



Worldconnectors statement

RESPONSIBILITY OF EUROPE IN THE WORLD



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2009

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WORLDCONNECTORS THE ROUND TABLE FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

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Responsibility of Europe in the World

We, the Worldconnectors, hereby present our statement on the responsibility of Europe in the World. The focus in the statement is on the European Union. It is the result of discussions and dialogue in the thematic Worldconnectors Working Group and the Worldconnectors Round Table of 20 March 2009.

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Other statements:

Migration and Development
Global Human Security
Millennium Development Goals
Policy Coherence on Aid, Trade and Investments
Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Connection of Civilisations
New Scarcities
Gender and Diversity
Sustainable World Citizenship
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I. PREAMBLE

As Worldconnectors we attach great importance to the European Union. The Union is potentially the best instrument for Europe and its citizens to shape the aspiration of an inclusive and open society, in which sustainability, welfare, peace and cultural diversity are central. Europe can contribute to a new world order by setting the right example.

What is needed in this globalised and complex world against and in which Europe defines itself, is a European Union that is grounded in an ethos of multilateral cooperation and collaboration and which asserts a strong global partnership role to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are spread fairly around the world. As stated in the Earth Charter, what is required is “a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility”. There is a need to join together and develop a global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic and social justice and a culture of peace. These are the essential underpinnings for the foundation upon which the emerging global community must develop, and within which Europe has an important role to play.¹

We are aware of the profoundly suspicious attitude that large parts of Dutch and other societies have taken towards the European Union. Subsidiarity is and should remain the answer to too much Brussels in national policies.

Having said that, we reiterate that, in order to realize the aims as mentioned above, Europe can and should be taken much more seriously. In this statement we present some concrete proposals on how European internal and external dynamics should be reformed. We think the debate in the Netherlands and elsewhere should not be about more or less ‘Europe’, but about how to shape a different Europe, both in terms of how it is organized internally as well as how it takes up its role and responsibilities towards the rest of the world.

Europe is a factor in the world and can be influenced by its member states. Now that the dominance of the United States is beginning to decline – instead of one superpower there is a multi-polar world order which includes countries such as China, India, Russia and Brazil as important players – the new direction in which the world order will develop is being determined. In order to guide that process, Europe will need to become aware of its potential power.

¹ See Johannah Bernstein: The Policy Relevance of the Earth Charter for Europe, A Paper Prepared for the Maastricht Forum on the Future of Europe 9-11 May 2007, Maastricht University, The Netherlands.

European integration has stalled and should be stimulated again through the coordination of the financial-economic, social, environmental, security and development policy of the European member states.

In the neoliberal storm that has blown across the world in the last few decades, Europe has lost its critical abilities and has become a follower. But now that the era of market fundamentalism is coming to an end, there is a momentum for a new, assertive Europe. Cooperation with the European Commission and member states should lead to unanimous contributions in multilateral institutions and discussions, starting with the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The financial crisis, which has resulted in a recession, makes it clearly and urgently necessary to coordinate the supervision of financial institutions on a European (and subsequently global) level. A strengthening and renewal of the so-called 'Rijnland model' should point the way to the harmonization and strengthening of the EU's social policy. The economic recession should be countered with targeted control and investment in a faster transition to a sustainable economy.

The Worldconnectors also support a shared European security policy focused on the reduction of (nuclear) weapons and the formation of a joint European military force – with a European 'beret' and under 'European' command – that can be deployed around the world within the framework of human rights protection and peace-keeping, preferably supported by regional organizations. And finally, the European development policy (of the 27 member states and the European Commission) should, particularly in these times of crisis, be expanded and better coordinated, as has been reiterated in various agreements.

II. WORLDCONNECTORS' PRIORITIES

We as Worldconnectors ask the political parties in the upcoming European elections to consider internal European ambitions and develop a clear-cut European approach in its external relations. We think that both are linked: a more social, transparent and inclusive Europe is necessary to rebuild trust among European populations. But that Europe should simultaneously apply its (explicit or intrinsic) values of openness, tolerance, participation, equality and sustainability towards the rest of the world. Not only for moral reasons, but also because the various crises we are currently facing can only be solved through worldwide cooperation. At the same time, we have to view Europe as an ongoing project. It is not an end goal as such, but a dynamic project which might become an influential factor in an increasingly multi-polar world. A strong and positive European identity, based on openness towards other cultures and interests, will be of utmost importance in the decades to come.

1. Internal European ambitions:

In order for people to feel more connected to Europe, they have to see what is – or might be, if rightly reformed – in it for them. People should see their personal interests both in an (individual) material way, through more equitable and social policies, and in a (collective) cultural way: if we come to consider Europe as a common society which promotes (or should promote) values like the equality of all human beings, respect for nature, religious and cultural tolerance, gender equality, peace, reconciliation, and solidarity, the European fundamentals would become much stronger. If we can build a Europe that is a community, rather than a political or economic institution, it evolves into a phenomenon people can really identify with.

The current crisis – theoretically and in very real terms – may involve serious risks, but it also provides great opportunities for change, enabling a more positive attitude towards Europe. In fact, there is currently a revolutionary opportunity to really change directions towards a more green and sustainable economic order.

A. A greener Europe: speeding up the process

Two of the main current crises – financial/economic and climate – provide a unique opportunity to change courses fundamentally. Europe should now choose radically for a green future: a speedy transition to a sustainable economy and society.

- A new release of capitalism is needed, instead of looking backwards for an old concept. A new ecological and social policy should be developed, based on the concept of circulation and recycling and a much broader definition of wellbeing. Accounting the National Product should include ecological costs and benefits.

- The recession should be tackled in and by Europe through a “Green Deal”. This means there should be a ‘green acceleration’. New jobs should be created in environmental sectors. The transition to a sustainable economy should be accelerated, using fiscal instruments, regulations and research and investment, in consultation with businesses and social organizations.
- Europe has already shown some remarkable leadership worldwide, which should be deepened. It has founded the Emission Trading Scheme to battle climate change. It has implemented the most far reaching climate legislation thus far. The European Commission has championed the case for emissions reductions worldwide.
- Every change in the tax payment system should advance sustainability and this advance should be harmonized across Europe as much as possible.
- We support an open-minded assessment of (third generation) nuclear energy. It is essential that there are clear European minimum conditions for the use of nuclear energy².
- All European businesses should comply with sustainability standards as far as possible and report on these, according to the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

B. A more social Europe

European economic integration has brought prosperity. In addition to formulating policy initiatives designed to tackle the economic recession through green jobs, it now is time to share the wealth more equitable. We have to increase social justice, via a transparent democratic process that involves civil society organizations (including trade unions).

- The European Union is a strange amalgam of different social economic preferences. Compromise, not fundamentalism, is at the heart of its being. Compromises should be realized by exploring new ways to accommodate the many actors in the European socio-economic landscape who, in the last twenty years, have had a preference for private shareholders. In the last two decades, in parallel with the expansion of the EU in the former Eastern Bloc, we have seen a rapid liberalization of the economy in Europe. However, the free market in Europe needs a solid social foundation. Upward social mobility should be a European goal, not the lowest common denominator. There should be collective agreements made at a European level instead of the current competition between member states that leads to further erosion of social cohesion.
- If there are relevant collective agreements and legislation in force, the starting point should be equal pay for equal work and an equal legal position. It is also important to recognize that regular work leads to regular jobs. These principles are established in the Decent Work Agenda of the ILO and simply mean

there should be good jobs for everyone. This Agenda hopes to ensure not merely jobs, but jobs with a decent salary and social security. When thinking about the labor rights of newcomers, these starting points ought to apply from the outset.

- The social market economy as a European achievement is worth revitalizing, adapted to current demands. Now that it is clear the market can indeed fail, it is time to (re)discover and (re)evaluate the countervailing powers in social and economic Europe. The Rhineland model needs modernization and will encounter new challenges, because it should not be based on the old industrial models anymore. New coalitions can breathe new life into this tried-and-tested model. Governments and parliaments would do well to listen to the message of social movements and, on this basis, to handle the crisis through reliable market-correcting mechanisms. This requires regular consultations, like the Social Dialogue, between different political and social players.
- In Europe, newcomers should have the same rights as the long-term inhabitants of the continent.
 - The free movement of employees in the significantly enlarged EU should be maintained, and should not lead to the exploitation of cheap labor from new member states.
 - In order to guarantee these rights to all new member states and newcomers in Europe, the further expansion of the European Union should take place with the utmost cautiousness. Not in order to exclude countries from this process, but to ensure that the European structure is not damaged in the process.
- Greed was a main reason for the recent financial crisis. It is as yet not possible to impose European wide sanctions designed to push back financial greediness, as there is no common tax policy. One way to tackle this might be a stronger common policy on tax evasion through tax havens inside and outside of Europe.

C. A more democratic and transparent Europe

The failure of the market mechanism raises questions about supervision and correction. Power needs a counterbalancing power. One of the problems with Europe is its lack of transparency.

There should be much more open debate and involvement of all kinds of civil society organizations.

One way to improve participation is to create a more important role for multipartite negotiations at the

² Last year the Worldconnectors’ position was as follows: With regard to nuclear energy we follow the line of the SER, which recommends the Dutch government should research all energy options, including nuclear energy, on the basis of the criteria reliability, environmental impact, security and finances. See: http://www.ser.nl/~media/DB_Advieszen/2000_2009/2008/b26650.ashx.

European level. Analogous to the tripartite consultation between government, business and trade unions in some European countries, which leads to balanced power relations, a similar participative process should be at the forefront of European democracy. However, (at the European level as well as in the Netherlands) it is crucial to broaden such processes to encompass new civil society organizations. If we want to move from a European project that is mainly centered on (socio) economic issues towards a Europe that positions a sustainable and open society at the heart of its existence, we have to create democratic institutions according to the same principles. This includes not only trade unions and businesses, but also environmental organizations and other NGOs. Of course, such multipartite consultative processes should not overshadow the central role of parliaments in the decision-making process. Apart from strengthening the European Parliament, the national parliaments still play an important role.

D. A Europe that respects different identities and cultures, both of its member states and of the groups of newcomers from outside Europe who have settled in the EU temporarily or permanently.

- Europe’s identity is primarily based on multiformity. This multiform identity can help us to reconcile differences with (potential) newcomers, in search of a new global balance in the multi-polar world, while attempting to turn the Clash of Civilizations into a Connection of Civilizations. More diversity also means more creativity. A balance has to be struck between providing space to newcomers who sympathize with Europe, but who simultaneously do not deny their cultural roots. A diverse and multiform Europe will be more adept at relating to other cultures and civilizations around the world.
- We support the participation instead of the integration of migrants in Europe as a primary policy objective. Participation is a key challenge and has to be practiced in our European societies from the bottom up. The obstacles in functional circles of each individual – i.e. work, healthcare, sports, school, culture and arts and religion - have to be overcome in daily life. Migrants have to participate actively in these functional circles and Europe-born citizens have to be involved in removing obstacles that hinder participation and assist in finding practical solutions. At the same time, the government should ensure an enabling environment. In addition to a tremendous effort from the migrant, participation also requires a change in mentality in society. Such a change in mindset will provide migrants the room to engage in society and it will create a sense of belonging and security. It will allow society to become more inclusive and open to the diversity the world offers. This open view should not be noncommittal or indifferent, but should be based on a deeply felt

reciprocity. Engagement from both sides is crucial. Migrants should not be viewed just as a group, but more as individuals, with diverse and multi-layered identities. Migrants have a transnational identity; they live in and come from various cultures. They embody the idea of transnational citizenship. Europe can further its ideals on the basis of that idea of transnational citizenship.

- refugee policies should be humanized and coordinated at a European level.
 - Existing laws should be enforced, so as to separate refugees from those who – often assisted by human traffickers – try to use refugee law to escape poverty.
 - However, allow those who are not rejected after three months, to participate in learning the language of the European country they are in, vocational training, education; and allow them, after six months, to work and only reject them after these six months if there are serious cases of non-compliance with refugee standards.
 - After these six months municipalities should be held co-responsible; and they should be consulted on issues of participation and on terminating residence permits, should this be warranted and necessary.
 - Refugees should no longer be sent back if the human rights situation improves in the country of origin, after their entry to a European country, unless “temporary protection” was explicitly granted on the basis of a European Union decision.
 - There should be a considerable increase in the number of “refugees by invitation”. This would be an important message that real refugees are welcome in our country. It would also reduce irregular flows of migrants to Europe.

2. Europe in the world

In a future world order no one power – i.e. the US – will be dominant. Europe must clearly opt for such a multi-polar world, in which cooperation with other centers of power should be central. We live in an increasingly chaotic and complex world, in which Europe can and must make the difference. Active responsibility in a multi-polar world means a self-confident mix of hard power and soft power. Europe should have the confidence to use its power, including military power for peacekeeping. But the growing complexity in the world relationships can never be controlled solely with physical force. Europe’s power should above all be evident in its ability to share and to work together, in the search for global and inclusive solutions and in the dialogue that should be held with everyone in the world, in which attention is also paid to the diversity and the interests, cultures and perspectives of others. Europe should present itself as a partner and pioneer in the global fight for human rights and the international legal order.

These kinds of commitments should not only exist on paper. There has been considerable progress in the past years in policy initiatives in the field of, for example, Policy Coherence for Development: European external policies should not harm the interests of developing countries. However, there is a big difference between these words and the actions of Europe. We oppose the arrogance and hypocrisy that characterize the EU policies and many of its member states in this regard. We urge Europe to comply with international law and obligations.

We support an active European contribution to:

A. An inclusive world

- In which we actively strive for a more social and fair distribution of wealth, as for example laid down in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Earth Charter.
- In which dialogue and discussion take precedence over polarization and confrontation. A multi-polar world requires reconciliatory instead of arrogant leadership.
- With (potentially new) global institutions in which the votes are more fairly distributed, even if this means a step back for European countries.
- In which we work together on challenges of global significance – poverty, climate, security, (nuclear) power and (nuclear) weapons, trade, migration and mobility, science and technology, water, food security etc. – while recognizing the specific needs of vulnerable states and developing countries.

B. A global ‘green acceleration’

- Analogous to the Green Deal in Europe, Europe should confirm its support for a Global Green Deal such as the one called for by the UN Environmental Organization UNEP in October 2008. UNEP calls for the mobilizing and refocusing of the global economy towards investments in clean technologies and ‘natural’ infrastructure such as forests and soils. This is the best bet for real growth, combating climate change and triggering an employment boom in the 21st century. According to UNEP, six sectors must be given priority³:
 - Clean energy and clean technologies including recycling
 - Rural energy, including renewables and sustainable biomass
 - Sustainable agriculture, including organic agriculture
 - Ecosystem Infrastructure
 - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)
 - Sustainable cities including planning, transportation and green building
- Europe should prioritize the fight against climate change. At the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Europe should present a strong and

- unanimous standpoint, in which the interests of developing countries have a central position.
- Europe should generously invest in programs for sustainable energy use and production in developing countries, always in consultation with governments and other relevant partners.
- Europe should confirm its support for sustainable agriculture around the world. This should not result in the subordination of the interests of small farmers and small agrarian businesses in developing countries. The development of new agricultural techniques (for example second and third generation biomass) provides many opportunities, which ensure: food security, alternative energy sources, less environmentally damaging agriculture and income-generating activities in developing countries.
- We oppose the agricultural protectionism of Europe and the US. If Europe decides against reducing protectionist measures in the field of agriculture - and there can be good reasons for that (food security, for example) - developing countries similarly have the right to protect their strategic agricultural production.

C. A world order in which the poorer countries get a more equitable slice of the global cake

- Europe should promote much more consistent and generous sustainable (economic) development world-wide, in particular in Africa
- The 28 European donors (27 member states plus the European Commission) should actually meet previously made agreements: coordinate, divide labor in and pay attention to policy coherence. Their development policy should be much more closely coordinated with and adjusted to national agendas in developing countries; they should respect the obligations of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action; ensure a more precise and elaborate division of labour as was formulated in the Development Policy Statement of the European Commission and Council in May 2005 and the documents that followed. They should specialize and take the lead in areas in which they have an added value in relation to other member states. This means that they can improve the complementarity of their development efforts in specific countries and specialise in specific sectors. The existence of ‘orphan countries’ and ‘orphan sectors’ should be avoided; this applies in particular to the neglect of agriculture by donors over the last 15 years.
- Member states should consistently respect the EU Consensus for Development agreement that was established on a European level and particularly the

² See <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5957&l=en>

This passage comes from the Worldconnectors’ statement about New Scarcities

agreements concerning Policy Coherence for Development (PCD): in all aspects of (European) national and international policies the interests of developing countries should not be integrated into European and geopolitical interests. The European Commission has taken an important step forward by issuing the declaration on PCD in September 2007. Notably, the following declaration in September 2009 should be supported by concrete proposals to execute more in-depth 'assessments' of the concrete effects of European policy in developing countries, in particular with regards to the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fishing Policy and the problems surrounding migration

- Europe has a right to defend its farmers and to safeguard food security, but it should avoid taking measures and providing subsidies that hurt the agricultural sector and farmers in developing countries. Subsidies on non-food agricultural products (as cotton and tobacco) should be abandoned.
- Europe must fulfill its promise in relation to Policy Coherence for Development and change its policy towards the bilateral trade agreements with developing countries, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).
- All old European member states (the 'EU of the 12') should ensure that in 2010 their development budget has reached the collective goal of 0.56 percent of the European GNP and the individual target of 0.7 percent in 2015. New member states should achieve a 0,175 percent in 2010 and a 0.35 percent of GNP target in 2015. It is precisely in times of crisis that cuts cannot be made in a policy that benefits those who will be most affected by them: the people in developing countries. The Commission should therefore produce an annual progress report and urge much more strongly the member states that fall behind to fulfill these promises.
- The existing complaints procedure at the European ombudsman should be accessible to people from developing countries who feel harmed by European policies. The European Commission, other European institutions, as well as the Member States should also formulate accessible, independent complaints procedures for individuals and organizations from developing countries who feel damaged by European policies. In relation to the Global Green Deal as mentioned above and the different global crises, Europe should actively and generously stimulate sustainable agrarian production: small farmers and small businesses in developing countries, in particular, should be assisted through targeted investment, subsidies and other stimuli in the innovation and transition to a sustainable economy.
- Europe should actively and generously stimulate alternative energy sources in developing countries. Such as, for example, the comprehensive investment in

sun energy, and a strategic collaboration between Europe, Russia and Africa in the field of alternative energy, if necessary with the help of the European Energy Charter.

D. A safe and stable world order

- We do not principally oppose the expansion of the European Union, yet we urge great caution. The EU cannot risk damaging the still fragile structures as a result of new accessions. This does not imply that agreements may be adversely affected, as was the case with Turkey for example. It means that great care is required in the process.
- In addition, the EU should grant special attention to its immediate neighbors, such as the Maghreb countries, as an alternative to accession to the EU. It means that the EU should expand its New Neighborhood Policy with new and more adventurous instruments.
- Europe should prioritize non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament, and the reduction of arms trade. Europe should be active in realizing the non-proliferation agreement and the ultimate ban on nuclear weapons. To that end, the EU should advance the cooperation between the EU member states in the Security Council and Brazil, South Africa, India and Japan. The IAEA should also be granted supranational status.
- Europe should focus globally on the advancement of good governance and political dialogue with and between warring parties in the countries in question, on conflict prevention and on the removal of the structural causes of conflicts.
- In a multi-polar world, Europe should no longer hide behind NATO and the US, but work together with other centers of power.
- Europe should draft a security policy that renders countries and regions outside Europe responsible for their own peace and security. Imposing changes externally does not work if the local population and factions do not arrive at an agreement via locally accepted processes. Inclusivity should therefore be a priority: a sense of exclusion breeds discontent. That means that regional peacekeeping solutions should be supported much more, financially as well as politically and through all kinds of advisory and logistical support.
- That also means that Europe relinquishes (participation in) military interventions elsewhere, unless for humanitarian reasons and at the request of and mandated by the UN (Security Council).
- We support the joint European deployment of national troops – with a European 'beret' and under a 'European' command instead of one of the national commanders – within the framework of the global protection of human rights and peace missions. In principle, these European troops would focus on the support of

regional peacekeeping troops, through providing resources, logistics and advice. Decisions on the deployment of these forces should be made by a majority at the European level, and all EU member states together bear the costs.

- Europe should continue to actively support African peace missions through (the strengthening of) the African Union and the African Peace Facility. In past years Europe has contributed to African Union peace missions in Darfur and the Comoros, for example, via the African Peace Facility. New resources have also recently been made available for 2008-2010. An evaluation of the first phase of this facility is urgently requested.

We call upon all European Parliament members and party leaders to call on the European Commission, the member states and Parliament for a more rapid transition to a sustainable economy, in which European coordination in the area of social regulation, environmental policy, development cooperation and the supervision of the financial sector is strengthened. In the new multi-polar world a united Europe will be one of the centers of power. Europe must understand this and take upon itself that responsibility and transform itself into a strong and self confident continent that believes in itself once again.