

:: EUROPE DAY, 9 MAY...

:: Do you know Europe? It sounds cliché but you do not love what you do not know... ::

E.

EUROPE DAY, 9 MAY

"I love Europe"

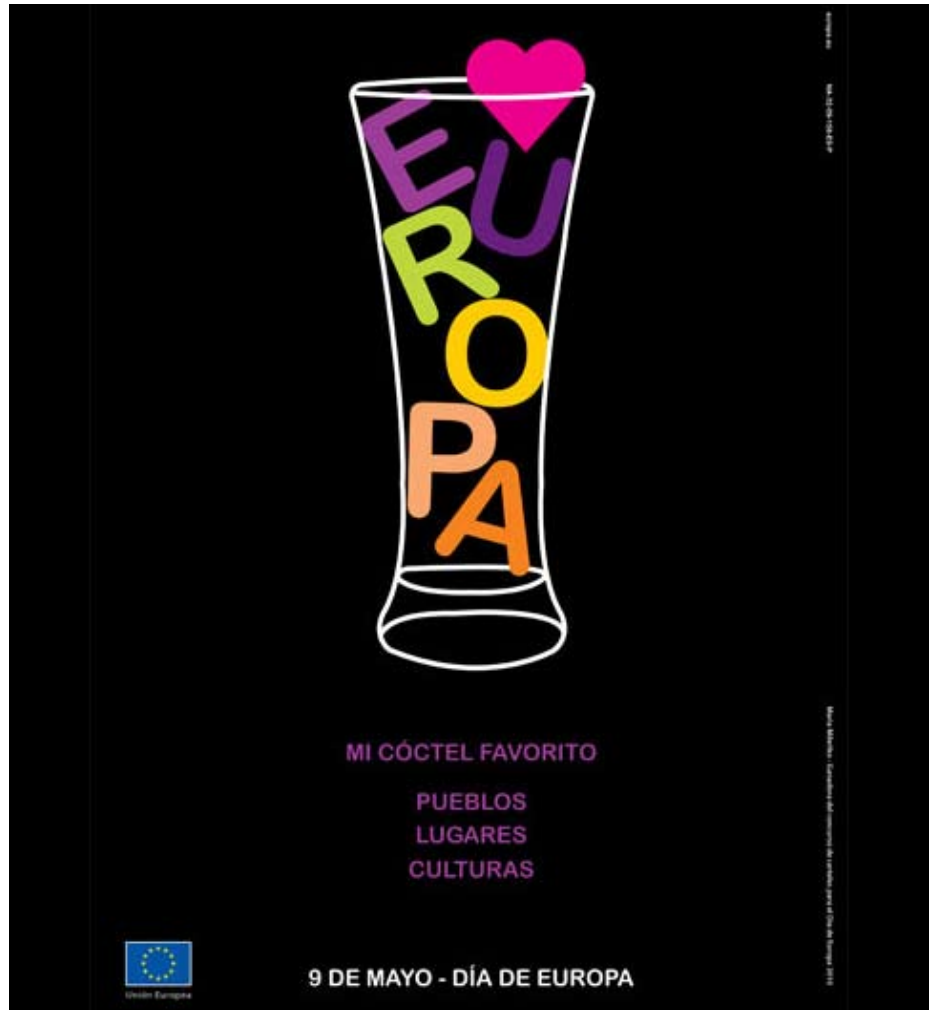
With the theme of 'I LOVE EUROPE', in May 2009, the European Commission launched a poster competition aimed at young graphic designers from the 27 Member States. When the initial submission phase closed on 30 November, the Commission had received 1703 original designs. A European jury pre-selected their favourite 10 projects, but the final decision of the official poster was put into the hands of Europe's citizens, and more than 60 000 of them voted for their preferred design to be the official poster of the Day of Europe. When the vote closed on 31 January 2010, the young Polish artist Maria Milenko was announced as the winner of the Europe Day 2010 poster competition. Her fresh, innovative design of a "Europe cocktail" won the hearts and votes of the jury and public alike. Her design got 416.974 points. In the poster, Europe is represented as a cocktail, a mix of people, places and cultures.

"I love Europe"

Do you know Europe? It sounds cliché but you do not love what you do not know. The European Union, through its institutions, no effort spares to educate in European citizenship.

To begin with '9 May' has been elected to be the Day of Europe. You may have come across a reference in a diary or elsewhere to the fact that 9 May is "Europe Day" and perhaps asked about its significance. You might wonder what happened that day and what year.

Probably very few people in Europe know that on 9 May 1950 the first move was made towards the creation of what is now known as the European Union. That day the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman read to the international press a declaration: he proposed the creation of a supranational European Institution indispensable for peace keeping. Every



country which democratically chooses to accede to the European Union endorses its fundamental values of peace and solidarity which are the cornerstone of the European building.

While Europe as such has existed for centuries, the elements which united it, in the absence of rules and institutions, have in the past been insufficient to prevent the most appalling tragedies.

Even today, some countries that are not part of the European Union have been exposed to these tragedies, such as the war in the former Yugoslavia.

"I love Europe"

It is now clear that our future is in Europe, but European dimension in many people go through a time of uncertainty or is missing. Knowing the European Union can help to strengthen the sense of European citizenship.

What is the European Union?

A unique economic and political partnership between 27 democratic European countries.

What are its aims?

Peace, prosperity and freedom for its 498 million citizens — in a fairer, safer world.

What results so far?

Frontier-free travel and trade, the euro (the single European currency), safer food and a greener environment, better living standards in poorer regions, joint action on crime and terror, cheaper phone calls, millions of opportunities to study abroad... and much more besides.

How does it work?

To make these things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are: The European Parliament (representing the people of Europe)

The Council of the European Union (representing national governments)
The European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

Which is the European flag?
Twelve yellow stars on a blue background. The stars in a circle symbolize the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the people of Europe.

Which is the European anthem?
The melody comes from the Ninth Symphony by Beethoven. When used as European anthem, it has no words.

Which is the European motto?
United in diversity.

When is Europe Day?
The ideas behind the UE were first put forward on 9 May 1950 by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. So 9 May is celebrated as the UE's birthday.

Why the European Union?
The EU was set up in the aftermath of World War Two to bring peace, stability and prosperity to Europe.

What are the rights of the EU' citizens?
In addition to the rights that a democratic system gives, thanks to the European Union, citizens of its Member States can travel, living and working anywhere in the EU.

Which is the European Union role on the world stage? Europeans have more influence on the world stage when they speak with a single voice. EU countries work

closely together on trade issues and development policy. The EU is also developing a common foreign and defence policy. In economic, trade and monetary terms, the European Union has become a major world power. It has considerable influence within international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the specialised bodies of the United Nations (UN), and at world summits on the environment and development.

What future for Europe?
Today EU covers a whole continent. It has to represent the interests of European citizens in a globalised world. To make the EU act more effectively on our behalf, a new treaty, the Lisbon Treaty, has been signed by the EU leaders. If ratified by all member states, it is expected to provide the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and citizens' demands.

'A day will come when all the nations of this continent, without losing their distinct qualities or their glorious individuality, will fuse together in a higher unity and form the European brotherhood. A day will come when the only battlefield will be the marketplace for competing ideas. A day will come when bullets and bombs will be replaced by votes'.

Victor Hugo spoke those prophetic words in 1849, but it took more than a century for his utopian predictions to start coming true. During that time, two world wars and countless other conflicts on European soil caused millions of deaths and there were times when all hope seemed lost. Today,

the first decade of the 21st century offers brighter prospects, but it also brings Europe new difficulties and challenges.

How has it adapted its mission and core values to the 21st century?
Europe's mission in the 21st century is to:

- provide peace, prosperity and stability for its peoples.
- overcome the divisions on the continent.
- ensure that its people can live in safety.
- promote balanced economic and social development.
- meet the challenges of globalisation and preserve the diversity of the peoples of Europe.
- uphold the values that Europeans share, such as sustainable development and a sound environment, respect for human rights and the social market economy.

"I love Europe"
'Lifelong Learning Programme' is a programme that gathers together the educational activities of the European Commission aimed at education for European active citizenship.

The programme enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. There are four sub-programmes focusing on different stages. One of them is called Comenius: Europe in the classroom.

The Comenius programme focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary schools. It is relevant for all members of the education community: pupils, teachers, parents and other educational staff.

Eight schools in eight countries, coordinated by the school IESO QUERCUS are developing the Comenius programme 'Beyond Words'.

Project coordinators have assumed the responsibility to contribute to education for European citizenship. We have used the Day of Europe to reflect on the European Union through workshops, exhibitions, worksheets and lectures. The aim was to bring the EU closer to our education community: teachers, students and parents. We believe that the feeling of European citizenship will be developed more easily if we feel that the European Union is an institution close to us, and the first step to achieve this is knowing it.

Domingo González Calzada
Secretario del IESO Quercus
Profesor de Lengua Castellana y Literatura
Coordinador del Proyecto Comenius
dgonzalez@e-quercus.es

