Europe and the European Union,
- that there are many blogs focusing on liberalism and politics,

LYMEC awards a yearly prize named after the French journalist and economist Frédéric Bastiat who advertised liberalism and free trade in an entertaining and comprehensible way. The prize shall be given to the European blogger, who in the tradition of Frédéric Bastiat, promoted liberalism through his or her blog most convincingly during the preceding year.

SET CULTURE FREE

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Considering that

- Technological development has made it possible to spread culture, both popular and niche, around the globe at minimal cost
- Large distributors and copyright owners systematically and widely misuse copyright to stall artistic development and innovation

Observing that

- Today's legal framework for copyright is not adapted to new technology in modern society
- New technology creates vast opportunities, but also challenges for both artists and consumers
- Today's restrictive laws regarding copyright create a difficult situation for musicians, movie producers, writers and other artists when they want to recreate and rework old works and productions
- Stringent and non-enforceable copyright laws have criminalised a generation of digital consumers who as a result are losing respect for the rule of law

Recognising

- The need to strike a balance between consumer demands, society's need for openness and access to culture, and the artists' right to revenue and attribution

Declaring that

- Anyone who has bought the right to use a product should be able to use it with the technology of his choice
- Copyright terms should be at a level that properly balances innovation and widespread use of culture

LYMEC - European Liberal Youth calls for

- Laws and regulations to be changed so that they only regulate limitations of use and distribution in a commercial for-profit context
- Recreation of old works to be regulated as fair use, as existing laws against plagiarism are more than enough to protect the rights of copyright holders.

STOP EXPLOITATION OF OCCUPIED WESTERN SAHARA

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Whereas

- The territory of Western Sahara has been under occupation by Morocco since 1975.
- The International Court of Justice in 1975 ruled against Morocco's territorial claim on Western Sahara.
- Western Sahara is on the UN list of Non-Self Governing Territories and is considered Africa's last colony.
- Under the terms of the UN's settlement plan in 1991, Western Sahara should decide its own future status in a referendum.

Noting that

- Morocco has repeatedly blocked the execution of a referendum.
- Human rights agencies and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have reported grave and systematic violations of human rights in the occupied territories.
- The people living in the occupied territories are subject to severe restrictions on their freedom of speech, assembly and movement.
- Human rights activists and pro-independence journalists and editors have been arrested.

Observing that

- Nothing of the income from the exploitation of Western Sahara's rich fish and phosphate natural resources is diverted back to the people of Western Sahara.
- The EU has signed an agreement with the government of Morocco that allows EU vessels to fish in occupied territorial waters off the coast of Western Sahara, in clear violation of international law. The EU/Morocco fishing agreement specifies that it does not prejudge of the EU's position about the status of the territory of Western Sahara.
- The USA has specifically excluded from its free-trade agreement with Morocco all products that originate from the occupied territories of Western Sahara.

LYMEC - European Liberal Youth calls upon

- The EU to exclude the coast of Western Sahara from its fishing agreement with Morocco.

TOWARDS A STRONGER EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress in Berlin, 2007 and revised by LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

The Barcelona Process emerged during the Spanish Presidency in 1995 from the decision of the European Union and twelve neighbouring countries from the South and East of the Mediterranean region to establish a perspective of partnership and association. After more than eleven years of implementation, the outcome of this space for a deeper dialogue between both shores of the Mediterranean Sea has shown contradiction, excessive bureaucracy and budgetary constraints.

One of the latest EU enlargement, on 1st May 2004, has brought two Mediterranean Partners (Cyprus and Malta) into the European Union, while adding a total of 10 to the number of Member States. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership thus comprises 37 members, 27 EU Member States and 10 Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey).

In fact, the difficulties for the implementation of the policy adopted in Barcelona in 1995 do not question its architecture defined to prevent conflicts in the area, on one hand, and offer a regional response to the challenge of globalisation, on the other hand. On the contrary, they reveal the need to prioritise the political and economical challenges and to work to get rid of certain prejudices existing on both sides of the Mediterranean.

A number of external factors have also delayed the implementation of the partnership launched in Barcelona, notably the instability in some countries of the region and the increasing violence in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, there is a need for a clear reformulation of the strategy for cooperation regarding the EU Mediterranean policy. Indeed, the first stage of the Barcelona Process did not allow the involved countries to reach a relevant degree of economic development and did not sufficiently encourage political democratisation in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. In fact, the balance of reforms carried out is disappointing. Also, the threat of terrorism and other elements affecting security after September 11th and its aftermaths have delayed this process.

In order to consolidate channels of dialogue and association between the European Union and these Southern neighbour countries, the Barcelona process is more necessary than ever and therefore it demands a political concern in the EU agenda.

Taking all these elements into consideration and looking at the current state of art of the process, European Liberal Youth calls upon the partners of the Barcelona process:

- A) to move towards the creation of a EuroMediterranean free trade area as soon as possible, and as a matter of priority for agricultural products, as a basic objective of the Barcelona process as a tool to encourage economic development and human rights. This process has to be accompanied by a clear strategy on energy supply.
- B) to strongly advocate the rule of law, based on the good governance, and the respect for human rights, as well as the promotion of individual freedom, free market and the respect of the environment. These deep reforms must not only be the result of the cooperation with the EU, but also the result of the internal reforms performed by these countries. The creation of a *Human Rights Observatory* in one of the Southern neighbour countries would contribute to the achievement of these goals.
- C) To condition EU aid to the respect of human rights by EU partner countries. In those countries which are still ruled by authoritarian regimes, the aid should instead be directed to NGOs and civil society.
- D) to establish a privileged status membership, as a fixed intermediate step between the association and the full membership in the EU.
- E) to appoint a high-representative in order to make the partnership more visible and accountable.

URGENT RESOLUTION GREECE MUST ACT AS AN EU MEMBER STATE

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

Expressing:

- Deep regret that due to the Greek veto Macedonia was not invited to become member of NATO, despite fulfilling all required criteria
- Disapproval of the rise of nationalist feelings in Greece towards Macedonia
- Shock by the recent decisions of Greek authorities to block their airspace for Macedonian air companies
- Surprise that Greek Central Bank ordered blocking of certain financial transactions to Macedonia
- Disagreement with trade limits imposed on the Greek-Macedonian border by Greek farmers and with their government's support

Calls on the European Commission and European Council:

- To support the ongoing democratic reforms in Macedonia

LYMEC Congress again re-affirms its support to the self-determination of the Macedonians regarding their state and identity.

INTERNAL MOTION

LYMEC Individual Membership

Adopted at the LYMEC Congress, 1-4 May 2008 in Barcelona, Catalonia

The Congress of European Liberal Youth - LYMEC gathered in Barcelona on 2 May 2008

CONSIDERING THAT:

- The number of individual members is progressively decreasing
- The number of active IMS clubs has declined to almost none
- The lack of candidates for the position of IMS delegate is preoccupying
- A large part of existing individual members are already members of a LYMEC Member Organisation, and only a few individual members come from countries where LYMEC does not have a Member Organisation
- The section of individual members has shown no sign of recent activity (no events, no posts on the LYMEC forum, no resolution at LYMEC events...)

CONCLUDES THAT:

- The section of individual members ("IMS") created in 1997 is today not properly functioning anymore

DECIDES THAT:

- A Working Group is created to analyse before the next (extraordinary) Congress the causes of this dysfunction and propose solutions to this situation, which may include the total deletion of Individual membership / IMS from the statutes of LYMEC