

Maastricht Manifesto marks 25 years of Treaty

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News

Students from all over Europe joined with representatives from civil society to mark the 25th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty coming into effect.



Photo credit: Roger Casale

Participants from across the EU converged on Maastricht on Thursday to sign the so-called “Maastricht Manifesto” which calls for the “fulfilment of the Maastricht promise to create a Europe of Citizens.”

The treaty was one of the most important in EU history as it paved the way for the introduction of the single currency, arguably the bloc's biggest ever achievement.

Speaking in Maastricht, former UK Labour MP Roger Casale, the co-organiser of the event, told this website, “Europe is not just a union of nation states, market and money, it is also a union of citizens.

It is up to us, the citizens of Europe, to make the vision a reality.”

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“We went back to the same building, the very same hall to sign the Maastricht Manifesto. This, for us, was significant,” Casale said.

“The Maastricht Treaty created the idea of a Europe of citizens, but it wasn't until the treaty actually came into effect on 1 November 1993, that Europeans could actually say that they were EU citizens,” he added.

Casale is the founder and CEO of New Europeans, a group that is campaigning for the rights of citizens to be respected after Brexit.

Further comment came from Theo Bovens, Governor of the Province of Limburg who opened the event, and said: “25 years ago today, we became citizens of Europe. The birth certificate was signed here in Maastricht and a new Europe was born. Today more than ever, the new Europe belongs not just to the member states of Europe but above all to the citizens.”

“The Maastricht manifesto reminds us that European unity is about peace, it is about social justice and it is also about democracy”

Hildegard Schneider, Professor of European Law at Maastricht University, said, “The Maastricht manifesto reminds us that European unity is about peace, it is about social justice and it is also about democracy.”

Another participant was Maria Laura Franciosi, an Italian journalist who was present at the signing of the Maastricht Treaty 25 years ago and who spoke at the launch of the Maastricht Manifesto.

The Brussels-based reporter said, “Then as now, no one could foresee what would happen next. Then and now it is young Europeans who hold the future of Europe in their hands.”

Luca Jahier, EESC President and Jean-Marc Roirant, General Secretary of the European Civic Forum, sent messages of support to the event as did André Schmitz-Schwarzkopf, President of the Schwarzkopf Foundation and others.

The Maastricht Manifesto campaign will tour European cities between now and the start of the European election campaign with further signing ceremonies planned in Strasbourg, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Brussels, London and Rome in the coming weeks.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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