

2011

European Liberal Forum Annual Report



elf
European Liberal Forum
2011 Annual Report

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Letter from the President

MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff



Dear reader,

2011 was dominated by the economic and financial crisis, the implications of the Arab Spring in North Africa, as well as the challenges posed to an open and pluralist society in Hungary. Meanwhile, long-term European challenges, such as demographic decline, migration and integration demanded innovative liberal solutions.

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) addressed these themes by initiating events and publications to stimulate the liberal debate. ELF is the foundation of the European liberal family and links 33 foundations, think tanks and institutes in a network spanning Europe.

Dynamic panels of liberal policymakers, academics and young people provided meaningful impetus for the development of European public policy. Inspiring young Liberals and Liberal-minded people is a cornerstone of ELF's mission, and was clearly reflected in our 2011 activities.

Young Liberals came together at ELF events in Brussels, Poreč and Vienna to participate in lively discussions and invigorating lectures. Liberalism continues to be an appealing ideology for Europe's young people and ELF is playing a significant part in its promotion.

2011 also saw ELF committing to extending the foundation's work, not only in the EU member and official candidate countries, but throughout the European neighbourhood. I am proud of this increased scope, which promises a significant widening of our future activities.

Finally I wish to extend my appreciation for the fruitful cooperation we have enjoyed with the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) Party in the past year.

It is therefore my pleasure to introduce the 2011 European Liberal Forum Annual Report.

MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff
President

Foreword by the Executive Director

Susanne Hartig



In 2011, ELF worked tirelessly towards our goal of shaping public debate on European policy issues and serving as a liberal voice, conveying liberal values and ideas. At its international conferences, seminars and workshops, ELF covered a variety of topical issues such as the promotion of economic growth, the challenges surrounding demographic trends and the opportunities presented by migration.

ELF took up themes of particular interest to Liberals across Europe, ensuring at the same time that a European dimension was intrinsic to all ELF events conducted.

In response to the growing demand for liberal approaches to the myriad of challenges confronting Europe, ELF implemented more events than ever before.

At all ELF fora, distinctly liberal analysis was provided by Members of the European Parliament, members of national and regional parliaments as well as by academics, journalists and other stakeholders, resulting in high-level thematic debates, conclusions and policy recommendations.

Among the publications ELF produced in 2011 was a series of German papers offering liberal perspectives on a variety of socio-political issues. ELF had these papers translated into Greek in an effort to promote the liberal agenda in Greece.

I would like to express my appreciation for the contributions of ELF member organisations, speakers, authors and editors and to thank them for helping to bring a liberal Europe closer to its citizens and for promoting European integration.

Enjoy the read and continue to share in the progress of ELF in the years to come!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susanne Hartig". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Susanne Hartig
Executive Director



About us

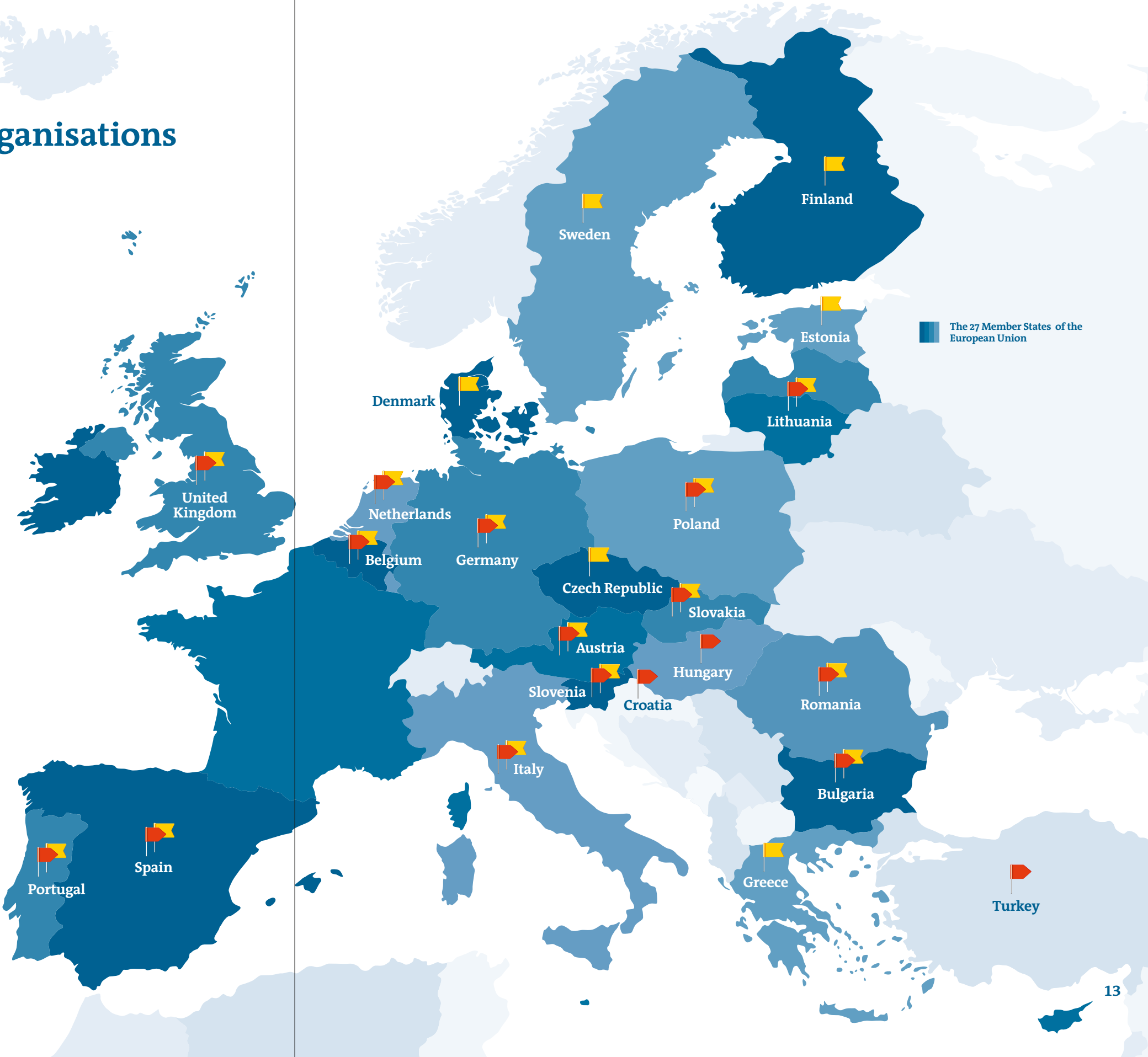
Founded in the fall of 2007, the European Liberal Forum, asbl (ELF) is the European political foundation of the liberal family.

ELF brings together liberal think tanks, political foundations and institutes from around Europe to observe, analyse and contribute to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration, through education, training, research and the promotion of active citizenship within the European Union.

ELF currently has 33 member organisations

- Galicia, Spain  **Asociación Galega para a Liberdade e a Democracia**
Galician Society for Freedom and Democracy (GALIDEM)
- Lithuania  **Atvira visvomenė ir jos draugai** | Open Society and its Friends
- Sweden  **Bertil Ohlin Institutet**
- Belgium  **Centre Jean Gol**
- United Kingdom  **CentreForum**
- Czech Republic  **Centrum Liberálních Studií** | Centre for Liberal Studies
- Finland  **Edistysmielisen tutkimuksen yhdistys r.y. e2** | Think tank e2
- pan-European  **European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)**
- Italy  **Fondazione Critica Liberale**
- Greece  **Forum for Greece**
- Sweden  **Forum för reformer och entreprenörskap**
Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (FORES)
- Germany  **Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit**
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)
- Slovenia  **Fundacija Libertas**
- Catalonia, Spain  **Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata** (Fundació CatDem)
- Poland  **Fundacja Klub Obywatelski** | Civic Club Foundation
- Poland  **Fundacja Projekt: Polska**
- The Netherlands  **Haya van Someren Stichting** | VVD International
- Romania  **Institute for Liberal Studies**
- Greece  **Kentro Fileleftheron Meleton (KEFIM)** | Liberty Forum of Greece
- Belgium  **Liberaal Kennis Centrum**
- Bulgaria  **Liberal Institute for Political Analyses (LIPA)**
- Belgium  **Liberales**
- Austria  **Liberales Zukunftsforum** | Liberal Future Forum
- Estonia  **Liberalismi Akadeemia** | Academy of Liberalism
- Finland  **Lokus**
- Portugal  **Movimento Liberal Social (MLS)**
- The Netherlands  **Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting**
- Slovak Republic  **Nadácia Liberálna spoločnosť** | Liberal Society Foundation
- Slovenia  **NOVUM – Inštitut za strateške in aplikativne študije**
NOVUM – Institute for strategic and applicable research (NOVUM)
- The Netherlands  **Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting**
- The Netherlands  **Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief** (Stichting IDI)
- Denmark  **Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA)**
- Sweden  **Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC)**

-  Countries where ELF member organisations are based
-  Countries where ELF events took place in 2011



Board of Directors



MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff

- › **President of ELF** | 2007 – present
- › **Member of the European Parliament** | 2004 – present
- › **Vice-President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the European Parliament** | 2009 – present
- › **Leader of the German Free Democrats’ delegation (FDP) in the European Parliament** | 2011 – present



MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck

- › **Vice-President of ELF** | 2007 – present
- › **Member of the European Parliament** | 1994 – 1999, 2004 – present
- › **President of the ELDR Party** | 2005 – 2011
- › **Minister of State (Belgium)** | 1995 – present



Dr Thierry Coosemans

- › **ELF Treasurer** | 2008 – present
- › **PhD in Political sciences (Université Libre de Bruxelles)**
- › **Political and electoral consultant**



Felicita Medved

- › **Member of the ELF Board of Directors** | 2010 – present
- › **Vice-President of Zares – New Politics** | 2007 – 2010
- › **President of the Board of NOVUM** | 2010 – present
- › **Independent researcher on migration, citizenship and political geography** | 2004 – present



Dr Eugenijus Gentvilas

- › **Member of the ELF Board of Directors** | 2010 – present
- › **Chair of the Board of Open Society and its Friends** | 2010 – present
- › **Former member of the European Parliament** | 2004 – 2009

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Selection of events

2011 was a busy year for ELF, with 34 projects organised throughout Europe. With more single events than ever before, ELF brought together politicians, academics and representatives of civil society and the media to discuss issues high on the agenda for Europe's Liberals.

Our events spanned a range of public policy issues. Capacity building was also at the forefront of our activities as ELF held seminars and workshops to widen our members' knowledge base of the EU and Liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe. Other projects examined topical issues such as the future of European foreign policy, Hungary's EU presidency and developments in the Euromed region.

Young people remained in focus for 2011, and many of our events looked specifically at topics of importance to Europe's younger citizens such as the exploration of Liberal answers to the current financial crisis and the threats posed by demographic decline.

Political communication in the age of social media revolution

Type of event
Series of workshops with online follow-ups

Dates
April and May 2011

Location
Poreč, Zagreb and Opatija | Croatia

Supported by
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)
Fundacja Projekt: Polska
Liberal Society Foundation

Our internet-driven society is evolving rapidly. The rise of social media is accelerating this even more. Communication, whether personal, commercial or political, is becoming shorter, denser, more scan-able and, most importantly, information-driven in nature. The future has become every English teacher's nightmare.

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube, and the proliferation of online blogs, have beyond doubt, a strong influence on how we perceive what is happening around us. Social networks are redefining the way 'digital natives' interact with each other. It is easy to forget that we are no longer even making buying decisions without consulting sites such as Google first. The certainty is that the internet is everywhere and that it is here to stay.

The perpetual dynamics, transparency and indiscriminating nature of online communication bear both great possibilities and great risks for public stakeholders. Like traditional public communication, online communication requires profound knowledge, experience and a certain skillset.

ELF's 2011 training series on online communication and social media was designed to provide essential know-how and experience of internet communication strategies for Liberal organisations. Some 70 participants from Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Serbia, and The Netherlands took part in the offline workshops in Croatia, followed by an e-learning seminar phase. Participants in working groups were able to develop ideas and concepts for feasible online campaigns in their constituencies.

The training events were led by **Toni Richard Crisolli**, an independent expert in the fields of e-learning and social media and **Igor Ostrowski**, a legal expert on digital and property rights and Fundacja Projekt: Polska board member.



Young liberals engaging on the intricacies of social media and the civil society

The blended-learning seminar provided both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in online communication. Mr Crisolli presented on the theory and the skills needed to develop successful Web 2.0 communication strategies.

He showed how to structure, organise and execute online campaigns using new technologies. More practical input was given through interactive workshops and working groups, led by Mr Ostrowski. He explained crucial workflows and gave best-practice examples based on his extensive experience within Fundacja Projekt: Polska.

The e-learning phase enabled both trainers and participants to continue their activities and interactions beyond departure. The learning participants were given access to all materials presented, as well as to a pool of related content and background information. They were encouraged to clarify open questions in discussion forums and/or raise new topics.

Enabling the participants to engage with multiple interconnected topics over a longer period of time allowed for a much more solid knowledge base to be laid and a deeper learning impact to be achieved.

Dr Christian Christ-Thilo
Project Director Western Balkans, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Project Office Belgrade

Success or failure: Review of the Hungarian EU presidency

Type of event
Conference

Dates
24 – 25 June 2011

Location
Budapest | Hungary

Supported by
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)
Liberal Society Foundation

The aim of the Success or failure: review of the Hungarian EU presidency conference was to evaluate the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the EU. At the end of Hungary’s six-month tenure, important stakeholders in the field discussed the successes and failures of the Hungarian presidency. The conference consisted of three panel discussions which sought to provide both a general evaluation and a more detailed review of two specific policy areas: press freedom and Roma society. **Margarita Starkeviciute**, former MEP and currently professor at Vilnius University, closed the conference.

The first panel provided a general overview of the presidency, and the various speakers emphasised a number of aspects. The first speaker, **István Hegedűs**, chairman of the Hungarian Europe Society, outlined the methodological and practical difficulties of assessing a task as complex as an EU presidency. While largely critical of Hungary’s presidency, his view also highlighted how the domestic and European scenes interact during a presidency. **Balázs Dénes**, chairman of the Society for the Protection of Civil Liberties (TASZ), an important Hungarian NGO, was the most critical panellist: in his view, the presidency had failed in each and every regard. A more positive evaluation was given by **Piotr Maciej Kaczyński**, research fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies.

Mr Kaczyński offered eight criteria by which to evaluate the Hungarian presidency and believed that in none was, in the effort, a complete failure. **Kai-Olaf Lang**, deputy head of the research division at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) (German Institute for International and Security Affairs) offered an approach focusing on the role of the presidency itself, comparing its usefulness to other aspects of the EU framework. Finally, **Klára Mikulíková**, an analyst at the Academy of Public Affairs, Prague, dealt with the media coverage of the presidency.

Csaba Tòth, panel moderator and director of the Republikon Scientific, Educational and Research Foundation identified the discrepancy between the Hungarian and the international panellists, pointing out the Hungarian speakers were much more critical of the undertaking than their international counterparts.

The afternoon sessions focused on two major issues high on the Hungarian political agenda.



Michael Jordan, Attila Mong, Istvan Hegedus, Oana Popescu, Dr Judit Bayer | left to right

The first panel addressed the topic of media freedom in the European Union. **Dr Judit Bayer**, associate lecturer, King Sigismund College, Budapest, analysed the controversial and largely criticised Hungarian media law, which came into force at the beginning of the Hungarian presidency. She argued that, despite the amendments made by the Hungarian government following the European Commission’s suggestions for some minimal changes, the law still does not reflect the requisite European norms and values.

A diagram of the structure of Hungary’s public service media was shown to the audience. This illustrated the dependence of Hungary’s public media institutions on political institutions, as well as the relevant personnel, which included the prime minister and his party at the top of the hierarchy. The special competencies of the one-party media authority remain very strong, as does the potential danger that the free media is obliged to become more ‘disciplined’, after being punished with huge fines and forced to self-censor. Journalist **Attila Mong** explained that he stopped broadcasting for a public radio programme after the media law was approved in Hungary. He blamed not only the current government, but criticised the entire political elite for leading the country into a climate of increasing unpleasantness and expressed his disillusionment following the absence of any kind

of protest from Hungary’s journalistic community. The moderator, István Hegedűs, disagreed, arguing that the demonstrations, especially the biggest which took place on Hungarian National Day, 15 March 2011, pointed to the solidarity of many and the general desire for a free society, as well as the need for freedom of expression in particular.

The next two presenters widened the discussions to broader European topics. **Oana Popescu**, programmes director at the Aspen Institute, and **Michael Jordan**, journalist from Transitions Online, discussed the potential and risks of new media and the role the public has today in shaping the tools of information. The internet has changed the relationship between political players and the broader public on one side while, on the other, there are ever more sources of information as the mass media experiences increased competition in the delivery and publication of news and articles. The audience was actively involved in the debate and the potential of using the Citizen’s Initiative under the Lisbon Treaty was raised as an instrument to protect the achievements of media freedom and to broaden the scope of regulations, not just in the member states, but also at a wider European level.



The aim of the final panel was to discuss current issues relating to Roma society in Hungary and East-Central Europe and to evaluate the European Union's New Roma Strategy. **András Vágvölgyi**, an independent Hungarian writer and filmmaker, outlined the situation in Hungary as a radical process. He emphasised the erroneous social reasons blamed for the economic crisis, increased hate against the Roma minority in Hungary, and the deteriorating well-being of the Roma people as a result of ethnic crimes in the last two years. He advocated fighting the political groups campaigning against the Roma and suggested ways to combat 'Roma crimes'. He suggested an analysis of the living conditions of the poorest Roma should be undertaken in order to draft a government social inclusiveness policy designed to address these conditions.

Human rights activist **Angéla Kóczé** also evaluated the New Roma Strategy of the European Union. She underlined the contradictions between the domestic policy of the Hungarian government and that of the EU-level Roma policy. She also mentioned the weakness of the New Roma Strategy, which in her view is not enough to solve the problems of the Roma living in Europe. She emphasised the best practices of the Soros Foundation and Open Society Institute, organisations with long-standing experience of dealing with the problems associated with the Roma in East-Central Europe. **Dr János Ladányi**, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Corvinus University of Budapest, analysed the Roma situation in East-Central Europe, illustrating some worrying trends in education in the region (including the problem of segregation) and issues around tolerance.

Dr Ladányi suggested that, ultimately, citizens' views of the Roma and Roma society in general need to change, initially through education programmes around Roma society. He underlined the importance of desegregated education because, in most of the regions which are densely populated by the Roma, it is typical practice to educate children separately. This fact could cause significant problems in the future, and this is therefore the most important area in which it would be helpful to intervene.

Dr Borek Severa
Representative in Central Europe and Baltic States,
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Prague

Capacity building and empowerment of Liberal organisations

Type of event
Workshops

Dates
12 – 14 July 2011 and 18 – 20 October 2011

Location
Bucharest | Romania and Istanbul | Turkey

Supported by
Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA)
Institute for Liberal Studies
Open Society and its Friends

ELF, together with a number of local partners, organised two seminars on political communication with the overall aim of assisting participants from Liberal organisations to address both organisational and region-specific challenges to Liberal policymaking.

Political communication of Liberal politics July 12 – 14, Bucharest

The particular objectives of this seminar were to provide participants with the tools they need to identify target groups and determine their issues of interest; to inspire the political communication of Liberal ideas and solutions and to facilitate an international forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas.

The first day of the seminar began with a presentation on post-communist developments in popular political thought by **Adrian Cioroianu**, former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of the National Liberal Party (PNL). In the afternoon, **Mihai Vacariu**, director of FI-Communications (Romania) gave a presentation on the methodologies for determining issues of interest for citizens, as well as the relative merits of professional versus non-professional surveys.

Following the presentations, Mr Vacariu led a workshop on how to conduct surveys.

On the second day, the seminar group visited the Romanian parliament for a meeting with **Cristian David**, Member the Romanian Senate and former PNL Minister of Interior, for a discussion on populism and ideology in contemporary politics. In the afternoon, **Bent Outzen**, a Danish political consultant, presented on political communication, spanning theoretical Liberal terminology to everyday language. Building on the presentation, Mr Outzen conducted a workshop on ways of communicating Liberal political praxis.

The group work was conducted in cross-national teams on both days, providing a setting for the exchange of local experiences and ideas. The third and last day of the seminar was used for summing up and discussing the results of the workshops.





Intensive discussions on how to do political work in a rural environment

How to make politics outside the capital October 17 – 20, Istanbul

This seminar had two main objectives: to provide participants with the specific tools they need to plan and conduct targeted political communication outside capitals and urban areas and to facilitate an international forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas.

Focusing on politics outside capitals, and aiming to provide the participants with tools to target political communication, the seminar's two full days featured a combination of presentations by experts and experienced professionals, and case-based group work during workshops. The cases were based on the authentic challenges of making politics outside the capitals of the participants' home countries.

The presentations and workshops were organised to mirror the progression of steps necessary for the preparation and execution of political communication. Group work was conducted in both national and cross-national groups, which provided a setting for the exchange of local experiences and ideas. On the third day, the final results of the workshops were presented and feedback was given.

At the first-day welcome dinner, Turkish photojournalist **Sezayi Erken** gave an introductory presentation to the political situation in Turkey, focusing on minorities and human rights issues.

The second day began with a presentation on alternative ways of communicating politics by Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA) representatives **Sofie Marseen** and **Anders Trelborg**. This was followed by group discussions, during which participants from each nation identified the major challenges to policymaking in their home region.

After this, **Mihai Vacariu** and **Manole Zaharia** from FI Communications (Romania) gave three presentations on the three steps necessary for strategic political communication: (1) drawing up a strategic communication plan; (2) identifying a specific target group; (3) planning a communication strategy. The day concluded with a presentation by **Doreen Huddart**, City Councillor from Newcastle, UK, and member of the European Committee of the Regions, who shared her experiences of politics in rural areas of England.

On the third day, **Semih Bedir** from Turkish Liberal youth organisation, 3H Movement, told the participants about his work with social media in political communication. Then, **Pinar Akyasan**, an experienced campaign worker and member of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP), shared her experience with more conventional forms of political communication.

The two presentations were followed by a workshop on the use of different types of media in political communication, facilitated by Ms Akyasan. The two previous days' workshops were summed up on the fourth day by group presentations. Mr Vacariu and Mr Zaharia gave each group their feedback, including some useful advice on their case projects.

Following the presentations, the seminar was concluded by Can Yirik from Global Political Trends Center (Turkey), who gave an inspiring presentation on bias and objectivity in the media.

May Holstein Hansen
International Project Consultant, Support Initiative
for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA)

Liberal Academy 2011: Financing Europe – value for money

Type of event
Seminar
Dates
8 – 10 September 2011
Location
Brussels | Belgium
Supported by
ELDR Party
Fondazione Critica Liberale

The Liberal Academy 2011 was the second annual Academy following 2010's inaugural event. This year, the event brought 35 students from throughout Europe together to the European Parliament in Brussels following an essay competition. 'This is one of the ways to reach out beyond Brussels to interested citizens', explained ELDR Party Secretary General **Federica Sabbati**, who continued 'I was very glad to see the activity and interest in the group, and I am positive that they were able to gain some valuable insights over the two-and-a-half-day session. Listening to the students' discussions also gives us and our speakers here in Brussels highly valuable feedback from today's young people'.

The Liberal Academy 2011 gave participants an opportunity to debate with prominent European Liberal politicians on current EU political developments of crucial importance.

Ms Sabbati opened the Academy by welcoming the participants, explaining the principles behind the Liberal Academy, as well as outlining the rationale for the major European political parties, what they currently do and what they could do in the future.

Liberal Budget Coordinator **MEP Anne Jensen** continued by giving an insightful overview of the

EU budget and the EU's methods of gaining its own resources, calling inter alia, for a more transparent system of EU funding – 'an end to the rebates on the rebates' – which was widely acknowledged in the subsequent Q&A session by the students as 'a good way of making a rather dry subject lively and interesting'.

Over the course of the evening dinner, ELDR Party Vice President **Sir Graham Watson MEP** gave a well-received account of his years in politics, and why he belongs 'to the odd few who entered into politics several decades ago and then never got out of it'.

The second day began with an intense session on the problems of the eurozone and EU taxes, which saw sentiments running high when German **MEP Jorgo Chatzimarkakis** reviewed statements by then Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and made an emotional plea in favour of keeping the eurozone intact, whereas LYMEC President **Alexander Plahr** and Dutch advisor to MEP Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy **Marc Holtkamp** discussed EU taxes and their implications. While Mr Holtkamp argued along similar lines as Anne Jensen regarding the need for increased transparency, Mr Plahr took a classical Liberal view of opposing additional taxes in general, be it on a national, regional or European level.



Flo Clucas, Wulf Pabst, Marco D'Acri | left to right

Following these extensive discussions, the seminar then entered phase II for the students, in which their own teamwork and presentations would form the basis of the debate and discussions. Following three separate working groups ranging from energy security to development aid, the participants debated their conclusions and observations together with ELDR Party President **MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck**, who also has the function of Foreign Affairs Coordinator in the Liberal Group of the European Parliament.

The final day of the seminar followed along the same lines as the previous days. Together with Liberal local council/regional representatives **Flo Clucas** (Liverpool, UK, President of the ALDE Group in the Committee of the Regions) and **Marco D'Acri** (Turin, Italy), the participants were given a unique first-hand view of how the EU Cohesion Policy and structural funds work in practice. They were given the opportunity to work with a real seven-year budget of 1.3 billion euros, during which Ms Clucas revealed the difference between the Liberal and Socialist approach to the budget proposals, i.e. the Liberals prudently investing in future projects and what was, in her view, the Socialists' irresponsible spending.

Wrapping up the seminar, facilitator **Christiaan Smits** guided the participants through a simulated reform

of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a highly successful project in that it included all 35 participants in a realistic lobbying effort, as well as, unfortunately, delivering a highly realistic outcome. The participants were not able to substantially reform CAP, which has been a priority for Liberals over a protracted period of time.

The overall feedback from the participants was very positive, as evidenced by the comments from the evaluation forms, a selection of which are given below:

'It was very practically oriented and I developed a lot of my skills and increased knowledge.'

'Really good opportunity to meet interesting people from other countries, see the differences of Liberal opinion on a variety of topics.'

'I really learnt a lot of things during these three days, especially from the "real world of the EU" – not like at school where it is much more theoretical.'

Philipp Hansen
Head of Political Unit, ELDR Party

EU Strategy for the Danube Region:

How to improve prosperity, people-to-people contacts and economic freedom in a European macro-region

Type of event
Seminar

Date
2 September 2011

Location
Sofia | Bulgaria

Supported by
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)
Centre for Liberal Studies
ELDR Party
Institute for Liberal Studies
Liberal Institute for Political Analyses (LIPA)
Liberal Society Foundation

The Danube Region is one of the most important areas in Europe. It covers several EU Member States and neighbouring countries in the river basin and the coastal zones on the Black Sea. Nevertheless, the Danube still represents an unexploited opportunity and thus has enormous potential in the fields of energy transportation and infrastructure, urban and rural development and bio-diversity protection.

The main objectives of the conference were to highlight the opportunities the EU Strategy provides for Bulgaria and Romania. Furthermore, it aimed to provide information on the specific activities currently taking place in the region, as well as the people and institutions running these projects. Examples include: the Danube Competence Centre in Serbia (Belgrade), the Danube Young Citizens Network in Hungary (Budapest) and the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Center in Bulgaria (Ruse).

The conference provided an opportunity for more than 90 representatives of local authorities and civil society, mainly from Bulgaria and Romania, to familiarise themselves with regional development, education, tourism and private business projects and programmes. It also provided an opportunity to share contacts, ideas and experiences.

Naturally, the focus of the discussions was on Bulgaria and Romania. The fundamental issues addressed related to the need for political support for the Danube Strategy, and the role of institutions, local authorities and civil society. A major topic was funding for the EU Strategy, which must be secured from national, regional and EU funds.

In his speech, **Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha**, former Prime Minister of Bulgaria, gave a comprehensive account of the potential of the Strategy for the two countries, both from a historical perspective and in terms of future options. He called the Danube River a ‘European common denominator which should continue to hold us together’.



Peter-Andreas Bochmann, Dr René Klaff, Iliya Lingorski | top left to right
Cristian David, Dr Heike Dörrenbächer, Meglena Kuneva, MEP Michael Theurer | bottom left to right

The Romanian perspective was given by Senator **Christian David**, former Minister of the Interior. **MEP Michael Theurer**, ALDE Group, one of the most passionate defenders of the Danube Strategy in the European Parliament, highlighted possible solutions to the crucial problem of funding. He argued strongly in favour of delegating responsibilities for actual projects from central to local governments, thus empowering citizens.

On a similar note, **Dr René Klaff**, FNF Regional Director for Central, East and South-east Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, emphasised that ‘the Strategy could prove to be a useful instrument for the enhancement of Liberal solutions to the regional issues at stake’.

The greater political perspectives were elaborated on at a final podium discussion by MEP Theurer, Christian David and **Meglena Kuneva**, former EU Commissioner.

Obstacles to realising the potential of the EU Strategy were also outlined. These included poor administrative capacity, limited opportunities for co-funding and pre-funding, corruption, lack of confidence and general fear. But, as all three panellists pointed out, there is no sensible alternative to engagement, confidence and an optimistic outlook. After all, in the words of Ms Kuneva, ‘It is the people who stand at the heart of any strategy’.

Dr René Klaff
Director, Regional Office Central, East and South-east Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Liberal principles compared

Type of event
Workshop

Dates
7 – 9 September 2011

Location
Doorn | The Netherlands

Supported by
Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI)
Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting

Every political ideology is defined by a set of core concepts. For Liberalism these are liberty and the sanctity of the individual. These conceptual precepts are shared by all Liberal organisations. Other important Liberal concepts are responsibility and tolerance. However, the way Liberal organisations give meaning to these concepts is very different.

Some believe that markets should always prevail because this is in the interest of the individual and his/her freedom. Others, in contrast, think that markets should be strongly regulated, and that there are, in fact, many aspects of public life in which the considerations of the government, or the citizens themselves, should be given precedence.

Another highly-debated question among Liberals is that of sustainability. Some believe that individuals should be using the world’s resources without any restrictions, since this contributes to their freedom and opportunities. Others think that the right to breathe clean air must be conserved for future generations, and that therefore it is the duty of Liberals specifically to protect the environment.

The Liberal response to a variety of issues, such as economic developments, education, welfare systems or foreign policy is often the subject of discussions during congresses and seminars. However, these discussions focus on the practical situations at hand, and less so on the fundamental principles to which the spectrum of Liberal organisations adheres.

This has encouraged many Liberal foundations to express an interest in comparing policy ideas and their vision for the future of European Liberalism.



ELF member organisations representatives in consuming discussions on the principles of Liberalism

ELF, with the support of Stichting IDI and the Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting, organised a seminar in Doorn, The Netherlands, to compare the principles of ten European Liberal think tanks. Representatives of foundations from Austria, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and The Netherlands, some of them affiliated to a political party, others wholly independent, had the opportunity to make a fundamental comparison of their principles.

Showing considerable cross-border cooperation, the first step was to assess which organisations most closely share an outlook, from which a comparative study of their principles was subsequently made. The results of this work are included in a report showing the propositions (implicit values) on which the participants agree or disagree, and also shows the extent of agreement or disagreement.

Liberal Principles Compared falls under one of ELF’s core tasks, namely to provide the Liberal family with intellectual input via its network of think tanks and foundations. By connecting a seminar to a publication, Liberal Principles Compared has transcended the limitations of a single event to produce a product which can be drawn on by Liberals irrespective of their location. Unique of its kind, Liberal Principles Compared has laid the groundwork for future ELF activities seeking to understand the principal tenets of Liberalism.

Maartje Jansen
International Officer, Stichting IDI

EU institutions: Roles and responsibilities

Type of event
Workshops

Dates
September – November 2011

Location
Various in Romania

Supported by
Institute for Liberal Studies
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)

As a recent EU member, Romania must close the gaps between itself and the other, more established members: gaps in administration, economy and living standards. In order to accomplish this, society in its entirety, from politicians and civil servants to the media, analysts and other social actors, must acquire knowledge and understanding of the EU, its role and the responsibilities the member states have towards it, and towards each other.

It was with this intention that the ‘EU institutions: roles and responsibilities’ project was developed. It consisted of 21 seminars organised by eight trainers throughout Romania and attended by more than 500 young citizens. The project’s objectives were to consolidate the participants’ perception of the EU as a Liberal project in terms of values and principles, as well as to give them an opportunity to find out more about EU institutions and procedures and the benefits of EU membership for Romania.

General seminar programme objectives:

- › To facilitate for the participants a thorough understanding of the EU as a Liberal project;
- › To enable participants to acquire the basic skills of political debate and to identify arguments in favour of Liberal ideas and policies, which they will be able to use during debates within the political arena and in the context of upcoming local and European elections;

- › To test the participants’ interest in Europe and to assess their level of knowledge of EU issues within local organisations;
- › To increase the participants’ knowledge of the fundamental principles of the EU, and its main activities and operating procedures;
- › To review the reasons making EU membership a net benefit for Romania.

The impact for the participants:

The training programme was able to give the participants a solid understanding of the main issues affecting Romania and the EU. It enabled them to identify the current challenges facing the country as an EU member and to determine why EU membership is important.

Rather than being organised as a conventional conference, the facilitators’ approach was interactive, based on debates, competitions quizzes, questionnaires and group working exercises.

The seminar’s first exercise outlined the history of the EU, describing its development from inception to the present, emphasising the EU’s fundamental institutions and underlining the decision-making process at EU level. The value-added aspect of this topic for the participants was their understanding of the fact that each member state, regardless of its size or wealth, and



Young Romanians attentively following presentations on the EU and its institutions

each European citizen represented by the politicians he or she elects in the European Parliament, has a say and are therefore directly involved in the decision-making process at the EU level.

The topic of the second exercise – identifying the advantages and disadvantages of Romania’s EU accession – was the seminar’s most debated. During the discussion the participants outlined many arguments supporting both views, both for and against. The arguments pro were presented from a Liberal standpoint and advocated Romania’s gains as an EU member. These were: the four freedoms of goods, capital, services and people, the Liberal perspective on an independent judicial system and rule of law and the enhancement of civil society. This brainstorming session enabled the participants to identify the EU as a Liberal project.

The third topic – Finding the best solutions to Romania’s ‘issues’ in the context of the European Union – was a challenge for those present. The harmonisation of national and European interests and standards, as well as the need to further implement the enforcement of the rule of law, were extensively debated. Many participants discussed the need for a new, active model of education, one that will carry forward the spirit of European values and rules.

The fourth and final topic constituted a very interesting experiment and addressed the transition from ‘Romania’s problems in the EU’ to ‘The EU and Romania’s problems in a globalised world’. The participants took the position of the European citizen and identified the main threats of the global economic crisis, terrorism and environmental issues (climate change, pollution, energy conservation and the efficient use of resources).

Conclusions:

During the concluding session, the participants agreed that it is important to support the EU enterprise as a fundamentally Liberal design. They understood that the EU is a project founded on Liberal principles, such as the respect for human dignity and autonomy, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

All participants agreed on the importance of supporting the EU as Liberal members within the larger family of the European Liberal parties. Membership of a larger family bringing together the Liberal parties of each European state and the EU’s Liberal organisations was identified as a source of confidence to Liberals everywhere.

Ruxandra Popovici
Executive Director, Institute for Liberal Studies

Fighting for inter-generational fairness: Young Liberal solutions to demographic change in Europe

Type of event
Seminars

Dates
7 – 10 April 2011 and 6 – 9 October 2011

Location
Vienna | Austria and Poreč | Croatia

Supported by
European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)
Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem)

Demographic change will drastically alter the societal balance between economically active and inactive individuals in Europe in the coming years and poses serious challenges for the creation of inter-generational fairness. Some of the biggest consequences of demographic change in Europe will be seen within the social insurance and healthcare systems, the labour market and social security systems and also within the greater political system.

With this in mind, ELF organised two seminars aiming to develop potential approaches to creating inter-generational fairness from a young Liberal perspective with regards to these subtopics.

Following speeches and lectures from expert speakers, open discussions and working group sessions, the participants of each seminar drafted an ELF Common Policy Paper, detailed below.

Policy recommendations: Health is wealth

Healthcare systems in the demographically changing EU

7 – 10 April 2011, Vienna

Healthcare in Europe has come a long way. Practically the entire population is covered by some form of health insurance, and becoming ill does not generally threaten entire existences, as can be the case in other countries or has been in the past. This fact should be celebrated, but there are also numerous challenges. Demographic change poses a threat to the financial sustainability of many national healthcare systems. Often, the relationship between private and public options is unbalanced. Long waiting times, a lack of choice or simply not getting the healthcare demanded is the reality for hundreds of thousands of Europeans.

We are convinced that a sustainable healthcare system in Europe should be based on three pillars:

- › First, national governments and the EU must design healthcare policies in a way that access to quality healthcare is available to everybody;



Debating the pros and cons of Flexicurity

- › Second, a strong market for private options will ensure that individuals can buy the insurance that meets their needs, while also driving innovation and ensuring efficiency;
- › Third, civil society must be strengthened, especially the role of non-governmental organisations.

Therefore, we believe that a public insurance option, which covers everybody, should be guaranteed. From a Liberal perspective, ensuring quality healthcare for all and, at the same time, having freedom of choice (meaning a strong private sector market for health services) are not opposing ideals. A public option should be guaranteed, and it needs to compete with private insurers on the same level to ensure the public option does not only provide second-class services. Most importantly, allowing patients a free choice of general practitioners also needs to be ensured within the public insurance option, as a good relationship with, and confidence in, one's General Medical Practitioner is essential.

A free Europe-wide market for private insurers should be created so that people are able to select insurance policies across Europe. Their coverage should then also be Europe-wide. The creation of a common market of

private insurance should be accompanied by a platform where prices are published periodically, which should then be at the disposal of every European citizen. This could then evolve into a Europe-wide stock market for health insurance that would significantly increase competition and ensure that supply and demand mechanisms function.

To realise any kind of further integration in the sector, steps should be taken to gradually achieve a truly European public healthcare system. Generalising cross-border agreements is an important step, and we also welcome the Cross-border Healthcare Directive passed by the European Parliament on 19 January 2011. However, in our view, this does not go far enough. We demand that, by the end of this decade, the principle of origin should also apply to healthcare services, as envisioned by early drafts of the Services Directive.

Also, any Europe-wide market for health services can only work if standards are comparable on a European level. Most importantly, the quality of care needs to be measured by common standards.



It is essential that the healthcare system is financially sustainable, especially when taking into account Europe’s changing demography. Healthcare costs are projected to spiral out of control in many European countries, with today’s youth having to bear the burden. Ensuring a functioning market for health services promotes efficiency. Also, diagnosis-related groups have been proved to be a good way of containing costs.

Positive incentives should be provided in order to combat a brain drain. We encourage European citizens to advocate ways to increase innovation in their respective countries and thus create demand for skilled workers. Involving private hospitals in research should also create opportunities.

We strongly demand that access to basic health services is available to everybody, including ‘sans-papiers’. Healthcare systems should not be a means to control immigration.

A problem in a considerable number of European countries is corruption and as cross-border healthcare becomes a stronger reality, this needs to be confronted through an EU initiative, supervised by independent organisations. Most importantly, the underlying problems that lead to corruption in the sector in these countries, namely inadequate remuneration and working conditions, must be addressed.

In addition, ethics courses for medical personnel should be compulsory and the psychological health of healthcare personnel should be monitored on an ongoing basis.

As many healthcare systems depend on financing through general taxation, we believe that individual responsibility needs to be increased. One way to do this without increasing the burden on the general population would be to lower healthcare taxes, while at the same time addressing negative externalities, e.g. through levies on products that increase public healthcare costs, such as cigarettes, unhealthy food, etc.

Finally, we reiterate that health is defined by so much more than healthcare; health is the way we live. Healthier living and healthier working conditions are important. Employers should be increasingly involved in disease prevention and we see health promotion and disease prevention as the way forward.

Policy recommendations on Flexicurity and the European labour market

Flexicurity – overly hyped buzzword or social security and labour market flexibility combined?

6–9 October 2011, Porec, Croatia

Believing that mobility in Europe should be increased, between different regions and countries, but also between different economic sectors;

Considering that hiring and firing procedures are rather complex and expensive in many EU Member States, resulting in labour market segmentation;

Recognising that rigid labour markets lead to a higher share of long-term unemployment and youth unemployment;

Noting that wages are often not adjusted to workers’ individual productivity and business cost structures;

Criticising labour unions for contributing to this misalignment;

Firmly believing that the role of government in employer-employee relations should be limited to the protection of contract, property and human rights;

Noting the risk of welfare traps caused by elevated unemployment benefits, while at the same time, identifying that insufficient income security poses a risk of a large informal economy and increased criminal activity;

Pointing out that active labour market policies conducted by EU Member States should combine flexibility in the labour market with planning security for job seekers, which is best achieved through systems whereby, in exchange for unemployment benefits, beneficiaries are required to actively seek work, and to attend relevant training;

Participants call on the European Union to:

- › Further develop and promote the concept of Flexicurity, taking the above into consideration, focusing on the four main areas of labour market policy, contractual agreements, lifelong learning strategies and modern social security systems, and;
- › Dedicate a larger share of the EU budget to strengthening the EU’s lifelong learning programmes, which also aim to increase opportunities for those already active in the labour market to achieve further qualifications according to developments in and the actual needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, participants call on EU Member States to:

- › Simplify procedures regulating hiring and firing, as well as to make them less costly;
- › Base their unemployment benefit regimes on a system whereby high nominal unemployment benefits are granted for a short transition period, followed by a two-pillar system consisting of voluntary private unemployment insurance and minimal benefits to prevent hardship;
- › Ensure strict monitoring and control of benefit recipients’ activities related to active job seeking and their participation in training programmes;
- › Set up a more individualised approach to vocational counselling and job seeking assistance, and;
- › Give incentives to employers who enable employees to combine their careers with obtaining further educational qualifications.

Slaven Klobucar
Secretary General, LYMEC

Political culture as a challenge for young people

Type of event
Seminar

Dates
15 – 16 October 2011

Location
Bratislava | Slovakia

Supported by
Liberal Society Foundation
Centre for Liberal Studies
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)

When it comes to social changes, young people seem the most perceptive of the population groups. The two-day seminar, Political culture as a challenge for young people in Europe, aimed firstly to enable students to reflect upon the term civic culture and, secondly, to motivate them to influence civic culture in their own environment.

The event was organised over four sessions.

Firstly, the participants learned about the general meaning of the term civic culture, considered its various manifestations throughout Europe and the possible implications for direct democracy. While it is difficult to give a clear definition of the term, political scientists often refer to it by explaining its characteristics: pride in one's nation; the ability to freely and frequently debate politics; tolerance of opposition parties; valuing active participation in local government activities, parties and civic associations; civic cooperation and trust; and membership of political associations, amongst others.

The opening session triggered a lively discussion with the speakers. The relative strengths and weaknesses of civic culture are closely linked with the potential to practice it in everyday life. The more civic-minded the

population, the more civic culture will grow and its benefits will spread. Nevertheless, this process needs time: by analysing different situations and countries, the participants found that it takes at least a generation to change civic culture even marginally.

Following this brief introduction, the participants proceeded to a more practical session, during which they were able to become more acquainted with the current state of civic culture in Slovakia. The current government, headed by Prime Minister Iveta Radicova, has introduced a whole series of changes designed to engender a more open society. While the upcoming elections could present a formidable challenge to her work, strengthening existing notions of civic culture and further promoting the idea within Slovak society could be a way to proceed. The participants agreed that civic culture could become much more attractive by increasing the accountability of politicians. This would give citizens the sense of playing an active part in their community.

The subsequent sessions were dedicated to analysing two threats to political culture: corruption and the public's perception of it, focusing on the role of the media.



Young liberals discussing political culture in Slovakia

Since 1 January 2011, all public contracts, invoices and financial transactions are required to be declared online in order to become legally binding. This is one of the most important achievements of the Radicova government. An electronic commercial register will be completed by the end of 2012. This important change illustrates the significant contribution of the country's Liberal politicians, who played a major role in educating the Slovak citizens in the relevant legislation.

The participants also learned about recent changes in the Czech municipality of Semily. Its mayor, Jan Farský, rules the town as if it were a company, i.e. its citizens are shareholders and he himself acts the administrator of their estate. By creating an open and transparent municipality, Mayor Farský aims to build citizens' confidence in its administration, while supporting local entrepreneurs and attracting investment.

Shifting to the role of the Slovak media, the speakers and participants analysed how the issue of corruption and settling conflicts is dealt with by journalists. In contrast to their counterparts in western Europe, Slovak journalists have a descriptive rather than

analytical approach to their field. This is accepted by the public due to the differing public perception of the role of the media in the country.

During the final session, participants were asked to give presentations on the status of justice, the media and public administration in Slovakia, explaining how they perceive the political culture in their country, how politics could become more attractive and how the political culture can be implemented in their municipalities.

The results were encouraging: the seminar enabled participants to learn the importance of being an active member of society and to proceed to design their own way of shaping Slovak civic culture.

Dr Viera Gajova
Administrator, Liberal Society Foundation

Liberal reforms for the 21st century: Is there a future for Liberalism?

Type of event
Conference

Dates
15 – 16 October 2011

Location
Vilnius | Lithuania

Supported by
Open Society and its Friends
CentreForum
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)

Liberalism is often misunderstood and must contend with a number of myths. In practice, Liberal ideas can sometimes lose popularity with voters, who are becoming increasingly concerned by the consequences of globalisation and the financial crisis. As answers to current issues, Liberal policy reforms do not seem attractive to the general public, and are seen instead as distant from reality and unable to provide for the basic needs of the population. Thus, European Liberal political parties often fail to reach the hearts and minds of their voters.

The goal of the conference was therefore to provide a platform for an open and integrated discussion of the Liberal reforms possible in 21st-century Lithuania in the context of the EU.

During his welcome speech, **Dr Eugenijus Gentvilas**, ELF Board member and one of the founders of the Open Society and its Friends, called on Liberals to provide a strong response to the current global political challenges. Inviting conference participants to participate in a broad discussion forum, he mentioned globalisation, a disregard for freedom, human rights violations and the deepening of the rights of power as issues, among others.

Why renovation if there is compensation? Is this really the case?

The first part of the conference, Liberal solutions for individual welfare, focused on social policy, and was inaugurated by Minister of Justice **Remigijus Šimašius**. He discussed Liberal policy proposals for social support. According to the Minister, it is imperative to change the attitude that the problems of unemployed individuals can be resolved by others and they must be instead encouraged to believe in themselves and to take active steps to return to the labour market.

Guest speaker from Sweden, **Per Bylund**, currently undertaking a PhD in applied economics in the Applied Social Sciences Division of the University of Missouri and a Ludwig von Mises institute senior expert, exposed the myth of Sweden as a welfare state. He put forward strong arguments for how state regulation there has become too great, and how society's division into groups rather than individuals create increased levels of dependency instead of a mentality of freedom.

The problems caused by the welfare state model were discussed by another non-Lithuanian speaker, **Frederik C. Boeder**, Executive Director Healthcare Solutions



ELF Board member Dr Eugenijus Gentvilas addressing the audience

(Germany/Estonia). He stated that human dignity and the welfare state are opposite poles, and the latter destroys the human ambition of self-reliance, promoting dependence.

Writer and ‘delfi.lt’ commentator, **Anatolijus Lapinskas**, illustrated that under current laws it is hardly financially worthwhile for a family with children to work for a minimal or even an average wage, since this is almost equal to the allowances paid by the state. Mr Lapinskas illustrated the irony in these disincentives to take action or to work with the phrase, ‘why renovation if there is compensation?’ and presented statistics on recently increased public spending on social allowances and other benefit compensations (including heating).

Economy: the state is a judge, not a player

Following the lunch break, during which discussions around the Liberal vision on healthcare, energy, foreign investment, land and transparency in politics were able to take place, the participants gathered to analyse economic issues during the second part of the conference. President of the Liberals’ Movement of the Republic of Lithuania, and Minister of Transport and Communications, **Eligijus Masiulis**, spoke on the

lessons drawn from previous crises, stressing that it is a valuable experience for the party to work in the Ministry during a period of crisis. However, Mr Masiulis expressed his regret that repeated proposals by Liberals for the adoption of solutions to not only save public funds, but which would also stimulate the economy, were often ignored by their coalition partners.

A member of the Board of the Liberals’ Movement and marketing expert, **Mindaugas Lapinskas**, spoke on the Liberal vision and outlined concrete proposals for the tax system. He pointed out that the tax system should promote confidence and be oriented towards citizens who legitimately pay their taxes. State tax policy should encourage values of wealth creation rather than being simply punitive.

Dr Auke R. Leen, scientist at Leiden University in the Netherlands, illustrated in his report that Adam Smith’s principles laying the foundation in 1776 for free market theories remain as valid today. Economic growth and decline are natural processes, as is an unpredictable market. However, he said it is essential to remember that the main task for the state is to create rules and to act as a judge, but certainly not to become a player. This is the basic principle of the Liberal economy.

The first systematic Liberal reform in education

The third part of the conference, entitled Education policy: Accomplishments and future goals was opened by Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science **Gintaras Steponavičius**, who identified education reform as the first ever Liberal reform. Mr Steponavičius presented the achievements and challenges of the recent education reform in his speech, emphasising that ‘we need to understand that, in seeking innovation and progress, each actor – student, professor, university, politician, etc. – must as a necessity take responsibility for action in rapidly changing circumstances’.

Afterwards, Vice-minister for Education and Science **Vaidas Bacys** discussed changes in Lithuania’s general education system. He noted that legislation in this area is one of the best in Europe; however, in practice, the situation is completely different. Mr Bacys identified the priorities of the education system, namely greater pupil autonomy, less bureaucracy, and the professionalisation of leader selection. Vice-chairman of the Liberals’ Movement Education Committee, and advisor to the Minister of Education and Science, **Albertas Lakšauskas**, developed a non-formal education concept and presented the improvements and goals of the application of a voucher system in the non-formal education sector. After the panel discussion the speakers took many questions from the participants and were involved in a number of stimulating debates on how to continue improving the education policies initiated by the Liberals.

Do we really want to go back to the free world?

The fourth and final part of the forum was concerned with human rights and freedoms. It was moderated by chairman of the Human Rights and Civil Society Committee for the Liberals’ Movement and advisor to the Minister of Justice, **Tomas Baranovas**, who noted that this topic is at the centre of Liberal policy and had been planned for the beginning of the conference, but

the agenda had had to be changed owing to the flight schedules of the international speakers.

Expert psychiatrist, member of 2007-2011 UN Child Rights Committee, **Dainius Pūras** described the human rights situation in Lithuania as deteriorating but not hopeless, although with the proviso that Liberal democracy, which had recently begun to be doubted, is finally being established in Lithuania. ‘What did Lithuania look for in 1990? Was it seeking only national liberalisation, or also to return to the Liberal world?’ he asked, recognising the danger that civil liberties can be sacrificed for a strong state, economic prosperity and for other reasons. In order to prevent this from happening, Lithuania needs a critical mass of Liberal-minded people that many post-Soviet countries do not have; there are, in other words, the skills required in order to live in freedom, namely energy, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and respect for the opinions of another.

Lithuanian **MP Dalia Kuodytė** began her speech with a provocative question: is there a place for human rights in a system of Liberal values? In an attempt to determine where human rights issues are encountered in everyday politics and society, Ms Kuodytė identified the right to property, domestic violence, civil society and the laws related to those areas, prevailing opinion and stereotypes.

In the conference’s closing speech, organiser **Jurgita Choromanskytė** noted with satisfaction that the Liberals presenting their ideas on key areas of public life during the event had shown that they are committed to Liberal ideology, values and principles. She also emphasised that this international forum for Liberal ideas, which had, for the first time, been organised in Lithuania, had raised the bar so high that it will be difficult to lower it in the future.

Jurgita Choromanskytė
International Officer, Open Society and its Friends

ELF Yellow Salon:
Liberal answers to
disenchantment
with politics

Type of event
Seminar

Date
25 October 2011

Location
Vienna | Austria

Supported by
Liberal Future Forum
CentreForum
Fundacija Libertas

Contemporary Europe must improve the quality of its democracy. This is true not only of Europe and its institutions, but also of the EU Member States, regardless of the various national challenges. Data from the European Social Survey reveals low voter turnout in the Member States, low levels of participation in political parties and a lack of trust in politicians and democratic institutions.

Overall, there is disenchantment with politics and policies, while involvement in the activities of civil society is sporadic and limited to single issues. Low citizen participation leads to the rise of populism, a challenge that must be met. What therefore are the Liberal answers to improving democratic quality? This question was the theme of the ELF Yellow Salon, and was addressed by a panel discussion, followed by a round-table workshop. The introduction was given by Felicita Medved, Member of the ELF Board of Directors, with the panellists Dr Ronald J Pohoryles, Director of a European social science research centre and President of the Liberal Future Forum, Giulio Ercolessi, member of Fondazione Critica Liberale, Sebastian Springer, member of Liberal Youth Forum and Jeroen Diepemaat, representative of LYMEC.

Felicita Medved welcomed the participants on ELF’s behalf. Based on her experiences in Slovenia, she gave some advice on how Liberals can challenge the threat of disenchantment with politics. Her party, the social-liberal ZARES, emerged from civil society and hence promised a new type of politics underpinned by new issues, actors, and policy instruments, both within and beyond the party. A holistic approach brought the party to parliament with a 9% of the vote, making it the second-largest government coalition party. However, the legislative blockades of the opposition and an abuse of plebiscites hindered effective governance. The government resigned as a result, increasing disenchantment with politics.

In his lecture, **Dr Pohoryles** gave a brief overview of the academic studies on the phenomenon of disenchantment. Russel Dalton (2004) defines disenchantment as a phenomenon that combines three elements: distrust vis-à-vis the politicians; scepticism vis-à-vis the institutions; and disillusion with the political process.





Michael Fichtinger (moderator), Dr Ronald J Pohoryles, Sebastian Springer, Felicita Medved, Giulio Ercolessi, Jeroen Diepemaat | left to right

There are several traditional responses to overcoming political disenchantment. The most common is the undifferentiated call for more direct democracy. The problem with this approach is two-fold: more direct democracy for complex issues necessitate an active and informed citizenship that goes beyond the possibilities or ambition of the citizens (Nico Stehr: 2008); and politicians can potentially abuse the public opinion polls upon which they base their decisions instead of proving leadership by their knowledge- and normative-based decisions.

Another common response is the call for a vote for candidates rather than for political parties. This approach is common to proportional electoral systems in continental Europe. It risks promoting demagogic personalities and increasing the divergence between a country's social structure and its representatives. This decreases democratic legitimacy. Related to the call for a vote is the call for a first-past the post system. However, such a system distorts the will of the people: minority votes are neglected, small parties representing alternative political visions disappear and democracy loses legitimacy.

Overall, politicians and political parties must inspire trust through ethical behaviour, defined political objectives, competitive elections, defined avenues of public participation and increasing broad popular participation.

Giulio Ercolessi followed by criticising the current policy-making process by insisting that individual politicians should be more flexible in order to (re) gain popular trust. He stated his belief that serious political decisions by representative politicians are more effective in combating disenchantment than direct democracy. However, he added that he deplores politicians who lack the information and ambition to make informed decisions. Instead, he said that politicians involve themselves in smear campaigns, which damage the perception of politicians more generally, causing further disenchantment. The current economic crisis also creates the perception of endangerment among the lower and middle classes. In such cases politics is not able to provide for the basic needs of society.

Sebastian Springer of the Austrian Liberal Forum and Jeroen Diepemaat of LYMEC attended as youth representatives.

Sebastian Springer noted that the youth are even more disenchanting than the population at large, owing to sclerotic political, religious or civil society institutions, and exacerbated by decreased family solidarity. Liberals support individual initiatives, yet alternatives for the youth population are decreasing, particularly as a result of the economic crisis.

For many, politicians are increasingly disregarding the problems of the young, which are, amongst others: reduced family allowances; decreased quality in education; increased youth unemployment; failure to (re-)integrate socially excluded youth and decreasing street-level projects; increasing tuition fees; state debt and unsustainable development. Youth issues are not sufficiently accounted for in the political system. Youth party participation is merely symbolic. Youth representatives in traditional parties seem to focus on their own career rather than on representing their fellow youth. If it remains unchanged, the current low level of youth involvement is a serious problem for democracy.

Jeroen Diepemaat reminded the audience that optimism is a Liberal duty, with its core values of freedom and responsibility. Looking at personal responsibility first must be the priority. Therefore, Liberals must defend the democratic system and fight for their interests. At their disposal are all the options Web 2.0 offers for winning elections and meeting the expectations of the people. European issues are core for the youth, and reform is essential. One example of reform includes true European elections without limiting candidacy to the level of the Member States.

The general debate has shown that the trend towards disenchantment is increasing and that Liberals must collaborate closely with civil society organisations to meet the challenge. Disenchantment is caused by politicians as much as by political parties and a strategy of any party blaming the other parties will not help to overcome the distrust, but will instead increase it.

Dr Angelika Mlinar, President of the Austrian Liberal Forum closed the event by stating that, without wishing to ignore the importance of activists with a strong political vision, policies necessitate a comprehensive political vision. It is a major task of Liberals to mark out the difference between populist leaders with simple ideologies and strong democratic leaders with a defined political vision. Again, some of the younger participants underlined that political actors must involve themselves at a societal level. The young may not be interested in political parties, but the parties must nonetheless integrate the ambitions of the youth.

To summarise, there is room for improvement; and Liberals must work hard to use this space to fight for human rights, social justice, sustainable development and better economic governance. Liberals must combat populists by openly challenging their simplistic slogans. Liberals must defend democratic politics. Without neglecting the failures of public policies, Liberals must be clear in explaining their complexities. Finally, democratic deficiencies must be addressed both at European and national levels by an increase in individual representative accountability.

Dr Ronald J. Pohoryles
President, Liberal Future Forum

Liberalism versus the world

Type of event
Panel discussions

Dates
March 2011, May 2011, September 2011 and October 2011

Location
Poznań, Wrocław, Cracow and Łódź | Poland
Dresden | Germany

Supported by
Fundacja Projekt: Polska
Centre for Liberal Studies
Liberal Society Foundation

The Liberalism versus the world project emerged from the events organised in 2010 by Fundacja Projekt: Polska which gathered participants from diverse Polish NGOs and academics to discuss the state of freedom after 20 years of independence. The conclusion was not very optimistic at the time. Liberalism still had a relatively bad reputation in Poland, often seen as synonymous with aggressive anti-governance. People were unlikely to support it, associating it with the hard times of economic transition of the early 1990s. On the other hand, the success of events showed that Liberal organisations are legion and Polish Liberals are able to stimulate vibrant discussion of the most important issues in modern society, proving that it is worth continuing to promote Liberal thinking.

The project therefore aimed to animate the Polish Liberal movement by gathering experts and people interested in public discourse, and in Liberalism itself, together in one room to seek Liberal solutions for the most urgent of Poland’s and Europe’s problems. Consisting of six events organised throughout 2011, each event centred around a panel discussion organised by a local branch of Fundacja Projekt: Polska and local partners. All the participants had ample opportunity to contribute to the debates, and the floor was open for a free exchange of thoughts between the audience and invited guests.

The target participants all had an interest in the Liberal movement, namely members of Liberal organisations

(mainly those promoting Liberal solutions in particular areas of social and political life) and those that might be attracted to Liberalism and who could become active members of the movement in the future. A special effort was made to attract young people. A large variety of speakers participated in the panel discussions, from professors and university teachers and Liberal Members of the European Parliament, other respected politicians, thought leaders and activists from important NGOs. The debates were moderated by senior journalists from the mainstream media.

The main conclusion from the debates is that there is a significant interest in Liberalism among Polish opinion-makers and young people. During the last four years of a Liberal-leaning government, which contrasted heavily with the former conservative administration, the word ‘Liberal’ ceased to be a stigma. As one of the newest political trends on the Polish political stage, Liberals are gathering more and more attention of the general public and the media. This is encouraging more people to take a strong position towards Liberals and Liberalism, and there is a growing arena for the discussion of Liberalism. Liberal proposals now exist freely and could be attractive even to those who would never have called themselves Liberals before and they may now find themselves able to support specific ideas presented by the Liberal movement if they are well argued. Polish society is definitely more open to a Liberal agenda now than ever. The debates were able to clearly demonstrate



Audience gearing up for a discussion on the versatility of Liberal principles

that the Liberal agenda can be presented in each of the topics discussed, with the key issue being political lobbying and convincing the public at large to support Liberal solutions.

The main conclusions were:

Education

- › A government-issued voucher system, which currently operates at lower levels of the education system, should be introduced at university level to enable students to contribute towards tuition costs at a private school rather than the current system of automatically having to apply to a pre-assigned state school;
- › The government should not differentiate between public and private universities with regards to grants and support projects;
- › A great number of English programmes should be offered in order to compete with foreign universities;

Patriotism

- › Liberal patriotism is possible, but it must be devoid of nationalism. Liberals should support this positive and constructive version of patriotism that supports development and entrepreneurship;

War

- › Protecting the civilian population from massive human rights violations is a goal worth pursuing in the foreign and defence policies of liberal-democratic states;

- › Outright military intervention (grounded in the premise of humanitarian assistance) is not always the most legitimate, realistic and efficient form of crisis management in the aforementioned situations;

Digital agenda

- › Funds should be invested to combat unemployment, which should be addressed in two ways: cohesion and research;
- › Structural and cohesion funds should be used efficiently and more attention should be placed on the EU 8th framework programme – emphasis should also be put on programmes aimed to strengthen small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with ICT (information and communications technology) and on education so as to identify real flagship organisations;
- › It is important for the success of the Digital Agenda for Europe to significantly improve the e-skills of both the youngest generations, and the current workforce (through life-long learning);

Church

- › The Liberal state should uphold democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of trade and ownership, with respect to both religious and non-religious citizens.

Miłosz Hodun
International Officer, Fundacja Projekt: Polska

Dynamics of demographic decline

Type of event
Symposium

Date
11 November 2011

Location
Arnhem | The Netherlands

Supported by
Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)
Open Society and its Friends

On Monday October 24, 2011 the 7 billionth person was welcomed into the world. This statistic marks a significant moment for the world’s population, which continues to grow at an exponential rate. World Population Prospects, the official website of the United Nations Population Division, indicates that the world’s population will increase at least until 2050 and that the number of inhabitants in all continents, except Europe, will grow.

The UN numbers indicate that the natural increase in Europe’s population is slowing and may start to decline steeply within a few decades. In fact, the total number of people in some European countries is already declining, while other European nations are seeing population decrease in rural areas and a simultaneous demographic increase in urban areas.

All these factors are dramatically transforming European demographics. How should Liberals approach these demographic developments? What are the policy implications? Should governments intervene, or let nature take its course? Indeed, is demographic decline a problem which requires political intervention?

The seminar was chaired by **Bas Eenhoorn**, former President of the VVD and current mayor of Alphen aan den Rijn (The Netherlands). **MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck**, Vice President of the ELF Board of Directors, made the welcome speech and was presented with the first copy of the ELF publication, The dynamics of demographic decline. She expressed her concerns on the ongoing debates around inter-generational solidarity versus the clash of generations prompted by demographic changes such as ageing. She stated that inter-generational solidarity is fundamental to the fabric of society and it is essential to safeguard this. While there is reason for concern, MEP Neyts-Uyttebroeck argued there are greater reasons for hope. She advocated, therefore, speaking of demographic change – rather than decline – in order to counteract the negative perception of current demographic developments.

The three speeches that were given outlined demographic decline from different angles. **Dr Csilla Hatvany**, research fellow at the Liberal Institute of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, described demographic trends within the European Union. She discussed the fertility rate, population ageing and the shifting population. She emphasised the differences and dynamics within the EU, also stressing that the elderly are a growing group and are therefore becoming an increasingly important voting group.



Joost van den Akker elaborating on the possible effects of demographic decline on the Dutch housing market

Prof. Martin van Hees, Professor of Ethics and Political Theory at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), defined a Liberal perspective on demographic decline. He described the Liberal dilemma of, on the one hand, scepticism towards the role of the state and, on the other hand, concerns regarding demographic developments and the freedom of the individual. He concluded that it is sometimes necessary for a state to intervene – by implementing rules or by scaling down – to protect the freedom and autonomy of the individual.

The third speech was given by **Prof. Barrie Needham**, Professor of Spatial Planning at the Radboud University of Nijmegen (The Netherlands), who analysed demographic decline from an economic perspective. He explained that a decline in the number of people of working age does not necessarily result in higher demand for labour and thereby a decreasing unemployment rate. Most economic consequences of demographic decline are negative and there are no market mechanisms to stop such demographic developments. Highly qualified people, in particular, will leave any declining areas, the older people stay behind and territorial inequality increases. Fighting demographic decline is not very successful either, so the only option policymakers have is to take measures to make the resultant problems easier to live with, demolishing vacant housing units and helping to retrain people, for instance.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion involving three Liberal politicians: **Joost van den Akker**, member of the Provincial Chamber of Representatives in Limburg, The Netherlands, representing the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) Party, **Tomas Baranovas**, advisor to the Minister of Justice of Lithuania, representing the Liberals’ Movement of the Republic of Lithuania, and **Alexander Plahr**, representing the Free Democratic Party (FDP) of Germany. It became clear that promoting immigration could be a useful policy measure to deal with the vagaries of demographic decline, although several stipulations were made. The minds of the people should be open, ensuring that open borders will be sufficient. In other words, the attitude towards migrants should become more positive and open minded.

Also, policies should focus on steered migration of non-EU migrants to prevent brain drain of certain EU-regions with a high emigration rate. And finally, the Liberal dilemma of national framing should be addressed. Should every migrant worker within the EU have the same access to the national social security of a specific EU nation? In conclusion, many Liberal questions were raised during the discussson.

Dr Patrick van Schie
Director, Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting

Perspectives for freedom and democracy in North Africa

Type of event
Seminar

Date
23 November 2011

Location
Palermo | Italy

Supported by
Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem)
Movimento Liberal Social (MLS)

Coinciding with the Arab Spring, and set within the framework of the ELDR Congress, ELF, with the support of Fundació CatDem, organised a seminar on one of the most important issues in the Mediterranean of the past year: the promotion of democracy in the wake of the Arab Spring. The goal was to evaluate what Liberal forces could do to promote democracy and to reflect on the key issues for the future of the South and East of the region. The aim was to answer several questions: what is the immediate future for the Arab Spring?; are the events revolts or organised revolutions built on a specific programme?; what role could European Liberals play in the promotion of democracy in these countries?; what do these countries expect from Europe?; what role will Islamists play in the future of these countries?; and, finally, will the protests lead to real changes in the political situation of these countries?

European Liberals were able to fully engage in the discussion and debate the likely consequences of the mobilisation organised by civil society that, although on occasion had not been strong enough, was taking steps towards a desired democracy. 120 people participated in the seminar, many of which showed a marked interest in the debate that it generated. They

clearly saw it to be the Liberal family's first step to greater reflection on its role in the framework of the future of the Mediterranean.

The event's main outcome was the initiation of a debate on democracy in the Mediterranean and the role Liberals can play in the future of this debate. The Arab Spring has been extremely important for the region and, without a doubt, the consequences will be enormous. The promotion of democracy, the training of future leaders, the arrival of people in Europe and the new political regimes established following the electoral processes already begun will all be themes that must be at the foundations of ELF in the not too distant future.

Conclusions:

1. Differing perceptions exist as to the developments in the MENA region that, considering the political fragmentation there, is not unusual. Some analysts are optimistic others tend to be pessimistic. The final position is that in this case the truth is somewhere in the middle. Liberal forces should search for unity and devise a common strategy.



Felicita Medved, Dr Marc Guerrero, Mònica Sabata, Leoluca Orlando

- 2. Overcoming fragmentation is the main challenge for the Liberal forces in the Arab world. Disunited on both a country level and a regional level, the fact that Arab Liberals speak many different tongues also became apparent during the seminar.
- 3. Arab Liberalism can learn from the European example and particularly from such organizations as ELDR Party and ALDE. On a different note, they can also learn from their main political foes, the Muslim Brothers, who have a clear strategy and are united on national and regional levels.
- 4. What is the role of Europe? This may be analysed on various levels: politics, the economy and society, all fields in which Liberals are active and present with their own contributions. Governments have Liberal ministers which may exert their influence in the diplomatic field; the economic field offers a wide range of possibilities for cooperation, which was dealt with in greatest detail by one of the European speakers; finally, civil society and political parties constitute the area of political party cooperation in which ALDE and ELDR Party have shown engagement and initiative. The well-attended dialogue event at the outset of the ELDR congress is a proof of the seriousness of European Liberals in this matter.

Event speakers: **Felicita Medved**, member of the ELF Board; **Dr Marc Guerrero**, ELDR Party Vice President, CatDem; **Leoluca Orlando**, Italia dei Valori and ELDR Party Vice President; **Roger Albinyana**, Director, Programme of the Union for the Mediterranean of the Government of Catalonia, CatDem; **MEP Niccolò Rinaldi**, Italia dei Valori, author of the report 'Investing in change: a European strategy for the Southern Mediterranean'; **Dr Osama Al Ghazali Harb**, President of the Democratic Front Party (DFP) of Egypt; **Khalil Choucair**, Coordinator of Political Affairs in Future Movement of Lebanon; **Dr Mouloud Lounaoui**, Algerian sociolinguist; **Dr Ronald Meinardus**, Director, Regional Office for the Mediterranean, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

Mònica Sabata
International Officer, Fundació CatDem

The future of European multilateralism in NATO

Type of event
Panel debate

Date
28 November 2011

Location
London | United Kingdom

Supported by
CentreForum
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)
Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI)

Should European countries ‘pool and share’ resources to remain ‘useful’ to the US? How do defence budget cuts affect the American-European relationship? As attitudes and spending change within Europe and diverge from America, can NATO survive as a two-tiered alliance?

MP Joachim Spatz, FDP member of the German Bundestag, opened the panel discussion by asking what kind of Europe do we want: a more cooperative one, or merely an assembly of nations? He said that the concept of a ‘two-tiered’ alliance had never been realised and with America’s focus now shifting towards the Pacific, responsibility for the Mediterranean and Balkan region falls to Europe. This necessitates a ‘common sense’ approach defined by patience and strong political action, he added.

The approach MP Spatz proposed was two-fold: a political strategy to define Europe’s interests; and a strategy for the realisation of these interests. Mr Spatz suggested these aims could be met through the creation of a European forum to establish foreign and security policy. The forum should comprise a delegation from the European Parliament and delegations of national parliaments. It would therefore

be free of national agendas, and could consider pooling and sharing where needed.

MP Stephen Gilbert, Liberal Democrat Member of the UK Parliament, began with a glowing assessment of NATO’s ‘Operation Unified Protector’ (OUP) mission in Libya. With a clear UN mandate, no allied losses and success in its goals, Mr Gilbert wondered if OUP was the ‘model of model interventions’, heralding a new era of ‘responsibility-to-protect’ (RTP) interventions. He was clear, however, that the mission was yet another example of European indecision and reliance on America. 14 NATO states did not contribute to the mission – including Germany and Poland – and the US contributed more money than Britain and France combined. He argued that, with America’s focus altering, Europe needs to discard the crutch of American support in order to remain relevant.

MP Gilbert said that the future of European defence is based on flexible rather than fixed alliances. Instead of rigid structures, a national interest-led ‘multiple-bilateralism’ should be developed, operating under a wider European vision, a common definition of threat and an understanding of Europe’s role. Defence industries should be integrated to enhance



Dr Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, MP Stephen Gilbert, Chris Nicholson, MP Joachim Spatz, Kees Homan | left to right

cooperation, and expand upon the Anglo-French Treaty and Nordic Community. He said that Germany’s involvement in this process is essential.

Major-General (ret.) Kees Homan, former director of the Netherlands Defence College, began by reflecting on the record of Europe’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). He decided that its power was ‘modest’, having engaged in just eight military missions and limiting its armed force to 70,000. He suggested that too much money was spent on personnel (up to 70% of budgets in some states); that defence budgets were too defined by national directives; that national governments failed to implement promises made in NATO; and that forthcoming national budget cuts in defence – such as 25 % in Germany – threatened improvement.

General Homan’s suggested method of progress was ‘pooling and sharing’ – a process which will standardise and specialise military capabilities while saving taxpayers’ money.

Dr Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, lecturer in International Studies at the University of Cambridge, disagreed with MP Spatz, stating that NATO had always

been a two-tiered (and in fact asymmetric) alliance. The US offers support and extensive deterrents to Europeans, whereas Europe offers political support and legitimacy for American geopolitical objectives. She went on to say that the post-cold war period had obscured previously clear communal interests, and it was now necessary for Europe to find a greater degree of agreement. Intra-European interests were diverging as much as American-European interests.

Dr Eilstrup-Sangiovanni emphasised the importance of American leadership, comparing the power of the CSDP and NATO, and doubting the number of attractive incentives in EU-led security deals. She stressed that pooling and sharing was a ‘dangerous’ tactic, requiring multiple financial agreements on deployments and numbing national willingness to cooperate by marginalising defence industries in smaller countries. Her conclusion was that Europe should build up more operable national capabilities within NATO, which could then ‘plug in’ to flexible, mainly US-led alliances.

After the presentations, chair **Chris Nicholson**, chief executive of CentreForum, opened the discussion to the floor. The first questions were concerned with

whether European countries can work cooperatively and reach an agreement. Mr Spatz reaffirmed his belief that everything ultimately relies on common political decision-making He said that bottom-up processes need a common attitude to keep Europe united. General Homan highlighted Germany’s reluctance to provide forces in Afghanistan.

MP Gilbert likewise questioned the viability of top-down authority, arguing that there is already an EU Operations Centre in Brussels, but the French veto its use because it is too small. He said: ‘One of the things that I’m concerned about is our ability to project our values around the world’. Europe needs to discard reliance on America and be able to deploy ‘lethal force’ if required. Dr Eilstrup-Sangiovanni suggested that a joint agreement could only be made if joint interests arose. Clear leadership forges political will, but the country that accounts for the most foreign trade (Germany) is the least willing to defend those interests, prompting America, again, to fill the void.

The next three questions from the floor were about the extent to which bigger defence firms taking over smaller firms mattered; how cuts in spending would sustain objectives; and how climate change would fit into Europe’s plans for defence.

On the first question, Dr Eilstrup-Sangiovanni said that smaller national defence industries were ‘doomed to fail’. She urged pragmatism when considering divisions of labour, and hoped that smaller states would find a niche in applying civilian power. Civilian missions, she said, have attracted less support than military ones. General Homan, meanwhile, was keen to emphasise that output was more important than proportion of GDP. He extended this theory to the Dutch defence industry, which was small but very productive – and by extension very durable. He also suggested that armed forces would increasingly be deployed to aid in natural disasters. MP Spatz denied that Germany always sought civilian solutions and reaffirmed it was ‘not the way’ for some countries to decide for themselves and others not.

Dispensing with verbosity and rhetoric, the final question was posed by student Timothy Penn. He asked, quite simply: what is it all for?

MP Gilbert closed with a reference to the projection – and protection – of ‘our values’. Whether this would involve the ‘Bear in the East’ or the jungle in Africa, it would have to be determined, he said. Nevertheless, it was clear that dependence on the US was hurting national and intra-European interests. Dr Eilstrup-Sangiovanni said that whatever it was for, at the moment Europe did not have it. She compared European efforts for collective action to pulling oneself up by the hair. America had renewed its interest in NATO because of Afghanistan, but the European Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) had disappointed, for it had failed to fulfil half its staff quota.

MP Spatz ended with by saying we should prepare for whatever it will be. It was left to General Homan to finish the discussion by rebuking pessimism towards pooling and sharing. He argued that the Netherlands and Belgium have shown that military instruments can be standardised to save money: the two countries have combined their military-purpose frigates and mine-hunter vessels. He said that standardisation is the solution to a lot of problems.

Finally, Mr Nicholson thanked everyone present for attending, and expressed his pleasure that a debate amongst Liberals could end on an ‘optimistic’ note.

Leontine Douma
Research Intern, CentreForum

Anthony Rowlands
Director, Events and Administration, CentreForum

Complete list of ELF events 2011

February

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
07	Migration: Europe’s challenge and opportunity › FORES	Brussels Belgium	English

March

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
24	Liberalism versus education › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Centre for Liberal Studies › Liberal Society Foundation	Poznań Poland	Polish

April

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
07 – 10	Healthcare systems in the demographically changing EU › LYMEC › Fundació CatDem	Vienna Austria	English
08 – 10	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Poreč Croatia	English
11 – 24	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Online	English
12 – 16	Bridging the gap between European and local Liberal policies › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Institute for Liberal Studies	Warsaw Poland	Dutch Polish English
15 – 16	Social entrepreneurship: Vector of change in the EU › Institute Novum › Fundació CatDem	Ljubljana Slovenia	English Slovenian

15 – 17	Consolidation and strengthening of democratic organisations › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Institute for Liberal Studies › LIPA	Pravets Bulgaria	English
15 – 17	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Zagreb Croatia	English
16 – 01	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Online	English
23 – 24	Free trade, democracy and peace › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Stichting IDI	Adana Turkey	English

May

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
07 – 08	Globalisation, market economy and entrepreneurship › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Stichting IDI	Izmir Turkey	Turkish
07 – 08	Liberal answers to xenophobia and community conflicts › Liberal Future Forum › FORES › Institute Novum	Klagenfurt Austria	German English
13 – 15	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Opatija Croatia	English
16 – 29	Political communication in the age of social media revolution › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Online	English
18	Liberalism versus patriotism › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Centre for Liberal Studies › Liberal Society Foundation	Wroclaw Poland	Polish English

17 – 22	Bridging the gap between European and local Liberal policies › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Institute for Liberal Studies	The Hague The Netherlands	Dutch Polish English
20	The next financial framework: EU goes digital? › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Centre for Liberal Studies › Liberal Society Foundation	Dresden Germany	English
21 – 22	Free trade, democracy and peace › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Stichting IDI	Kars Turkey	Turkish

June

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
10 – 11	Liberalism in the Iberian Peninsula › Fundació CatDem › GALIDEM › Movimento Liberal Social	Lisbon Portugal	English Portuguese Spanish
10 – 12	Outcome-oriented project management, the Logical Framework Approach and basics of Project Cycle Management. An introduction with practical experiences › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Fundacija Libertas › Institute Novum	Split Croatia	Croatian
17 – 19	Outcome-oriented project management, the Logical Framework Approach and basics of Project Cycle Management. An introduction with practical experiences › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Fundacija Libertas › Institute Novum	Poreč Croatia	English
24 – 25	Success or Failure? Review of the Hungarian EU presidency › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation	Budapest Hungary	English
28	Media and politics: Democracy in times of networked societies › ELF secretariat	Brussels Belgium	English



July

Date	Title of event ‣ ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
12 – 14	Political communication of Liberal politics ‣ SILBA ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Open Society and its Friends	Bucharest Romania	English

September

Date	Title of event ‣ ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
02	The EU Strategy for the Danube Region: How to improve prosperity, people-to-people contact and economic freedom in a European macro-region ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ LIPA ‣ Liberal Society Foundation ‣ Centre for Liberal Studies ‣ ELDR Party	Sofia Bulgaria	English
07 – 09	Liberal principles compared ‣ Stichting IDI ‣ Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting	Doorn The Netherlands	English
08 – 10	Liberal Academy 2011: Financing Europe – value for money ‣ ELDR Party ‣ Fondazione Critica Liberale	Brussels Belgium	English
15	Liberalism versus religion ‣ Fundacja Projekt: Polska ‣ Centre for Liberal Studies ‣ Liberal Society Foundation	Cracow Poland	Polish
23 – 25	Outcome-oriented Project Management, the Logical Framework Approach and basics of Project Cycle Management. An introduction with practical experiences ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom ‣ Institute Novum	Opatija Croatia	Croatian
22	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Ploiesti Romania	Romanian
23	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Alexandria Romania	Romanian

24	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Calarasi Romania	Romanian
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October

Date	Title of event ‣ ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
01	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Suceava Romania	Romanian
02	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Constanta Romania	Romanian
02	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Neamt Romania	Romanian
06 – 09	Flexicurity – overly-hyped buzzword or social security and labour market flexibility combined? ‣ LYMEC ‣ Fundació CatDem	Poreč Croatia	English
07 – 09	Liberalism and the free market ‣ Open Society and its friends ‣ CentreForum ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Druskininkai Lithuania	Lithuanian
08	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Buzau Romania	Romanian
08	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Deva Romania	Romanian
09	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Timisoara Romania	Romanian
09	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities ‣ Institute for Liberal Studies ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Birland Romania	Romanian
14	Making European elections European ‣ ELDR Party ‣ LYMEC	London United Kingdom	English



15	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Râmnicu Vâlcea Romania	Romanian
15	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Brasov Romania	Romanian
15 – 16	Political culture as a challenge for young people › Liberal Society Foundation › Centre for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Bratislava Slovakia	Slovakian English
15 – 16	Liberal reforms for the 21st century. Is there a future for Liberalism? › Open Society and its friends › CentreForum › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Vilnius Lithuania	Lithuanian English
16	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Targu Mures Romania	Romanian
18 – 20	How to make politics outside the capital › SILBA › Institute for Liberal Studies › Open Society and its Friends	Istanbul Turkey	English
22	EU Institutions: Roles and Responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Craiova Romania	Romanian
22	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Alba Iluia Romania	Romanian
22	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Galati Romania	Romanian
23	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Targu Jiu Romania	Romanian
23	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Cluj Napoca Romania	Romanian
24	Liberalism versus war › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Centre for Liberal Studies › Liberal Society Foundation	Poznań Poland	Polish

25	Liberal answers to the disenchantment with politics › Liberal Future Forum › CentreForum	Vienna Austria	German
26	Liberalism vs internet › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Centre for Liberal Studies › Liberal Society Foundation	Łódź Poland	Polish
29	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Satu Mare Romania	Romanian
30	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Oradea Romania	Romanian

November

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisation/s involved	Venue	Language
04	EU Institutions: Roles and responsibilities › Institute for Liberal Studies › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Bucharest Romania	Romanian
04 – 05	The Role of Liberals in Slovakia and in Europe › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation	Bratislava Slovakia	English
04 – 06	The European Parliament › Open Society and its friends › CentreForum › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Druskininkai Lithuania	Lithuanian English
08	Cases in which is allowable to go to war: Libya and the future of Liberal interventionism › CentreForum › Stichting IDI › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	London United Kingdom	English
11	Dynamics of demographic decline › Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting › Open Society and its Friends › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Arnhem The Netherlands	English
17	Individual rights in Europe › Movimento Liberal Social › Fundació CatDem	Lisbon Portugal	Portuguese



18	Is ideology still relevant today? › Movimento Liberal Social › Fundació CatDem	Lisbon Portugal	Portuguese
22–23	Optimising Europe’s infrastructure: The impact of trans-European Networks › ELF secretariat	Catania Italy	German
23	Perspectives for freedom and democracy in North Africa › Fundació CatDem › Movimento Liberal Social	Palermo Italy	English
25	Resolving the eurozone crisis – Liberal responses for stability and prosperity › ELF secretariat	Palermo Italy	English
25	Promoting economic growth in the European Union? › Movimento Liberal Social › Fundació CatDem	Lisbon Portugal	Portuguese
26–27	Free trade, democracy and peace › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Stichting IDI	Trabzon Turkey	Turkish
28	The future of European multilateralism in NATO › CentreForum › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Stichting IDI	London United Kingdom	English
29	Liberal answers to innovation and growth › Liberal Future Forum › Institute Novum › Fondazione Critica Liberale › Stichting IDI	Vienna Austria	English German
30	Political foundations in Europe: Key actors in democracy promotion? › Fundació CatDem › SILC	Barcelona Catalonia, Spain	English

Selection of publications and studies

In 2011 ELF published a much-anticipated volume on demographic decline, which is a crucial issue for the future of Europe and a challenging subject matter for Liberals. Tax competition is another topic set to shape Europe's future growth centres, and was therefore the topic of another ELF publication.

At the same time, ELF continued its tradition of supporting the translation of important Liberal texts into as many European languages as possible. In this way, ELF has been able to widen the readership of key Liberal monographs, thereby bringing Liberalism closer to the European citizen.

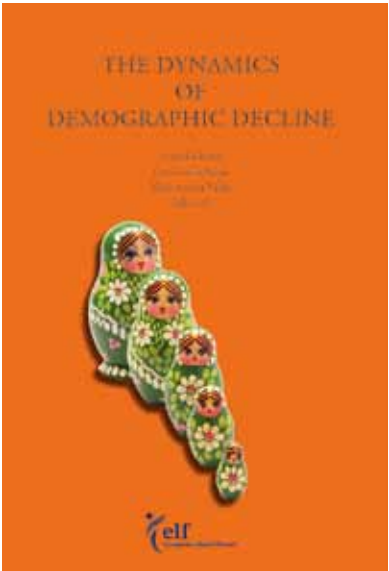
Dynamics of demographic decline

Publisher
European Liberal Forum

Cooperating member organisations
Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting
Open Society and its Friends
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)

ISBN
978-90-73896-00-0

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Europe faces a timebomb – no other region in the world has fewer births today than the European Union. This will unavoidably lead to a substantial decline in Europe’s population. Indeed, for some European countries and regions, population decline is already today’s reality. Others will have to address it in the near or distant future.

Demographic change does not only affect the economic outlook for Europe, it also changes the way we organise the social fabric of life today. Examples of this are the housing market, the labour market, or institutions and practices such as social care, education, and culture. How should Liberal politicians deal with these developments? Influencing the number of births would amount to social engineering, a nightmare for Liberals. It is also exceedingly difficult to achieve as the state has almost no influence over what is, and must remain, one of the most intimate and important decisions in the individual life of men and women anywhere. The freedom of the individual should always be the point of departure for any Liberal politician and the government should intervene only when it is proven to be truly necessary and unavoidable. But what does this mean in the case of demographic change? Should ‘nature’ take its course or is demographic decline a problem that needs to be addressed more thoroughly? And what can Liberalism offer in all this?

These demographic developments are one of the biggest challenges of this century and therefore ‘demographic change’ is analysed and debated extensively among Liberals. Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting (The Netherlands), Open Society and its Friends (Lithuania), and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (Germany) were able to cooperate in the ELF project, ‘The dynamics of demographic decline’. The project consists of a seminar and a book containing case studies of different regions within the European Union that, in one way or another, are facing demographic change. The aim of this project is to provide a Liberal vision for problems related to these changes. Liberals (and everyone) are encouraged to use this source of research and knowledge to identify the challenges and opportunities demographic change offers to policymakers all over Europe.

Tax competition in Europe

Publisher
European Liberal Forum

Cooperating member organisations
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Centre for Liberal Studies

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In a market economy, suppliers compete to win favour with the customer for a particular good or service. This element of competition is one of the fundamental aspects of the market economy. The distribution of goods and services in a market is run according to this guiding principle.

Internationally, tax systems are also characterised by such competition. In tax competition, various financial locations compete for the favour of a body of investors by way of their taxation system. The tax system is therefore an important factor to be taken into account by those trying to gain an advantage over their competitors in attracting investment. Through the fruition of the internal market, these EU member states have laid the foundation for the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. The free movement of capital, under no restrictions in the EU, ensures that EU tax competition principally concerns company taxes. Member states hope to draw companies into making investments, which in turn will create tax revenues.

In conclusion, this study supports a continuation of tax competition within the EU. It argues that tax competition provides all stakeholders with an incentive to optimise their market solutions to achieve most efficiency. Notwithstanding, as in the case of international tax competition, a framework of rules should form the boundary of tax competition within Europe, too. This framework should stop unfair tax competition, by creating equal conditions of competition for all actors. The following principle of regulatory policy also applies to the desired state of tax competition in the EU: as much market freedom as possible, as many rules as necessary.

FNF occasional papers: translation of selected publications into Greek

Publisher
European Liberal Forum

Cooperating member organisations
Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM)
Centre Jean Gol
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)

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A combination of the financial and economic crisis, and structural problems inherited from the past, mean Greece is confronted with its deepest crisis of recent decades. Today more than ever, Liberal ideas must be shared, tested and discussed in order to draw the path to a more stable and prosperous future.

The selected publications of experts from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom can contribute to the dissemination of Liberal ideas in Greece, and by translating them into Greek we hope to be able to reach an even wider public. The selection of publications has been undertaken by our member organisation, Liberty Forum of Greece, in order to assess which issues would be most interesting for the Greek public today:

- 1. Globalisation and the poor**
Johan Norberg, 2004
- 2. Freedom properly understood**
Dr Tom G. Palmer, 2008
- 3. Liberty: the best remedy against poverty**
Dr Otto Graf Lambsdorff, reprinted 2005
- 4. The social dimension of liberal policy**
Prof. Hubertus Müller-Groeling, reprinted 2005
- 5. Non centralism – the Swiss experiment**
Robert Nef, 2009
- 6. The private provision of public goods –
The history and future of communal Liberalism**
Dr Fred E. Foldvary, 2009
- 7. Europe and education**
Prof. Ulrich van Lith, 2006
- 8. Migration matters – How Germany and the world can benefit from
a free movement of people**
Philippe Legrain, 2009
- 9. Liberty in the modern world**
Richard D. North, 2005
- 10. Property rights in Central and East European countries**
Dr Stefan Melnik, 2009

Complete list of ELF publications 2011

Title of publication ‣ ELF member organisations involved	Author/Editor	Language
Tax competition in Europe ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) ‣ Centre for Liberal Studies	Dr Kerstin Brauckhoff (FNF) ‣ Author	German
Dynamics of demographic decline ‣ Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting ‣ Open Society and its Friends ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)	Camilia Bruil Dr Patrick van Schie Mark van de Velde ‣ Editors	English
Liberal principles compared ‣ Stichting IDI ‣ Centre Jean Gol ‣ CentreForum ‣ Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting	Maartije Jansen Anne van Veenstra Gosse Vuijk ‣ Editors	English
FNF occasional papers ‣ KEFIM ‣ Centre Jean Gol ‣ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)	Liberty Forum of Greece ‣ Editors	Greek
‣ Globalisation and the poor	Johan Norberg ‣ Author	
‣ Liberty in the modern world	Richard D. North ‣ Author	
‣ Europe and education	Prof. Ulrich van Lith ‣ Author	
‣ The social dimension of Liberal policy	Prof. Hubertus Müller-Groeling ‣ Author	
‣ Liberty: The best remedy against poverty	Dr Otto Graf Lambsdorff ‣ Author	
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‣ Migration matters – How Germany and the world can	Philippe Legrain ‣ Author	
‣ The private provision of public goods – The History and future of communal Liberalism	Dr Fred E. Foldvary ‣ Author	
‣ Non centralism – The Swiss experiment	Robert Nef ‣ Author	
‣ Property rights in Central and Eastern European countries	Dr Stefan Melnik ‣ Author	



liberalforum.eu

The ELF website features information on ELF activities and structures. Furthermore it provides:

- › Reports on past ELF conferences, seminars and workshops
- › Newly issued ELF publications
- › A platform for member organisations to exchange liberal views and ideas with fellow members

Visit us on www.liberalforum.eu

Member organisations

The ELF was established in 2007 by 15 founding member organisations. More liberal organisations have since joined, bringing the current number of members to 33.

Membership of the foundation is open to those think tanks, political foundations, institutes and leading liberal personalities that promote liberal, democratic ideals and values.

The current member organisations of the ELF are presented on the following pages.



Asociación Galega para a Liberdade e a Democracia

Galician Society for Freedom and Democracy (GALIDEM)



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The Galician Association for Freedom and Democracy, GALIDEM, is the Galician Liberal think tank. GALIDEM is the concretisation of an old idea of a group of young Liberal economists who have gone on to take up academic positions at Galician Universities.

GALIDEM has two main purposes:

- > First, to encourage serious debate on Galician public policy issues, by proposing ideas grounded on academic research;
- > Second, to promote education: by organising seminars and publishing non-technical reports and articles, as well as publishing teaching materials on Liberalism and Economics to be used for young students in classrooms.

On Liberalism

Our idea of Liberalism stems from our confidence in individuals, each freely pursuing his/her own interest as the way to promote that of society as a whole, is based on a long academic tradition in Economics, which is also found in British liberal thinkers such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.

Activities

In order to accomplish our goals, we have organised conferences, book presentations, articles in the media, meetings, the publication of non-technical reports, as well as teaching materials for students.

Atvira visuomenė ir jos draugai

Open Society and its Friends



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Founded in 2005, Open Society and its Friends is a non-profit organisation that aims to spread Liberal ideas and values, stimulate the development of an open civil society, extend and deepen democratic traditions, promote citizenship and strive for more private sector involvement in public administration.

Apart from the implementation of various projects and initiatives, we mainly aim to provide an opportunity for other people and organisations to reach their mutual goals together. Therefore, our organisation is often a supporter of ideas and initiatives as well as a partner in projects.

However, we always pursue our goals and, before we consider taking part in any initiative, we ask ourselves the following questions:

- > Will it disseminate Liberal ideas and values?
- > Will it promote citizenship?
- > Will it strengthen the culture and awareness of democracy?
- > Will it encourage public and political activity?
- > Will it build political intelligence?

The organisation is involved, on an ongoing basis, in disseminating Liberal ideas and in their implementation. With our goals in mind, we initiate research on important social, political and public issues; we create concepts for Liberal reforms; we organise conferences, discussions and public lectures; we carry out opinion polls and finance the publication of academic literature.

Bertil Ohlin Institutet



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OHLIN institutet

The Bertil Ohlin Institutet is a foundation founded in 1993. It is named after Bertil Ohlin, who was the leader of the Liberal Party of Sweden (Folkpartiet) between 1944 and 1967.

The purpose of our institute is to initiate research and debate in important social and political issues. We regularly organise lectures, debates, and conferences that are open to the public. We also commission research reports and other publications. Most of our activities are in Swedish but some of the papers are written in English. They can be found at, or ordered from, our website.

In 1977, Bertil Ohlin was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics, in recognition of his academic achievements. The institute maintains close contact with high-quality university departments. Four out of nine seats on our board are reserved for scholars from relevant fields, mainly the social sciences.

By building a network of scholars, politicians, journalists and public debaters, the institute contributes to and broadens Liberal opinion formation in Sweden.

Although the institute’s founders were affiliated with the Liberal Party of Sweden we operate independently of parties and interest groups, organisationally as well as financially. Our activities are mainly financed through grants from Liberal foundations.

Centre Jean Gol



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Opened in December 2004, the Centre Jean Gol is, at one and the same time, the guardian of the archives of the Reformist Movement and a number of its directors; an interdisciplinary library boasting over 4,000 volumes (‘seminal’ Liberal writings but also less well-known works); a design office; a think tank and research unit; a publisher of numerous collections; a proactive political force; a centre for training the Reformist Movement’s representatives; and an organiser of events, seminars, conferences and symposiums. The Centre Jean Gol’s objective is to generate discussions on important social issues, thereby enabling the Reformist Movement to promote new ideas as part of a message that is accessible to all. In other words, the Centre Jean Gol allows the Reformist Movement to express itself as a vital creative force.

Apart from reference works on Liberalism, the Centre Jean Gol publishes ‘Cahiers’, the fruit of an interdisciplinary discussion process involving political authorities and experts from academic and socio-economic spheres or from civil society. It updates a database of electoral results since the early 1990s, from which it produces in-depth analyses. It also places itself at the disposal of the Reform Movement’s elected representatives to carry out surveys and work on specific election projects.

Finally, the Centre Jean Gol has a website, designed to serve as a communication tool for the activities and publications of the centre. It offers online access to our library catalogue and to the inventory of our archives; the option to download certain parts of our publications free of charge; a ‘Liberal portal’ providing several hundred links to other websites (Liberal or otherwise) of possible interest; plus a section entitled ‘La Pensée Libérale’, which gives access to analyses of major Liberal works, bibliographical references, etc.

CentreForum



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CENTREFORUM

CentreForum is an independent, liberal think tank based in Westminster, London. Since its launch in 2005, CentreForum has established itself in the top tier of UK think tanks. Its influence has grown since the formation of the UK Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010.

CentreForum's research covers four broad themes: education and social policy, economics, globalisation and liberalism.

CentreForum's social policy work is directed towards a single objective: to ensure that people's chances in life are determined not by their family background or income, but by their talents and efforts. This has led CentreForum to focus, above all, on education – the engine that powers social mobility. The 'pupil premium' was developed at CentreForum and is now a flagship policy of the UK coalition government.

CentreForum's key focus since the economic crisis has been how to boost growth and rebalance the economy. It has explored the deeper causes of the UK's soaring debts, scrutinized government fiscal policy and set out proposals to boost spending in the real economy. It has also looked at ways of making capitalism fairer and more inclusive. CentreForum's plan to give the British public a share in the bailed out banks has received cross party support. Its proposal for community land auctions to promote local involvement in development is being piloted by the coalition government.

As a liberal think tank, CentreForum views the phenomenon of globalisation positively. It believes that the greater movement of goods, capital and labour across national boundaries has made the world both richer and freer over recent decades. But, as the financial crisis and recession showed, globalisation brings threats as well as opportunities. CentreForum believes these can be tackled only through international cooperation.

CentreForum believes that liberalism forms the common ground on which all mainstream British political thought lies. With liberalism very much in vogue and Liberals back in government for the first time in a generation, CentreForum is seeking to stimulate debate about the relevance of liberalism's defining ideas in the 21st century.

Alongside its research CentreForum runs seminars, conferences and fringe meetings, which aim to engage parliamentarians, policymakers, academics, media and voters in debate.

Centrum liberálních studií

Centre for Liberal Studies



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The Centre for Liberal Studies was established in 1994 as foundation and then re-established in 1999 as civil society organisation. It is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit think tank.

The main objective of the CLS is to develop contacts between exponents of Liberal thought, to contribute to clarifying the definition of Liberalism and to define its place in contemporary society, and to apply this Liberal approach to the political, economic and social transition of the Czech Republic.

Due to a historical absence of any stable Liberal political party in Czech political landscape, the CLS, along with the Liberal Institute, is the only promoter of Liberal ideas in Czech society. The CLS is open to cooperation with all interested institutions, organisations and individuals.

The activities of the CLS consist of three main types:

- › Policy advocacy in areas such as tax system reform, social insurance, rent deregulation, healthcare system reforms, etc.;
- › Educational: panel discussions, round tables, conferences, awarding grants to undergraduates and graduates, sponsoring degree papers, translations;
- › Cooperation: with established experts (university teachers, scholars, government officers etc.) and with other think tanks (Liberal Institute, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom).

In 2011 the CLS was actively involved in preparing the webzine 4Liberty.eu which serves as a platform for communication of Liberal-oriented think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe towards media and decision-makers.

Edistysmielisen tutkimuksen yhdistys r.y. e2

Think tank e2



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The Society for Progressive Research was established in 2006 to run the Think Tank e2 based on progressive values and Liberal ideals. The director of the organization is Dr Karina Jutila, D.S.Sc.

Think Tank e2:

- › Provides a forum for debate by bringing together experts from different disciplines for innovative social discussions;
- › Initiates conversation on current issues and introduces new themes for open debate;
- › Aims to predict social phenomena outside the field of daily politics;
- › Contributes to the strengthening of think tank activities in Finland and improving contacts with think tanks in other countries.

Think Tank e2’s activities are divided into four programmes:

- › Sustainable development and society’s ability to change;
- › Equality of opportunity and prevention of social exclusion;
- › Enhancing citizens’ political participation and grassroots democracy;
- › Finland as part of the EU and the international community.

European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)



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The European Liberal Youth, abbreviated as LYMEC, is a pan-European youth organisation seeking to promote Liberal values throughout the EU as the youth organisation of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) Party and its parliamentary group in the European Parliament (ALDE, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe).

Involving about 210,000 members from 58 organisations in 33 countries, LYMEC is made up of Member Organisations (MO) and Individual Membership (IM) and it is active across the breadth and diversity of the European continent. Our central aim is the creation of a Liberal and federal Europe.

LYMEC was established in 1976 as the ‘Liberal and Radical Youth Movement of the European Community’. As a youth organisation, LYMEC supports the development of political and educational understanding of young people throughout Europe. LYMEC strives to play a political role within Europe by cooperating with other liberal and radical organisations – like ELDR Party – and to represent Liberal interests in European youth movements.

In brief, our organisation aims to:

- › Create a liberal and federal Europe;
- › Educate its member organisations and individual members through the realisation of seminars, publications, group travel, symposia, courses and meetings;
- › Increase the common understanding of liberal ideas among young people throughout Europe;
- › Promote tolerance between cultures and individuals;
- › Increase the level of political awareness and involvement of young people in politics including the promotion of active citizenship.

Recent activities include seminars organised in various European countries, conferences and symposia organised in the European Parliament, travel groups and demonstrations.

We gather together for Congresses and Executive Committee meetings in various locations throughout Europe during the year to exchange ideas and meet our fellow Liberal colleagues. These events are listed on our website.

Fondazione Critica Liberale



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fondazione critica liberale

The Fondazione Critica Liberale was established in 1994. The foundation’s aim is to promote Liberalism through the organisation of conferences, seminars, research and study activities, workshops and meetings.

The foundation is actively involved in publishing and in the promotion of research studies and debates. It publishes the monthly review Critica Liberale, established in 1974, that originated the entire organisation, and its supplement Gli Stati Uniti d’Europa (‘The United States of Europe’), advocating European federalism. The foundation is also editor of the Libelli vecchi e nuovi collection, published by Dedalo Editore, and of several books and publications; it also operates a web site.

The foundation works with the Consulta Laica of Rome and with Coordinamento Nazionale delle Consulte Laiche of Italy. It has, together with the Settore Nuovi Diritti (the ‘New Rights’ Office of the CGIL trade union), created a ‘secularisation monitor’, which produces research on secularisation in Italy on an annual basis, now covering a period of 19 years, and a new yearly report on the religious information in the Italian media, funded by the Italian Waldensian (Protestant) Church.

The journal of the foundation, Critica Liberale, is a member of CRIC (Coordinamento Riviste Italiane di Cultura), the coordination body for Italian culture magazines.

The foundation is one of the founding members of the Pannunzio Society for Freedom of Information, and part of the Open Media Coalition, a network of Italian organisations promoting transparency in the media system, supported by the Open Society Foundations.

Forum for Greece



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On July 13, 2010 a group of liberal-minded academics and professionals from all over Greece, headed by Greece’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakoyannis founded Forum for Greece, a non-profit association.

Forum for Greece is a non-profit organisation with Liberal, democratic and reformist ideas, wishing to contribute to open and democratic developments in Greece and the European Union. Forum for Greece has been registered under Greek Law as a non-profit organization, (VAT No EL997889575) with headquarters in Athens and a branch in Thessaloniki, in northern Greece.

Forum for Greece aims to work in the liberal-thinking sector in Greece, helping to form a critical mass of citizens aiming at a liberal reform of Greek society. Opinion polls suggest that conditions for such an endeavour are ripe; taking in consideration the recent financial crisis in Greece, an impressively large section of the population is embracing, for the first time, Liberal ideas, such as the free market, privatisation and the reduction in the size of the state.

Forum för reformer och entreprenörskap (FORES)

Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability



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FORES

Founded in 2007, FORES is an independent research foundation dedicated to encouraging entrepreneurship and sustainable development through market solutions.

The goal is to adapt the micro-economic incentive structures to meet the challenges of accelerating globalisation and global warming.

FORES's main activities are to initiate research projects that will result in concrete reform proposals in relevant policy areas such as:

- › Market-based solutions for environmental issues;
- › Harnessing the positive potential of immigration;
- › The role of civil society in entrepreneurship;
- › The flexibility of labour markets;
- › The protection of the integrity of the individual;
- › Modernising public services.

FORES is heavily reliant for its activities on a vast network of academics. The business model is that of a modern network organisation with a small core of research managers and communication officers supporting and coordinating a vast network of researchers and experts. Papers and books from the institute are subject to a peer review processes.

FORES draws on researchers at universities and research institutions in Sweden (and some abroad), including regional universities and especially those with particular expertise in empirical social sciences.

The institute also makes full use of new media, the homepage being its most important communication tool, supplementing written reports and books with audiovisual material and interactive forums.

In order to ensure its independence, FORES was set up as a foundation, with a Board of Directors made up of academics, experienced former politicians, business people and opinion leaders.

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit (FNF)

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom



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Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG FÜR DIE FREIHEIT

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom – established in 1958 by the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Theodor Heuss, and a group of committed Liberals – is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation that is committed to promoting Liberal policy and politics in Germany, Europe and worldwide. Based in Potsdam, Germany, the foundation has seven offices in Germany and more than 40 offices worldwide through which it promotes its core concepts, such as the protection of human rights, civil society, market economy, free trade and rule of law.

Over the last 53 years, the activities of the foundation have expanded beyond their original civic educational task in the young Federal Republic of Germany. A scholarship programme, a think tank (the Liberal Institute), a press and media department and its engagement in international politics have become important parts of the foundation's assignments.

Together with our partners – which include Liberal political parties as well as non-governmental organisations – we support the development of constitutional and democratic institutions as well as civil society.

The Foundation's key focus areas for the period of 2012 to 2015 are:

- › Freedom and progress: Progress means the unhindered realisation of the innovative potential to improve living conditions and to enhance the understanding of the world in the wake of advances in scientific knowledge;
- › Freedom and religion: The right to freedom of religious and ideological belief is considered a human right for all faiths in equal measure;
- › Freedom and participation: Liberal civic education must take up this subject, 'Only when the individual interferes can a liberal society grow' (Friedrich Naumann). Freedom and democracy thrive on participation;
- › Freedom and property: private property and its protection through the legal system are essential conditions for wealth creation, economic growth and, furthermore, for a self-confident civil society.

The main objectives of our international work are:

- › To disseminate Liberal ideas and concepts in all political areas;
- › To strengthen civil society, particularly Liberal organisations and parties;
- › To bring Liberal approaches and solutions from abroad into German political discussion.

Our activities are as varied as our cooperation partners or the regions in which we work. They are based on long-standing experience and are constantly evolving.

Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem)



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The Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem) has taken on the challenge of leading the restructuring of Catalanism. The modern world presents a whole new set of important challenges, to which Catalanist thought must be capable of giving adequate answers; for example, to the consequences of globalisation; to the increasing diversity and pluralism of developed societies from a social, cultural, linguistic and religious point of view; to the emergence of new technologies and the impact of those in areas such as education or the economy; to the demand for new policies to face emerging needs; to the new geopolitical situation; to the newly emerging economic interdependency; to the regeneration of democracy; to the role of states and the distribution of sovereignty and political power in this new context. To sum up, Catalanism must be prepared to provide answers to anything that shapes economic development and citizens' well-being.

The Fundació CatDem seeks to make its contribution to this process by encouraging and supplying ideas for debates and proposals. This process is open to the whole of Catalan society with an understanding of the essential values of Catalanism and democracy – it is a debate that goes beyond strictly political and partisan lines.

Between 2008 and 2011, the Fundació CatDem constructed the Casa Gran del Catalanisme (Meeting House of Catalanism). The idea behind this Meeting House was to give us an opportunity to have an open and plural debate on the future of Catalanism, which had shifted from traditional nationalism to a nationalism based on pluralism and, thus, better adapted to today's society. Following this stage, during which the Fundació opened its doors to new sectors that had previously been indifferent or outwardly hostile to the Catalan nationalist movement, at the end of 2011 the Fundació CatDem started a new phase, which we are calling the National Transition.

The goal of National Transition is help us obtain a social majority for when we have the ability to exercise our right to decide. This is why the Fundació CatDem is now working hard to increase support for sovereignty and unite all those who believe in freedom and democracy. Today, the first steps towards this Transition are our demands for a fiscal pact and the careful reflection on what model of a country might be best suited for the Catalan citizenry if we are ever given the ability to exercise the right to decide our future.

Fundacja Klub Obywatelski

Civic Club Foundation



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The Civic Club Foundation was founded in December 1998 by people connected to the Polish Democratic Movement 'Solidarity'. We are an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation.

The foundation's priorities are as follows:

- › Dissemination and protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as civil liberties;
- › Propagation of the ideas of a free market economy and entrepreneurship;
- › Promotion of European integration and the development of contacts and cooperation between societies;
- › Action in the field of education, especially democracy, human rights, social policy, foreign relations and economic affairs.

We implement our statutory aims through:

- › Organising seminars, conferences, workshops and debates;
- › Compiling publications;
- › Cooperation with public administration and non-governmental organisations acting in fields that correspond to the foundation's statutory aims.

The foundation's two key programmes are:

- Direction Europe:
- › This programme is run especially for academics and non-governmental organisations and aims to disseminate knowledge about the EU and find common solutions with regard to Polish foreign policy.
- Liberal Institute:
- › This programme aims to develop up-to-date solutions with regard to economics (especially energy and environmental policy), human rights and rule of law. Within this programme we have also dedicated a special framework of cooperation with other organisations in matters related to the current global economic crisis.

Fundacja Projekt: Polska



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The mission of Fundacja Projekt: Polska is to bring together experts and young leaders to promote public policy solutions for Poland based on the free market, free society, European values and the rule of law.

Fundacja Projekt: Polska is a joint initiative between two different groups. The first group consists of business and media people who were in their teenage years shortly after the collapse of Communism and the second group consists of young people from Liberal youth and student associations.

We think that public life in Poland needs more projects and constructive ways of thinking. Each project has precise aims, costs and profits. Each has a timetable and it is therefore possible to evaluate how successful it has been. A project can only be successful when it is created and implemented by competent people.

We want to act as a platform to give young people the chance to professionalise and to prepare – in a politically impartial way – to take part in public life. We also want to give the young professionals and business people who have entered the labour market since 1989 the chance to get involved in public issues and civil society and to pass on their skills and knowledge to the next generation. We support and advocate changes in Poland by establishing unique and independent think tanks. The main goal of our foundation is to initiate changes in Poland with the help of professionals, think tanks and projects promoted by the civic actions of our partners.

Additionally, Fundacja Projekt: Polska invited preeminent Polish experts to join forces in the creation of ‘Centrum Cyfrowe’ (Digital Center), offering expertise and know-how on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to enhance social capital in Poland, civic engagement and state efficiency.

The aim of the Center is to foster broad social, civic and cultural engagement with the use of ICT tools. With the broad focus in mind, Centrum Cyfrowe was created to provide that support in the following spheres:

- › Research and analysis of the digital space,
- › Maintenance of laboratory space where specific projects are developed and tested,
- › Communication and promotion of digital issues in public debate.

Haya van Someren Stichting

VVD International



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Haya van Someren Stichting is responsible for the international activities of the Dutch Liberal party (VVD) and is seated at the Headquarters of the VVD in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The Haya van Someren Stichting concentrates on supporting activities that strengthen Liberal-minded political parties and groupings in Central and Eastern Europe, without making a financial profit. This is facilitated by the Political Parties Programme of the Matra Programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Matra Programme aims to support the transition to a multiform, constitutional society in countries in Central and Eastern Europe and North Africa. VVD International has already almost twenty years of experience in the field of capacity building of political parties in Eastern and South-eastern Europe.

The parties and/or political groups we support should emphasise Liberal principles and ideas. Preferably they are, or intend to be, a member of the Liberal International, and/or the European Liberal Democrats (ELDR). There are some other basic conditions: the political party or grouping should aim to strengthen the rule of law, guaranteeing the individual rights of man and promoting peaceful relations with neighbouring countries.

The Haya van Someren foundation works on a demand-driven basis and organises and facilitates several training programmes:

- › Training on various party-related subjects;
- › Regional seminars, providing keynote-speakers;
- › Visitor’s programmes in the Netherlands;
- › Regional and national discussion fora.

Projects have been successfully implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

The VVD is, as well as an ELF member, also a member of other worldwide networks of Liberals: Liberal International and the European Liberal and Democratic and Reform Party (ELDR).

Descriptions of the countries, organisations, activities and background information on VVD International’s cooperation with its international partners can be found on our website: www.internationaal.vvd.nl.

Institute for Liberal Studies



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The Institute for Liberal Studies association was created by a group of high-ranking Liberals, Ministers, Members of Parliament (including the Prime Minister), in order to promote Liberal values in Romanian society.

The institute organises public debates and conferences on the latest issues concerning Romania and the EU agenda.

At the same time, it organises seminars, workshops on Liberalism, EU institutions, public administration, and media campaigns throughout the country.

The institute is also focused on socio-political research on current topics.

The development of the institute’s own library of basic texts on Liberalism is ongoing, and it also aims to publish its own studies and books.

The Institute for Liberal Studies is a founding member of ELF and works closely with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom as foreign partner and with TNL (Liberal National Youth), CSL (Liberal Student Clubs), Murray Rothbard Centre for Political Economy and Business as domestic partners.

In 2007, the Institute for Liberal Studies was declared an association of public utility.

Kentro Fileleftheron Meleton (KEFIM)

Liberty Forum of Greece



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The Liberty Forum of Greece aims to promote activities to broaden the study and dissemination of Liberal ideas and policies in Greece, Europe and the rest of the world. We also support associations, non-profit organisations and other agencies as well as individuals who contribute to the fulfilment of our aims.

The means for achieving our aims are the organisation of training and educational programmes to educate the officials of associations, leagues, non-profit making organisations or other agencies, as well as single personalities in order to promote the principles of a free economy, individual rights and an open society.

Liberaal Kennis Centrum



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Liberaal Kennis Centrum is the knowledge centre of the Flemish Liberal Party (Open Vld). It is a Liberal think tank that aims to define Liberalism in the 21st century and to put its important topics high on the political agenda.

Liberaal Kennis Centrum seeks to respond proactively to different challenges in the near future. In this way, we want to lay the foundations for political Liberalism in Flanders, Belgium and Europe.

Liberaal Kennis Centrum aims to formulate a clear vision of today's Liberalism in an era marked by great challenges such as globalisation, ageing of the population, migration and climate change. It does so by means of progressive research, study sessions, meetings and lectures. By taking an innovative interpretation of contemporary Liberalism, Liberaal Kennis Centrum has found a place among the international think tanks in Brussels.

Liberal Institute for Political Analyses (LIPA)



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The Liberal Institute for Political Analysis is a think tank committed to nurturing the political ideas and activities of the liberal and reformist centre in Bulgaria. At the service of Bulgaria and all its citizens, LIPA seeks to reinforce the values of freedom, liberal democracy, personal initiative and responsibility. LIPA members share Friedrich Naumann's belief that a functioning democracy needs politically informed and educated citizens, that civic education is a prerequisite for political participation and thus for democracy. Among our goals is to constantly offer political alternatives to socialism and populism and to demonstrate that voluntary change in one's thinking and attitudes is the way to change one's life, output and the society as a whole.

LIPA assists and supports liberal parties and politicians in Bulgaria in their efforts to advocate the values of liberalism, to propose liberal policies and solutions to everyday problems of Bulgarian citizens. Central to this role is our strategic partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. LIPA works in strategic partnership with the National Movement for Stability and Prosperity offering political consultation to party leadership and training to party activists and young leaders.

LIPA partners with students' organisations. Together with the Student Club of Political Science at Sofia University LIPA organise and present training seminars on 'Civil Rights and Responsibilities in the EU' for young leaders in a number of Bulgarian cities. The programme fills a gap in the knowledge and understanding of human rights, European institutions and civil education for the youngest generation. Our formula 'Young Leaders Training Younger Leaders' has been very motivating for both trainers and trainees and has encouraged all participants to pursue a more active civil participation and further education.

LIPA regularly holds and participates in discussion seminars, lectures, and various training courses. We publish the work of all our members and contributors on our internet pages.

Liberales



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Liberales is an independent Belgian think tank within the Liberal movement, founded in 2002. Its members consider Liberalism as a progressive movement supporting individual freedom, justice and human rights. Liberales stimulates debate and progressive thinking on various topics including social-economic, ecological and ethical issues.

Its members believe in the strength, uniqueness and self-determination of the human being who takes on responsibilities in society as an empowered individual. In order to give every person the possibility to do so, we pursue equal starting conditions for all in a society where freedom and responsibility are intimately connected. A society where a balance between freedom and solidarity is obtained. A society which does not impose itself onto the individual but invites active citizenship in which people invest in the community and take on responsibility towards their fellow citizens.

Freedom also implies respecting the rights of others. A society can only be deemed dignified when it warrants a maximum of choices for its citizens. This self-determination is especially important regarding the life philosophy and attitude to life which people wish to develop. Liberales thus pursues mutual respect.

Liberales addresses everyone who believes in freedom, openness and creativity of the human being as the engine for increased wealth and well-being.

Activities

Liberales disseminates its ideas through a weekly newsletter with columns, essays, book reviews, and interviews. Our newsletter has over 10,000 subscribers and Liberales has published more than 2,000 articles on a broad range of subjects. These articles can be consulted on our website. Also, Liberales organizes interactive events with prominent speakers which are open to anyone interested.

Popper Readings

Once a year Liberales invites a key note speaker to elaborate on its ideas using the work of Karl Popper, a staunch defender of open society, as a starting point. Previous speakers have been: Guy Verhofstadt (Belgian Prime Minister), Prof. Hugo Dyserinck (Head ‘Komparatistik’ Philosophische Fakultät – RWTH Aken), Herman Van Rompuy (Belgian Prime Minister, President of Europe), Hans Achterhuis (Philosopher, publicist), Mark Rutte (Dutch Prime Minister).

Liberales Zukunftsforum

Liberal Future Forum



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Liberal Future Forum was created as non-profit organisation to promote Liberal ideas and to develop new concepts for contemporary societies. As in most Central European countries, Liberalism does not have a long tradition in Austria. Hence, there is a particular need for countries with weak Liberal traditions to increase the capacity of Liberals to influence public debate. Liberal movements are quite distinct from traditional conservative and social democratic concepts, combining the claim for open societies based upon strong individual freedom and a strong understanding of individual citizens’ rights with the call for an efficient and effective market economy based upon competition.

Liberal Future Forum promotes the idea of a progressive, democratic, strong, efficient and ecological European Union and its continual deepening and widening.

Liberal Future Forum understands itself as think tank for Liberal movements. It aims at developing evidence-based policy solutions to the problems facing Austria and Central Europe. Running in parallel to the research programme are public events. Through meetings, conferences, seminars and lectures, the Forum aims to engage policy-makers, academics, the media and public at large in lively and provocative debate.

Liberal Future Forum focuses on issues related to:

- › Europe’s role in the world with respect to the economic and financial crisis and the consequences for a more efficient organisation of the world economy beyond this crisis;
- › The improvement of European democracy by enhancing informed participation of citizens and protecting their right for privacy by clearly limiting state control of individuals (control of electronic communication, bugging operations, CCTV data storage, etc.);
- › Populism, xenophobia, and the extreme right-wing parties and movements;
- › Other topics to be addressed, including migration, asylum and the rights of minorities.

Liberal Future Forum is in touch with other think tanks in the Liberal milieu in order to participate in the international exchange of Liberal ideas and solutions. As well as forging links with the major Liberal think tanks across Europe, its principal aims are to strengthen the links between Liberals in Central Europe.

Liberalismi Akadeemia

Academy of Liberalism



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The Academy of Liberalism is an independent Liberal think tank founded by the Estonian Reform Party in 2006.

The Academy of Liberalism has a board of 12 persons, including ministers, parliament members and entrepreneurs.

The purpose of the Academy is to promote a Liberal world view to oppose the emergence of socialist ideas in society.

The Academy of Liberalism is focused on civic education and research projects to promote Liberalism in Estonia and EU neighbourhood countries.

The activities of the Academy include three main types:

Publishing

- › Translations of acknowledged works in Estonian (L. Mises, Liberalism, J. Munkhammar, The Guide to Reform, etc.) and publications on topical issues;

Events

- › A sophisticated training programme for Reform Party Youth, the Day of Liberalism, Liberal of The Year Award, round tables, conferences, training series on liberalim (ABC of Liberalism, Liberal economics, government spending and economic growth, state intervention in economic crisis, etc.);

Cooperation

- › Various joint projects with other think tanks (Institute for Market Economics – IME, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, ELF, etc.) and partnership projects in Kyrgyztan (International Republican Institute – IRI).

Lokus



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Lokus is a Liberal think tank that operates in the sphere of civil society, with the following focus: the Swedish minority in Finland. We support inclusiveness towards the Swedish people, where language serves as a central point for active citizenship.

Lokus thinks big about small issues, about human beings, contextuality and democracy. Citizens are mostly interested in political questions that are ‘glocal’ – a mixture of local and global. Lokus works for dynamic relations between big and small democracy.

Lokus is an inclusive meeting place for citizens who speak one or more languages. The Swedish in Finland need positive metaphors rather than threats.

Lokus seeks to promote a desirable future which has a social-liberal profile. The whispers of today are the calls of the future. Values and ethics should be the overarching guidelines in politics and it is important to rediscover and renew basic ideologies. Lokus has a social-liberal profile and we defend the welfare state.

Lokus is linked to the Svenska folkskolans vänner (SFV) association and was founded in 2006. We publish caricatures, research reports and arrange meetings and seminars within an ideological framework.

Movimento Liberal Social (MLS)



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MLS, which was officially founded in 2005, aims to promote social-liberalism in Portugal. The movement is a platform for individuals who believe that the old left-right dogma makes little sense today and that it is possible to secure a different and more constructive type of politics in Portugal.

In brief, MLS stands for:

- › The sovereignty of the individual: the inalienable right to live one’s life and to seek happiness;
- › A fairer society, based on merit, where everyone can freely exercise their talents and develop their potential, free from any control or pressure, in an environment of solidarity and respect between individuals;
- › Equality before the law, always with respect for the right to differ;
- › A state that focuses on the essential things, but which ensures (in a sustainable way and following the subsidiary principle) the defence of the individual and of society, private property, justice, the existence of basic healthcare and social security services, high-quality education and the protection of cultural and environmental heritage;
- › The market economy, but always with state control as a corrective mechanism to counter the inevitable disequilibria.

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The Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting works as a knowledge, expertise and ideas broker for the Dutch Liberal Democratic Party D66 (Democraten 66). With three staff members, the main focus of our work is to deepen and develop our liberal-democratic (also often called social-liberal) thinking.

Our foundation was originally founded in the 1970s, when it served as a traditional research centre. At the turn of the 20th century, our approach changed to that of a broker but our aim has remained the same: to generate concepts and ideas that strengthen the intellectual profile of D66 and to be a place where political thinkers can look at societal developments in a more considered manner.

Nowadays, the organisation employs dozens of volunteers, working on projects varying from very concrete policy advice to fundamental studies of the basic social-liberal principals of D66. We also publish a magazine, called Idee. Furthermore, we act as secretary to D66’s permanent programme committee, which is charged with writing the party programmes for both national and European elections. It is in this arena that the link is forged between ideological awareness and everyday practice.

Nadácia Liberálna spoločnosť

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The Liberal Society Foundation was established in 1995 as a non-governmental and non-profit think tank. It was founded because of a real need for objective evaluations of social processes, with the aim of promoting Liberal values and to create space for social and expert discussion in the transition period. The Liberal Society Foundation's activities have been very important in supporting Liberalism in Slovakia, especially during the short period without any Liberal party representation in the Slovak Parliament (2006 – 2010).

Co-founders are the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, the Forum Foundation, the Foundation Gaudeamus and Ing. Viliam Vaškovič, CSc.

Its mission:

To promote, strengthen and apply Liberal thinking and develop Liberal values, targeting the development of democracy, tolerance, culture, humanity and civil society, especially through:

- > The organisation of discussions, seminars and working group meetings;
- > Research studies and expert opinions;
- > Editorial and publishing activities;
- > Education, promotion and adult education activities;
- > The development of foreign contacts.

Its importance since 1995 has been in promoting Liberal thinking and strengthening the democratic process in Slovakia through seminars and workshops (supporting the discussions of politicians and experts on current legal, economic, political and other social topics), educational and publishing activities (aiming to raise citizens' awareness and influencing the legislative process via Members of Parliament).

The Liberal Society Foundation currently maintains its efforts to contribute to improving the political climate in Slovakia.

NOVUM – Inštitut za strateške in aplikativne študije (Inštitut Novum)

NOVUM – Institute for Strategic and Applied Research



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Institute Novum is a non-profit, educational and policy research organisation established in Ljubljana, Slovenia. It aims to support the political decision-making process, to promote democracy, to foster public dialogue, to communicate new policy ideas and to develop new methods and approaches in political advertising.

Institute Novum pursues high standards of research and discourse. Through its activities, which include conceptual studies, public education and administrative and technical assistance, the institute contributes to the stock of knowledge available to political parties, policy-makers and a targeted audience in Slovenia and abroad.

We promote and protect Liberal values, which include: democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for and protection of human rights, economic and social development and sustainable development.

The Novum Institute disseminates its research findings through its website, the media, publications, seminars, round tables, workshops, forums and conferences.

The Novum Institute is registered as an NGO under Slovenian law. Its board consists of 10 members with economic, political, public and scientific backgrounds, which makes the Novum Institute a powerful advocacy group.

Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting



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The Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting is a Dutch Liberal think tank affiliated to the VVD political party. The foundation is named after Benjamin Telders, a lawyer and philosopher who was chair of the Liberal State Party (a predecessor of the VVD Party) and who, during World War II, was arrested by the German (Nazi) occupiers. He died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp shortly before The Netherlands were liberated. The Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting was founded in 1954 as a completely independent Liberal think tank by a board under the chairmanship of Johan Witteveen, a Professor in economics who was to become vice prime minister of The Netherlands in the 1960s and director of the International Monetary Fund in the 1970s. In 1972 the Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting established a link with the VVD, but, as an organisation and in its policy formulation, the think tank remained independent. The current President of the board is Frans Engering, who earlier was Director-General Foreign Economic Relations of the ministry of Economic Affairs and Dutch ambassador to South Africa. The Director of the Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting is Patrick van Schie, a historian who wrote his dissertation on the history of Dutch Liberalism from 1901 until 1940.

The Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting publishes policy papers and books on all kind of political and societal topics, from the market economy to environmental issues and from crime fighting to defence policy. In addition, together with a commercial book publisher, the foundation publishes books for a wide audience on the history of Liberalism and its leaders, on the political philosophy of Liberalism and on the leading minds in Liberal (political and economic) theory. Each year several conferences and seminars on various topics are held. An annual Telders Lecture is held, in which we invite an influential scholar or politician from abroad to stimulate debate in The Netherlands with original Liberal thoughts and insights. Talented, promising students of Dutch (and Belgian) universities are selected to take part in the Liberal summer school of the Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting, which is held annually in the last week of August. The quarterly journal of the Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting is *Liberaal Reveil*, which is edited by researcher Fleur de Beaufort. Every two months we publish an electronic newsletter called *Vrijpostig*. Most of our publications and debates are in Dutch, although some are available in English.

The Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting does not adhere to one exclusive variant of Liberalism, although Liberalism's classical thinkers always appear to be an important source of inspiration. For us, the freedom of the individual is the most fundamental point. We therefore consider it essential that a free and democratic society, in which there is no accumulation of power and public power is always democratically controlled and legitimised (via checks and balances), survives. It is not the US type of Liberalism as it has developed in recent decades that we embrace, but a Liberalism that is vigorously opposed to Socialism, religion-based politics and other kinds of communitarianism.

Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI)



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Stichting IDI is an important pillar in D66's cross-border work. In 1989, IVSOM, the Central and Eastern Europe Foundation of the D66 party, was founded to support democratisation and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe. In October 1997, IVSOM was renamed the Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI).

After it was renamed, the organisation's field of operation was expanded to include countries outside Central and Eastern Europe. Nowadays, the Stichting IDI is mainly active in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Turkey and North Africa. Furthermore, Stichting IDI maintains and develops relationships with likeminded political organisations in many countries around the world. Stichting IDI co-operates with liberal-democratic parties and organisations that respect human rights and the rights of minorities.

Democratic movements and progressive or social-liberal political parties are natural partners for the Stichting IDI. The relationships are mutually beneficial. On the one hand, Stichting IDI offers practical knowledge for political partners in the project countries. On the other hand, D66 benefits by gaining new ideas and experience concerning democratisation and international cooperation. Stichting IDI projects are financially supported by the Matra Political Party Programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA)



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SILBA Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy is a Danish NGO established in 1994.

SILBA is currently working on projects together with Russia, Kaliningrad Oblast, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. We focus on cross-organisation and cross-border activities such as large summer camps, seminars, website projects as well as providing core funding for our partner organisations. We have also organised election observation missions in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

SILBA is represented in Denmark by five local branches. Our activities consist of organising conferences and lectures on various topics for the countries mentioned above. Our members are young people from different Danish political youth organisations and students.

Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC)



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SILC cooperates with struggling Liberal parties and democracy activists in Belarus, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Tunisia and the Ukraine. SILC also has an ambitious programme to support dissidents in Cuba. Currently, SILC is exploring engagement activities in Egypt, Libya and Venezuela and has implemented pilot activities in these three countries.

SILC has its own publishing house, SILC Publishing, which publishes two books a year on the work of democracy activists in challenging environments. SILC takes a visible part in the Swedish debate on development aid and foreign policy.

SILC currently has a staff of seven, of which two are working from the Belarus programme office in Vilnius, Lithuania. SILC's annual turnover is approximately EUR 1.5 million (2011).

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