

CID PROJECT

CSV's chosen theme: The perception of interculturality by civil society.

Justification:

In the UK people, far from being uninterested in politics, are engaged in the political life of their society, but express their political interests in other ways than voting, standing for election and using their elected representatives. They are much more likely to get involved in single-issue movements, high profile demonstrations and events like LIVE8, which harnessed real interest among the UK society.

It is necessary to share with citizens the way in which the policies of the EU affect everyone's life and propose ways in which discussion on those policies can become part of the national, regional and local debate. This is necessary in order to bridge a number of gaps, including the gap between national identities and different European cultures which are so widely represented in the UK. The European civil society is susceptible to fragmentation into the so-called 'national bubbles'. Whatever the subjects, the 27 national debates added together do not yet constitute a European debate. This is very much the case in the UK. It is therefore important to pursue the theme of the UK civil society's perception of interculturality to overcome obstacles stemming from nationalist reflexes.

We are proposing to tackle the theme of the perception of interculturality by UK civil society by creating platforms for exchange and reflection on ways in which individuals can make their voice heard on European policy affecting them and offer citizens means of direct involvement with their local MEPs and policy-makers. We will create local study circles for reflection on interculturality as well as intercultural dialogue, migration and participation, and how that impacts on participants' life in their town or region. This will create spaces for debate on interculturality within different focus groups: activities working on refugee issues, people directly involved in their communities, young participants from secondary schools, as well as virtual volunteers.

The discussions on participants' perception of interculturality will also offer means for discovering what means of expression UK civil society members use to debate European issues and to influence, engage with and inform their MEPs. We also aim to establish baseline of voter turnout at the 2004 European Parliament elections in wards where the study circles are located, with a view to identifying any improvement in turnout for the 2009 vote; in this there will be a specific focus on how intercultural European issues influence political participation.

Piotr Sadowski, CSV, 22 August 2008