

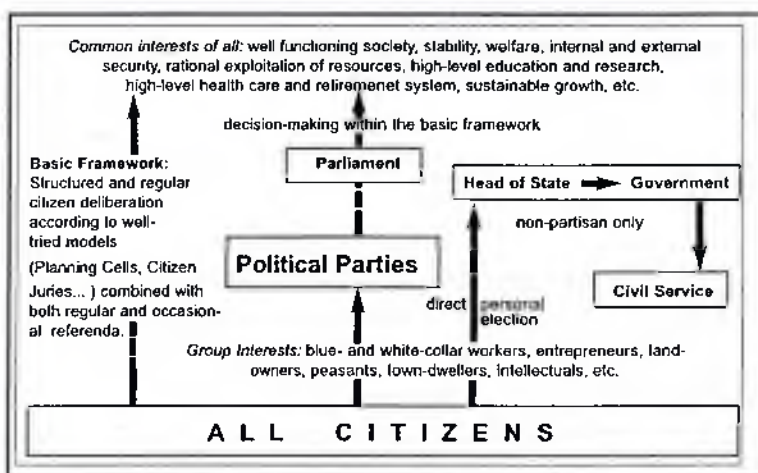
Parliamentarism and Democracy (conclusion)

(by Jiri Polak)

Admittedly, the rationale and motive force of politics is the pursuit of one's own interests. In the previous issue, I identified 4 types of interests: 1. *Various citizen categories' group interests* (blue and white collar workers, employers, peasants, landlords, etc.) 2. *Common interests of all citizens* (well functioning society, stability, welfare, internal and external security, rational exploitation of resources, high-level education and research, high-level health care and retirement system, sustainable growth, etc) 3. *The ruling elite's power interest* (preservation of the system as a basis of the elite's privileges) 4. *Vested interests of enterprizes and organizations* (big corporations, the military-industrial complex, trade unions, churches, bureaucracies ...)

The type 3 and 4 interests are incompatible with true democracy and must be eliminated. In the public debate, the type 3 interest is mostly covered up. Instead, it is pretended that the current system is true democracy, that it cannot be radically improved, that it is based on general consensus, etc. By contrast, lobbying by vested interests is often mentioned and commented upon, but again, it is pretended that lobbying is OK, that it is an integral part of the

Genuine, Semi-direct Democracy of the Future



The system is based on a Citizens' Constitution. Current constitutions have been written by party politicians so as to perpetuate their power monopoly. They result in oligarchic, not democratic systems. Therefore, they lack democratic legitimacy. They have to be revised by a series of deliberative processes, submitted to public debate, and finally to a referendum.

The Basic Framework serving for the promotion of the common interests of all has to be put in place outside the reach of political parties.

Political Parties are only allowed to operate inside the Legislative Power (Parliament). The Executive Power must be free from party politics.

The salaries and emoluments of politicians and high officials must be approved by special *Citizen Commissions* (model Planning Cells, Citizen Juries or the like).

Decisions concerning military operations, especially abroad, must be made by the citizens themselves, not by representatives. Nobody has the right to send other people to death.

A transition to this truly democratic system may only be achieved by non-violent means. Violence is banned.

"democratic" system. We hear that in Brussels, there are professional lobbyists having offices of their own quite openly, that they do lobbying as a full-time job. If most people still seem to consider this phenomenon as belonging to democracy, it can only be explained by permanent brain-washing on the part of the establishment.

It can be expected that some time in future, people will understand that their group interests are best served by the promotion of their common interests. But we are not there yet. To gain this insight, perhaps one or two generations will be

needed. For strategical reasons, the DD movement should not try to jump over group interests. This means that we should not demand the abolition of traditional political parties. But we should demand that the scope of activity of these parties be limited to their original purpose - promotion of group interests, while our common interests, that in fact have nothing to do with party politics, be defined and attended to by directly democratic processes. Party political abuse of these interests - an abuse we are exposed to all the time - should be banned.

INTERNATIONAL

USA

8 June, a letter from *Triaka*: "Clearly, no government/political system is valid unless it is based on (1) your unforced explicit direct consent, and (2) your unforced explicit direct support."

"Advancing to a truly democratic and mature global order is suggested in The CONSTITUTION of UNITED DIVERSITY which is constructed on individual Rights

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/uniteddiversity>"

1 July, information supplied by Mr.*M.Kolar*: RETURN CONTROL of GOVERNMENT to the PEOPLE - <http://www.cusdi.org> Home Page Summary:

Problem:

Candidates cannot get elected in today's expensive media age unless they accept essential campaign finance from wealthy special interest groups.

Wealthy special interest groups now control so much of our government that their interests have supplanted those of the People.

This Problem costs we the People hundreds of billions of dollars, it grievously harms us and denies us our constitutional rights.

Solution:

A proposed Constitutional Amendment will grant the People constitutional rights of direct democracy to remedy this Problem that we may regain and retain control of our government.

This Solution is practical, cost-effective, constitutionally sound, protects state rights, and is safe from improper influence.

Action: The power of our votes will ultimately make this Solution happen; a grassroots email campaign will start it.

5 July: Information from Mr.*M.Kolar*: "Since as early as 1994: U.S.CONSTITUTION for 21st CENCURY and BEYOND:

<http://www.newusconstitution.org/21CenturyAndBeyond.pdf>

<http://www.newusconstitution.org>

<http://www.newusconstitution.org/usc21b.html>

15 July: New submission to

<http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html>

LINK: <http://direct-democracy.us> - Begin;

Observations; Open Forum; Vote

Thomas Paine is candidate for public office in 2004 election cycle

6 August: Information by *ElecCity* sent to the cidd discussion channel:

(DW) Conf - 5th Worldwide Forum on Electronic Democracy - Sep 29-30 - Issy, France Info sent by Mr.*Steven Clift* clift@PUBLICUS.NET (<http://www.publicus.net>) to

DO-WIRE@LISTS.UMN.EDU For full details on this event, see

<http://www.issy.com/statiques/e-democratie/index.EN.htm>

15 August: New submission to <http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html>

LINK: <http://www.beyondplutocracy.com> - "Beyond Plutocracy"

Free online book. According to the author, "America is not a democracy but a plutocracy".

Michael Abrams, msabr@earthlink.net U.S., 2004/8/15

CANADA

19 July: Correction supplied by Mr. **M. Kolar**: At <http://www.movementfordirectdemocracy.com/page2.htm> - correct link to the translation of the Draft of the Czech Citizens' Constitution: <http://democracy.mkolar.org/HzPD/CzCitizenConstDraft.doc>

At

<http://www.movementfordirectdemocracy.com/page3.htm>, correct link to Mr. Kolar's page at newURL.html is: <http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html>

16 August, information supplied by **Global Outlook**: "Global Outlook's products are now available online at our NEW ADDRESS: www.globaloutlook.ca

"We have re-vamped our webstore to include new products such as:

(NEW BOOK) The New Pearl Harbor by David Ray Griffin

(NEW DVD) The End of Suburbia, Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream and much more...."

Important articles in the Issue 8 - Spring 2004 (topics):

The Presidential Elections; From Vietnam to Iraq; The Iraqi Resistance Movement; 9/11 and 3/11; Haiti; Israel's Nukes

26 July: Information from Mr. **Abraham Weizfeld**: **Direct Democracy Movement - Mouvement démocratique directe**

<http://directdemocracy.ws>

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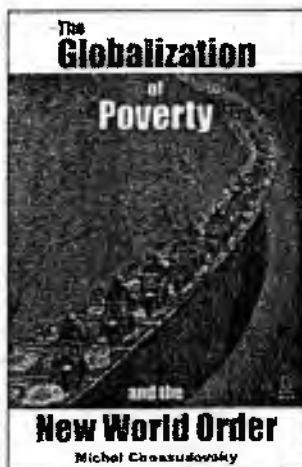
In this new and expanded edition Michel Chossudovsky outlines the contours of a New World Order which feeds on human poverty and the destruction of the environment, generates social apartheid, encourages racism and ethnic strife, and undermines the rights of women.

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Michel Chossudovsky is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG), which hosts the award winning website: www.globalresearch.ca.

"In its entirety, the book can and should be read by all with an interest in world peace and the causes of poverty." - Frances Hutchinson, *The Ecologist*

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Featuring the author of *War and Globalisation, the Truth Behind September 11*, Michel Chossudovsky, and media critic Barrie Zwicker, with excerpts from Vision TV's *The Great Deception*.

This carefully researched video sheds light on 'what really happened' on 9/11. It unmasks the Bush administration's so-called 'war on terrorism' and situates the strategic interests of the Anglo-American oil giants in the Caspian Basin and the Middle East. The video reviews the origins of Osama bin Laden and how the Bush administration used Al Qaeda as a pretext not only to wage war in Central Asia and the Middle East but also to repeal the Rule of Law at home.

The video calls attention to the blind acceptance by the mainstream media of the official version of events. Chossudovsky and Zwicker suggest that we are on the brink of the gravest crisis for humanity since World War II.

To order your copy, turn to page 55 or call 1-888-713-8500.

GERMANY

25 July, a letter sent by Ms *Filia den Hollander* to the *democracy-europe* discussion channel:

"Please find enclosed the article on the new electoral system in Hamburg. For easy reading and/or printing reasons, the article is also attached as a Word document.

Many thanks go to Angelika Gardiner of the Hamburg campaign for additional information and feedback, and to Michael Macpherson who spontaneously edited the text into good English.

German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) perceived society as a 'social sculpture'. Each individual helps to "mould" society and is, in doing so, an artist him- or herself. This Hamburg referendum is an example of re-shaping democracy. The idea of initiative and referendum: direct democracy, is also connected to Beuys.

My contributions to this 'sculpture' are that I participated one weekend in signature gathering for the German *Volksbegehren* (second phase of the German referendum system) and also my writing this article in English. With it, I aim to bring the new Hamburg electoral system to international audience and to international consciousness - both artistic and political."

Filia den Hollander, visual artist, Democracy activist, Amsterdam"

(Those who want to read the article can go to democracy-europe@vahoogroups.com)

Spring 2004: "Die Befreiung der Politik zu langfristigen Denken" - Fachkonferenz Berlin, Ernst-Reuter-Haus, 26./27.Mai Quote: "Bei der Kandidatenaufstellung zur Präsidentenwahl kam es erneut zur Diskussion über mehr Bürgerbeteiligung: Unser politisches System zeigt Ergänzungsbedarf. Bundespräsident Rau selber hat in seiner "Berliner Rede" die notwendige Stärkung unserer Demokratie durch die Bürger betont."

The conference showed again that the idea of citizen deliberation is being increasingly acknowledged as an indispensable component of modern political systems. Indeed, the extent to which the two basic elements of DD - I&R and citizen deliberation - have already been integrated in the respective system can be used as an index of the level of democratic development of that system. On such a scale, Germany together with Switzerland,

California and some other states of the USA, plus some cities like Porto Alegre and Albacete, would surely occupy a top position. (JP)

Some articles dedicated to the ideas of the above mentioned Conference: *Fachtagung - Befreiung der Politik (Politik & Kommunikation*, April 2004); *Ueber das Minderjährigenwahlrecht* (aus: *Hattenhauer, Juristen JZ Zeitung, Heft 1/96*); *History of Citizens' Juries* (Parra Youth Matters, Australia, October 2003), see

http://www.hydra.org.au/parrayouth/citizens_juries_history

Planungszelle and Citizens' Juries: A tribute to Professor Dienel from Britain (by Clare Delap, Public Participation Consultant, University College London and IPPR, London, and Anna Coote, Director of Public Health, Kings Fund, London)

Ein Golfstrom vernünftiger Ideen (WZ, 22 April 2004)

For a synoptic information see *Denkblockaden in der Politik? Die Planungszelle als Chance politischer Bildung* by Prof. Peter C. Dienel (paper)

UK

11 June, a letter by Mr. *Tony Adeney*: "We are presently working on a website, which we hope will become an international forum, campaigning for the introduction of Direct Democracy - bringing together various organisations and individuals with similar interests.

Although the site is still under construction, we are building into the site a page for useful website links/bibliographies and related useful information. It should be up and running in about two months and be located at www.directdemocracyinternational.com

Would your organisation be interested in allowing us to put your website details onto our site and allowing a reciprocal link to your site. We could simply require your permission, your URL web address, and ideally a short paragraph explaining what you are about. (Max 100 words, although less can be highly effective!)

Also of help would be references to any books, articles, academic work or courses at Universities and colleges where direct democracy is studied (possibly as part of a wider curriculum) that we

can add into our general information section.

Although we are based in London we are hoping to bring various direct democracy groups together, from around the world as there is growing interest in the subject.

For correspondence please contact me at: tone.one@btopenworld.com

20 June: Mr. **Bernard Clayson** sent round a letter summing up the various fields of DD activities and their various aspects. Something to keep pondering over and consult from time to time!

18 July: A letter from Mr. **Bernard Clayson** sent to the *democracy-europe* discussion channel:

"Dear all, I have set up an email group at International-Democracy@yahoogroups.com It is an open group i.e. anyone can join. The description is 'The global discussion and application of democracy'. You can join by 'clicking' on International-Democracy-subscribe@yahoogroups.com"

A new idea has already appeared in this channel: Established organizations like the *ERC* try to push through the opportunity for the citizens of all EU countries to vote 'yes' or 'no' on the EU Constitution. But this is not enough. The citizens should also obtain the opportunity to examine the draft, submit it to deliberation, and propose amendments, if they consider them necessary. There are plans to form a special citizen group for this purpose. (JP)

AUSTRALIA

10 July: An information from Prof **Lyn Carson**, the University of Sydney: "The website for ACTIVE DEMOCRACY has moved from <http://www.hydra.org.au/activedemocracy> to

<http://www.activedemocracy.net> Would you please update your link or your list of websites? I apologise for any inconvenience. Many thanks. Lyn Carson"

19 July: A letter from Dr. **Doug Everingham**:

"1. The WSF may be the world's best joint project of non-profit, non-government groups seeking a fair and sustainable world order.

2. Such joint action may hasten and broaden 'triple bottom line' practices - allowing social and en-

vironmental aims to regulate or replace the world's dominant principles of economic growth, profit and under-regulated markets.

3. We are building registers of citizens and groups who combine to draft more democratic laws and rules. We encourage governments and corporations to adopt such measures. We declare preferences for conforming election candidates, while recognizing that many democratic reforms can only be safely implemented when most rival governments agree to act simultaneously - because corporate power in control of currencies, credit and job creation can cripple economically a country that moves alone to regulate companies for social and environmental reasons.

4. Decision-making groups should aim to be of manageable size, each group including members of other groups to form networks of related special interest groups with each other and with other levels of administration and representation. Consensus in joint decision-making should be a common objective. Where this fails the group should try to negotiate consent. Majority votes may be necessary, but may be accompanied by minority comments.

5. This 'nested networking' of non-governmental networks will also seek constructive liaisons with private enterprise and governmental groups.

(Practical examples of such deliberative and decision-making principles are given in writings of *Shann Turnbull*, Principal, International Institute for Self-governance, P.O.Box 266, Woollahra 1350 Australia; e-mail sturnbull@mball1963.hbs.edu Also writings of the *Sociocratic Center* <http://www.sociocracy.biz>

SWEDEN

Recently published: (in Swedish; 80 pages)
/See the next page/

Contents: 1. A summary of the Western World's political development since Antiquity to our time; 2. The Twentieth Century's General Trends: A. From objectivism to subjectivism, B. From collectivism to individualism, C. From conflict to co-operation

The following cultural spheres are examined: geometry, physics, sociology, psychology, social psy-



JIRI POLAK



DIREKT DEMOKRATI

HISTORIA – ANALYSER – PERSPEKTIV

Debatt: Kan man betrakta som demokrati ett system där både den lagstiftande och den verkställande makten är sammanväxt och koncentrerad i händerna på ett fåtal professionella partipolitiker? Där medborgarna inte själva kan besluta något utom en gång vart fjärde år, och då bara genom att rösta på komplexa program som tvingar dem att i praktiken samtycka även till vissa inslag i politiken de i själva verket ogillar och att förbli maktlösa om politiken ändras under mandatperioden?

Direkt demokrati är *inte* populism och *inte heller* ständiga folkomröstningar om allt möjligt. *Direkt demokrati* är en gemensam benämning på flera metoder och strukturer som kan kombineras på olika sätt. De viktigaste är:

– *Medborgarnas rådslag* där *neutrala experter i ämnet* lämnar information enligt väl utvecklade och beprövade modeller (*Planungszellen, Citizen Juries...*)

– *Rätten till medborgarinitiativ* för att hålla folkomröstning. Där ett visst antal medborgare begär det.

– *Direkt personval av ett partipolitiskt obundet statsöverhuvud.*

– *Möjligheten att avsätta en folkvald även under mandatperioden (recall).*

– *Möjligheten till direkta personval till alla typer av representativa församlingar.*

Dessutom: I en verklig demokrati måste den verkställande makten vara skild från den lagstiftande och den måste vara partipolitiskt neutral. Medborgarna måste få rätten att medelst regelbundna rådslag bedöma utrikespolitiska och försvarspolitiska åtgärder samt den allmänna nivån av skatteuttaget. Politikerna är medborgarnas anställda. Deras löner bör därför bestämmas av medborgarna medelst regelbundna rådslag och folkomröstningar.

Läs vidare!

HzPD - MDD Movement for Direct Democracy

e-mail: pdemokracie@quick.cz

chology, decision-making theories, literature, music, the fine arts; a general theory of the development of art; philosophy. Conclusion: What we have witnessed (and go on witnessing) is *disintegration of (the illusion) of objective reality*. All that is are billions of subjective realities. Purely representative government is based on the premise of a reality common to those represented and their representatives. This premise does no longer exist. Therefore, representation can only be limited and conditional. In vital areas, it must be subject to processes of Direct Democracy. Development towards DD is unstoppable. It is a historical necessity.

3. Development and branches of the global DD Movement.

4. Strategy of transition. (Will be discussed in the next issue.)

6 July: Mr. **Lars Elgstam**, Ekvilibra, drew our attention to his article *The distribution of power* published in March 2003 in the British magazine *Philosophy Now*:

<http://www.elgstam.com/Articles/DistributionOfPower.htm>
Worth reading! The author welcomes comments.

27 August: A circular letter from his Excellency **Bernard Freymond**, The Ambassador of Switzerland to Sweden, and Ms **Karen Fogg**, Secretary-General, International IDEA:

"We are pleased to invite you to attend a seminar on "Instruments for Direct Democracy Today" to be hosted by the International Institute for democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Embassy of Switzerland in Sweden on 15 September 2004.

Direct democracy is a subject of increasing debate in Sweden. Many questions about the use and instruments of direct democracy have arisen following the 2003 referendum on the introduction of the euro and the preparations for a referendum on the proposed congestion charge in Stockholm.

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organisation with member states across all continents, which seeks to support sustainable democracy in both new and long-established democracies. IDEA draws on comparative experience and analysis in building democracy and develops policy options, tools and guidelines for those engaged in political reform. Given the growing role of direct democracy instruments in many parts of the world, IDEA

has recently embarked on a project to improve knowledge and understanding of the various models of direct democracy and the advantages and disadvantages associated with them.

The seminar aims at promoting debate on the possibilities and the limitations of referenda and citizens' initiatives as well as assisting those who may be involved in the planning and implementation of direct democracy instruments in Sweden."

ANDORRA

23 August: A letter from Mr. **Josep Lluís Ortega**: "I have been active helping the wiki for a better democracy grow. I think it is more or less consolidated by now. However, for the last several months I have been also working hard on a project that I would like to present to you: the creation of the Community of World Citizens, a non-geographical, world embracing collective of interdependent people who wish to join others in being first of all citizens of the world sharing the deep personal belief that loyalties to our planet and the human species come before national loyalties.

We are now a small group (but growing) of people behind it, and we are also engaged in talks with the *World Citizen Registry*, the *Coalition for a World Parliament and World Democracy*, and a number of groups and organizations, to explore for possibilities of convergence.

Quotations from the *CWC Full Proposal*:

"In the midst of so much social injustice, economic inequality, political alienation and environmental danger, it is an optimistic sign that a great number of individuals and groups working toward what can loosely be named global justice gets more numerous by the day through the world. Some work at local levels, others at national or international levels and many have entered the information highway and have presence in internet. Some deal with world governance issues, others try to promote direct democracy, many strive for a new economic democracy, most are worried about the environment and sustainability.

However, some of us feel there is also a need to find a way of coordinating all the separate efforts if real progress toward more global justice, sustainability and world governance is going to have any chance.

Thus, the first step is the establishment of a Community of World Citizens (CWC), i.e. of people committed to the above statement. Joining the CWC only entails:

The signature of a statement of world citizenship. The acceptance that the community of world citizens constitutes a legitimate and proper arena for making and debating propositions and nominating and electing.

No obligation to participate in any of the above process, but acceptance of the right of any other world citizen, group or organization to be contacted and asked for opinion, vote or participation.

No conflict with other nationality, political militancy, or association. World citizenship is added to other levels of affiliation, never suppresses them.

Being included in the public registry of world citizens and acquiring a registry number.

A world citizenship card.

Conclusions

We think this is a simple proposal that requires only more and more people signing up as world citizen. This is an easy, free process with a minimum of political ideological commitment. Groups, political parties, and non-governmental organizations can either continue to function as before or take profit of the new audience provided by the CWC, perhaps converging with other organizations. Initiatives, nominations, votes and other actions will exist only inasmuch as people are active in undertaking them. Representatives will exist only if nominated and elected. Their role and force will depend on the number of world citizens and the quality of the debates.”

<http://cwc.betterdemocracy.net>

The idea of World Citizenship is not new. Already in the 1970s, I was approached by one of its advocates. However, in the pre-internet age, this idea had no chance of success. In the 21st century, the situation is very different. Mr.Ortegas initiative is certainly worth of all support it can get. (JP)

GREECE

23 July: A letter from Mr.*George Kokkas*: “.... I wish to inform everybody in the DD scene that we finally had approximately 4,000 votes for our “European Sympolitia, Direct Democracy” Party, that participated recently in the European

Parliament elections! The choice of the Greek voters was among 29 political parties, including the big parties holding power! Since a lot of voters encourage us to continue this attempt, is there any idea for capitalization on this first presence in elections, especially during the Olympic Games next month in Athens ... or during the procedures of ratification of the European Constitution?”

George, please accept my congratulations on behalf of the DD community! Jiri

SINGAPORE

6 August: A letter from Mr.*Erik Lim*: “I am Eric Lim from Singapore, a tiny initially unwilling country with a current local population of about 3.2 m people.

We have constitutionally inherited the Westminster Parliamentary system of government from Bernard’s country with the expiry of colonialism in our region of the world following World War II. Since then, we have evolved into a parliamentary system of government with the ruling party having overwhelming control of the Parliament with 82 out of the 84 ‘elected’ Members of Parliament (MPs) currently. Many of the MPs of the ruling party come from walkover uncontested constituencies.

We have a strong and effective government for economic growth and social orderliness, but our Constitution could be amended with two-third parliamentary majority and had in fact been amended many times over the last 40 odd years of our history.

We were often told in the past and are therefore familiar with the best reasons why ‘western’ democracies could not work in most parts of the world, especially those with the far eastern cultural heritage.

So for global democracy to grow and thrive, it must be relevant to all people in the world, it must address the fundamental problems of the people anywhere on the Planet Earth, of society and of government, and it, therefore, must be shown convincingly to be workable: a safe democracy with an effective government.

A careful analysis of the issues involved would unfailingly point to the problems inherent in the existing political systems.

In this connection, Bernard has unknown to me, for many years already, presented before us a New Political System with ideas and concepts boldly free of the existing political systems while I have been in search of a New Political System for the Information Age (currently at Draft #05) for the past few years.

(‘Bernard’ means Bernard Clayson. JP)

CZECH REPUBLIC

On 17 November 2004, *The Association for a better life* plans to hold a demonstration on the *Václavské náměstí* (the heart of Prague) to protest against the corrupt post-communist regime of that country. A DD information leaflet is sheduled to be distributed.

RUSSIA

30 June: A report sent to us by Mr. *Miroslav Kolar*: “Yesterday, pres. Putin signed a Referendum Law for Russia. To hold a referendum, 2 million signatures in the whole Russian Federetion are needed and at least one half of the regions have to be represented.”

EUROPE

15 July: New submission to <http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html>

LINK: <http://www.cafebabel.com/en/dossier.asp?id=116> - Cafe Babel on e-politics and DD.

27 July: A letter from Mr. *Heiko Dittmer* sent to European activists:

“Dear friends, some of you might have had problems with the attachment in the note from Bruno. Please find hereafter the invitation also as an imbedded text.

By the way, some of you might already know that there will be also a (European Citizens’ Initiative Right) project planning meeting on Monday, October 11, 13:30-17:30, near to the European Parliament. For your involvement and more information concerning this project planning meeting,

I’ll personally stay in contact with you.”

INVITATION & ANNOUNCEMENT: THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE RIGHT - INTO NEW DEMOCRATIC TERRITORY

Dear colleague, we would like to invite you to an international seminar on the European Citizens’ Initiative Right, Art. 46.4. in the new EU Treaty. With this new instrument, the citizens of the EU will for the very first time have the opportunity of submitting a proposal for a new European Law to the Commission.

However, Art. 46.4., only describes the basic principles of this new democratic instrument - the exact details, including the numbers of countries from which the signatures must be gathered and the range of issues which the initiative right will cover, will be part of the upcoming pre-implementation process, which will start after the signing of the new Treaty by the EU Heads of State and Government on October 29 in Rome.

You are most welcome to join the work and discussion around one of the most innovative elements of the new Treaty by joinig us on MONDAY, October 11, 2004, 9.30-12 am.

In the European Parliament in Brussels, Room P5B001.

At this seminar you will receive an introductory presentation on the options, limits and challenges of the new European Citizens’ Initiative right, as well as a presentation of various perspectives by representatives of the EP, the Commission, academia, the media and NGOs. You are most welcome to offer your viewpoints and to take an active part in the concluding discussions at the seminar, which can mark the departure into truly new democratic territory.

Please let us know a.s.a.p., but at the latest by September 17, if you are able to join us by sending an e-mail to info@iri-europe.org .

Address your feedback, comments, proposals or questions to kaufmann@iri-europe.org .

Yours sincerely, Bruno Kaufmann, President, Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe, www.iri-europe.org & Diana Wallis MEP, AEDL, United Kingdom; Jo Leinen, MEP, ESP, Germany, Jens-Peter Bonde, IND/DEM, Denmark; Michael efler, Coordinator, Democracy International.

4 August: **PRESS RELEASE** by *IRI Europe*: IRI Europe Launches New Briefing Service on

Upcoming EU Constitution Referendums
*REFERENDUMS BECOME STANDARD ON
CONSTITUTION RATIFICATION*

With less than 100 days to go before the final signing of the new EU Constitution by the Heads of State and Government in Rome, the Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe today launches a new briefing service on the upcoming EU constitution referendums across Europe: referendums are about to become the standard for constitution ratification.

Established in 2001, IRI Europe has published backgrounders and guidelines on the European Referendum Challenge including these 2004 releases, which can be downloaded at www.iri-europe.org

The European Constitution - Bringing in the People. A guide to the options and limits of direct democracy in the European integration process. *Initiative & Referendum Monitor 2004/05.* Toolkit. Free and Fair referendums & citizen lawmaking in Europe.

Direct Democracy in Europe. The most comprehensive reference book on Initiatives and Referendums in Europe (and beyond). Carolina Academic Press. ISBN 0-89089-262-8

Hard copies can be ordered from IRI Europe headquarters. Call **Arjen Nijeboer** in Amsterdam on +31 20 4275091 or send an email to info@iri-europe.org

7 August: Information from Mr. **Miroslav Kolar**:
New submission to
<http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html> LINK:
<http://eu04.com> - European referendum Campaign
ERC; A concise website, where you may get a brief info about ER(C).

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