

Dear friends, members and local groups of Attac in Europe,

With this letter we want to inform you about the process, the meaning and the possible strategic handling of the “10 principles for a democratic EU treaty”, which is the first common document of the European Attacs.

Origin of the text

Following the Non in France and the Nee in the Netherlands, the European Attac groups intensified their collaboration on European issues and focussed, amongst others, on the constitutional process. In a meeting in Brussels, in December 2005, we collected our views and positions on Europe. During the Austrian presidency, Attac Austria succeeded in building an alternative view on Europe – progressive, but critical. One outcome of this campaign was a text on 10 principles for a new Constitutional Treaty (CT). This was presented and warmly welcomed at the summer university of Attac Germany in August 2006. This triggered the idea to write a common statement of the European Attacs on the CT. The discussion started in autumn 2006 on the “convention” list, a European mailing list on the constitutional process. In a European Attac seminar in December 2006, we decided to publish a “10 principles” text on occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaty. This anniversary will be used through huge public parties and glorious speeches to celebrate the EU as it exists without speaking about the social and democratic shortcomings. We fixed timelines and created a drafting group which coordinated the process. About 15 Attac chapters with several hundred Attac members contributed to the paper – and finally signed.

The official process

The official process meanwhile has been restarted after a time of “reflection”. In a meeting in Madrid, in January 2007, 18 member countries of the EU decided to search for a solution on the basis of the rejected CT. Two options are possible: The revival of the whole “monster”, which is the official strategy of Angela Merkel; and a mere institutional reform of the Nice Treaty which is favoured by Sarkozy. With our text, we are prepared for both options. The text gives us a strong tool a) to reject any new Treaty on the basis of the rejected CT, being “constitutional” (excluding part III) or not (including it); b) to demand an alternative to the Nice Treaty, which is more or less the same and definitely as neoliberal as the CT, although it is not called constitutional; c) to demand a democratic process on which any European Treaty must be built (directly elected assembly/referenda). With these goals and demands, we strongly support the Non and Nee of the people in France and Netherlands and make the next step: Now we need to get rid also of Nice and put Europe on a democratic fundament. The race to the bottom of social rights and taxation of capital can only be reversed if meaningful social and fiscal standards become an integral part of the EU treaties. The Non/Nee give us the opportunity to achieve these changes through common social movement struggles for the Europe we want.

Useful tool, not a bible

The 10 principles text is, however, a first result and a useful tool, not a bible. It is a first common position which we built under time pressure, and it is only a minimum consensus. The key point of the text is not that each word or phrase is perfect, but the large consensus between us in comparison with the mainstream. Besides, it is *not* our common position on Europe as a whole, or on the EU in all their policy fields; it is merely a text on the rejected CT and a demand for a new democratic fundament of the EU. Our friends in Attac Netherlands

and Attac France often stressed that a common proposal would help them a lot to defend the achievement of their Nee/Non. During the months to come, it will be crucial to demand that the results of the referenda have to be respected and any change of the existing treaties must happen on the basis of truly democratic processes.

However, the common discussion on Europe in Attac has only started, and hopefully we will commonly publish more developed and refined positions and documents on Europe and the EU in the future. The next publication, a booklet on Europe, is already planned. For this, the most important condition is that we enlarge, continue and intensify our dialogue on Europe.

Catalyst for our discussions on the EU

For this goal, the text should be made available to all Attac groups, member organisations, partners, members and friends with a call for further discussion. Local Attac groups should discuss it in public events and collect views on it. We suggest inviting speakers from other Attacs. The European drafting group is ready to help in this process. The local summer universities could be neuralgic meetings to discuss the text. This process should converge in Attac's first European Summer University from the 1st to the 5th of August 2008 in Saarbrücken/Germany.

In all these discussions, reflections, corrections, and proposals shall be collected and fed into the process.

Some possible main messages

- The EU will only have a future if it is built democratically with the strong participation of people. This is a key condition for broad popular acceptance.
- For the first time a progressive European Network makes a constructive proposal on the constitution.
- For the first time the European Attacs publish a common constructive position.
- The French and Dutch "No" were not national, but a European ones.
- The large majority of Europeans who said "no" are not nationalists, but globally and solidarily thinking and acting citizens!
- In opposition to the governments, we succeeded to ally people of this basis all through Europe.

Who do we want to read and discuss the text?

1. The general public.
2. Our member organizations and other progressive organisations. We invite them to discuss and sign the text.
3. Individuals. It is a big chance for Attac to offer a "concrete instrument" with which to participate in the construction of a another Europe. For many people who feel powerless this could be a first concrete experience of contributing to change the undemocratic and unbeloved EU. Many will thank and join Attac. In some countries, supporters of Attac were disappointed because they only perceived that we say "no", but do not offer an alternative to the Nice Treaty. We could convince these supporters to come back.
4. Political parties. We invite and pressure them a) to reject the CT; b) to question the Nice Treaty in the same way; c) to hold referenda on any new Treaty; d) to engage for a process to put the EU on a different fundament.

Discuss the 10 principles, invite international speakers, give feedback:

If you are searching for international speakers for events, please contact:

EU-speakers@attac.de

If you have comments on the text, please send them to the drafting group:

EU-convention@attac.de

We are looking forward to all comments, in all European languages. Even if we will not be able to respond to all of them individually, they will all be fed into the process of reviewing the “10 principles” text.

All versions of the “10 principles” can be found on:

<http://www.attac.at/eu-convention>

We hope that the 10 principles text help to trigger a broad, participatory and fruitful discussion on the Europe we want.

The drafting group

“10 principles for a democratic EU treaty”