



EUROPEAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

A framework to outline the process toward a democratic Europe

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Section 1 – THE EUROPE WE WANT

1.1 A disintegrating EU

The European Union is disintegrating. Dormant for long decades, the old forces of hate, authoritarianism and nationalism have awakened again to shatter all advances on equality, freedom and democracy. More than half a century of progress in Europe, obtained through constant and hard struggles, is at risk.

These entropic forces are not a simple malaise to defeat. They are symptoms, scattered and ugly, that signal to a deeper, inner disease: the lack of democracy that lies at the heart of the EU.

Born as an ambitious project directed towards peace, then developing through intergovernmental treaties mostly focusing on market issues, the EU is a complex institutional framework which remains largely obscure for the people of Europe and where technocrats take decisions behind closed doors to serve the national elites and corporative interests. A subtle form of authoritarianism that showed its ugliest face when it crushed the Greek Spring, to serve as an example against anyone who dared to defend democracy over the depoliticization of the economy.

The Euro crisis, rising xenophobia, the multiple “exit” surges against the EU, etc., are just the ugliest heads of this Hydra.

To save Europe from itself we must fight against hate with solidarity, against authoritarianism by exerting our freedom and against nationalism by standing together in unity: we will show the corrupt elites that there is a European *demos*, and put *democracy* at the centre of the European project.

The EU will either be democratized or it will disintegrate!

1.2 A new Europe is already here

The peoples of Europe are conquering the streets. Every day that passes, new movements and initiatives mobilise to defend democracy. Demanding transparency of politics, giving voice to the weak, taking the corrupt to court, lending a hand in solidarity, defying borders, reclaiming our cities, creating new social economies, sheltering those who flee from war and terror, protecting the environment. A new Europe is already here, and it is ready and willing to take power back from the elites.

We are disobedient, but constructive. We are ambitious, but our goals are realistic.

From every municipality, every region and every state: we will transform all these efforts in a constituent movement!

1.3 Toward a Democratic Constitution of Europe

The time of the Europe of treaties, of obscure intergovernmental negotiations, of taking decisions as far as possible from the people, is over.

Its end began with a bad joke: the failed Constitutional Treaty. With an oxymoron by name, the establishment tried to create a EU jurisdiction where states retained all their competences and powers. To put it simply, the national elites wanted to have the cake and eat it, but they just sowed the spoiled seeds of European disintegration.

Since then, the intergovernmental approach has been a charade: consensus is a menial tool to reluctantly produce meaningless agreements, vetoing is the key for national power, and stagnancy prevails. As such, Europe must abandon the already defunct phase of treaties towards a constitutional momentum: a common approach with a pan-European perspective is necessary.

A constitutional text would serve as a fundament that defines a new sovereign political entity, a new legitimate community of equals, a framework from which law and rights stem. The Constitution, elaborated by the peoples of Europe, would become the source of legitimacy and sovereignty.

It will be the beginning of a new age: the age of “We, the People of Europe”!

1.4 A Constituent Assembly

A democratic constitutional process entails massive participation of European citizens to completely redefine the role of European institutions and the meaning of European democracy.

DiEM25's proposal to drive this process is to begin a constituent process to convene a Constituent Assembly in which the whole of European society has a voice, and which should be elected on transnational tickets. A Constituent Assembly whose mandate would be to draft, propose and enact a Democratic Constitution of Europe.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the step that shall open such a constituent process and the concrete actions that DIEM25 and our joint transnational list for the 2019 elections will put in place to live up to our aspiration.

Section 2 – STRATEGY

2.1 Strategy for Transnational Democracy

We must renounce the failed logic that assigns to national governments primacy of European policy. It is time to give back to citizens their constituent power, to put them at the center of the new democratization process. In order to do it, we have to act using any possible space and opportunity, inside and outside the existing framework of EU treaties.

Our main task will be to give Europeans the feeling that they exist as a transnational power able to decisively change the current system. In order to do so we must:

- 1) open a transnational political space and use it in a democratic way;
- 2) define new transnational political forces able to change the current political landscape; and
- 3) push the European citizens to participate to a constitutional process.

2.1.1 Opening a transnational political space

The existing EU framework presents some embryonic features of a transnational political space covered by a huge and suffocating intergovernmental tangle. In order to cut this tangle, we have to act from two sides: from the inside, using the contradictions of the system, in order to allow the embryo to grow and to start to break the tangle, and from the outside, opening to citizens, in order to use this hole to finally destroy the intergovernmental system. Through the protagonism of European citizens – the current Godot of EU politics – we will create the political conditions to fix a new transnational democratic order.

There are currently two embryos that could potentially be used to force the tangle: the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure and the idea of introducing a transnational constituency for the European elections. The first is an existing procedure while the second is just a proposal that still has some possibility to be implemented. We have to strengthen the first and to promote in any possible way the second.

As DiEM25 and our joint transnational list we have to choose our candidate well in advance, and with innovative tools of transnational democracy, in order to challenge other political forces to do the same usher in a continental political debate and struggle on Europe's future. Regarding transnational lists, we will have to move beyond the recent European Parliament rejection simulating a transnational list and bypassing the scandalous timidity of current EU policymakers. On the back of its own, simulated transnational list, DiEM25 will advocate publicly that the whole European Parliament should be elected on the basis of a single, transnational constituency.

From this point of view the effort for the creation of a transnational list – begun in Napoli on March 10th, 2018 – will be decisive to show that another kind of European politics is possible. This list will set the frame to build, after the 2019 elections, the first

successful transnational political party in EU history with the direct purpose of pushing also other political forces to follow us on that path, creating their own, finally real, transnational parties.

2.1.2 Organising a transnational political force

Our transnational list will have to adopt some fundamental rules that will differentiate it from traditional politics and usher in the first breath of transnational democracy.

Firstly, the transnational collective that will manage the list would be composed at least by 20% or people randomly drawn from among the member movements and the individual members of the new transnational force. This is in order to avoid, since the beginning, the classic splitting up among the member parties and the consequent confederal – or impotent and antidemocratic – nature of the new political subject.

Secondly, all the decisions of the transnational list will be voted at transnational level by all the individual members using an online platform. This in order to create a transnational identity and democratic subjectivity inside the new force.

Thirdly, after the 2019 elections the entire collective will be elected through a transnational online vote of the individual members.

Fourthly, the 2019 Candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission of the transnational list will be selected through a transnational vote by all the individual members of the new transnational subject (members of the member movements and individuals who directly join it).

This new transnational movement will be decisive in order to move towards our final aim: the active involvement of citizens in a constituent process. Getting into the European Parliament after the 2019 elections – and after an electoral campaign fully oriented to that – it will start the decisive and final struggle that will allow all European citizens to determine the decisive shift in the history of European integration.

2.1.3 A Pan-European Referendum for a Constituent Assembly

After the 2019 elections, the transnational list, with its new Members of the European Parliament, will arrange the first historical Pan-European Referendum in order to ask all European citizens the following question: “Do you want a European Constitutional Assembly, elected by all citizens, with a mandate to draft a new Democratic European Constitution?”

The Referendum will be organized simultaneously in all the territory of the EU using official consultative referendum procedures where possible, and self-managed ones where it is not. The aim is to arrive to give to European citizens the right of self-determination as a constituent subject.

This campaign will begin with the designation of the transnational list’s 2019 Candidate

to the Commission Presidency that will guarantee full support to this campaign whether he or she is elected. It will continue through the entire 2019 electoral campaign via the engagement of our future MEPs on this proposal. It has to be clear that during the 2019 electoral campaign this will be our main proposal for the democratic revolution of the EU.

In order to grant to the process a major strength, a declaration of engagement will be presented – after the 2019 elections – to any political and social force willing to join this struggle. This declaration will be useful in order to create a coalition among the ones who want to support this decisive campaign. We need to open the process to any interested citizen and association, trying to involve the wider possible number of people.

The referendum results will be used by our MEPs (and by the subjects which signed the declaration) in order to open the way for the creation of the European Constituent Assembly, including by demanding a vote within the European Parliament to start the convocation of a Convention to reform the European Treaties. Our purpose is to arrive at its convocation within the end of 2025, with elections to the Assembly simultaneous to the 2024 European elections or immediately thereafter.

2.2 The European Constitutional Assembly: our proposal

The European Constituent Assembly imagined by DiEM25 is different from the classic ones, which included just elected representatives. Considering the recent experiences of countries such as Iceland, Ireland, Canada and the Netherlands, DiEM25 will propose to inspire the European Constituent Assembly to the new mixed criteria of participatory and direct democracy.

The Assembly shall be composed as follows: 25% will be randomly drawn among the entire body of the European citizens; 25% will be directly elected by the citizens via transnational lists; 25% will represent the member states, while the final 25% will represent territories and municipalities. This system will allow all the main components of European society to be represented and to act as authentic constituent actors. During the months that will precede the institution of the Constituent Assembly, several citizens conventions will be created in order to spread the debate and involve civil society, territories and local communities in this fundamental constituent step. At the same time, several online public spaces will be opened and animated in order to reach any citizen in the most direct and comfortable way. This debate will be convened inside the Assembly through the citizens elected representatives and the representatives of the territories and the municipalities.

The final text resulting from the work of the Constituent Assembly will be approved by the Europeans through a Pan-European referendum.

Beyond the disintegration there will be another Europe
A democratic Europe!