

50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome
Youth Summit "Your Europe – Your Future. Youth debates for tomorrow's Europe" Rome, Italy, 24–25 March 2007

The position of LYMEC is based on the debates of members and within Member organizations on the Future of Europe. It is based on a general LYMEC's position stated in the organization's Manifesto and the LYMEC Declaration "Towards a New European Treaty" adopted by the leaders of LYMEC member organizations in October 2006.

Guiding questions for the national debates

The future of the Constitutional Treaty

1. What kind of basic text does the EU need? Does a Treaty suffice, or should it be a Constitution?

Following a period of no clear plans and no clear leadership since the rejection of the Constitution for Europe in 2005, LYMEC would like to point out most suitable ideas changing the current state of Europe. LYMEC views the future of the Constitutional Treaty in two dimensions: Technical treaty for a short term and a Constitution for the long term.

A Technical treaty is urgently needed in short term perspective to outline the broad principles which are the foundation of the Union, but not the detailed policies. The project of establishing a Constitution for Europe cannot be realised at this very moment and therefore needs to be postponed and replaced by another treaty which would enable us to overtake the situation of institutional paralysis and the subsequent demotivation existing in the European Union. The new EU treaty should immediately solve the huge short-term challenges that Europe is facing enlargement towards SEE countries, cooperation within the home and justice as well as security affairs.

2. How should this basic text be drafted and adopted (and by whom)?

LYMEC believes that the European Council should convene a new Inter-governmental Conference with the aim to prepare a new Inter-governmental treaty that can come into force before the next European Parliament elections in June 2009.

LYMEC believes that

In a longer term, and not after 2014, LYMEC advocates the call of a constituent assembly (directly appointed by the European Parliament) that should be in charge of drafting a real Constitution for Europe to be ratified afterwards by the EU citizens through an EU-wide referendum, requiring a majority of population and member states in order to come into force.

3. What should be in such a basic text? And what should not be in?

The European Union needs a new, shorter, simpler and more readable text focused on the broad principles which are the foundation of the Union rather than on the detailed policy that can only lead to a worsening the current feeling of overregulation, bureaucracy and excessive governance that we have.

The improved text should clearly state the policy competences of the EU and should limit the role of the EU in fields such as education, social policy and culture. LYMEC particularly objects the idea of widening the EU competences on the field of social policy as we believe that it is mostly a national competence, and therefore LYMEC believes that the principle of subsidiarity should be strengthened. However, LYMEC believes that on this policy field, exchanges of good practices and common guidelines should be applied.

The new reformulated treaty must be based on the first two parts of the 2004 constitutional treaty.

Europe needs an improved text, with more subsidiarity, modern and responsive common policies and more efficient, transparent and democratic governing structures that will surely stand a better chance to get the backing of public opinion across the EU than the present text.

LYMEC believes that the Union needs a democratic, federal, open and transparent decision-making system, accountable to its citizens, in order to reconnect the peoples of Europe with the decisions taken in their name. This should be based on the democratic principle of the separation of powers.

As the only directly democratically elected body, the Parliament, representing the citizens, should co-decide in all policy fields. It should have full budgetary competence and it should have the right of initiative. Brussels should be the only residence of the European Parliament and its secretariat. Furthermore, the European Parliament should have the right to propose and elect the President of the European Commission and should have the power to remove individual Commissioners and to impeach the Commission President.

In the European Parliament, LYMEC believes that national and regional electoral lists are required to retain the traditional link that exists in some Member States between elected representatives and their constituents, whilst also believes that an EU-wide element is required to enhance the reach of the EU political parties as a precursor to establishing a pan-European democracy. We thus believe that members of the European Parliament should be elected in two components: some elected in national or regional lists, and some others elected from a standardised EU "top-up" list.

The Council should meet in public. The Council should be reformed into a genuine second chamber, co-deciding together with the European Parliament on EU legislation. Decisions in especially sensitive areas can be made with a double majority of states and people, preventing the domination of big countries over smaller ones. The right of veto should be banned in the decision-making system of the Union. The constitutional regions, in agreement with their member states, should participate in the Council of Ministers when debating what belongs to the sphere of competencies of those regions.

The European Commission is the guarantor of the European Constitution. The European Commission has to be transformed into a true European executive. It has to be fully accountable to the Parliament and the Council.

All matters within the competence of the Union should be subject to the Court of Justice. Every citizen should have the right to approach the Court of Justice.

The social and economic model

1. Which elements of the European social and economic model that should be maintained or strengthened?

LYMEC believes that social policy is mostly a national competence and therefore we believe that the principle of subsidiarity should be applied in all spheres, but especially in that field.

2. Should the current social and economic model be redefined—and if yes, how?

When we talk about redefining the European countries' social policies we strongly believe that Europe needs a more flexible approach to the labour market. The role of the European Union in this respect is to set clear and binding guidelines for member states to reform their social models. Only when Europe is ready to do this, we will be able to enjoy the same competitive position we have right now. LYMEC believes that the current state of reforms in Europe is insufficient and that it is up to the European Commission to take a stronger lead on this.

3. Taking into account the demographic changes in Europe, how can the fragile position of youth be improved? Should new forms of intergenerational solidarity be developed?

Coming back on the flexibility issue: without doubt the young people are the direct victims of the inflexibility of the labour markets in Europe. Older workers are often protected in non-competitive ways that harm economic progress. In order to fight intergenerational challenges LYMEC believes that European countries should adopt more sustainable frameworks to deal with pensions such as (partly) capitalised systems; these systems are better able to tackle the problem of ageing.

Sustainable Development

1. What is the role of the European Union in the promotion of sustainable development?

LYMEC believes that the promotion of sustainable development by the EU is a crucial goal. That's why we aim to see it placed higher on the political agenda. The EU together with other countries like Canada have been key to raise awareness of the climate change problems and the need to take immediate actions.

On a global level it is of the greatest importance that developed countries take the lead towards sustainable development. This means that developed countries must turn to sustainable energy consumption and reduce significantly their emissions of greenhouse gases.

LYMEC urges that the use of fossil energy sources is decreased and encourages the EU as well as all European countries to invest in alternative energy sources that neither pose threats to its surroundings nor to the environment in the long run and promote scientific research in this field, without disregarding the use of clean nuclear energy.

LYMEC supports a common European environmental policy to set up minimum standards and take the environment into account in all European policymaking areas and in all European projects. The Kyoto agreement is a good start for further development of vital environmental cooperation. EU must face for different scenarios for the climate change.

2. What key policy changes would be needed to achieve sustainability? (You might want to consider: energy policy; agricultural policy; environment policy; transport policy; economic policies)

LYMEC welcomes European Commission's proposal to develop an integrated energy and climate change package with the aim to cut emissions for the 21st Century. Therefore the fight against climate change is crucial and fundamental objective of the EU.

The European Commission, with the crucial input from the commissioner on energy Andris Pielbargs, has proposed a comprehensive package of measures to establish a new Energy Policy for Europe to combat climate change and boost the EU's energy security and competitiveness. LYMEC supports it. The package of proposals set a series of ambitious targets on greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy and aim to create a true internal market for energy and strengthen effective regulation.

Back in March 2006 LYMEC was already advocating the creation of single and free market of energy after looking at the green paper on energy policy. Today LYMEC strives for more efficiency and use of low carbon energy.

3. Can sustainable development be effectively reconciled with poverty reduction? What policies should be pursued?

Environmental problems know no state borders and therefore LYMEC finds it reasonable to invest more money and time in resolving environmental problems in neighbouring countries. EU also must support measures that lead to the stabilisation of world population and the limited use of resources associated with it. One example is different programs to improve the situation of women in developing countries.

Youth and Education

**1. What role should the EU play in the areas of youth and education?
(Consider Article III-282 of the proposed Treaty establishing a
Constitution for Europe)**

We are quite satisfied with the current status quo in terms of competences, even though we aim to see a better financial framework for these programmes, and more information in order to give better and more equal access to all young people in Europe. We believe that youth and education should be mostly dealt with at a sub-European level. Mobility, life-long learning,...

There is a need however to provide an equal minimum quality on education in all member states and provide common lessons of European history and studies of the European Union.

ARTICLE III-282

1. The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and complementing their action. It shall fully respect the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.

Union action shall be aimed at:

- (a) developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
- (b) encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
- (c) promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
- (d) developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;
- (e) encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe;
- (f) encouraging the development of distance education;

(g) developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting fairness and openness in sporting competitions and cooperation between bodies responsible for sports, and by protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially young sportsmen and sportswomen.

The EU in a globalising world

1. Does the EU need a common foreign policy, and why?

Yes, clearly as being one of the key areas where European member states and peoples together can achieve more than on its own. It is one of the areas where Europe needs to show leadership by acting to the rest of the world and to all its citizens.

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2. What should be the main principles underlying an EU foreign policy?

Foreign Policy should remain a shared competence of the European Union. The Foreign and Security policy should be integrated and decisions taken democratically by the European Parliament and Council.

The EU should pursue a comprehensive approach to promoting peace and security, based on (1) conflict prevention, (2) crisis management involving the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF), (3) post-conflict institution building. The EU must develop a Defence Identity. The Rapid Reaction Force allows Europe to partake in peace-keeping and crisis management operations. However, it is unable to function without NATO assets and has no role in defending the EU. A European Army will be more efficient economically and will be more effective militarily. No member state, however, should be forced against its will to participate in specific missions. The EU shall respect the right of any member state to participate in international cooperation agreements external to the Union.

Europe's approach to relations with other regions of the world is a challenge of ensuring peace and stability. We believe that the EU must pay particular attention to Europe's new neighbouring countries.

EU must recognise our eastern and southern neighbours as a cooperation priority. Increased EU involvement in these countries will support fledgling democracies, prevent the violation of human rights and help develop a free market economy. EU should be a key player in promoting global governance.

The membership in the European union must be open to all European countries who comply with the Copenhagen Criteria. The European Union must provide assistance to pre-accession countries to achieve the necessary standards for EU membership.

3. What is needed in order for EU citizens to identify themselves with the EU's foreign action?

EU citizens will start identifying themselves with the EU's foreign action as soon as there will be institutional solutions brought up regarding this respect.

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EU Affairs

Establishing European Rapid Reaction Force, functioning together with NATO assets will allow EU people to feel more efficient European army bringing peace and managing crisis. However the freedom of every member state's choice to participate in any military action will maintain the strong legitimacy of the decisions taken by national authorities elected by citizens .