



Generation Europe Debate

“European intergration”

Date: 25th February 2009

Place: Piraeus University

Participants: 10 students, department “International and European relations”

Organised by Irene Schinaraki and Mary Papageorgiou

After completing the first session of the debate we decided to follow our conversation a little bit further. Based on the results of the questionnaire I reached to 2 basic conclusions:

- 1) the more people know about the EU the more supportive they become
- 2) what the future of EU will be or which direction should follow is rather uncertain.

According to what we've been told by the attendees, they prefer to further political integration even to a point of a completely supranational organisation. It was also added that common policy should move from 'low politics' to 'high politics' as well.

The next topic we discussed was the enlargement of the EU. Should more countries be invited enter the organisation. I was surprised to hear that even though most of them support a EU that covers the whole European continent they prefer mostly rich and industrialised countries with thriving economies to enter EU or at least that the new countries should follow the criteria for their accession.

Also almost everyone agree to say that EURO and the economic and monetary union are the greatest achievements of the EU.

As far as it concerns the future of the EU, I thought it was essential to talk about the Lisbon Treaty. From what I realized based on different opinions that most of them agree that the EU should face the challenges of enlargement and further cooperation in fields like security and common foreign policy with a more stable and productive internal structure. But they don't agree with all the provisions of the treaty. They even support the symbols of EU (flag, day of Europe, anthem) as an approach to acquire a European 'identity'.

By discussing the reasons why Irish people voted against the Lisbon treaty, the most common view was that their reaction has to do with their country's domestic policy and lack of information, it was also pointed the USA's contribution to the 'no' campaign.

Lastly, the discussion was about the recent economic crisis and to know if the decisions of the EU were efficient or headed to the right direction to alleviate the problem. The answer was clearly 'no' and at that point it was once again underlined that the EU should move towards a further political cooperation.

To sum up with it is a hope from every attendee that the EU will have its own independent role and along with national governments will work on improving all aspects of political, social and economic cooperation so that all countries would benefit from it and the prosperity of EU would be guaranteed.