

## Let's make May 9 a public holiday – Europe Day

On 9 May 1950, the Schuman Declaration took the first step towards the integration of the European states: With this speech, ground was laid for what would later become the foundations of the actual European Union. This is why, since 1985, “Europe Day, held on 9 May every year, celebrates peace and unity in Europe”, according to the EU’s website.

The 9th of May is a public holiday for members and employees of the European institutions but it is not for other European citizens, those who really make possible the existence of our European Union. These are the citizens who are a part of the European Union as equals, participating in the election of political representatives, being directly affected by the decisions and living with the consequences. The 9th of May should be a date reaching all Europeans, not a gap between institutions and citizens. It should be a day for celebrating our Union, of which European citizens are essential, for filling each Member State with thousands of people marking this day, its history - which is our history - and sharing the boon of being and feeling European.

Aware that every Member State has the competence of establishing its own work calendar, we ask the national parliaments and the European Council, comprising the Heads of state or government of EU countries, to promote Europe Day as a public holiday. We know it is an ambitious goal, yet achievable, and that is why we believe it is necessary to call for joint action of the European institutions, political parties, social groups and civil society to explore together the best way to make it a reality.

That next year 2020 the Schuman declaration will reach its 70th anniversary further encourages us to promote the need to turn the 9th of May into an inclusive holiday. Why? To make this day a celebration for all European citizens, an appointment in which we can make known, close up, the European Union and our common past. Let Europe Day spread its forward-looking projects over the continent, fanning the pride of being European. Let's make every citizen keen to wave the EU flag as a symbol of union and progress to build our common future.

One hymn, one flag and one commemoration! Symbols unite us, silence divides us.