

Beyond Boundaries

For a "bottom-up" Europeanization

So far, in Austria most political discussions dealing with the Europeanization of politics and the globalization of the economy have remained "introverted": in other words, they were about protecting one's own sphere of life from the *consequences* of globalization, i.e., "introspective" politics, but not about attempts to have an impact on the "outside" world and to influence the institutions of globalization.

Along the same line is the protective or resigning attitude of many people toward questions of EU policies and the creation of a fairer globalization of the economy. This is a self-reinforcing process: since "Brussels" seems to be so far away, the shaping of EU policies is off-limits, which then again moves them into an ever increasing distance—with the well-known result of a passive to decidedly negative attitude toward the European Union.

One of the consequences of this attitude is the complete lack of attention given to EU topics in Austrian interior politics. While Austrian ministers—with the minister of agriculture and the minister of economy leading the way—have critical responsibility for decisions taken on the EU level, they are not held accountable for those same decisions on the domestic level. This is paradoxical. **Vis-à-vis the public, it is "those in Brussels" who allegedly make decisions without considering the people's needs, while actually, it is "those in Vienna" who shirk responsibility.**

These circumstances are reflected in the feeble presence and scant interest that members of the European Parliament enjoy in their home countries, particularly in Austria. How many people take notice of the work of an EU member in the course of her or his legislative period? How many turn to her or him? How many local authorities invite a member of parliament to discuss matters of European aspects of municipal policies such as, for instance, public-sector services or public-sector procurements?

Change through Action...

With the Summer Academy 2010, we want to bring about a measure of change to all that—in the Green Party, but also in other political groupings and politically interested individuals in general. Here, a call to more attention to the activities of Austrian ministers and members of parliament in Brussels alone will be of little effect. Instead, this is about an easily understandable and lively connection between local and regional players

and people in institutions where EU policies are influenced and made: that is, with members of parliament, with representatives of civil-society lobbying organizations, with members of important committees, etc.

What, then, does an interested individual on various levels of political activity (from NGO through municipality to *Landtag* [state legislative assembly] and National Council) have to know and do so that her or his involvement will be effective beyond municipal or state boundaries? In this context, how can elected members of established institutions (municipalities, states, chambers, federal government) and those involved in matters of civil society or NGOs cooperate? **What can we do so that Europe or globalization will “reach” the local, regional, and national political discourse? And what can we do so that, vice versa, local, regional, and national representative bodies develop the knowledge and self-confidence to influence institutions of Europeanization and globalization?**

That such efforts will be joined by the endeavors of the equally minded on a transnational level will be crucial. Hence, these questions as well: Which organizations and associations are already present with their resources on the European level or even on-site in Brussels to influence EU decision-making bodies? How successful are they? Which opportunities will open up in the future, especially if they are supported by communal and regional forces—and also by their financial resources?

... in citizen-oriented political fields

To avoid thematic overloads, the **focus of the Summer Academy will be on five selected political areas** –

- **Agriculture**
- **Climate change and environment**
- **Labor and social affairs**
- **Public services and procurement** and
- **World trade order.**

Together with representatives of transnational civil society organizations (NGOs), we will explore the possibilities, but also the limits of political influence for each of these areas. We will examine the perspectives of such interventions with members of the European Parliament and most important: we will discuss practical ways that will enable municipalities and states to influence EU politics for the benefit of their citizens.

This is of concern for the redefinition of European agricultural policy after 2013—an extremely topical subject that will be as decisive for communities marked by small agriculture and mountain farming as for the world agricultural order in general. It concerns questions of European labor and social policies, from which social policies of the states (Bundesländer) and the national state can no longer disconnect themselves. This is about European and global climate change and environmental policies since water and wind do not care about national, regional, or municipal

borders. Equally, the shaping of public service and procurement policies will be under discussion. Here, the notion of municipal responsibility and of a broadly covering basic supply must be advocated. And finally, this is about a fairer world trade order. Municipalities and states can participate in shaping it by mobilizing resources for development and by demanding social standards that apply worldwide.

There is plenty to be done.

Demonstrate what works

Through "**Good Practices**" we want to elucidate:

- What are **successful ways of political mobilization** "from the bottom-up", that is, on community, city, and state levels?
- Which are the **topics that enhance public discussion about EU policy**?
- How can they be incorporated into the political discourse on the municipal and state levels?
- What are the possible influences of **transnational mobilization and campaign organizations** as well as of cross-border associations of, for instance, municipalities? Where do we find examples?
- How can one affect the EU? With the help of which **means and alliances**?
- What are the possibilities of **cooperation with members of the European Parliament**—especially in the wake of its increased role following the Lisbon Treaty?
- How can we **bring together and critically evaluate these experiences on a regular basis**?

All those questions are not just questions concerning the Greens exclusively. Yet, as many Greens as possible should ask these questions and—together with as many others as possible—look for viable answers. Justice – democracy – globalization: this must be brought together by politics if a peaceful Europe and a relatively peaceful world is to be achieved. For this purpose, we need a start "from the bottom up" to form a democratic EU. With the Summer Academy 2010, the Grüne Bildungswerkstatt wants to explore possibilities—and provide encouragement—for this endeavor.