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**European Liberal Forum
Annual Report**



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Dear reader, dear Liberal friend,

I am delighted to present the 2010 Annual Report of the European Liberal Forum asbl (ELF), the European political foundation of the Liberal family, affiliated to the European Liberal Democrat Party (ELDR).

Throughout 2010, ELF offered analysis and opinions on a multitude of topics of European interest from a liberal perspective and thus contributed in a meaningful way to the debate on European public policy issues and European integration.

The diversity of the European political agenda was reflected in much of ELF's programme, which was met with great interest by the European citizens who participated. The challenges resulting from the economic and financial crisis were analysed and debated at various discussion fora. Policy-makers, academics and experts outlined liberal ideas and approaches to safeguarding financial stability in the future and thus provided liberal recommendations to this important and topical debate.

Active citizenship and democratic accountability in the European Union were identified as central themes at numerous ELF events and publications. The policy debate was complemented by workshops on political communication, with a special focus on the use and impact of social media; an issue that has become even more relevant in the light of the latest developments in the Middle East and North Africa.

ELF implemented conferences, seminars and workshops across Europe, reaching out beyond expert circles to European citizens to provide Liberal viewpoints, political education and stimulate political participation.

During the course of 2010, the network of 28 member organisations in 18 different EU member states deepened considerably. Member organisations from various EU member states actively supported ELF projects with their expertise, thus highlighting their genuinely European nature. This led to popular demand for our activities across Europe. I am glad to see ELF developing so successfully!

I am confident that ELF will further widen as a network of liberal think tanks and foundations and that it will extend the scope of its activities to many more countries.

MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff
President



Foreword by the Executive Director



This annual report is composed of a selection of reports on the events realised by the ELF in 2010. In addition, it includes activity profiles of the many Liberal think tanks and political foundations making up the ELF network across Europe and provides a comprehensive overview of both our activities and those of our member organisations.

2010 was a year of intense activity here at the ELF. We saw an even higher number of members actively supporting and engaging in an even greater number of ELF conferences, seminars and workshops than in previous years. ELF events addressed an audience across Europe, having been held in EU member states and in official candidate countries.

Liberal policymakers at European, national and regional level took part as speakers, resource persons and participants at many of the ELF's events. They expressed their Liberal convictions and shared their Liberal opinions with the audience and thus shaped the debate on current policy issues of Liberal interest, contributing tremendously both to the success of the events themselves and to the ELF as an organisation. Their relentless support is greatly appreciated!

I hope you enjoy reading this report and learning more about the ELF and its accomplishments during 2010.

Susanne Hartig
Executive Director





About us

Founded in the fall of 2007, the European Liberal Forum, asbl (ELF) is the non-profit 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.

Member organisations

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The ELF currently has 28 member organisations

Atvira visvomenė ir jos draugai Open Society and its Friends Lithuania	
Bertil Ohlin Institutet Sweden	
Centre Jean Gol Belgium	
CentreForum United Kingdom	
Centrum Liberálních Studií Centre for Liberal Studies Czech Republic	
Edistysmielisen tutkimuksen yhdistys r.y. e2 Think tank e2 Finland	
European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) pan-European	
Fondazione Critica Liberale Italy	
Forum för reformer och entreprenörskap (FORES) Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Sweden	
Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit (FNF) Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Germany	
Fundacija Libertas Slovenia	
Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem) Catalonia Spain	
Fundacja Klub Obywatelski Civic Club Foundation Poland	
Fundacja Projekt: Polska Poland	
Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International The Netherlands	
Inštitut za strateške in aplikativne študije (NOVUM) Institute for Strategic and Applied Research Slovenia	

Institute for Liberal Studies Romania	
Kenniscentrum D66 The Netherlands	
Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM) Greece	
Liberales Institut Österreich Austria	
Lokus Finland	
Movimento Liberal Social (MLS) Portugal	
Nadácia Liberálna spoločnosť Liberal Society Foundation Slovak Republic	
Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting The Netherlands	
Prometheus Liberaal Kennis Centrum (Prometheus) Belgium	
Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI) The Netherlands	
Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (SILBA) Denmark	
Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC) Sweden	



MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff

- > President of the ELF (2007 – present)
- > Member of the European Parliament (2004 – present)
- > 1st Vice-President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the European Parliament (2009 – present)



MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck

- > Vice-President of the ELF (2007 – present)
- > Member of the European Parliament (1994 – 1999, 2004 – present)
- > President of the European Liberal Democrat (ELDR) Party (September 2005 – present)
- > Minister of State (1995 – present)



Dr. Thierry Coosemans

- > ELF Treasurer (2008 – present)
- > PhD in Political sciences (Université Libre de Bruxelles)
- > Coordinator of the Centre Jean Gol



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

In 2010, the ELF organised 34 events throughout the EU and candidate countries. Academics, researchers and politicians from the EU and neighbouring countries, as well as representatives from civil society and the media, analysed and debated the European public policy issues high on the political agenda, and of particular concern to Liberals.

The events covered a wide range of policy areas. Considerable attention was given to the global financial and economic crisis and Liberal answers to it. A strong focus on the continuing demographic decline in the EU led to a discussion of EU migration policy, with Liberals across Europe outlining their ideas for solutions and new approaches.

Special emphasis was given to the promotion of democracy inside and outside the EU. Protecting human rights, securing the rule of law and promoting active citizenship and democratic accountability were core concerns at many ELF events.

Political communication in the IT age



Type of event
Workshop

Dates
14–16 April 2010
02–04 July 2010

Location
Bucharest | Romania
Bankya | Bulgaria

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

‘Social media is the web-based technology that can transform and broadcast media monologues into media dialogues. The main task of social media is the democratisation of knowledge and information, and the transformation of people from content consumers to content producers. Social media utilisation can be seen as a driving force in defining today’s world as the “Attention Age”,’ stated Irina Toma, an event participant.

Are you active on the internet? What do you know about political blogging? Are you familiar with the concept of ‘netiquette’? Are you able to communicate to a wider audience rather than just a few people?

On 14-16 April 2010, the ELF organised, for the first time, an event explicitly designed to support the communication skills of young political activists and students by giving them the opportunity to expand their knowledge of political communication in the IT age.

During the event, moderated by Toni Richard Crisolli, participants had the opportunity to learn about and develop best practices in the fields of blogging and podcasting, as well as basic rules and guidelines for IT communication and editorial standards on the internet. This kind of knowledge can be particularly valuable when it comes to the political environment.

On the first day, after a few short welcoming remarks by Peter-Andreas Bochmann, resident representative of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Elisaveta Tsvetkova, FNF Project Coordinator for Romania and Moldova, the participants were presented with an overview of social media tools, followed by a step-by-step tutorial on how to set up their own internet activity. Those who already had their own blogs received some useful tips, such as how to further develop them in order to attract more attention. They were also able to share their blogging experience with Victor Ionescu, one of the first Romanian Liberal bloggers and Vice-President of TNL (the Youth Organisation linked to the Romanian Liberal Party). During the afternoon, the participants then had the opportunity to put into practice the tools that they had learned in the morning and were able to start publishing their blogs in the ‘Do-it-yourself’ session.

The second day’s sessions addressed two of the IT age’s other important communication issues: how to write online and how to cultivate and maintain an online reputation. Under the supervision of Mr. Crisolli, the participants familiarised themselves with the rules of writing online and were given an introduction to how to make professional use of the main social networks: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

On the third and last day, participants were given an insight into podcasting. Divided into three working groups (documentation, news and entertainment),

they developed different types of media: one-to-one interviews, commentaries, panel discussions and talk shows. Following the presentations, the discussions covered the difficulties and obstacles they had faced, as well as the solutions they were able to find, and the participants’ achievements. The open discussions enabled all the participants to share their views on the workshop and to discuss how to continue improving their IT communication skills.

A second workshop on the same topic was held in Bankya, Bulgaria.



Participants enhancing their blogging skills

Democracy in Turkey: A road map on the way towards European Union



Type of event
Academy

Dates
14 – 16 May 2010

Location
Ankara | Turkey

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

As a EU candidate country, Turkey is looking to fulfil the EU's acquis communautaire by bringing democratic processes to the fore in both its domestic and foreign policies. Examples of these democratic processes are the recent constitutional amendments to the judicial system and the country's more constructive relations with its neighbours.

Freedom and democracy in Turkey was the central theme of this workshop. The event brought together academics, representatives from think tanks, bureaucrats, legal professionals, politicians and journalists from all over Turkey, as well as representatives of international NGOs and foreign diplomatic missions. Presentations by the main speakers ignited high-quality discussions among Liberal opinion leaders.

The programme highlighted the importance of the Turkish political system's transition to a liberal democracy over 60 years ago. This marked a period of major change for a country that had previously been ruled by a single-party regime. However, as noted by Professor Mustafa Erdogan, Hacettepe University, Department of Politics, the transition did not result in a stable and sustainable democratic system with fully-established liberal democratic values and institutions. Instead, it seems that this state of transition has become a long-term situation with no expected end in sight.

During the first session, individual freedoms, mainly of a political and economic nature, were assessed within a theoretical framework by Professor David Schmitz, Director of the Freedom Center, University of Arizona, and Professor Mustafa Acar, Kirikkale University, Department of Economics. Following these inspiring talks, various speakers discussed how these ideas have been used in practice and how countries have engaged in the democratisation and economic liberalisation process over the years. Martin Aranburu, Programme Coordinator, Fundació Catalana i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem) and a former member of the Basque Parliament, spoke on Spain's historical experience with liberalism. The audience was keen to hear about Spain's struggle with secessionist movements, as well as its experience in consolidating liberal democratic institutions. Milosz Hodun, International Officer, Fundacja Projekt: Polska, described Poland's democratisation process following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Belgium's experience with liberalism was also discussed; Dr. Huseyin Kalayci, Associate Professor at Maltepe University, Department of International Relations, debated whether Belgian history could be an inspiration for Turkey in easing ethnic and cultural tensions.

As the conversation shifted back to Turkey, Dirk Verhofstadt, Liberales (Belgium), addressed the usual criticisms directed at the country in its bid for EU membership and defended its right to become an EU member. This led to a discussion on the particular problems facing Turkey as it approaches a process of liberalisation and democratisation. Professor Tanel Demirel, Cankaya University, Department of Politics and Lale Kemal, columnist at the Taraf daily newspaper, analysed how far

the country's civil and military bureaucracy were barriers to democratic change. The speakers and participants agreed that the Turkish people have only recently become more aware of the oppressive bureaucratic system of tutelage that has been in place since the military coup in 1960. This has been particularly true following the recent legal investigations into Erghenekon, the clandestine ultra-nationalist gang allegedly plotting an anti-government coup.

Secularism and religion were also discussed. Giulo Ercolessi, Fondazione Critica Liberale (Italy), emphasised the important role played by secularism in a liberal democracy. By contrast, both Professor Adnan Kucuk, Kirikkale University, Department of Law, and Professor Bilal Sambur, SD University, Department of Theology, argued in favour of the value of freedom of religion and conscience. In conclusion, the speakers emphasised that the Turkish experiment with laicism (i.e. a secular state) in the Republican period (1923-present) is incompatible with secularism in a liberal democracy.

Towards the end of the programme, a discussion developed on the constitutional problems currently existing in Turkey. The session included three speakers: Professor Ergun Özbudun, Bilkent University, Department of International Relations; Professor Yavuz Atar, Selcuk University, Faculty of Law and Professor Mithat Sançar, Ankara University, Faculty of Law. They gave a historical overview of Turkey's institutional framework and constitutional past, and also discussed the present shortcomings in the country's rule of law and liberal democracy. Although the recent amendments aiming to remove judicial bureaucratic tutelage in favour of democratic politics were mostly well received, many participants did not consider them to be sufficient to achieve Turkey's full liberalisation and democratisation.

In the day's final session on the rule of law, Orhan Kemal Cengiz, President of the Human Rights Agenda Association, highlighted violations of human rights by the establishment, while Dr. Osman Can, rapporteur to the Turkish Higher Constitutional Court and President of the Association for a Democratic Judiciary, mentioned the interventionist position of the Turkish judiciary in suppressing constitutional democracy. Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), also offered her opinion on Turkey's progress towards EU membership. She emphasised the importance of Turkey's ability to meet the EU's democratic criteria. By contrast, some Turkish participants criticised European institutions and actors of European integration for not being consistent when advocating and implementing universal values and principles. They went on to argue that it is crucial to apply them equally to all individuals and societies, notwithstanding religious beliefs, ethnicity or country of origin.

It was concluded that Turkish membership of the EU could bring major benefits to both Europe and Turkey. The democratisation of Turkey could serve as a tool for disseminating democratic values across the region and the Middle East. In addition, Turkey's accession to the EU could serve to convince the international community that peaceful agreements based on liberal institutions and liberal values could enhance peace and prosperity in today's world.

Empowering civil society's movements, organisations and institutions



Type of event
Conference

Dates
5 June 2010

Location
Athens | Greece

Supported by
Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM)
Centre Jean Gol
Prometheus Liberaal Kennis
Centrum (Prometheus)

What is civil society and how can it be empowered, especially in circumstances such as those in Greece today? Is civil society mature enough to deal with the challenges emerging from the financial crisis?

Having active and responsible social movements, organisations and institutions is a good and reliable indicator of a healthy civil society. 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.

However, every crisis has a silver lining and there is always another side to the coin. New Greek civil society movements and organisations are flourishing and they are demanding better representation and more visibility in the public sphere.

In this context, the ELF organised a conference in Athens entitled, 'Empowering civil society's movements, organisations and institutions' on 5 June 2010. The conference brought together some 60 participants from Greece and southern Europe and included three major Liberal thinkers and politicians: Dr. Thierry Coosemans, member of the ELF Board of Directors and a representative of the Centre Jean Gol (Belgium); Dr. Robert Nef, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Liberal Institute (Switzerland); and MEP Michael Theurer (ALDE), former mayor of Horb am Neckar and a former member of the Baden-Württemberg Regional Assembly (Germany).

Dr. Coosemans gave a short word of welcome and focused on the importance of the method of subsidiarity and on the need to strengthen Liberal actors in civil society to ensure that they are able to take part in, and have an impact on, Greek public life. He then left the floor to George Billinis, representative of Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM), for an in-depth analysis of the current state of Liberalism in Greece.

George Billinis opened a discussion with the public, stressing the importance of civil society, particularly in the situation that Greece finds itself today. Can it be considered mature enough to deal with the challenges emerging from its financial crisis? Who are its enemies today? He stated the conference's aim of facilitating a constructive discussion between speakers and conference participants: exploring potential solutions through the analysis of the current crisis and identifying potential obstacles to those solutions, as well as analysing civil society's willingness and ability to intervene.

Dr. Nef focused his speech on the topic of non-centralism in Europe. He started by asking the participants to consider the following issues: is the topic of non-centralism in Europe still of importance? Should we not instead discuss national insolvency and international solidarity, as well as the new EU monetary and financial policy, and the principles behind those issues? His view is that, nowadays, these topics seem far more interesting and of universal concern. Still, non-centralism and the principle of subsidiarity, continue to be useful concepts.

Dr. Nef supported the principle of subsidiarity as a way to achieve a more decentralised EU. He is of the view that any higher jurisdiction should give up its competence, powers, responsibility and transfer them to smaller jurisdictions closer to grassroots movements. What is needed now is not a deeper enosis (unification) but a return to greater autonomy, i.e. to that diversity which is the secret behind the European miracle.

Dr. Nef's presentation was followed by an interactive discussion. Several participants contrasted the decentralised Swiss system with the centralised Greek system.

In conclusion, it was agreed upon that the Greek system as it is organised today cannot meet the needs of its communities and citizens. Considerable autonomy is needed and this can be achieved by giving greater resources to regional and local authorities so they are able to serve their constituents more effectively.



MEP Michael Theurer and Emmanouil Manoledakis

MEP Theurer presented successful examples of empowering civil society, which were drawn from his time as mayor of Horb am Neckar in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. He highlighted how, within a short period of time, he convinced the residents of the surrounding areas of the city of Horb to come together and establish a bigger and stronger municipality. He then explained how he developed a policy of incentives in order to keep local industries and SMEs alive and, consequently, avoided the possible relocation of these companies to another country or to other parts of Germany. According to him, this policy had achieved its goal of saving local jobs and giving local Liberal parties significant political support in local elections.

He stressed the importance of local action and responsibilities despite ongoing discussions on the structure of the state and how it should be improved. Based on his experience, close communication with citizens is important. This encourages people to become involved in the public arena: society is stronger than the state, has more potential, and should be left free to address local problems in its own way rather than in a way decided by central state organisations.

The session was brought to a close with an open discussion on coalition-building and successful actions at a local/regional level.

In the last session, Nicholas Chardalias, the Mayor of Vyronas, a large municipality within the broader metropolitan area of Athens, presented a number of major obstacles to the empowerment of civil society in Greece. He explored the topic using his eight years' experience as mayor. Participants were able to ask questions about the municipality's financial situation and were particularly anxious to know how it was able to recover economically without the need to implement job cuts. Mayor Chardalias explained that incentives were introduced for new businesses within the municipality exempting them from paying taxes for three years. However, he acknowledged that there is no one single model of success, as each local community has its own criteria and its own needs.

The discussion focused on how civil society could find ways either to participate in regional councils or to influence them through targeted action. Mayor Chardalias gave examples of successful initiatives in his municipality and made reference to the recently-introduced new regulatory framework (the 'Kallikratis' law, effective 1 January 2011). It was agreed that its provisions encourage wider participation in civil society at a local level because the new law upgrades the involvement of local authorities on issues such as economic development, town planning and management of schools and kindergartens.

However, despite some scepticism expressed regarding the availability of financial resources for local authorities, Mayor Chardalias argued that the principle of subsidiarity is, for him, definitely the way forward and that greater responsibilities at a local level should be welcomed. He noted that town planning, pre-school education and local development plans will be among the new areas that will be dealt with at a municipal level and that these areas provide opportunities for participation not only for local government, but also for community groups and NGOs.

Attendees were able to share their ideas and obtain input from the speakers, enabling them to leave with the confidence that they had begun to play their part in empowering civil society's movements, organisations and institutions.

At a time when there is an urgent need to reduce carbon emissions and when sources of growth appear scarce, European governments are attempting to stimulate the 'green economy' through taxes to improve price incentives, by underwriting the risk of investing in new technologies or by directly subsidising the companies that produce them. But, what about the economic costs of the transition to a low-carbon economy? And, is current government investment in green technology being undertaken in the right way? These were the questions that the four panellists of the 'After the financial crisis: green growth?' seminar were seeking to answer.

Speaking first, Tom Burke, Founding Director of E3G and current Environmental Policy Advisor to international mining group Rio Tinto, argued that incoherent policy is preventing any real progress. He asserted that while we already know how to make the transition to a low-carbon economy, we have not yet created an effective policy structure to deliver the transition. For one, governments across the developed world are failing to prepare their economies for oil price growth constraints and a post-fossil fuel world. They are investing too much time and energy into getting the carbon price right, when what they should be thinking about is: who pays the carbon price? In simple terms, the answer is, if conventional sector industries stop producing, there will be no carbon tax revenues.

The second panellist, Dimitri Zenghelis, Associate Fellow, Chatham House (United Kingdom), agreed with Mr. Burke that the political will to deliver green growth is lacking and that, in the absence of clear policy signals, governments risk choking their economies. For Mr. Zenghelis, innovation is, or should be, the driving force behind sustainable growth, arguing that we need to create new inputs whilst radically changing the way we consume things.

For example, developed countries should be looking to reduce consumption levels from 15 tonnes of CO₂ per person per year to one or two tonnes (i.e. to about the same levels as India). Europe's emissions reduction goal should be set at 30% rather than 20%. Reassuringly, in recent years, there has been more investment in renewables than in conventional energy, generating up to 50% growth in some areas. What we need now, Mr. Zenghelis believes, is a more ambitious policy framework to support this growth.

Tom Murley, Head of Renewable Energy, HgCapital (United Kingdom), talked about his own experiences of investing in renewables, focusing, like Tom Burke and Dimitri Zenghelis, on infrastructure and the need for planning and consistent policymaking. Investors in clean energy demand (but do not always get) stable regulation of prices; a predictable planning regime; access to a distribution grid; a supply chain that works; and a diverse, long-term pool of capital. Yet Britain's 'scorecard' is not good, and Mr. Murley referred to the fact that, in England, there is no offshore grid and that 25% of wind farm applications

After the financial crisis: Green growth?



Type of event
Seminar

Dates
20 July 2010

Location
London | United Kingdom

Supported by
CentreForum
Movimento Liberal Social (MLS)
Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship
and Sustainability (FORES)



are turned down. As things stand, renewable energy sources like wind and biomass are expensive and relatively unproductive. So while – in the current climate – energy companies might be opportunity rich, they are generally cash poor and unable to move into the renewables sector. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Murley argued that governments need to provide more capital if green growth is to become a reality.

The final speaker, Jakob Rutqvist, Environment Programme Director, FORES (Sweden), questioned the role of government in green growth, suggesting that this can be achieved at a micro-economic level. He also argued that climate change is only part of the problem. We must take time to examine the biophysical limits within which human beings live. How much growth can our planet actually take? And what further metrics should we consider beyond GDP?



Jakob Rutqvist, Dimitri Zenghelis, John Springford, Tom Burke, Tom Murley | left to right

During the question and answer session, the panel was asked how to consider the problem of collective action. How do we design institutions to deal with this problem? Mr. Rutqvist argued that we should introduce a 'public goods variable' and establish a co-ordination body among the G20 member states. Mr. Burke countered that all parties at the Copenhagen summit on climate change lacked the political will to do so. Fundamentally, we must ask what the current ratio of high carbon to low carbon investment is, recognise that developing economies have different needs to developed economies and that the developed world needs to lead the way. Mr. Zenghelis agreed, arguing that China is not the villain. No country will move unless it feels change is in its best interests. Green growth has to be driven by the developed world and is a pre-requisite for a global deal.

The panel was also asked how pension and insurance funds could be given incentives to invest in green technology. Mr. Murley argued that the major problem is merely that green technology investments are currently more risky or less profitable than conventional investments. Pension and insurance funds want to invest in long-term projects, but ones that offer a reasonable return for a small amount of risk, unlike venture capital funds or hedge funds. In order to make green technology projects more attractive, governments would have to subsidise investment revenues or underwrite risk, which could entail a large fiscal cost.

The panel disagreed on the extent to which economic arguments could be used to persuade the public. Mr. Burke suggested that economics obscured the crisis, encouraging governments to tinker with economic incentives instead of taking serious action. Mr. Zenghelis argued that economics is a crucial analytical tool for identifying the costs of climate change, and the cheapest and most efficient way to mitigate these costs. But, they agreed, as all the panel did, that the largest obstacle to solving the problem was political will, not the lack of technological, economic or scientific instruments.

Liberal Academy 2010: Challenging the European integration standstill



Type of event
Seminar

Dates
29 – 31 August 2010

Location
Brussels | Belgium

Supported by
ELDR Party
Kenniscentrum D66
Fondazione Critica Liberale
Prometheus Liberaal Kennis
Centrum (Prometheus)

The event brought together Liberal-thinking students and young people from across Europe to challenge and discuss European Liberal positions on the future of European integration.

Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake (ALDE) discussed the role, opportunities and limitations of parliamentary work at the European level and highlighted the working mechanisms of transnational parliamentary groups. German MEP Dr. Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE), and German economist, Kai Lücke, dissected the detail of the financial rescue package for EU member states following the debt crisis in Greece. Views were exchanged as to whether the Greek rescue package took place in line with the provisions of the EU Treaty and whether this case has set a precedent enabling other bankrupt countries to be bailed out by the other EU members. Special emphasis was put on the importance of strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact to avoid similar scenarios in the future. Participants generally agreed that these kind of cases could seriously endanger the functioning (if not the whole existence) of the euro as a currency and the EU's economic stability as a whole.

Alexander Plahr, LYMEC President, and Giulio Ercolessi, Fondazione Critica Liberale (Italy), discussed the changes to the EU's political system that would be necessary following the institutional changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. Federica Sabbati, ELDR Party Secretary General, and MEP Andrew Duff, British Liberal Democrats, talked with students about the opportunities and challenges for true European political parties and about whether elections to the European Parliament could take place on the basis of EU-wide constituencies.

MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, ELDR Party President, ELF Vice-President and foreign policy expert, discussed the students' own proposals with regard to the EU's future enlargement and its role in the world.

The influence of individual European states globally is negligible. In the future, global political decisions will be imposed on Europe if the EU is not able to go beyond the positions of single member states and if the states themselves do not exploit the benefits of being in a union with other states. Similarly, Europe's military weight has remained largely ineffective and almost irrelevant in terms of political influence. The discussion showed that there is unanimous agreement among the students on this view of the status quo of Europe's role in the world. However, it proved more challenging to find common ground on how to find the right answers. Split opinions as to whether to create a joint European army, or instead, whether to pool military resources, were symptomatic of the difficulty in finding solutions and this difficulty mirrored discussions among the EU's elected leaders on the subject.

MEP Guy Verhofstadt, Liberal group leader of the European Parliament, provided his group's view on the necessary structural changes to prevent future systemic



Discourse with decision makers in the European Parliament

breakdowns in the financial sector. Against this background, he elaborated on the measures needed to lead the EU out of its current structural crisis and how to overcome the standstill in European integration. He also emphasised the crucial role that Liberals played in the process of negotiations on the new European supervisory architecture for the financial sector.

Throughout the seminar, students were provided with ample opportunities to reflect on their discussions with Europe's top Liberal politicians during working group sessions. These sessions enabled them to discuss questions such as: what reforms should the EU undertake in order to become a functional actor and to exploit its potential? Where do we want the EU to go? Is Europe merely an administrative union serving economic purposes, such as extending the single market, or does it want to go further than that, and with whom? What are the borders of the Union?

In the final session, participants held intense discussions to agree the crucial developments needed in order to see the emergence of the Europe they want. There was considerable agreement on the practical benefits of EU integration in areas such as the common currency, free movement and the benefits of transnational education. However, areas such as moving towards greater economic integration or a European army were much more controversial.

The event proved to be very successful and the students encouraged the organisers to hold more events of this kind, which provide citizens with the chance to meet European politicians in person to discuss important issues not sufficiently discussed in the domestic arena.



Human rights in the EU in the context of the 'War on Terror'



Type of event
Lecture

Dates
27 September 2010

Location
Lisbon | Portugal

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

It is widely accepted that various EU member states have made progress in terms of protecting human rights in recent decades and that this trend has had an impact on the positions taken by the European Parliament and on agreements between the EU and other states.

However, there is still a lot to be done. Sometimes, the criteria that the EU applies to third countries are not fully respected inside the EU. This is the sort of situation which could endanger the EU's moral authority. It is also accepted that, owing to economic interests, the EU does not pressure other countries as much as it should in terms of human rights. The aim of the panel discussion organised by the ELF was to discuss the impact of the 'War on Terror' on human rights in the EU, analyse what has happened in the past, what the existing situation is, and what is currently being discussed in the European Parliament and at the national level.

Professor Leonidas Donskis, ALDE MEP (Lithuania), focused his speech on the role of the European Parliament in the area of human rights and on the importance of human rights as a universal value. Progress on human rights has clearly been made in the EU. For example, capital punishment has been abolished in all member states. Professor Donskis defended the view that the EU should use its soft power to promote human rights worldwide. He also emphasised the importance of instruments such as the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for the promotion of human rights. Professor Donskis concluded his speech by highlighting the key role of the European Parliament in the defence of human rights and the fact that human rights are a fundamental value of the EU.

Dr. Christa Meindersma, Deputy Director of The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, focused on the fact that a significant number of laws, measures and regulations have been put in place to combat terrorism and that they restrict individuals' freedoms. She also raised doubts about the effectiveness of these laws, measures and regulations. Many of these measures have been widely criticised nationally and internationally and could encroach on the privacy of European citizens. It is worrying that these measures are implemented to target threats that many reports consider to be low risk and that the laws have not been re-evaluated after a certain period of time. Before adopting new laws, privacy and security impact assessments should be carried out. She also noted that the public discourse needs to be changed, as, for the ordinary citizen, the typical answer to questions of restrictions on freedoms and privacy is 'if you have nothing to hide, why all the fuss about human rights?'

MEP Ana Gomes (Portugal), Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D), outlined the extraordinary rendition of suspects during the 'War on Terror'. The extraordinary rendition programme was designed to interrogate terrorist suspects outside US territory so that the US authorities could not be held responsible for any human rights violations. It enabled the widespread abuse of human rights worldwide. Many European governments knew about and

collaborated in it. People involved in terrorism are criminals and should be treated as criminals. However, for it to succeed, combating terrorism should not be seen as a war, but as a much broader fight against terrorism. Only when governments learn from the mistakes made with the extraordinary rendition programme will it be possible to fight terrorism effectively.

MEP Rui Tavares (Portugal), European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), illustrated how the SWIFT agreement between the EU and the USA has enabled historical data on any customer banking transaction in the EU to be transferred to the USA. This agreement is an example of how privacy can be endangered by the War on Terror. The issue was treated with an excessive amount of secrecy. Even MEPs were not able to access all the information they needed to check the data transfers and to ascertain whether too much private information had been shared with insufficient justification. It was also an agreement without reciprocity and which Mr. Tavares believed allowed too many people to access the private information of European citizens.



MEP Professor Leonidas Donskis, Pedro Krupenski, MEP Ana Gomes, MEP Rui Tavares | left to right

In conclusion, human rights are part of Europe's values today but Europe should remain critical of itself. Before adopting new laws, privacy and security assessments should be made. Privacy should always be taken into consideration when making new laws. The first obligation of a state based on the rule of law is to respect fundamental laws. If Europe does not respect this principle, it could end up without freedom or security, handing victory to the terrorists. However, broadly speaking, the EU can be regarded as a success story in terms of human rights.



Life chances in Europe



Type of event
Seminar

Dates
1 October 2010

Location
Brussels | Belgium

Supported by
Bertil Ohlin Institutet
CentreForum
Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting

On the occasion of the presentation of the book 'Life chances in Europe', the ELF invited four of the book's authors to Brussels: Professor Ingemund Hägg, Bertil Ohlin Institutet (Sweden), Alasdair Murray, former Director of CentreForum (United Kingdom), Dr. Francesco Velo, researcher (Italy), Dr. Fleur de Beaufort, Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting (The Netherlands) and Leszek Jażdewski, editor-in-chief of Liberté! journal (Poland).

On the situation in Great Britain, Mr. Murray said that social mobility continues to be at the forefront of public debate, including under the new coalition government. Liberal Democrat policies include greater investment in early years' education, deprivation funding for the neediest children and the expansion of vocational and work-based education.

Dr. Velo focused on higher education and argued that the enhancement of the European integration process calls for social mobility in the overall European arena, not just the individual countries. A social framework for mobility at the European level is a prerequisite for the improved life chances of European citizens. Subsidiarity can actually be sustained by a common framework for higher education in Europe.

Dr. de Beaufort continued by stressing the need to end the poverty trap, i.e. the reality that welfare can pay more than work. In The Netherlands, the VVD party wants to reform social security, for example, with a 'participation law', obliging people living on social security to work in return. Education is also a priority and Dutch Liberals seek to reduce the school drop-out rate. Fair life chances for all is their policy focus.

Mr. Jażdewski saw Poland as a fragmented nation from the point of view of social mobility, not least because of cultural differences. Social cohesion is necessary and improving access to social services such as healthcare, education and culture should be part of the fight against social exclusion.

For Sweden, Professor Hägg noted that studies showing the length of time people are trapped in problematic situations, such as being a single mother, were not included in social mobility studies. He thus underlined a need for longitudinal studies.

The discussion that followed the presentations was lively. Issues such as the need for social cohesion, geographical mobility, immigration and equal opportunity versus equal outcomes were discussed.

Individual life chances in focus

Underlying the presentations in the book is the conviction that increasing life chances for individuals is a core task for Liberal policy. Life chances equal the

potential to make meaningful choices over the course of one's life. Equality of opportunity, the removal of obstacles to making meaningful choices and the removal of obstacles to mobility in society are urgent tasks. People should have the opportunity to follow their dreams and to make use of their capabilities.

We need to question the assumptions about the individual that currently underpin the majority of social mobility research and debate.



Leszek Jażdewski, Alasdair Murray, Professor Ingemund Hägg, Dr. Fleur de Beaufort, Dr. Francesco Velo | left to right

These assumptions include:

- › That everyone wants to 'climb the ladder'. But, not everyone does.
- › That individuals have one goal, that of climbing the ladder as far as possible. Liberals would want to respect the goals chosen by the individuals themselves. These goals can vary and there can be several of them.
- › That the ladder is predefined. Classes are assumed to 'exist' in reality and they are assumed to exist in a hierarchy. The hierarchies set the conditions and restrictions for individual actions. The individuals are assumed to be passively adapting to given conditions. But, there could be other bonds or contexts that individuals regard as more important for their life chances: bonds or contexts defined and chosen by the individuals themselves, giving meaning to their choices.



Five challenges for Liberal policy

- › Liberal policy should make efforts to diminish the role of constraining bonds (such as ethnicity, religion, sect etc). It should try to change the widely-shared view that classes and occupational hierarchies have an independent existence, instead of their being merely convention.
- › Liberal policy should promote equality of opportunity but accept inequality of outcome, within reasonable limits, and as long as this does not hurt social cohesion in a society. Such inequality of outcome is a sign of dynamism and vitality in an open liberal society.
- › Liberal policy should promote civil society without interfering in the autonomy of organisations in civil society. This is because a dynamic civil society is the main way to give meaning to individual actions and choices.
- › Public debate should formulate questions that are relevant to individual life chances, with the aim of stimulating new types of social mobility research emphasising longitudinal studies.
- › Liberal policy should prioritise pre-school and early school education so as to improve the long-run life chances of individuals. This should be combined with support for deprived families with small children. No other measures can compete with heavily-increased investment in the education of the very young if we want to improve life chances in our societies.

While it is possible to debate in-depth the amount of power that the EU should have and the desirability of many specific measures endorsed by European institutions, no one would dispute – at least not openly – that the EU must be democratic. Although the Treaty of Lisbon contains four articles that appear to provide for proper democratic accountability, there is uneasiness and even dissatisfaction with regard to democratic standards in the EU.

For the majority of citizens, Europe is, and continues to be, very remote. When asked what they think of when they hear the words 'European Union', they are more likely to refer to the EU as 'costly' and 'bureaucratic' than they are to mention such concepts as 'freedom' and 'democracy'. No one can – nor should they – remain indifferent to these perceptions. The question is therefore: what is the best way to ensure the democratic accountability of the EU?

Along with several related issues, this question was addressed during a seminar on active citizenship and democratic accountability organised by the ELF in Helsinki. During the seminar, the ELF publication *Democracy in Europe: of the People, by the People, for the People?*, was presented by Dr. Patrick van Schie, Director of the Dutch think tank, Prof.mr B.M. Teldersstichting and one of the book's editors.

As the subtitle reveals, the famous description of democratic government by US President Abraham Lincoln was the book's starting point. In his short Gettysburg Address on 19 November 1863, Lincoln spoke of a 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. While it is clear that EU policies have to serve the citizen (intended to be for the people), no Liberal should be satisfied with politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels ruling from the perspective of 'We know (better than you do) what is good for you'. Government by the people can take many forms. It is now clear that the traditional representative means alone will not generate enough trust among citizens. For Liberals, government of the citizens should be the highest objective, but in the EU, it is also the most difficult to achieve by far because the EU did not come into existence following a deeply, broadly and strongly expressed desire on the part of European citizens. Instead, it was initiated by a relatively small group of politicians and enthusiastic citizens and then shaped almost exclusively from the top.

The conference was chaired by Professor Christoffer Grönholm, Chairman of Lokus (Finland). After a short welcome by Dr. Thierry Coosemans on behalf of the ELF, Minister Astrid Thors, Finland's current Minister of Migration and European Affairs, gave a speech on the question of how representative democracy can be kept alive in the modern world. For Minister Thors, direct democracy is not the solution. On the contrary, the more pressure is put on representative democracy, the more we should trust and invest in this principle. In her opinion, direct democracy can easily be hijacked by what she called 'dark forces' such as racism, or ultimately the neglect of fundamental citizens' rights. Direct democracy is

Active citizenship and democratic accountability in the EU



Type of event
Conference

Dates
13 October 2010

Location
Helsinki | Finland

Supported by
Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting
Lokus
Think tank e2

currently even abused by certain political parties to put issues on the political agenda and increase their own popularity. Minister Thors favours participatory democracy, where there is a need to attract and involve educated people as the citizens' initiative-takers, so that this might generate a common political agenda.

This pessimistic view of direct democracy is not shared by Dr. van Schie, who delivered the second speech of the conference. In his speech, he concentrated on the question of whether the referendum and Liberal ideology are compatible. According to Dr. van Schie, referenda are not only easy to endorse, on Liberal grounds, as a useful addition to the representative system, but even merit a recommendation. No power without countervailing power, not even a parliament, should ignore this fundamental rule. Furthermore, if a profound and long-term difference of opinion arises between the electorate and those elected to govern concerning the most fundamental matters, those elected cannot, and should not, ignore this difference of opinion in a liberal democracy. Voters must then have the last word.



Dr. Thierry Coosemans, Professor Christoffer Grönholm, Minister Astrid Thors, Dr. Patrick van Schie | left to right

Dr. Robert Nef, Chairman of the Liberal Institute in Zürich, Switzerland, spoke on the subject of the Swiss experiment with non-centralism. After some remarks on the Swiss situation, Dr. Nef explained why the Swiss experience, with direct democracy, combined with non-centralism, local government and local taxation, can be regarded as a success story. Common problems should always be solved at the lowest possible level: the private or the local community. This is called the principle of subsidiarity. The higher level should step in only if social and political support is required from below. Swiss subsidiarity draws on a healthy scepticism with regard to the centre and this kind of subsidiarity requires power to be taken

away from the central state. As such, the principle is based on a fundamental distinction between the individual, the state and society. In essence, subsidiarity means that we have to try to find the solutions to political, social and economic problems in the most private and the most local framework possible. This is also the precondition of functioning direct democratic institutions.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion involving the speakers and the audience. It became clear during the discussion that Liberals hold very different opinions about the use of referenda as a way to increase democratic accountability. Some participants shared the fears expressed by Minister Thors in her speech, in certain cases based on experiences in their home countries. Others – in line with Dr. van Schie and Dr. Nef – showed more confidence in individual voters and the countervailing powers within a democracy.

Could migration defuse Europe's demographic timebomb?



Type of event
Seminar

Dates
14 October 2010

Location
Helsinki | Finland

Supported by
CentreForum
Stichting Internationaal
Democratisch Initiatief (Stichting IDI)

The ELF organised a seminar over breakfast entitled 'Could immigration defuse Europe's demographic time-bomb?' at the ELDR Party Congress in Helsinki in October 2010. Congress delegates from eleven countries attended the meeting. The meeting was organised with the support of CentreForum and Stichting IDI. It was chaired by Anthony Rowlands, Director of Events, CentreForum. Discussions were led by three speakers:

ALDE MEP Graham Watson set the tone of the debate with a speech in which he argued that migration is a necessity if Europe's economies are to survive an ageing population, although it is not the only solution. As such, MEP Watson highlighted the need for a forward-thinking policy on immigration that would achieve solidarity and cultural cohesiveness through diversity. Governments, he argued, must show how progressive policies in the areas of unemployment, social welfare and education are the best ways to deal with immigration and demographic changes. This could also involve an emphasis on immigrants' rights and obligations, enabling them to be smoothly integrated into society. The EU has already put in place policies to reduce global inequalities through security and development programmes, which aim to reduce excessive migration and curtail the 'brain drain'.

Next to speak was Professor Han Entzinger, Department of Sociology, Erasmus University of Rotterdam. He provided a balanced analysis of the main arguments for and against immigration as a solution to the demographic crisis. In terms of arguments for immigration, he noted that migrants are younger than the average population, go on to have more children and contribute to the social security system. Yet migrants tend to age in the country to which they emigrated, thereby failing to mitigate the issue of an ageing population. Furthermore the number of migrants contributing to social security claims is dependent on jobs being available, which can generate social tension. Professor Entzinger used detailed statistical analyses to show that immigration alone could not solve the EU's demographic problems. Based on his findings, he suggested a number of alternatives to migration in order to stave off an economic crisis. These included a rise in fertility levels, together with new government policies, such as increased labour force participation, postponing retirement, increasing productivity (e.g. the automation of production processes), transferring low-yield jobs to low-wage countries and the selective use of labour migration.

The final speaker was Philippe Legrain, a British economist, journalist and author. He highlighted four approaches to tackling demographic change. These were, to get more people of working age into work; to encourage people to retire later; to find ways to boost investment and productivity; and to attract more migrant workers. He conceded that immigration alone would not solve the demographic problem but pointed to the ability of immigration to deal with the problems associated with the retirement of the baby boomer generation over the next twenty years. Migrants are not only net contributors to public finances but they

also take on health and social care jobs that native Europeans are often unwilling to take. Mr. Legrain was also the first speaker to point out how migration boosts growth through flexible labour markets and that it fosters innovation and enterprise as migrants are often a minority of young, hard-working individuals. But, he argued, countries needed vigorous anti-discrimination laws, flexible labour markets and needed to encourage social mobility to reap these benefits. He also presented recent research on social policy and immigration to show that there is no obvious correlation between ethnic homogeneity and the size of the welfare state. He concluded that Europe needed to allow more migrants in and that it needed to make the most of the talent that is already there.



ELDR delegates attending ELF meeting at the Congress



Liberal answers to the global economic crisis



Type of event
Conference | Workshops

Dates
15 – 20 November 2010

Location
Vilnius | Lithuania

Supported by
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)
Think tank e2

The 'Liberal answers to the global economic crisis' conference was launched by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, Minister Andrius Kubilius. After his welcome address, the representatives of the two main organisers, ELF board member Dr. Eugenijus Gentvilas, and Dr. Borek Severa, the representative in Central Europe and the Baltic States for the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), also welcomed all the speakers and guests.

The first part of the conference focussed on a question that has been widely debated over the last year: how should we respond to the economic crisis: with stimulus policies or with austerity programmes? Dr. Ján Oravec, President of the F. A. Hayek Foundation and President of the Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia, outlined his perspective on the reasons for the crisis: biased coverage in the media, the state monopoly of money supply and its price level, a latent anti-capitalist mentality and inadequate politicians. He stated his concerns on the enormous increase in spending on the elderly. Thus, preparing credible strategies to cut future expenditure via significant efforts to reduce health, pension and old-age care liabilities are crucial. His main message and final conclusion was very clear: Europe must wake up and move from wealth redistribution to wealth creation.

Mark Wallace, Senior Fellow of the TaxPayers' Alliance, presented the main arguments of the Alliance, which strongly opposes all tax rises and EU tax harmonisation and criticises wasteful and unnecessary spending. Kalev Kallemets, Academy of Liberalism, explained why austerity is necessary. He analysed why Estonia was able to come out of the crisis stronger to subsequently become a new eurozone member. According to him, the main reason is Estonia's culture of thrift. Also, given the strong right-wing government and weak labour unions, Estonia had been increasing its stabilisation reserve, its health fund reserve, its labour office reserve and its pension insurance reserve even during the crisis years of 2007 to 2008. The first panel was concluded by Ingrida Šimonytė, Lithuania's Minister of Finance, who pointed out a seemingly self-evident fact: that governments cannot spend more money than they are able to get from taxpayers. She also illustrated the structure of Lithuania's budget in detail.

The second part of the conference focused on the future of the euro. Dr. Jörg Guido Hülsmann, discussed what should be done to avert a future crisis. The first prerequisite is to change the monetary system. In the best case, there should be free competition in money and banking. The second-best solution would be a new gold standard. This system would not be immune from crises but it would be much better than the current system. In any case, any such return to a sounder monetary system would entail deflation and massive financial defaults that would also spill over into the real economy. Unemployment would increase in the short term but in the medium term (three years) and the long-term prospects would be incomparably better than at present.

Juraj Droba, member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, presented a highly controversial topic: the bailout of Greece and Slovakia's refusal to take part in it. He explained that, in his view, a bailout could never work like a medicine, but that it fosters moral hazard, it breaches EU treaties and discredits the whole European framework for Monetary Union and, last but not least, it is a transfer from taxpayers to rich corporations and banks. As to future developments, he remarked that Greece will most probably not be able to pay its debts in three years and the bailout just gives it a temporary lifeline. As an alternative solution, he proposed a 'no bailout policy' which would let the financial markets speak. This solution would avoid creating a highly dangerous precedent of moral hazard and it would also mean the end of the illusion of a social state that hands out gifts indiscriminately.

This contribution was followed by a speech by Rūta Vainienė, Lithuanian Free Market Institute (LFMI) President. She focused on the question of whether Lithuania should seek entry into the euro in the near future. According to her, the main political priority should be fiscal discipline. Professor Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, gave a presentation and spoke on the EU's competitiveness policy. In his view, the crisis in Europe was caused by huge government spending and a lack of structural reform.

The conference was concluded with a joint discussion between all the speakers and guests on one main question: where do we go from here and how? The main points of the discussion were that the future of the euro depends on public finances in the eurozone being controlled. The current euro crisis was caused by the mismanagement of public finances and so further austerity is crucial. In conclusion, the eurozone is currently not as attractive as it used to be for those EU countries not currently members of the eurozone.

The workshops were organised as a series of lectures and practical exercises for a selected group of almost 60 attendees. Their aim was to provide students of economics and economic professionals with an opportunity to delve into aspects of economic analysis by presenting the methodology of the Austrian school of economics and its major insights. The aim was to strengthen the school's voice in the public discussions undertaken during the programme.

The workshops were led by prominent Lithuanian and foreign economists, policy analysts and theorists. They covered a whole range of topics. In the first session, LFMI's Dr. Kęstutis Kėvalas discussed the relationship between the market and Christianity. The next topic was the development and role of private property, presented by Lithuania's Minister of Justice Dr. Remigijus Šimašius. One of the core aspects discussed was the need for private property in order to prevent conflicts in a society with a limited amount of resources. Later, Žilvinas Šilėnas, LFMI, explained the role of the price mechanism, which he considers one of the greatest inventions of humankind. The workshop then went on to focus on the methodology as elaborated by the Austrian school, (teleology in human behaviour, role of beliefs and intentions, praxeology etc.) in a lecture given by Dr. Algirdas Degutis, LFMI. His colleague, Dr. Šimašius, later paid a great deal of attention to explaining common fallacies present in the mainstream concepts of competition and competition law. Dr. Hülsmann gave



a presentation on the division of labour and the fundamental role of savings in roundabout methods of production. Mr. Wallace then presented the activities of the TaxPayers' Alliance campaign and focused on the grassroots aspects of the UK organisation. During the session on practical tasks, participants were involved in creating new campaigns against the bailout of Irish government debt. Kalev Kallamets presented a case study on reducing government spending in Estonia. Dr. Hülsmann then gave detailed lectures on market principles (value, pricing, arbitrage) and on wealth creation in a monetary economy. Giedrius Kadziauskas, LFMI, presented his ideas on the role of economists and of think tanks in society. Later, LFMI's concept of reforming the state social security system was presented by Kaetana Leontjeva. It was followed by a lecture by Ms. Vainienė on the theory of money and economic calculation, introducing the audience to the basics of banking theory: fractional reserve banking, change of money supply and its implications. The final lecture was given by Professor Josef Šima, University of Economics, Prague, who focused on the theory of business cycles, on the types of government intervention and on public goods and externalities.



Dr. Eugenijus Gentvilas, member of the ELF Board of Directors

The ELF Internal Market seminar was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 24-28 November 2010. The goal of this seminar was to discuss the internal market, which has been one of the cornerstones of European Integration in past decades. The construction of a market with nearly half a billion consumers has proved to be the engine behind economic growth in the EU. The seminar discussed ways to inject new energy into the internal market and what still remains to be done in achieving its full potential.

The seminar was opened by Felicita Medved, ELF Board member, and Vedrana Gujic, LYMEC political officer. Key lecturers were Draško Veselinovič, former chief executive officer of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange and Dr. Darko Štrajn, president of the party LDS (Liberalna Demokracija Slovenije) and researcher at the Educational Research Institute (ERI). During the event several workshops were held and as a result of the seminar a resolution on the internal market was drafted.

Please find below the seminar theme resolution 'Liberal ideas on the future of the Single Market'. The four freedoms of the EU have been its cornerstone and the driving force behind European unity and integration since the Treaty of Rome. The achievements in realising these freedoms have been considerable and the Union has been successful in its constant efforts to eliminate physical, technical and tax barriers. At the end of this process is the eventual realisation of a fully-integrated European Home Market.

However, the internal market is as yet still incomplete. We believe that the future success of the internal market is also linked to its extension, therefore LYMEC reaffirms its commitment to support enlargement of the EU to its maximum viable boundaries. Maximum extension also refers to current EU/EEA Member States, which we urge to comply with implementation of existing directives. Infringement procedures need to be more efficient and a proper mechanism for the penalisation of non-compliance should be introduced. Furthermore, derogations, exceptions and opt-outs are often additional obstacles and should be re-evaluated and removed.

Whereas harmonisation, especially the harmonisation of standards, is an important part of the realisation of the freedoms, it should not be self-serving. The EU needs to improve the new legislative framework to combat overregulation. Also, LYMEC supports the Commission's initiative for a European patent system.

On the issue of taxation, LYMEC reiterates its commitment to tax competition. Currently, the EU does not have the competence to regulate direct taxation. However, Value Added Tax (VAT) is regulated through the VAT directive, through which the EU subsequently regulates the rates of VAT taxes in member countries. The system is complicated and adds heavily to the administrative and regulative burden of European businesses. It also legislates for powerful special interests to acquire exemptions, which is counter to the entire idea of the directive, namely to





Felicity Medved, member of the ELF Board of Directors

harmonise taxation. LYMEC therefore proposes that the EU VAT directive should be abolished. However, this does not mean that EU countries cannot make voluntary VAT agreements amongst themselves.

In addition, LYMEC supports the Common Corporate Tax Base (CCTB) to increase tax competition while limiting the administrative burden on companies operating in the EU. Opposing the idea of a new European debt market, LYMEC rejects any notion of introducing Eurobonds, as for instance suggested by the Commission. The internal market must not be used as a protectionist tool in trade with third countries. Instead, Europe needs to focus on standards pertaining to human rights and production methods.

Environmental concerns need to be taken more seriously and integrated into internal market policy and must be reconciled with the free market principles we are committed to. We especially advocate the inclusion of environmental aspects in public procurement to ensure sustainability and work towards reaching ambitious emission reduction targets.

LYMEC proposes a central organisation to harmonise banking requirements in order to achieve free mobility for all EU citizens in banking services. This should lead to a single, free European banking market. Finally, LYMEC wishes to point out the lack of liberalisation of cross-border services in Europe and calls for a new comprehensive Services Directive which would encompass many services of general interest, as well as the principle of origin.

This high-level seminar was attended by 150 people, who represented a wide variety of participants, including members of Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International, Prometheus, VVD and D66 Dutch Liberal parties, policy institutions, students and international representatives of civic and political organisations. The aim of the seminar was to discuss what role the EU should play in supporting democratisation processes around the world.

Democracy support is a relatively new instrument in foreign affairs, and has been increasingly implemented during the last few decades. In the early nineties, the spotlight was mainly on free and fair elections, with Europe mainly focusing on observing elections. Panellist MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, President of the ELDR Party and Vice President of the ELF, described this focus solely on elections as naïve. Just because a country holds elections every few years, this does not mean that it automatically has a well-functioning democracy. In the late nineties, democracy support policies shifted from a focus on elections to more long-term support for transition democracies. The EU has also started to focus more on democracy and good governance in its development strategy. However, it has concentrated its activities on supporting human rights and the accountability of local governments.

The experience in the CEE countries and the national or intergovernmental initiatives to support democracies more directly, like the Dutch, Canadian and Finnish multi-party institutes and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), has increased the pressure on the EU to develop a European strategy on democracy support. Uri Rosenthal, Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, underscored the importance of this policy at the European level and emphasised that the EU has an important role in supporting democratisation processes. However, he stressed that democracy should grow from within countries.

The minister pointed out that the courageous people who raise their voices in countries with repressive regimes are those who should be supported. Finally, an important condition for this new strategy is that it will result in concrete actions. This last point was also recognised by MEP Neyts-Uyttebroeck and Arjen Berkvens, Chairman of the European Network of Political foundations (ENOP). They both said that strategy papers are necessary, but the conversion to concrete actions is even more necessary.

MEP Hans van Baalen, President of the Liberal International federation of Liberal parties, said that political parties are already being supported not only bilaterally by ideologically-based political organisations, but also by multi-party organisations such as the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy. However, funding political parties is the difficult part. The panellists stressed the importance of public financing for political organisations and therefore emphasised the need to have transparent public funding of political party support by, for instance, the

Should democratisation be a key pillar of EU foreign policy?



Type of event
Seminar

Dates
27 November 2010

Location
Scheveningen | The Netherlands

Supported by
Haya van Somerenstichting –
VVD International
Prometheus Liberaal Kennis
Centrum (Prometheus)

EU or member states. The other even more delicate issue is the transparency of the support given to political parties in the various countries. Support given to political parties should be undertaken by political organisations without directly financing them, but mainly by sharing knowledge and best practices. Projects should be small and based on direct contact between politicians. The discussion raised the question as to how this kind of support could be provided without imposing democracy on the countries.

At the end of the conference, a resolution was adopted with some minor adjustments. For the resolution, please consult the ELF website.



MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, ELDR President, ELF Vice-President
cc by-sa Sebastiaan ter Burg

The ELF organised two successive seminar days in Visé and Maastricht to address the development of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, which groups together the provinces of Liège and Limburg in Belgium, the German-speaking community in Belgium, the province of Limburg in the Netherlands and the district of Aachen in Germany.

Opening the proceedings of the first day, Dr. Thierry Coosemans, member of the ELF Board of Directors, emphasised the evident shared interests which have enabled the psychological barriers, which all too often prevent genuine cross-border dialogue, to be overcome.

Michel Foret, Governor of the province of Liège, then gave a presentation on the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion. Established in 1976, the area encompasses 10,400 km², 4 million inhabitants, four universities, 19 post-secondary education schools, 201,000 businesses (90% of which are SMEs), three languages and all manner of institutional and cultural differences.

As he stressed, 'all this constitutes a cross-border reality at the heart of Europe's most industrialised region.' The Meuse-Rhine Euroregion should also be acknowledged for receiving European credits since 1991 thanks to the four initial Interreg programmes (budget: €371 million), facilitating 378 projects which directly impact the daily life of citizens, for instance, in the realm of security.

He concluded by stating 'our current objective is to obtain a fifth block of Interreg credits to add depth to all current projects and develop a strategic vision facilitating more partnerships between the main urban centres of Maastricht, Aachen, Hasselt, Eupen and Liège, as well as to enable the public to find out more about this regional reality.'

The moderator Arthur Bodson, Managing Director, Centre Jean Gol, noted that no other area in Europe has four universities in such close proximity to each other. Unfortunately, the potential this offers is not being sufficiently exploited, due primarily to language barriers. Fortunately, joint projects are still being undertaken, particularly in the field of medicine.

Marcel Neven, Mayor of Visé, was delighted by the collaborative partnership between Belgium and the Netherlands in finding a solution to the Lanaye lock issue, which is vital for the development of river transport in the area. 'It is a positive example of what we can achieve together', he stressed, while hoping at another level for closer and more intensive contacts in future between Belgian and Dutch Liberals, which would be in everyone's interest.

Gilles Foret, Director of the Liège Port Authority, also stressed the importance of river ports and notably the port of Liège, which handles 13 million tonnes of goods, directly employs 12,000 people and indirectly employs 16,000 and

Liberalism across the borders: A citizen's dialogue in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion



Type of event
Conference

Dates
1 – 2 December 2010

Location
Visé | Belgium
Maastricht | The Netherlands

Supported by
Centre Jean Gol
Kenniscentrum D66

which serves as a natural inland port for the maritime ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp. He continued: 'while this demonstrates the value of Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, we must continue to improve our joint marketing, speak with a single, common voice, and present ourselves to the outside world in a way that further promotes our success.'

After Viviane Dessart, Visé town councillor, presented the Montagne St Pierre joint tourist project – one of the projects realised thanks in part to Interreg credits – Jurgen Moors, Meuse-Rhine Euroregion /International Affairs advisor, Limburg Chamber of Commerce, Netherlands, closed the debates on this first day by congratulating the participants on the excellent collaborative relationship between the various Chambers of Commerce incorporated under the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion umbrella. In particular, the joint activities have reduced costs and brought people together who would otherwise not have had an opportunity to meet, enabled projects to be created together and ensured greater awareness of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.

During the second evening, which was moderated by Frank van Mil, Kenniscentrum D66, researchers, administrators and experts reviewed cross-border enterprise between Maastricht (Limburg) and Liège (Wallonia). It was clear that the initiative appealed to the audience and businesses represented. However, there appear to be many invisible bottlenecks to cross-border enterprise attributable to differences in language (French-Dutch) and culture (How do you deal with agreements? Affirm a relationship? Perceive contracts?). Dr. Bart Paashuis, Dr. Mirjam Ubachs, researchers at Maastricht University and Hogeschool Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, respectively, and businessman René Lahaye stated that contacts with the German-speaking part of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion appear to be going more smoothly than those with Wallonia. Everyone agrees that the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion offers key opportunities for business, but that these are difficult to realise in practice. Mr. Lahaye, who lives in the Flemish part of Belgium, has an office in Maastricht and operates on a broad international scale, finds it particularly difficult – for a multitude of reasons – to do business with partners in Wallonia. This was illustrated during the evening itself by the presence of just one person from Wallonia compared to the 15 Dutch citizens who had come to Visé. As a result, the simultaneous interpretation service offered was not really necessary. However, there was broad agreement that there is a world to be won, particularly between Wallonia and Limburg.

The main focus of the second part of the evening was that political will is essential with respect to, for example, unity in the legal position of contracting parties and contracts. There are also still many gaps and incongruities in regulations concerning recruitment and transnational operations. The panel, consisting of Jurgen Moors, Sjef Bastiaens, Chairman of Business Club Limburg and member of the board of directors of MKB Limburg and Bert Jongen conducted a dialogue with the audience and identified quite a few sensitive areas. At the same time, they managed to establish mutual contacts with a view to continued improvement of the possibilities. Both the members of the panel and the audience gave Mr. Jongen plenty of input to add a stronger cross-border component to his work on the Maastricht City Council.

All in all, the meeting in Maastricht proved a terrific practical example of how a political party functions as a social institution and as a movement of citizens who, based on a shared vision of people and the world, meet to discuss and comment on social issues, supported in the endeavour by experts and politicians, are able to return home at the end of the evening with a more grounded understanding of how public administration can be influenced.



Dr. Thierry Coosemans, member of the ELF Board of Directors

Complete list of ELF events in 2010



Date	Title of event › ELF member organisations involved	Venue	Language
April			
21/04/10	Iberian Liberal meeting › Movimento Liberal Social › Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Cadiz Spain	English
07/04/10 –10/04/10	Education in Europe: A location factor for businesses and people alike › LYMEC › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Poznań Poland	English
14/04/10 –16/04/10	Political communication in the IT age › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Institute for Liberal Studies › LYMEC	Bucharest Romania	English
May			
14/05/10 –16/05/10	Democracy in Turkey: A road map on the way towards European Union › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Stichting IDI	Ankara Turkey	Turkish, English
28/05/10 –30/05/10	New duties and responsibilities for the Liberal heads of counties, mayors, and heads of municipalities in Croatia › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Kenniscentrum D66	Opatija Croatia	English, Croatian
30/05/10	Attitudes towards Liberalism. Presentation and discussion of survey results › ELDR Party › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Bratislava Slovakia	English
June			
05/06/10	Empowering civil society's movements, organisations and institutions › Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM) › Centre Jean Gol › Prometheus Liberal Knowledge Centre	Athens Greece	English
07/06/10 –09/06/10	Rule of law and civil society › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Institute for Liberal Studies › LYMEC	Bucharest Romania	English
10/06/10 –13/06/10	Rule of law and civil society › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Institute for Liberal Studies › LYMEC	Bankya Bulgaria	English
11/06/10 –13/06/10	New duties and responsibilities for the Liberal heads of counties, mayors, and heads of municipalities in Croatia › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Kenniscentrum D66	Bjelovar Croatia	English, Croatian
11/06/10 –13/06/10	Liberty and civil society in enlarged Europe › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Cracow Poland	English Polish
14/06/10	New regionalism as a way to promote democracy and socio-economic development? › Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata › Centre Jean Gol	Barcelona Spain	English

Date	Title of event › ELF member organisations involved	Venue	Language
June			
19/06/10 –20/06/10	Consolidation and strengthening of democratic party structures in the EU member states in Central-Eastern Europe › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Centre for Liberal Studies › Centre Jean Gol	Prague Czech Republic	English
21/06/10	Privatisation and liberalisation as responses to the crisis › Liberales Institut Österreich	Vienna Austria	English
25/06/10 –27/06/10	New duties and responsibilities for the Liberal heads of counties, mayors, and heads of municipalities in Croatia › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Kenniscentrum D66	Poreč Croatia	English, Croatian
July			
02/07/10 –04/07/10	Political communication in the IT age › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › LYMEC	Bankja Bulgaria	English
20/07/10	After the financial crisis: green growth? › CentreForum › FORES › Movimento Liberal Social	London United Kingdom	English
August			
29/08/10 –31/08/10	Liberal Academy: Challenging European integration standstill › ELDR Party › Fondazione Critica Liberale › Kenniscentrum 66 › Prometheus Liberaal Kennis Centrum	Brussels Belgium	English
September			
04/09/10 –05/09/10	ELF Academy on local democracy › Liberales Institut Österreich › Fundacja Libertas	Vienna Austria	English, German
21/09/10	Liberal answers to the financial crisis: What markets, what regulations? › Liberales Institut Österreich › CentreForum	Vienna Austria	German
27/09/10	Human rights in the EU in the context of the 'War on Terror' › Movimento Liberal Social › Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata	Lisbon Portugal	Portuguese, English



Complete list of ELF events in 2010



Date	Title of event › ELF member organisations involved	Venue	Language
October			
01/10/10	Life chances in Europe › Bertil Ohlin Institutet › CentreForum › Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting	Brussels Belgium	English
12/10/10 –13/10/10	The role of Liberals in the European Parliament and in Estonia › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Centre for Liberal Studies	Tallin Estonia	German, English
13/10/10	Active citizenship and democratic accountability in the EU › Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting › Think tank e2 › Lokus	Helsinki Finland	English
14/10/10	Could migration defuse Europe's demographic timebomb? › CentreForum › Stichting IDI	Helsinki Finland	English
November			
14/11/10 –14/11/10	The role of Liberals in the European Parliament and in Slovakia › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Liberal Society Foundation	Vyhne Slovakia	Slovak
15/11/10 –20/11/10	Liberal answers to the global economic crisis › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Think tank e2	Vilnius Lithuania	English
28/11/10 –28/11/10	Internal market › LYMEC › Fundacija Libertas	Ljubljana Slovenia	English
26/11/10	Secularisation in Europe › Fondazione Critica Liberale › Bertil Ohlin Institutet › Fundacja Projekt: Polska › Movimento Liberal Social	Rome Italy	English, Italian
27/11/10	Should democratisation be a key pillar of the EU foreign policy? A Liberal view on democratisation and democracy assistance › Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International › Prometheus Liberaal Kennis Centrum	The Hague The Netherlands	Dutch English
30/11/10	Journalists between legal prosecution and gate-keeping? › Liberales Institut Österreich › Fondazione Critica Liberale	Vienna Austria	German, English
December			
01/12/10	Liberalism across the borders: A citizen's dialogue in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion › Centre Jean Gol › Kenniscentrum D66	Visé Belgium	French, Dutch
02/12/10	Liberalism across the borders: A citizen's dialogue in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion › Centre Jean Gol › Kenniscentrum D66	Maastricht The Netherlands	Dutch, French
09/12/10	Fiscal federalism in the European Union › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Berlin Germany	German



Selection of **publications and studies**

In 2010, the ELF produced eight publications in close cooperation with its member organisations. These included proceedings of ELF conferences organised throughout the year, essays on Liberal topics, research papers and studies on Liberal ideas and values.

The main fields of interest for the publications' authors are the central issues facing Liberal Europe in times of global financial and economic crisis: the future of democratic representation, growth and investment, social mobility, and fiscal federalism in the European Union. Europe-wide, the ELF has continued its successful presentation of, and research into, Liberal tradition and ideas.

Democracy in Europe: Of the People, by the People, for the People?



Publisher
European Liberal Forum
Cooperating member organisations
Prof. mr. B.M. Teldersstichting
Lokus
think tank E2
ISBN
978-90-73896-47-5
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The book contains essays from Dutch, Finnish, Swedish and Polish authors, who have each researched the level of (dis)trust citizens display towards European institutions and developments, and the means to improve democratic accountability within the EU in order to restore trust among European citizens.

First, the editors, Dr. Fleur de Beaufort and Dr. Patrick van Schie give the general background to the topics presented. Then, Charlotte Maas, Sten Berglund and Leszek Jazdzewski analyse public opinion in the various European countries on the subject of deepening and widening of the EU. Patrick van Schie and Fleur de Beaufort further investigate whether referenda can be defended from a Liberal perspective and if they can be an instrument for restoring trust.

Aarettii Siitonen, Edwin van Rooyen and Gerrit Voerman delve deeper into the role transnational political parties now have and the role they could play in the future. Frits Bolkenstein and Hans van Baalen present Liberal political strategies to improve trust and democratic accountability, while Björn Wallen attempts to draw some 'blue-sky' conclusions out of all these very different, but thought-provoking, contributions.



The paper begins by examining the scale of the challenge of mitigating climate change and the costs and benefits of doing so.

It then quantifies the level of investment needed to meet the requirements of a low-carbon infrastructure. It considers the lifecycle of R&D, commercialisation and the deployment of new technologies. Having analysed what measures are in place to mitigate climate change, the paper then examines the case for government intervention to promote investment in R&D of green technologies. It looks at the benefits and disbenefits of different demand- or supply-side measures to promote investment in the commercialisation and deployment of a low-carbon energy infrastructure. In particular, as an example of the measures governments can take to promote investment in a low-carbon infrastructure, there is a focus on the role the UK's proposed Green Investment Bank (GIB) might play in promoting investment.

Finally, the paper concludes by assessing which measures are likely to be the most effective and economically justifiable for promoting green investment.



Green growth: How best to promote green investment



Publisher
European Liberal Forum
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ISBN
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Liberty and civil society in enlarged Europe



Publisher
European Liberal Forum

Cooperating member organisations
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)

Fundacja Projekt: Polska

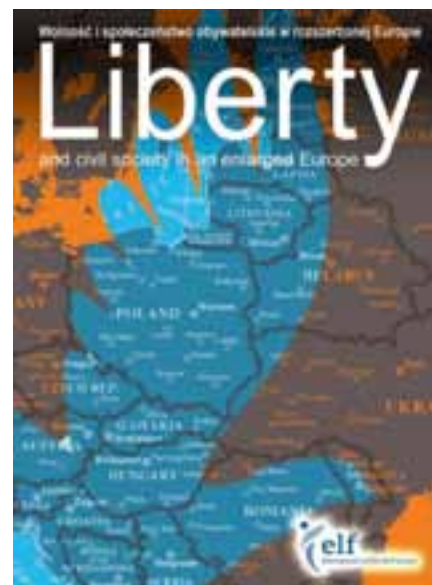
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The publication is based on the speeches given at the 'Liberty and civil society in enlarged Europe' conference held in Cracow, Poland on 11-13 June 2010.

The primary goal of the conference was to examine the current situation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in terms of democracy and civil society. The event served as a forum for Liberal politicians and academics to exchange experiences and knowledge on the efforts necessary to promote Liberal ideas in the region.

On one hand, there is no democracy without civil society and civil society does not exist without liberty. On the other, there is a significant issue to be tackled, namely the increasingly visible weakness of Liberalism in CEE countries. Is there a link between these issues? Is there anything that can be done to solve this problem? All CEE countries demand more visible participation by citizens and activity to strengthen their young democracies. Simultaneously, liberal democracy is challenged all over the world. There are more and more new political threats and socio-economic problems weakening the democratic system.

The essays reflect the course of the conference, its main points and conclusions, inviting further discussion and analysis of the subjects discussed.



Discussions regarding a new financial framework for the EU began in the summer of 2010, if not earlier. Following a review of the EU budget, the European Commission – supported by the European Parliament – has expressed the wish it has often expressed in the past for an EU tax and responsibility for dealing with indebtedness.

These proposals were rejected by the Member States. At the European Council in October 2010, the heads of government and of state agreed on a significantly lower increase in EU finances than the Commission had proposed. Ultimately, in mid-November 2010, talks between the Council and the European Parliament on the 2011 EU budget collapsed. The talks failed not only because the European Parliament wanted greater responsibility for dealing with the budget, but also because of its call for an increase in EU expenditure and for a commitment to future financing of the EU from an EU tax.

In what direction is EU budget policy heading? What seems to be the trend? Based on a detailed presentation of both the EU budget (income and expenditure) and the EU's debts outside its budget, especially via the European Investment Bank, this study subjects the EU budget to a critical task review. This review reveals that the actual allocation of responsibility for income and expenditure at EU level only partly conforms to the ideas formulated from an economic perspective. Furthermore, it shows that there is not much evidence to support the introduction of an EU tax. Reform of the system of funding the EU should instead significantly reduce the complexity of the system, while fundamentally retaining the contributions system.



Fiscal federalism in the European Union



Publisher
European Liberal Forum

Cooperating member organisations
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom (FNF)

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Complete list of ELF publications in 2010



Title of publication	Author/Editor	Language
› ELF member organisations involved		
Democracy in Europe: Of the People, by the People, for the People? › Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting › Lokus › Think tank e2	Fleur de Beaufort Patrick van Schie › Editors	English
Grandes obras do pensamento Liberal › Movimento Liberal Social › Centre Jean Gol	Igor Caldeira › Editor	Portuguese
Green growth: How best to promote green investment › CentreForum	CentreForum › Author	English
Liberty and civil society › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom › Fundacja Projekt: Polska	Robert Pośłajko › Editor	English/Polish
Liberal reflections on life chances and social mobility in Europe › Bertil Ohlin Institutet › CentreForum › Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting	Prof. Ingemund Hägg › Editor	English
Fiscal federalism in the European Union › Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	Prof. Lars Feld › Author	German
Synthèse détaillée d'ouvrages majeurs de la tradition libérale – Tome II › Centre Jean Gol › Movimento Liberal Social	Dr. Coarentin de Salle › Author	French
The difference in public attitudes towards Liberal ideas across European countries › Movimento Liberal Social › Think tank e2 › Lokus › Kenniscentrum D66 › Bertil Ohlin Institutet › Prometheus Liberaal Kennis Centrum	Joanna Suder › Author	English



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 28.

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 European Liberal Forum present their activities on the following pages.

Atvira visuomenė ir jos draugai Lithuania

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.

The purpose of the Bertil Ohlin Institutet is to initiate research and debate in critical areas of public policy along traditional Liberal lines of thinking. The institute is named after Bertil Ohlin, who was the leader of the Liberal Party of Sweden (Folkpartiet) between 1944 and 1967. In 1977 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics, thus capping a successful career as a political leader with the recognition of his academic credentials.

A Liberal think tank

By building a network of scholars, participants in the public debate and persons from private and public working life, the institute – as a think tank – contributes to broadening the basis of Liberal opinion formation and the renewal of Liberal thinking.

Independent

The institute is independent of political parties and interest groups, organisationally as well as financially. Its activities are financed from private and corporate contributions as well as project grants from foundations.

International cooperation

The institute seeks international cooperation in order to improve the way in which policy issues of importance for our time are addressed. The institute is active in the international network of Liberal think tanks and became a member of the ELF in 2008.

Grounded in research

Our projects should be applicable and practical. They should build on scientific approaches, which implies 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.

Organisation

The institute is a foundation, the Stiftelsen Bertil Ohlin-Institutet, founded in 1993.

Public events, debates and seminars, which are open to the public, are organised on a regular basis. We also publish papers and books on different topics. 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.

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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 is an independent, Liberal think tank seeking to develop evidence-based policy solutions to the problems facing Britain. Since our launch in 2005 we have established ourselves in the top tier of UK think tanks, being named runner-up in Prospect magazine's 2007 'Think-tank of the year' awards.

We aim to provide a progressive forum for innovation and debate. Alongside our research we run seminars, conferences and fringe meetings, which aim to engage policy-makers, academics, the media and voters in debate.

CentreForum is determined to begin with reference to data and not dogma. But, we do have certain key values at our core. These are progressive, rooted in the same quest for justice that has motivated all British Liberals for more than 300 years. In the social sphere, justice has never, for Liberals, been about equality of outcomes but has instead focused on equality of opportunity – the belief that everyone should enjoy an equal chance in life, regardless of background, wealth or connections.

CentreForum's research focuses on four broad themes: the politics of aspiration, empowerment, globalisation and Liberalism.

A belief in the politics of aspiration has focused our social policy work on expanding life chances, spreading opportunities and boosting social mobility. Already much of our work, particularly on education and welfare, has been guided by a desire to help people 'get on', make the most of their talents, fulfil their potential and realise their ambitions.

Liberals have long been committed to decentralising power to the local level in the name of individual and community empowerment. At CentreForum we want to explore ways of spreading decision-making and purchasing powers among those directly affected by the consequences rather than concentrating them in the hands of politicians and bureaucrats. Our belief in the supply side liberalisation of public services is coupled with the vision of an enabling, rather than a minimal, state. We advocate a progressive approach to public spending and a redistributive approach to taxation to ensure that all are able to realise their ambitions and their goals, regardless of earnings or wealth.

As well as devolving power downwards, we also advocate the pooling of power at the international level. This is based on a commitment to the 'internationalist' tradition in Liberalism: the commitment to establishing a rules-based global order, governed by international law and, where possible, maintained through multilateral institutions. We intend to set out a confident, forward-looking agenda that champions the free movement of goods, capital, services and people. We believe that migration, trade, development and 'green capitalism' can all make Britain richer – financially, ecologically and culturally.

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CENTREFORUM

2010 Annual Report
Member organisations



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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 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:

- › Research: publications on topical issues (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 – FNF)

The Society for Progressive Research was established in early 2006 to run a think tank based on progressive values and Liberal ideals. The think tank is called Think tank e2 and is headed up by Dr. Karina Jutila, D.S.Sc.

Think tank e2:

- › Acts as a forum for debate by bringing together experts from different fields and disciplines for innovative social discussions.
- › Initiates conversation on current issues and introduces new themes for open debate.
- › Aims to foresee social phenomena outside the field of daily politics
- › Contributes to the strengthening of think tank activities in Finland and their internationalisation.

Its 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.

Edistysmielisen tutkimuksen yhdistys r.y. e2 Finland

Think tank e2



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European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) pan-European



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The European Liberal Youth body (LYMEC) was established in 1976 in The Hague (The Netherlands) as the 'Liberal and Radical Youth Movement of the European Community'. LYMEC supports the development of political and educational understanding of young people throughout Europe. Moreover, it plays a political role within Europe by acting as the youth organisation of the ELDR Party and its parliamentary group in the European Parliament, ALDE. With 59 member organisations in 37 countries and around 210,000 members, LYMEC aims to:

- › Create a Liberal and federal Europe.
- › Promote tolerance between cultures and individuals.
- › Increase the level of political awareness and involvement of young people in politics.

LYMEC's Annual Congress brings together young people from all over Europe. It is the organisation's highest decision-making body and is where its members meet to discuss policies and to decide on the organisation's future actions.

LYMEC's Executive Committee meetings take place twice a year and deals mostly with organisational matters. We also organise many seminars throughout the year on various topics such as human rights, migration policies, agriculture, regionalism, the environment and Liberalism. We offer membership not only to organisations, but also to individuals who want to participate in the European integration process.

The Fondazione Critica Liberale was established in January 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* and its quarterly supplement *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa* ('The United States of Europe'). The foundation is also editor of the *Libelli vecchi e nuovi* collection, published by Dedalo Editore, and of several books and publications.

The foundation works with the Consulta Laica of Rome and with Coordinamento Nazionale delle Consulte Laiche of Italy. It has, together with the Ufficio Nuovi Diritti (the New Rights Office of the CGIL association), created a 'secularisation monitor', which produces research on secularisation in Italy on an annual basis and organises 'Conversazioni laiche' ('Secular conversations') meetings.

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

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fondazione critica liberale

Forum för reformer och entreprenörskap (FORES) Sweden

Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability



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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' main activity is the initiation of 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 subjected 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 home page being its most important communication tool, supplementing written reports and books with audiovisual material and interactive forums.

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

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) – 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, 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 51 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 principles of Liberalism as a political philosophy underpin all the foundation's work. Our focus in the 2008-2011 period is on the following issues:

- › 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.
- › Freedom and civil society: active citizens are the lifeblood of a liberal society. It is people, not government bureaucracies, who can bring freedom to life and secure it on a lasting basis.
- › Freedom and the rule of law: only a state governed by the rule of law can sustainably perform the core functions Liberals assign to it, namely, the protection of freedom, security and property.

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 we work in. They are based on long-standing experience and are constantly evolving.

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit (FNF) Germany

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom



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Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG FÜR DIE FREIHEIT

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Member organisations

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The Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (Fundació CatDem) has taken on the challenge of driving forward the restructuring of Catalanism. The modern world raises a whole new set of important challenges, to which Catalanist thought has to be capable of giving adequate answers; for example, to the consequences of globalisation; to the increasing and unstoppable 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 has to have sufficient competency to provide answers to anything that shapes economic development and citizens' wellbeing.

The Fundació CatDem seeks to make its contribution to this process by driving forward ideas for debates and proposals. This 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. Basically, the foundation offers a broader space – what we call a 'Casa Gran' ('Big House') – which is open to dialogue, participation and creativity. It relies on professionals, intellectuals and technical experts from the different traditions of Catalanism.

In order to structure the debates in an efficient way, the foundation set up three broad areas of reflection and six working groups. The aim is, from now on, to focus on the participation and contribution of more than a hundred people from Catalonia's social, intellectual and academic world. The areas of reflection are designed to rethink Catalanism from an intellectual point of view. The working groups offer an appropriate framework to define concrete proposals and projects on more specific issues.

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

The foundation's priorities are as follows:

- › The dissemination and protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as civil liberties.
- › The propagation of a market economy and entrepreneurship.
- › The 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:

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

The foundation's key programmes are:

Liberal Academy:

- › This is the foundation's flagship project. Run since 2002, it has been an extremely valuable platform for discussion, the exchange of ideas and as a source of knowledge. Over 130 young European Liberal leaders have participated in the Academy so far. Each year, we pick the issue of greatest interest as the main topic of the event. It reflects the mainstream discussion which is taking place in Europe and on the world stage. The Academy provides Liberals with the opportunity to discuss relevant issues and develop their own positions in accordance with the Liberal values they represent.

Direction Europe:

- › This programme is attended by 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 aims to develop up-to-date solutions for problems in education and health policies.

Democracy without women is half a Democracy:

- › This is dedicated to disseminating, propagating and protecting the equal rights of men and women.

Fundacja Klub Obywatelski Poland

Civic Club Foundation



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Civic Club Foundation

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Member organisations



Fundacja Projekt: Polska Poland



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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. Why projects? 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.

Our main target group is young people. We cooperate with them through:

- › Research, publications and conferences
- › The power of the internet: www.napiszmydoeuropy.onet.pl
- › Cooperation with NGOs such as: www.21paздziernika.pl, www.7czerwca.org.pl, www.razem89.pl
- › Student and education programmes: for example, we have started to campaign for reforms in the Polish higher education system: www.wyborcza.pl/student

The Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International aims to develop international relations with Liberal parties in areas of democratic transition. The main objective is to maintain and strengthen relations with Liberal parties and to contribute to democratisation in Eastern Europe and developing countries.

The Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International focuses on the following policy areas:

- › Worldwide bilateral contacts with like-minded parties and organisations;
- › International networks (the ELF, the ELDR Party and Liberal International);
- › Public support activities on international cooperation;
- › The Central and Eastern Europe Program (CEEP).

The International Secretary, who also is a member of the VVD National Executive Committee, heads the Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International.

Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International The Netherlands



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novum
INSTITUTE

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

The Novum Institute 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 13 members with economic, political, public and scientific backgrounds, which makes the Novum Institute a powerful advocacy group.

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

The institute organises public debates and conferences on the latest issues. At the same time, it organises seminars on Liberalism and the EU institutions throughout the country.

In the future, the institute aims to develop its own library of basic texts on Liberalism and to publish its own studies and books.

The Institute for Liberal Studies is a founding member of the ELF and works closely with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and Haya van Somerenstichting – VVD International.

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

Institute for Liberal Studies Romania



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D66 Kenniscentrum

The Kenniscentrum D66 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 find and implement the talents of those sympathetic to liberal democratic (also often called social-liberal) thinking. It was originally founded in the 1970s, when it served as a traditional research centre.

At the turn of the 20th century, our approach changed 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 developments in a more considered manner.

Nowadays, the organization employs dozens of volunteers, working on projects varying from very concrete policy advice to fundamental studies of the basic social-liberal principals of D66, as well as our magazine Idee. The Kenniscentrum D66 also acts as secretary to the 'permanent program committee' of D66, which is charged with writing the party programs for both national and European elections. It is in this arena where the link is forged between ideological awareness and everyday practicality.

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.

Means for achieving the aims of the Liberty Forum of Greece are the organisation of training and educational programmes aiming at educating 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, the Individual Rights and the Open Society.

Liberty Forum of Greece (KEFIM) Greece



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The Liberales Institut regards itself as a driving force for ideas and as part of the European Liberal network. The aim of the Liberales Institut Österreich is the long-term establishment of the idea of freedom and liberty in Austria, which is the homeland of the Austrian School of National Economics and a country that has produced great Liberal thinkers.

The Liberales Institut organises events and publications together with Austrian, European and international institutions. The aim is to stimulate the political debate for more freedom, liberty, tolerance and a free market economy in Austria. The Liberales Institut Österreich seeks to disseminate Liberal ideas in order to give life to the values of liberty and freedom.

In addition, the institute strives to facilitate an in-depth exchange of ideas and to organise joint projects in cooperation with Liberal institutes in other countries. We focus especially on cooperation with the new EU Member States and current EU candidate countries.

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. We believe the Swedish in Finland need positive metaphors rather than threats.

Lokus seeks to promote a view of a desired future which has a social-liberal profile. The whispers of today are the calls of the future. Values and ethics should be important 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) Portugal



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The MLS, which was founded in 2005, aims to promote social-liberalism in Portugal. The movement is a platform of individuals who believe that the old left-right dogma makes little sense today and that it is possible to secure a different and 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 more just 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 for the law, always with respect for the right to differ.
- › A state which focuses itself 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 health 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.

The Liberal Society Foundation, which was known as the Institute for Liberal Studies until 2002, was established in 1995 as a non-governmental and non-profit think tank. It was established because of a real need for objective evaluations of social processes and with the aim of promoting Liberal values and to create space for social and expert discussion in the transition period. Co-founders are the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), the Fórum Foundation, the Foundation Gaudeamus and Ing. Viliam Vaškovič, CSc.

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 meetings;
- › Research studies and expert opinions;
- › Editorial and publishing activities;
- › Education, promotion and adult education activities;
- › The development of foreign contacts;

Its importance in 1999: 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).

Its importance later: educational and publishing activities (aiming to raise citizens' awareness and influencing the legislative process via Members of Parliament).

Its importance now: given that the political situation in the Slovak Republic is starting to be increasingly influenced by nationalistic tendencies and that there has not been a Liberal party in the Slovak Parliament since 2006, the activities of the Liberal Society aim to contribute to improving the political climate in Slovakia.

Nadácia Liberálna spoločnosť Slovakia

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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) 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 was 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 Frits Bolkestein, who in the 1990s was the most successful leader of the VVD ever and who was an EU commissioner from 2000 to 2004. 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 the 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.

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

Prometheus 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.

Prometheus aims to formulate a clear vision of today's Liberalism by means of progressive research, study sessions, publications, meetings and lectures.

By taking an innovative interpretation of contemporary Liberalism, Prometheus has become a leading institute among the international think tanks in Brussels.

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The IDI Foundation 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 Balkans, the Middle East and Northern Africa. Furthermore, Stichting IDI maintains and develops relationships with like-minded political organisations in almost every country in the world. Stichting IDI co-operates with democratic parties and organisations that respect human rights and the rights of ethnic 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.

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

SILBA is currently working together with groups in Russia, Kaliningrad, 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.

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The Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC) is a Liberal foundation that promotes democracy. SILC supports activities by other organisations and individuals that promote democracy. It works mainly with political parties, youth, women's and human rights organisations as well as with independent journalists.

The bulk of SILC's work is in totalitarian and post-totalitarian states such as Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Russia, Serbia and the Ukraine.

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