



# 7 steps

## towards more attractiveness, initiative and inspiration

Development Plan to be implemented until the Spring Citizens' Weekend 2010

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Discussed and agreed upon during the General Assembly on 24 October 2009 in Berlin

Citizens of Europe exists as a platform for our members' activities. The board is responsible for keeping this platform functional and assuring its credibility. The office is an asset the platform provides as administrative support for our projects. It will necessarily grow and shrink together with our level of activities.

Essential are the activities. Only the concrete project work can justify the existence of Citizens of Europe, the work of the board and the work of the office.

In order to realise good projects, we need (1) good, motivated people, (2) innovative ideas and (3) solid finances. Each of these needs requires effort during the coming months and support by as many people as possible.

Our '7 steps' are meant to prepare the ground and improve the potential of such joint efforts:

1. Better access for all members
2. Facilitate members' involvement to projects
3. Slimmer organisational procedures and structures
4. New means of communication
5. Abolishment of 'programmes'
6. Definition of 'formats'
7. A more precise profile

They are meant as concrete and urgent measures. Additional ideas and suggestions how to proceed are more than welcome!

## 1. Better access for all members



*For an average newcomer, joining Citizens of Europe leads to nothing more than the need to pay a membership fee. Keeping most communication within the council disables others to contribute and get involved. Those who would like to get involved have hardly any chance to find the 'entry points' on their own. On the other hand, we are not able to identify and guide them. This is especially problematic for those who might like to bring up own ideas.*



**We intensify communication with and among our members. By shifting communication from council- to members-level, we will give everybody more opportunities to contribute opinions and ideas and to get involved.**



- As an immediate measure, members-l (the mailing list to which all members are subscribed) will take over a part of the functions of council-l (the mailing list to which all council members are subscribed).
- The board will discuss and implement technical and other measures, which allow to better involve the members in all activities going on.

## 2. Facilitate members' involvement to projects



*Project related debates in our council tend to be discouraging for the initiators. Often there are few or insufficient reactions to enthusiastically presented ideas. In other cases it repeatedly has been perceived as inappropriate and unfair to be dependant on the content related judgement of just a very few people (who hardly had an opportunity to understand and evaluate the context and the intentions).*



**We change the rules of procedure in order to facilitate the members' participation and to encourage our members to get involved into new projects from the beginning.**



- The board will be entitled to accept projects based on pre-defined criteria.
- The board has the obligation to justify every decision (and name the criteria) on new projects to the members publicly. Criteria are financial and personal responsibility, quality of the project and compliance to the profile (see below).

### 3. Slim procedures and structures

↩ *Over the years, we have developed a lot of a lot of formal regulations, differentiations and habits, which take a lot of effort but do not always contribute to the quantity and quality of our actual output.*

☛ **We will carefully revise all our organisational procedures until the next General Assembly in Spring 2010.**

- ?! • There will be less board meetings, but they will be actual physical meetings for an entire day.
- We will rethink the necessity to have a „Council“ and check whether there are other ways to assure that the General Assembly will always reach the quorum required for voting and be able to check the activities of the board according to the statutes.

### 4. New means of communication

↩ *So far, a large part of our internal communication takes place between the board (and recently also the office) on the one hand and project responsables, members and participants on the other. This ‚vertical‘ communication makes our administrative capacities a bottleneck for the distribution of information and the exchange of ideas. Step 2 (described above) will lead to additional problems: If all communication takes place via the mailing list „members-l“, many people will perceive this as an information overload.*

☛ **We will check different technical options for a new system of internal communication which needs to achieve the following:**

- **More communication among our members, people who get to know each other and discover similar interests.**
- **Possibility to easily establish virtual groups.**
- **Avoidance of information overload.**

- ?! • While designing the new website (to be launched by the beginning of next year) we will evaluate which elements of social networks, CRM software and fora can and should be integrated.

## 5. End of ‚programmes‘

⚡ *Our four programmes do not cover the range of our actual activities and vice versa. And not each of the four pillars is really well established and stable.*

*In none of the four programmes the role of a „programme director“ could be separated from that of project responsables in a reasonable way.*

*The “programme” structure therefore pretends a stability and continuity, which does not exist. It raises the false impression of an already settled organisation, and thus, the project structure discourages creativity, initiative and responsibility.*

👉 **We will treat each project as an individual activity of limited duration and in responsibility of specific people who initiate, conduct and close it. We will not call them „programmes“ any more.**

- ?! • For fundraising or other reasons there will still be project cycles combining several projects!
- For both MyEurope and the Volunteers’ support specific ways of presentation will need to be developed.

## 6. Definition of ‚formats‘

⚡ *Over the years, we members of Citizens of Europe have developed several project formats. (European/Euratlantic Tuesdays, Training4Europe, ActivActing Youth, OpenFora, Focus on Belarus, Art Interventions).*

*On the one hand, several of them tend to be forgotten. On the other hand, treating some of them as Programmes created an unreasonable need for continuity and somehow „conservative“ tendencies.*

👉 **Our formats and the experience with them are not a burden but a treasure to be kept, developed and used.**

- ?! • -We will conceptualise our formats as a Format Toolbox or Format Library, which can be used as a source of inspiration for future projects. Short presentations will be available on the website, detailed information and material used in our Wiki.
- We will simultaneously check the possibility to deal with specific topics utilizing different „formats“ at a time, as often suggested by people approaching our network. Topics are likely to generate public awareness and to motivate people to make more use of established or new „formats“.

## 7. A more precise profile

↩ *The intention to satisfy different political views and perceptions and integrate them as also the tendency to rather define what we are ,not' than what we are has in the past regularly lead to somehow lengthy profiles and mission statements. Potential donors and others interested in our work regularly declare that they miss a clear focus and a concise description of our activities, our intentions and us.*

☛ **Citizens of Europe needs to present itself as what it really is in order to be understood, to reach more people and to create sustainable credibility and trust.**

- ?!
- The board will carefully check the way we present ourselves personally, online and in printed materials
  - Based on the open debate that took place at the General Assembly in Berlin on 24 October 2009, the board will review our written self-description. The members will get the opportunity to comment and make suggestions.