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1. FOREWORD BY JOAN MARC SIMON

STRONGER TOGETHER
for a FEDERAL EUROPE!

Dear friends,

Time is ripe for Europe. The current economic downturn can be a dangerous threat for the European project but it can most certainly be the window of opportunity that federalists have been waiting for during last years. It is in times of crisis when the added value of a United Europe is more visible and it is in times of crisis when we have to advocate even louder the need for a new Constitutional settlement for the Union, a coherent economic governance, a solid European budget, a common voice in the world…

The bureau of UEF met twice during last months under the leadership of our president Andrew Duff to prepare the work for the next two years and work out the UEF strategy for the campaign for European Parliament Elections. I'm happy to present to you the UEF Manifesto as the first result of this work:
"Stronger Together for a Federal Europe" is the message of the manifesto and highlights the importance of staying united in times of crisis and avoid nationalist attitudes.
In the manifesto there are the 12 points that should guide the federalists during the next 4 months. From the Treaty of Lisbon to the financial and economic crisis, from energy strategy to climate change and from foreign and security policy to justice and home affairs. The manifesto brings together the federalist viewpoints in the current historical moment. To read the manifesto **click here**.

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Organisationally, the UEF is gearing up for the European Parliament elections with a comprehensive activist and communication plan. A taskforce has been created to bring in federalist items in the agenda and for the first time the UEF is getting up to speed with online activism. We shall see the results of the online actions soon. As regards new communication tools: you can join the UEF facebook group "European Federalists" if you want to get daily updates about the federalist agenda. UEF is also in Twitter as "federalists" and a quatrilingual blog about the federalists has also started working http://federalists.cafebabel.com/ .

As regards the current campaign "Who-is-your-candidate?" the issue of having a candidate for the European Commission nominated by the European Political Parties continues to be in the agenda thanks to the efforts of many activists and next months will be crucial in the development of this important topic for the democratization of the European political arena.

Calendar for next months looks challenging for the federalists. We will be celebrating the next Federal Committee of the organization on the 18-19th of April in Brussels and before then many party conventions will take place, federalist meetings in the European Parliament, presentation of the UEF manifesto to the media…

All in all, I believe the next months present an opportunity for Europe to jump to a higher stage of integration but also an opportunity for UEF to grow and take the lead in the process. One of the goals of UEF for next months is to continue to grow as network of European citizens, growing to countries where we are not yet present and attracting those citizens eager to get engaged in the building of a stronger and more democratic Europe able to better deliver to the expectations of the European citizens.

Therefore, get up to speed for the forthcoming campaign for the EP elections and I look forward to seeing you in the next UEF Federal Committee of UEF!

Federalist regards,

Joan Marc Simon
Secretary General
Union of European Federalists

2. UEF MANIFESTO

UEF Manifesto for the European Parliament 2009-2014

Stronger together in a Federal Europe

Europe must be more united if it is to face up to its current economic and constitutional crises. This is the message of European federalists on the eve of the European Parliamentary elections.

1. The **Treaty of Lisbon** must be ratified and implemented efficiently as soon as possible. Once the new treaty is in force the Union will have acquired a unique capacity to act on the world stage. It will be a much more powerful, open and democratic Union. If the Lisbon treaty does not enter into force, the European Parliament should push immediately for a new constitutional Convention.

2. The EU must move quickly to establish strict, transparent supervision of the banking, securities and insurance sectors, leading to the creation of an EU financial services authority. The current weak coordination of national policies should be replaced by a **common macro-economic policy**. EU bonds should be launched to bolster the economic recovery plan.

3. The weak economy is no excuse to return to national protectionism. The EU should dedicate itself to the **completion of**

the single market in finance, services, energy and intellectual property. Structural reforms of the labour market which build Europe's social dimension are badly needed to create the right conditions for renewed long-term investment. The WTO negotiations must be re-started.

4. The EU needs a radical review of its financial system. Relevant spending should be shifted from the national to the European level to get real added value out of the Union. More spent jointly at the European level means less wasted by disjointed national efforts. The **EU budget** should have adequate resources, financed by fiscal federalism, to fund common policies which enhance competitiveness and create green jobs across Europe. EU spending should be made fully accountable.

5. The eurozone states must assert their autonomy from those who cannot or choose not to join the single currency. The eurogroup must act as one in world monetary matters and take the lead over the reform of the **international monetary system**. The EU should advocate the establishment of a global network of prudential supervision across currency zones, with the longer term intention to create a world currency unit.

6. The EU must be the driving force at the UN sponsored talks on **climate change**. The goal is to leave Copenhagen in December 2009 with an internationally agreed package based on the EU model of cutting carbon emissions, conserving energy and increasing the use of renewables.

7. The single market must be extended to **energy supply** so that consumers benefit from a more competitive and better interconnected industry. The EU should invest directly in diversified sources of energy. It must help energy companies to build the European super-grid as well as the infrastructure necessary to import supplies from Asia and Africa.

8. Whatever the fate of Lisbon, the EU needs to strengthen its contribution to world **peace and disarmament**. This means a dedicated effort to reform the United Nations as well as building up Europe's own civilian and military capability to be a credible peace-maker wherever it is needed.

9. Those EU states with the political will and the military means to do so must form a core group in **security and defence**. This will help NATO modernise and put transatlantic relations on a sound footing. If the Irish again reject Lisbon, the next urgent step must be to agree a separate EU treaty in security and defence between some but not all EU members.

10. The Union should confirm its existing commitments to **enlargement**, projecting its values, stability and relative prosperity throughout its own neighbourhood. As a top priority reconciliation must be achieved between the two communities in Cyprus, united in a new federal republic.

11. The task of building Europe's common area of **freedom, security and justice** has only just begun. The EU urgently needs to sort out its visa policy, and fashion common policies for asylum and for legal and illegal immigration. European states must act together to combat international crime and to ensure that there is decent justice and civil liberty for all. More integration in civil law will help families and consumers.

12. The European Parliament must exercise its new **democratic powers** and responsibilities with energy and skill, in particular by shaping the programme of the new Commission. MEPs should reform their own electoral procedure so that, in 2014, a number of deputies are elected from a single, transnational constituency. This reform is key to making European political parties fit for purpose, connecting them directly with the citizen and giving citizens a strong voice in how Europe is run.

3. PAST EVENTS

Who-is-your-candidate.eu Campaign Action during the PES Council meeting, December 1st, Madrid

A group of 25 JEFers gathered in Madrid very early on Monday morning in order to welcome the participants to the Congress of the Party of European Socialists with t-shirts and flyers asking "Who is Your Candidate?". Inside, a group of almost 10 JEFers was distributing leaflets and leaving a "Motion to elect the Socialist candidate for the President of the European Commission" on the seats & tables of the Congress.

Martine Aubry, Mercedes Bresso, Walter Veltroni, Martin Schulz, Franz Müntefering, Mr Di Rupo, Giacomo Filibeck (President of ECOSY) and other socialist activists were asked about their wish to nominate a candidate as President of the European Commission. Most of them expressed a lot of interest and support for our initiative. Some of them (Martine Aubry, Elio Di Rupo, Giacomo Filibeck) even stated their support for this idea in public during their speech saying that they would like this proposal to be included in the PES manifesto.

During the afternoon, the group of JEF activists went out in the streets of Madrid to exchange with the public about this action. Again, the population expressed positive reactions and a lot of interest for this proposal.

On Tuesday morning, some of the activists managed to participate in the debates of the Socialist Party concerning the 09 elections.

A very successful action!

Jessica Chamba, Bureau member

Federalists Intervention taskforce Kick off meeting, February 10th, Brussels

25 federalists of all ages joined the FIT kick off event that marks the beginning of a spring full of campaigning!

Federalist Intervention Taskforce - FIT Bxl - is a campaign strategy developed in order to increase the presence of the federalist messages in the European debate, focusing especially on Brussels. It is a joint JEF/UEF project bringing together activists from all levels of both organizations and is coordinated by UEF Campaign coordinator Åsa Gunvén.

35 federalists have committed to visit at least 2 events each during this coming spring and make a question or intervention in front of the audience and high profile speakers, highlighting our federalist demands for Europe. Potentially 70 conferences, public debates, press conferences, round table discussions will be targeted by FIT, thousands of listeners and hundreds of decision makers will be reached with just a few hours effort from each member of FIT.

The interventions will be based on the federalist demands as stated in the UEF and JEF manifestos. At the meeting also Marta Semplici from JEF and Joan Marc Simon from UEF introduced the manifestos of the two organizations respectively.

Tips and tricks were shared by communication expert, and former JEFers, Bob Beck. Avoid being a federalist stereotype as in speaking only about constitutions, being to unrealistic etc. Remember you don't have to convince everyone in the room by your argument - if you convince 3 people this is a success! Being honest and personal, even if nervous and blushing is more effectful then making the "perfect" intervention. Simply make a start, then the rest will come automatically!

If you want to set up a Federalist Intervention Taskforce in your UEF section – it is easy! Gather some activists prepared to sacrifice 2-4 hours this spring, send out an agenda with events and start to go there and make your questions/interventions! If you want any help don't hesitate to contact asa.gunven@federalists.eu.

4. FUTURE EVENTS

UEF Federal Committee meeting, April 18th and 19th, Brussels

We have the pleasure of announcing that the next meeting of the UEF FC will take place in Brussels on **April 18th and 19th 2009.**

More information can be found under the following LINK:

http://en.federaleurope.org/index.php?id=8056

5. 2009 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN

New Volunteers Training

This spring we are joined in the UEF office by Laura Bringina from Latvia and in the JEF office by Julia Brink from Germany, that will assist both organisations with our EP campaigns as European Volunteers (EVS). As a kick off to the campaigning team a training was organized 9-11 February, where federalism, the federalist movement, our campaigns and demands and of course our present EP campaign was introduced and discussed. Also some other stagiaires that will join our work this spring participated in the training. The main idea was for the campaigning team to get to know each other and for the new EVSers to learn more about us, what we do and think and what our plans are for the coming campaign.

The training started off with a introduction made by JEF SG Peter Matjasic to what federalism is and means to us, as well as how JEF works and functions. Joan Marc Simon, SG UEF, followed with an overview of what federalist thought has meant for the development in modern history. The volunteers also had the chance to practice their debating skills, as well as try out the argumentation of the euroscpetics and federalists respectively in a couple of heated mock debates about Europe and the European Parliament. After this background political training it was time to get into the federalist campaigning that will take place this spring. Åsa Gunvén, UEF campaign coordinator, made an introduction to grass root campaigning and shared the experience of JEF/UEF such as the pan European actions, online campaigns like *Who is Your Candidate?,* and how to make creative campaigning with few financial and human resources. Part of the EVS project will involve working on campaign strategies such as a poster campaign as well as online campaigning – here we jointly had the

chance to brainstorm and develop some of the strategies.

Much of campaigning and communication today takes place online. Mana Livardjani introduced the online presence of UEF as well as the strategy to set up a federalist blog under Cafébabels EP election section. Finally Jon Worth, former JEF president and the person behind most federalist online campaigning tools, made an introduction to online campaigning. Strategies in turning visitors of webpages into first reactors, then supporters and finally activists were explored, with a focus on our present campaigning.

And of course the training offered a opportunity to get to know Brussels better with bowling, dinner in town and of course a Belgium beer introduction! Again – warm welcome to the federalist campaigning team Julia and Laura!

6. UEF REFLECTION PAPER

A European economic government or a European federal government?

The global financial crisis will have a deep and lasting impact on the real economy. International trade, world production and employment are expected to fall down markedly. In Europe, the dangerous climax of the crisis was stopped in October 2008, thanks to the intervention of the ECB and national governments. In December, the EU approved a European recovery plan. Nevertheless, a quick recovery is unlikely. As usual, national divisions hinder the effectiveness of the actions of European institutions. Every national government deceives itself – and deceives its citizens – about the efficacy of national action. From that crisis, Europe can come out more united or more divided.

In the very middle of the crisis, M. Sarkozy, the rotating President of the EU, declared in the European Parliament: "we have a currency, a central bank, a single monetary policy, but we do not have an economic government worthy of that name" (Oct. 21st). In fact, Europe has a confused governance system, not a government. Unfortunately, the solution proposed by M. Sarkozy – i.e. a *directoire* formed by the most important countries of the Union – is not only non democratic, it is ineffective. Instead, the real European problem was well highlighted by M. Trichet, the President of the ECB, who declared in an interview (FT, Dec. 15th) that "the Stability and Growth Pact is the legal framework that we have as a *quid pro quo* for the fact that we do not have a federal budget and a federal government".

The lack of a federal budget has been crucial in determining the outcome of the crisis. When – at the beginning of October – some government proposed a "European Federal Fund" of 300 bn euros, the German government refused on the ground that the Germans were not ready to pay for somebody's else mistake. Therefore, instead of having a European Fund, every government provided its own national rescue plan. The final result was a financial engagement of about 2,000 bn euros, seven times more than the European Fund proposed. Later on, on December 12th, the European Council approved the "European Economic Recovery Plan", drafted by the European Commission, which proposed a mobilization of European resources for an amount equal to 1.5% of EU GDP. Of that amount, only 0.3% of the EU GDP was to be financed by European financial resources. The greater part of the plan, 1.2% of EU GDP, had to be financed by national governments. The result was that some national government, waiting for benefits coming from other budget expenditure (therefore behaving as a free rider), does not contribute at all to the recovery plan. Moreover, the national plans are not

coherent: one proposes to increase consumptions, the other one bets on investments. Finally, some government, even if it is willing to contribute, will not be able to draw enough financial resources at a reasonable rate of interest on the financial market, due to the rush of big countries for public indebtedness. In conclusion, the European Plan is not very coherent and is certainly insufficient to bring Europe out of recession. The lesson of the 2008 crisis is that without a federal budget and a European Ministry of the Treasury – responsible before the European Parliament – any attempts of shaping a European policy is destined to fail. The SGP is a bad substitute for a system of fiscal federalism in Europe.

The lack of a European federal government is especially evident if we consider the world challenges Europe has to cope with. The financial crisis was caused not only by the falling prices of toxic assets, but also by the excess of liquidity in the USA and in the world economy at large. The use of the dollar as the key currency for international payments granted the US government the "extravagant privilege" of holding up a huge current account deficit, without bearing the cost of the adjustment, as the IMF asks other countries in the same position. Therefore, a new regulation of the financial market has to go with a new regulation of the international monetary system. A political multipolar system needs a symmetrical monetary system, not an asymmetric mechanism founded on a privileged national currency. Moreover, due to the collapse of the world aggregate demand and production, even the US economy will not be able to recover if the world economy does not recover. A new Bretton Woods is necessary. In a multipolar world, the growth of the international economy is no longer led by only one state or a little group of states (the locomotive doctrine, elaborated by the G7). The European Union, the first experiment of a supranational community of states, has the duty to propose a plan to reform world economic institutions, to promote world-wide sustainable development, to regulate finance, to guarantee a supranational currency – by gradually substituting the dollar with SDR issued by the IMF – and to establish a system of fixed exchange rates among industrialized and developing countries.

To conclude, Europe needs a democratic government. A *directoire* is an elusive reply. Europe needs a federal budget and a federal government. The fundamental reform, necessary to transform the Commission into a democratic and effective government, responsible before the European Parliament, is the abolition of the veto right in the Council of Ministers. The unanimity rule is incompatible with democracy. The EU cannot avoid the problem. The citizens should be involved in the European decision making system. Every proposal, even a permanent President of the European Council, will be a palliative, if the EU democratic deficit is not removed.

Guido Montani
Vice-President of the UEF

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7. UEF IN THE PRESS

Andrew Duff asks Vaclav Klaus if he is a 'CLOSET FEDERALIST'

Andrew DUFF

UEF President Andrew Duff MEP says he is astonished by the profound lack of understanding of the European Union shown by Czech President Vaclav Klaus in his speech to the European Parliament today.

In a statement Mr Duff says:
"President Klaus should be thanked for being such an undiplomatic head of state. His bold speech certainly enlivened this morning's session.

"The astonishing thing, however, is that Mr Klaus seemed to blame the Union for not having an executive government which could be held properly to account by the European Parliament. Is Mr Klaus a closet federalist, after all?

"As things stand, Mr Klaus demeans the legitimacy of the European Parliament, but has no alternative democratic solution to offer. Does he think that a curious assemblage of 27 different national parliaments could possibly exercise the scrutiny, budgetary and legislative powers of the European Parliament with greater effect?

Andrew Duff, who is also spokesman on constitutional affairs for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), added:
"The top priority of the EU is to see the Lisbon treaty ratified. Once it is, Mr Klaus may care to read it again in order to reach a better understanding of the federal-type democratic system of governance which the new treaty modernises and reinforces.

"When everyone else is drawing the conclusion that Europeans will be stronger together, it is sad to see the presiding head of state of the Union pulling in the opposite direction."

Czechs must guide the EU through choppy waters

Andrew DUFF

The ebullient performance by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in the European Parliament in mid-December rather glossed over the complexity of how to salvage the Lisbon treaty.

On the face of it, Mr Sarkozy had done well at the European Council the previous week.
The Irish premier Brian Cowen committed his government to a second crack at ratifying the treaty. This commitment had been demanded by Mr Sarkozy during his trip to Dublin in July, in the immediate aftermath of the Irish referendum. He had caused some affront on that occasion. Since then, Mr Cowen and his Fianna Fail party have had a difficult time as the embers of the lost referendum were raked over and the financial storm broke over Ireland.

The agreement between the Irish Taoiseach and the French President was a surprise to those who had been led to expect the European Council merely to scope the options of a deal, invoking a bit of seasonal melodrama. This would have left the embattled Irish leader to declare his struggle victorious only in June or July, once the municipal and European Parliamentary elections were out of the way. But the strong leadership of Mr Sarkozy forced the deal to be done there and then. Or did it?

The package agreed by the European Council consists of four elements. First, contrary to the provisions of the current Treaty of Nice, the European Commission is to continue to have one member from each of the EU's state nationalities. Such a radical departure from the decision to reduce the size of the

Commission to 18 is technically possible under the terms of the Treaty of Lisbon. But this reversal of policy is a big concession by those more federalist EU states which have long argued that a smaller Commission will be more efficient and less likely to be dominated by vested national interests. It also marks a concession by the larger member states which had already traded in a second Commissioner and accepted fewer seats in the European Parliament as their contribution to the Union's overall constitutional settlement.

There are, of course, respectable arguments on both sides. Commission Vice-President Margot Wallstrom, in a departure from the official line, has long believed that what a small Commission would gain in efficiency it would lose in legitimacy. It is certainly true that the formula of Lisbon, which was for equal rotation in the Commission among member states, would have left the college from time to time without a French citizen inside it. It is, in truth, quite difficult to conceive of a Commission that would work well without a Frenchman.

It is also true that Ireland's representatives in the constitutional talks have always complained about their possible exclusion from the Brussels executive.

Yet it would be foolish to think that December's summit has resolved the issue of large versus small in the Commission for all time. A Commission of more than 30 members will not work unless a hierarchy is established within the college. Guess whose Commissioner will never be a senior member?

The second part of the Cowen-Sarkozy deal is that "necessary legal guarantees" will be formulated with the aim of ensuring that Ireland will continue to be free to make its own decisions in matters of taxation, neutrality and family law. Nobody knows what these necessary legal guarantees are. Over-interpretation can lead to misinterpretation. The treaty already means what it says, giving ample safeguards to Ireland by way of opt-outs on defence policy, Schengen, justice and home affairs. The treaty confers on the EU only certain competences, which are clearly defined. The Charter of Fundamental Rights is binding only within the scope of those conferred competences and within the limitations of the institutions' treaty-based powers.

Mr Sarkozy declared with brio that a protocol or two can be glued on to the next EU treaty after Lisbon, which is expected to be the Croatian accession treaty. But the procedures for the EU's enlargement to Croatia are less ponderous than those for a constitutional revision of the type required by Ireland. A hybrid treaty that attempted to deal with both Croatia and Ireland would risk being knocked down by the European Court of Justice. On the other hand, an Irish protocol bound as an afterthought to the Lisbon treaty would trigger a new intergovernmental conference (risking a wider renegotiation) followed by national ratification, yet again, in all 27 member states.

In 1992, when a Danish referendum had blocked the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht, an elaborate package was concocted, involving a decision of the heads of government made under international law (rather than EU law), alongside two declarations of the European Council and a unilateral declaration by Denmark. But the Danish precedent is not wholly apt because Denmark was seeking, and getting, real opt-outs – a course not open to Ireland today. So instead of Mr Sarkozy's legally binding protocols, Mr Cowen will have to settle for appropriately solemn declarations which the EU and Irish courts may use in the future to interpret accurately certain treaty clauses hitherto, at least in Ireland's populist democracy, interpreted erroneously.

A further element of the deal at the European Council is that "high importance" will henceforward be attached to social progress and the protection of workers' rights. This was a hard nut for Britain's Labour prime minister Gordon Brown, in particular, to swallow. Negotiations went on all night between officials before the British were reassured that this new posture of the European Council would not materially affect the standing of the EU in domestic labour law. At the same time, the Irish had to be given satisfactory confirmation that the treaty does not mean that the right to deliver public services will be surrendered to Brussels.

Lastly, as always at these events, seats in the European Parliament were traded to sweeten the deal. The Parliament elected next June will have 736 MEPs. Thereafter, once Lisbon comes into force, the extra seats foreseen in that treaty will simply be added, making an eventual total size of 754. A tricky agreement will have to be reached about how to choose these lucky extras. Moreover, the principle of degressive proportionality which is supposed, under Lisbon, to guide the distribution of seats between states is comprehensively abused. Parliament will have to insist that the derogation from primary law is only temporary, until 2014, by which time a radical overhaul of Parliament's electoral procedures will have to be agreed.

MEPs will also be bound to take a hard look at the timetable and procedures for the appointment of the new Commission. Parliament will be unhappy to begin the election of a new Commission in July without knowing what the competences of the Union and the powers of the institutions are eventually to be. And it will only be once the Irish have voted again in October that we will know whether one of the new Commissioners is to be Portuguese.

So there are still choppy seas ahead for the European Union, steered from 1 January by the Czech Republic - which, with Ireland, is the other country not yet to have ratified Lisbon. Happy New Year.

Andrew Duff MEP (Liberal/UK) is the European Parliament's rapporteur on electoral reform. www.andrewduff.eu

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EU Summit must raise the scale of Europe's ambition

'Europe's leaders should raise the scale of their ambition', says Andrew Duff MEP, President of the Union of European Federalists.

In a statement today (Tuesday), Duff called for the European Council to restore confidence in the project of European unity. 'What the public wants is assured political leadership on a regional scale which points the way out of Europe's current economic, ecological and political crises', he said.

Speaking after a meeting of the UEF in Brussels at the weekend, Andrew Duff said:

'First, the heads of government must introduce the culture of integration into their economic policy making. There are no national solutions to the monetary and economic crisis, and prime ministers -- and indeed Chancellors -- should stop pretending that there are. The Commission's recovery package deserves firm backing. A more consensual approach is badly needed to the recapitalisation of the financial system, to new banking rules enforcing transparency, and to fresh investment in leading technologies. Tax payers should not have to bear the consequences of weak European leadership.

"Second, it is this European Council which must salvage the Treaty of Lisbon -- without which the EU will remain under-performing

and incapacitated. Lisbon is a decisive turning point for the Union, and the rendezvous must not be missed. The summit should raise the scale of Ireland's ambition to be a modern European country. Ireland's partners and the EU institutions can do a lot to persuade the Irish to change their mind about the treaty, but the Irish must also reflect on the seriousness of the consequences for them and for all Europe if they decline to be so persuaded.

"Third, federalists insist on no retreat on the climate change and energy package. Europe has to be serious about delivering a low carbon economy. The current economic situation reinforces the need for sustainable growth, as we look to leaders to build resilient economies that are insulated from global shocks. The cost of inaction outweighs the cost of action. Further delay will increase costs."

Duff added: "The European Council has to work hard to restore confidence in the project of European unity. What the public wants is assured political leadership on a regional scale which points the way out of Europe's current economic, ecological and political crises".

Andrew Duff comments on the rule of the Czech Constitutional court regarding the Lisbon Treaty

Andrew DUFF

The decision of the Czech supreme court is very welcome, although hardly a surprise. The quality of the Senate's six questions to the Court, as well as the intervention of President Klaus, was erratic. Neither the Senate nor the President showed a sure grasp of the realities of the legal constitutional order of the European Union, or of the fact that when the Czech Republic signed up to become a member state of the Union it was subscribing not only to the acquis communautaire of the past but also to all future obligations.

"Now is the time for all member states to bury the stale existential question about 'Europe: yes or no?'. At this time of global crisis, it is truly absurd to go on arguing about the relevance of a reformed and strengthened European Union. Europe needs to unite if it is to prosper -- and the Czech Republic can now make an important contribution to European unification.

"The Czech Parliament would be wise to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon immediately, before the end of this year. The Czech government will lack credibility and authority as the serving presidency of the EU unless and until it can secure the ratification of the Treaty at home."

Socialist candidate for President of the European Commission is … José Manuel Durão Barroso!

PSE Congress de facto supports Christian Democrat Barroso for President of European Commission

Things didn't look very promising when already before the PSE Congress two socialist prime ministers, MM. Zapatero and Socrates, declared that they would support the Christian Democrat José Manuel Durão Barroso for another term as President of the European Commission.

But the fact that the PSE Congress in Madrid has decided not to nominate a socialist candidate for President means that the socialists in fact accept the re-nomination of Mr Barroso.

"Considering the proximity of the European Parliament elections, the political parties send a mixed signal to the electorate if they effectively pre-empt the choice of Commission President before a single vote

has been cast" said Andrew Duff, President of the Union of European Federalists.

Federalist action in Madrid

Today federalist activists have called for linking the result of the forthcoming European Parliament elections to the election of the president of the European Commission in an action in the European Socialist Party Congress and in a street action downtown Madrid.
In a colorful action Federalist activists have been asking citizens from the Spanish capital "who is your candidate for president of the European Commission?". The same question has been posed inside the venue of the Congress of the European Socialist Party.
"The European Union needs a legitimated figure that embodies the spirit of leadership of the Union and this leadership should come from the president of the European executive." said Samuele Pii president of the Young European Federalists.

"The European Political Parties should be major players in European Parliament elections and putting a face to their programs is important to motivate electors to vote" concluded Pii.

New Blog about EU budget: http://www.followthemoney.eu

FollowTheMoney.eu aims to make it easier for European citizens to understand the EU budget: how it gets decided, where the money comes from and how it is spent. FollowTheMoney.eu comes from the same people that brought you farmsubsidy.org: journalists, researchers and activists who want to make the European Union work in a more transparent and accountable way.

We hope that FollowTheMoney.eu will build on the work of farmsubsidy.org in bringing to an end the secrecy of who gets what in EU farm subsidies, for example by applying the same approach to other areas of the budget like fisheries, structural and cohesion policy and development assistance. We hope it will complement the many media and civil society initiatives on the EU budget that are already out there.

Contributions from **UEF activists** are welcome.
Please contact: Jan Seifert (j.j.seifert@lse.ac.uk)

8. SECRETARIAT NEWS

Meet Åsa Gunven, the Campaign coordinator

After developing campaigning in JEF last years I am now excited about jointing the UEF team as campaign coordinator. My role will be to develop the European level grass root campaign and lobby strategies and coordinate the preparation and implementation above all together with the 2 EVSers that are joining our team for this campaign specifically. These European level activities, building on lots of creativity and enthusiasm and very limited money, try to strengthen the presence of the federalist demands especially towards the political establishment in Brussels. The campaign also offers a great opportunity for UEF to work closely with JEF while joining ideas and human manpower to produce a stronger federalist message. As former JEF VP and UEF FC member I am happy to be in the middle of this development that I hope can bring out a stronger federalist message this spring! If you have any questions, ideas or want help with your campaigning in your UEF section don't hesitate to contact me!

Åsa Gunven asa.gunven@federalists.eu

Meet the new European Volunteers

Two new interns recently joined the UEF and JEF secretariat. They will help to jointly organise the UEF/JEF elections campaign in 2009 and are staying with us in the framework of the European Voluntary Service programm of the European Commission. Please find a short presentation below.

On the 1st of February, **Julia Brink** (julia.brink@jef.eu) joined the JEF Secretariat as new EVS for 6 months. She will mainly work on the JEF and UEF campaigns It's TIME for CHANGE... It's TIME for EUROPE! and Stronger Together for a Federal Europe going along with the European elections.

Julia is 22 years old and graduated in European Studies at the University of Passau last fall after having studied at Charles University in Prague for a year and interning in the German Embassy in Prague and the Europa-Union in Berlin.

Moreover the UEF European Secretariat welcomed the new EVSer **Laura Bringina** (laura.bringina@federaleurope.org), who is mainly going to work on UEF EP elections campaign Stronger Together for a Federal Europe.

Laura has graduated from Vidzeme University College in Latvia, acquiring a professional bachelor degree in Public Relations and Communication. She has perfected her academic knowledge studying in Turkey for one year and gained professional experience in several PR agencies in Latvia. She has also been active member of the international youth organization AIESEC, working as a communication manager in the organization and being a member of the executive board.

9. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- Spring Federal Committee, 18th until 19th of April 2009 in Brussels, Belgium
- European parliament elections, 4th until 7th of June 2009
- Ventotene Seminar, 30th of August until 5th of September 2009
- Autumn Federal Committee, 24th and 25th of October 2009 in Brussels, Belgium

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The Union of European Federalists (UEF) is a non-governmental European organization, campaigning for a federal Europe. It consists of 20 constituent organizations and it has been active at the European, national and local levels for more than 50 years.

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