



DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL

Newsletter: 2012 - 366 Days Democracy International

2012 was a special year – and this not only because it was a leap year that counted 366 days.

2012 was also special for the board and staff of Democracy International because 2012 meant 366 days in operation as a registered association: 18 months ago, on 30 June 2011, 70 people from all over the world had met close to Brussels, Belgium. At our founding meeting “Deepening Roots, Reaching Out” at the picturesque Kortenberg Abbey we developed Democracy International’s official statute and we elected Democracy International’s first permanent executive board.

Campaigning for a transnational voting rule

With this official set-up in place we geared up for our campaign to reform the European voting rule. Our goal was to make the voting lists of the European Parliament transnational through creating a single EU-wide constituency for 25 Members of European Parliament. 2100 people signed up to our pledge for a transnational voting rule. However, in March 2012, just a few days before the decisive vote in the European Parliament, the European People’s Party decided to reject the reform. Regretfully this showed us that there are still many hearts and minds that need to be convinced of our idea of a truly European democracy. We will continue with our work to reach this goal!

Lobbying for 12 months-time for any ECI

First April 2012 was the date the European Commission had chosen to introduce the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI), and this was not a fool’s day joke: The first transnational tool of direct democracy legally entered into force on this day and soon the very first ECIs were registered. However, the software to collect signatures online did not work, which the European Commission was supposed to deliver.

Therefore, our Chairman Gerald Häfner, Green Member of European Parliament and rapporteur of the ECI, addressed the European Commission. He insisted on extending the deadline of those ECIs that already were registered. And he succeeded: the European Commission accepted to prolong the one-year deadline. This means that 1st November 2013 is the new deadline for the first ECIs that had registered while the problems with the software were still apparent.

Launching a new logo while our mission continues

Sometimes it’s time to say good bye: This applies to our butterfly that had accompanied our work over the past ten years while Democracy International was a loose network of democracy activists. Along with the official foundation of Democracy International as an independent membership organization we decided to give us a new look: Since 1st September 2012 two ascending, pastel green leaves officially embody our central mission, which is to strengthen direct democracy in Europe and the world. The leaves express the character of democracy as a growing concept that has to be cherished, nurtured and carefully observed in order to be alive.

Holding a summer academy to learn more about democracy

In Mid-July democracy activists, researchers, journalists and politicians travelled to Burgas, Bulgaria to attend our summer academy that we had organized with the help of our Bulgarian board member Daniela Bozhinova. In Burgas we were shocked to learn about the deteriorating state of democracy in European countries such as Hungary, Romania and Greece. Also, we

discussed ways to make the EU more democratic while the ongoing EU financial crisis is undermining democracy at EU level. To stop these undemocratic trends in Europe we decided to start campaigning for a European Convention and EU-wide referenda to let citizens decide about the future of the EU. This campaign for a more democratic European Union will be at the heart of our activities in 2013.

After all that happened in 2012

We - the board and staff of Democracy International – cordially thank everybody for their commitment, support and interest in our work. 365 days lie ahead of us in 2013 - 365 days to strengthen direct democracy at all political levels and to build an effective membership organization of democracy activists around the world.