GENERAL REPORT

The Civil Society Days 2016 were held on 31 May and 1 June 2016 and were organised in cooperation with the EESC's Liaison Group with European civil society organisations (CSOs) and networks under the title 'Living together in our Europe'.

Over 200 participants, from all levels of European organised civil society, took part in the discussions and panel debates.
Georges Dassis, president of the European Economic and Social Committee, opened the Civil Society Days by underlining the purpose of this event: to foster more cooperation between EU bodies and civil society. He considers the Civil Society Days to be the symbol of this cooperation. This year's event was devoted to migration and refugee challenges.

Every day, we are facing reports of women, children and men losing their lives by crossing the Mediterranean Sea and being victims of human trafficking.

To address this situation, the EESC sent fact-finding missions to 11 European countries and Turkey to analyse the situation and try to propose new solutions. It is sad to observe that refugees who are fleeing war and terror are often met with indifference and sometimes hatred in Europe.

The solution is not hard to find, but it depends on one condition: willingness. We need to tackle populist, racist and xenophobic discourse. While the EU has always needed migrants and workers, it needs to establish a legal migration policy. We need to respect the Geneva Convention of 1951 that provides for asylum to people in need. This is a legal obligation.

The number of migrants compared to the European population is very small: between one and one and half million, while our population amounts to 508 million inhabitants. It is possible to integrate one million people provided that there is a good distribution in line with capacities across the EU's regions and municipalities.

This year, the EESC's Civil Society Prize will also be awarded to social organisations working for the integration of refugees.

According to Prof. Gesine Schwan, president of the Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, the citizens in Europe are a lot more accepting, a lot more open, a lot more generous, free, fair and just to others than governments and leaders lead them to believe.

Many communities in Europe are ready to integrate refugees. The problem is that the EU is represented by the EU Council composed of politicians who want to stay in power. What is important for them is
preparing for the next election rather than reflecting what people want. So now they are putting out this story that people are reluctant to accept others and they are creating a vicious circle that we need to break.

We need to find other ways of engaging in cross-border cooperation. The Maastricht Treaty enshrined competition into the EU framework. Now competition is everywhere between Member States; thus the Member State that has the competitive advantage will prefer to keep its advantage rather than work together. Competition is something that is conflictual: it may work in business, but in society it drags people apart.

However, this readiness of the people to welcome refugees is not shared by the EU institutions, as it is endangered by a lack of solidarity, both within the Union and with third countries. The lack of solidarity is not something that is coming out of the blue. Solidarity has been whittled away through our economic policies and competition which drives people apart.

"As a coordinator of German-Polish civil society cooperation" continued Ms Schwan, "we had the problem of taxation and salaries being lower in Poland, thus Germans were not happy with the relocation of companies. The German side demanded uniform taxation, but that was impossible. But as long as Member States are seen only as location opportunities for capital investment, then of course we shouldn’t be surprised that countries are competing against each other on the work front. It trickles down to society and leads to the erosion of solidarity. That is something that permeates all levels of society, education and so on...

So I don’t think we should be surprised by a lack of solidarity within the EU."

On refugee matters, so far, only short-term measures have been set up to steer through the refugee crisis and some countries still prefer a Union based on economic competition rather than working together on this crucial issue.

Germany is the economic power house of Europe, and that brings with it responsibility. But that position of strength has never been used to boost solidarity in Europe. During the economic crisis, they accused the southern countries (Spain, Italy, Greece) of being responsible for the sovereign debt; they never accused the banks.

They keep the European Union together not through political negotiation but by producing rules and regulations. They try to regulate everything with rigid rules (economic policies, saving...). While imposing rules is a very German tradition, it undermines true politics and political dialogue. A balance is needed between what is negotiated politically and what are only rules.
"What can we do to avoid regression?" she asked.

To avoid regressing, we need to engage in a discussion. It’s important for European citizens to experience the European Union not only through grand statements. Economic austerity policies do not work; we need growth with investment.

Ms Schwan felt that the deal with Turkey is another example of bad short-term policy. It is neither a good agreement, nor it is sustainable with the current behaviour of the Turkish government.

Yes, Europe needs to stop smugglers, who are constantly opening new dangerous routes. The only way to stop smugglers is to have a legal way to enter the EU. This is the way forward.

We need a pilot project. This pilot project could be the first 160 000 immigrants which the countries have agreed to take in. I think each country needs to be able to decide for itself about the number of refugees it can take in.

But we need to create a European fund for municipalities from across Europe to call on the funds to finance the taking in of refugees and immigrants.

We need a democratic movement coming from the municipalities and from NGOs that will prevent the danger of regression in Europe.
PANEL DEBATE

Following the keynote speech, the discussion with representatives from the EU institutions and civil society was moderated by the journalist Monika Hoegen.

Conny Reuter, co-president of the EESC Liaison Group, stressed the fact that solidarity is a big issue. Citizens are much more helpful than we think, as can be seen, for example, on the island of Lampedusa.

We need to think in terms of inclusive growth that integrates everyone. Unfortunately, nowadays everything is based on competition, while integration needs a huge amount of social effort.

Emmanuelle Grange, head of the Disability and Inclusion unit at the European Commission’s DG EMPL, explained that they are working on the integration of migrants.

Next week, there will be a report on integration (also of women, a very important subject). But what happens if Member States block progress? “We cannot force Member States, it’s not our competence”.

From the political side, Cécile Kyenge, member of the European Parliament and coordinator of its asylum and migration report, stressed that integration is not easy and in several Member States there is no real tool for integration, although migrants have to be active in society.

There is political responsibility at national level, but more practical measures must be taken at regional level.

Political opinion must be expressed locally.

The questions from the audience focused mainly on the integration of women and combating human trafficking.
Panel: "Integration and inclusion"

Christa Schweng, rapporteur for the EESC opinion on the integration of refugees in the EU, presented the report requested by the Dutch presidency. It was adopted in April almost unanimously.

For her, the concept of integration is a two-way dynamic, involving the refugees and the host society.

Integration needs to be linked to the EU’s values and principles as set out by the EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights as well as the Europe 2020 strategy, the employment policy and the social agenda.

She presented the main recommendations of the opinion:

• registration procedures should allow for an initial indication of whether the asylum procedure is to be successful;
• if so, language training also containing basic values and cultural training should start as soon as possible;
• refugee children should attend schools with local children and get additional support to learn the language;
• minors who are not allowed to attend school, due to their age, need adequate offers for training;
• early identification and classification of certificates, skills and qualifications are essential;
• fair, transparent and reasonable regulations to grant labour market access for asylum seekers;
• information about the functioning of the labour market, professional training opportunities and jobs;
• public employment service: integration contract to establish the additional qualifications needed;
• equal treatment on the labour market;
• refugee friends to take care of refugees;
• Financing (FTT, special support for Member States of first arrival, and Member States which host more refugees than foreseen, additional funds in AMIF, ESF and RDF).
Workshop 1: Youth and education

The youth sector has a growing role in promoting freedom of thought, expression, social inclusion and respect for others and in preventing discrimination, at local but also European level.

For Tinkara Oblak, from the European Youth Forum, the youth sector needs to be more empowered and encouraged, as there is a growing need to discuss the role of youth education policies in promoting the values of living together and move towards a more inclusive society.

She also stated that, when talking about radicalisation, it is preferable to use the term “violent extremism” to avoid any form of labelling, since violence can take many different forms such as racism, xenophobia, propaganda, hate speech, hate crimes and not only religious fundamentalism as often portrayed.

Discussions during this workshop revolved around two main themes: how youth organisations can create a more inclusive environment for all young people and what cross-sector measures could be taken to defeat violent extremism. Representatives from four youth organisations came to present their plans and projects.

Amel Yacef, from the Youth Council of Ireland explained that young people are at their best when they have access to resources and decision-making, when they have access to relationships of respect and solidarity and to recognition by other members of the society.

In order to help them, youth organisations work at their best when there is a full commitment to the principle of inclusion youth work, when they are flexible and have the capacity to engage young people and foster cross-community interaction in creative ways and when they can offer means whereby young people can be “young” without any labels.

Marguerite Potard, from the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, and Isabela Jurczik-Arnold, from the European Federation for Intercultural Learning both addressed the importance of encouraging inter-religious or inter-cultural dialogue, to offer a unique space where people from all backgrounds can gather, talk and exchange.
The main question was: how can the youth sector keep our people safe from being targeted and labelled? Simply by helping them to build positive identities and resilience, safe spaces for their identities to develop. Then, once people have strong identities and personalities, it is important to help them by campaigning and lobbying.

A consensus was quickly reached during the panel to the effect that the opportunities for young people to be able to develop their identities should be made available for all, and they should be within easy reach – money or distance should not be a problem for instance. Youth organisations need better cooperation with schools to promote youth work and non-formal education.

And not just by fighting violence and extremism, but also by raising awareness. Formal education systems need to take more responsibility for promoting diversity values. However, youth organisations and formal education systems are not supposed to bear the responsibility, but rather be empowered by other sectors and policy makers, which is why cross-sector action is important.

Ellen Meijer, project leader for the EU presidency on Youth, Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport reported on cross-sector measures saying that the Netherlands presidency had raised the issue of preventing violent extremism and adopted Council conclusions on 'The role of the youth sector in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to preventing and combating violent radicalisation of young people'. This is a list of actions and intentions; although not compulsory, it is a consensus reached to show that all of the different Member States agree to consider this issue as important. It took five months of negotiations to reach this consensus between all of the youth affairs ministers in the 28 Member States. Policy-makers need to include young people to contribute and fight violent extremism in order to avoid stigmatisation. In order to counter that, they need to help them develop healthy and positive identities and gain life skills.

This kind of action requires the contribution of all sectors of our society at local, regional, national and European levels, with cooperation between formal and non-formal sectors, each bringing their own tools and possibilities. There is work to be done at all levels: including at EU level. In her view, a programme like Erasmus+ can be a way to fight violent extremism thanks to the sharing aspect and the way it enables young people to develop life skills.

For Ilona Von-Benthenfalvy, working on terrorism and crisis management in DG Home at the European Commission, the response to the terrorist threat lies in preventing radicalisation by empowering stakeholders at local level: youth workers, street workers,
teachers, probation officers, local community police officers etc. Experiences from five years of implementation of a network of first-line workers are showing more and more efficiency, not only through non-formal education, but also through practices.

Katerina Dimitrakopoulou, from the Fundamental Rights and Union Citizenship Directorate of DG Justice, explained that institutions need to give a stronger voice to EU citizens regarding decision-making. Youth organisations and decision-makers need to work side by side to better integrate young people and avoid violent extremism.
Workshop 2: Social integration and the CSOs

This session addressed the role of CSOs in helping citizens to become socially integrated.

For Pavel Trantina, President of the Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship Section at the EESC, the integration must be taken as a two-way process. It doesn’t mean assimilation; it is a learning process for both sides. Investments and especially social investments are needed to be done in order to support it. The recent EESC Opinion on Integration of refugees in the EU brings a number of best practices examples from across Europe, where organised civil society plays a crucial role.

Lejla Šehić Relić, founder and managing director of Volunteer Centre Osijek (VCO) and CEV Vice President, highlighted the role of volunteers and local CSOs in the process of refugee integration. She presented a letter written by participants in the CEV Helping Hands Policy Conference in October 2015, addressed to policy makers asking for their assistance to help more people volunteer to change attitudes & save lives. She pointed out that we need to find a way to create sustainable structures to integrate local volunteers in providing solutions and to strengthen the role of civil society in the process of social integration, reflecting the core values of EU and democracy.

Laura de Bonfils from Volonteurope presented the report 'Rural isolation of citizens in Europe'. The report is the result of a two year campaign in which Volonteurope explored the challenges facing rural communities and identified possible solutions and recommendations gathering evidence and good practice from the European voluntary sector, while advocating for stronger political and financial support for voluntary sector organisations engaged in rural development initiatives.

Luk Zederloo, director of the EASP (European network of support service for persons with disabilities) shared the findings of research done by KUL (Leuven) that proves that CSOs and NGOs, when providing social services and support, are less expensive than public services and even more effective.

There are two main reasons for that: NGOs and CSOs are more flexible; moreover, they understand faster and easier. When discussing the role of CSOs in this migration crisis, we need to consider some important elements: we should try to avoid competition between people in need of support.
Regarding EU funds, Marie-Anne Paraskevas, senior policy officer at the unit “ESF and FEAD: Policy & Legislation” at the Commission’s DG EMPL, explained that there is a reluctance among Member States to use the FEAD to support asylum seekers because they prioritize the allocation of the funds to other deprived groups. The need for CSOs to be part of the monitoring committees that are set up in order to assess the implementation of the funds and to select the projects that are going to be supported and in which they can apply was pointed out. The European Social Fund has a particular role in supporting CSOs and there are specific provisions, but it has not been used by the Member States providing the NGOs global grants.

Katherine Heid, head of political development at Culture Action Europe, points out the key role of arts and culture for promoting intercultural dialogue and inclusive societies. Migration processes should be seen as a chance to develop structural responses. The impact of cultural engagement on elements such as participation, inclusion, self-esteem, and openness towards differences is of importance both for the migrant as well as the resident population. Arts and culture define us as human beings, and should therefore be taken into account from the start. They cannot be seen as an add-on once other factors of integration (social, economic, linguistic,..) have been addressed. Local level culture and arts organisations are essential as a driving force, whereas the role of European CSOs can be to provide trainings to develop expertise advocate and create links between different organisations.

Jozo Radoš, Member of the European Parliament, presented an example of best practice involving a Croatian CSO called “Are You Syrious”. This organisation helps refugees at difference stages of their arrival and needs and helps to raise the awareness of Croatian society towards refugees.

Expert on immigration and intercultural dialogue Mohammed Azahaf highlighted the concept of identity in order to understand what differentiates us and also what unites us. There are different ways to integrate refugees, intercultural, multicultural, and assimilation and a lot of people talk about multicultural society, or how to integrate & assimilate, but very few are talking about intercultural integration. To create a truly
multicultural society, we should stop talking about second or third generation migrants. We need a new system, a new model of coexistence for European citizenship based on residence.

Ms Birzniece, from the Commission's Directorate General of Education and Culture mentioned the Commission's call for proposals on social inclusion to promote and upscale innovative good practices in areas of citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination. It includes a strand dedicated to large-scale volunteering projects. Such projects can showcase what impact volunteers can have on society. The 20th anniversary of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) was also highlighted.

Natalie Cramp, from London, European Volunteering Capital 2016, presented the Mayor of London’s volunteering programme. This programme increases impact for London’s communities, targets youth unemployment and makes volunteering quicker and easier by cross-sector working. It has involved more than 3000 young people in its HeadStart programme, which bridges the gap between school and work. One participant explained his experience within the programme and the difference that it has made to his life.

David Frautschy, representing Telefonica Foundation, the social branch of the Spanish Digital Telco. He explained the company’s Corporate Volunteering Programme, which last year coordinated the works of over 27,000 volunteers in 32 countries, contributing with more than 210,000 hours dedicated to social works. He also shared the challenges posed by these types of corporate programs that have the objective of fostering employees to collaborate in the solution of real social needs, like the refugee challenge.

Sara Queila Brito Lopez presented CLW Woluwe, a Brussels centre for learning and working (two days of school plus three days of work) for more than 200 students of more than 30 nationalities. She described the cross-sector collaboration with Kellogg’s through their food donation and nutrition advice programme. The support offered assists young people to have a smoother integration in today’s society through education and work, helping them get the most benefit from new experiences, work and learning opportunities, and developing a wider, more inclusive view and perspective on society.
Workshop 3: Responses to the cause of migration

Several panellists were invited to give an overview of responses to the causes of migration. A number of specialists provided analysis, before representatives of NGOs and other organisations presented their projects and proposals.

Sebastien Stetter, from DG Home (European Commission) was the first to take the floor, to open this workshop. He briefly pointed out that there are about 2 million people that come legally to the European Union every year. Between 25% and 33% of them immigrate due to professional reasons, as they hope to have opportunities here. But the policy specialist underlined the fact that most of them have low levels of education (2/3 do not have university degrees), contrasting with the situation in countries like Canada, where immigrants are often high qualified. This is why EU legislation has been reformed. For instance, new directives on students and researchers have been adopted in May 2016, allowing them to stay longer in the EU and to be integrated. The European Commission does as much as possible to assist with the integration of migrants.

Gertrui Lanneau, a specialist on Labour, Migration and Human Development for the International Organization for Migration was the second panellist to speak. She gave a speech on migration from a labour perspective. According to Eurostat, the labour market will have a shortage of 19 million workers in the coming years; this is the opposite phenomenon compared to Africa. She stated that immigration could be one, but not the only, solution to face this challenge. Some countries had a certain success with liberal legislation, such as Sweden. But the approach should be tailored, as the EU Member States have different needs. Migrant workers have to be advised and well-treated, which is not always the case. In this respect, the seasonal workers directive goes in the right direction.

Brenda King, from the EESC, took the floor to deal with the environmental aspects of migration. When we talk about migration, social and economic aspects are major issues. But the global environmental crisis has to be considered. She stated that the first cause of internal migrations, in the countries of origin, is crisis of resources. People move from the countryside to urban areas and after a couple of years, as there is no work there, they move
to Europe. Therefore, politicians have to deal with the environmental crisis. The panellist added that an aging population is a reality in Europe and that migration could be a solution.

After their contributions, the speakers answered a couple of questions, mainly on the economic aspects of migration. Geertrui Lanneau pointed out that the people who come to Europe are not the poorest, while Sebastien Stetter advocated the publication of the jobs and qualifications required to meet the EU’s needs. In the second part of the workshop, representatives from civil society in third countries took the floor to present their initiatives to improve the economic and social situation in their countries of origin and to address the causes of migration to EU.

The first speaker, Saadia Zrira, a researcher at the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire of Rabat, presented an organisation in which she is involved, ASSID. ASSID was created in 2004 in Morocco in order to combat poverty, promote sustainable development and support women living in rural areas. It works in health and education, providing information to rural women and working to counter rural depopulation and emigration. By working with national and international institutions as well as NGOs, it has taught more than 1 000 women to read and write and created 20 women’s cooperatives.

Then, Gbenga Sesan, executive director of Paradigm Initiative Nigeria, took the floor. Through his organisation he decided to teach young people to use computers and new technologies in Nigeria six years ago. In his organisation, he trains poor young people for free over an eight week period, helping them to be computer-literate and thus to find a job. But after the students find a job, they have to give back 10% of their salary to the project, to enable it to keep on training people.

Asma Mansour was the last panellist to take the stage. She is the co-founder of the Centre Tunisien pour l’Entrepreneuriat Social. She first explained that migrants leave Tunisia not because they are not graduates but because they are not qualified. Creating an enterprise is very hard, as managing the bureaucracy is difficult and there is no help.

She spoke honestly about the economic situation in Tunisia and the difficulty for young people, especially women to create enterprise in the country. Even if she decided not to leave after the Tunisian revolution or in the years after, she said it is still very hard to deal with the economy and there are too many barriers to doing business. That is why people leave the country to come to the EU.
Between security and freedom – a societal balance

The second day began with an introductory speech on the theme *Between society and freedom – a societal balance*. This speech was given by Mauro Magatti, an economist and sociologist, and professor at the faculty of political and social sciences at the Università Cattolica of Milan. He first took a philosophical approach to migration, before switching to sociology and economics.

Mr Magatti started by saying that the question of migrants has to be considered from a structural and long-term perspective. Between 1989 and 2008 (when the “mass migration” started, according to him), a lot of changes took place in Europe.

Mr Magatti stated that the migrant crisis will determine whether the European project continues or collapses. The American model relies on a “new start”. In order to talk about the European model, the panellist referred to Rémi Brague, the French historian. For Mr Brague, Europe has a very specific way of working, as it has always been torn between a feeling of nostalgia and the future. Long periods of stagnation result in new starts and then in a certain balance. Thus Europe will have to deal with the migration crisis to continue.

Mauro Magatti added that foreigners cause problems in all societies, as they call into question traditions, culture and social dogmas. Foreigners induce changes, which most of the time people do not want. If there is no mechanism settled, the foreigners are considered responsible for all the problems.

The panellist underlined that this wave of migration is taking place while economic forecasts are pessimistic; Islamic terrorism creates fears and an increasing rejection of unknown people. Moreover, as the EU institutions are still under construction, European and national solidarities are not obvious and it appears that no one really wants to integrate foreigners.

But politicians have to go further and really work on the benefits of migration. The question of migration is a cause of rebirth for certain political systems. Therefore, the EU needs to work on it.

That is why Mauro Magatti is convinced that civil society has an important role to play in these difficult times. Civil society can participate in the creation of institutions; this has always been the case over history.

The panellist stated that aging populations will be a major challenge in the coming years. Therefore, it is essential to deal with migration, which requires long-term policies.
Since migration brings jobs, it can be a part of the solution. But the issue is not only economic.

Mr Magatti insisted on the fact that we have to involve citizens and ensure a link between them and the institutions. This mediation should be done by civil society, thanks to their experience with specific situations. The ongoing causes of the migration phenomenon need attention, especially in the countries of origin. Civil society, as well as NGOs, all have to make proposals to facilitate that work.

The path to become a citizen is a long process. The professor thinks that we have to reinforce the network for those working for integration and education on citizenship. Civil society is important in this framework.

The issue of migration raises the question of the future of Europe. Mauro Magatti stated that action by civil society is necessary to force the institutions to implement adequate measures. A story has to form the basis of policies towards migration. According to the panellist, it has to be the story of human dignity. Human dignity must be the foundation of the approach to migration.

Specifically, after having hosted migrants, we have to guarantee them human dignity. Abuses have to be denounced, as the Guardian did after the Idomeni camp was closed. "How is human dignity ensured?" he asked: By taking measures to aid integration and ignoring primitive speeches and ideas.

In this framework, Mr Magatti pointed out that civil society was not involved at European level, as regards dealing with migration and integration. He was convinced that a new civil society would be interesting, and it is necessary that it shares its actions beyond national borders. This civil society will allow us to look to the future with confidence.

After his speech, Mr Magatti answered a few questions, underlining that there is no civil society today and that it is useless to expect politicians to change their stances on migration issues.

He concluded by stating that the migrant is seen as the person that steals a job, but Europe has to be open. We have to give ourselves the means to be reborn.
Workshop 4: Freedom of expression

Fear of terrorist attacks, insecurity and extremism have led governments in the past few months to take security measures which are sometimes in conflict with citizens’ rights. As civil society, how can we make sure that citizens’ security will not be at the expense of our freedoms and rights?

Jean-Pierre Dubois, professor of constitutional law and honorary president of the League of Human Rights, stated in his introductory remarks that this question has two aspects and that the balance between security and liberties must be considered from the angle of what it implies for human rights.

Our world is indivisible, but yet divided – divided by conflicts. Mr Dubois illustrated his point by saying “If you spit in the air, it will hit you in the face” and further added “When you spit in the air in Syria, a million migrants arrive in Europe”.

What we now call the refugee crisis and how it is often linked to the issue of terrorism reveals the sign of a deep wound in our European societies; the fear of regression, a feeling of malaise which is reflected in our temptation to withdraw ourselves into our communities, fear policies, the security threat imposed on us – not only by far-right parties. The refugee crisis and terrorism are the signs that our world is indivisible. We are paying the consequences of our mistakes. Our societies will not be able to defend their liberties if we keep our oligarchic white-male-privilege based way of dealing with these issues.

The rejection of authoritarian solutions is growing and the state of authoritarian policies, which are restricting liberties, has been disastrous for the past 30 years during which layers and layers of authoritarian laws have been piling up. Jean-Pierre Dubois took the example of France, where for the past 20 years the penal code has been changed over 80 times. And why? Is there more insecurity or delinquency? No. The number of crimes has been decreasing at the same time.

It is important to rekindle our consciences – as somebody from the floor stated “there is a clear lack of critical mass in European societies” – to stimulate the current situation. We are confronted with problems regarding the EU and we are facing a storm but these issues go well beyond European borders. The situation we are facing nowadays was not even thinkable 10 years ago; countries adopting non-liberal democracies (Hungary and Poland) which do not accept as legitimate some fundamental elements regarding democracy and the
rule-of-law. It is time to establish a militant democracy as now we need to fight for rights we never thought we would have to fight for, and which were considered to be acquired. The fight for these rights has been forgotten for a long time and civil society is now paying the consequences for this. José Antonio Moreno Diaz, a member of the EESC, quoted Rosa Luxemburg: “Those who do not move do not notice their chains”.

The crisis we are experiencing is a systemic crisis with social, political and civic dimensions. The values of our societies are being questioned by the rise of euro-scepticism. Mr Moreno Diaz called for a citizens’ compromise, to create a citizens’ observatory to defend these rights and liberties. Only citizens have the key to democracy.

The political legitimacy crisis is a reality in European countries and has caused scepticism and apathy towards public affairs. Political power is constantly being undermined by the interests of big companies, creating a democratic deficit. To counter-balance the lack of critical mass, it is important to separate education and instruction, and to rather develop the latter, which forms people’s critical mind instead of formatting to the uniform thinking of mass media.

Dominique Guibert, president of the European Association for the Defence of Human Rights, then spoke about “Big Data” issues and how surveillance for the sake of security can deeply affect our liberties. If one justifies its use with the protection against terrorism, what would be the limit of the over-use of surveillance and the primacy of electronic systems regarding the arrival of massive flow of refugees? This raises the question as to “what is in control now?”, and whether it is technological development or civil society. These are the consequences of the accumulation of procedures induced by the Schengen agreements and the Dublin III Regulation. The EU-Turkey agreement also follows this logic: a maximum of electronic surveillance outside the EU for a minimum of reception in the EU.

We now see the creation of hotspots outside the EU to study and establish files of people in order to determine who will be allowed to come in or not. It is the automation of the asylum application process to stem secondary flows.

Civil society can no longer think “I haven’t done anything, there is no risk to me”, now that surveillance is more global, and if governments want to impose surveillance on possible terrorists, anybody has to be considered as such.

Mr Guibert thinks that, at the aftermath of the British referendum, we have to move away from the binary way of thinking the EU as it is or not at all. If we need a European Union it is not the disastrous example given by the European Council today. We can observe a step backwards of member states’ politics at the expense of the general interest of us all, notably
in the field of migrants’ rights and social rights. Today, if member states come to an agreement, it is on the lowest common denominator and the European Commission is either reduced to a supporting role like in the case of the EU-Turkey agreement or condemned to a desperate attempt to resume control. Claiming that we need more Europe only makes sense, if the vision is a Europe of more and stronger rights for everyone.

Mr Dubois concluded by saying that, indeed, there is a cultural diversity in our societies but mankind has more in common than it has differences, quoting Montaigne: “every man bears the whole stamp of the human condition”. In such a manner, dignity and human rights go hand in hand and are essential values at the core of our societies that we need to promote. This is why we now need more Europe and not less Europe.
Workshop 5: Freedom of movement in the EU: challenge and prospects for EU citizens

This workshop was moderated by Niklaus Nuspliger, the political correspondent for European affairs for the Swiss newspaper Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

In the first panel, the participants discussed the benefits and challenges of freedom of movement for EU citizens.

László Andor, former EU commissioner for employment, social affairs and inclusion in the Barroso II Commission (2010-2014), now senior fellow at the Hertie School of Governance, explained the complicated context, we are in. Freedom of movement can improve social life and economic life but it can also split families and leave people behind. Mobility affects society: for example young people’s emigration is often leading to demographic problems. According to Mr Andor the EU approach must demonstrate that mobility is a win-win game for the citizens if it is well managed. Providing freedoms and especially freedom of movement to citizens is very important and must be handled properly.

For Pieter Cleppe, head of Open Europe Brussels, free movement is very valuable, but it is under pressure at the moment. He presented several examples of challenges that the freedom of movement is facing in the EU at the moment: in the UK it is the “in-work benefits”; in France and Belgium social taxation. Finally, Mr Cleppe stated that blowing up Schengen would not help resolving problems connected with work.

Where are we now as regards freedom of movement in Europe? Anthony Valcke, solicitor at the EU Rights Clinic, highlighted that 15.3 million European citizens live in Member States other than their home country. Moreover, a briefing from the European Parliament shows that 300 million people travelled within the EU in 2012. Freedom of movement is not only about living in another country but also about visiting. What is the motivation for people to move around Europe? The main factor is work. The second is family reasons. Statistics show that people do not move to another state to abuse social welfare systems but to work.
Anthony Valcke also highlighted some other challenges to freedom of movement in the EU such as the high refusal rate of applicants for residence documents in Europe, and the increasing number of expulsions of EU citizens from Belgium.

László Andor responded that there is a need to design and implement a long term strategy for integration for which the EU funds can be used. It is also crucial to inform citizens about their EU rights. The main problems for EU workers are social security harmonisation and the recognition of academic diplomas and professional qualifications.

For Pieter Clekke, there is a problem of discrimination of EU migrants that we need to ban. However it is not so easy to handle for in some cases there is a thin line between discriminatory and non-discriminatory actions.

László Andor stressed that citizens who work in another EU country have the right to be treated exactly the same way as national workers.

The interventions from the audience presented national examples of workers’ rights, breaching EU directives (in Spain) and highlighted possible solutions of the situation.

The second part of the discussion was dedicated to the future of the Schengen agreement as a common area of freedom, security and justice.

For Elena Dulguerova, from Border management and Schengen unit of DG HOME, the Schengen area enhances freedom of movement. Schengen is the most visible advance stage of the EU. Nevertheless, recently seven Member States re-established border controls because of third-country migration and terrorist threats. Ms Dulguerova believes that the introduction of internal borders is not the solution to the current difficulties.

She also recalled the rules in the Schengen agreement related to the establishment of temporary border controls. For example, when immediate action is required, Member States can re-establish controls while informing the European Commission. These border controls can take place for two months. The general provisions of the Schengen agreement allow controls on borders for a period of between 2 and 6 months in exceptional situations. Exceptional situations are those which pose a serious threat to internal policy. According to Ms Dulguerova the closing of borders as done by France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Norway was in accordance with EU rules. She also stressed that in the case of
very exceptional circumstances, there is a possibility for the Council to put an end to all its unilateral decisions with Member States.

What are the benefits of Schengen? **Luca Jahier, president of Group III of the EESC**, explained that according to public opinion, Schengen and the Erasmus programme are the most appreciated benefits by EU citizens. The lowest estimation of the costs for re-establishing borders is EUR 100 billion and moreover the reestablishment of borders wouldn’t solve the situation that the EU is facing at the moment. Mr Jahier stated that for one fifth of that cost, the EU could establish migration policies, integration policies, aid for transition countries etc. and solve many aspects of the problem. **Luca Jahier** also argued what is the definition of a serious threat or exceptional situation that the Schengen’s general provisions refer to as a condition for re-establishment of borders.

According to **Tanja Fajon, Member of the European Parliament**, the Council has failed to manage the current crisis of third-country migrants and refugees in Europe. Moreover, the Commission does not have the power or the right tools to make the Member States respect the existing EU agreements (on relocation of the refugees for example). The current policy cannot deliver the way it is and it is interesting to see how week the leadership is in Europe. **Tanja Fajon** fears that Schengen is under a serious threat.

**Boris Le Hir, Project manager of France Stratégie**, presented the economic cost of rolling back Schengen. The study assessed two kinds of impacts (in France): the short term direct impact caused by time loss at the borders for controls, and a long term macroeconomic impact created mainly by indirect induced effect on trade.

The short term impact and impact on tourism amounts to EUR 500 million and EUR 1 billion per year for the long term impact. The increase in commuting time for 350 000 French commuting workers that cross the border twice a day amounts to 217 days a year. The estimated socio-economic cost is between EUR 250 million and 500 million per year for French cross-border workers. Mr Le Hir’s last example was the impact on freight transport which involves 21.5 million tonnes of imports and 21.7 million tonnes of exports each transported by 3 million trucks. The estimated cost is between EUR 120 million and 240 million per year.
Workshop 6: Living together...or in parallel societies?

Moderated by Cristian Pîrvulescu, president of the Permanent Study Group on Immigration and Integration at the EESC, the Wednesday session gave an overview of the current identity problems that face the EU’s Member States and societies in the context of the migration crisis and terrorist attacks.

Ruby Gropas, research fellow at the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) was the first to take the floor. She underlined the role that civil society plays in reducing the gap between different communities, especially in urban areas. According to her, the main role of civil society is to face up to discrimination and exclusion and to deal with it. Because of the terrorist threat and the pain induced by these attacks, organisations were called upon to take a constructive part in the fight against radicalism. The real question is: how can the most vulnerable people be helped?

Another very relevant and interesting point she mentioned was the internet. Online, stakeholders are exposed to their critics. Everyone has to talk and interact with everyone else.

Bart Somers was the only politician to take part in this workshop, being the mayor of Mechelen since 2001. He first explained the process of the recruitment of jihadists on the internet and in vulnerable circumstances. The recruiters find the most fragile people and isolate them, before making them believe that they can fight on the "good side".

According to the speaker, the local level is best placed to stop the process of radicalisation. He quoted James Barber, who considered the local level to be the one that can change the society in 21st century. Finally, Bart Somers stressed the need to include all sections of the society in projects and initiatives.

Fatima Zibouh, a researcher in political science at the University of Liège, was the last person to take the floor in the first part of this workshop. She pleaded for reciprocal confidence between the different communities. She said that Muslims in Europe are always suspected, because people do not know each other. According to her, right now, ethnic identity is less important than urban and territorial identity. Therefore, the best way to restore confidence
is to implement common projects and debates.

During the question and answer session, Bart Somers pointed out that at this time, as a politician, you have to say things that people do not want to hear and highlight positive stories about migrants and minorities.

During the second part of the workshop, moderated by Irini Pari, member of the Permanent Study Group on Immigration and Integration at the EESC, Claire Fernandez was the first speaker to take the floor.

Claire Fernandez is the deputy director of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and had a human rights perspective on the situation in EU society. She pleaded for teaching on human rights for everyone. Everyone has rights and it is important to get that message across in the education system. We should learn from the contributions of migrants in Europe.

She added that NGOs, as major stakeholders in civil society, have a very important role to play in this crisis of identity. NGOs should be consulted by political leaders on a range of subjects such as radicalisation and European values and they should be funded accordingly.

Mohammed Ali OBE, founder and chief executive of Quest for Economic Development (QED) in Bradford, then took the floor. Mr Ali was born in Pakistan and came to live in the UK with his father in 1969. According to him, isolation and the incapacity to participate in public and political life are the causes of problems and radicalisation. Therefore, education is the only way to tackle the vicious circle.

QED supports migrants that come from the Middle East and supports Madrassahs, by connecting those Muslim supplementary schools to mainstream education establishments. The NGO also provides other services in the fields of education and accommodation. It works with national authorities in both the UK and Pakistan.
CLOSING REMARKS

The two days of discussions, workshops and debate concluded on Wednesday 1 June in the afternoon. The session started with responses from the workshop organisers, linking to workshop results, with Irini Pari from the EESC, Anthony Valcke from the EU Rights Clinic, Gabriella Civico from the CEV, Marguerite Potard from WOSM, and Conny Reuter, among others.

They all concluded that the participation of civil society is essential. But cross-sectoral intervention is necessary, as associations representing civil society will not be able to take sufficient measures without the help of policies. Anybody who wants to make a difference at their own level – local or national – must be able to do so and be heard.

Ms Pari pointed out that poverty does not simply come from the economy but also from the lack of history and prospects as well. Today, we need to remain optimistic and courageous to allow young migrants to gain prospects for their future. To do so, we need to build a common project, to work together, to fight against stereotypes, and understand those who are stigmatised. Human rights are a key point in this process, as long as they remain the basis of our societies. There is clearly a constructive commitment on the side of civil society to work towards the improvement of our society.

Dominique Guibert, from the AEDH, called again for more Europe. More than ever we need Europe to get through this crisis, and not less.

Jo Leinen, an MEP for the S&D group and president of the European Movement highlighted in his statement how the refugee crisis was a test for answering to the question "what is Europe?". The answer is that we must keep in mind that citizens’ and human rights cannot be infringed no matter what, if we want to ensure peace among humans. Civil society expresses its desire to live together in mutual respect with all our neighbours.

Mr Leinen pointed out that the European Union had been built following the Second World War to create an area of States that would be so interdependent on each other that it would, by default, create a space of peace between mankind. Now we should rejoice that this peaceful union has 28 members and that all of these members share the same values of
respect and living together. But now it is time to apply those values to the people we are welcoming to our Union. Civil society has a primary role in this process, and the success of integration entirely relies on it.

Europe needs a global plan to tackle the migrant crisis. With millions of migrants arriving in the EU, it is fundamental to have a policy based on a solid legal basis, to set up a pact with Africa and to constantly reject racism, Nazism and xenophobia.

Is there an alternative answer? **Paul Dujardin, CEO of BOZAR** explained that we need to build bridges, and as a representative of the cultural field and of civil society as well, he feels very much involved in this process. The BOZAR centre can serve as an inspiration as a European inclusive art centre for civil society which can add extra value to the debate.

For example, the BOZAR centre has decided, independently from the European Parliament, to keep developing its focus groups on topics such as borders, identity, differences etc.

Artists depict our own world in a way we would never see it. They depict the changes in our societies. Banksy’s paintings in Calais’s jungles are a good example of this. Mr Dujardin said that he is convinced that both artists and migrants can add a great deal to our society and to the debates emerging.

Our societies’ potential for innovation relies on European countries’ ability to integrate new elements.