



PES Briefing: Libertas

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1. The product of the anti-Lisbon Treaty campaign in Ireland

Led and funded by previously unheard-of **businessman Declan Ganley**, Libertas originally presented itself as a think-tank.

The Libertas campaign focused on claims that the Lisbon Treaty was undemocratic and bad for the Irish economy, pointing in particular to the prospect of future tax harmonisation. The group also argued that the treaty would erode Irish sovereignty and remove the requirement that the government put future major changes at EU-level to the electorate.

Libertas skilfully used an **“Us vs Them” rhetoric**, systematically defining the debate as a choice between the will of the people on one hand and an undemocratic Brussels establishment on the other.

Libertas **played on people's fears**, claiming for example that the Lisbon Treaty would allow for the detention of three-year-olds and reintroduction of the death penalty.

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, **Ganley claimed that he was a devout pro-European**. That is what was truly new in the Libertas approach, and probably the main reason for its success. Ganley said that although he had supported previous EU treaties, something changed when he read the EU Constitution, the precursor to the Lisbon Treaty. **Ganley insists he is not a eurosceptic**: “I am pro-Europe. Libertas is pro-Europe. I believe the majority of citizens want this project to succeed but it must be rooted in democratic accountability. We are not eurosceptic; we are very pro-European.” This latter claim is doubtful in view of the false claims Libertas makes to attack the EU and the well-known eurosceptic figures that have subsequently showed support to the Libertas movement.

In the end, during the Lisbon Treaty campaign in Ireland, the pro-treaty side spent so much energy refuting the reasons to vote ‘No’ that it left little time to communicate the reasons to vote ‘Yes’. There is a risk in some countries that this could happen again at the European elections in June; Libertas focusing the campaign on institutional issues while shifting the focus away from PES campaigning themes such as European cooperation to tackle the financial and economic crisis.

Though they have been running a highly visible campaign across Ireland, Libertas are failing to see the benefit of it and may not obtain a seat in the European Parliament. Declan Ganley who is running in the North West constituency, is polling at just 9%, a score he would need to double to be elected. The Libertas candidate in Ireland East, Raymond O’Malley, received just 3% preferences while their candidate in Dublin, Caroline Simons fares even worse, polling at 1%.¹ Ganley himself has stated that should he fail to be elected he will not play a role in the second Lisbon Treaty referendum in Ireland.

In addition to their poor polling results, another blow for Libertas in Ireland has come in the form of the public pronouncements of Naoise Nunn, their former Executive Director, who resigned last September. Nunn is now in favour of a Yes vote in the next referendum. Acknowledging that “The circumstances have changed: internationally, economically, financially and domestically”. He said that a second rejection of the Lisbon Treaty would be “dangerous for the country”.²

¹ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2009/0516/1224246701442.html?via=mr>

² <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2009/0428/1224245518261.html>

2. Libertas as a European party

Libertas was set up as a European political party in December 2008 with the aim of transforming this year's European Parliament elections into a pan-European referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

2.1. Brussels elite bashing

Behind its modern looks, Libertas actually uses traditional fringe party tactics: attacking the political establishment, undermining its legitimacy, slamming bureaucracy and advocating more democracy and transparency.

Declan Ganley went as far as accusing the European Commission and more generally what he calls the "Brussels elite" of being responsible for the economic crisis, through its "tyranny of mediocrity".

When it was pointed out that Ganley **puts elected MEPs in the category "Brussels elite" without having been elected himself**, he awkwardly detailed his conception of what he means by Brussels elite: "We very much include the Commission in the term 'Brussels elite,' and also the lobbyists that have extraordinarily comfortable relationships there in Brussels – many people don't understand or know about that. We're speaking about MEPs who get elected and within weeks, jump on the gravy train and forget about the people who put them there in the first place."

Ganley's strategy is to systematically undermine the legitimacy and image of MEPs who are currently in office.

This was very clear in **Libertas' recent attempt to obtain funding from the European Parliament for recognition as a pan-European political party**. The intrigue started when Libertas issued a press release saying it welcomed the European Parliament's "upcoming decision" to recognise it as a European political party. The problem was that the decision had not been taken yet. EU rules require that, to be eligible for EU funding, a party's founding documents must have signatories from at least seven EU member states and a quarter of the total number of states. Libertas said it had the support of British peer Lord Alton, three MEPs - Philippe de Villiers and Paul-Marie Couteaux, both French members, and Greek deputy Georgios Georgiou - Timo Soini, Igor Grazin and Hristov Kuminev, MPs in Finland, Estonia and Bulgaria respectively, and Cyprian Gutkowski, a regional assembly member in Poland. However, Estonian MP Igor Gräzin and Bulgarian MP Mintcho Hristov Kuminev denied they had signed the documents giving their support to Libertas, thus making Libertas ineligible. Libertas accused MEPs of putting pressure on Gräzin and Kouminev to withdraw their support for the group and even published the image of what it claimed was Gräzin's signature online.

Ganley used the opportunity of the buzz created by this funding refusal to spread Libertas' populist rhetoric: "This hypocrisy is the very reason why right across Europe, people are looking for a new kind of politics. Libertas will not be deterred from its aim of bringing a message of change and reform to the people of Europe this summer, and these disgusting and cowardly tactics only underline the fact that Europe's detached elite know that their time is running out." He added: "We deplore the corrupt, dishonest and anti-democratic forces that are pushing [the signatories] to renounce their support."³

Since the incident, Ganley has continued to accuse MEPs and the European Parliament of undemocratic and illegal acts: "The fact that these people are anti-democrats is something that voters across Europe need to be aware of and these people need to be exposed for the dishonest people that they are, and we are exposing them."

In the end, the incident gave a great opportunity for Ganley to obtain the attention of the press and increase exposure for provocative statements such as: "What they are doing is really serious, and actually helps us expose the type of behaviour and things that are wrong with what's going on here in Brussels."⁴

³ <http://www.europeanvoice.com/CWS/Index.aspx?PageID=214&articleID=63868>

⁴ <http://www.theparliament.com/latestnews/news-article/newsarticle/ganley-eu-parliament-trying-to-stymie-libertas-party-bid/>

2.2. The lack of political programme

Libertas created another buzz when, on Labour Day, they had Polish Nobel Prize laureate Lech Walesa as a key note speaker at their first European convention. His appearance – and all the controversy it triggered – successfully hid the fact that **Libertas failed to present a political programme for the European elections**. Declan Ganley had however announced that Libertas’s policy manifesto would be published on the occasion of this event.

Gathered in Rome, speakers talked in generalities about themes such as democracy, freedom and transparency while pledging to never accept the Lisbon treaty. Their speeches were heavy on big words such as democracy and freedom but light on policy detail, especially on the burning topic of the moment – the state of Europe’s economy. The event culminated in lead representatives and candidates running for election across the EU27 signing the Libertas Petition “Should you get to vote on any new European treaty?”⁵. Declan Ganley said Libertas has four policies which only it can deliver to voters in June’s EU elections – accountability, value for money, full disclosure and elected politicians making EU law. On the policy section of Libertas’ website, it still says that the Libertas programme for a better Europe will be published in the coming weeks, with the European elections to take place in just over two weeks. For now, the Libertas “programme” is half-a-page long:

“What Libertas wants to change to make Europe better for you:

Libertas wants democracy: not one European Union law should be passed without a positive vote in the European Parliament. Laws have to be approved, either by a national parliament and or the European Parliament. Laws made by unaccountable, unelected civil servants do not belong to a democracy.

Libertas wants accountability: any person who has the power to decide on a law must be accountable at the ballot box. The citizens will decide if that person’s actions and decisions are worthy of their votes.

Libertas wants transparency: without good reason to do so otherwise, all law making must be done in public.

Libertas wants a strong Treaty: The Lisbon Treaty would ensure that those who govern Europe are even less accountable to the people than they are now. Europe needs a strong treaty. A treaty that is clear to Europe’s people and that is supported at the ballot box by Europe’s people. A short and readable basic treaty, no longer than 25 pages. A treaty that motivates people to read it, understand it and vote on it.

The Lisbon Treaty is bad for the people of Europe:

The Lisbon Treaty – both in its content and in how its masters planned to enforce it – would do nothing to bring the European Union closer to its people. Despite earlier promises of referenda from many country leaders, Ireland was the only Member State that asked its people to reject or accept the Treaty. Libertas led the ‘no’ campaign in Ireland. With an unexpectedly high voter turnout, the Irish people rejected the Lisbon Treaty. According to European Union law, this means that the Treaty will not come into power.

The EU does not respect democracy

In an appalling rejection of the democratic choice of the people, the EU has refused to accept that the Lisbon Treaty is dead. Instead the Irish government, encouraged by elites in Brussels and throughout European capitals, want to ask the people to vote again. And this time, they want the people to accept what will be bad for them and bad for the future of the European Union.”

Quite surprisingly though, Robin Matthews, **the British Libertas leader, announced that a 25-page constitutional document drafted by Libertas would be published after the elections**⁶.

⁵http://libertas.eu/index.php?option=com_chronocontact&chronoformname=emailcamp001&l=en&s=gb&template=blank

⁶<http://mondediplo.com/blogs/european-elections-trust-libertas>

Although Ganley claims that he is pro-European, and argues that the issue of democracy transcends political orientation, and as such, big enough to justify the creation of a dedicated party, the fact he allied himself with well-known right-wing eurosceptics clearly shows that **Libertas is a right-wing eurosceptic movement**. Moreover, Ganley himself has in the past made large donations to the centre-right Fianna Fail, Ireland's main political party⁷. He also mentioned several times that Libertas would promote an economic environment that encourages SMEs to take risks⁸.

Libertas's attempt at becoming a pan-European party seems to be jeopardised by its lack of homogeneity: gathering together pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics, unable to articulate coherent positions beyond that of democracy, Libertas sounds like a recipe for failure in the European Parliament.

3. Libertas's allies for the European elections

3.1. Austria

In February, Declan Ganley had announced that Libertas would run for the European Parliament election in Austria. However so far Libertas' plans to form an alliance with an Austrian party have proved unsuccessful. Neither Hans-Peter Martin nor other EU sceptical parties are interested in collaborating with Libertas.

3.2. Bulgaria

Libertas was denied registration in **Bulgaria** as it submitted its list to the electoral commission without paying the registration fee.⁹

3.3. Czech Republic

The President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus, has expressed his support for Libertas¹⁰. Well known for his eurosceptic stances, President Klaus is notorious for likening the EU to the Soviet Union. Recently, Klaus left the party he co-founded, the Czech Civic Democrat party (ODS), the dominant force in the country's ruling coalition, because of disagreements over the EU. Klaus is a staunch opponent of the Lisbon treaty. Klaus is also a strong critic of the EU's drive to combat climate change, dismissing global warming as a "very dangerous theory"¹¹.

Two new eurosceptic political parties have registered since the beginning of the year in the Czech Republic, the first of which appears to have links to Libertas: Vladimír Železný's Libertas.cz and Petr Mach's Party of Free Citizens (SSO).

Libertas.cz is understood to be a sister party of Declan Ganley's Libertas¹². However, it was founded by highly controversial MEP Vladimír Železný without the prior formal approval of Declan Ganley or his party headquarters in Brussels. Železný distanced himself from Ganley, saying: "We have our own Ganley and he is totally consistent. It's Václav Klaus." Železný sees the Czech president as the "intellectual leader of all who point at the desperate lack of democracy in the EU"¹³. Libertas.cz is seeking to cooperate with the SSO by developing a common list of candidates. Zelezny was sentenced for tax evasion recently and offered his resignation as party chair, but has let the party "persuade" him to run in the EP elections anyway.¹⁴

⁷ <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/the-man-with-a-lisbon-agenda/61632.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/libertas-founder-sees-electoral-niche-germany/article-179369>

⁹ http://peoplekorps.blogspot.com/2009_05_01_archive.html

¹⁰ <http://www.europeanvoice.com/folder/czechpresidency/97.aspx?artid=63377>

¹¹ <http://www.europeanvoice.com/folder/czechpresidency/97.aspx?artid=63377>

¹² <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/czech-eurosceptic-parties-run-eu-elections/article-179409>

¹³ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/czech-eurosceptic-parties-run-eu-elections/article-179409>

¹⁴ <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/czech-press-survey-may-14/376857>


A media businessman: Vladimír Železný was the first CEO of TV NOVA, a Czech television station that became popular for broadcasting US shows like “Baywatch” or featuring naked women presenting the weather forecast ¹⁵. He has been a member of the European Parliament since 2004. As a media mogul with political influence, he has been compared to Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi. He won the licence to broadcast TV Nova in 1994 and attracted €140 million investment from Ronald Lauder, one of the world’s richest men and heir to the Estée Lauder empire. ¹⁶ In 2008 he told Prague Radio “I left the Czech Republic for Brussels as a Eurorealist, Eurosceptical politician, and now I am a fierce Eurosceptic. It’s an over-regulated environment which strongly resembles what we know from our communist past.”¹⁷ Vladimír Železný was elected to the Czech Senate in 2004 under suspicions that he was seeking parliamentary immunity, in relations with his public falling out with Ronald Lauder in 1999, which gave him the opportunity to take full control of TV NOVA, but also caused Mr Lauder to later successfully sue Mr Zelezny and the Czech government, which had to pay his company €353 million in compensation. By this time, Mr Zelezny had sold on his stake in Nova TV to another firm. He has subsequently been pursued for tax evasion and abuse of creditors over the affair and several court cases are pending. In 2005 he founded “Independent Democrats”, a small populist party advocating strict immigration policies, a review of the country’s relationship with the European Union, and the abolition of the Senate, which Czech sources describe as a one man operation ¹⁸.

The Free Citizens Party could yet be the “true” Libertas party. The decision to establish a new political party started after he left the ruling Civic Democratic Party (ODS, the party of former Prime Minister Topolánek) at the end of 2007. The ultimate decision came on 4th of December 2008 when ODS decided to support the Lisbon treaty, and President Klaus left. Peter Mach is head of the preparatory committee of the new party.

Peter Mach is an economist and a politician. He worked as an executive director of the Center for Economics and Politics in Prague from 1999 to 2009 and as an external economic advisor to the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus from 2003 to 2007. He shares his views on the free market economy and is also a Eurosceptic. Since 1998 he is the Publisher and Editor of the economic “Laissez-Faire” newsletter. He is also the director of the think tank founded by Vaclav Klaus, Center for Economics and Politics (CEP) and he is presented as “the expected front man of the future conservative party with a close affiliation to President Klaus”. ¹⁹

Profiles

	Vladimír Železný, Libertas.cz
	2002: Election to the Czech Senate
	2004: Election to the European Parliament
	2005: Founder of Independent Democrats
	2009: Launches Libertas.cz
Member of the Independence and Democracy Group (IND/DEM) in the European Parliament.	

	Peter Mach, Free Citizens’ Party
	2007: leaves ODS
	2008: creation of the Free Citizens party

¹⁵ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0122/1232474672730.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0122/1232474672730.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0122/1232474672730.html>


¹⁸ <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0122/1232474672730.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.petrmach.cz/cze/prispevek.php?ID=408%20>

3.4. Estonia

Libertas Estonia was formed on 2 February 2009 drawing on the remaining of 'Democrats – Estonian Democratic Party', which was at the risk of losing its party status due to low membership. Head of list Jüri Estam is well-known for his strong nationalist views.

Profile

	Jüri Estam , #1 Estonia Born in 1951. 1971 – 1975: US Army 1979 – 1989 : Correspondent with Radio Free Europe 1991 – 1999: Journalist
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3.5. France

In France, the Libertas list is an Alliance of de Villiers' *Mouvement pour la France* (nationalist party) and Nihous' *Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Traditions* (Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Traditions), both opponents to the Constitutional Treaty. Their main argument is that Brussels is costing too much money to the taxpayers. They see themselves as the defenders of "French values" and national cultural heritage, and are strong opponents to having Turkey within the EU. During Libertas.eu Convention in Rome on 1st of May 2009, de Villiers said the perimeters of Europe must be defined "once and for all" and that it is "out of the question" for Turkey to join²⁰. Philippe de Villiers even developed a rhetoric of fear of the "islamisation" of Europe, displayed in various interviews, his blog when he expresses his pride to have opened the debate on "islamisation of spirits" in France where he will "defend the Republic against Islamism"²¹ and in one his books "Les mosquées de Roissy – Révélations sur l'islamisation en France" ("Mosqs of Roissy – Revelations on Islamisation in France"), in which he also warns against "islamist censorship" over school programmes and the way young people are taught about religions²².

Philippe de Villiers is a well-known face in French politics, having contested two presidential elections on the far-right, eurosceptic platform of his *Mouvement pour la France* (MPF) party. His attacks on Islam and Muslim immigrants regularly generate controversy. His strong catholic views on society are also often seen as too radical on both sides of the political landscape and Font National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has based part of his presidential campaign in 2007 on the fact that de Villiers' battle against immigration and his ideas for the defense of traditional values (Family, (Catholic) Religion and Work) are in fact his own, stolen from his own programme to steal his electorate. He himself rather angrily remarked that "de Villiers walks like Le Pen, talks like Le Pen, swims in the "tricolor" like Le Pen"²³.

Mouvement pour la France (MPF) is a conservative and eurosceptic party, founded in 1994, with a marked regional stronghold in the Vendée (North West of France). Leader Philippe de Villiers (who coined the phrase "polish plumber) was once communications minister under Jacques Chirac. Standing by itself in the 2004 European elections, MPF obtained 7.6% of the vote and returned three MEPs. The party is a member of the Independence and Democracy Group (IND/DEM) in the European Parliament.

CPNT is a small agrarianist party which aims to defend the traditional values of rural France. The party states it is neither right or left but represents rural people and their right to "live in peace in the countryside"²⁴, often using a rhetoric generally used to talk about a discriminated and economically disadvantaged minority. The leader is the unique face and voice through which the party expresses its ideas. Leader Frédéric Nihous was a candidate in the 2007 presidential election. With a campaign mainly focused on hunters, hunting quotas and hunters rights against "Brussels" and the French State's

²⁰ <http://euobserver.com/883/28054>

²¹ <http://villiers2007.over-blog.com/article-4324028-6.html>


²² De Villier, P. *Les mosquées de Roissy*, Albin Michel (19 Avril 2006) ISBN-10: 2226172645 ISBN-13: 978-2226172648


²³ http://www.fn06.net/villiers_menteur.html?04ea17ebfe92d9dff4d446649b2124a3=83cbbea9bfeb6eea1a7e7695b0a5538a

²⁴ <http://www.pourquivoter.com/CPNT.html>

“technocrats”, disguised as a defense for nature and a specific concern for the preservation of the environment (he often declared “I am a true environmentalist, not a living room environmentalist”²⁵), he obtained 1.15% of the vote.

Profiles

	Frédéric Nihous, # 1 Libertas Nord-Ouest
	42 years old, European law teacher
	2007: candidate to the presidential election
	2008- ongoing : President of <i>Chasse – Pêche - Nature et Traditions</i>

	Philippe de Villiers, #1 Libertas Ouest
	60 years old
	1986 : Junior Minister for Culture
	1987 - : Election to the national Parliament
	1997 : Founder of Mouvement pour la France
	2004- : Election to the European Parliament
2007: candidate to the Presidential election	
Member of the Independence and Democracy Group (IND/DEM) in the European parliament	

3.6. Germany

“Libertas Germany” is the name given to the activities of Declan Ganley’s Libertas.eu in Germany. It may refer to Libertas Partei Deutschland (LPD), the German member party of Libertas.eu which has failed to gather enough certified signatures to contend the 2009 European Parliament elections, described by the Irish Times as “a major blow to the organisation’s pan-European ambitions”²⁶. Libertas.eu has an affiliate party AUF - Partei für Arbeit, Umwelt und Familie, the “Party for Work, Environment and Family – Christians for Germany”, which will be running in the elections.

The AUF party has no visibility or representation in Germany or at European level. It is a populist Christian party and its campaign is focused on family values and national identity. The party presents itself as having a “social-Christian” profile and wants marriage and family at the centre of their policies. It is a member of European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), a Christian-based European political association. AUF was the result of “Aufbruch 2009” (Awakening 2009) emanated from the ECPM Congresses in 2004 and 2005.

The AUF Partei has received the endorsement and support of Libertas for its campaign, its candidates and its programme. The AUF campaign will be run on its own independent budget, and the future AUF parliamentarians are meant to join the Libertas parliamentary group in the European Parliament. The AUF Partei presents more than ten candidates, the head of the list being Dieter Burr, who calls for a national referendum to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, and for less bureaucracy in Brussels. The Auf Partei has a short European election manifesto with vague references to EU politics, such as the mention of ‘a Europe of nations’, or ‘more transparency, less bureaucracy’ but most of all covers issues such as “people’s sovereignty”²⁷. Most issues are national, as it claims: “The AUF party is in favour of a Europe which is a community of democratic nations, led in accordance with the constitutional principles, consistent with freedom of opinion and cultural diversity.”

²⁵ <http://www.pourquivoter.com/CPNT.html>

²⁶ http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0402/1224243854493_pf.html

²⁷ http://www.auf-partei.de/fileadmin/content/Sonstiges/AUF_Europawahlprogramm_2009_v2009-05-10-1.pdf

The AUF Partei has so far campaigned with famous German people, especially Eva Herman, who was Guest Speaker together with Declan Ganley during a campaign event on the 16th May, and is a regular feature of the campaign's website with texts and videos.²⁸ Eva Herman is a controversial figure. The books she writes are criticised by women-rights activists as being extremely conservative on gender equality issues, and being part of an "anti-feminist" front rising in the country. She criticised the 1968 movement in Germany as having destroyed motherhood values and redefined family traditions, which resulted in her being accused of promoting Nazi views of society. A successful anchorwoman of the popular show *Tagesschau*, she took her public by surprise when she started expressing positive comments about the Nazi regime on TV: "It was a gruesome time with a totally crazy and highly dangerous leader who led the Germans into ruin as we all know, but there was at the time also something good, and that is the values, that is the children, that is the families, that is a togetherness -- it was all abolished, there was nothing left."²⁹ She refers to the Bible, condemn abortion and strongly attacks the way working women live arguing their obligations towards their family and children are not fulfilled. She publishes books based on the rejection of emancipation, career success and self-fulfillment, replacing them with the values of motherhood, maintaining a home and be a good marriage partner. Eva Herman wrote: "Let's just say it loud, we women have overburdened ourselves -- we allowed ourselves to be too easily seduced by career opportunities."³⁰ She has been at the centre of a scandal in relations to her declarations, and caused her employer (NDR TV Channel) to lay her off. She is now a host at shows organised by various organisations. Her participation in a meeting of the German Catholic Forum in 2005 has caused outrage among the Jews community.³¹ The head of the catholic conference described her as a "martyr in the battle for marriage, family and children", while the forum's chairman, Hubert Gindert, defended his decision to invite Herman telling the newspaper *Der Spiegel* "in our view, she says the right things about the subject of raising families,". Eva Herman encourages women to leave professional work environments for the "colorful world of children" and to discover their "destiny of nurturing the home environment."³²

3.7. Greece

Libertas Greece is the name given to the activities of Libertas.eu in Greece. It is not a political party in its own right. Candidates from the Liberal Party intend to contend the 2009 European Parliament elections in Greece under a common list branded with the Libertas identity.

Manolis Kalligiannis, a retired military officer and the President of the Liberal Party, attended Libertas.eu's Rome convention on 1 May 2009. He compared Europe to a "whore," saying it would be neither "decent" nor "moral" to negotiate with Turkey, which is "militarily occupying" 40 percent of Cyprus³³. When the lists for the 2009 Elections were published, it transpired that the Liberal Party would run for those elections under a Libertas list.

3.8. Italy

On the occasion of the pan-European Convention of Libertas in Rome on May 1st, the list Pole of Autonomy, bringing together The Right, Movement for Autonomies, Centre Alliance and Pensioners Party, declared its support for Libertas and its willingness to join an EP Group that Libertas intends to build after the June elections. Spokespersons on this decision, were The Right president Teodoro Buontempo and Movement for Autonomies MP Carmelo Lomonte. The list Pole of Autonomy is not a Libertas list and there is no Libertas political party as such. Libertas does not have a defined political identity in Italy, nor does it have any recognition, support or media presence. The current Libertas movement is unknown to the wider public. Given the political affiliation of parties currently represented in the European Parliament, with The Right sitting in the UEN and the Pensioners Party sitting in the EPP, the potential for disagreement on the future Group affiliation of elected candidates in the EP is very high. Future representation in the EP is not assured with the current national threshold set at 4%.

²⁸ <http://www.auf-partei.de/newsdetails/eva-herman-ich-spreche-von-gott-den-man-aus-der-europaeischen-verfassung-gestrichen-hat/>

²⁹ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,510846,00.html>

³⁰ <http://www.kath.net/detail.php?id=16301>

³¹ <http://www.whitewomenonly.com/Eva%20Herman.htm>

³² <http://www.kath.net/detail.php?id=16301>

³³ <http://euobserver.com/883/28054>

3.9. Lithuania

In Lithuania, Libertas announced at a press conference it would submit a joint list together with the populist National Revival Party, which is one of the co-governing parties and comprises numerous artists and show-business personalities. However, NRP submitted its own list without candidates proposed by Libertas.³⁴

The Party is headed by a former Lithuanian performer and producer Arūnas Valinskas who is the current Speaker of Seimas (since 2008).

Libertas has also been mulling a coalition with the populist Order and Justice (whose leader, Rolandas Paksas, was removed from the presidential office in an impeachment procedure) and the Labour Party (whose leader, Russian-born businessman, Viktoras Uspaskich had to resign from the position as a Minister of Economy over corruption allegations).

3.10. Malta

It was reported on 31 December 2008 that Malta's Azzjoni Nazzjonali (AN, National Action) was considering contesting the 2009 European Parliament elections under the Libertas banner. National Action is considered a conservative-neoliberal, even extreme far-right party on certain issues.³⁵ Its leader said that preliminary discussions had taken place but nothing had been concluded.

Malta Today stated on Sunday 8 February 2009 that Mary Gauci, the former vice-president of Azzjoni Nazzjonali, would run as the Maltese candidate for Libertas. She had originally joined AN when she heard they would set up a TV station and she wanted to become involved in the media again (she hosted a radio show for eight years).³⁶ Ganley held a press conference on 21 March 2009 in which the Libertas Malta party, led by Mary Gauci, was announced.

Asked why she chose Libertas, she said: "I left AN because I found a better platform to deliver my message. I realised Libertas was expressing its concerns over the lack of democracy within the EU, and the way the endorsement of the Lisbon Treaty was handled. They share my same frustrations in this regard. I'm hurt when people are not explained the hard facts. If we use the proper language, everyone will understand. Politicians owe this to the public who elected them to power, and people expect it. A lot of people cannot see why Maltese politicians have become puppets of the EU. People have their own minds and they need to have a say. My goal is to make the EU recognise this."³⁷ She expressed a very decisive view on immigration, saying she had "zero tolerance (...) to the fact that people are coming to Malta and we have nowhere to put them". "The solution is that we should force the EU to see what the problem in Malta is to forbid people coming to our shores".³⁸

3.11. The Netherlands

The Libertas list in the Netherlands is to be conducted by 28-year-old ultra-liberal Eline van de Broek. Libertas has not yet announced other candidates on the list although their website said mid-April that further candidates would be announced in the coming weeks.

Journalist and political analyst, Eline van de Broek was one of the leaders of the 'no' campaign against the European Constitution during the 2005 referendum campaign. Van den Broek studied politics and journalism and owns her own consulting firm. She has worked for conservative think-tanks such as the Edmund Burke foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. She has also worked as an assistant to liberal MEP Toine Manders. Economically very liberal minded, Van den Broek used to be a member of the Dutch liberal party VVD.

A recent controversy was created when she wrote on her blog that she is in favour of the use of torture when questioning alleged terrorists. When security services are "almost entirely convinced that a group of

³⁴ Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, http://www.vrk.lt/rinkimai/404_lt/KandidatuSarasai/RinkimuOrganizacija3612.html

³⁵ Source: Labour Party Malta International Secretariat

³⁶ <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2009/04/19/interview.html>

³⁷ <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2009/04/19/interview.html>

³⁸ <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2009/04/19/interview.html>

terrorists wants to commit an attack” all means are allowed to prevent such a terrorist attack, she went on. “Normal methods will not deter these ruthless people”. She concluded the article by stating that torture is allowed if it helps to protect citizens³⁹.

3.12. Poland

The Polish Libertas branch will run people from the far-right, nationalist League of Polish Families party and its youth movement, Młodzież Wszechpolska, and from the Forward Poland – Piast party. The list will feature current LPF MEPs Dariusz Grabowski and Zdzisław Podkański as well as former MPs from different right-wing parties, including Anna Sobecka from Law and Justice and representatives of the co-ruling Polish People’s Party. Neither the League of Polish Families or Forward Polska – Piast are currently represented in the national parliament and lack the support to breach the 5 % electoral threshold on their own.

Polish law forbids foreign funding of election campaigns. Instead, Libertas gathers the support of discredited (League of Polish Families, Forward Polska – Piast, Artur Zawisza) or disgruntled (Anna Sobecka) candidates. According to the Polish elitist newspaper ‘Gazeta Wyborcza’, the candidates have promised to call for a resolution on compensation by Germany of war crimes. They also want to position Libertas as a party for Polish traditions and Catholicism. Candidates Anna Sobecka and Wojciech Wierzejski support restoration of the death penalty.

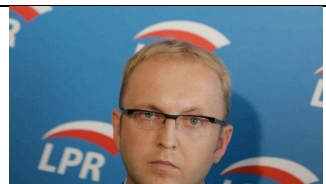
On 13 May, the ‘Gazeta Wyborcza’ published an article criticising the Polish public television ‘TVP’ (whose President was appointed by the then co-ruling League of Polish Families) for promoting Libertas by giving it as much media attention as the established parties (in the week of 10th to 14th of May, its representatives appeared in the news programmes more often than PES Member party SLD). The article featured a list of examples pointing to biased and uncritical coverage. On 14 May, ‘GW’ published statements of defiant TVP journalists complaining on lobby from senior management to present news stories designed for the sole purpose of promoting Libertas’ candidates.⁴⁰

Libertas failed to obtain the endorsement of far-right Catholic radio station, ‘Radio Maryja’⁴¹, despite featuring a large number of candidates closely linked to the station (e.g. Sobecka, Bender, Kozłowski). The so-called “pan-European” party was not perceived as Polish enough.

In 2007, Maciej Giertych, member of the Polish League of Family and father of the current leader, current member of the National Parliament and of the European Parliament (where he seats as an independent since 2004) sparked outrage among European Union officials and Jewish organizations by publishing a brochure called “Civilisations at war in Europe” that claimed that Jews are “biologically different” and “create their own ghettos”. Accessorily, he is an honorary member of the Daylight Origins Society, a creationist organisation based in the United Kingdom.⁴²

Amnesty International expressed concern about head of list Wojciech Wierzejski for his homophobic utterances, encouraging violence against the participants of Warsaw Gay Pride 2006 in interviews with the press (‘Warsaw Pact 2006’)⁴³. He said: "If the deviants will start demonstrating, they need to be bashed with a thick stick." He specifically threatened German politicians who might join the march. These comments caused public focus in Poland and throughout Europe. He also called the abolition of death sentence “anachronistic”, as mentioned in Amnesty International report for 2007 published on the UNHCR report.⁴⁴ He was a candidate in the 2006 elections for President of Warsaw, he received 0.34 % of the vote.

Profile

	Wojciech Wierzejski, #1 Małopolskie and Świętokrzyskie
	Born in 1976 1993 – 2000 Member and Chairman of Młodzież Wszechpolska 2001 - : Member of Ligue of Polish Families 2004: Election to the European Parliament 2006: Candidate in the presidential election

³⁹ <http://www.eline.info/news/30/55/Heiligt-het-doel-de-middelen/>

⁴⁰ <http://wyborcza.pl/8,76842,6606254.html>

⁴¹ http://wyborcza.pl/1,97619,6596206,PiS_kontra_Libertas_czyli_awanturna_o_Basie.html

⁴² <http://www.theotokos.org.uk/pages/creation/daylight/daylight.html>

⁴³ http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session1/PL/AI_POL_UPR_S1_2008anx_EUR%2037_001_2006.pdf

⁴⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,AMNESTY,,POL,46558edd20,0.html>

	2007: Election to the National Parliament
	Member of the Independence and Democracy Group (IND/DEM) in the European parliament.

3.13. Portugal

Libertas Portugal is the name given to the activities of Declan Ganley's Libertas.eu in Portugal. Unlike Libertas in other countries, Libertas Portugal is not a political party in its own right. Instead, candidates with no national party affiliation and candidates from Movimento Partido da Terra^[1] intend to contend the 2009 European Parliament elections in Portugal under a common list branded with the Libertas identity. The candidates retain their membership of their national parties and the national parties retain their legal identity.

Libertas.eu held a press conference in Lisbon on 29 April 2009. During that press conference, Ganley introduced Pedro Quartin Graça as the head of the Libertas List and named Antonio Ferro as number two on the list. Graça is the president of Movimento Partido da Terra (MPT). MPT have a budget of €1.5 million for the 2009 European Parliament elections.

Libertas.eu also posted (on the Portugal section of its website) an essay entitled "Que Europa queremos nós? (What Europe do we want?)" by David Garcia, the coordinator of Projecto Democracia Real (Real Democracy Project).

MPT registered its list with Portugal's Constitutional Court on 27 April 2009. Graça presented the stance MPT would take for the elections: accountability, transparency, and the pursuit of a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. When asked his position on whether José Manuel Barroso (former Prime Minister of Portugal) should run for a second term as President of the European Commission, Graça said that was a matter for Libertas.eu.

The party has currently two representatives in the Assembly of the Republic, Pedro Quartin Graça and Luís Carloto Marques, elected on the lists of the Social Democratic Party, following an agreement with its then leader, Pedro Santana Lopes.

The President of the Board is Pedro Quartin Graça and the Honorary President is Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles.

The party has participated several times in coalitions with the major right wing parties in the country, such as the Social Democratic Party or the People's Party.

The "Earth" Party is a green party.

3.14. Slovakia

On 15 May, Libertas announced its alliance with the coalition of Conservative Democrats of Slovakia (KDS) and the Civic Conservative Party (OKS).⁴⁵ The list features several well-known politicians from KDS and OKS. KDS was established by Vladimír Palko in 2008 as a protest to the popularity of Robert Fico's social democratic government. The party wants to promote traditional Slovak values, such as Christianity, solidarity, elderly care, and nationalism.⁴⁶

Vladimír Palko is a member of the National Council (the Parliament) and former Interior Minister of Slovakia. In 2008 he left Christian Democratic Movement, due to his scepticism and disappointment about leadership of Pavol Hrušovský, to found a new party called Conservative Democrats of Slovakia, together with three other MPs (František Mikloško, Rudolf Bauer and Pavol Minárik) who also belonged to the Christian Democrat Movement.


Participating at the Libertas.eu convention in Rome on 1st May 2009, former PM Jan Carnogursky likened the EU to Communism, which tried to "replace the sovereignty and culture of nations."⁴⁷

Profile

⁴⁵ <http://www.libertas.eu/en/news-slovakia/362-libertas-announces-alliance-in-slovakia>

⁴⁶ <http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/view/StockNews/articleid/2396335>

⁴⁷ <http://euobserver.com/883/28054>

	Vladimír Palko, #1 Slovakia
	Born in 1957. Founder of the Conservative Democrats of Slovakia.

3.15. Spain


Libertas Spain is not a political party in its own right. Instead, candidates with no national party affiliation and candidates from Citizens – Party of the Citizenry, Partido Social Demócrata and Unión del Pueblo Salmantino[1] intend to contend the 2009 European Parliament elections in Spain under a common list branded with the Libertas identity. The candidates retain their membership of their national parties and the national parties retain their legal identity.

Libertas.eu scheduled an official press conference for 17 April 2009 but details began to be leaked on 15 April 2009. Libertas.eu's candidates in Spain would stand as individuals alongside candidates from Citizens – Party of the Citizenry (usually abbreviated to "C's") under a common list branded with the Libertas identity. The name of the list was variously reported as Ciudadans en las Europeas or Libertas – Ciudadanos de España or Ciudadanos – Partido de la Ciudadanía y Libertas.

The head of the list is Miguel Durán, a blind lawyer and businessman. He is not a member of Citizens – Party of the Citizenry, but is running as an individual member of Libertas.eu. Durán was the director of ONCE (National Organization of Blind people of Spain) between 1986 and 1993, and in 1997 was charged for alleged tax crimes committed during his time at Telecinco, involving Silvio Berlusconi. In 2007 Durán was acquitted of all the charges, but the judge Baltasar Garzón was forced to leave all the charges pending relating to Silvio Berlusconi due to his immunity as Prime Minister of Italy. As the head of the list of LIBERTAS-Ciudadanos de España, Miguel Durán will try to become the first blind Member of the European Parliament.

The leader of Citizens – Party of the Citizenry (C's), Albert Rivera is a Catalan lawyer who worked in the bank "La Caixa" until 2006, when he became the president of this new party. In November 2006 he was the candidate of C's to the Presidency of the Generalitat de Catalunya (the regional government of Catalonia) with an electoral programme based on the national and linguistic issue, trying to reinforce the use of Spanish in Catalan institutions. They won three seats in the Catalan Parliament, but Albert Rivera's decision to run under the common Libertas list has caused a huge confrontation among the members of the party and also between Albert Rivera and the two other members of the Catalan Parliament.⁴⁸

Profile

	Miguel Durán, #1 Party of the Citizenry
	1986 – 1993 : General manager of the National Organization of the Spanish Blind, 1990 – 1996: Director of Telecinco from 1990 to 1996 1990 – 1993: Director of Onda Cero Radio from 1990 to 1993.

3.16. Sweden

In **Sweden**, Libertas approached unsuccessfully the June List (which has MEPs within the IND/DEM Group in the European Parliament), offering to run in the European elections from a joint list. The June List


⁴⁸ Source: PSOE International Secretariat

furthermore claims that representatives from Libertas offered considerable sums of money, up to €1 million, if it agreed to change its name to Junilistan-Libertas, which created a scandal.

Libertas list has been criticised in Sweden for lacking female candidates.

The head of list Stefan Kihlberg is a former member of the Parliament, elected with the populist New Democrats. He decided to leave the party in 1994 (when it took a xenophobic turn). Has also represented the Christian Democrats at a local level and was a member of the Moderate Party and the June List.

Profile

	Stefan Kihlberg, #1 Sweden
	Born 1945. Former member of New Democrats, the Christian Democrats, the Moderate Party and the June List


3.17. United Kingdom

The party's UK campaign will be led by Robin Matthews, a former soldier who left the army last year after more than 20 years' service in countries like Bosnia and Afghanistan. He recently became a strategic communications advisor in Afghanistan where he also acted as spokesman for the British Forces. He will stand as a candidate for South West England. He declared that there are "no limits" to Libertas ambitions in the UK.⁴⁹

Libertas UK is increasing its number of candidates, currently advertising 41 candidates in 12 constituencies.

Andrew Jamieson's profile advertises rather conservative values and tells that he still lives in the house where he was born, and has chosen to devote himself to sustainable small scale farming, primarily an English apple orchard. His other merits seem to be that his activity helped to make him "acutely aware of the costs and delays incurred by adherence to remote and irrelevant legislation" and that "This can only be addressed at a European level and on a pan-European basis."⁵⁰

Profiles

	Robin Matthews, Libertas UK campaign leader
	2005: Director in the Army's Department of Corporate Communications

	Andrew Jamieson, Libertas UK Chairman
	1981: securities broker, investment banker and fund manager

⁴⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7934378.stm

⁵⁰ <http://libertas-eastern.blogspot.com/2009/05/andrew-jamieson.html>

4. Who would Libertas MEPs ally with in the European Parliament?

After the European elections, the new threshold for group formation in the European Parliament will be a minimum of twenty-five MEPs coming from seven different countries. Group status gives the right to positions in parliament committees (Chair, Vice-Chair etc), access to meetings of top officials, more speaking time in plenary and greater financial resources. Non-affiliated MEPs are usually condemned to obscurity.

It is unlikely that Libertas will have enough MEPs to form a self-standing group. As a consequence, if Libertas MEPs want to have influence in the chamber, they will have to form a group with MEPs from other political parties. Libertas could find alliances in the two current political groups in the European Parliament that are not going to survive this June's elections because of the new threshold rules and internal divisions: the right-wing nationalist Union for Europe of the Nations Group (UEN) and the Eurosceptic Independence/Democracy group (IND/DEM) ([see PES Eurosceptic and EU-critic briefing](#)). Libertas could also join the new eurosceptic conservative formation, which the UK Conservatives and Czech Civic Democrats wish to form.

4.1. Alliance with the Eurosceptics

Swedish Junilistan's leader and **EUdemocrats**'s president Sören Wibe, who is candidate for the June elections, said that some form of cooperation with Libertas may be possible after the election results are known, depending on what specific policy programme Libertas outlined in the coming weeks.⁵¹ EUdemocrats (EUD) is an EU-critical European party with MEPs sitting in the IND/DEM group in the European Parliament, where the highly Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) also sits.

Such a group would comprise different factions, according to Wibe. However, he also acknowledged that he currently finds some of Libertas' ideas questionable: "He [Libertas leader Declan Ganley] said, for example, that they want an elected EU president. That is what we are against!"⁵². He argued that **Ganley "treats politics like a business, as if a political party is a commodity which you can sell with the same method in every country. My personal view is that he's a rather naïve politician"**⁵³. This comment refers to Junilistan's allegation that Libertas would have offered the Swedish party one million Euros if they changed their name to Junilistan-Libertas and ran some candidates under the Libertas banner.

The EUD president believes his group has a good chance of gaining seats in Sweden, Denmark and Ireland, as well as potential seats in France, Slovenia and Italy. In total, the EUD hopes to increase its size from six MEPs to 10 (EUD MEPs ran candidates under national party names)⁵⁴.

In policy terms, the EUD wants to devolve power from the EU back to national parliaments, limiting cooperation within the Union to a few areas. "'Yes' to Europe, 'no' to an EU state" is Wibe's message. As for the European Parliament, of which he was a member between 1995 and 1999, Wibe says he would call for returning the assembly to what it was in the 1960s and 1970s. "I wouldn't mind if it was unelected, then you'd have an assembly that met a couple of months a year and took on some resolutions," he argued⁵⁵. He also believes the introduction of the euro has worsened the economic crisis, because it fixes the exchange rates of eurozone countries.

4.2. Alliance with the Conservatives

The remainder of the UEN group – after Fianna Fail's joining of the Liberals – is likely to form a new group with the British Conservative, Czech Civic Democrats and Polish Law and Justice parties that are leaving the EPP-ED group. **The British Conservatives, ODS and Law and Justice party** are currently in talks with several smaller parties to form a new anti-EU integration group after the elections next month. Jan

⁵¹ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/eu-democrats-chief-form-new-group-libertas/article-181024>

⁵² <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/eu-democrats-chief-form-new-group-libertas/article-181024>

⁵³ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/eu-democrats-chief-form-new-group-libertas/article-181024>

⁵⁴ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/eu-democrats-chief-form-new-group-libertas/article-181024>

⁵⁵ <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/eu-democrats-chief-form-new-group-libertas/article-181024>

Zahradil, the head of the ODS delegation in Brussels, said that more than four smaller parties had already signed up, but do not want to go public yet. "They are junior parties, the kind that might get one, two or three MEPs in the elections," he said⁵⁶. The junior parties come from both 'old' and 'new' member states. Some of them are in the existing EPP-ED and UEN groups and some have never sent MEPs to Brussels before, the Czech politician revealed. The new group expects to get at least 65 MEPs, which would make it the fourth largest in parliament.

Zahradil said the group is also interested in taking in MEPs from the Libertas party, if Libertas politicians find themselves stranded after the EU vote. "I believe we can negotiate on some of the political issues that are now being discussed within Libertas. My feeling is, they will not make it in seven countries. If they cannot establish their own group, in my opinion this [taking in Libertas MEPs] is perfectly negotiable," he said. "I assume they wouldn't want to be 'non-inscrit'⁵⁷."

Any potential link-up with Libertas might prove tricky for the British Conservatives and Poland's Law and Justice. Both parties see themselves as part of the political mainstream despite their anti-integrationist views. Asked about the possibility of such an alliance, a spokesman for the British Conservative EU delegation said it "does not give a running commentary" on the new group's formation⁵⁸. Law and Justice also declined to speak.

But Zahradil said that some of Libertas' ideas fit in with the new group's agenda. Both sides dislike the Lisbon treaty and oppose further transfer of national sovereignty to the EU, he explained. "If the Lisbon treaty did not come into force due the German court or the Irish referendum, we could live with that. The EU does not need this treaty," the Czech politician said⁵⁹.

For its part, Libertas denied making any contingency plans for failure in the EU vote. "Our sights are firmly set on forming a Libertas group within the European Parliament," a spokeswoman said. "We are not considering other options."⁶⁰

As it is unlikely that Libertas gets enough MEPs to form a self-standing group in the European Parliament, its MEPs will either remain non-affiliated and thus powerless, or have to ally with either nationalist conservatives or Eurosceptics. The first option rules out Libertas's claim that it is neither right nor left wing, while the second rules out its claim to be pro-European.

⁵⁶ <http://euobserver.com/843/28128>

⁵⁷ <http://euobserver.com/843/28128>

⁵⁸ <http://euobserver.com/843/28128>

⁵⁹ <http://euobserver.com/843/28128>

⁶⁰ <http://euobserver.com/843/28128>