

DENMARK

CONTRIBUTION BY THE DANISH DELEGATION

Organisation, themes and financing

With reference to the European Council decision in June 2005 to institute a reflection period throughout the EU, the Danish Prime Minister, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, convened meetings with the parties represented in the Danish Parliament and with a number of the major NGO's engaged in the Danish EU debate in August 2005. On the basis of these meetings, the parties of the Danish parliament concluded that the Parliament's European Affairs Committee should coordinate Danish activities in the reflection period.

Danish activities in the reflection period build on a tradition of EU debate developed through six EU referenda since 1972. Under the heading 'Citizens' Agenda', the Parliament's European Affairs Committee and a number of NGO's convened a so-called 'Planning Group', which agreed on a thematic, financial, and organisational framework for the debate.

The following five general questions reflect the thematic aspects of the framework:

- 1) Which of the cross-border problems that Europe is faced with should be given special emphasis, and which role should the EU play in this respect?
- 2) What are the most important problems related to EU cooperation and how can they be solved?
- 3) How should the debate on the future of Europe and a possible new treaty be organised to ensure width, depth, and legitimacy?
- 4) How can we strengthen citizens' participation in the EU?
- 5) Where are the geographical boundaries of the EU?

The financial and organisational aspects of the agreement comprise a financial framework of DKK 17.5 million, which will be distributed via three pools:

- Initial and concluding arrangements as well as larger (nation-wide) arrangements under the auspices of the Parliament and the Parliament's European Committee
- Activities under the auspices of the NGO's that are members of the Planning Group
- Local or national measures organised on a decentralised basis by individuals, civil society etc.

Plans and initiatives

A number of plans and initiatives are currently being developed. So far the Parliament has decided to conduct a nationally televised hearing with 400 participants on 29-30 April 2006, run a youth Parliament session probably in April 2006 and launch a website on 'Citizens' Agenda' in December 2005 or January 2006 to inform and coordinate activities in the reflection period.

The NGO's will launch the 'Citizens' Agenda' on 12 or 13 January 2006 with a happening and distribution of information material at main railway stations and carry out debates mainly at local level as well as a concluding event to follow-up on the hearing conducted by the Parliament.

Conclusions on the Danish debate

The Parliament will conclude on the Danish reflection period activities in Spring 2006 and submit a report to the Prime Minister in due time before the June 2006 Summit.
