European Parliament President Martin Schulz pledges support for EYCA recommendations and civil dialogue in Europe

Representatives of the European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA) Steering Committee met with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, on 3rd April 2014 in Brussels to discuss the EYCA recommendations aimed at enhancing European citizenship.

We raised a particular warning about the profound social and economic distress, but also the political distrust Europe is facing today. Deploiring the institutional appetite for direct dialogue with “THE” citizen, we called for the recognition of associations and NGOs in their capacity of gathering together millions of citizens across Europe and for their involvement on equal footing with trade-unions and businesses in the policy dialogue and democratic processes.

Convinced that “Europe can no longer survive without a social pillar”, President Schulz pointed out the real risk of Europe’s failure, as highlighted by the lead in opinion polls from Eurosceptic and regressive forces, even in some founding Member States.

Aware that civil society organisations can be “valuable allies” for the institutions in working to bring about more solidarity, equality and democracy in Europe, and paying due attention to the EYCA recommendations, Mr. Schulz undertook to “seriously consider the issue and leave a strong legacy for his successor to integrate civil society organisations in a dialogue process with the European Parliament”.

This position goes totally in line with article 11 from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which underlines the need for “institutions to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society”. We can therefore only welcome President Schulz’ will to make civil dialogue a reality and hope that this discussion will bear fruits and continue to work towards a more transparent and democratic Europe.
Notes to the editor:

1. **The European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA)** is an open network of European and national civil society organisations and networks willing to promote active citizenship as a core element of the European project in the context of the European Year of Citizens 2013/2014. The Alliance now consists of 62 European members representing more than 4000 individual organisations in 50 European countries and working in different areas such as education, culture, health or youth, to name but a few.

2. See the EYCA recommendations [here](http://ey2013-alliance.eu), for more information, please visit: [http://ey2013-alliance.eu/](http://ey2013-alliance.eu/)