

Introductory paper for discussion on EGP membership of the European Movement International

Background

We have twice been approached in the last few years to join the European Movement International (EMI). The organisation was founded in 1948, after the Second World War, having originally been called the Joint International Committee for European Unity.

The stated objective of EMI is to "contribute to the establishment of a united, federal Europe founded on the principles of peace, democracy, liberty, solidarity, and respect for basic human rights." There are various national associations whose objectives are differently expressed.

More information on the organisation can be found on their website <http://europeanmovement.eu>

The previous EGP Committee decided not to join as there was no consensus in favour. The current Committee revisited the issue earlier this year and decided by a majority vote to join in view of the upcoming European elections, with the provision that the next EGP Council should be asked to endorse or not this decision.

We present here two short arguments, one in favour and one against and ask Council delegates to make a definitive choice.

The case in favour

- The European Movement strives to keep alive the initiative for more integrated and democratic Europe. Tools are public information and awareness campaigns, debates and also the fact of bringing together several organisations and groups, which, even if coming from different political and social backgrounds, do share the basic need of strengthening EU integration and democracy.
- It also traditionally works on democracy and human rights (recent examples are declarations on Hungary and the proposed EU Hungarian commissioner)
- It represents an additional tool for campaigning and mobilizing around a positive idea of Europe. It is based on the activism and participation of its members. So, in a word, we can find there what we choose to find and above all we can decide to use it for what we need. Notably to enlarge the idea of EU democracy to issues which are not always at the centre of the initiative of EMI like ICE, referendum, sustainable development, etc.
- Greens have been a pro-European party for a while now and the "federal" word is in several of our documents. In any case, the EMI, differently from the Union of European Federalists, is much more of a platform than a militant organisation.
- The EMI is a place to be for us, notably in this moment in which the EU project is losing legitimacy, but not its importance.

The case against

- The message is the wrong one. The phrase "federal Europe" in their objective, as quoted above, is open to many interpretations and not all of our Member Parties would wish to subscribe to it, though the rest of the objective is self-evidently common ground amongst us.

- The benefits are not obvious. Annual membership fees for the EGP are €1250 which could be better spent elsewhere. For this we would join a club consisting inter alia of the European People's Party, the Party of European Socialists and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats.
- It has been argued in favour of membership that the EGP was the "missing link" amongst mainstream pro-European parties! At a time when the European project needs a significant change of direction, when the incoming Juncker Commission looks to be as unprogressive as its predecessor and above all when the European Parliament is set to be dominated by a grand coalition of Christian democrats and Socialists, joining them in the EMI is the last thing the Green family should do. We should instead better distinguish ourselves by independently promoting our own values and demands.
- The choice must be made democratically. Making a commitment to become a member of such an international organisation is a major step and should require the consent of both the EGP Committee and the member parties meeting in Council.