



Platform of European Social NGOs
Plate-forme des ONG européennes du secteur social

Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen
Prime Minister's Office
Snellmaninkatu 1 A,
00170 Helsinki
Finland

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OPEN LETTER

Dear Mr. Lipponen

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Mr. President, we are writing to you to request your support for strengthening the framework within which NGOs operate at the European level. We know of the deep understanding and appreciation you have already shown of the work of NGOs throughout the Union. We now believe that action to strengthen this role is urgent if we are to counter the apathy about Europe, which was so visible during the recent elections, and if we are to ensure the success of the enlargement of the Union. It is vital that NGOs are given sufficient recognition and resources if they are to play a role in the next phase of the Union's development.

During the negotiations for the Amsterdam Treaty, we campaigned for a legal base for the civil dialogue between NGOs and the Institutions of the European Union. Declaration 23, appended to the Maastricht Treaty, stresses the importance of the role of charitable associations and foundations to the European project. We believe that, due to the growing awareness that the relationship between the Union and NGOs needs to be put on a legally and administratively stronger footing, a similar text must be included in the body of Treaty itself. It is for this reason that we are writing to urge you to support the inclusion of a legal base for civil dialogue in the forthcoming revision of the Treaty.

The need for support for the civil dialogue in the Helsinki Summit Conclusions is further emphasized by the fact that the European Commission is intending to publish a Communication on how to build a stronger relationship with NGOs. The



