

TEN YEARS OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES



EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES



TEN YEARS OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES



EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES

Since 2007 **European Alternatives** works to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state.

EUROALTER.COM

Authors' texts: Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolò Milanese .

Year of publication: 2017 for the tenth anniversary of European Alternatives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

European Alternatives would like to express gratitude to Cristina Gabetti and Lavinia Ferné for their patience, the inspiration and their editing. A special thanks also goes to Ricardo Barquín Molero, who designed and patiently followed us in putting this publication together. To Marta Cillero for her perseverance.

For their support and initiatives, we thank everyone who has been involved in making European Alternatives possible.

We thank all the team of European Alternatives for their commitment and for their work on this publication.

FURTHER THANKS

This book was made possible by the financial support from the Europe for citizens program of the European Commission and the Mott Foundation.

LICENCE

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 3.0 (BY-NC) license.

You are free to copy, distribute or display the content in this book. You must give credit to European Alternatives and the original authors.



FUNDERS



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union



INDEX

- P. 007* 1— Ten years of European Alternatives
- P. 013* 2— Our logo: Europe beyond a geographical space
- P. 017* 3— 2007-2017: One decade of our journey
- P. 039* 4— The Other Europe inside Europe
- P. 045* 5— A machine that runs on dreams
- P. 061* 6— Citizen-led, Democratic invention
- P. 075* 7— Transnational Public Spheres
- P. 087* 8— Europe's dialogue with the World
- P. 093* 9— The search for Europa continues





1 TEN YEARS OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

— Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of European Alternatives at the MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome.
Mural in the wall by Marco Raparelli / photo by Marco Casino.

In the Greek myth of Europa, the beautiful Phoenician woman of that name, born in Tyre (now in Lebanon), is abducted by Zeus, perhaps on the island of Crete. Her three brothers go out searching for her, each in a different direction. While searching for Europa Cilix founded Cilicia (now Anatolia); Cadmus founded Thebes in Greece, bringing the alphabet with him, and Phoenix went into North Africa and founded Phoenicia. None of them found Europa.

If we were looking for abducted Europa today, where might we find her? In a refugee camp in Lebanon, close to where she was born? On a dangerous boat traversing the Mediterranean or stuck at the Hungarian border? In Greece, protesting on Syntagma square? Fighting in the Donbas region of Ukraine? Or perhaps in Kobane on the border between Turkey and Syria? Or maybe she would be much closer to the centre, in the European capitals, held hostage in the Chancellery in Berlin? In the colourful meeting room of the European Council building called 'Europa' in Brussels, or in a grey corridor outside it?

Ten years ago, the first physical space that European Alternatives opened to work was a disused warehouse just off Brick Lane in London. That office had an informal Brazilian martial arts club above it, Italian waiters, a guy importing parmigiano, and a carpenter. We used to have to throw away any letters we received in rubbish bins a long way from the office, because we were not meant to be there, and nor was anyone else.

With no heating and highly unreliable internet, a first team of people coming from all over the world worked from one of the most cosmopolitan streets of one of the most cosmopolitan cities to call for an alternative path for a Europe of democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state. Just around the corner from the world's financial centre and next door to one of Europe's most deprived neighbourhoods, this space of paradox, a warehouse where no-one was supposed to be living, was a place to reimagine a possible future.

WE BELIEVE EUROPE COULD BE A LABORATORY FOR POLITICAL INVENTION AND PROGRESS

We did not think that the nation-state had already vanished: we thought precisely that in the twilight of the national world there would be manifold attempts to resurrect it, but that it would be resurrected as a monster; that any hopeful, positive politics in our century and in this part of the world must be at least European in scope and imagination.

We believed Europe could be a laboratory for political invention and progress with global implications, but only if we radically change course. We felt the current European regime was undermining its own claims to universal rights, democracy and justice. We rejected the idea that we must choose between the status quo and nationalism: we held Europe had to be reclaimed and reinvented, made hospitable to others and to other ideas.

At the same time, we knew that Europe had the resources to reinvent itself: a history of democratic invention, of human rights and responsibility, of art and intellectual endeavour, of dissidence, resistance and utopian action.

This paradox of creativity and destruction, of beauty and violence, of universality and colonialism, of rights and expropriation, of democracy and exclusion, is Europe's fate, and only through active political, social and cultural engagement is it possible to bend the arc of this destiny towards justice.

We started humbly in 2007 a group of like-minded individuals with almost no material resources, only our energy, ideas and our email accounts, but it became clear rapidly that there was a need for an organisation, a structure, an



Backyard Market on Brick Lane in 2007, brewing ground for European Alternatives.
Photo by Free Range 2008 - Wikimedia commons.

institution, a medium, to empower a new generation of Europeans to act for a different future in a multiplicity of ways.

We reject the idea there is necessarily a division between 'metropolitan elites' and 'ordinary people'. We see that all of our lives are politically and socially determined by forces which cross borders, and we can only try to have political agency by acting in a transnational way in solidarity with others who may be physically far from us but in a similar circumstance. The relevant political division is between elites which profit from exploitation and a monopoly over power and influence, and those of us who believe an alternative future is possible. The task of European Alternatives is to contribute to educating, organising and empowering these people across borders, often acting very locally.

In this book you can read some of the ways we endeavoured to create this movement, the way others joined, the ways we spread across borders, engaged with other institutions and initiatives and tried to make an organisation as transnational as our lives, to have a role in deciding our own history and that of the future. We travel hopefully in search of Europa, not believing we will find her, but that the journey will open-up horizons for democracy, justice and culture as yet undiscovered.



—
ChangeUtopia!
series of posters
and leaflets by
Rasha Kahil.





Niccolò Milanese and Lorenzo Marsili, initiators of European Alternatives opening «People Power Participation».



2 OUR LOGO: EUROPE BEYOND A GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE



**EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES**

EUROPE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE OF EXCHANGE AND CULTURAL COUNTER-INFLUENCE

As every attempt to define or limit it has shown by its failure, Europe is not primarily a geographical space: it is a process and a pursuit.

Before Europe was a geographical space, it was a myth: the myth of the goddess Europa abducted by Zeus, who disguised himself as a bull and carried the beautiful Europa away. As the myth is told by Apollodorus, Europa was the daughter to Agenor and Telephassa and had three brothers: Cadmus, Phoenix and Cilix. After her abduction, Agenor sent the three brothers set out to find Europa, telling them not to return until they had found her. They set out in three different directions, and when they could not find Europa they founded cities from which to continue the search. Phoenix settled in Phoenicia, which is modern day Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Palestine; Cilicia settled in Cilicia, which is modern day Anatolia; and Cadmus settled in Thrace (now Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey) and founded the city Thasus, known later on as Thebes. But the importance of this myth is not the particular geographical cities and countries (although it serves to remind us that 'Europe' has from the beginning been thought of as bigger than it is now typically understood),

but the idea that Europe is a pursuit – it is never where you are, it is something to be aspired after.

The logo of European Alternatives, read from the inside towards the outside, represents the three paths of Europa's brothers. The centre of the logo is no particular place: is wherever the pursuit starts from. The three divergent paths remind us that there is no one way to pursue Europe; no one way to be European.

The logo of European Alternatives can also be read from the outside in. Europe is not a culture or a space that can be defined independently of all other cultures and spaces. Europe has always been a place of exchange and cultural counter-influence, and those are the processes that define it. Attempts to impose European values on others are necessarily self-defeating for this reason: Europe is necessarily a multiplicity which includes and involves others. From the outside in the logo of European Alternatives represents the three dominant cultural influences on Europe: the influence of Asia from the East, the influence of Africa from the South, and the influence of the Americas and the sea from the West. Europe is to be found in that intersection.



The first logo of European Alternatives in 2007.



3 2007-2017: ONE DECADE OF OUR JOURNEY

— Peeking out of one of our Transeuropa Caravans, 2014.

2007

FESTIVAL OF EUROPE

In 2007, in addition to the “official” celebrations in Berlin and Rome of the 50th anniversary of the European Union in March, London witnessed the first civil-society-initiated “Festival of Europe” organised by Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolò Milanese. An opening lecture by Zygmunt Bauman launched a Festival that was conceived as a series of public debates and art exhibitions. The debates embraced all the countries of the enlarged EU and included discussions on the environment, Eastern European art, the European social model, Turkey and the EU, and philosophical traditions.



—
Zygmunt Bauman launching European Alternatives and the Festival of Europe with his lecture «Making the planet hospitable to Europe» in 2007.

2008

EUROPEAN FEMINIST SUMMIT

The European Feminist Summit, a part of the London Festival of Europe 2008, was a meeting of feminists who gathered to evaluate transnational strategies to campaign for gender equality in the workplace and at home, in political representation and activism, and for reproductive rights. The outcome and impulses of the summit continue to resonate throughout the activities of European Alternatives.

2008

HOW TO MAKE EUROPE DREAM

How to Make Europe Dream was a congress of artists, writers, philosophers and dreamers looking at how to recover an ambitious utopian energy in an old continent. It took place in Chelsea College of Art and was opened by Bernard Stiegler.

2008

LOVEDIFFERENCE FESTIVALS

LoveDifference festivals in Northampton, Bristol and London celebrated the creativity and richness which can result from mixing cultures and histories. They featured discussions, poetry readings, art exhibitions, workshops and concerts of leading bands from the UK and central Europe performing together.



—
Poster of the campaign
on gender equality
for Europe,
by Rasha Kahil.

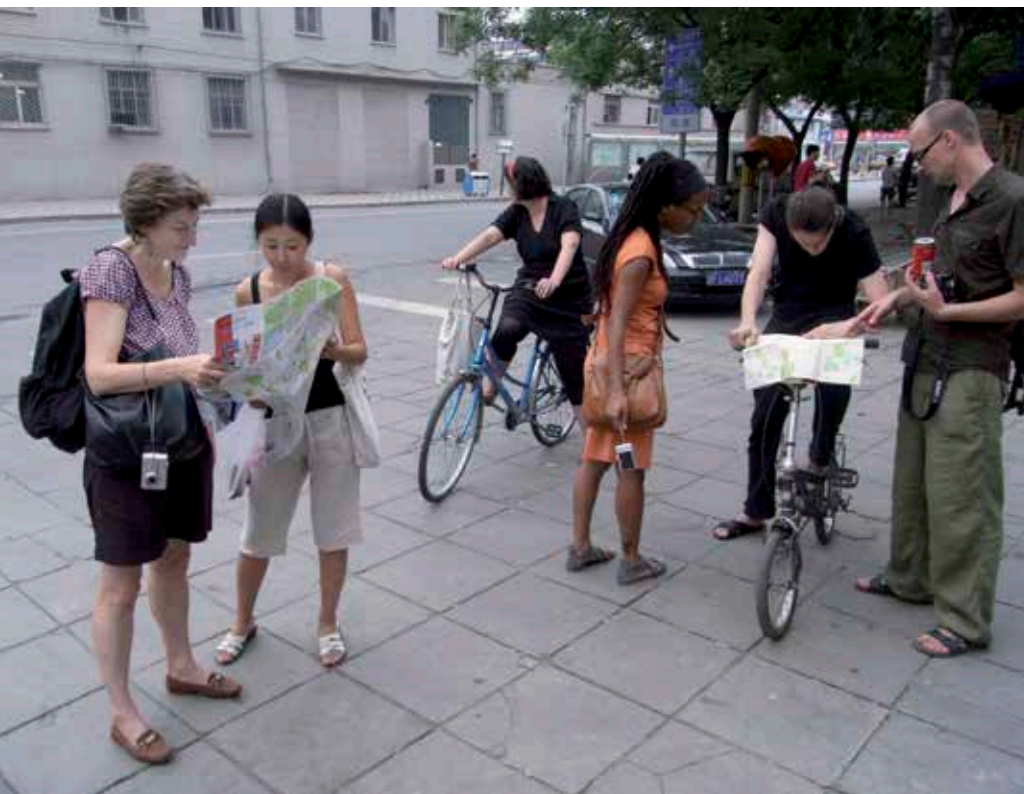
2009

ROMA RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



—
Consultation on
Roma rights in
Sliven (Power Peo-
ple Participation).

We campaigned against the expulsion of Roma from France and Italy, and the undermining of European, fundamental and human rights that this represented.



Participants of the seminar «Art in the City» in Beijing.

2009

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL DIALOGUES: EU-CHINA SEMINARS “ART IN THE CITY”

The EU-China seminars “Art in the City”, held in Beijing, led to the development of the Transnational Dialogues project.



2010 MEDIA FREEDOM CAMPAIGN



Logo for the campaigning on media freedom.

European Alternatives campaigning on media freedom started with a vote in the European Parliament on the situation in Italy. The campaign gathered 200,000 signatures across the continent and was mentioned more than 100 times in the press. It led to the creation of the European Media Initiative to keep pressuring the European institutions to improve regulations and transparency in the media.



One of posters of the series ChangeUtopia!,
by Rasha Kahil.

2010 OPEN ACCESS CAMPAIGN

Along with Migreurop, European Alternatives launched the Open Access Now campaign that called for unconditional access to immigration detention centres for civil society members and journalists. It helped emphasise obstacles faced by NGOs, researchers, families and friends of migrants to access information and contact detainees, in order to support actions, awareness and advocacy campaigns on these matters.

2010 THE NETWORK OF EA IS LAUNCHED IN HANBURY HALL

European Alternatives launched its transnational network in Hanbury Hall, the same place where the first workers 'strike' took place in 19th century London. Just like matchstick makers back then, we looked to invent new forms of political agency through joint action. Our strategy was to create a network of activists across the continent to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state.

2011

FIRST EDITION OF TRANSNATIONAL DIALOGUES

Transnational Dialogues brings together artists, creatives, professionals, intellectuals and writers from Europe, China and Brazil for a series of exchanges in person and online. The platform promotes the sharing of information, networking, and conceptual collaboration between individuals, organisations and institutions active in a variety of disciplines transnationally. It also offers a trampoline for future collaborations and initiatives.



Participants of Transnational Dialogues about to start a plenary on the commons in China.

2011

PEOPLE POWER PARTICIPATION: CITIZENS CONSULTATIONS THROUGHOUT THE EU

Over three years, European Alternatives organised citizens panels throughout the European Union. The popular consultations involved thousands of Europeans (by birth, choice or circumstance) who were asked to elaborate policy proposals which, in their views, should constitute the primary focus of the next European Parliament and Commission. 50 policy proposals were gathered in the Citizens Manifesto for European Democracy, Solidarity and Equality and served as a sensitisation and advocacy tool towards the candidates of the European elections in 2014.

Street Band Altabbanda at Piazza Re Enzo in Bologna / Transeuropa 2011.



2011

TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL

After the Festival of Europe in London, TRANSEUROPA Festival became a unique transnational festival of culture, arts and politics, taking place in 14 cities all over Europe. It is a collaborative, open and public space for the emergence of an alternative Europe. It promotes political and cultural exchange, and collective action for new visions on the economic crisis, migrations and democratic participation.

Performance at Piazza Re Enzo in Bologna / Transeuropa 2011.



2012

THE COMMONS STRUGGLE: A DOCUMENTARY OF EA

“Common Struggles” is a documentary on the search of what Common Goods (Commons) mean in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2012 European Alternatives, together with Rome’s Teatro Valle Occupato, began a transnational discussion over the meaning of the Commons beyond borders. The desire was to learn more about struggles for the re-appropriation or protection of common goods in former communist and socialist societies in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria that had gone through a process of privatisation.

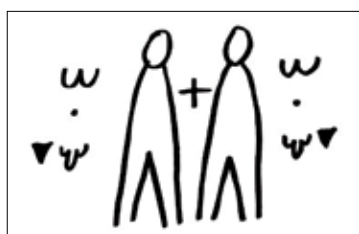


Activist of the Citizens Pact holding a banner before a demonstration.

2012

CAMPAIGN FOR LGBT MARRIAGE RECOGNITION

The forum in Rome organised by European Alternatives brought together European activists to develop a common strategy to demand mutual recognition of all forms of stable partnerships throughout Europe.



Art piece from the Agorà Teatro Valle.

2013

TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL: IMAGINE DEMAND ENACT

TRANSEUROPA Festival 2013 took place in 15 cities and it featured Erdem Gündüz, "The Standing Man" of Taksim square in 2013, and Tania Bruguera, the Cuban artist and founder of the Institute of Artivism Hannah Arendt (INSTAR), among many other political and cultural activities.



Cover of the Transeuropa Festival Catalogue of 2013
- Designed by
Noémi Zajzon.



2014

A EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR THE COMMONS

Responding to the wave of privatisations, European Alternatives, together with the International University College and its Institute for the Study of Political Economy and Law, the Municipality of Naples, and the Institut International d'Études et Recherches sur les Biens Communs, launched a series of forums and meetings throughout Europe to draft a European Charter of the Commons. The Charter aimed to call for the protection of fundamental services and common goods from privatisation, while guaranteeing an equal right of access for all.

2014

TRANSNATIONAL DIALOGUES LANDS IN BRAZIL



—
Activists of
Transnational
Dialogues participate
on a plenary in Brazil.
—

After our first activities with Transnational Dialogues in China, we moved to Brazil to continue exploring our belief that current social, economic and cultural models are failing us, regardless of the national context, for endogenous reasons.

2015

TRANSEUROPA CARAVANS

—
«Who Does Europe
Belong to» was
the motto of the
TRANSEUROPA
Caravans in their
trip across Europe.
—



Ahead of the 2014 European Parliament elections, European Alternatives connected 100 local alternative projects and voices in 18 countries through transnational nomadic caravans. From the United Kingdom to Greece, Portugal to Poland, the TRANSEUROPA Caravans encountered hundreds of inspiring people and explored their local initiatives to enact labour rights, welfare, democracy, civil rights and environmental protection.



2014

#FIXEUROPE: EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES' FIRST CAMPUS

European Alternatives' first campus gathered more than 70 activists to reflect and strategise political and social renewal in Europe. The Campus was followed by in-depth discussions with the philosopher Hauke Brunkhorst, scholar and author Igor Stiks and political scientist Ulrike Guerot, gathering more than 150 participants in Berlin.

2014

CITIZENS RIGHTS: TOWARDS CITIZEN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN THE EU

Starting in June 2015, the Citizen Rights project engaged with civil society activists to look at how, when and where people in the EU can individually and collectively protect and advance fundamental rights. The project included researching citizen rights in the EU, trainings for civil-society activists to improve their capacity to protect and extend rights, teaching about rights in schools and universities and drafting EU policy proposals.



2015

LAUNCH OF TALK REAL



Filming crew, director (Berardo Carboni) and speakers of the first episode of Talk Real, our nomadic talk-show for the web launched in 2015.

Talk Real is an online political nomadic talk-show that aims to create an informed, enthusiastic and connected public sphere, empowering democratic change. Talk Real works with local cameramen and technicians, a model that also fosters the creation of a transnational network of European filmmakers. Talk Real has brought together politicians and citizens to debate on burning issues in Europe.

2015

TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL: BEYOND FRAGMENTS

Beyond Fragments, 2015 TRANSEUROPA Festival, focused on war in Europe, the rise of nationalism and the threats of dismantling the European Union.



Closing event of TRANSEUROPA Festival 2015, moderated by Daphne Bullesbach in Belgrade.

2016

DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

One month after the launch of the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25) in Berlin, European Alternatives organised a large event in Rome, inviting the movement to chart a roadmap for a more democratic, equal and just European Union. The event launched DiEM25's campaign "Transparency in Europe Now!"

2016

SHIFTING BASELINES: THE SECOND CAMPUS OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

The second edition of the Campus of European Alternatives brought together 80 activists to exchange, reflect and strategise on how to build transnational alternatives to politics as usual. The 2nd edition of the EA Campus focused on four areas: media, cities, networks and activism. Areas that EA had been working on for years merged with new networks, while existing ones were strengthened.



All the activists of the Campus of European Alternatives in 2016. —

Participants of the Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series in Paris 2016.



2016

EU-WESTERN BALKANS CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

The Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series brought together, in Paris, more than 100 activists and representatives of civil society from the European Union and the Western Balkans. They formulated recommendations for the future of the European project and the integration of the Western Balkans. Migration, climate change and sustainable development, bilateral contrasts and youth cooperation were the themes.



2016

NETWORKING REBEL CITIES IN EUROPE

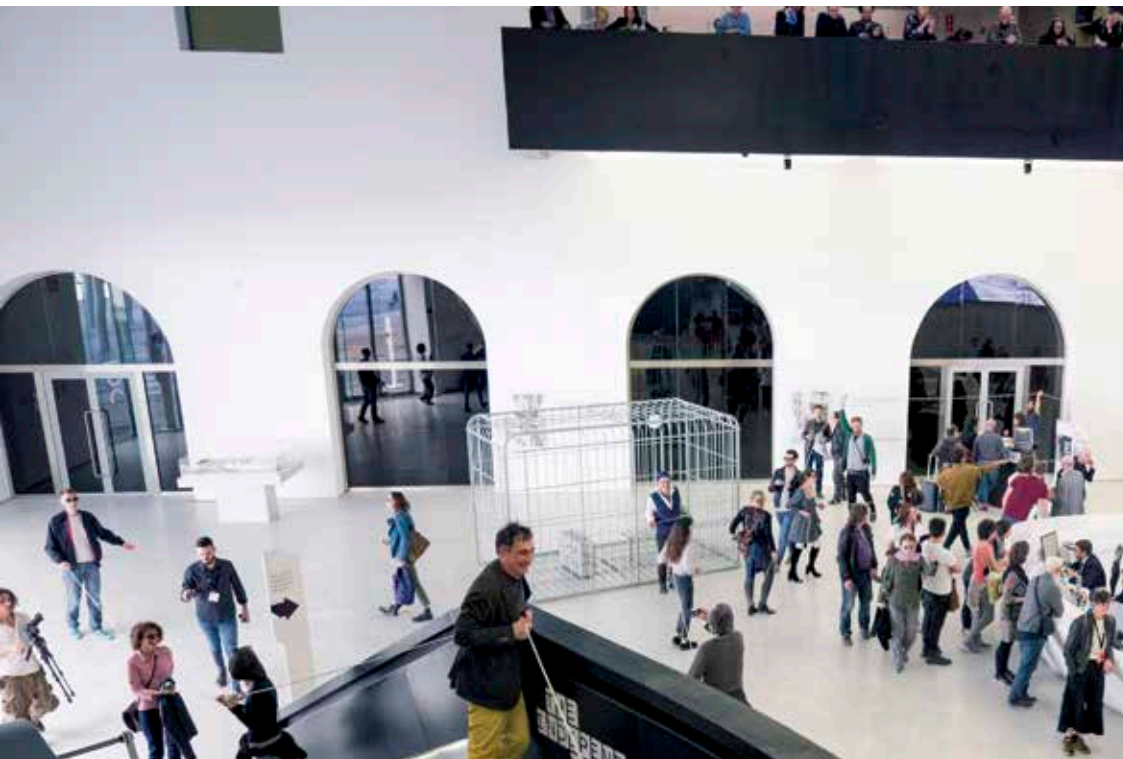
—
Open event of 'Rebel Cities' in Marghera (Venice) with the mayor of Barcelona Ada Colau, the mayor of Naples Luigi de Magistris, Lorenzo Marsili, director of European Alternatives and Gianfranco Bettin, Italian politician in 2016.



European Alternatives is networking and cooperating throughout Europe to discuss the establishment of an active network of cities with alternative and progressive governments and municipal movements. We have been establishing contacts and bringing together some of these inspiring experiences in a series of public events and in a piece of academic research.

2017

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES



Artistic performance that took over the MAXXI Museum in Rome in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of EA.

For our 10th anniversary we chose to pay tribute to the role of art in social and political change. Together with Maxxi, the National Museum of the 21st Century Art in Rome, we organised a day to reflect on the meaning of the European Union and the role of political, cultural and artistic institutions. The focus was: how can Europe deal with the crisis it is facing and transform its model? It was very inspiring for everyone to feel the positive energy coming from the crowd. People who believe that a European citizenship and transnational demos are built through practices of dissent, protest and cooperation beyond national borders. From European movements for refugees, to the fight against austerity, from continental mobilisation for water as a common good to the struggle of women.



4 THE OTHER EUROPE INSIDE EUROPE



THE CITIES OF EUROPE IN TEN YEARS

UNITED KINGDOM

1. London
2. Cardiff
3. Manchester
4. Leeds
5. Edinburgh
6. Northampton
7. Bristol
8. Brighton

BELGIUM

9. Brussels

SPAIN

10. Barcelona
11. Madrid
12. Valencia
13. Donosti - San Sebastian
14. Seville

FRANCE

15. Paris
16. Toulouse
17. Marseille
18. Vannes
19. Douai
20. Lyon
21. Evry
22. Grenoble
23. La Rochelle
24. Nantes
25. Lille
26. Strasbourg

SWITZERLAND

27. Zurich
28. Lucerne

LUXEMBOURG

29. Luxembourg City

THE NETHERLANDS

30. Amsterdam
31. The Hague

PORTUGAL

32. Lisbon

GERMANY

33. Berlin
34. Cologne
35. Leipzig
- Bochum
- Duisburg
- Hagen
- Hattingen
- Wuppertal

ITALY

36. Bologna
37. Messina
38. Rome
39. Milano

POLAND

40. Warsaw
41. Lublin

ROMANIA

42. Cluj-Napoca
43. Bucharest
44. Timisoara
45. Iasi

IN TEN YEARS
OF ACTIVITIES
EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES
HAS BEEN
ACTIVE IN
82 CITIES
ACROSS THE
WORLD

SLOVAKIA

- 46. Bratislava
- 47. Banska Bystrica

SERBIA

- 48. Belgrade
- 49. Novi Sad
- 50. Nis

UKRAINE

- 51. Kiev

BOSNIA

- 52. Sarajevo

BULGARIA

- 53. Sofia
- 54. Varna
- 55. Byala Slatina
- 56. Sliven
- 57. Stara Zagora

CZECH REPUBLIC

- 58. Praga
- 59. Brno

MONTENEGRO

- 60. Podgorica

MACEDONIA

- 61. Skopje

KOSOVO

- 62. Prizren

TURKEY

- 63. Istanbul

GREECE

- 64. Athens

CROATIA

- 65. Zagreb
- 66. Rijeka

AUSTRIA

- 67. Vienna
- 68. Alpbach

SWEDEN

- 69. Stockholm
- 70. Malmo

MALTA

- 71. La Valetta

CHINA

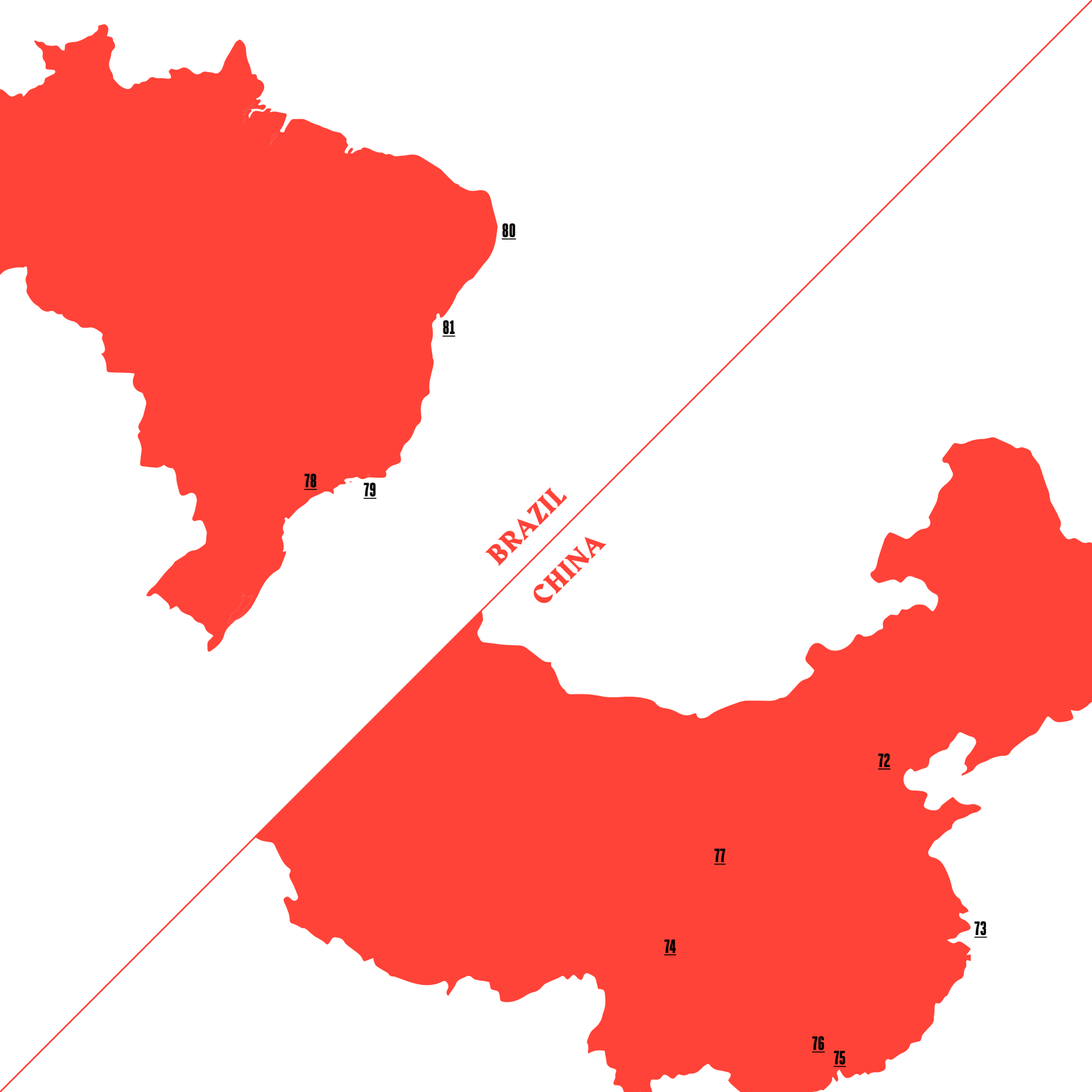
- 72. Beijing
- 73. Shanghai
- 74. Chongqing
- 75. Shenzhen
- 76. Guangzhou
- 77. Xi'An

BRAZIL

- 78. Sao Paolo
- 79. Rio de Janeiro
- 80. Recife
- 81. Salvador de Bahia

ALBANIA

- 82. Tirana



BRAZIL
CHINA

80

81

78

79

72

77

74

73

76

75



5 A MACHINE THAT RUNS ON DREAMS

— Nandipha Mntambo, Beginning of the Empire 2007, installation, artist collection.



«SO LONG AS THERE ARE COFFEE HOUSES, THE IDEA OF EUROPE WILL HAVE CONTENT»

As George Steiner writes in *A Certain Idea of Europe*, part of what defines our continent is to be found in the cultural habits of Europeans, whether that be walking through and appreciating historic cities or frequenting cafés – by excellence places of creation, exchange between people and a crucible for the development of new ideas.

Rather than by ‘predominant’ cultures, Europe is made of intertwined cultural influences; and artists have always played an active role to integrate them and blend them in new movements of thoughts that have influenced politics and representations of society.

Poets, painters, intellectuals and musicians have played a crucial role in allowing Europe to psychologically work through the atrocities of its recent past and to think further along the lines of peace and reconciliation. It would be dangerous and possibly futile to try to create a new political space, – a ‘European polity’ – without their active involvement.

From a derelict warehouse in one of London’s most cosmopolitan neighbourhoods a group of young people set up to construct a machinery to re-imagine a continent in crisis. It was with arts and culture that the adventure started.



Poster of TRANSEUROPA Festival 2012.



— London Festival of Europe 2007. Art direction by Rasha Kahil.

TRANS EUROPA FESTIVAL

We should have just organised a couple of events in London. But we ended up launching a Festival across 15 cities in Europe.

It all started in Spring 2007, only a few months before the first cracks of the global financial crisis would bring to the fore all the weakness of institutional Europe.

We had discussed the year before how the discourse of Europe had become stifling and devoid of vision. As we set out in our first efforts to address this and to attract a small team of like-minded dreamers, we chose London as an ideal starting point: at once famously cosmopolitan, and famously hesitant about its place in Europe, a city of paradoxes in which perhaps alternatives could be found.

We prepared to organise a few debates to socialise our ideas. Then we realised the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome was fast approaching, and there was almost no public acknowledgement of this planned in the UK. Soon we were talking about several events in major institutions across the capital, and then a week's worth, then finally a two week long festival with events embracing the political, artistic and philosophical.

One day the phone rang at 7am. An important politician apologised he could not attend the opening of our program: he would be preparing the government's budget for the following day; a former president of another European country replied he regretted he could not attend our important events because of illness. We realised that starting with emails and ideas, we could reach and influence even the most important people.

In the midst of the preparations we registered an organisation to oversee the festival preparations. European Alternatives was born. On 19th March 2007, in a packed hall at the Courtauld Institute of Arts, Zygmunt Bauman opened the Festival: many of the audience were surprised to see not some well established or official organisation behind the festival, but a group of young people.

It was the first public act of European Alternatives.

The French poet Paul Valéry wrote of Europe as being a giant machine that runs on dreams and transforms the world around it. Our machine was miserable - with less than a couple of thousand euros we set about transforming this experience into a pan-European festival that would span the continent and provide the infrastructure to grow our ideals: Transeuropa festival.

AT A GLANCE

— TRANSEUROPA is a transnational festival taking place in as many as 15 cities simultaneously and encompassing several topics and activities in the areas of art and politics. From Belgrade to Barcelona, from London to Bratislava, from Cluj-Napoca to Paris, since the first edition thousands of activists across Europe have been invited to engage in this movement spanning dozens of cities across the continent.

— TRANSEUROPA is a moment of synergy and openness; a moment of gathering and a place from which it is possible to develop new perspectives, imaginaries and launch common projects and initiatives across Europe. It is the moment for European Alternatives to reaffirm its commitment to putting culture and arts at the centre of its vision of Europe.

— Beyond inviting people to think Europe differently, TRANSEUROPA aims at creating a shared space between people located in different countries and cities, where they can think and act together. A transnational space, where the feeling of belonging to one community is not linked to territoriality or nationality.



Artistic exhibition at TRANSEUROPA Festival 2015 in Belgrade.



Opening of TRANSEUROPA Festival 2012 in Bratislava.

Renowned intellectuals, artists and activists have supported TRANSEUROPA and contributed to its development by taking part in various editions of the Festival. Artists and poets such as Dan Perjovschi, Tania Bruguera, Stefano Boeri, Danielle Arbid, Marcelo Exposito, ORLAN, Cai Yuan and Jan Jun Xi, Casimiro de Brito, George Szirtes, Fiona Sampson, Ma Yongfeng, Hiwa K and Oliver Ressler have brought their creations, ideas and art projects to the Festival.

Key thinkers of our times such as the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, philosophers Franco Bifo Berardi, Bernard Stiegler, Etienne Balibar, Marc Crépon, Geneviève Fraisse and Michela Marzano, academics such as Kalypso Nicolaidis, Engin Isin, Saskia Sassen, Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, Rosi Braidotti, or art critics and curators such as Hans Ulrich Obrist, Hou Hanru and Steven Wright have shared their ideas and proposals during Festival events.

HOW A FESTIVAL CAME TO LIFE

Originally published on March 15, 2007

By Niccolò Milanese, organiser of London Festival of Europe

The London Festival of Europe was thought of in ideal conditions for European dreaming: over red-wine and pasta al dente, outside a back-street restaurant, under the Raffaello-blue summer sky of Rome. I was living in Siena, and had come to Rome with my visiting cousin to meet Lorenzo, who had returned to his home city from London for the summer months. As we always have, we shared our frustrations over European politics. Still, Prodi had just won the elections, and perhaps the combination of that, the beauty of the evening – the day of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, as it turned out – the wine and the presence of my young cousin conjured sufficient hope that we resolved we must do something to help transform the situation.

What we should do was to hold a couple of events in London: we both knew that the myth of Britain being completely detached from Europe is nowhere less true than in London, in particular amongst the artistic community, and that there is potential and enthusiasm for change in this most cosmopolitan city of the world. Furthermore, we resolved that the vision of Europe embodied in the events should be one of Europe configured to include the world, that it makes no sense to draw geographical boundaries of Europe, since all the world is already here, just as all the world is also already outside: cosmopolitanism is for both of us an extremely high value.

We certainly worked on the idea in the most cosmopolitan of ways: I returned to London whilst Lorenzo went to Istanbul, then Lorenzo to London, I to Paris, Lorenzo to China, I back to London, Lorenzo to Rome then London, I to Paris and Zurich... the festival would have been impossible without e-mail. It was only a few month into the process that

— Assembly of artists at TRANSEUROPA Festival / photo by Ruben Mir Ugolini.



we realised the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome was in March the following year, and quite how much enthusiasm there was amongst various institutions – particularly cultural and artistic – in London for something along the lines we were thinking. Soon we were talking about several events, and then a week's worth, then finally two-week's worth and events embracing the political, artistic and philosophical, and were having consistent success in inspiring people with the idea that something should be done. Throughout this time our committee and team of helpers grew ever larger and ever more cosmopolitan, to now include people in London from Romania, Turkey, Italy, Hungary, Australia, Canada, Poland, France ... Looking back now I regret we didn't find all these people earlier: they all bring different ideas and new energy. The entire point of the festival is to open up public spaces for debate of European issues; as we sit down around restaurant tables and stand at bars together, I feel we've already achieved something in the people we've pulled together to run it.

Here in London, four days before the festival is opened by Zygmunt Bauman on Monday 19th, I look away from my bulging e-mail inbox, see the quite unusually blue skies and still feel the utopian hopefulness of the project.

The French poet Paul Valéry wrote of Europe as being a giant machine which runs on dreams and transforms the world around it. I'm eager that the energy we've generated and will generate at a much higher voltage over the next two weeks shouldn't be misused or lost.



Participants of TRANSEUROPA reading the journal 2012. The journal was drawn by artist Dan Perjovschi and had more than 40 contributors.

NET— WORKING TRAINING EMPO— WERING:

FROM TRANSEUROPA NETWORK
TO THE CAMPUS OF EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

European Alternatives came to life through the enthusiasm and determination of a small group of people which immediately started to attract others who understood what we were doing and found in the combination of a generalised cultural, political and social approach as well as a transnational vision, a form of activism which made sense and responded to urgent needs.

In 2010, amidst first waves of protests already sweeping Europe and North Africa, we met in London's Hanbury Hall, a historic venue where the first workers' strike was organised in the 19th century, to give a structure to some of the informal collaborations European Alternatives had developed. We brought together over a hundred young activists from across the continent to forge "Transeuropa Network", a Europe-wide movement for change to accompany our work from the ground up.

Our Network would keep on meeting online and offline at monthly intervals: we set up local groups across the continent and devised innovative democratic models enabling the participation of all our members in steering European Alternatives forwards.

We soon realised that in order to build an alternative Europe we had to go beyond a proprietary vision of politics: we needed a broad network and ecosystem of individuals and organisations working together to address our common challenges and we needed to contribute to scaling up existing activism from a local and national level to a European level.



—
Participants
performing
at the Campus
of European
Alternatives 2016
/ photo by Marco
Casino.



— Niccolò Milanese and Segolène Pruvot at the opening of the Festival of Europe in Paris.



Workshop on activism at the Campus of European Alternatives 2016 /
photo by Marco Casino.

AT A GLANCE

- We empower individuals to get involved in our program and get a sense of how a transnational community of activists and civil society actors works together to build alternatives for a viable future for Europe. We do this by training and providing tools for activists to develop transnational projects and campaigns to defend fundamental rights and open societies
- We build strong relationships with organisations and specific groups that support our strategic objectives
- We develop European Alternatives local hubs, where individual members can come together and contribute to politicising citizens or promote the vision of European Alternatives
- We provide a platform for citizens to network and ensure our activities and events give space for co-creation and participation



Opening of the Campus of European Alternatives 2016 at the Schloss Wartin /
photo by Marco Casino.

- *More than 200 participants and volunteers in Transeuropa festivals.*
- *More than 2,000 Europeans involved in the creation of the Citizens Manifesto.*
- *Over 80 participants in each Campus of European Alternatives.*
- *Over 70 participants in the CREATE | REACT training of the Citizens Rights project.*
- *More than 100 activists at the Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series.*
- *More than 85,000 unique visits in our website in 2016.*
- *17,000 supporters of European Alternatives.*

As the Network was founded, European Alternatives started campaigning to influence decision makers, but, just as importantly, we started to empower a new transnational fabric of European activism. Transnational activism stems from the idea that none of the crises we are facing in the European space, from recurrent attacks on fundamental rights, minorities and the rule of law, to austerity, unemployment and poverty, can be addressed in isolation. Solutions and strategies for change already exist across the continent, but the resources to upscale them to transnational level are missing. As well as the possibility to understand the contexts in which alternative policies and practices do work. As European Alternatives grew bigger, we committed to providing networking, training, capacity building and opportunities for organisations and individuals. Our goal was, and still is, to support transnational projects and campaigns that bring forward our vision of democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state.

We put together two editions of the Campus of European Alternatives. A moment to exchange, reflect and strategise on how to build transnational alternatives to politics as usual. What makes the Campus of European Alternatives relevant is its capacity to help activists meet physically and work together on how the transnational alternatives could look. More than 80 activists from all across Europe gathered in the Schloss Wartin in Germany in 2014 and 2016. We helped them connect and create opportunities to cooperate, on issues common to all. In parallel, we organised our first comprehensive training series CREATE | REACT to provide citizens rights activists with the tools to advocate and campaign for the defense and extension of fundamental rights and citizenship.

All our actions foster transnational forms of collectivity. If there is a genuine space of political debate and dialogue, within and without institutions, where citizens can understand, influence and participate in decision making, political institutions will be robust and legitimate enough to guarantee the common interest of Europeans.

In Schloss Wartin, a castle in the countryside one hour away from Berlin, European Alternatives organised a Campus called #Fixeurope. About 60 activists from all over Europe contributed with their wealth of experience to an interesting event with workshops, lectures and debates about today's and tomorrow's Europe. The castle suited the theme of the event well. The creaking of old doors, the damaged frescoes, the noisy wooden stairs, the sumptuous chandeliers of candles. And the explosive force of sincere passion for politics in the middle of this decaying castle. Is this not the best picture for today's Europe? On the one hand, an active and proactive generation, on the other an institutional organisation slow and detached from reality. This is the first broken spring; the crack between Europeans and the European Union.

Giuseppe Avigliano,
Campus participant on Boell blog, 2014.

CAM— PAIGNING FOR MEDIA FREEDOM

AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

EUROPEAN INITIATIVE FOR MEDIA PLURALISM

AT A GLANCE

— European Alternatives and the Alliance Internationale de Journalistes organised a European Citizens Initiative to create a bottom-up legislation on media pluralism and freedom.

— A pan-European campaign saw European Alternatives organising hundreds of volunteers and thousands of activities all across Europe, testing new models for transnational organisation.

— An innovative use of online technology, including a pro bono partnership with Saatchi&Saatchi, global communications and advertising agency networks, made this as much an awareness-raising as a signature-collection campaign.



— Poster for the campaign for media freedom.



— Activists of the campaign for media freedom use newspapers on a performance in the streets of Brussels.

— Over 200.000 signatures collected for the ECI on Media Pluralism.

— 28 Member States involved.

— Thousands of activists mobilised for street actions in most European countries.

European Alternatives had existed for only two years and we were not familiar with the European Parliament in Brussels. It was 2009 and we wanted to make a simple point. The deterioration of media freedom, exemplified at the time by Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, was a European problem, demanding a European solution. Failure to act would yield a domino effect, with more and more countries threatening the path towards illiberal democracy.

We were going from office to office trying to push parliamentarians to take a stand. Apparently we had a point, and others were raising it with us. MEPs agreed to prepare a resolution, and we were asked to draft parts of it. That resolution, censoring violations of media freedom in several member states, went to vote in the European Parliament plenary. The vote was tied and the resolution did not pass.

That is when we decided we had to start campaigning and exercise positive pressure for change. We partnered with the Alliance Internationale de Journalists and started discussing the idea of a European campaign.

We decided to run a *European Citizens' Initiative* which allows at least 1 million EU citizens to make legislative proposals.

We asked for an effective legislation to prevent the concentration of media ownership and control over advertising, independent supervisory bodies, a clear definition of conflict of interest in order to prevent media moguls from occupying important political positions a European monitoring system for media independence in the Member States, sustainability guidelines and best practices for publishers. Over a few months of heated campaign across Europe, we collected more than 200,000 signatures. It meant a lot for us, but it was not enough for our European Citizens' Initiative to be accepted by the EU institutions. It was an inspiring, constructive failure. We had created a movement and started to craft organisational models beyond borders. We created a spin-off - the European Media initiative - and registered it in Brussels to continue our advocacy work.

In the process, we realised how much work was still needed to make effective transnational activism a reality. And that we had a strong role to play to foster the capacity of European citizens to mobilise beyond borders. We kept working on pan-european campaigns - on migrant rights, Roma rights and more - and started drafting a dedicated program of innovative trainings to empower citizens and organisations to take back control of their continent.



Logo of the European Initiative for Media Pluralism.

OPEN ACCESS NOW

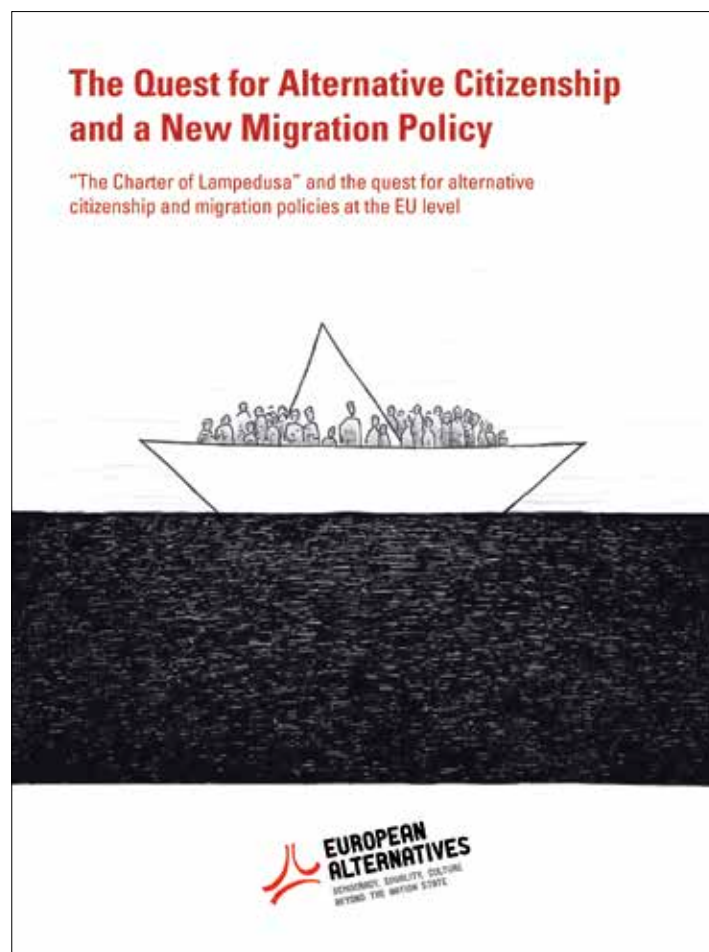
AT A GLANCE

— The Open Access Now campaign called for unconditional access for civil society members and for journalists to immigration detention centres across Europe. It helped emphasise that opacity surrounds these detention sites. An opacity that is hiding something.

- *More than 20 organisations agreed to recognise the campaign.*
- *12 countries including Italy, Spain and Greece were involved in the process.*
- *Over 200 participants participated in the public Forum we organised in Paris on migrants' detention in Europe and the Mediterranean Region.*

During 2012-2015, we worked on the defence of migrants' rights and the free movement of citizens through the Open Access Now campaign, launched with Migreurop in 2011. We called for access to detention centres for journalists and civil society and against the suspension and restrictions on the right to information. Together with dozens of other organisations, we conducted actions to raise awareness among both European politicians and the general public on migrant detention and how it had become an unacceptable routine. We conducted specific advocacy actions in the context of the revision of the EU "Returns Directive" (2013-2014), which provided European guidelines for migrant detention.

The campaign saw the active participation of migrants, especially those working in detention centres, or third country nationals. Migrant organisations were also involved.



Front cover of the publication.

THE CHARTER OF LAMPEDUSA

AT A GLANCE

— The Charter of Lampedusa is a pact drafted through a constituent grassroots process which brought together hundreds of organisations and individuals in Lampedusa in early 2014. They gathered with the objective of improving the democratic legitimacy of EU migration policies

- *Hundreds of organisations and thousands of citizens involved in bottom-up drafting.*
- *Over 20,000 signatories.*
- *The Charter was translated into 6 languages.*

On October 4th 2013, 300 migrants travelling from Libya to Italy died tragically off the island's coast, after their boat caught fire and sank in the Mediterranean. In the aftermath of the tragedy, many citizens and organisations across Europe, including European Alternatives, launched an appeal for the opening of a 'humanitarian corridor'. The appeal reached 20,000 signatories in few hours. It called for a European Right to Asylum, demanding that EU institutions focus on creating a humanitarian corridor towards Europe, so that those who flee war may apply for asylum directly to the European Institutions from the countries of departure, via consulates or other offices, without being forced to embark on dangerous journeys by sea, thus increasing human trafficking and the endless number of deaths and shipwrecks.

In the days following the launch of this call, engagement relating to problems of borders within the EU-Mediterranean area and the free movement of people developed further and led to the construction of a more comprehensive proposal: "The Charter of Lampedusa". We took part in gathering hundreds of organisations on the island of Lampedusa to draft a comprehensive manifesto and policy proposal for a humane, legitimate and effective European

migration policy. We translated and published the Charter in several languages and took it forward as the representation of bottom-up solutions to a challenge our leaders were increasingly unable to address.



—
Drawing
from the
Charter of
Lampedusa:
«citizens of
the world,
citizens of
nowhere».

6 CITIZEN-LED, DEMOCRATIC INVENTION



«A PRAGMATIC UTOPIA»

To claim that politics can only be global does not equate to saying that politics is not concerned with the condition and the problems of “people” where they live, where their life history has placed them: on the contrary, it equates to asserting that local citizenship has as its condition an active global citizenship. Every local political choice of economic, social, cultural, institutional orientation involves a “cosmopolitan” choice, and vice versa.

Etienne Balibar

A Plea for an Alter-Globalising Europe,
European Alternatives magazine 2007

Our actions and activities have always been trans-local as they attempt to be transnational, and our hypothesis is that every place has connections and relations with other places beyond and outside of it. We feel these connections and relations are less and less ‘national’ in scope and scale, and cross all kinds of borders. Our everyday realities are increasingly connected and affected by what is going on elsewhere, through the economy, through media and communications, through climate change, through the increased movement of people.

Soon after we launched European Alternatives the public debate on Europe became almost entirely centred on the “European crisis”. The contradictions, aspirations, and fears we tried to bring to the fore at our inaugural 2007 Festival in London were now on the front pages of mainstream media.

And yet, something was not quite right.

We started producing a great amount of ground-laying work, while meeting inspiring initiatives and experiences of active citizenship across Europe. But the political debate seemed very distant from the demand for change that was emerging from the bottom up. While European Councils kept on being conveyed apparently only to kick the can down the road, we were contrasting this with a stupendous hidden vitality on the ground and across our continent. We felt European citizens were on the move, often advancing the ideas and questions that institutions did not dare take up or ask.

What if citizens had a chance to draft, concretely, the Union they wanted to live in?

THE CITIZENS MANI— FESTO

We, the people of Europe, by birth, by choice or by permanent circumstances, believe that the European Union and its Member States have failed to guarantee the welfare of their citizens and to live up to the global and local challenges that have shaken Europe in the last five years of crisis.

We believe Europe has a common future, but we feel that we are losing control of our destiny. Rather than relying on fractured national sovereignties, we want to be empowered to act at a transnational level. Europe can play a strong role as a space of democracy, solidarity, and equality, but this requires rapid and radical changes to the current political framework and priorities of the European Union.

Democracy is in crisis in Europe. We need to radically transform the EU's democratic structures, for instance by creating a fully elected European government, by granting full legislative powers to the European Parliament and by introducing transnational lists for European elections. The future that the people of Europe desire necessitates a tangible redistribution of power. Democracy in Europe must mean that decisions are made by all with regard to all, not by some for the benefit of the few.



Assembly of European
Commons at the Agorà
Teatro Valle / photo by
Ruben Mir Ugolini.

Today Europe is facing a crossroads. The process of integration as it has happened so far has created a political entity without an active citizenry which is able to influence its course. We need to be made protagonists of much needed change to reform the European Union into a democratic and participative space.

The introduction of our Citizens Manifesto is extraordinarily, and perhaps unfortunately, still relevant today. Over three years, between 2011 and the 2014 European elections, we set up an ambitious program to write a fully detailed policy Manifesto together with thousands of citizens in nearly 100 participatory debates. From Poland to Portugal, from Britain to Bulgaria, we brought together citizens, activists and experts to draft bottom-up the Europe citizens wanted to see and the institutions were not delivering.

Is there such a thing as a European common interest? Can citizens and residents of Europe organise themselves to demand from the European institutions rapid and radical change?

When we developed the process that created the Citizens Manifesto, we proved that there is such a commonality, that there are the beginnings of a European demos, and that it is possible to engage and participate beyond borders.

We developed and wrote the Manifesto transnationally: it is not a sum of national requests, but a coordinated series of demands that are important for Europe's people as a whole and that emerged from dozens of participatory events across the continent and thousands of online participants.

Our discourse is characterised by "Pragmatic Utopia", as Cuban artist Tania Bruguera has put it. The Manifesto contains a vision for tomorrow's Europe that is radically different from today's; nevertheless, it springs out of a detailed analysis of current European legislation and an understanding of the power the EU currently has, the power it does not have, or the power it could have if there was enough political will to act radically.



An activist of European Alternatives gives to Martin Schulz a copy of the Citizens Manifesto before the flash mob «Surprise for Martin Schulz».



North-Eastern Caravan getting ready for an event in front of the Brandenburger Tor.

With the Citizens Manifesto we understood that there is much that can be drawn from the potential of this continent and its citizens, if only we begin seeking and demanding it.

AT A GLANCE

- The Citizens Manifesto is the result of a three-year process (2011-2013) of citizens' consultations across Europe, online and offline
- The process involved thousands of Europeans who were asked to elaborate policy proposals which in their views should constitute the primary focus of the work of the European Parliament and Commission from 2014
- Citizens' panels were held on work, welfare, finance, legality and the fight against organised crime, democracy, gender equality, common goods, migration, LGBT rights, the environment, Roma rights, media freedom and pluralism
- Thousands of participating citizens engaged with expert groups to fine-tune demands and transform them into sound policy proposals

- 80 panels across Europe.
- 12 transnational forums.
- 2 hearing at the European Parliament.
- More than 2,000 votes for proposals offline and online.
- 3 years of Europe wide-participatory process.



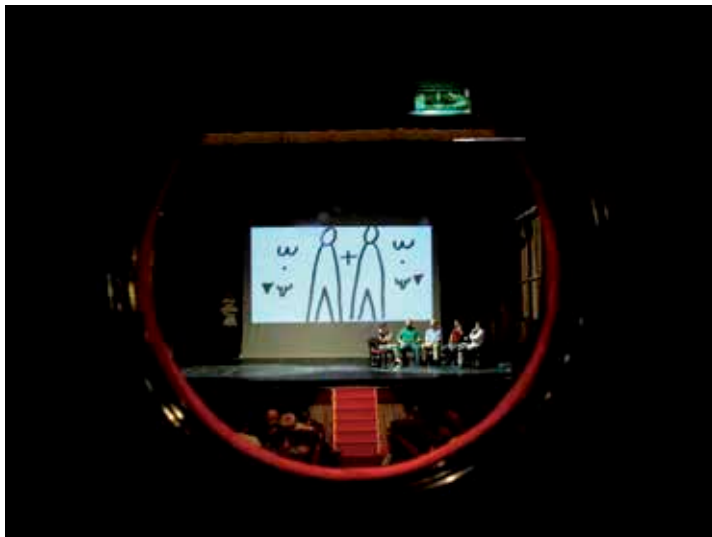
Copy of the Citizens Manifesto.



Assembly of commoners coming from across Europe.



Art piece at the Agorà Teatro Valle in Italy 2012. —



Performance on stage at the Agorà Teatro Valle in Italy 2012.



Artistic exhibition in the opening of TRANSEUROPA in Bratislava.



Participants of TRANSEUROPA Festival.

AS THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS APPROACH, IT'S TIME TO STOP THE POLITICS OF COWARDICE

By Niccolò Milanese.

Originally published in January 2014 in The Guardian.

In the context of the increasingly shrill debate around migration and Europe, this week the Mail on Sunday included an article attacking the non-profit organisation European Alternatives, of which I am co-president. Aside from crude attempts to discredit me personally, the paper takes issue with the Citizens' Manifesto we have published following consultations with citizens throughout the European continent, entitled "European Democracy, Solidarity and Equality". It contains proposals to protect the rights of migrants and minorities; to promote greater democratisation of the EU; to build a more social dimension to the Union in a context where many people are experiencing unnecessary hardship arising from shortcomings in the integration of the single market, single currency, and Europe's macroeconomic policies, and to act to protect media freedom throughout Europe. The paper absurdly referred to a "Marxist manifesto for a European superstate", demonstrating ignorance of our document, the nature of the EU, and of what Marx said in one headline.

European democracy will only be built by citizens throughout the continent engaging in productive debates about our common future. When that real conversation happens, more people will realise that advancing on many of the things we care most about – from preventing global warming, promoting employment and a decent living standard for everyone, to guaranteeing the fundamental rights of minorities – requires acting on a transnational scale.

Our organisation is called European Alternatives precisely because we think that in this part of the world Europe is the most appropriate level to act on these issues, but Europe needs alternative policies from the ones it currently

follows. Not everyone will agree with the proposals we make, and that is exactly as it should be. The European elections should be precisely the moment to discuss these alternatives.

The rightwing media are scared of this approach because it breaks out of the politics of cowardice and fear that it would like to keep us all locked into; a politics of cowardice to which many of the leading politicians in the UK are subservient when it comes to migration and Europe (with some notable and praiseworthy exceptions such as Ken Clarke). Instead of addressing the irrational fears of waves of benefit-cheating migrants arriving in the UK by using the extensive empirical data that is available showing this to be false, British politicians are cowed. These trends may be particularly prevalent in the UK at the moment, but ask citizens throughout Europe and many of them will tell you they are growing throughout the continent. Furthermore, national leaders fail to appreciate they are leaving the door open to nationalist attacks each time they take decisions about our common future in private European Council sessions, or pretend that they are "leading" Europe on their own without making courageous public arguments to convince a European public. That is another thing citizens have made proposals to change through our manifesto.

Our organisation was created because we think citizens throughout Europe need to stand up against this politics of cowardice, and need a platform to do this where our tired political parties are failing. We think many people share our sentiment that calling into question the fundamental rights of migrants, Roma and other minorities in the way the populist press across Europe does is shameful and scandalous, and understand that we aren't going to make any progress in a globalising world if we can't get over our national egos; and they are frustrated about the lack of public voices providing an alternative. We exist to amplify the voices of all these citizens who share that frustration.

TRANS— EUROPA CARAVANS

WHAT DOES EUROPE FROM BELOW LOOK LIKE?

The Citizens Manifesto showed us the power of collective intelligence and demonstrated that a common thread of aspirations, demands, and visions for a fair and democratic future holds together citizens across Europe. But very soon we started asking ourselves how this multiplicity could be better understood, networked, and mobilised.

That is why just before the 2014 European elections we hired six camper vans, armed them with speakers, social media teams, researchers and graphic novelists, and crossed 18 countries and dozens of cities across our continent.

If no European party was going to run a truly pan-european campaign, we decided citizens could do better!

We collaboratively mapped initiatives, ideas and local struggles to understand the bigger picture of what we call “civil society”. Arriving at a comprehensive map of the tremendous richness of activities across Europe is no easy feat, especially considering how many of these activities and initiatives are far from the spotlight. So we chose to visit places of action where we felt that a different conversation was taking place: from the migrant squats of Calais to the student markets of Canterbury and the Roma camps of Pata Rât. From the mothers in Slovenia who reformed education opportunities for Roma children, to anti-fracking activists fighting for clean water and workers defending jobs in their communities. We tried to uncover stories of ideas and of resistance, and above all, stories of progress.

What we saw along the journey was both astonishing and well-known. Voices which are not being heard by politicians, needs which are not being met by national states, solutions which are not being supported by institutions. The trip in the caravans revealed the “other” Europe, the one seldom found in the halls of power in Brussels. It showed a politically active and thriving civil society, Europe’s “hidden vitality”.

What does Europe from below look like? How do people cope with the crisis, stand up for their rights, experiment new forms of democracy and solidarity? What are the issues that people in Europe organise and rise up for? The Transeuropa Caravans set off to meet Europeans throughout the continent, at their places of work and struggle, to try and answer these questions.



Route map of the caravans for the Citizens Pact.



Activists getting ready for the North Eastern Caravan in 2014.



—
Biblioteca
Vivente e Spetta-
coli in Bologna /
photo by Ruben
Mir Ugolini.



— The Eastern Caravan's journey comes to an end.

AT A GLANCE

— Transeuropa Caravans, brought six caravans with around thirty activists to cross eighteen countries to meet with social movements, organisations, and citizens ahead of the European Elections.

— Hundreds of video interviews, a live diary, cartoonists and photographers transformed this simultaneous, pan-European journey into a great communication initiative and democratic campaign.

— Caravans reached out to Europeans at their sites of struggle, at their places of initiative, to understand and connect local alternative voices on different issues:

1.- Democracy

“If I could demand one thing from Europe, it’s listening more to what citizens are saying, what the normal working class people want with the world, and not only what the big companies and the big chiefs want.”

Sebastian van Neijnsberge Utrecht, the Netherlands.

2.- Environment and Commons

“If I could change something in Europe, I would hope that this run after more and more growth comes to an end and that people can be happy with what they have. [...] I would be very happy if Europe in the future could have various and diverse landscapes with a lot of small farms and that many people can afford for their own needs.”

Adrian Eias-Rinnert Rohne, Germany.

3.- Work and welfare

“I would like a Europe based not only on the free exchange of goods and services, but also on the ability of workers to have a pension and a guaranteed future.”

Lorenzo Allegrini Ljubljana, Slovenia.

4.- Roma

“According to many of the initiatives, the EU should keep a closer eye on how EU funding is spent in the Member States – demand outcomes, carry out proper evaluations and check if Member States actually implement the kind of projects they are getting money for.”

5.- LGBTBIQ

“If, as an EU citizen, I move to Cyprus, I may not be recognised as my child’s parent. If I look for a job in Latvia, I may have troubles finding one. If I live in Italy, I won’t be able to marry my partner. If I organise events in Lithuania to fight for my rights, I may face obstruction from the state... Who am I? I am an LGBT person living in the EU.”

Anonymous.

6.- Migration

“Europe needs to have the capacity to envision itself [...] as an open space, which goes beyond its own borders. I would like to imagine a Europe founded on the fact that each of us, living in Europe and not necessarily being born as a European citizen, can imagine Europe as a space of free experimentation with their own lives.”

Gianmarco de Pieri Bologna, Italy.

- 30 activists, 6 caravans, 18 countries, 11 days.
- 12,000 km crossed.
- Nearly 100 events in towns and cities across the continent.
- One hearing at the European Parliament.



7 TRANS- NATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERES

«Where are the institutionalised public powers to which transnational opinion is addressed and which it should hold accountable? Where are the public powers with the capacity to solve transborder problems, such as global warming or financial meltdown, in the general interest of transborder populations? Without a correlation between the scale of public opinion, on the one side, and the scale of public powers, on the other, it becomes hard to envisage what the critical ideals of public-sphere theory could mean today.»

Excerpt from a conversation between Nancy Fraser and European Alternatives for *The Myth of Europa* magazine, May 2009.

It is a regular complaint that the ‘European public sphere does not exist’, but what if we are looking for the wrong kind of thing? Instead of looking for something like an official national public sphere only on a larger scale, perhaps the real European public spheres are to be found in multiplicity, in overlapping commentaries and commitments, in translation and mixity. These spheres have the character of nomads and polyglots, of clandestine samizdat collections of texts circulated in the shadows, and the subversive power of these media comes from their keeping open the spaces of invention and alternative. Involved in publishing from its first days, European Alternatives has sought to add to, weave together and empower these dissident public spheres, whether in print, online, in text, photo or video. In our search for ideas, illumination, analysis and commentary we have ranged throughout Europe, to North Africa, the Americas, China and elsewhere, along the way finding fellow travellers, writers and readers.

**PERHAPS THE REAL EUROPEAN
PUBLIC SPHERES ARE TO
BE FOUND IN MULTIPLICITY**

FROM THE THE MYTH OF EUROPA TO POLITICAL CRITIQUE

A European journal of new transnational thought and culture is the way we characterised the first publication of European Alternatives in 2007. The ambitious subtitle says much about what we were trying to achieve: a regular publication that could be called genuinely «European», but which was not euro-centric; a political publication which was also philosophical, artistic, cultural and literary; and which was resolutely «new» and forward-looking.

In its quest to live up to its title, the journal took different physical forms and appearances, and changed its name from «European Alternatives» to «The Myth of Europa» to «Transeuropa». It was as if in our search for the mythical Europa carried away by Zeus, disguised as a bull, we ourselves took on different forms, different personas, different guises. And in our search we were joined by some of the leading thinkers, artists, writers, poets, political and social theorists of our age.

Those viewpoints came through words as much as images and photographs. The time we put into choosing and making combinations between the articles and images expressed our conviction that photographs can at once open up the world to us and open us up to the world, a window in the white page to another part of the planet, to another human subjectivity.

The journal of European Alternatives has always been a campaigning journal, whether for gender equality, Roma rights, migrant rights, media freedom or democratic renewal: through it, readers, writers and artists since 2007 have been informed about and joined our campaigns, joined our movement, joined our organisation for democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state. After years of publishing, we are now in the midst of a new evolution. From 2017 we are cooperating, together with the Polish organisation Krytyka Polityczna, in developing *PoliticalCritique.org*, a pan-european, political online magazine. This new partnership speaks directly to our objective of connecting the already existing audiences at the national level towards a common shared European agenda.



Covers of all the magazines the Myth of Europa, designed by Rasha Kahil from 2007 - 2010.



AT A GLANCE

— In the magazine of European Alternatives from 2007 onwards the reader finds an intellectual, cultural and political chronicle and interpretation of contemporary events and tendencies, a unique set of viewpoints on a changing world that was entering into a new stage of crisis and complexity.

— Thousands of copies were distributed in cafes, bookshops, galleries, and public spaces across Europe

— In 2017, with PoliticalCritique.org we are starting a new media partnership with the objective of joining forces to develop a transnational online media able to speak beyond borders and able to harness the digital tools to communicate across borders.

- *Over 60 intellectuals contributed to The Myth of Europa.*
- *More than 300 pages of content were published.*
- *Distributed in more than 30 cities across Europe.*
- *Contributors included Zygmunt Bauman, Saskia Sassen, Etienne Balibar, Alfredo Jaar, Nancy Fraser, Ulrich Obrist and dozens more.*
- *85,000 visits to our website.*

POLITICAL CRITIQUE
KRYTYKA POLITYCZNA & EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

Logo of the redesigned magazine Political Critique after the partnership between European Alternatives and Krytyka Polityczna in 2017.

TALK REAL

Talk Real is an online political talk-show discussing the most urgent political, social and cultural issues for Europe. Filmed in different cities of Europe, with guests mixing East and West, North and South, young and old, intellectuals and activists, artists and policy-thinkers, Talk Real aims to gather a broad community and does not shy away from proposals for comprehensive political change.

We began in Athens in the days that followed the “Oxi” referendum of July 2015. Over the summer of that year we crossed Europe with a camera and a film crew to pilot the first nomadic talk show for the web: Talk Real.

We felt we needed a new mechanism to weave together the experiences and contacts we were making across Europe. If television remained primarily national, the web offered us an opportunity to imagine media that crossed borders.

We did not aim to create controversy or a spectacle, but to bring some of the brighter thinkers and doers from across Europe to reflect on European issues at a crucial juncture for our continent. We aimed to create an audiovisual product that could speak and inform that pan-European citizenship people were discovering through our work.

—
Lorenzo Marsili
moderates a Talk
Real discussion in
Paris about social
movements in the
Balkans, 2016.





—
Niccolo Milanese moderates a Talk Real discussion in Cluj Napoca about environmental racism with activists of the DL18 platform, 2016.



—
Margarita Tsomou moderates Talk Real at the opening of the Artists at Risk exhibition by Perpetuum Mobile / Athens 2017.

AT A GLANCE

— With a heterogeneous participation of intellectuals, cultural workers and activists, Talk Real is an informal but professional audiovisual platform for the dissemination of innovative ideas and the organisations and individuals behind them.

— Talk Real is a nomadic broadcast: the episodes are connected with current events and are often filmed in the context of important cultural or political events. The first episodes were recorded in Turin, Lisbon, Athens, Madrid, Vienna, Berlin, London and Rome.

— A spin-off from 2017 is bringing our nomadic talk show to foster a debate for democratic reform in Eastern Europe and the Balkan region.

— *Over 62,000 unique views online.*

— *Media coverage in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, including screenings of two of our shows on television in Germany, Italy and Portugal.*

— *More than 20 long video productions.*



— Second version of the logo of Talk Real after its pilot phase in 2015.

FOR A COSMOPOLITAN ALLIANCE: BEYOND TRIBAL JOURNALISM, FOR A POLYPHONY OF MINDS

Lorenzo Marsili

Originally published in The Myth of Europa - 2009

A magazine today can only be international in its composition and cosmopolitan in its desire. We need a wayfarer, an eternal vagabond, running the world after a scattered tribe of minds.

But perhaps this is an impossible stance. After years of integration, despite investments and calls for its creation, even a European public sphere has not yet emerged. And to think just our distance from a cosmopolitan paradigm – how many European magazines still have most of their board from a single European nation! But the public sphere today has stale air. It is weighted by its hubris of unity, its tentacular reach, its closure. (An example of that closure – and of its beauties – comes from the last surviving artistic product on Italian television: Blob. Blob cuts a selection of brief television sketches and edits them into gems of irony and insight. Which can only be drawn out from within, when the whole concatenation makes sense to us, when the faces are familiar, the stories known.)

But perhaps it is not necessary that a sphere of publicity be entirely familiar to every member. On the contrary: this space can contain unseen perspectives, can dislocate and disrupt; presenting alterity, it becomes the factory of an unknown. Perhaps we must forego the conception of a public sphere as an enclosed cluster of assumptions, as a place where everyone feels intellectually at home, where the vocabulary employed, the themes raised, the reasoning followed—all strike one as familiar, maternal. And what in its place? A field of overlapping commitments. A field of overlapping interests, of overlapping languages. Of overlapping, struggling ideas.

This is a politically suspicious stance. For in such an open space of possibility, amidst the cacophony of one thousand languages, how can the opportunity for engagement arise? Do we not edge dangerously close to an elitist cultural production, one that juggles a plurality of thoughts, browsing through a market of ideas where nothing is ever bought? How can a cosmopolitan magazine be political?

But have we not seen just the attempt to practically forge such a political space in the past ten years? What was the movement for an alternative globalisation if not a space of global polyphony? These are not the most popular times to chant its praises. But what is the lesson that it has taught? That global participation can be stimulated around local struggles; that a tribalistic understanding of commitment – commitment to what touches me – can be left behind. And at the same time that the plurality of local struggles can come together, producing a critical mass that demands nothing short of another world. And what are the latter two statements if not the clearest definition of the political task of a cosmopolitan publication? To stimulate a compassionate response, which means to move, regardless of geographical distance. And to articulate the emergence of a world to come from no privileged vantage point, from no urban centre, but through shifting geographies of thought.

There is more. A cosmopolitan magazine becomes political the moment it ceases to be alone. The moment its concert of voices enters in direct relation – and in this relation, dialectically, it also finds itself – with others. Exchanges of activisms. Exchanges that enable to surpass one's own constituency, one's own group of the converted, and that open a vision to and for society. And these can only be exchanges that stretch into public space, that occupy, with drums and trumpets, the sphere of publicity. Exchanges that both found and represent a political consciousness beyond borders. An example? The joint transnational publication and dissemination of statements, invectives, positions, pamphlets, or announcements, that appear simultaneously in the streets, cafés, galleries, universities, work places of cities across nations.

For the crucial task of magazines is to advance a political-cultural project. A project must not mean a blind adherence to a single position, membership of a single party. But polyphonic creation and reformulation of the categories that govern our society. And then—to allow for that project to emerge and be articulated, to grow and evolve and assume the shapes of history. The hands of editors must be black with ink and commitment.





8 EUROPE'S DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD

— Snapshot from the first issue of the magazine The Myth of Europa 2007.

TRANS— NATIONAL DIALOGUES

The role of culture and the arts is a key dimension of European Alternatives. It is impossible to imagine a different society without crafting and uncovering a new language, new symbols, new gestures and new expressions for a vision of democracy and community beyond borders and nations. What if we brought this energetic mix beyond Europe's borders?

That is when we decided to set up *Transnational Dialogues*, a cross-media platform managing and imagining artistic and cultural projects with a focus on the new geographies of globalisation and the emergence of a multi-polar artistic and intellectual world. The program was devised to facilitate artists, creatives, professionals, intellectuals and writers from Europe, China and Brazil to come together for a series of exchanges both offline and online. The platform promotes sharing of information, networking, conceptual collaboration between individuals, organisations and institutions, and offers a trampoline for future projects and initiatives.

We started this adventure in 2009, structuring a collaboration between Europe and China. We felt the need and the desire to pop our European bubble and start discussing global issues such as economic alternatives, civil rights, democracy, and freedom of expression. In the first edition of *Transnational Dialogues* in 2011 we mapped, researched and performed, but we also worked to strengthen the ties to grassroots organisations, citizens and activists to create sustainable forms of cooperation able to look further into the future.

2013 was a year of awakening for the Brazilian community. The dream of economic growth and globalisation was broken by the ringing of an alarm clock that something was not working: the streets of Brazil filled with millions of protesters. In 2014 Hong Kong felt the shake of the so-called Umbrella Revolution, a disobedience campaign following the proposed electoral reform in the special administrative region. 2014 was also the year Europe voted for the renewal of the European Parliament, at the time when eurosceptic views became more and more popular.



Artistic performance of Transnational Dialogues: Soterramento (Burial), a performance by Jota Mombaça in Belgrade 2015.



Artistic performance of Transnational Dialogues in the context of TRANSEUROPA Festival 2015.

In this context, in 2014 we launched a new edition of *Transnational Dialogues*, building bridges both to China and to Brazil to tackle a democratic crisis that, we felt, has a global dimension.

With *Transnational Dialogues*, we created a common ground, experimenting new forms of artistic, and activist cooperation and collaboration. The group of activists, artists, intellectuals and practitioners met in Brazil, Europe and China in nomadic residencies, but also spent time conducting field research, allowing a more stable and sustainable creation and diffusion of ideas and visions in this new multipolar world.



Cover of the Transnational Dialogues Journal 2016.

AT A GLANCE

- Starting in 2011, Transnational Dialogues is one of EA's keynote transnational artistic and networking projects, bringing together artists, young researchers, practitioners and political activists from Europe, Brazil and China.
- Transnational Dialogues works around nomadic residencies, aiming to craft a temporary and travelling production and research unit through the engagement with practitioners and the local community across three continents. Residencies produce published content, exhibitions, symposia and interventions in all participating countries.
- The last edition of Transnational Dialogues, held in 2015-2016, focused particularly on the new geographies of globalisation and borders, the different perspectives on sharing economy and marginality.

- 3 editions in 7 countries actively involved, including China and Brazil.
- 8 countries reached, including Serbia, Colombia, Cuba, USA, Spain, Monaco, Egypt, and Lithuania.
- 50 artists, practitioners and young researchers involved.
- 4,000 printed copies of the different editions of Transnational Dialogues Journal.
- An online magazine, books, video productions, artistic residencies and interventions organised across three continents.

IT'S ABOUT THE "COMMONS" – WITNESSING OCCUPY MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE FROM CHINA

*By Boliang Shen. Beijing-based curator, participant in
Transnational Dialogues.*

Originally published in TD Journal - October 2012.

"The Occupy movement is not a carnival-style entertainment", but on May 12th, at Piazza Verdi next to the University of Bologna, what I saw looked just like that: students wearing costumes of ancient Roman generals, medieval knights or pirates holding placards with creative slogans addressing different social and political issues gathered at the square under the sun, they drank beer, engaged in animated talks... When dawn drew near, a truck carrying a rock band drove across the square. Following it was a long procession of students, smoke of fireworks to herald the procession gradually spread and seethed in this old, red city known for its tradition of radical resistance. The "Global Strike Day" march had just began - "in the eyes of the Chinese, this is a spectacle, another disguise under the protection of capitalism", said the artist Zhou Xiaohu who was with me.

At the time, four other artists, curators (i.e., Ma Yongfeng, Ni Kun, You Mi and Zhou Xiaohu) and I were invited by European Alternatives, a European civil society organisation, to participate in the art exchange in Rome and Bologna as part of the Transeuropa Festival.

From the eruption of the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009 to the outbreaks of "Arab Spring" and "Occupy Wall Street", all kinds of occupations, protests, mobilisations and radical politics have been acting like flames spreading everywhere. Nevertheless, we can only get to know one another through smoke and phantoms. "Is your art against capitalism?" "Is your art anti-modernism?" – These have been the looking-for-comrades type of questions that we often encountered.

On the other hand, it is not like the "May Revolt" of '68 in France, as many people have understood – "a group of young people growing up after the war revolted against a prosperous society". Italy is experiencing a serious financial and social crisis. The young people I met showed anxiety over employment after graduation, and expressed concerns over tax hikes and high suicide rates in this city. According to a BBC report, there was a "White Widows March" in Bologna the weekend before we arrived, husbands of the women in the march killed themselves under the burden of deep recession, many were businessmen – that reminded me of a passage mentioned in the "Capital", which has often been ignored: do not blame individual capitalists, they are victims of capitalism too. Reports of infectious suicides were all over the place. This March, a craftsman burned himself to death in front of the local tax court. Two days before we arrived, Maurizio Cevenini, a beloved left wing party leader and former mayoral candidate in Bologna, threw himself off a council building. His funeral was held on the 12th of May. The whole town was in grief. Ma Yongfeng's "micro-resistance" event, scheduled for that morning at a square near the city council, was moved to the afternoon on the same day at Piazza Verdi next to the University of Bologna.

Back in China, movements of "micro-interventions", "micro-practices" and "micro-resistance" had been well received. Would the effect and meaning of "micro" become difficult to execute or express anything in the mighty context of Bologna, where people have been so agitated? Continuing the pattern of creating graffiti on site in Bernard Controls, Ma wrote sentences on recycled cardboards, scrolls of fabrics, flags of Italy and EU, some were with indefinite indications such as "Sensibility is Under Control", "Action is the Product" and "You Can Steal 'Now', but Future is In Our Hands". Some were reflections on radical demonstrations – "Do Not Let the Protest Become a Pollutant-Free Ethical Gesture", "Is It A Revolt Without Revolution?" and so on. He also interacted with the students, asked them to write down their thoughts. However, in the deluge of slogans and graffiti of Bologna, could their words be noticed and un-

derstood as delicate and firm heterogeneity? After the brief exchanges, would the students deviate somewhat from the radical way of thinking they have been used to for the thoughts written down by themselves? A Chinese friend who studies at the University of Bologna said: “Protests and demonstrations happen here almost everyday, they have become a way for the people here to participate in public life, express opinions and positions, or legal channels for criticisms, just like us Chinese tweet our complaints online...”

“Commons”, “common goods” are terms mentioned often in the above movements, but they are relatively new concepts to Chinese readers. The easier examples are “Wikimedia Commons” and “Pirate Parties International” (PPI). The latter, first appeared in Sweden in 2006, started by opposing corporate copyright law’s restrictions on online downloads and hindrances of circulation of knowledge, and supporting legalization of online resource sharing. Later it grew bigger and expanded to many countries. Its claims have also been extended, by advocating openness and transparency of online information, government transparency and protection of civil rights, establishing a freer civilization and opposing outdated patent laws and monopoly. “Online governing” is another trait of the parties. They take advantage of online social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to allow party members to exercise their rights, announce policies, collecting opinions and eliminating hierarchy.

To me, instead of establishing a country where everything is eventually a commons, the entire work regarding “commons” shall aim to the autonomy by the people on certain public resources, consequently make a government become a more idealised “limited government”.

9 THE SEARCH FOR EUROPA CONTINUES

— The Rape
of Europa, Titian
(painted ca. 1560-62).

THE LIST OF CHALLENGES THAT BYPASS THE NATION-STATE KEEPS ON GROWING

During the ten years of European Alternatives the world has been in a state of quasi-permanent crisis. In a grotesque sequence of events, from the financial crash down to the crisis of the Euro, the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 ushered in an era of uncertainty and global turbulence. Then came the refugee crisis, Brexit, and war along the frontiers of the continent, from Ukraine to Syria and Libya.

Europe's political institutions have often demonstrated an incapacity to live up to the challenges of the last, lost decade. But if the continent's leaders have often appeared divided and small minded, these years have also made clear to many Europeans the sheer necessity of an ambitious politics beyond borders.

Speaking at her first Conservative party conference after becoming leader, Theresa May proposed that 'people who believe they are citizens of the world are citizens of nowhere'. This was intended to be an appeal to nationalistic sentiment, to some version of 'Britishness'. But we can misread it a different way: in our globalised, interconnected world, we are all to different extents citizens of the world, and we have almost all, as a result, lost much of our political citizenship because political forms have not kept up with globalisation.

From the refugee and migration crisis to the need to rein in multinational tax evasion, from environmental protection to digital surveillance, the list of challenges that bypass the nation-state keeps on growing. We need to reconstruct a transnational political vision for this century or risk letting go of our capacity to govern some of the most important challenges of our time. This requires innovating our democracies and developing practices of participation and engagement able to go beyond the nation state. It requires recuperating a sense of historical purpose.

The attitude of the men and women preparing the Treaty of Rome in 1957 was visionary, and built on centuries of plans to pacify Europe. It managed to look beyond the animosities that were still blatant only 13 years after the Second World War. Today's attitude of last-minute crisis-management could not be more different.

Even as we are frequently forced into the front lines of emergency response by government failure, the advantage and privilege of civil society should be to take a step back from the immediacy of government or institutional politics. Our European future will never belong to us if it is not taken and constructed directly by us with a forward-looking, long-term vision.

Against apathy and despondency, we work for a powerful re-politicisation of the continent by its citizens. We can do more than protest, we can express more than 'sacred indignation', we can act and intervene, not just to fix the shortcomings of a governmental system, but to roll back governmentality. Imagine, demand and enact a different world.

European Alternatives has been empowering and gathering citizens to do this in manifold different ways, from turning up as individual citizen lobbyists in the European Parliament or Commission, to organising solidarity kitchens with refugees, from running transnational campaigns to developing citizens manifestos for change. For ten years we have been working to prepare the world of tomorrow, and our engagement and capacity multiplies with each individual and organisation that joins us.

Today, we are thrown in the middle of a global, great transformation that will change our democracies and our economies at the root. These are no ordinary times. Nor times for navel-gazing and petty politics. This is the time for courage and engagement. The way ahead can only be crafted with a renewed partisan vision beyond national borders.

