

“There are times of crisis in which only the utopian is realistic” (G. Steiner)

BRUSSELS MUST BECOME A CITY-STATE, ISN'T OBVIOUS ?

- Because it is the Capital of a vanishing State
- Because it is the Capital of Europe, that which is already very real and that which still remains to be made
- Because its identity is multiplicity, openness and hospitality
- Because it will be soon the will of its inhabitants
- Because they will be joined in this project by many of other residents of the country
- Because it is high time to shake up the routine thoughts and nationalist narrow-mindedness of a conformist political class desperately hooked to power in order to defend its own interests
- Because it will soon be too late to uphold the right of the people above communitarian and 'jus solis'
- Because, by cutting the Brussels Gordian knot with a daring project worthy of this century and our European culture, we will allow true democracy, build on the freedom of debate and on the freedom of choice, to regain its vigour and its importance.

Brussels, City-State: this idea floats implicitly in the conversations of all those who are desperate by the Belgian communitarian-obsessed political speech of so many decades. The time has come - in May 2010 - to place this idea in the limelight, to speak about at all street corners and in front of all the coffee vending machines in all the offices. This way, it will become a living Project, around which all those who recognize themselves in it, will gather .

By mobilizing to turn this idea into a reality, we can regain our dignity of citizens of the City and cease being the impotent passengers of a lamentable political, exhausted crawling train which advance in a sordid dead-end haunted by obsolete passions, shameful interests and reheated conflicts.

There is no need to answer all the questions now nor to find out exactly how we will avoid the pitfalls and negotiate with the other regions. In order for us to have a Project, only a few principles are needed:

CITIZENSHIP:

- By right: all residents of Brussels, citizen of one of the Member States of the European Union, who will not refuse to see it granted to them.
- By choice: all residents of current Belgium, citizens of one of the Member States of the European Union, who will request it.
- Dual citizenship will be accepted.
- The Citizens of Brussels, City- State, by accepting or by asking for this nationality, will take the commitment to defend the values it embodies and to contribute to the fame of the City-State.

TERRITORIALITY:

- The current nineteen 'communes';
- After the creation of the City-State, all communes of the two Brabant provinces whose residents of European nationality will choose, by referendum and with a majority of two thirds, to become part of the City.

VALUES OF THE CITY:

- The Multiplicity of Cultures and Languages,
- The conviction that a person's or a group's identity can never be reduced to a single component or a simple hierarchy of identities; the faith in the possibility of a world where what people have in common is much more important than what distinguishes them from one another
- Courtesy towards all, whatever their language, their dress, their religion, their opinions and all other manifestations of their identity,
- The quality of the management of public affairs, which must be a service to all and not a form of power,
- The support for European integration and the defence of the unique position occupied by Brussels in its construction.
- The conviction that history does not stand still and that our role is to take a stand for an open society, able to find new answers to all the future challenges of its course.

NATIONAL FESTIVAL:

We will have two of them, alternating from year to year:

- The Ommegang which, referring to Charles Quint, roots Brussels in a European and cosmopolitan history,
- The 'Zienneke Parade' which pays homage to our present boiling age, fertile of a polymorphic and merry future.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION:

- Strong separation between the Executive, identified with the administration, and the controlling and guidance authority - the Parliament - made of a hundred Representatives, elected individually for a five-year term.
- Limited number of elective office that an individual may hold: no more than two consecutive terms, no more than four terms during a lifetime.
- The installation of the Council of Elders of thirteen members, at the same time Supreme Court and Constitutional Court of the City-State. The Councillors will be old at least 55 years old and be named for at least 15 years. The first Council shall consist of temporary members, so as to establish a system of renewal of the members by increments of four members every five years. The Chairperson will be elected outside the Council by its twelve members, who will be named by the Parliament.
- The Executive will consist of senior professionals responsible for administering the City by allocating basic administrative functions to private companies, according to stringent procurement procedures and based on rigorous specification of the quality and expected service levels

- The Executive's duty will be to ensure compliance with the contracts and it will have the obligation to apply quick and effective sanctions against the providers found in breach
- This professionalization of the administration and this quasi-privatization of public services are necessary to bring to an end the system of influence peddling and cronyism that have, in fact, become the more or less conscious 'raison d'être' of the existing political parties.
- An exception to these principles, on top of the obvious cases of Law and Order and the administration of Justice, will be made for the organization of education at all levels, from the primary to the higher education. Education will remain in the public sphere and will be accessible to all. The ambition of the City-State will be to consolidate, in order to reach an international level of excellence, the various networks existing today. They will be granted a broad autonomy of management in the service of a true strategy of excellence at all levels and in all fields, from the 'social integration' level up to the higher education, whether they are humanistic, technical or scientific.
- The official languages of the city will be, on an equal footing, English, Dutch and French. Linguistic courtesy will be a basic rule of all the official and public exchanges.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

The electoral system will be founded on the principle “One Voice per Language” applied to all the official languages of the European Community.

- This innovative provision shall be adopted to ensure the pluralistic nature of the City. It will mark its irrevocable commitment to move beyond both, the mechanisms of domination of minorities by the majority, and the temptation to identify policy issues with community interest or other particularities.
- The proficiency level required for each voice will be a fair comprehension of the language (written and oral) as well as an elementary spoken capability in each language claimed by a voter.

ECONOMIC REGULATION.

- It will be based on the transposition of the Directives and Regulations of the EC in the Law of the City, which should suffice.
- Agreements of tax non-competition will be concluded with the Belgian regions, the wealth generated in the territory of the City will be taxed by the City, together with the application of preventive agreements against double taxation. Non-resident Brussels Citizen will be taxed differently in order to reflect the cost of the services provided to them in their place of residence.

THE ROAD AHEAD:

- To make this project the guiding line of the various energies which are already expressed already in a number of forums. To gather them under the BRUXSEL

logo and to reinforce these energies by creating the ObI movement:
'Onafhankelijke bruXsel Indépendante' (working name);

- Distribute this manifesto so it will be debated, glorified, ridiculed and vilified in all media, public places and in private conversations. By doing so, we will ensure that all those who feel citizen of BRUXSEL, within the meaning of the text, can reclaim the public space speech and the freedom to choose which City they want for themselves, for their children and for all those who will want to join them there.