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## **40under40, European Young Leaders**

**While European heads of state and decision-makers meet in Brussels tomorrow to set the orientation of European Union policymaking is to uptake, 40 talented individuals from across Europe gathered in Berlin from 6 to 8 December to think about the future of the continent.**

**An initiative by EuropaNova and Friends of Europe**

This seminar allowed the 40 European participants under the age of 40 to think collectively about the major issues and challenges facing Europe by interacting with key European stakeholders.

**See the entire 2012-2013 selection of European Young Leaders on**  
[www.40under40.eu](http://www.40under40.eu)

Thinking European, innovating and acting in such manner is essential so as to break away from nationalistic sentiments and begin a new phase of the European construction process to serve the citizens. These are some of the key messages of this seminar, which led to the emergence of a clear consensus: a new generation of opinion leaders has to rally to pattern our decision-makers' thinking for long-term results!

Recent advances in economic governance and euro zone regulation are a step in the right direction. However, even though national economies' integration is well underway, it is still devoid of a political vision and citizen support. Several seminar participants underlined that: **“After 30 years of a consumer-oriented Europe, it is high time to define what we want to do with our Union!”**

This debate is necessary for the future of our continent so as to efficiently meet the great challenges we have to deal with: economic growth and employment efficiency, natural resources preservation, demographic unbalance, immigration, etc. European democracy also needs to be reshaped so as it becomes more present in citizens' lives and not be a topic of discussion merely around European election times.

Among the important pillars of this social contract that we need to implement, the European economic model has to be developed for it to adapt to global changing trends and to the feeble growth rates risks. Beyond the on-going economic regulation process, innovation is a prerequisite in order to encourage investment in strategic sectors of tomorrow, especially supporting SMEs, which are the primary targets of capital scarcity in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Being the continent where the population aging rates are higher than anywhere else, our ability to react quickly is undermined. The European Young Leaders' mission is to inspire European citizens to create for the European Union a new collective pathway to tread upon, a model to follow. They agreed to meet once again in June, in Athens, to discuss the methods to achieve this and to reflect upon European solidarity.

*The European Young Leaders: '40 under 40' programme is inspired by well-established American leadership programmes and aims to create a new generation of European opinion leaders. Each year, 40 talented individuals under the age of 40 from across Europe and from a wide range of professional backgrounds meet during two seminars to discuss major issues and challenges facing Europe by interacting with key European stakeholders. Supported by the European Commission, under the patronage of former President of Latvia Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Member of the European Parliament Daniel Cohn Bendit and Alex Stubb, Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade of Finland, the programme is led by EuropaNova and Friends of Europe.*

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