

European Parliament Simulation

Motion for a resolution on the involvement of European citizens in sustainable development

At the occasion of the European Estates General (21, June 2008) *Notre Europe* and the *European Youth Parliament-France* organised, in order to celebrate the 50th birthday of the European Parliament, a “*European Parliament simulation*” for youths aged from 16 to 22.

This mock parliamentary session, approximately 100 youth the Rhône-Alpes region as well as from Europe, debated, then put together a proposal on the “*involvement of European citizens in sustainable development*”. This assembly’s debate was instigated by a text presented by a recommendation commission made up of 10 young volunteers from the region. A month previously they had worked together to consider and put together a common review of the challenges to be taken up and the plans of action to be carried out.

On the day itself they defended their issues and considered the delegates’ suggestions which were divided up in ten themed commissions (foreign affairs, regional development, climate change, culture etc.). They presented an analysis of the issues surrounding sustainable development and expanded upon the proposals so that European citizens can be more involved in promoting sustainable development.

For four hours the assembly discussed and deliberated and finally proposed a resolution, to the European and regionally elected members and to Bernard Soulage. The resolution has been used as input in creating a “shared vision for the Rhône-Alpes region in the 21st Century”.

Activity run by:

Notre Europe (A PARIS-BASED “THINKTANK”) and the **European Youth Parliament-France** (EYP)

With the support of:

Rhône-Alpes Region,
EUNIC Lyons, (EUROPEAN UNION OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR CULTURE)
European Parliament,
Lyons City Council,
Europe Direct Lyon

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**RESOLUTION ADOPTED
BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SIMULATION ASSEMBLY**

Motion for a resolution on the involvement of European citizens in sustainable development

Sustainable development lies on the principle of solidarity between generations: we need to satisfy our present needs without compromising those of future generations. Knowing that the success of this process relies on civil society's involvement, how can the EU encourage its citizens to take an active part?

The Assembly...

A. acknowledges the definition of Sustainable Development as laid out in the Brundtland report.

B. is genuinely troubled by the disparities in the distribution of wealth on a global scale and by the lack of development assistance to resolve it in the long term.

C. is concerned with the territorial conflicts that provoke or could provoke in the future:

- i) the lack of food supplies,
- ii) the fight over the control of energy resources,
- iii) climate change.

D. is deeply concerned by the increase in industrial, domestic and tertiary pollution across the planet.

E. condemns the global dependency on oil, a diminishing resource that is predicted to dry up by 2050.

F. notes the major disparity in the level of awareness and firm commitment between the citizens and Member States of the EU.

G. believes that a change in consumer habits can lead to a positive development in the global development model.

H. keeps in mind that economic and social change in production methods is equally indispensable in positive development.

I. emphasises that we must reconsider the specialisation of agricultural production in certain countries.

J. is pleased to note the growth in local producer markets and organic farm products.

K. is aware that putting drastic measures in place creates the problem of a change of good intentions as a daily commitment because these measures are sometimes the source of additional problems.

L. is aware of the negative effects of biofuels, an alternative to fossil fuels, such as:

- i) the attack on biodiversity,
- ii) the reduction in agricultural land dedicated to food,
- iii) the use of water resources that are often scarce.

M. observes that waste disposal exists but that incineration is still an inadequate solution because of the pollution generated.

N. understands that there are ecologically inadequate buildings in terms of insulation, the methods and materials used in their construction.

O. readily acknowledges positive initiatives that have yet to be fully exploited such as:

- i) fair Trade,
- ii) development of renewable energy sources,
- iii) eco-house subsidies,
- iv) piggyback transportation,
- v) carsharing network.

P. recognises the abusive use of natural resources (e.g. forest resources) that lead to an eventual climatic damage without precedence.

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1. envisages the citizen's involvement in sustainable development within the context of:

- a) changing the individual's day-to-day behaviour,
- b) creating, distributing and exchanging information at local, national and international levels,
- c) using scientific research,

d) setting-up pressure groups and autonomous action groups.

2. encourages citizens to immediately adopt a more responsible attitude in their daily lives e.g. using public transport, low energy light bulbs or systematically switching off electrical appliances when not in use.

3. supports setting up a European citizen information and awareness campaign for sustainable development by using the media and relevant organisations.

4. requests that a “European Sustainable Development Label” be created to reward companies who are totally committed to sustainable development as well as products and services that respect the economic, ecological, social and political principles of sustainable development.

5. insists on the importance of scientific research in order to increase understanding on clean energy sources and how they can be a part of daily life.

6. trusts consumer groups to act in favour of sustainable development both in the EU and beyond.

7. encourages the development of a “European Sustainable Development Network” (ESDN) bringing together European citizens with a common concern for awareness and to standardise European awareness by:

a) evaluating policies and promises on sustainable development,

b) assessing the commitment undertaken by industry,

c) communicating these results to the public.

8. encourages, in addition to government aid in financing renewable energy plans, co-investment programmes as well as personal initiatives.

9. also wants to reinforce development assistance given to less advanced countries through financial initiatives by individuals or associations.

10. encourages the general principle of sustainable development in education by:

a) teaching good daily habits, starting at infant school,

b) incorporating a module into the curriculums of all schools within the Member States,

c) increasing the financial and material resources allocated to educational establishments (primary and secondary schools, six-form colleges, universities).

11. appeals to locally-elected ministers throughout Europe to organise, within their constituency, participative debates and lectures on sustainable development.

12. suggests creating a European agency for sustainable development in charge of compiling and evaluating proposals and initiatives suggested by its citizens and to contribute towards their implementation.

13. draws attention to the need for public powers to encourage separating out rubbish in all the member States by:

- a) collecting recyclable waste,
- b) setting up public rubbish bins with multiple compartments,
- c) standardising information and processes regarding recycling and separating out rubbish.

14. encourages setting up a national assistance fund in each Member State to renovate buildings that are poorly-insulated.