

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY
AND SOLIDARITY

DEMOCRACY BUILDING PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES
AND FOUNDATIONS IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE
& THE CAUCASUS.



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Abbreviations

AMS	Alfred Mozer Stichting
DS	Democratic Party of Serbia
EC	European Commission
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
PES	Party of European Socialists
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SDP-H	Social democratic party of Croatia
SDSM/SDUM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SI	Socialist International

Foreword

Herewith we are presenting to you the Annual Report 2007 of the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. In 2007, the democracy building platform for social democratic parties and foundations, continued its activities in East and Southeast Europe and the Caucasus. In addition, we expanded our geographical scope and organised a conference in Morocco, with reference to the ENP.

Our successful Promising Politicians Course in 2007 gathered young and promising social democrats from Western Balkan countries, who met in Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina and Albania. We have witnessed growing attention of the parties in the region as the Course has become very known among the parties and their Youth organisations. In September, a Training for Trainers was organised for a selection of participants of 2006.

Moreover, the representatives of the European Forum were present at the Party of European Socialist (PES) Balkan conference in Belgrade, the meeting of foundations in Slovenia, visited the congress of "Just Russia" in St. Petersburg and joined the fact finding mission to Armenia.

Four large conferences were organised by the European Forum, attended by representatives of the PES, the Socialist Group Members in the EP and government representatives. In Sarajevo, the European Forum took the initiative to address issues related to human trafficking. For the first time, political parties representatives and NGO's were offered the possibility to meet and to discuss the necessary steps to establish effective policies aimed at fighting this crime.

In Skopje, the European Forum organised a conference related to European integration of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Party leader of the SDSM, Radmila Sekerinska, was very much grateful for the support of the social democratic family to her country's further integration in the EU. She pointed out at the necessity to move the country closer to the EU and acknowledged that local politicians should make greater effort to implement reforms.

In autumn, conferences in Morocco and Ukraine were held. In Morocco a high level conference was organised on EU-Moroccan relations. The country is considered to be most receptive to change in the region. The two-day conference offered an excellent opportunity to learn about the post-election situation and meet with progressive forces. The conference in Kyiv focussed on energy security and climate change, two interlinked challenges for Europe. The PES resolution of December 2006 called for serious commitment since high energy prices and the evident consequences of the changing climate underline the urgency of a new energy strategy for Europe and the planet.

The CEE Gender Network Task Force concluded its ambitions workplan for 2007, thanks to the great commitment of Sonja Lokar and Dasa Silovic. The activities of the Gender Network have encouraged women to expand their participation in politics.

The information service of the European Forum was further improved. The number of monthly visitors has been growing and the Country Updates of the five Central Asian countries have been added to the list.

We have finalised a fruitful year. The support to our sisterparties was made possible through organisational and financial contribution by the member foundations and parties of the European Forum. In addition, our close cooperation with the PES and the Socialist Group, has added much to the quality of the conferences and active participation of our sister parties representatives. Our activities have encouraged social democrats to address relevant issues and by means of this, they have contributed to strengthening social democracy.

Once more, I would like to thank those who have been involved in our projects and specifically the European Forum staff, which was dedicated to make 2007 a rewarding year again.



Lena Hjelm-Wallén
Chairperson of the European Forum

General information

In January 1993, the social democratic parties and political foundations from EU countries founded the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity in order to support the transformation and democratisation processes in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Serving as a platform for co-operation between social democratic parties, organisations and personalities, the European Forum aims to contribute to the development of social democracy in these regions. The European Forum unites 12 social democratic foundations and 19 social democratic parties within its supervision body; the Steering Committee.

The Dutch Alfred Mozer Stichting is currently responsible for the implementation of the European Forum's working programme.

Staff in 2007

Arjen Berkvens - secretary general
Kirsten Meijer - senior project manager
Alma Balesic - project manager
Maartje Schrama - information officer (until 01/09)
Amieke Bouma - information officer (from 01/09)
Hayte de Jonge - information officer (from 01/09)
Amieke Bouma (intern)
Tessel van Westen (intern)
Stefan Panhuijsen (intern)

The Steering Committee

Lena Hjelm Wallén, former Swedish vice-prime minister, Chairperson
Jan Marinus Wiersma, MEP, vice-president Socialist Group

In 2007 the steering committee met on:

- 20th of February in Brussels, Belgium
- 8th of June in Brussels, Belgium
- 23rd of November in Sofia, Bulgaria

Members of the European Forum are 19 parties and 12 social democratic foundations

Parties: CSSD (Czech Republic), DNA (Norway), DS (Italy), Labour Party (Great Britain), MSzP (Hungary), PS (France), PvdA (The Netherlands), SAP (Sweden), SDL (Poland), SDP (Denmark), SDP (Estonia), SDP (Finland), SPD (Germany), SPÖ (Austria), PES, Unia Pracy (Poland), SD (Slovenia), PASOK (Greece), Partito Democratico (Italy)

Social democratic foundations: Alfred Mozer Stichting (The Netherlands), Dr. Karl Renner Institut (Austria), Fondation Jean Jaurès (France), Foundation for European Education (Poland), FES (Germany), ISTAME A. Papandreou (Greece), Johannes Mihkelson Foundation (Estonia), Kalandar Foundation (Slovenia), Olof Palme International Centre (Sweden), Westminster Foundation for Democracy / Labour Party (Great Britain) and Ovidiu Sincai Institute Foundation (Romania), Tancsics Foundation (Hungary)

Financial situation

Result of the European Forum	Result 2007
Contributions	
Czech Republic; CSSD	5.200
Finland; SDP	5.200
Hungary; MSZP	5.200
Austria; SPO	5.200
Norway; DNA	5.200
Sweden; SAP	25.000
Germany; SPD	25.000
Denmark; SDP	5.200
Projects covered by sister foundations	
Olof Palme international center	81.000
Fondation Jean Jaurès	10.000
Labour Party through Westminster funds	35.326
Other donations	2.966
Total	<u>210.492</u>
Expenditure	
Projects European Forum	103.682
Organisational costs & salaries	70.658
	<u>174.340</u>
Strategic Reserve EF	
On 31-12-2006	33.562
2007 surplus	36.151
total on 31-12-2007	<u>69.713</u>

Activities in chronological order

January - December	Belarus Solidarity Fund
February 26	Visit Congress 'A Just Russia', St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
April 20-22	Meeting of Social Democratic Foundations in Southeast Europe, Velenje, Slovenia
May 03-07	Promising Politicians Seminar I: "Social Democratic Parties; Ideology and organisation" , Petrovac, Montenegro
16	The PES Balkan Conference - Integrating Western Balkans in the EU. A Progressive Agenda for the People, Belgrade, Serbia
30-31	Post-election Mission to Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia
June 23	Fighting Human Trafficking in the Western Balkans, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina
September 21	The Macedonian Road to EU Accession: Setting the Priorities, Skopje, Fyr of Macedonia
21-23	Promising Politicians: Training of Trainers, Pula, Croatia

October 18-21	Promising Politicians Seminar II: "Media and Communication Skills", Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina
26-27	ENP at Work & the State of Democracy and Social Democracy in Morocco, Rabat, Morocco
November 29- 02/12	Promising Politicians Seminar III: "Negotiation Strategies and European Integration", Tirana, Albania
December 01	Energy & Environment policy: between power politics and alternative power sources Kyiv, Ukraine
13-15	Piran 2007: Youth Employment in Post-Conflict Societies, Velenje, Slovenia

Reports

BELARUS SOLIDARITY FUND 2007

Political context

Belarus is an increasingly authoritarian presidential republic, where the president dominates political life and no real opposition is allowed. President Alyksandr Lukashenka, who is in power since 1994, managed to strengthen his power by changing the constitution, and by the conduct of elections, which were far from free and fair. The democratic opposition did not have the chance to campaign freely for their candidates: Alyksandr Milinkevich and Alyksandr Kazulin. Mass-detentions took place creating a climate of fear. International observers and the democratic opposition widely condemned the poll. On the evening of election day and the days afterwards, people gathered in the centre of Minsk to protest and call for new elections. The scale of the demonstrations were the largest since nearly 10 years. On 25 March, it was ended by the police. Parliamentary elections are planned in October 2008. At the beginning of 2011 the current presidential term of Alyksandr Lukashenka should end. Belarus, while covered by the ENP, does not participate fully in it. The principal objectives of EU cooperation with Belarus are to support the needs of the population, to directly and indirectly support democratisation, and to mitigate the effects of the self isolation of Belarus on its population. There are two priority areas: Social and economic development, including actions to alleviate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, and; Democratic development and good governance.

Report

In response to the repression the European Forum decided in 2005 to set up a Belarus Solidarity Fund. The aim of the fund is to support social democratic activists (political parties, NGO's and trade unions) in Belarus. In order to make an assessment of the applications for financial assistance, a Belarus Solidarity Fund Committee was established, consisting of representatives of the Labour Party/ Westminster Foundation, the German SPD and the Swedish SAP. The support of Fondation Jean-Jaurès was crucial in 2007. We would like to thank you and your board for being so generous.



VISIT CONGRESS 'A JUST RUSSIA'

Date and venue : 25-26 February 2007, St. Petersburg, The Russian Federation
Participant : Kirsten Meijer, Senior Project Manager European Forum

Political context

Russia is entering another important political period as in December 2007 Duma elections will take place. These elections will set the tone for an even more important political event: the presidential elections in 2008. President Putin said he will respect the constitution and will therefore not run for a third term. Speculations about his successor have started and were given a new impetus recently when the President named Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov to the post of first deputy prime minister. Another candidate that is expected to have a serious chance is first deputy prime minister Dmitri Medvedev, who is in charge of, among other things, Gazprom. In the run up to these elections political parties are regrouping. Through registration procedures and direct support of the President for certain parties the Kremlin has a firm grip on this process.

A main development in this respect is the merger of Rodina, Russian Party of Life and Russian Pensioners Party into a party called A Just Russia on 29 October 2006. Federation Council Speaker Sergei Mironov is the leader of the party. Observers say it is the most serious effort by the presidential administration to advance the Russian "managed" or "sovereign" democracy towards a bi-party system where both centre-right (United Russia) and centre-left (A Just Russia) are represented. A Just Russia held its first congress on 27 February to approve the party's political platform and to present the strategy for the Duma elections. Socialist and Social Democratic Parties from Europe were invited. On instigation of the PES the European Forum sent an observer.

Report

On Monday 26 February all international guests were transported by bus to the huge Oktjabrski Concerthall. On arrival young people waving orange flags with the party logo and red balloons were standing outside, accompanied by police and security people. The hall was loaded with guests and about 300 delegates. TV screens showed speeches of party

leader Mironov and everything was very well orchestrated. The congress started with a film presenting the parties views, followed by children who introduced the public to the party programme and a speech of Mironov who formally opened the congress by presenting the agenda, which was approved. He explained the process of foundation of the party and said that there are already 300.000 members in 82 branches, a number that increases with 40.000 every month. Mironov explained that the party was founded with support of President Putin. He read out a message coming from the President, which said that he welcomed the new party on the political scene. Speeches of representatives of the Chinese Communist Party, the ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Cuban Communist Party, Nikolaj Kamov of the Social Democratic Party of Bulgaria, Valentina Semenyuk of the Socialist Party of Ukraine, an MP of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, and a Russian from Estonia pledging for keeping the monument for Russian soldiers in Tallinn, followed.

Summarising one can say that the party presents itself as an opposition party, of socialist/ social democratic (both words were used) nature. The creation of the party is by Mironov described as important for the development of a multi-party landscape in Russia. The first "test for democracy" will be the St. Petersburg regional elections, according to Mironov. Complaints were made about difficulties the party has (political enemies who distributed fake flyers saying that the congress was a concert, no access to media, no office).

During a break delegates could vote by secret ballot for positions of the central political committee and central finance and auditing committee. All suggested positions were approved within a range of unanimously approved to maximum 14 votes against (out of 300). During the break I met the former international secretary of the Social Democratic Party of Russia (SDPR), Boris Guseletov, who was accompanied by Aleksandr Nikolajevitsj Lukitsjev – former member of SDPR, now a candidate for A Just Russia. Boris Guseletov explained he is interested to join the new party and expects more people from SDPR to follow.

In the evening reports of the congress were shown on television. Next day party cars trans-



ported all international guests back to the airport. Watching the city from the car I saw two kinds of political billboards and banners: Those of United Russia and those of A Just Russia, the latter showing three candidates, one of them being ice-skater and Olympic gold medallist Evgeni Plushenko.

Political developments from an opposition perspective

The day before the congress I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of Yabloko Youth and the Social Democratic Union of Youth (SDSM). Both groups see the A Just Russia party as a Kremlin project. Especially the people in Yabloko are upset with recent developments as the Central Election Committee (CEC) refused to register the party to participate in the St. Petersburg regional elections on 11 March. The main speaker on this issue in the CEC is a political friend of Mironov named Mr. Konkin. Though many said they regretted the decision not to let Yabloko participate, only the Communist Party supported these words with deeds by voting against exclusion of Yabloko. The appeal to the Supreme Court was not treated without explanation.

Yabloko thanks Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma of the PES for their letter of support after recent developments and asked European politicians to continue to stress the importance of democracy and respect for human rights in Russia. They see that the EU does have some leverage since President Putin does not like to be treated as an outcast, but wants Russia to be considered to be part of the civilised world.

Conclusions and recommendations

Social democracy in Russia has reached another low point. The Social Democratic Party of Russia is practically non-existent by not being registered, being divided by internal quarrels resulting in several congresses, lack of clarity on the party leadership and members leaving the party. For some of them it is clear that A Just Russia is the best alternative. Another coalition of small leftist parties, including the People's Party led by Gennady Gudkov, the Party of Revival of Russia led by Gennady Seleznev, Patriots of Russia led by Gennady Semigin, and the Party of Social Justice led by Alexey Podberezkin seems seriously weakened since the People's Party also joined A Just Russia.

A Just Russia presents itself clearly as a pro-presidential party with a

social, conservative leftist orientation. All international guests were enthusiastic about the party and some consider it to be the only viable partner for the European and international social democratic movement. The party has clear ambitions in this respect, which is shown by their wish to apply for membership in the Socialist International and to develop international contacts with sister parties in Europe.

According to own statements, the party was founded to make sure that all political preferences of the Russian electorate are covered by pro-presidential parties. The fact that they present themselves as an opposition party that experiences pressure from the traditional "party of power" and that has difficulty for example with getting access to media is not based on reality. No judgement was given about the important fact that Yabloko is blocked from participating in the St. Petersburg elections. Human rights were only brought up in relation to the position of the Russians in the Baltic states, where the EU is blamed for double standards. The congress itself was not very democratic, with all decisions quickly and almost all unanimously approved. Russian nationalism, or patriotism as they call it, takes an important place in the party programme. Media reports of the congress described it as being a Soviet style congress.

It is true that in Russia the only way to be influential is to get the support from President Putin. The question is however whether social democratic parties in Europe should develop friendly relations with this party. For the moment it is too early to draw conclusions and I suggest that further steps will have to be considered after A Just Russia seeks further contact and/ or applies for SI membership.



MEETING OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATIONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Date and venue : 20-21 April 2007, Velenje, Slovenia
Participants : Alma Balesic, European Forum, Avni Mazrreku, Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Kosovo; Damir Sehovic, Social Democratic Party (SDP), Montenegro; Lejla Ademovic, Social Democratic Party (SDP), Montenegro; Nenad Celarevic, Social Democratic Union (SDU), Serbia; Saimir Tahiri, Socialist Party of Albania (SPA), Albania; Johan Lindroth, Olof Palme International Centre, Sweden; Matthew Beevor, Labour Party, United Kingdom; Sonja Lokar, Social Democrats (SD), Slovenia; Ziva Zivkovic, Kalander Foundation, Slovenia; Peter Bohinec, Kalander Foundation, Slovenia; Karolina Leakovic, SDP, Croatia

Political context

The Slovenian Kalander Foundation organised on 21st and 22nd of April a meeting to which several social democratic foundation, active in Western Balkan countries, were invited. The meeting was financed by the British Labour Party through Westminster Foundation for Democracy. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the policies of the foundations and the political developments in these respective countries, to inform the partners on the needs of each specific party and to improve the coordination of projects in the future. The attending parties and the organizers are of the opinion that closer cooperation between the foundations will add to the efficiency of the work and will fulfill better the needs of the social democratic parties in the region, regarding capacity building support, networking and organising thematic discussions.

Report

The programme of the meeting started on Saturday by an introduction of all present guests. All present explained the work of their respective foundations in the region. Aim of the introductions was to inform the participants about the field of work of social democratic foundations in coun-

tries in Western Europe, which might be of interest to foundations in Western Balkan countries. Labour Party through Westminster Foundation for Democracy was represented by Matthew Beevor, who explained about the assistance that can be provided to political parties by Labour Party. Alma Balesic introduced the work of the Alfred Mozer Stichting (AMS), explaining that its work includes campaign and elections training seminars and is fully demand driven. Moreover, the projects of the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity were introduced to the participants. The European Forum is a platform organisation of all social democratic foundations in Europe and its aim is to support democracy development in South Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The projects are conducted by the AMS Secretariat.

The representatives of the local social democratic foundations presented the projects they are involved in. Foundation Dimitrije Tucovic, linked to the Social Democratic Union (SDU) in Serbia, was represented by Nenad Celarevic who expressed the need to organise training seminars on political skills. The Socialist Party of Albania (SPA) was represented by Saimir Tahiri, the spokesperson of the party. He explained the critical situation in his party, talked about the need to modernise and therefore reform the election procedures in the party and the necessity to attract motivated people who will revive the Youth and Women's Forum. Damir Sehovic presented the newly founded Social Democratic Development Foundation, linked to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) from Montenegro. Damir explained that training seminars on political skills are a necessity in the countries in the region as parties do not offer those to their members. Avni Mazrreku (Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)) presented the experience of cooperation between PDK and AMS and Labour Party. He agreed that support from Western social democratic foundations is highly needed.

To the meeting, two guest speakers were invited to address the participants. Ziga Cebulj, Public Relations consultant of the Social Democrats (SD) in Slovenia, held a presentation on public marketing. Vlado Dimovski, former Minister of Social Security, discussed his experience during the party's mandate in government. He pointed out that the party should not make any promises



which can not be fulfilled and although you have a successful elections campaign, it is not sufficient to become a successful party.

The second day of the programme allowed for concrete proposals for future cooperation between those attending the meeting. In addition, Karolina Leakovic from the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in Croatia joined the group. The participants pointed out that regular meetings between foundations offer an opportunity to coordinate our projects better, to improve cooperation and to respond to the needs of our sister parties in the countries in the region. Therefore, it was proposed to try and find funding to organise at the end of each year a meeting between foundations in order to discuss the upcoming year's programme and adapt it to the needs and the wishes of the partaking parties. Also, this would enhance the cooperation. Secondly, an (internal) mailing list of all social democratic parties in the region would be a very useful and efficient tool to keep all parties updated on the developments.

Conclusions and recommendations

Sharing ideas, experience and knowledge exchange between social democratic parties and foundations is highly needed. Both the foundations and the parties deal with inexperienced members and they lack the knowledge and capacity to train their members by themselves. Therefore, the meeting held in Velenje proved to be very useful as its aim was to improve the coordination of projects and the cooperation between the social democratic parties and foundations.

THE PES BALKAN CONFERENCE

Integrating Western Balkans in the EU. A progressive agenda for the people.

Date and venue : 16 May 2007, Belgrade, Serbia
Participant : Alma Balesic, Project Manager European Forum

Political context

2007 is a crucial year for the Western Balkan region. The countries face several important reforms and crucial deadlines set by the EU. European integration of the Western Balkan countries depends not only on the internal reforms but also on the support from the EU. At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, the PES reiterated its determination to support the European integration of these countries, stating that it is the only way to achieve regional stability, economic prosperity and democratic development and consolidation.

The PES organised a conference on the Balkans in Sofia in 2005 to which party officials and leaders of all socialist and social democratic parties in the region were invited. The conference, which was to be held annually, aimed at deepening and widening the cooperation between the sister-parties. The second meeting was held in Belgrade and organised by the PES and the Democratic Party (DS) in Serbia.

The conference focused on the EU-Balkans relations and aimed at developing an overhaul strategy for the integration of the Balkans. Europe needs a global approach for the issues faced by this region: relations with the EU; economic and social progress; democratic development and modern states.

Report

The opening speeches at the conference were held by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (PES President) and Boris Tadic (President of Serbia and Leader of DS). Rasmussen pointed out that integration of the Western Balkan countries remains an key word. The difficulties experienced by the countries in the region at the moment are similar to those Western Europe experienced after the Second World War. Therefore, the region can overcome those difficulties and Romania and Bulgaria are



examples of success stories according to Rasmussen. EU membership can become reality for all those countries that aspire membership. Rasmussen welcomed the new government and congratulated the Democratic Party (DS) for doing its utmost best to form a pro-European and pro-democratic government. There are good hopes and high expectations to conclude the SAA, but Belgrade needs to fully cooperate with the ICTY. According to Rasmussen, Boris Tadic will succeed in making this happen.

Boris Tadic welcomed Serbia's social democratic friends for being present in Belgrade and said to be proud that DS has been accepted as PES member. Tadic asked the parties to continue their support the development of a strong, secure, prosperous and democratic region. Serbia's fundamental interest is to become EU's member state and the country faces several challenges. General Mladic needs to be extradited to The Hague and Kosovo's future status can only be decided upon by mutual consent, ensuring Serbia's sovereignty and creating a multi-viable Kosovo. However, Serbia will never give up on Europe.

Vuk Jeremic, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and DP member, also addressed the participants. He stated that the responsibility of the new government is to produce more democracy and less history. More democracy will inevitably lead to more prosperity. All three coalition partners are committed to defreeze the relation with the EU and to continue the negotiations on a SAA. The negotiations were stopped due to a lack of cooperation between Serbia and the ICTY. Jeremic stated that this will be the first priority of the new government. He also stressed that Kosovo's final status can only be based on compromise between Belgrade and Pristina. Fostering employment and attracting foreign investment are the other key issue and focus points of the new government.

Radmila Sekerinska, leader of the SDSM, congratulated DS on the new government and their sustained effort to bring Serbia on the right track. She expressed her gratitude to Europe for offering Macedonia the candidate status. Also she pointed out that domestic politicians are responsible for delaying the process of European integration as they are not able to put forward the necessary reforms and meeting the conditions as set by the EC. Radical nationalism remains a problem in the region and these forces feed each other. Therefore, social democrats must be brave

and they have to take the difficult and unpopular decisions because it is at the end better for the future. In addition, regional cooperation needs to be strengthened and the social democrats should exchange experience and views because they can learn from each other.

Milorad Dodik, leader of the Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Prime Minister of Republika Srpska (Bosnia Herzegovina), stated that conditions set by the EU are not only to be fulfilled in order to move forward to the EU but are part of a natural process which aims at democratic development and prosperity. Moreover, all forces agree that Western Balkans should integrate in the EU. He stressed that it is often much easier to fulfill the economic conditions than the political ones, which are much complex.

Edi Rama, leader of the Socialist Party of Albania (SPA) and mayor of Tirana, explained that his presence in Belgrade looks like a dream as 10 years ago contacts between Belgrade and Tirana were highly limited. At the moment, it is uncertain what future will bring and this should not be underestimated. The politicians in Serbia need to face the issue of Kosovo with courage and look beyond it. The people and their politicians in the Western Balkans should not fear a region without borders. Rasmussen replied to Rama's speech saying that he is not the only dreamer.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conference was indeed concluded by the signing of the Stability Pact as proposed by the PES. The Pact calls for European integration and regional cooperation and modern social democratic parties. All parties signed the document which reflected very well the programme of the conference and its speeches. The participants agreed on the necessity to improve regional cooperation in order to overcome problems that exist across borders. The speakers discussed several fields which need better performance, including education, environment and energy sectors. The representatives of the PES clearly stated that they will support further integration of the region into the EU and offer their assistance to help their sister parties to contribute to their accomplishments.



POST-ELECTION MISSION TO ARMENIA

Date and venue : 30-31 May 2007, Jerevan, Armenia
Participants : Kirsten Meijer, Project manager European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity and Alfred Mozer Stichting, the Netherlands
Peter Schieder, Chair of the PES Working Group on Eastern European Neighbours, Austria, Miguel Angel Martinez, MEP, Vice-President of the PES Group in the EP, Spain
Dan Sorin Mihalache, MP/MEP, Romania
Martijn van Dam, MP, foreign affairs spokesperson, The Netherlands, Rachel Cowburn, International Secretary, United Kingdom, Yondec Polet, PES Political Adviser, Belgium, Martin Janata, Project manager Renner Institute, Austria, Susanna Lif, Project manager Olof Palme International Centre, Sweden, Sonja Lokar, Head of European Forum's CEE Network for Gender Issues, Slovenia

Political context

On 12 May parliamentary elections took place in Armenia. The elections were an important test for democracy and were expected to shed light on the country's commitment to political reform. Previous elections showed some serious flaws, ranging from irregularities in counting and ballot box stuffing during the 2003 parliamentary elections to fraud and massive detentions of opposition activist during the 2003 presidential election, in which incumbent President Robert Kocharian was re-elected. The government was formed by the Republican Party (RP), Orinats Yerkir and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). The international community disapproved the conduct of a constitutional referendum in late 2005, though the proposed amendments that sought to expand citizens' civil rights, and to transfer power from the executive branch to the legislative branch were welcomed. In May 2006 Country of Law moved into opposition, criticizing the government over the conduct of the referendum, the failure to fight corruption and the privatization policies, as well as the lack of interest in relations with the EU and NATO.

Before the 2007 elections analysts said that these elections differ from previous elections as expectations both within Armenia and abroad are far higher. Flawed elections would be a blow for the relationship between Brussels and Yerevan. This relationship was given a strong impetus when the Action Plan in the framework of the ENP was signed in November 2006.

Report

On 30 and 31 May the European Forum organised bilateral meetings in Yerevan to analyse the political situation after the parliamentary elections, and to explore the possibilities for partnerships. During the two days, the delegation had intensive talks with Armenian political parties, NGOs and think tanks :

- SI member party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) : mr Vahan Hovhannesyan, ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Bureau member and Deputy Speaker of the outgoing National Assembly Mr. Armen Rustamyan, Chairman ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Supreme Council of Armenia; Mr Giro Manoyan, ARF International Secretary, Ms Maria Titizian, leader of the ARF women organisation
- the Republican Party : Mr. Davit Harutyunyan, Minister of Justice
- Mr. Varten Oskanian, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- the Country of the rule of Law Party : Mr. Artur Baghdasarian, Leader
- the Heritage Party : Mr. Raffi K. Hovannisian, Leader, also President and Founder of ACNIS
- the People's Party of Armenia : Mr. Stepan Demirchian, Leader.

The delegation also had meetings with :

- Raul de Luzenberger and Sylvie Bavelaar, EC delegation to Armenia
- Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of OSCE Office and Carl Hofstra Political-Military Officer OSCE
- Naira Gevorgyan, Head of office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)
- Andrew Bennett, Senior Program Manager of the National Democratic Institute
- Gor Hakobyan, President, and Arpineh Galfayan, Vice-President of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR)
- Boris Navasardian, President of the Yerevan Press Club



- Levon Zourabian and Claire Delessard, Analysts of the International Crisis Group
- Gayane Sarksian, Forum for the 21st Century Leaders.

Parliamentary elections 2007

In contrast to the pre-election period and the elections of 2003, the elections of 12 May 2007 have, according to International Election Observation Mission (OSCE, PACE and the EP), largely met the international standards. Tone Tinggaard, vice-president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, stated “the conduct of the voting was assessed positively in the vast majority of the polling stations observed”. Although the positive evaluation of the elections, the Mission concluded that still some issues remain unaddressed and that some irregularities took place. The report of the Mission states that their observers claimed to have seen “deliberate falsifications of results” and other types of electoral fraud. The overall conclusion of Leo Platvoet, head of a delegation of observers from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, was positive: “It’s not black and it’s not white, but I think it’s more white than black.” However, immediately after the elections, opposition parties protested against the results of the elections. They stated that the elections were fraudulent and that the government manipulated the results. In reaction to the allegations, president Robert Kocharian promised to thoroughly investigate the possible forms of fraud during the 12 May elections.

During our visit, NGO’s and opposition parties accused the Republican Party in particular of fraud and lack of possibilities to campaign freely. Opposition parties were not allowed to place billboards in Yerevan. Administrative resources were used for the campaign of the Republican Party, which was generally not visible as a political party campaign.

Newspapers and television stations are owned by the state or businessmen who also have strong ties with the government. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation also has its own television station, which is by the Yerevan Press Club regarded to be the most independent of the country. Reportedly, during the campaign opposition parties could only buy airtime – outside primetime hours – for 400\$ a minute (very expensive for Armenian standards), while governing parties had easy access to primetime broadcasting. Opposition figure Raffi Hovannisian accused

the OSCE of double standards: “OSCE countries would never accept such elections in their own countries”.

Party	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
Republican Party of Armenia (RP)	457,032	32,82	64	+33
Prosperous Armenia (PA)*	204,443	14,68	24	+24
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)	177,192	12,72	16	+5
Rule of Law (OY)	95,256	6,84	9	-10
Heritage*	80,890	5,81	6	+6
United Labour Party (ULP)	59,309	4,26	0	-6
National Unity (NU)	49,863	3,58	0	-9
New Times	47,018	3,38	0	0
Others	204,732	15,91	12	-43
Total	1,375,733	100	131	0

* = new party in elections 2007

The elections brought an enormous victory to the biggest ruling party, the Republican Party of Armenia. The party doubled its number of seats by winning 64 out of the 131 seats in parliament. The other party of the ruling coalition, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) won 5 seats.

A second remarkable outcome of the elections is the fact that two new parties (Prosperous Armenia and Heritage) entered parliament (see below).

Political landscape in Armenia

Members of parliament enjoy the privilege of immunity. During our visit, the minister of Justice (Republican Party) said this is used to protect the property of the members of parliament. Also others mentioned the problem of “redistribution of property”: parties and MP’s loose property and financial support once they fail to enter parliament. As a result, parties cease to exist. It is expected this will happen with for example the People’s Party, which was years seen as an important opposition party. Political parties are created based on economic power, rather than on political ideology.



The Republican Party (RP) is the most important party in Armenia. Party leader Serzh Sargsyan is also Prime Minister. The party is in governance since 1998. It describes itself as a neo-conservative party. The party won the 2007 elections and could form a government on its own. According to the Minister of Justice, the party won because of the economic growth, the importance of individuals in the party, the active campaign, and the lack of consolidation of the opposition.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) used to be the second party in Armenia. They have been in government past years together with the Republican Party. As a result of the success of the new Prosperous Party, the ARF is now the third party in parliament. During our visit, the ARF was often described as the most mature party in Armenia. The party is strongly supported by the Diaspora. The symbol of the party stands for the background of the party (feather = intellectuals, sword = defence of the home country, spade = farmers). The party programme has some socialist elements combined with a strong nationalist agenda. People we met described the ARF as “the most nationalist, militant party in Armenia”. According to the party leadership the party played an important role in defending the Karabakh people. Like most Armenians, the party wants Turkey to recognise the genocide, followed by compensation (monuments, land etc). They said they are in favour of a solution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh with peaceful means.

The party leadership told us the most important issue is to make sure that the 2005 constitutional amendments are implemented. The bulk of the amendments aimed at imposing a more strict separation of powers between the judicial, executive and legislative branches. One of the measures would be that the President loses its power to dissolve the parliament. Also anti-corruption, like all parties we met, is high on their political agenda.

ARF is a member of the Socialist International and would like to strengthen ties with European political parties and foundations. The party leadership expressed their wish to improve their reputation, to train young people in the party and to strengthen the Armenian lobby in the EU.

A new rising star in Armenian politics is Prosperous Armenia, which became instantly the second party in parliament with 24 seats. The party was formed in January 2006 by millionaire businessman Gagik Tsarukian,

who is a close associate of the President. Its goal is rather to support the president specifically than the ruling coalition in general. The future of the party depends therefore largely on the future of President Kocharian.

The second new party in parliament is the Heritage party (“Zharangutiun”) of former foreign minister Raffi Hovannisian. Hovannisian, who lived in the US, also leads a think tank. The popular Hovannisian is seen as the new leading figure of the opposition bloc and, was during our visit by many described as the only politician in Armenia with clean hands. He described his own party as a national, liberal party with a lot of social democratic elements. Main issues: European integration, rule of law and national sovereignty. We were the first political family to meet with the party, and he expressed his strong wish to keep in contact.

The Country of Law Party describes itself as a centre-rights party. They used to be part of the governing coalition. Last year they stepped out of the coalition out of dissatisfaction with the results in the area of democratization and fight against corruption, as well as a conflict over relations with NATO. The party lost half of the seats and has a difficult time since many businessmen stopped to support the party.

Apart from the Heritage party, all other opposition parties were blown away during last elections. Among them also the People’s Party led by led by Stepan Demirchian (son of the in 1999 murdered MP Demirchian). The People’s Party was the most important party in the Justice Bloc, which ceased to exist just before the 2007 elections. According to the party leader it is easy to buy votes because Armenia is such a poor country. The party did not gain any seats in the parliament, and participated in the protests against the results. The party explains the loss by the pressure and intimidation from the government, as well as the failure to unite the opposition. The party’s main issues are “fight against corruption, democracy and social issues”. Also they are in favour of direct elections of mayors. The party has contacts with the former communists in Sweden. Analysts described the party as “a party of the past”, meaning it is unlikely the party will continue to exist.



Armenia in the region

The relations of Armenia and Turkey have been troublesome for ages. Between 1895 and 1920, the Armenian population in Turkey allegedly lost 1.5 million people through violence and starvation. In 1915 the violence reached its peak when thousands of Armenians were massacred. Turkey closed its borders with Armenia in 1993 during the violent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to show its solidarity to Azerbaijan. The country refuses to lift the blockade, demanding that Armenia stops its international effort to get the Ottoman Turkish genocide recognised. There are no diplomatic relations with Turkey. Turkey is still seen as the main threat to Armenia. Armenia has a military pact with Russia to protect the country. NATO is not very popular, because of the Turkish membership of this alliance.

One of the most important and long-lasting issues that influence the political situation in Armenia has been the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-populated enclave in Azerbaijan, was transferred to Azeri control in 1923. A cease-fire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh in July 1994, but Armenian military forces continue to occupy Nagorno-Karabakh and a significant portion of the southwestern part of Azerbaijan. The international negotiations conducted in the framework of the OSCE/Minsk Group continue, but have so far failed to bring a peace agreement. Many politicians in Armenia, among them the President, have a Karabakh background. People from Nagorno-Karabakh have the image of being heroes. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia is in favour of self-determination through a referendum.

Because of Armenia's turbulent history and economic problems, there are many people that left the country. Today there are more Armenians living abroad (about 4 million) than in Armenia (about 3 million). The Armenian Diaspora has a mayor political and economic influence because of the flow of remittances. The largest Armenian communities exist in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Russia, and the United States.

EU-Armenia relations

Besides the relations with Turkey and the conflict with Azerbaijan, European integration is considered to be a foreign policy priority. Armenia is a member of the Council of Europe and OSCE. Generally, opposition parties have a very pro-European standing, while the govern-

ing parties have a more balanced view, also propagating good relations with Russia. Relations between the EU and Armenia are based on a PAC, which provides a framework for the EU to support democratisation and market liberalisation of the country. In June 2004, Armenia was included in the ENP. This policy was designed to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and to offer them the chance to participate in various EU activities, through greater political, security, economic and cultural co-operation. On 14 November 2006, the EU signed the ENP action plan for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. According to the EC delegation in Armenia "there is some leverage, but not as much as in other countries". More important than the EU is the influence of the United States. Because of the strong Armenian lobby in the US, they are very present and visible (for example, the US has an embassy in Armenia).

Conclusions and recommendations

The election results are remarkable and show a strengthening of the governing parties, while all but one opposition parties more or less disappeared from the political scene. Added to this are the many stories we heard about election fraud, lack of freedom during the campaign, and the links between business and politics, one can hardly speak of a functioning democracy.

Despite the steps forward, one can question the largely positive message of the OSCE after the elections, which is now widely used by the governing parties to show almost everything is all right with Armenian democracy. Delegation leader Peter Schieder declared after our visit: "The last general Elections, held on 12th May 2007, witnessed improvements in several regards but did not fully comply with European standards for democratic elections. We firmly condemn the violations committed including: intimidation, prevention of media access for the opposition, buying of votes and fraud". Democratisation, the fight against corruption and poverty, and resolution of the conflicts with Turkey and Azerbaijan are crucial. Stronger European influence and contacts with democratic oriented forces in Armenia can support positive developments in that regard.



FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

In cooperation with : Olof Palme International Center, FES (Sarajevo Office)

Date and venue : 23 June 2007, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina

Guest speakers : Besima Boric (SDP); Arta Dade (Socialist Party of Albania); Michael Docherty (Head Democratic Stabilisation and Social Development Sector, EC Delegation.); Gordana Dukic (SNSD); Anita Gradin (former EC Immigration, Home Affairs and Justice, Sweden); Brankica Grupkovic (Committee for human rights and civil society DS Serbia); Olga de Haan (Board member AMS); Selma Hadzihalilovic (STAR Network of World Learning, Bosnia and Herzegovina); Lovorka Marinovic (Head International Organisation for Migration, Zagreb Office Croatia); Dalibor Prevedar (SDP-H); Ljiljana Raicevic (Shelter for Women and Children, Montenegro); Samir Rizvo (State Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Immigration, Bosnia and Herzegovina); Patsy Sörensen (President of Payoke, Belgium); Hans Spekman (MP, PvdA, The Netherlands); Ivona Zakoska (Project Assistant / Counter Trafficking Focal Point, International Organisation for Migration, Skopje Office Macedonia)

Political context

Human Trafficking is a global phenomenon, related to poverty and corruption, facing constant changes and the need to adapt the strategies to fight trafficking in human beings. United Nations reports show that Western Balkan countries play a key role as countries of origin, transit and destination whereas the EU is the main destination of many victims. The victims trafficked are mainly reported to be women and girls, primarily for sexual exploitation. Countries in the Western Balkans do have

legal frameworks to fight trafficking, but have great difficulties to tackle the root causes of the problem. Social democrats are a key political factor, both in the Western Balkans as in the EU and should take the lead in fighting the injustice of human trafficking. In 2007, the European Forum initiated a conference to discuss the difficulties to successfully fight human exploitation. The meeting gathered experts on the issue of human trafficking, representatives of local non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and representatives of political parties. The participating parties discussed the current policies regarding human trafficking in the region. Representatives of various NGO's and (social) democratic parties in the region were offered the opportunity to meet for the first time and to exchange views related to the issue and the necessary efforts to improve the strategy.

Report

The conference was held in Sarajevo and welcomed 35 participants. (social) democratic parties from the region were represented at the event and major NGO's involved in the field of human trafficking took part as well. The introduction speeches were prepared by Anita Gradin, Lovorka Marinovic and Samir Rizvo.

Anita Gradin, shared her views and experiences related to human trafficking as former EU Commissioner of Home and Justice Affairs. Since the fall of the Berlin wall a lot of girls have been traded from Eastern to Western Europe. In 1995 the EU put human trafficking on the agenda regarding it as slave trade. In 1996 the EU organised its first congress on human trafficking, in 2002 a declaration was signed where for the first time the demand side was mentioned. In 2005 a convention was imposed that said there will be an action plan for all the 27 countries. The Daphne- programme, that combats violence against children, young people and women imposed in 1997, is also very important. When the program started 13 million Euro was available, in the years the budget increased and now the program entered its third phase and 116 million Euro is available. According to the United Nations, human trafficking is the third largest trading business, just after drugs and weapons. International and multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to fight this crime.



The second speaker, Lovorka Marinovic, Head of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) office in Zagreb, spoke about the situation in the Western Balkan region. She said that “when the Berlin wall fell, the bricks fell on the women.” Countries in South Eastern Europe are transit countries, but have come to be also countries of origin and destination.

At the end of the nineties new trafficking routes occurred replacing traditional ones, such as for example from Hungary to Croatia. Other changing patterns are that there is more internal trafficking and trafficking from less usual countries such as China and Iran. Ways of recruitment also changed; the job offering method is replaced by the loverboy method and women are used as recruiters. New phenomena are the increase of sex-tourism, wedding arrangements, and prostitutes getting pregnant. Also the amount of traded children and men has increased. Because there exists no real data, it is difficult to analyse these changes. The declaration on the fight against trafficking in human beings of the Council of Europe (CoE) was ratified by Croatia recently and the overall conclusion may be that international cooperation is very important and necessary.

Samir Rizvo, State Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Immigration in Bosnia and Herzegovina spoke about the current situation in the country. At the end of the nineties there was a lot of trafficking from Eastern Europe to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Trafficking was not made very difficult due to lack of a legislative framework and international cooperation, capacity problems and no public awareness. In 2001 the first action plan was introduced to attack these problems. In 2003 a criminal code that included human trafficking was imposed. To increase the capacity a state coordinator was appointed in 2003, a strike force against human trafficking was founded, and an immigration service introduced. Public awareness was obtained by information campaigns, safe houses and cooperation with NGO's. International cooperation was established through the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) center, founded to combat trans-border crime. Also bilateral agreements were made. All these measures resulted in each year an increasing number of investigations and convictions. A change is seen in the origin of the victims. The number of foreign victims decreased while the number of domestic victims increased. In combat-

ing human trafficking the international community is very important, but crucial is the role of NGO's as La Strada and Lara because they are the pioneers in fighting this problem.

After the opening speeches there was room for questions. Chris Sanger from the STAR network for world learning asked what the consequences of the EU enlargement were for human trafficking. Anita Gradin stated that these were positive. The enlargement led to better cooperation for example with Europol, which led to a better overview of the situation. Lovorka Marinovic argued that since the enlargement migration increased with 18 percent annually and therefore also trafficking increased. The first session discussed concrete details of the human trafficking industry in the EU and the steps that have been undertaken to fight this crime. Patsy Sørensen, founder and president of the Belgium NGO Payoke, stated that human trafficking is not a popular subject for politicians. Main reason is that most of the victims do not have voting rights.

From 1995 Belgium has a legal framework to combat human trafficking. But corruption and the amount of money made in the business makes the problem very difficult to tackle. Payoke has three specialised centres, where the girls that come in are not regarded as victims but as clients. They cooperate with police and justice, identification of the victims is very important for the police. Payoke also offers training seminars to Belgium peacekeeping forces that are sent to regions where illegal prostitution is a big problem. Overall Payoke focuses on practical issues. According to Sørensen, political will and international cooperation can add to the improving the strategy to fight this crime.

Hans Spekman, Member of Parliament in the Netherlands, started his speech with stating that we as social democrats can make a difference and should make a difference. He spoke about his experiences as alderman in Utrecht, a city where prostitution is legal. According to him we should approach the world in a realistic manner. Example is the street prostitution in Utrecht. A lot of women got sexual diseases and it was clear that something had to change. Denying or forbidding prostitution



solves nothing. It was decided to improve the social assistance and the working conditions of the prostitutes. This created more trust from the girls towards the social workers and the police. Building a relationship of trust with the prostitutes is an essential aspect of combating human trafficking according to Spekman. International cooperation is necessary because girls that are trafficked are afraid to go to the police as their families are most likely to be intimidated by the traffickers. Selma Hadzihalilovic, representing the STAR network of learning, agreed with Hans Spekman that building trust with the prostitutes is very important. She stated that more women should be active in local politics. With the Regional Anti Trafficking Mobilisation of the STAR Network she helps with the development of local communities. Their work is still in progress and they need more funds to realise their projects. Social organisations deny the problem and police stations have financial and practical troubles. Ljiljana Raicevic, president of Shelter for Women and Children in Montenegro, spoke about her experiences. The shelter is used for domestic and foreign victims. Protection of girls is very important because the police does not recognise the risks confronted by the victims. Many politicians talk about human trafficking but do not achieve much, because they never talk to victims. According to Ljiljana Raicevic, social democrats in Montenegro are already ten years in power but have not achieved any success in fighting human trafficking. Legalising prostitution would not solve anything in this region and she regrets the fact that the EU is putting pressure on accession states to legalise prostitution.

After these speeches there was room for questions and remarks, the representative of La Strada stated that authorities at different levels need to improve their cooperation. At the moment, the approach is too general. In the second session, country reports were presented. Arta Dade, international secretary of the Socialist Party of Albania (PS), after the opening of the borders in the nineties a lot of problems occurred. A lot of people were trafficked to Italy from Albania where they were forced into prostitution. Between 1992-95, there were no laws to combat this problem, and until 2001, there was no real human trafficking legislative.

Albania is a country of origin and transition. The anti corruption strategy resulted in more traffickers arrested, and economic development also plays down human trafficking. Arta Dade also stated that opening the negotiations about EU accession helps in the fight against criminality and human trafficking.

Brankica Grupkovic from the committee for human rights and civil society of the Democratic Party (DS) in Serbia introduced the situation in her country. According to her, cooperation is the key word. Serbia is a transit country and to a lesser extent a destination and origin country. In 2003 an agency for victim protection was established. New phenomena's are internal trafficking and children trafficking for forced begging, and forced marriage arrangements. Serbia signed the statement of the Council of Europe (CoE), but has not ratified it. Ivona Zakoska, Project Assistant at the Counter Trafficking Focal Point of the IOM office in Skopje, introduced the IOM's mission in Macedonia. Macedonia is a transition and destination, and more recently, also an origin country. Key point of the IOM is prevention through awareness raising. The IOM helps more foreign than domestic victims, but this difference has decreased in relation to the 2000 situation. The IOM office in Skopje tries to raise the awareness through nation wide campaigns, going to schools, and cooperating with local NGO's. They also assist in prosecution and protection. Although the IOM is active in Macedonia, there is still a lot that has to be done. Davor Vuletic, international secretary of the Social Democratic Party in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDP BiH), stated that this is the third conference he attends on this topic and that it is important to realise that we can not solve the problem in a short period of time.

Michael Docherty, Head of the Democratic Stabilisation and Social Development Sector at EC Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that the legislative to fight human trafficking exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but there is no money or people to make the legislative work. In the last ten years there have been 817 official victims of human trafficking, this is far below the real situation. The EC has started to train border police. In 2006 there was decided that there should be better protection for victims, but again funds were the problem. A new Action Plan for 2008-2011 was implanted, with as recommendation to appoint a minister of human rights. The only real solution is economic development, but the prospects for this do not look good.

A question is asked about the role of the EU in the solution of this problem. Michael Docherty said that the EU uses the prospect of EU acces-



sion as a way to put pressure on the government. But this method is not very strong because everyone knows accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU is not something of the near future. Money does not make any impression.

A representative of SDP BiH pointed out that the money should be used better. There are six shelters in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all of them built without government money. Michael Docherty says it is hard for the EU to transfer money directly to the NGO's, but they will transfer the money to regional governments. This only supports corruption so concluded is that human rights fund where NGO's can apply for funds is a good idea. But not only money is the problem, solutions have to come from inside the country.

Besima Boric, Member of Parliament of SDP BiH, introduced the third session as political parties representatives were asked to discuss the effort they should make to help the NGO's and to improve the policy in their countries regarding the fight against human trafficking. Boric stated that one fifth of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina lives under the poverty line, and education system is of low quality. The causes of human trafficking are therefore only growing. Corruption is a problem spread though the whole society. Police is protecting the traffickers instead the victims. It is the task of social democrats to put the problem high on the political agenda. NGO Lara stated that better cooperation with the political parties is necessary. Public opinion has to be used for political means. People need to be aware that the girls are victims. Arta Dade stated that more cross border cooperation is necessary. La Strada criticised the apathy of police and politics. For example there were advertisement in newspaper where girls are offered jobs abroad. These girls are later on trafficked abroad. Politicians did nothing to investigate who were behind these advertisements. Hans Spekman stated that we as social democrats should change this.

Conclusions and recommendations

Western Balkan countries are no longer transit countries only, but have become countries of origin and destination. Moreover, trafficking in human beings within the country's borders is increasingly taking place. Each country/ sister party in the region was represented in Sarajevo. Political parties were hardly involved in policymaking and therefore the

conference was welcomed by all parties in order to share information, experiences and views and to express the needs to improve cooperation between all parties. Representatives from local NGO's stated concrete requests to the relevant party representatives. For example, the NGO's should be financed directly, this to avoid corruption. The problem should be higher on the political agenda, especially on the one of social democrats. Cooperation between NGO's and political parties should be better. NGO's need to stay critical towards political parties without being afraid to loose the subsidies. It is very good to show to the citizens that social democrats are willing to establish a dialogue with the civil society and that social democrats should take the lead in fighting similar problems. Finally, several parties representatives promised to put the issue of human trafficking on the political agendas of their parties or local councils. The NGO representatives were grateful for being invited to the conference and the opportunity to express their views regarding the improvement of policies and closer cooperation between them and political parties.



THE MACEDONIAN ROAD TO EU ACCESSION: SETTING THE PRIORITIES

In cooperation with : Olof Palme International Center, FES (Skopje Office)

Date and venue : 28 September 2007, Skopje, Fyr of Macedonia

Guest speakers : Radmila Sekerinska, Party Leader SDSM; H. E. Simone Filippini, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Skopje; Ioan Mircea Pascu, Parliamentary Group of the PES, Vice Chairman Committee on Foreign Affairs (EP); Joan Pearce, First Counsellor EC Delegation to Macedonia; Malinka Jordanova Ristevska, State Counsellor at the Secretariat for European Affairs, Macedonia; Sonja Lokar, Gender Network, Social Democrats (SD), Slovenia; Marijan Nikolov, Center for Economic Analysis, Macedonia; Iso Rusi, Helsinki Comité, Macedonia; Vanco Uzunov, Professor of Economics, University of Skopje, Macedonia; Taulant Balla, Member of Parliament, Socialist Party of Albania (SPA); Zeljka Cvijanovic, International Affairs Committee, Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), Bosnia and Herzegovina; Vesna Marjanovic, DS, Serbia; Avni Mazrreku, PDK, Kosovo; Peter Kurecic, SDP-H, Croatia; Petr Wolf, Member of Parliament, CSSD, Czech Republic

Political context

In April 2001 a SAA was signed between the EU and Macedonia, providing the country a status of potential member of the EU. Macedonia was the first country of the Western Balkans to sign such an agreement. In March 2004 the country submitted an application for membership and was granted the candidate status in December 2005. Until now however no date has been set to start the accession talks. While the government expressed its hope to start accession talks in 2007, the EC is reluctant to mention dates. In a report on Macedonia's progress towards member-

ship that was presented on 8 November 2006, the EC states that Macedonia "has made further efforts to improve its ability to assume the obligations of membership." However, the report said, "the country still faces major challenges in implementation and effectively enforcing the legislation". The report called particularly for improving the independence and the efficiency of the judiciary. EU special envoy Erwan Fuere urged the government to run an extra mile and show a strong determination in continuing reforms.

Report

The conference, "The Macedonian Road to EU Accession: Setting the Priorities," was organised to discuss the process of European integration of Macedonia and the Western Balkan countries and to set the pre-accession priorities for the political agenda's of social democrats in Macedonia and the region. Representatives of the EC, the government of Macedonia and experts shared their views and experiences with representatives of social democrats in the region. Since the region was torn by war not so long time ago, and to avoid new divisions between winners and losers in the pre-accession process, it is important to go beyond the national borders and to set the democratic agenda together.

The opening speeches at the conference were prepared by Radmila Sekerinska, Party Leader of the SDSM, Ioan Marcea Pascu, member of the Parliamentary Group of the PES, Joan Pierce, representative of the EC Delegation to Macedonia and Simone Filippini, the Dutch Ambassador to Skopje. The speakers shared their views on Macedonia's accomplishments and challenges ahead on its road to EU integration and preparedness of the EU to absorb new members in the near future.

Radmila Sekerinska expressed her gratitude to the organisers and continued her speech on the lessons Macedonia has already learned and is about to learn regarding EU integration. According to her, an average Macedonian citizen would describe the road up till now as "curvy and bumpy" and the transition a long one. However, the majority of Macedonian citizens still are extremely positive about Macedonia's EU Accession. Sekerinska expressed dissatisfaction about the work of the



present government in her country, saying that the institutions do not cooperate well. Constructive dialogue in the parliament is absent. Moreover, judicial and administrative reform and fight against corruption need to become a priority on the political agenda in Macedonia. Although the EC has criticised the pace of reforms, often conditions are not clearly defined, reported and have become rigid and strict. Sekerinska agreed that politicians have not done their best and that domestic debate often results in a slow pace of reforms. Therefore, she argued negotiations on Macedonia's EU Accession should be initiated in order to have a strict supervision of the process.

Ioan Marcea Pascu stated that Macedonia will eventually become member of the EU. However, the current developments in the EU need to prepare its citizens for a new round of enlargement. Also, the EU institutions need to improve its functioning in order to absorb new members. Regarding the candidate country itself, popular support is fundamental. In addition, politicians need to recognise the fact that power politics cannot have positive outcomes and that consensual politics has to become part of the political scene in Macedonia. Pascu expressed his hope that in 2008 Macedonia will be invited to become a member state of NATO. As social democrats in the EP: "we follow the developments in Macedonia and hope to be helpful to our sister parties". Regional cooperation remains also a significant factor within the framework of European integration of the Western Balkan countries and our advise is to strengthen the cooperation in the region as much as possible.

The EC representative, Joan Pearce, referred to the Ohrid Framework agreement as the cornerstone of Macedonia's EU Accession. According to her, progress has been made in areas that include electoral, police and judicial reform, representation of minorities in public administration, simplification of business environment and fight against corruption. Pearce's main point of criticism focussed on the implementation of the new legislation and enforcement of reforms. She strongly criticised the politicians' attitude, saying that joining the EU means much more than passing an examination. Sustainability is necessary and in order to achieve this, politicians need to commit themselves and work hard.

Simone Filippini referred to the developments regarding enlargement (fatigue) in the EU member states. She pointed out at the great benefits

of the EU for its citizens and the fact that many of them take these as granted, mentioning the easy way to travel around as a result of free movement of people and the use of Euro. Regarding enlargement, however, the EU will need some time to absorb the new member states, institutionally wise but also the citizens need to accept further enlargement. Macedonia can contribute to this by improving the image of the country.

Macedonia in the EU

The first panel discussion referred to the political criteria for EU-membership. Malinka Jordanova Ristevska, State Counsellor at the Secretariat for European Affairs in Macedonia, stated that Macedonia has been a reliable partner of the EU for 15 years now. According to her, the government of Macedonia "maintained, sustained and delivered". Iso Rusi, President of the Helsinki Committee in Macedonia, said that it is not a normal thing if 90 percent of Macedonian citizens support the EU Accession of the country. The explanation to Macedonia's need to have an external force taking care of the country is a result of its history. For fifty years, policies were developed in Belgrade and now, Brussels should take over. Macedonia has neither capacity nor experience to have and run a state. Sonja Lokar of the Central and Eastern Network for Gender Network, focussed on the position of women in Macedonia's society. She named Macedonia a success story when it comes to women's issues. At the moment 30 percent of parliamentarians are women. Improvement of their rights and position in Macedonia's society remains necessary however. Women are the big losers of the transition period. Gained rights during the socialist regime in former Yugoslavia were dissolved for a great part as the EU considered them too expensive and economically not sustainable.

After the introductory speeches, a few comments were made by the participants. It was pointed out that the current functioning of the parliament needs to change. There is continuous disagreement between the parties in government and in opposition. As a result, the government is not able to proceed with new policies and reforms. A representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said that the government and the international community should keep in mind the



importance of local government. In a decentralised state, people are much more obvious of the changes that take place and they feel the consequences more directly and could for example demand corruption free governance. This would change the spirit in the country.

Sekerinska agreed that EU integration has been considered by the politicians in Macedonia as a technical procedure. Instead, the entire society should adopt EU standards and should stop treating European integration as foreign policy. Moreover, the root problems of corruption should be investigated. The Dutch Ambassador added that it is crucial for governments to explain their policy because proper communication is crucial to get the citizen's support.

Economy

The second part of the conference discussed the economic reforms related to EU integration. First speaker on this subject was Vanco Uzunov, Professor at the University of Skopje. He gave a general overview of the reforms in Macedonia and the economic prospect of the country. Uzunov said to consider economy the most important part of European integration. Unless the country finds economic interest in becoming EU member, it should not become one.

President of the Center of Economic Analysis in Skopje, Marjan Nikolov, was the second speaker on economic criteria. According to him, Macedonia's economy policy has been dependant for 14 year on the International Monetary Fund (IMF). There was no knowledge or political will with that level of credibility to offer as the one given from IMF. Economic analysis is relevant for economic policy. He referred to Central Plan Bureau (CPB), an independent economic policy bureau in the Netherlands. CPB compares economic policies of the political parties and government coalitions. The CPB explains to the voters the consequences of these policies. Political parties should realise that they should offer alternatives to the economic programmes and should include (independent) experts who will help develop economic programmes and policies of the party.

According to Nikola Gruewski, former Finance Minister of Macedonia, IMF has actually no model, but few goals which need to be reached, such as low inflation, export-import balance, high employment, high growing

rate. Privatisation of services (health, education, child care) is necessary because the old system is not economically viable. This is a problem, because before the transition to market economy, the state was responsible for the public services and the citizens are used to this system. According to Sekerinska, the World Bank required child care privatisation which made it impossible for a large group of people to bring their child(ren) to kindergarten. The left government voted against this reform. A blunt market system is not welcome. Mr. Pascu stressed that we need to have a right proportion of market influence. There is need for a state policy for child care, and private institutions can exist alongside. Social services, although privatised, are regulated by state policy. The former system is unsustainable; therefore the reform has to be done with caution and slowly, with data and new investment/approach in social system is an option.

Regional perspectives

Avni Mazrreku, Liaison Officer for the International Relations of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), presented as first speaker of the session on regional perspectives, the developments in Kosovo regarding European integration of the region. He stressed that recognition of Kosovo's independence is the only way to guarantee prosperity and stability of the Balkan. Vesna Marjanovic, member of parliament in Serbia, representing the Democratic Party (DS) said that the course of negotiations in Serbia is similar to those of the countries in the region. The country faces great challenges regarding judiciary reform, education reform, controlling mechanisms and the fight against corruption. The other big challenge is Kosovo's status. DS points out that the citizens of Serbia should not be punished for crimes committed by Slobodan Milosevic and declaring Kosovo's independence would strengthen the radical forces in the country. Deciding on the issue by consensus would mean a victory to all parties. Taulant Balla, member of parliament and the Socialist Party in Albania, focussed on the lack of dialogue between the political parties. Also he discussed the economic benefits of European integration of the countries and specifically the CARDS programme. Regional cooperation seems crucial to him as well, but free trade agreements do not mean nothing as there is no free movement of



people. Therefore, the EC needs to ask from the countries to establish a schengen area in the region. Kosovo has become a problem of the entire Europe, the EU and the Balkan and we should resolve the issue as soon as possible by giving Kosovo its independence.

Zeljka Cvijanovic, member of the SNSD (Bosnia & Herzegovina), addressed the developments regarding European integration in Bosnia. She stressed that politicians in Bosnia and its citizens all aspire EU membership. At the moment, negotiations on the SAA have been concluded. However, without agreeing on the police reform, SAA will not be signed. Petar Kurecic (SDP-H, addressed the developments in Croatia. Croatia has been involved in membership negotiation talks for two years now. The current government is doing well and negotiations proceed as planned. New laws are being introduced but their implementation is considerably more problematic. Corruption remains a big problem in the country. Final remarks were said by Petr Wolf, Member of Parliament of the Czech Social Democrats, and Marcea Pascu. The first speakers said that the Nice Treaty has exhausted its capacity to absorb new members. Therefore, a new treaty needs to be established in order to proceed with enlargement of the Union. In addition, the EU politicians have to take on the responsibility to work on the enlargement fatigue. The outlook regarding European integration of the Western Balkans is positive as the region is geo-strategically significant to the EU and Western Balkans is already “part of the West”. How fast the region will become part of the EU depends on the acceding countries themselves.

Conclusions and recommendations

The slow pace of reforms and the weak implementation of the adopted laws have resulted in the slow integration process of Macedonia into the EU. It was repeatedly mentioned that the politicians and the people need to realise that they are responsible for the pace according to which Macedonia will enter the EU. European integration is not only a technical matter and it is not an examination. The people and the politicians need to live the European integration as the road remains the goal of EU-membership at the moment. Brussels will not take over running the state and political leaders in Macedonia need to realise this. Sustainable efforts are needed to improve the situation in the country. In order to fight corruption and to improve Macedonia’s economic development, politicians need to work more serious and establish a proper dialogue

instead of opposing each other.

Sekerinska very much welcomed the support from the PES and the Socialist Group in the EP to SDSM and the country’s European integration. She agreed that cooperation between social democrats in the region needs to become stronger and that they should make use of each other’s experiences and knowledge. In addition, Sekerinska agreed to the critique expressed by the speakers on the sustainability of effort, however, she pointed out that deadlines have proven positive for the developments in the country and therefore a date for the start of the negotiation talks needs to be mentioned.

The conference gathered approximately 50 participants. The press conference was covered by several national media. It announced the PES support to Macedonia’s social democrats and the country’s European integration.



ENP AT WORK & THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN MOROCCO

In cooperation with : Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Rabat Office
Date and venue : 26 and 27 October, Rabat, Morocco
Guest speakers : Hajo Lanz, Director FES office; Mr. Adghoghu, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Jérôme Cassiers, Head of section EC Delegation; Mark Hendrick, MP British Labour Party; Leila Rhiwi, feminist activist, Morocco; Habib Belouch, Director of the Center for Information and Training on Human Rights; Abdellah Saaf, former Minister of Education; Alain Chenal, Jean-Jaurès Foundation/ French Socialist Party; André Gerrits, AMS & University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Lahcen Haddad, University Professor at Mohamed V University in Rabat; George Vella, Party of European Socialist (PES) Presidency, Malta; Gérard Latulippe, National Democratic Institute, Rabat; Pascalina Napoletano, Vice-President of the Socialist Group in the EP, Italy; Mehdi Lahlou, Party Socialiste Unifié (PSU); Hassan Boukantahar, Socialist Union of People's Forces (USFP); Mr. Hachimi, Democratic Labour Federation.

Political context

The parliamentary elections of September 2007 were the most democratic and orderly ran elections in the history of Morocco, analysts stated afterwards. The government and the parties had put much effort in the election campaign in order to make the Moroccan electorate enthusiastic for the coming elections. However, the turnout of only 37% on the election day was a huge disappointment. During the 1990s and since King Mohamed VI came to power, following his father's death in 1999, the democratic perspectives for the future of the Kingdom of Morocco improved. Already, gradual political reforms in the 1990s resulted in the establishment of a bicameral legislature in 1997. Parliamentary elections were held for the second time in September 2002. The elections of 2007

could be seen, despite the low turnout, as a new step towards full democracy now the leader of the biggest party in parliament, Abbas El Fassi of the Istiqlal-party, has been appointed by the King as Prime Minister of the new government. Morocco however still has a number of human rights' issues to resolve, and the international border issue with the Polisario Front over the territory of Western Sahara remains unsettled. Since the accession of Spain to the European Economic Community (now EU) in 1986, Morocco is one of the neighbours of the EU. To strengthen the relationship with these neighbours, the EU signed the Association Agreement with Morocco in 1996 and has developed (since March 2003) the ENP, in which Morocco participates.

The European Forum has been organising Wider Europe conferences in Ukraine in 2003, in Moldova in 2004, in Georgia in 2005 and in Russia in 2006. This is the first conference to focus on the Southern Dimension of the ENP.

Report

The European Forum organised this two-day conference in co-operation with the FES in Rabat in order to:

- Discuss the findings of the latest results of the ENP Action Plan
- Look for windows of opportunity to further deepen the relationship between the EU and Morocco and to solve shared problems
- Strengthen contacts between social democratic parties from the EU and parties with leftist and socialist or social democratic platforms in Morocco
- Assess the political situation in Morocco, with special attention for the results of the elections, and the development of democracy & social democracy.

European Neighbourhood Policy

The first day the ENP was the central topic. The conference was opened by Hajo Lanz, Director of the FES office in Rabat and chair of the day. Then Mr. Adghoghu of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the floor. He underlined the importance of building strong relations between his country and the EU. He explained the progress that had been made since the first agreement was signed in 2000. As a result,



investments increased, the infrastructure was modernised and progress was made in the field of human rights and security. In the future he would like to focus on promoting trade in agricultural products, increasing EU investments in Morocco and co-operation on migration issues. The Moroccan government wants to go beyond the Action plans by getting better access to European markets, better mobility and more parliamentary co-operation. Mark Hendrick, member of parliament for the British Labour Party said that mayor challenges lay ahead in the field of security and migration. In order to address these issues effectively we must look at the root causes, which are poverty, underdevelopment and socio-economic unrest. Building a Fortress Europe is not the answer to these problems. On the contrary, the best way is to develop open relationships, like in the framework of the ENP. By making an assessment of the functioning of the ENP Mark Hendrick showed progress is being made, especially in the democratic process, social sphere, co-operation on migration matters and terrorism, economic and energy policies. However, improvement is still needed in the area of judicial reforms, poverty reduction, fighting illiteracy, diversification of the Moroccan economy and further democratic reforms. Mark Hendrick concluded with a quote of Mr. Sarkozy who stated the same week: "The future of Europe lies in the South". The ENP at work was further assessed by Jérôme Cassiers of the EC Delegation to Morocco. He explained that Morocco is the keenest country in the region. The EC is strengthening its relations with the civil society in order to see how to update the Action Plan. Assistance is given to a wide range of sectors. The EC also developed a national strategy human rights action plan. These programmes are run by the Moroccan government. The coming years the focus will be on supporting the social sector: education and health.

Gender

The second block in the morning focused on the role of women in Moroccan society. Well known feminist Leila Rhiwi delivered a key-note speech. She spoke of the improvements of the position of women in Moroccan society as a result of the lobby of women movements, but moreover as a result of the daily struggle of individual women all over the country. Morocco witnessed the entrance of women on the labour market, new legislation on sexual harassment and discrimination, the family code and campaigns against violence against women. However it remains a mayor challenge to actually implement these new laws. In

addition, conservatism is on the rise, especially amongst younger Moroccans. Political participation of women is under pressure. Whilst in the previous parliament there were 35 women, they are only 34 in the newly elected Parliament.

In the discussion that followed Leila Rhiwi explained that women movements encounter more and more hindrances in political parties. The women movements decided they have other priorities, mostly in the social field, advocacy and research. The main focus in the future will be: 1) lobbying in order to influence public opinion, 2) creating alliances with other organisations, 3) information, education, and communication, 4) grassroots activities in order to show credibility, 4) mobilising the women. Especially the observation that it is the younger generation making up the more conservative parts of society did raise more questions. Leila Rhiwi said this is a result of the lack of understanding of democratic principles and absence of a political culture.

Security

After the lunch break the conference focused on the state of democracy and human rights in Morocco. Mr. Habib Belkouch, Director of the Center for Information and Training on Human Rights (CEDHD) in Morocco, gave an overview of developments. The main accomplishments are the adoption of the family code and the installment of a truth commission. He explained that democratisation started in the 1970s by the emergence of a civil society. The 1990s democratisation gained momentum by several reforms in the legislative field and the reform of the penal code. The king took a role as reformist. 300 people who used to be political prisoners were reintegrated into the labourmarket and were granted compensation. After 9/11 and the Casablanca bombings new human rights violations in Morocco took place as about 2000 people were arrested and reports of torture came out. Another problem noticed by Mr. Belkouch is the lack of freedom of press. New newspapers that made attempts to cross "the red lines" were punished. Abdallah Saaf, former Minister of Education, continued by presenting the latest developments in the Moroccan political scene. He stated that last elections differed radically from previous ones, but concluded that a lot



needs to be done. Especially the personalised political system in which is operated based on loyalties is a hindrance for further democratisation according to Mr. Saaf. He described Morocco as a half democracy.

Alain Chénal representing the Parti Socialiste and the Fondation Jean-Jaures from France underlined the importance of universal and socialist values such as respect for life and diversity of cultures. In this respect he described the installation of the truth commission as a mayor and unique event. According to Mr. Chénal democratisation is always risky and security and safety challenges lay ahead. Therefore attention should be paid to poverty reduction, the strengthening of the rule of law, and cherishing cultural diversity. Chénal further underlined the importance of regional co-operation in the Maghreb. He concluded by saying that we should fight the impression of a battle of the West against the Muslim world because this could seriously harm the work of democracy assisting organisations. André Gerrits of the University of Amsterdam and chairman of the AMS, concluded with a speech on the role of the international environment in democracy promotion. After summing up some political and moral dilemma's encountered in the work of democracy promotion, he stated that the easy part is over and that there is a growing resistance against western democracy promotion. In Gerrits view Morocco is a special case, but not unique. The monarch is a reformist, but in the end he will also be the biggest barrier. André Gerrits concluded the day with questions for further debate on the next day: What is democracy Moroccan style, how does the type of democracy of the EU relates to Moroccan society and what is the long term perspective, what type of political system would be best for Morocco and how can the reform process become less fragile?

Social democracy in Morocco

The second day focused on the development of (social) democracy in Morocco. Lahcen Haddad, University Professor at Mohamed V University in Rabat gave an introduction to the political party landscape. He presented all the reforms that have taken place and briefly described the main political parties, which are the Independence Party (Hizb al-Istiqlal/Parti d'Independence), the Justice and Development Party (Parti de la Justice et du Développement - PJD), People's Movement (Mouvement Populaire - MP), the National Rally of Independents (Rassemblement National des Indépendents - RNI), and the Socialist Union of People's

Forces (Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires - USFP). The election results show that the parties were very close to each other. The turnout was with 37% the lowest ever. Haddad explained this by the failure of the parties to deliver, the lack of differences between parties, and a general dissatisfaction over the lack of democracy in Morocco. The USFP was the biggest loser in the latest elections, while the PJD moved up although they lost votes. Istiqlal won the elections. Generally, a shift to the right can be observed in Morocco. Pasqualina Napoletano, Vice-President of the Socialist Group in the EP, pledged for more attention for Morocco and the Maghreb region in the EU and said that we have to "do the same for the South as we have been doing for the East". She however disagreed with the proposal of President Sarkozy to form a Mediterranean Union. Instead, strengthened co-operation with the South should happen within existing EU frameworks. George Vella, PES Presidency member responsible for Euromed region, highlighted the work of the PES in the region. He stressed the importance of meetings like these in order to join progressive forces. He praised the achievements Morocco made in the field of democracy and human rights and mentioned the areas in which still a lot of work needs to be done (low turnout, torture, corruption, lack of freedom of broadcasting, domestic violence against women, poverty, access to healthcare and education, illiteracy and child labour).

Gérard Latulippe, resident director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Rabat, explained the work of NDI in Morocco. Polls and low turnout show the dissatisfaction of the people with political parties. He said it is possible to blame the parties, but we should not forget that there are structural problems (the electoral system, the short campaigning period and the lack of freedom of press) that put parties in a difficult position. Hajo Lanz, resident director of the FES in Rabat, explained that the work with political parties is difficult. He does not see that political parties in today's Morocco build democracy. Therefore, the FES focuses on support to civil society. The projects of the FES in Morocco focus on human rights organisations, trade unions and women organisations.

In the discussion that followed Lanz explained that it is possible to be active freely, though some topics are sensitive and questions can be asked



by the authorities. This happens sometimes when speaking about the monarchy, religion and the territorial integrity of Morocco. Latulippe disagreed with Lanz about the role of political parties, he does see that many of them want reforms. Lanz replied that there are courageous individuals in the parties, but that the parties are empty shells.

Hassan Boukanthar, Socialist Union of People's Forces (USFP), explained that ever since the 70s resistances in the party existed. The party has limited possibilities to improve the quality of life of people, because the system is dominated by the monarchy and because the party never has a majority. It was clear Boukanthar was not satisfied with last elections. He said the divisions in the left are hard to understand for people. He called for unification and reforms in the USFP. A party commission will research and come up with proposals. Mehdi Lahlou, international secretary of the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) said that the parties of power failed to deliver, but also being in opposition is difficult. The PSU wants to have a parliamentary monarchy with separation of powers and a separation between religion and politics. They want more attention for inequality, education and healthcare and distribution of water. Also regional co-operation and maintaining Morocco's territorial integrity are important PSU issues. The party-programme is based on social democratic principles. Mr. Hachimi, international secretary of the Democratic Labour Federation (Fédération Démocratique du Travail - FDT, a trade union close to the USFP, pledged for constitutional reforms. He said that the programmes of previous governments did not meet the demands of the people.

Conclusions and recommendations

Political parties in Morocco have limited room to act. The monarchy and the electoral system are not very favourable for political parties and the population has lost trust in politics. In this difficult climate social democratic parties in Morocco try to make a contribution to the improvement of the lives of people. This is a hard job and it is time European social democrats strengthen their engagement in Morocco and the region.

The Southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood is working, but could be more intensely used to build bridges and co-operation between the EU and Morocco. The EU has been very much focused on the Eastern dimension of the ENP. Now it is time to shift attention. It is not necessary to seek for new constructions, like the proposed

Mediterranean Union of Sarkozy. Sufficient frameworks exist. Important topics are immigration and security. However, it is crucial co-operation goes beyond these hot topics, in order to address the root causes, which are of socio-economic nature. The two-day conference was appreciated a lot by all participants. It offered an excellent opportunity to meet and to renew old contacts or to build new ones. Suggestions were made to organise follow up conferences on the same topic, but in other countries part of the Southern dimension of the ENP. In 2008 the European Forum plans to organise a similar conference in Jordan.



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT POLICY: BETWEEN POWER POLITICS AND ALTERNATIVE POWER SOURCES

In cooperation with : Olof Palme International Center, FES (Kyiv Office)

Date and venue : 1 December 2007, Kyiv, Ukraine

Guest speakers : Stefan Chrobot, Head FES office in Kyiv; Libor Roucek, MEP Socialist Group, Romania; Ian Boag, Head of EC Delegation to Ukraine; Grzegorz Gromadzki, Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland; Sergei Kondratiev, Institute of Energy and Finances, Russian Federation; Leonid Zaiko, Sapegi Foundation, Belarus; Vitaliy Shybko, International Secretary Socialist Party of Ukraine; Saleddin Allahverdiev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan; Mikhail Kuznetsov, Deputy Chairman, Social Democratic Union, Russian Federation; Andriy Konechikov, Chief Editor, "Green Energy" Magazine, Ukraine; Yuriy Scherbak, Director, Center of Global and Regional Studies, Ukraine; Maryna Luzhykova, President, Regional Strategic Studies Foundation, Ukraine; Jamie Reed, MP Labour Party, United Kingdom; Nikolaj Statkevich, leader of the Narodnaya Hramada, Belarus

Political context

The conference focused on two interlinked challenges for Europe: energy security and climate change. The PES resolution of December 2006 stated that it is high time to commit to ambitious targets regarding energy and climate, since high energy prices and the evident consequences of the changing climate underline the urgency of a new energy strategy for Europe and the planet. This conference aimed to facilitate setting the social democratic energy and climate agenda by:

- increasing awareness on the importance of energy and environment
- assessing the impact of power politics on energy relations and finding alternative power sources
- identifying the main challenges and possible solutions for shaping environmental friendly societies with secure energy supplies
- creating synergies and strengthened international cooperation by bringing together social democrats from the EU and neighbourhood countries

Energy security is a important issue in Ukraine. Russia sends some 80 % of its gas exports to Europe via Ukraine, while Ukraine depends on Russia for more than one-third of its gas needs. Initially Ukraine received its gas for a heavily subsidised \$50 per 1,000 cubic metres, but in March 2005 the Russian gas company Gazprom announced its intentions to increase the gas prizes to market rates of \$230 per 1,000 cubic metres. Ukraine objected and in return demanded higher transit fees for Russia's gas exports to Europe. The countries were unable to come to an agreement and on 1 January 2006 Gazprom cut all gas exports to Ukraine to pressure the negotiations. After great media interest and political discussion, the EU and the U.S. stepped in and helped to reach a compromise. On 4 January, Gazprom continued the gas supply to Ukraine. An accord was signed on 11 January, agreeing to raise gas prizes to \$95 per 1,000 cubic metres, and also raising the fees for transportation of gas through Ukrainian territory for the next six months.

These developments made the EU aware of its energy security problem and its dependency on Russia. Therefore it is strengthening its ties with countries in Central Asia, the Middle East and in its neighbourhood that have energy resources. Moreover, in order to make energy supplies form these countries more feasible the Nabucco pipeline project was initiated. This pipeline will be connected with the Tabriz-Erzurum pipeline, the South Caucasus Pipeline and the planned Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline. Recent reports and natural disasters have shown that climate change is more and more becoming a pressing problem that requires worldwide solutions. The solutions that are proposed differ from country to country, from biomass to nuclear energy. In order to



tackle the problem of climate change we need to find alternative energy sources which do not create new problems and are applicable in the long term.

Report

During the morning session of the conference energy and power politics were the central topics. The main question was: “How to achieve secure energy supplies at predictable and affordable prices?”. The conference was opened by Ms. Kirsten Meijer, senior project manager of the European Forum and chair of the morning session. Then Dr. Stefan Chrobot, Director of the FES in Ukraine who was chair of the afternoon session, stated his opening comment.

First Mr. Libor Rouček, Member of the EP for the PES, took the floor. According to him there are several topics that are important to Ukraine and the EU. The first one is the rising oil and gas prices; Ukraine and the EU are too dependent on others for their energy needs. The second topic is global warming and climate change. This topic is intertwined with the energy discussion. He also stated that there is no magic formula, or policy or one dimension solution for this issue. During the EU summit in March it became evident that not enough attention is being paid to energy saving and that there is a huge potential of resources, like water, wind, solar and biomass energy that can be used to deal with this issue. The goal was set in March to save up to 20 percent of energy use in 2020. On nuclear energy there is no agreement within the EU, this is the same for the social democratic fraction. However, big world players are developing it, so it would be a big mistake for the EU to stay behind. He also spoke about the diversification of the energy needs of the EU, since the EU imports around 75 percent of its energy needs. The EU looks at Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Alternative pipelines should be build. The ENP has an energy dimension and Ukraine and Azerbaijan are important in this respect. The infrastructure in the EU stayed behind, especially in new member states, and it should be strengthened to complete the internal market. Mr. Rouček stated that membership of the EU is not realistic for Ukraine in the foreseeable future, because of the EU enlargement fatigue. But this does not mean that closer cooperation cannot be developed. This is evident in the Common Economy and Energy Space. Russia is seen by many as a threat, but according to Mr. Rouček it should not be viewed this way.

Russia is going through a transformation and this may not always be the transformation we like to see, especially in regard to human rights. The EU is striving for a strategic partnership with Russia; economy, nuclear weapons, global warming are all problems that cannot be solved without Russia. The EU should see Russia as a partner not as an enemy, because what is the alternative?

The next speaker was Mr. Ian Boag, Head of the EC Delegation to Ukraine. The cooperation between Ukraine and the EU takes place on two levels. First, on the level of traditional sources, for example by introducing EU models in Ukraine. Second, there is a need to foster the area of energy alternative sources, for example plans to reduce energy use. The ENP aims to bring Ukraine as close as possible to the EU. In December 2005 a “Memorandum of Understanding” was signed between the EU and Ukraine, it is actively pursued and implemented. This memorandum is committed to help Ukraine to develop an energy sector, make independent regulations and a roadmap for energy efficiency. For example the memorandum monitors nuclear safety aspects, since there is no export to the EU if safety regulations are not held up. An agreement on support for the coal energy sector will be signed next year, it will also cover safety issues, the need for this can be seen when taking the recent mine disaster into account. On the financial side, the EU is bringing all kinds of financial bodies and agencies together for financing the energy infrastructure in Ukraine. With regard to the civil service, twinning is used to transfer knowledge and experience and there are several plans for twinning in the energy field. The EU assists with bringing Ukraine into international organisations in the energy sector, like the Energy Community. And the EU is making an effort to help Ukraine and Russia with their cooperation, for example with new negotiations between the parties.

Mr. Grzegorz Gromadzki, Director International Cooperation of the Stefan Batory Foundation and the co-author of the “Energy Game” report, first spoke about the ENP countries and energy relations. The countries of the ENP are the common neighbourhood of Russia and the EU. However, EU policy is far less involved in energy matters than Russia. There is no common energy policy within the EU, it will be build in the next years but this will be a long process. Russia does have a well thought out energy policy towards its neighbours. According to Mr.

Gromadzki the EU should involve neighbouring countries in EU energy policies and build a common energy and gas market. So far only four countries have received a proposal to become member of the Energy Community, other eastern European ENP countries should also be invited, since it is also a form of integration policy. The EU member states have different approaches, there is no common position when it comes to energy policy. The companies of member states show little interest in CIS transit countries, except for Azerbaijan. The reasons for this is the lack of transparency in the energy sector. Companies have the idea that this sector is only for Russian companies and they want to avoid a struggle with them. The unresolved dilemma is whether the neighbours should be integrated into the Russian or the EU system. The conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and Belarus are affecting the energy supplies to the EU, therefore new pipelines are build. If more transit countries can be avoided while building these pipelines, the energy supply security will increase. Mr. Gromadzki stated that there are three scenario's for the future: 1) Accept Russia's dominance; 2) Create a common management of the pipelines in the transit countries, the only question is: who will lay down the rules?; 3) Gradual integration of ENP countries in the common energy market of the EU. The third scenario is the only scenario that would ensure long-term investment in ENP countries by the EU. It would be impossible for the EU to strengthen ties with these countries without energy cooperation and this scenario will give the EU a stronger negotiation position in the energy talks with Russia. However, this third scenario also depends on the enthusiasm of the transit countries. There are conflicting views coming from these countries.

Mr. Sergei Kondratiev, of the Institute for Energy and Finances, spoke about the Nabucco pipeline initiative in relation to the pipelines that already exist. According to him, the issue that arises in this respect is the following. The existing capacity of pipelines is sufficient, this means that building more pipelines could lead to overproduction. This is only done for the policy of diversification, which brings up the question: how economically efficient is this plan? Mr. Kondratiev stated that oil and gas will keep their strong position in the future, it is difficult to replace them. Due to the influence of nuclear energy the price of uranium is also growing. He mentioned that it is necessary to start thinking about energy efficiency. On the one hand the EU is dependent on Russia for energy supplies, but on the other hand Russia is dependent on the EU as an export mar-

ket. Mr. Kondratiev stated that competition and liberalisation can optimise current supply but not long term supply, because of long term contracts there is an exploration of new projects, this development will not take place if those contracts were not signed. This can be seen in the postponement of the exploration of new gas sites in Russia due to lack of investment. He stated that the Russian energy sector is not a pressure system, Gazprom is a market economy company, it does not follow government instructions.

As a fifth speaker Mr. Leonid Zaiko, Director of the Analytical Centre "Strategy", took the floor. According to him Belarus can be seen as an example for the other countries in the region as to what will happen if the energy prices double. In Belarus the energy price shock did not influence the economy. Mr. Zaiko mentioned that Gazprom is interested in the transport network in Belarus and has increased its prices to create a powerful position in which it can offer a transition period in exchange for a stake in the transport network. The monopoly position of Russia in the energy market gives the country an instrument to play a special role in the energy market. He also said that the government of Belarus plays a important role in regard to the energy market. For example, it forces people to set up gas furnaces when the gas prices are rising, the question is, why people would be forced to do this? President Lukashchenka is not taking advice from anyone, there is doubt that there will be serious changes in the energy structure in Belarus. The global trend in the energy sector are higher prices, the influence of India and China is substantial in this development. Mr. Zaiko also stated that we should step away from the idea of huge power generators, we should use local ones since they are more efficient, this can be seen when you consider limiting the loss of gas for example. People should be made to find their own solutions locally.

After Mr, Zaiko, Ms. Maryna Luzhykova, President of the Regional Strategic Studies Foundation, also expressed her views on the energy relations issue. She stated that the EU is interested in the stability of Russia, since this makes it easier for the EU to rely on Russia. The West has an interest in a long term cooperation with Russia and tries to achieve a reliable energy



supply. However, it is also looking to strengthen ties with other regions, such as Central Asia or the Middle East, for energy supply, as part of the diversification policy. Ms. Luzhykova told the conference that Gazprom is expanding its services, it is trying to offer the EU electricity besides gas. Ms. Luzhykova mentioned that it is said that people do not agree with the independence claim of Gazprom, the government is thought to be in control. However, if the EU does not allow Gazprom in their market, Russia is not going to sign energy treaties. The cooperation between Russia and the EU continues, however not happily. And the common neighbours are confused as to what their role is in the relations between Russia and the EU. At the end Ms. Luzhykova stated that organisations such as the FES are important because they build bridges, force sides to listen to each other and find a common position.

After these speeches there was room for some questions of the participants. The first question regarded renewable energy. Mr. Andriy Konechenkov, Chief Editor of “Green Energy” magazine and of the Green Party of Ukraine, had a question for Mr. Boag. He asked if there is a EU programme for renewable energy in Ukraine. Mr. Boag stated that there is, renewable energy is one of the five elements of the memorandum and there are also environmental programmes within the framework of Tacis. The next question referred to the lack of transparency: “is there a policy from the EU side to activate/motivate ENP countries to be more transparent on state monopolies in energy?”. This is in fact the case, there are clear rules and they should be fulfilled by new members. The EU strives for the liberalisation of the energy market. The third question regarded the issue of Ukraine joining the energy market; will there be a possible situation where Ukraine has negotiations about this with the EU? According to Mr. Boag is the EU seeking to become partner of Ukraine and other neighbouring countries. The EU companies will have negotiations with companies from neighbouring countries. The companies are free to do what they want within the EU laws and governments can stimulate them but they cannot force them. The fourth question was addressed to Mr. Roucek. Whether the programme of the Socialist Group should have a component about energy education? Mr. Roucek answered affirmative, many things start with education and the EU link of energy and environment should be brought across to the children. The consumer needs to be educated and this should be a part of the socialist programme. After this question was answered Mr. Kondratiev took the

floor and stated that Russia is following the international trends, which means that other countries have access to the industry and the role of EU countries in this respect is very important. Mr. Zaiko also added to the discussion by saying that the leaders of Belarus have contacted Russia and are willing to embrace a partnership, however Belarus did not get a response from Russia. Russia does not need Poland or Belarus, because without Russia’s gas these countries only have pipelines and it can easily build a new pipeline.

During the last part of the morning programme there was room for the representatives of social democratic parties from the region to share their views on the topic. Mr. Vitaly Shybkho, International Secretary of the SPU, stated that Russia plays a key role in the double standards that are arising in the energy sector in the transit countries. The relation with Russia should be build on a market economy system. Ukraine should reconstruct abilities to save energy in houses and other buildings. He also stated that Ukraine should become WTO member and build its EU relations to an official cooperation and take into account that this will affect the relation with Russia. However, the leaders of Ukraine do not always understand that they can set up alternative organisations. The social democratic vision according to Mr. Shybkho is that the state should develop transparency and polish the legislation. The mine accident shows that there should be a change in safety legislation. Other parties are populistic about energy relations, they use it to get elected into parliament and afterwards they will forget all about it. Mr. Nikolaj Statkevich, leader of Narodnaya Hramada, stated that President Lukashenko has good relations with Russia and without this he could not remain in power. Economic reforms are therefore unlikely since they will reduce the power of the president. Mr. Statkevich stated that Belarus needs a market economy. Then Mr. Anatashkevich took the floor and expressed his views. According to him Belarus does not have the environment that could create energy saving mechanisms. Belarus uses a lot of energy and is vulnerable for the increase of energy prices. The strategy of his party is a conceptual approach, the West en Russia are strategic partners and to cooperate with these partners it requires reforms. Next, Mr Jamie Reed, Member of Parliament of Labour, shared his views. He stated that liberal free market cooperation needs to exist between Russia, the EU and the transit countries and transparent price setting is needed. He also stated that fuel poverty has come up in the United Kingdom, which makes the

search for alternative energy sources and a more transparent energy market even more urgent.

The discussion continued and the strategic position of Ukraine was considered. It was mentioned that Ukraine is in a unique position to coordinate the relation between Russia and Belarus. It was also mentioned that Ukraine aims for market liberalisation in 2014, the reforms will start next year. Furthermore, on the topic of energy, it was stated that Ukraine lacks energy laws, this is a reason why the development of energy policy is minimum. Moreover, it was stated that Ukraine did not make use of the low energy prices when they were provided to the country. In Ukraine all oil refineries are in private hands, these people never invested any money in renovations, there was no modernisation of the plants. Gradually switching to European prices is the only correct way for Ukraine to deal with this situation.

Energy and a clean environment

After the lunch the afternoon programme started. During this session energy and a clean environment were discussed. The central question was: "How to make energy policy more environmental-friendly in order to tackle climate change?". The first speaker was Mr. Andriy Konechenov. He spoke about energy efficiency and the percentages that we can gain when it comes to energy efficiency. He also addressed the issue of nuclear energy. He stated that all sources of energy should be used, including nuclear energy. However, the safety of the production of nuclear energy has to be improved. In the EU countries there is a lot of support for creating legislation on this topic. If Ukraine wants to be part of the EU, it should follow the European standards in this area. He spoke about the introduction of small decentralised power plants and the lack of attention of political parties on the subject of alternative energy sources.

The second speaker of the afternoon programme was Mr. Yuriy Scherbak, Director of the Institute of Sustainable Development. He stated that in the report of the European Environmental Agency of 2007 it was stated that the transit region, makes big contributions to environmental problems. Ukraine is not the highest developing country, but it does have high hothouse gas emissions. The consumption structure is distorted. This is a Soviet legacy, and there is an addiction to gas consumption.

Although Ukraine is an economical dwarf it has high emissions. Mr. Scherbak also spoke about the fact that energy is related to the grey economy, to criminality. Furthermore, energy production is related to health problems. Then he addressed the question on how to overcome these problems. There is a need for a change in ideology of the governance and of the development of society. Whatever government there is, sustainable development should be imposed. Next he addressed the issue of coal. The conversion to coal is difficult, it cannot be extracted at the price that is now being paid for it. There is also the issue of social responsibility to make sure that the safety of the mine workers is ensured. The recent mine accident makes this evident. After that he addressed the issue of nuclear energy. There is a need for an agreement with the EU, however this cannot be done on the issue of nuclear power since Germany will not participate on this area. The switch to a more conscience approach of energy saving needs to happen throughout the whole society, from households to the industry. The prices of energy need to be raised to market prices, the industry will operate efficiently if that happens.

Ms. Maryna Luzhykova also contributed to this part of the programme. She made the participants aware of the fact that nobody spoke about the people who live in the regions where the energy is extracted, the people who are affected by this are usually minorities. For example, at the region where oil is extracted in the north of Russia, the diseases among women is four times higher than in other regions. The businesses must share the responsibility for these affected groups, however compensation for these people is never mentioned.

During the discussion that followed, it was stated that Ukraine needs legislation on renewable energy and that the responsibility must be shared between producers and the consumers of energy.

Ms. Svetlana Golizova, stated that creating more legislation is a social responsibility. She also mentioned that the gas negotiations are almost like a soap. A question was asked about which activities the Green Party of Ukraine has, to make the green idea known? The party does not have a seat in the parliament, however it does have a lot of environmental programmes, for example on



replacing gas with biomass. A new programme is developed regarding agricultural waste, since Ukraine has a higher production of waste in comparison to other countries. It was also mentioned that the discussion should not be left to the people who produce energy. They have different reasons for seeking alternative sources. The production of coal was also mentioned. Cheap coal is still available in Poland, however Germany will stop producing coal in 2020, since coal is one of the dirtiest types of fuel. When searching new energy sources, the accessibility should not be the only factor that is taken into account, but also efficiency and whether this form of energy production is cleaner. In Belarus energy loss is a big problem, energy efficiency is needed, however the industry is only enthusiastic to produce more energy, not to save more energy. This means that structural changes are needed, the people need to be motivated to be energy efficient.

During the afternoon programme there was also room for the representatives of social democratic parties to address the conference on alternative energy sources. First, Mr Jamie Reed took the floor. He spoke about the approach of Labour in this perspective. The UK government has created a climate change bill and this matches the approach of Labour which seeks to find possibilities for green energy and sustainable development. The UK government has been creating laws regarding energy sufficiency, for example there is a law that requires an overview of the energy sufficiency of a house when it is for sale. According to Mr Reed, climate change is a social democratic issue, since it hits the poorest people first and the worst. If it was left to the market climate change would not be tackled, intervention of the state is needed. Mr. Reed stated that there are three activities the EU could do with regard to climate change, it could: 1) significantly raise fuel tax; 2) provide incentives to use renewable technology and 3) reduce the emission to the maximum percentage. However, the first activity has proven not to be very efficient in the UK. Climate change is a difficult topic for a political party. Citizens expect to see the changes on the issues they vote on, however policies on climate change do not have immediate visible effect. The problem is finding effective visible solutions and awareness of the consequences of climate change and of energy policies. Mr. Reed further stated that there is no substantial difference between energy, economy and environmental policy, this issues are interlinked. When speaking about alternative energy sources Mr. Reed mentioned that renewable energy, like wind and

water, will not produce enough energy, this is why nuclear energy must be used. Nuclear energy is clean, secure and reliable according to Mr. Reed. If Ukraine does not make use of nuclear energy, it will face higher prices, more emission and more dependency. Mr. Reed finished this statement by saying that the world shares a moral obligation to fight climate change.

After Mr. Reed's statement the discussion turned to the use of alternative energy in Belarus. In Ukraine, Russia and Belarus there is a concrete development of technology for renewable energy sources like biomass facilities. It was mentioned that in order to change the dependency of Belarus on Russia, renewable energy need to become a major source of energy in the future. Several ideas and possibilities for renewable energy were shared, especially the use of biomass was mentioned. Mr. Reed informed the participants of the conference that when societies start to make more use of biomass as an alternative energy source, the problem of energy security could be replaced with a problem of food security. Land prices will explode and commodities will become very expensive.

Conclusions and recommendations

There is a common challenge when it comes to the lack of energy security and climate change since it will affect all of us. It does not just affect the EU or the countries outside the EU, everybody should work together to find a solution for these problems.

However the solutions for these problems differ per country or region. While the EU countries are increasingly focusing on fossil taxes, Ukrainian and Belarusian citizens face rising gas prices as a result of power politics and liberalisation. It is evident that the region of the transit countries, which includes Ukraine and Belarus, is caught between Russia and the EU. The current policy of the EU, that consists of avoiding the transit countries when it comes to energy transport, makes this even more clear. If the EU is committed to strengthen its relations with the transit countries, it should create a policy on energy and energy relations that is clear and concrete. At the moment the member states are too divided on the topic, which stands in the way of a common energy policy and further cooperation



with the EU neighbours. This is contrary to the position of Russia, which has a well thought out energy policy and is strengthening its power over the energy sector of the transit countries.

When it comes to alternative energy sources there are several different approaches. The region of transit countries has a lot of agricultural waste which it can use as a source for alternative energy. Biomass is regarded as an important alternative for oil and gas. However, it raises the issue of food security. Land prices will rise and commodities will become very expensive. The conference also made clear that there is a huge potential for energy efficiency measures in the transit countries. Changes can be made in households up to the energy industry itself and could substantially lower the costs of energy use in the region. These countries have high emissions and relatively small economies. The inefficient use of energy is a Soviet legacy that needs to be changed. Not only because of the increase in energy prices, but also because of the high emissions.

EU countries are tackling climate change by investing in a wide range of renewable energy sources. For example, in the UK nuclear energy is regarded as an important alternative for the current energy sources, it is considered secure and clean. Nevertheless, the Tsjernobyl disaster is not forgotten and uranium, used for the production of nuclear energy, is also a non renewable source.

Social Democrats should make the social side of the energy question a central focus point. It is unacceptable that mineworkers die in unsafe mines, this need to be prevented by creating proper legislation. Social Democrats should also support the people in the transit countries that are hit by the rising gas prices. And attention should be paid to the second generation fuels, with regard to the relation between biomass and food security The PES is currently working on the programme for the 2009 European elections and we hope that they will take these conclusions into account.

PIRAN 2007: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

In cooperation with	: Kalander Foundation, Olof Palme International Center, Renner Institut
Date and venue	: 13-15 December, Velenje, Slovenia
Trainers	: Simona Mursec, Youth Social Democrats (SD), Slovenia Peter Bohinec, Director Kalander Foundation, Slovenia
Guest speakers	: Gorazd Prah, Marketing Manager Moje Delo, Slovenia Dimitrij Amon, Trade Union Metal and Electro Industry, Slovenia

Political context

Cooperation among countries of former Yugoslavia, especially among young people, is the only way to achieve long-lasting peace, economical and social development of human rights and democratisation in the region. For that purpose the Slovenian Kalander Foundation, the Youth Organisation (Mladi Forum) of the Social Democratic Party in Slovenia and the Alfred Mozer Stichting have co-organised a number of Piran Conferences that gather young participants from Social Democratic and other progressive youth organisations from Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Slovenia. In the first years we have been trying to find the solutions to the conflict situation that were present in the region. We have covered all three areas of the Stability pact for South East Europe: human rights and democratisation, economical aspect of the integration and the security issue. In 2007, the theme of the conference was Youth Employment in Post-Conflict Societies. The conferences aimed to identify mutual challenges and discuss policies that will help the young people to extend their chances of finding employment, to offer the possibility to exchange knowledge and experience between parties that experience similar socio-economic problems and to strengthen cooperation between social democratic parties in the region.



Report

Annual PIRAN Conference was held in Velenje . The topic this year was Youth Employment in South East Europe. The conference was attended by 32 participants from Croatia, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia. Trainers and fascilitators at the conference were Gorazd Prah, representative of a successful employment company Moje delo and Simona Mursec, one of the Trainers of the European Youth Forum. The conference was initiated by participants' presentations on the situation in their countries regarding youth (un)employment. Consequently, Gorazd presented the view of the employers. He refered to the workers' profiles, which skills are needed and how to prepare yourself before entering the labour market.

The participants thoroughly analysed the current situation on the job markets and tried to define the biggest problems youth faces. These include:

- lack of experience
- employers are keen to employ youth in non-perspective fields of work and tend to enforce non-temporary contracts to young employees, not offering them any kind of social security and depriving them of many chances to create a home for themselves and/or achieve financial independence
- huge disproportions between the needs of employers and the influx of freshly educated people on the job market
- youth are not well enough educated and trained in practical skills to successfully enter the job market
- the youth have no or very few employment-seeking skills
- employers tend to limit the possibilities of youth to freely excersise their right to free planning of their family
- lack of systematic governmental approach to the problem

All the participating countries have a huge youth unemployment rate. In Slovenia, as the only country with comparatively low overall unemployment rate, young job-seekers still represent more than a quarter of all unemployed. Those lucky enough to be employed commonly have contracts for a definite period, which creates many problems for them, especially in the field of personal social security and stability, family-planning and financial independence.

The other perspective – the view of the employer

As there are more views of the labour market, we agreed that it is necessary to cover the other side of the market – the employers' view. In this educational workshop, Gorazd Prah from the company Moje delo, presented the view of the employers. The presented experience comes from the leading job-seeking portals in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, that Moje delo manages. We covered:

- what are the reasons for a job opening in the company?
- what are the most searched-for skills that employers are looking for?
- why do employers tend to create part-time jobs and/or jobs that offer no social security?
- why do employers tend to find new employees without publicly seeking for people?

We agreed that one of the biggest problems remains that the youth have almost no knowledge of the labour market and of the employers' needs. They also lack career-building skills, which are not covered in the educational process:

- how to define your career- profile to find the job that mathes one's needs?
- how to find a job without the help of advertisements?
- how to get in touch with employers?
- how to present one's abilities properly?

We agreed that the formal educational process should provide more knowledge and skills for mobility on the job-market, life-long learning and job-seeking skills. At this point, most of schools still educate people for one, life-lasting profession; on the other hand, people today change more than ten jobs and four to five professions in a lifetime.

The first part of the afternoon session focused on obstacles that appear when an individual is in the process of applying for a job. The participants went through the whole process starting from filling in an application form, to developing a CV and preparing for an job interview. After the coffee break the participants focused on the role of Trade Unions, their function in the process of solving problems and the service they provide for workers, specifically for youth. After the introduction, the participants took part in a workshop on negotiations between the government, the employers and representatives of trade unions.

The role of Trade Unions

Trade unions have always been an important part of any employment strategy. We held a panel discussion with Dimitrij Amon, one of the leading figures in the youth of Trade Union of Metal- and Electro-Industry of Slovenia. The participants had the opportunity to openly discuss the problems of trade unions and their impact on youth. We covered:

- how trade unions help their members today?
- how to join a trade union?
- how to found a trade union, if there is none present in the company?
- what are the possibilities of those working in non-traditional sectors (i.e. services, banking...) and those with non-temporary jobs?
- how do trade unions adapt to globalisation and an increased flexibility of the job markets?

Conclusions and recommendations

The 9th Piran conference proved to be of great interest to young (social) democrats in countries of South East Europe. These countries continue to face similar socio economic problems. The conference in 2007 discussed the youth (un)employment. The interactive approach of workshops, which were facilitated by experts on the specific issues, resulted in extensive input of the participants. As a result, the guest speakers were able to present all necessary information and discuss the specific details of policies related to the labour market needs, the influence of trade unions and how to improve the skills of those who will enter the labour market in the near future.

The organisers of the conference have agreed to make effort to organise the tenth Piran conference in 2008, combined with a high level meeting of politicians and representatives of sister parties and sister foundations in the region and the EU. The event will also mark the 15 years existence of the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, the umbrella organisation of the Piran conference and the platform organisation of social democratic parties and foundations in the EU.

COURSE FOR PROMISING POLITICIANS 2007

Political context

Since the end of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, the resolution of the conflict in Macedonia and the democratic changes in Serbia, a situation has emerged in which all countries of former Yugoslavia share more or less the same basic principles of stability and democracy. In all of these countries social democratic parties are active. They can benefit tremendously from mutual experiences and discussions on issues such as modern social democratic ideology, the harsh realities of governing and coalition forming, party building, election campaigns and other challenges that political parties face. Since 2003 the European Forum in cooperation with the AMS and the FES have been organising annually a series of seminars for young and promising politicians, members of social democratic parties, from the former Yugoslav republics (later Albania was included as well). The positive evaluation of the course through the years, led to the decision to organise a Promising Politicians Course in 2007 as well. The course includes seminars on ideology, organisation, political campaigning, mass media, national sovereignty, and joining Europe. The aim of the course is to introduce young politicians to the various aspects of political leadership, governing and the dynamics and structures of party policies.

The invited parties in 2007 are SDSM and DUI (FYROM), DS, SDU and LSV (Serbia), PDK and ORA (Kosovo), SDP, DPS and PzP (Montenegro), SDP (Croatia), SD (Slovenia), SDP and SNSD (Bosnia-Herzegovina), SP and PSD (Albania).

Counterparts

The youth movements of social democratic parties in southeastern Europe. See for more detailed descriptions of our partners the previous parts on bi-lateral projects in countries in southeastern Europe.



Primary aim & Strategy

To train a group of promising politicians in southeastern Europe in order to build on their capacity. To strengthen their network and to improve the relations between the political elites in the mentioned countries. Training the selected talents of the above mentioned parties.

Target group

Young members of social democratic parties in former Yugoslav countries and Albania

SEMINAR I - "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES; IDEOLOGY AND ORGANISATION"

In cooperation with : Alfred Mozer Stichting, FES (Belgrade Office)
Date and venue : 3 - 7 May, Petrovac, Montenegro
Trainer : Berend Jan van den Boomen
Guest speakers : Gordana Comic, Damir Sehovic and Uros Jausovec

Report

The first seminar of this year's program took place in Petrovac in May and was attended by 28 participants. All invited parties were represented at the seminar. The theme of the first seminar was "Social democratic parties, Ideology and Organisation" and therefore the trainer, Berend Jan van den Boomen, prepared an introduction on the history and the values of social democracy. Nenad Celarevic, introduced shortly an overview of the history of social democracy in Serbia and pointed out that Dimitrije Tucevic has been regarded as the first social democrat in Serbia. The second and largest part of the seminar dealt with the organisation of social democratic parties and youth movements.

SEMINAR II - "MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS"

In cooperation with : Alfred Mozer Stichting, FES (Belgrade Office)
Date and venue : 18-21 October, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Trainer : Ziga Cebulj, Public Relations consultant SD, Slovenia
Guest speakers : Amela Karajbic, Governance and Society Manager, British Council
Damir Masic, Member of Parliament Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina & Spokesperson SDP BiH
Karolina Leakovic, Social Democratic Party (SDP) Croatia
Tanja Topic, Coordinator Media related projects, FES

Report

The introduction to the seminar on media and communication skills was prepared by Amela Karajbic, Governance and Society manager at the British Council office in Sarajevo. The British Council has developed training projects for local politicians on communication skills and organised a number of conferences. The second part of the seminar was conducted by Ziga Cebulj, public relations consultant who has been involved in various election campaigns of the Slovenian social democratic party, Socialni Demokrati (SD). Cebulj dealt with the power of communications. Introductions by Damir Masic, Spokesperson SDParty in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Karolina Leakovic, of the SDP in Croatia followed. Both referred to the election campaigns of their parties, the organisation at local level, regional level, financing, volunteers and shared their experiences about difficulties in relation to media. The final speaker was Tanja Topic, coordinator media related projects at the FES office in Banja Luka. As former journalist and media expert, Topic was able to present a very interesting introduction on media freedom and professionalism of journalists in the region. Topic shared her knowledge and views with the participants who also referred to several cases related to the relation between media and politics in their countries.



SEMINAR III - "NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION"

In cooperation with	: Alfred Mozer Stichting, FES (Belgrade Office)
Date and venue	: 29 November - 2 December, Tirana, Albania
Trainer	: Marco Esser, Media Consultant (and former campaign manager Dutch Labour Party (PvdA))
Guest speakers	: Saimir Tahiri, Qemal Stafa Foundation, Socialist Party of Albania Armin Machmer, Spokesperson Parliamentary Group of the PES Matthias Verhelst, Political Assistant to MEP Jan Marinus Wiersma Momcilo Radulovic, European Movement for Montenegro Ditmir Bushati, Institute Agenda, Tirana

Report

The last seminar of 2007 discussed the European integration of South East European countries and included workshops on negotiation strategies. The introduction to the seminar was prepared by Saimir Tahiri, Executive Director of the Qemal Stafa Foundation. He presented the work of the newly established foundation, affiliated to the Socialist Party of Albania. Also, Tahiri explained the internal party reforms that have been initiated by the party leadership. Armin Machmer welcomed the participants as representative of the PES. He elaborated on the organisational structures of PES, its goals and policies and its view of further enlargement, focussing specifically on the European integration of Western Balkan countries. The workshops on negotiation strategies were prepared by Marco Esser, former campaign manager of the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA). Esser discussed the various negotiation strategies, based on power, exchange and arguments. The participants practiced the strategies in a number of workshops. The second day of the seminar included a presentation on EU, its history and institutions. The presentation was held by Matthias Verhelst, political assistant of Jan Marinus Wiersma, Member of EP.

Conclusions and recommendations of the three seminars

After evaluating the programme of 2007, the organisers agreed to intro-

duce a few changes to the seminar's programmes of 2008. The changes will include:

- the issues addressed at the seminars must be approached more deeply. This will be a more suitable incentive to improve the knowledge of the participants on the relevant topics.
- The FES office in Belgrade has a large network of trainers who take part in their local projects and the organisers have agreed to involve more local trainers in the programme.
- The participants have expressed the need for more preparatory assignments prior to the seminar.
- Local FES offices will send out invitations in order to assure participation of those who are most seriously involved in politics and the youth forum of their party.

PROMISING POLITICIANS: TRAINING OF TRAINERS

In cooperation with	: Alfred Mozer Stichting, FES (Belgrade Office)
Date and venue	: 21-23 September 2007, Pula, Croatia
Trainers	: Berend Jan van den Boomen and Ivo van Duijneveldt
Target Group:	Participants of the Promising Politicians seminars in 2005 & 2006

Report

The ToT was held in Pula and was attended by 9 participants. The aim of the seminar was to enlarge insight in training skills and to improve these skills through practice. Special attention was paid to presiding, giving an introduction as trainer, instructing a group and providing feedback in training sessions. We concentrated on the AMS-principles for trainings, on the responsibilities and skills of a trainer and on the role of a trainer when instructing workshops and providing feedback, presiding a discussion, the position of trainers when instructing and facilitating a role-play. We finished the seminar with a Q&A-session on difficulties and problems for trainers and with a general evaluation round.



Conclusions and recommendations

Although the participants who attended the training in Pula agreed that there is a need to improve the training skills of young and politically active members of social democratic parties in the region, it remains difficult for the participants to become a trainer in their own party. This is due to the already settled powers within political parties which prevent the young people to demonstrate their influence. Inviting some of the participants to act as a co-trainer in future Promising Politicians programmes is highly recommended. This will be a great opportunity to put their knowledge into practice.

CEE Network for Gender Issues FINAL 2007 NARATIVE REPORT

Background

The CEE Network for Gender Issues came into being in 1994 in Bratislava, as a small group of 7 SD women volunteers working within the framework of the European Forum in order to investigate the status of women and offer the recommendation for social democratic action for its improvement in transition countries.

In 1998 it was transformed into formally organized project, named CEE Network for Gender Issues, supported by Olof Palme Centre for the core funding, with a small office in Budapest Hungary. This office connected the women from practically all SD parties, women TU activists and feminist NGO-s in 21 transition countries with the SD women of the PES and Europe based SI sister parties, and organized their systematic capacity building with the growing support of several SD foundations. It started a Women Can Do It movement first within SD parties in transition countries, and from 1999, when it was between the most important initiators and lobbyist for the establishment of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, also in cooperation with all sorts of women activists in the SEE region.

In 2001, the project was reorganized - three small regional offices under the auspices of respective national SD parties were started – in Budapest, Ljubljana and Tallinn. CEE Network started to grow into more and more institutionalized link between SD parties and their women organizations all over Europe from one side, and SD foundations, SI, PES (it got the status of an associated member of the PES W in 2005), big European women's networks in TU and in civil society, and even became a source of expertise for some governmental gender equality actors (World Bank, UN ECE, CSW, UNIFEM, Council of Europe, Committee of the Regions, EC).

From 2000 on, CEE Network is more and more



often asked to offer its expertise in the projects implemented by the OSCE, NDI, Norwegian People's Aid, International Idea Institute from Sweden, and to share its knowledge and spread its networking capacities also to the women in CIS countries (such as Armenia, Georgia, Moldova), as well as to Turkey, Africa - Magreb countries and Pakistan.

In all this time, CEE Network for Gender Issues worked mostly on the voluntary bases, with no permanent employees, lining upon enthusiasm of its 5 Executive Board members and project by project financing from the SD foundations working together within the Forum. Stable cooperation, support and core funding from the S-Kvinnor and Olof Palme Centre (from 1998 approximately 50.000 EURO per year), made all this work possible.

In 2007 CEE Network for Gender Issues continues to implement its growing mission as:

- Main mechanism for exchange of the European Social Democratic Women best practices
- Organizer of joint and specific national social democratic women gender equality advocacy campaigns and initiatives
- Information and training centre for the SP/SDP in the SEE region – for Croatia, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, B&H, Macedonia, but also for Turkey and EU neighboring countries – Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and North Western Russia.
- Operational link between SD women organizations and PES, SI, PES Women, SIW the Forum and SD foundations
- Support and initiator of the regional and pan European SD W and broader initiatives.
- Creator and implementer of the train the trainer programs, publisher of manuals and electronic tool kits for social democratic women activists and cadres

In 2007 the focus was on:

- Organizing the commemoration of the 100 years of the SIW – at UN SIW fringe meeting in New York and on SIW celebration event in Stuttgart, Germany
- Discussing the new challenges of SD Women after our first 100 years of international cooperation (sub-regional seminar with the SPO Women in Vienna)

- Coordination of the PES Women and SD Women in the SEE and neighboring European countries activities for engendering the PES Manifesto for 2009 EU elections (pan-European Workshop in Budapest)
- Transfer of the PES Women organizations' know how and exchange of experiences between SD women, progressive NGO-s and women TU leaders on social democratic policies regarding women's representation in politics, SD policies for gender equality in labor market, women's entrepreneurship, pay gap, health care and child care in all SEE countries (8 seminars for women activists from SD parties, TU activists and NGO leaders in Croatia, BiH, Serbia, Macedonia, Armenia).
- Awareness raising on SD concepts, policies and practice among SD youth (Training young SD at two regional seminars – Belgrade, Velenje)
- We started successful transfer of the experience of the SD Women in the SEE to the women of SD parties and feminist NGO-s in EU member states (We established direct cooperation with Labor Party Women Council in Ireland, with SD Women in Germany (active part in the international conference on the implementation of the 1325 Resolution of the UN Security Council in Berlin), with Forum 50 Percent in Czech Republic – helping them to develop advocacy campaign for quota in electoral legislation, and we presented our idea of the pan European coalition for the parity in the law on all levels of decision making at the General Assembly of the European Women's Lobby in Borovec, Bulgaria).

CEE Network continues its close cooperation with the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, SD foundations, PES W, SIW, UN agencies, International Idea Institute, NLP Women and Norwegian People's Aid.

We took active part in SIW celebration of 100 years of international SD women's movement. We took active part in the Forum's seminar for SD foundations in the Balkan countries in Velenje, in its seminar on new EU financial instruments for development cooperation, pre-accession and neighboring countries in Brussels and in the Forum & PES Group joint fact finding



Mission to post electoral Armenia

In 2007 we succeeded to implement joint projects with LP Westminster Foundation, with Karl Renner Institute and with Alfred Mozer Foundation.

Sonja Lokar was invited by NDI to train 60 outstanding Arab women politicians from Magreb in Marrakech on collective women strategies for political empowerment of women and to help women to become stronger in four main democratic political parties in Pakistan.

We took active part in Idea International (Sweden) and Canadian Foreign Affairs workshop on Effective Party Assistance in Ottawa, Canada .

CEE Network modules for political empowerment of women were discussed at the NPA regional Women Can Do It conference in Ohrid, and at the first global conference of Women Can Do It movement organized by Norwegian Labor Party Women and Norwegian People's Aid in Belgrade. CEE Network also continues its close cooperation with the Stability Pact Gender Task Force (SP GTF).

In close cooperation with the SP GTF we prepared an electronic toolkit for empowerment of women within SD parties and gender equality awareness raising within SD Youth organizations. Without this cooperation and our support, SP GTF Regional Centre in Zagreb would not have survived the last part of 2007.

Without the lobbying and support from the CEE Network for Gender Issues, Stability Pact Gender Task Force wouldn't have survived the transformation of the Stability Pact for SEE into a Regional Cooperation Council. In 2008 SP GTF has got approved new regional projects for the future work on gender mainstreaming in the SEE countries. These projects will be financed by Austrian, German and Italian government. A big two years regional project on gender and ecology with the Dutch government is in final negotiations. In all these projects, SD women politicians, ministers, MP-s, councilors and SD women party organizations will be included as equal partners.

In 2007 we have also prepared a new book on "Women in politics", which documents the progress made and the challenges ahead of the SD women in the SEE region.

In 2008, CEE Network for Gender Issues wants to continue its coopera-

tion with S-Kvinnor and Olof Palme Centre, as well as with the Forum, with PES W, SIW, and all SD foundations. We want to focus on expert support for the 2009 EU elections as well as on support to the SD women in SEE and EU neighboring countries in forming real SD policies, especially in child care and in labor issues (equal pay).

On behalf of our Executive Board, we would like to thank you very, very much, dear partners, S-Kvinnor and Olof Palme Centre, for your crucial support to our core operations. We are happy and proud to be able to tell you, that this support, dating from 1998, made a real difference in the capacities of SD women and their ability to foster the growth of the progressive women's movement all over Europe and even broader.

Thank you, dear sisters and comrades!

Dasa Silovic Chair of the Board and Sonja Lokar, coordinator of the CEE Network Ljubljana Office



List of the CEE Network for Gender Issues activities by date, place and subject:

- January 17, Dublin, Ireland, exchange of experience and strategies meeting with the leadership of the Labour Party Women Council in Ireland
- January 26-27, Bratislava Slovakia, discussant (with Anna Zaborska) at the international EC & Comenius University workshop: Negotiating Gender in EU.
- February 2, Zagreb, Croatia, women in the New Left in Croatia – fact finding mission
- February 9-11, Pristina, Kosovo, sub-regional seminar for SD parties, NGO-s and TU leaders from Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, BiH and Albania on concrete SD gender equality policies. (In close cooperation with the LP Westminster -Foundation for Democracy).
- February 12, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Meeting with the representative of the West Sahara Polissario women's movement in EU.
- February 22, Brussels, Belgium, active participation on the PES Women Statutory meeting – start of the PES Eliminate gender Pay Gap campaign
- March 15 Vienna, preparatory meeting with Karl Renner Institute - planning the seminars in Vienna, Skopje and Albania.
- March 22, Koper, Slovenia, Lecture about CEEE Network work in the SEE for the Association of moderate progress
- April 2, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Lecture to the New Social Democratic party leaders from BiH on the issue of modern women's movement in Slovenia and in the SEE region
- April 7, Catez, Slovenia, lecture to the same group on gender equality issue coalitions
- April 11, Rijeka, Croatia, taking part in the round table on SD model of women's entrepreneurship – CEE Network organized two experts on the issue from Slovenia (Marta Turk - vice chair of the World's Association of Women Entrepreneurs, and dr. Aleksandra Mrcela Kanjuo, researcher and university teacher working on this issue in Slovenia).
- April 14. April 20, NDI&IRI training of 60 Arab women politicians from Magreb- Sonja Lokar invited to train on the issue of collective women strategies for political empowerment of women.

- April 21-22, Velenje, Slovenia, moderating the work on the Forum's seminar for SD foundations from the Balkans
- April 27, Geneva, Switzerland – active participation at the UN ECE international conference on women in the labor market.
- May 4-6, Berlin, Germany, active participation at the German Women's Security Council & Foreign Ministry international conference of women peace activists on the implementation of the 1325 UN Security Council Resolution
- May 10-11, Zagreb, Croatia, participation at the Regional Table of the Stability Pact
- May 28-29, Vienna, meeting of the CEE Network for Gender Issues main partners in the SEE region and the launching of the CEE Network booklet: Our first 100 years at the public event.
- May 29-June 1st, Jerevan, Armenia- active part in the Forum's & PES Group post electoral fact finding mission in Armenia, special meeting with the women leaders from the SIW sister party (Armenia Revolutionary Front).
- May 6-7, Brussels, Belgium, active part on the Forum's & FES seminar on the new EU funding mechanisms
- June 8-10, Ohrid, Macedonia, presentation of the CEE Network module of the Women Can Do It at the NPA regional Women Can Do It conference
- June 11-12, Berlin, active participation at the PES W meeting and German SD W seminar on SD strategies for child care for all.
- June 22-23, Skopje, Karl Renner Institute & CEE Network train the trainer seminar for the leaders of the SDSM and DUI on concrete gender equality policies when the SD parties are in opposition.
- July 6-10, 2007, Belgrade: ECOSY Summer school, Sonja Lokar did the training of young social democrats from the SEE region on the issue of SD approach to the women human rights
- July 14-15, Velenje, Slovenia, Sonja Lokar did the training young activists from SD parties of the Western Balkans on the Lolipop seminar: How to organize and lead the campaigns on specific youth and gender equality issues
- August 10-23, Islamabad, Peshawar, Pakistan- In cooperation with NDI, Sonja Lokar trained women organizations in 4 Pakistani parliamentary parties on how to make women stronger within their own parties.
- September 6-8, Stuttgart, Dasa Silovic., Marta Bonifert junior, and

Zita Gurmai took active part in the 100 anniversary of the international organization of SD women.

- September 13-16, Prague, Czech Republic, at the international conference of the FORUM 50 Percent (the most important NGO network for political empowerment of women in Czech Republic) Sonja Lokar presented the experiences of SD women in transition countries and in SEE regarding enactment of positive measures for equal political representation of women.
- September 19-20, Novi Sad, Belgrade, active participation at the meeting of the newly established women's organization of G 17 + in Serbia.
- September 21-23, Skopje, in cooperation with the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, at the regional conference: Macedonian Road to EU, Sonja Lokar presented experiences of SD women in new EU member states regarding the possibilities of improvement of the status of women in the process of EU accession.
- September 24-26, Budva, Montenegro – in cooperation with UNIFEM and Governmental Office for Gender Equality of Montenegro, Sonja Lokar moderated one part of the regional conference – How to prepare a good national CEDAW report for the UN.
- October 1-3, Lisbon, Portugal, Sonja Lokar took active part in the PES W Statutory Conference
- October 5-7, Tirana, Albania, in cooperation with Karl Renner Institute, Sonja Lokar trained and coordinated the work on the seminar for the female and male party leaders of 4 Albania left wing parties on the issue: How to improve gender equality policies of the left wing parties in Albania
- October 19, Ljubljana, Slovenia, in cooperation with the regional NGO named Together, Sonja Lokar presented new strategies of SEE women for empowerment of women in war torn and post-war countries.
- October 20-21, Stockholm, Sweden, CEE Network for Gender Issues Executive Board Meeting
- October 22-24, Skopje, Training of women parliamentarians on the issue: EU policies on gender equality.
- October 26-28, Borovec, Bulgaria; presenting the idea on the establishment of the formal coalition for the pan-European parity in the law campaign at the General Assembly of the European Women's Lobby

- November 2-5, Becici, Montenegro, basic gender equality seminar for the youth of the SDP of Montenegro
- November 14-15, Istanbul, Turkey, presentation of the SEE women experiences with the big coalitions for equal representation of women in politics to 400 women activists working in education filed in Turkey
- November 16-18, Belgrade, presentation of the SD women experience with the Women Can Do It training approach in SD parties in transition countries at the first world conference of the Women Can Do It global movement – in cooperation with the NLP Women and Norwegian People's Aid
- November 23, failed attempt to attend to the Forum's Steering Committee meeting in Sofia (we could not land because of the fog)
- November 26-30, Ottawa, Canada, Active participation at the discussion on International Idea & Canadian Foreign Ministry organized discussion on the policy paper: : Effective Party Assistance: Stronger Parties for Better Democracy
- December 3-5, Tirana, Albania – participation at the Working Table 1 strategy meeting on how to continue gender mainstreaming in the SEE region within the framework of the new Regional Cooperation Council.
- December 7-9, Skopje, Macedonia – in cooperation with the Multimedia Centre – lecture to the regional network of the feminist NGO-s and representatives of the gender equality national mechanisms from Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina on joint gender equality advocacy campaigns on specific issues – such as equal representation of women and men; protection of women reproductive health.
- December 14-16, Budapest, workshop for socialist and SD women leaders and activists of transition countries and selected EU countries : “New Challenges & Opportunities for SD gender equality policies – Exchange of experience from Europe”

Reporting: Sonja Lokar, CEE Network for Gender Issues, coordinator for the SEE News Service Report

The Information Service in 2007

In 2007, the Information Service of the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity has changed radically in the way it is organised. First of all, the information services (bi-monthly Newsflash and the Country Updates) have been fully the responsibility of the so-called Information Officers. In the past, the project managers of the Alfred Mozer Stichting were also updating the Country Updates and editing the Newsflashes. As of 1 January 2007, these tasks are handled by the Information Officers. This has helped us to improve the quality and accuracy of the Information Service, as far as we can say.

Aims of 2007

In the Information Service proposal of 2007, several aims were outlined:

Country Updates

- To update all the dynamic country updates, whenever it is needed, especially after elections, changes in party leadership and developments in society with a big impact on the political developments.
- To introduce a Central Asia Update, starting with reports on Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

Newsflash and calendar

- To continue the Newsflash and the Calendar for the foundations and political parties in our Network

Electionblog

- To improve the functioning of the electionblog; a weblog following all the important elections in the region with personal stories of participants and observers.

Annual reports

- To publish 500 European Forum Annual Reports.

Website

- To improve the structure and the layout of the European Forum website in order to improve its accessibility.

Country Updates

Not all the news from the Newsflash makes it into the Country's Update. When selecting the news for the Country Update, it is considered whether the news is:

- a. a separate event, but highly important for the country. Examples of such events are: the death of a politician, an elections or a sudden economic crisis.
- b. an event that is part of an ongoing process in politics, economy or society. For instance: ongoing poverty or corruption, political instability/political unrest, border-disputes or growing authoritarianism.

So, if a news-item is a separate event (so not part of a bigger process or development) and not highly important for the country, it is highly unlikely that it will make it to the country update. The reason to make this consideration is to keep a clear distinction between the Newsflash and the Country Update. If all the Newsflash items would make it into the Country Update, the Update would become not more than just the sum of the different Newsflashes. It is important for the Country Updates to place the news items in the correct political context.

In 2007, five new Country Updates have been added to the website. Amieke Bouma wrote the Updates for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and Stefan Panhuijsen wrote the Update for Uzbekistan. The third intern, Tessel van Westen wrote the updates for Kazakhstan and for Turkmenistan. The Central-Asian countries have so be completed in 2007. The newly written Updates can be found in the appendix. It can be stated that we have reached our goals, dynamically updating the Country Updates and adding the Central Asian updates, for 2007.

Newsflash

The Newsflash in 2007 has undergone some slight graphical changes in 2007. We have tried to make the Newsflash easily accessible for our readers, by using internal links to skip directly to the country of interest. By November 2007, a total of 622 people receive the News Flash every two weeks. The European Forum Calendar has been sent to our network on a regular basis. The Newsflash and the Calendar have worked according to plan, so it can be stated that we have reached our goals for 2007.

Electionblog

Of all the parts of the Information Service, the electionblog has had the

least attention of the Information Officers during 2007. During the second part of 2007, we have tried to revive the electionblog, by adding contributions from Kosovo, Jordan, Ukraine and Russia to the website. These last months of 2007 will be the overture for 2008, in which we hope to continuously have fresh contributions/blogs from all our countries on the website. More on this in the 2008 proposal. The overall conclusion should be that we have not achieved our aims for 2007, concerning the electionblog. In 2008, the planned improvements should be made.

Annual reports

The annual report of 2007 was published in an edition of 200, lower than our aim of 500. Our experience of 2006 is that 500 is too high an amount.

Website

It is hard for the information officers to determine whether the Country Updates and the Newsflashes have improved qualitatively. However, there is one indicator that can also be judged and interpreted by us: the statistics of the European Forum website.

Month	Unique visits
Dec	13626
Nov	15269
Oct	14528
Sep	11939
Aug	14644
Jul	19081
Jun	18341
May	10557*
Apr	14448
Ma	14060
Feb	13056
Jan	13352
Total	162.344

* In May there was a technical update of the website we suspect that data was lost, because this number is highly unrealistic. 15.000 would be more according the truth, given the numbers in June and July.

Despite an occasionally lower number of visits, the overall trend is pretty clear: the European Forum website is getting more popular, compared to 2006 and 2005. In these years, we had respectively 105.000 and 97.000 unique visitors. The increase of 2007 is, compared to the numbers of 2006 and 2005, spectacular (+54%).

The second aim of 2007 was to improve the structure and the lay-out of the European Forum Website in order to improve the accessibility. To achieve this aim, we have chosen to improve the maps of the Country Update countries. Nowadays, the maps are easier accessible and nicer to watch. The relationship between the increased number of visitors and the improved accessibility has not been proved scientifically, but we think we can conclude that we have reached our goals of 2007 by attracting 66% more visitors to the website.

European Forum Work Plan 2007

The European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity is dedicated to support the transformation and democratisation processes in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. By serving as a platform for co-operation between social democratic parties, organisations and personalities it aims to contribute to the development of (social-) democracy. Within the European Forum 12 social democratic foundations and 19 social democratic parties play an active role.

The European Forum has the following focus, following the enlargement agenda

1. Acceding countries: Bulgaria and Romania
2. Candidate countries: Turkey and Croatia, FYR of Macedonia
3. Potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244
4. ENP: Eastern Dimension: Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan
5. The Russian Federation
6. The ENP Southern dimension (possibility, not a priority)

What did we do?

- In the past four years the European Forum has focussed on the ENP in a series of Wider Europe in perspective conferences in: Ukraine (2003), Moldova (2004) and Caucasus; Georgia (2005), The Russian Federation (2006.)
- We have organised a number of topical conferences: the role of political foundations (2003), European enlargement and the Roma issue (2003 and 2004), Economy in transition (2003), sexual minorities (2004), Human Rights (2005), Resistance movements (2005), Economy & Employment (2006), Public opinion and the EU; the image of the EU & how to involve our citizens (2006), Fair Trade: the consequences of WTO policies for the Western Balkans (2006),
- Paid attention to specific developments in the following countries: Latvia (2003), Slovakia (2003), The Russian Federation (2004),

- Belarus (2004), Ukraine (2005), Turkey (2005), Belarus (2006)
- Initiated assessment visits: Georgia (2004), Turkey (2004), Kosovo (2004), Albania (2006)
- Coordinated efforts: Romania (2003), Ukraine (2004), Promising politicians in Former Yugoslavia and Albania (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006), Belarus (2006)
- Gender equality through the Gender Network (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006)
- Information Service: country updates, newsflash, website. (1993 - 2006)

Based on our agenda in the past four years we would like to propose the following draft programme for 2007 (to be discussed at the Steering Committee in Porto on 7/12) :

We will organise five conferences:

- Fighting trafficking in the Western Balkans; A conference in Bosnia & Herzegovina.
- Energy & Environment policy: between power politics and alternative power sources; A conference in Kiev
- Piran Conference; a conference of youth organisations in the Western Balkans in Slovenia. Topic not yet decided.
- The Macedonian road to EU Accession; setting the priorities. A conference in Skopje.
- ENP at work: a conference in Rabat, Morocco

Initiate assessment visit to:

- Armenia: In April 2007 parliamentary elections are expected. We want to see how the political landscape develops in the run up and aftermath of the 2007 elections and assess if it is possible to identify a sister party with whom we can work on a bilateral level. In order to assess the situation we decided to organise a fact-finding mission after the April elections.
- Belarus: The pressure of the regime on democratic parties and organisations is increasing, also on international donors. For safety reasons most political foundations decided to stop organising activities in Belarus and now work out of Ukraine. In 2006, AMS and Labour Party initiated a visit to Belarus in order to show support to the Belarusian opposition. The visit made clear that international sup-

port is very important for Belarusian opposition that finds itself in the most isolated and closed country in Europe. That is the reason why we will repeat this visit in 2007.

Coordinated efforts:

- Belarus Solidarity Fund: a continuation of the activities in 2005 & 2006. The Fund will support social-democrats.
- Promising politicians in Former Yugoslavia and Albania; year five. For the first time we will also organise a training for trainers. The best participants of the last four years (12 in total) will be selected.
- Gender equality through the Gender Network
- InformationService: country updates, newsflash, website.

European Forum Work Plan 2008

The European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity is dedicated to support the transformation and democratisation processes in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. By serving as a platform for co-operation between social democratic parties, organisations and personalities it aims to contribute to the development of (social-) democracy. Within the European Forum 12 social democratic foundations and 18 social democratic parties play an active role.

Relevant developments

In 2007 the new PES foundation (FEPS) was created. For the near future FEPS does not seem have the ambition to do the same work as the European Forum, but it isn't excluded in the statutes: "The object of the FEPS is to undertake research, information and training in the fields of political, social, legal & economic science, more specifically in their European and international dimension. More specifically, it may: undertake studies on specific political issues, organise conferences, seminars and workshops, publish and circulate publications promoting the works of the FEPS, organise training sessions." The European Forum has to closely monitor the development of FEPS and start consultations with the PES and FEPS about the best way to cooperate in the future, without excluding any possible outcome beforehand. Moving back the European Forum to Brussels in 2008 is not possible for financial reasons and because of the fact that the above mentioned developments are still in their early stage. Taking into consideration the fact that the election period in the first half of 2009 will keep all parties busy. Realistically moving the European Forum will be possible only after the European elections in June 2009. This means that the European Forum will remain with the AMS for two more years.

Decision by the Steering Committee: the European Forum will remain with the AMS for two more years.

The European Forum has the following focus, following the enlargement agenda

1. Candidate countries: Turkey and Croatia, FYR of Macedonia
2. Potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244
3. ENP: Eastern Dimension: Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan
4. The Russian Federation
5. The ENP Southern dimension

What did we do?

- In the past four years the European Forum has focussed on the ENP in a series of Wider Europe in perspective conferences in: Ukraine (2003), Moldova (2004) and Caucasus; Georgia (2005), The Russian Federation (2006), Morocco (2007.)
- We have organised a number of topical conferences: the role of political foundations (2003), European enlargement and the Roma issue (2003 and 2004), Economy in transition (2003), sexual minorities (2004), Human Rights (2005), Resistance movements (2005), Economy & Employment (2006), Public opinion and the EU; the image of the EU & how to involve our citizens (2006), Fair Trade: the consequences of WTO policies for the Western Balkans (2006), Human trafficking (2007) The Macedonian road to EU accession (2007), Energy and environment policy (2007), All equal, all different; the rights of minorities in the Western Balkans (2007)
- Paid attention to specific developments in the following countries: Latvia (2003), Slovakia (2003), The Russian Federation (2004), Belarus (2004), Ukraine (2005), Turkey (2005), Belarus (2006.)
- Initiated assessment visits: Georgia (2004), Turkey (2004), Kosovo (2004), Albania (2006), Armenia (2007.)
- Coordinated efforts: Romania (2003), Ukraine (2004), Promising politicians in Former Yugoslavia and Albania (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007), Belarus (2006, 2007), Promising politicians in Moldova and Romania (2007)
- Gender equality through the Gender Network (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)
- Information Service: country updates, newsflash, website. (1993 - 2007)

Based on our agenda in the past five years and after consulting the members we would like to propose the following draft programme for 2008 (to be discussed at the Steering Committee in Sofia on 23/11):

We will organise five conferences:

- Slovenia: 15 years European Forum. Achievements and challenges. What lessons can be learned from the role of the international social democratic movement in the development of social-democracy in the new European democracies? What should be our agenda in the years to come? Combined with...
- 10 years Piran, ten years of cooperation between social democratic youth movements in South-eastern Europe; ten years of reconciliation.
- Albania; Transparency & Openness; the role of political parties in society. Political parties play a crucial role in our societies. Their behaviour should be exemplary, given their position as main broker between the population and the countries executive. However the trust people have in politicians is at an all time low. How can we improve this? This conference will start to look at the way political parties deal with issues as internal democracy, recruitment of party officials and candidates, policy making procedures and finances.
- Turkey; EU enlargement regional conference. Turkey is an EU candidate country. How far has it progressed on the road to EU Enlargement? What is the current state of play after three years of negotiations on the *acquis communautaire* and which challenges lay ahead. A conference in Istanbul.
- Jordan; ENP- southern dimension. The ECs effort to create a ring of friends around the EU has an eastern and a southern dimension. In this conference we will tackle the role of the EU in the Middle East and address the issue of strengthening democracy in these countries.

Initiate assessment visit to:

- Georgia; 2 days post-election mission
- The Russian Federation; 3 days post election mission in April/ May

Coordinated efforts:

- Belarus Solidarity Fund: a continuation of the activities in 2005 - 2006 & 2007. The Fund will support social-democrats.
- Promising politicians in Former Yugoslavia and Albania; year six.
- Promising politicians Moldova/ Romania
- Georgian Youth Forum
- Information Service: country updates, newsflash, website.
- New country updates on Tunisia, Libya, Syria.
- Include the five Central Asian countries in the Newsflash
- In 2008, eleven Country Updates (South-Eastern Europe and Eastern-Europe) will be also available in PDF-format. These Updates in PDF will be easier to read through an improved full color lay-out

Office

Currently four staff members are employed at the European Forum office:

Arjen Berkvens - secretary general; aberkvens@pvda.nl
Kirsten Meijer - project manager; kmeijer@pvda.nl
Alma Balesic - project assistant; abalesic@pvda.nl
Amieke Bouma - information officer: abouma@pvda.nl

Contacts

Website: www.europeanforum.net
Postal address: PO BOX 1310
1000 BH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
E-mail address: info@europeanforum.net
Phone number: 0031 (0)20 5512 170
Fax number: 0031 (0)20 5512 250

