



EUROPEAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

25 YEARS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACHIEVEMENT

25ème ANNIVERSAIRE

Reuniting our continent is the ELDR's key mission

As the longest established European political family, we should be proud of our achievements over the last 25 years. In the European Parliament we are a well respected and influential Group and to use the words of Simon Hix, a senior academic in the London School of Economics, "the ELDR is pivotal in determining whether a centre-left or a centre-right coalition wins".



Pat Cox MEP, President of the ELDR Group in the European Parliament.

As we reflect on our achievements, however, we must also look forward to the challenges ahead where ELDR can continue to play a vital role. Not least of these is the challenge of enlargement. We must continue to promote the enlargement agenda as a moral imperative, a political necessity and an economic opportunity. This is a generational challenge no less significant in our times than that faced by an earlier generation of Europeans more than four decades ago in establishing the European integration process. The next waves of EU enlargement will be unparalleled in nature and continental in scale. This process politically is now irreversible. It must succeed since failure cannot be contemplated.

Like the other EU institutions, the European Parliament is currently considering how best to prepare for the next Intergovernmental Conference. The ELDR Group will insist on a robust parliamentary participation. We believe that the Laeken

declaration under the Belgian Presidency has a constructive role to play in sharpening the definition of what needs to be done by way of constitutional and institutional change to render the European Union capable of coping with the enormous challenges ahead.

We are strongly committed to an open Europe as a core value of our Liberal project - open to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital - open to trade on a global basis and not least open to the enlargement of the European Union.

The great prize offered by enlargement is that of political security and stability on the continent of Europe and with our near neighbours. This is the ultimate strategic political goal of the exercise and must remain the essential point of reference when, inevitably, the going gets

tougher as negotiations deal with the more complex issues.

The ELDR has a vital role to play in providing the political momentum to bring about these ambitious goals. And as we approach our next 25 years together as a political family, we should regard reuniting our continent as our key mission.

By Pat Cox, MEP



The Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties is established by the Stuttgart Declaration, 26-27 March 1976.

Strengthening the network

In 1976, nine parties from the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, France, Denmark and Germany founded the *Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties in the European Community* by adopting the *Declaration of Stuttgart*. Today, twenty-five years later, the European Liberal Democratic and Reform Party (ELDR) has grown to be a home for forty liberal parties from all over Europe - from Gibraltar to the Baltic States and from Ireland to Cyprus. ELDR member parties in their national states and the ELDR within the European Parliament have a lot of common ground. Our immediate goals are the promotion of Liberalism in times of globalisation, the protection and promotion of individual rights and freedoms, and the unrestricted support for the process of European integration and enlargement.

Twenty-five years after the founding of ELDR we can be proud of being the active force behind the deepening integration and the ongoing



Werner Hoyer, MdB, President of the ELDR Party

enlargement of the European Union. Despite of our successes in the past, much still remains to be done. The enlargement of the European Union and the development of European institutions will be accompanied by the development of ELDR Party. Our main tasks ahead are to strengthen the network within the ELDR in order to bring together the expertise of our national and European parliamentarians in areas of common concern, to transform ELDR into a real party in a real parliament, to support our member parties in their national election

campaigns, and to strengthen and co-ordinate our contacts with the liberals in the young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, dear Liberal Democrats, let us celebrate our birthday, because the story of ELDR is a story of success. Let me thank you all for your commitment in the past and invite you to carry on. Let us work for an ever more successful future for liberalism in Europe.

By Werner Hoyer, MdB

1976



Nadia Comaneci (PHOTO) given seven perfect tens

ELDR Federation established. Stuttgart Declaration adopted. First Electoral Congress, The Hague. Draft political programme. Gaston Thorn, President. Florus Wijsenbeek, Sec-Gen. World News:

1977



Congress, Brussels. (PHOTO) Named: "European Liberal Democrats" World News: Star Wars released

1978

Congress, London

1979



1,200 Liberal politicians attend election rally. (PHOTO) First European Parliament elections - ELD 14%, 39/410 seats. World News: Three Mile island

Parvenu à un tournant dans l'histoire de l'Europe

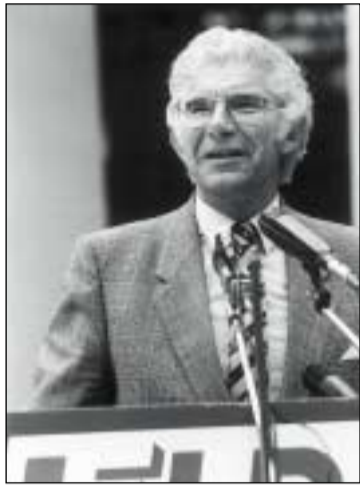
Je voudrai avant tout rendre hommage à Gaston Thorn, le véritable fondateur de l'ELDR en tant que Fédération des partis libéraux européens. C'est à son invitation que nous nous sommes réunis pour la première fois à Stuttgart en 1976, pour la Conférence constituante et l'adoption de la Déclaration toujours valable.

Gaston Thorn fût notre premier Président et un "leader éclairé" aux débuts de l'ELDR. Il a posé les premiers jalons vers la formation d'une identité libérale européenne commune. Après sa nomination à la fonction de Président de la Commission européenne en 1981, j'ai eu le privilège de lui succéder en tant que Président de l'ELDR.

Nous avons au cours des 25 dernières années accompli beaucoup de choses. De toute façon la vie d'un parti politique est comme toute autre vie: elle ne peut s'expliquer qu'en se tournant vers le passé mais elle ne peut être vécue qu'en se tournant vers l'avenir.

En 1993, nous avons fait de l'ELDR un parti politique européen, sur base de l'article 191 du Traité de Rome: les partis politiques au niveau européen apportent une contribution essentielle au processus d'intégration européenne et en favorisant l'expression de la volonté politique des citoyens, au fonctionnement démocratique du système institutionnel.

Enfin, le Traité de Nice a introduit un paragraphe contenant une base légale pour le statut et le financement des partis politiques européens. En tant que libéraux



Willy DE CLERCQ, député européen, Ministre d'Etat, Président honoraire de l'ELDR.

européens, nous espérons que ce processus sera aussi transparent et démocratique que possible, ce qui implique une répartition correcte des intérêts financiers afin que ce ne soient pas seulement les partis "mastodontes" qui en tirent avantage.

25 ans après notre fondation, il nous faut regarder au-delà de ce que nous avons accompli. Il est aujourd'hui particulièrement approprié de parler de l'avenir de l'Europe, en effet nous nous trouvons à un tournant important de son histoire.

En ce début de 21 siècle, l'Europe est confrontée à d'énormes défis. Tout d'abord l'achèvement de l'UEM par l'introduction de la monnaie unique européenne à la fin de l'année, la plus grande opération monétaire jamais réalisée dans le monde. Deuxièmement, il y a l'élargissement vers l'Europe centrale et orien-

tale qui nous offre la possibilité historique de réconcilier l'Europe avec elle-même même si cela présente de nombreux risques. Mais nous n'avons pas seulement la responsabilité morale de procéder à l'élargissement, celui-ci présente également des avantages économiques incontestables et apportera la stabilité à notre continent, répandant notre modèle démocratique et socio-économique.

Troisièmement, l'Europe a plus que jamais besoin de réformes internes, qui clarifieront la répartition des compétences et des responsabilités entre l'Union européenne et les Etats membres et amènera une plus grande transparence et un contrôle démocratique accru.

Dans la perspective du renforcement de l'efficacité de l'Union européenne et de son processus de prise de décision, il nous faut admettre que le nouveau Traité de Nice ne va pas assez loin.

Dernier point et non des moindres, l'Europe doit faire en sorte de (re)gagner le soutien des citoyens. Le projet européen, basé sur des principes libéraux tels que la liberté, la démocratie, la solidarité et la responsabilité ne pourra réussir que s'il bénéficie du soutien de tous les citoyens européens.

Pour relever ces défis un parti libéral européen est absolument nécessaire. Les objectifs communs que nous nous sommes fixé il y a 25 ans sont aujourd'hui plus que jamais d'actualité. Joignons donc nos efforts pour 25 (et davantage encore !) nouvelles années de succès!

by Willy De Clercq, MEP

Safeguarding freedom and peace

For me there can be no doubt: The most significant achievement of European liberalism over the last 25 years is the return of freedom and democracy to the former communist countries in Europe.

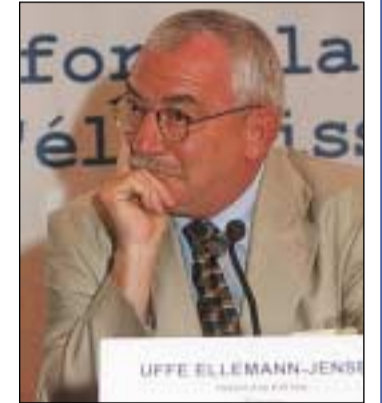
For half a century we Europeans lived in a Europe divided by the Iron curtain. It formed our lives, our convictions. I remember how crossing the Iron Curtain, only a few hundred kilometres from where I grew up, was always like entering another world with scary rules of life and an atmosphere of utter hopelessness and desperation.

But then came the dramatic and truly historic changes of the European political architecture. Changes all European liberals had fought for through decades. It started with civil disobedience and round table conferences in Poland, economic reforms in Hungary - and a new atmosphere in the many international fora, that had been established to link East and West. Glasnost and Perestrojka set a new tune. Then the first cracks in the Wall suddenly appeared. East Germans moved from Czechoslovakia through Hungary to Austria and freedom. Then came the ultimate fall of the Wall - and the fall of one oppressive regime after another. A brief setback: The Moscow "Putsch" in August 1991. When it failed came the restoration of freedom and independence in the three Baltic states - and then the disintegration of the Soviet Union into a number of new independent states.

In the course of three dramatic years we suddenly had a new map of Europe. Bringing us the important lesson, that only fantasy sets the limit to what is possible in Europe.

But - the task of safeguarding freedom and peace in Europe has not been finished. We still miss the pivotal element in the unifying process: The enlargement of the European Union with the new democracies from Central and Eastern Europe.

Here is the most significant task for European liberals in the time ahead of us!



Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, President of the ELDR Party from 1995 to 2000.

by Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, MP

Colette Flesch : Présidente du Parti ELDR, 1985-1990

Lors du congrès de Groningue, en juin 1985, les Libéraux et Démocrates européens ont bien voulu me faire l'honneur de m'élire à la présidence de la Fédération.

C'est avec intérêt que j'ai retrouvé dans les archives que, lors de ce congrès, les discussions avaient principalement porté sur:

- les conséquences de la production énergétique sur

l'environnement,

- la protection de la démocratie et des libertés civiles en Europe,
- la réforme des institutions de la Communauté européenne.

Coincidence ou souci constant?

Seize ans plus tard, ces trois sujets restent toujours d'actualité et comptent parmi les priorités du Parti ELDR et du Groupe

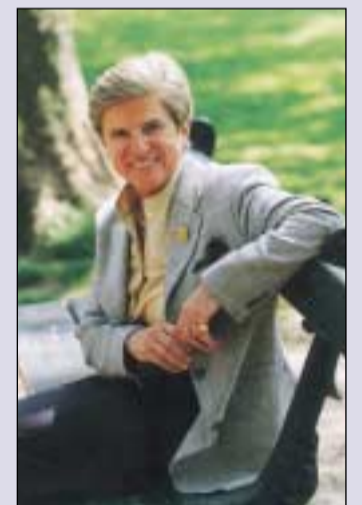
au Parlement européen;

Au cours de mon mandat, de 1985 à 1990, la Fédération a pu s'élargir, changer de nom, modifier quelque peu ses structures et se donner un nouvel emblème.

Mon souvenir le plus vif de cette période demeure sans conteste la préparation de la campagne électorale européenne de 1989, culminant au congrès de décembre 1988 à

Luxembourg au cours duquel fut adopté le troisième manifeste électoral de l'ELDR/LDR.

Mon souvenir le plus cher reste l'ambiance chaleureuse et l'amitié au sein de l'équipe dirigeante de la Fédération. Dans ce contexte, je tiens à adresser mes remerciements à tous mes collègues et en particulier à notre dynamique secrétaire général, Mechthild von Alemann.



1980



Congress, Paris. (PHOTO)

World News: John Lennon assassinated

1981



Congress, Copenhagen. WDC, President. (PHOTO)

World News: AIDS

1982

Congress, Venice

Jens Nyman Christensen, Sec-Gen

World News: first artificial heart implant

1983



Congress, Munich. (PHOTO)

Towards a community of shared values

Transforming the European Union from an economic community to a community of shared values has been an historic goal for Liberals. Our ELDR President Werner Hoyer was one of the drafters of the Amsterdam Treaty which endowed the EU with this task. It has allowed us to make great strides forward.

As Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Citizens Rights, Justice and Home Affairs since July 1999 I have witnessed much progress. The EU's laws to combat racism and xenophobia, approved by Parliament in record-breaking time, provide new tools to tackle a continuing scourge of our society. The Liberal-inspired drive towards common citizenship rights, exemplified in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the emerging common policies on asylum and immigration, is bearing fruit.



Graham Watson MEP, Chairman of the EP Committee on Citizens Rights, Justice and Home Affairs.

And the EU's new regulation on Public Access to Documents will bring unprecedented freedom of information for the citizen and should engender a new culture of openness in the EU's institutions. All this has been achieved within two years of the Treaty's entry into force. Our achievements must not be a cause for complacency. Europe has a long way to go to become a truly Liberal society. The

vestiges of the 19th century military-industrial nation state are still too much in evidence. The power structures of our continent still contribute to policies which feed the rich and destroy the planet. Citizens are still bound by traditions and taboos and subject to discriminatory laws and practices.

Injustice too often goes unpunished or unrectified. Our collective and individual lifestyles are far from sustainable, our foreign policy insufficiently rigorous in the cause of human freedom. Nonetheless, a quarter of a century of Liberal action in European government has accounted for far greater progress than our strength in national government would suggest. I feel proud to be a member of a political family in which all members work long and hard in pursuit of individual liberty and social justice.

by Graham Watson, MEP



The ELDR Party and its Parliamentary Group offer mutual support and adopt a common approach towards political activities. Under the Presidency of **Pat Cox** (Independent-Ireland), the Group of the ELDR Party is the third largest political group in the European Parliament, with 52 members. **Jan Kees Wiebenga** (VVD-Netherlands), serves as Vice-President of the European Parliament whilst **Daniel Ducarme** (PRL-Belgium) is a Questor. **Graham Watson** (Lib-Dems-UK) is a Parliamentary Committee President and 5 other members of the ELDR Parliamentary Group serve as Committee Vice-Presidents. **Astrid Thors** (SFP-Finland), **Antonio Di Pietro** (Lista Di Pietro-Italy) and **Karl-Erik Olsson** (Centerpartiet-Sweden) are Presidents of Interparliamentary Delegations and there are 6 group members who serve as Delegation Vice-Presidents, as well as one member who is Vice-President of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly.

« Le choix libéral, c'est surtout un choix de civilisation »

C'est vraiment avec plaisir que nous, membres de « Italia dei Valori », nous associons à la célébration des 25 ans du Parti des Libéraux, Démocrates et Réformateurs européen dont nous sommes membres depuis à peine un an. Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, nous pensons que l'appartenance à la famille libérale est un choix obligé, parce que, pour nous, le choix libéral, c'est surtout un choix de civilisation.

Nous, membres de « Italia dei Valori », sommes Libéraux parce que, à la différence d'autres formations politiques, nous ne croyons pas posséder de Vérités absolues : nos convictions sont fermes, mais nous respectons toutes les autres opinions, même celles très lointaines de nous.

Notre vision du monde de l'économie de la politique nationale comme européenne, est en effet basée sur l'idée même de Liberté, ainsi que l'indique notre nom.

Liberté comme autonomie de pensée, capacité de prendre des décisions, assumer des responsabilités, opérer des

choix efficaces et efficaces seulement en fonction du Bien commun, en optimisant les possibilités à notre disposition sans gaspillage inutile de ressources, mais surtout sans être conditionné par des idéologies dépassées, sans liens de dogmes ou préjugés.

Nous, membres de « Italia dei Valori », en particulier, considérons qu'à fin d'exercer totalement et concrètement cette Liberté, qu'il est nécessaire d'avoir un Etat de droit où soit pleinement affirmé le respect absolu des règles, c'est-à-dire, de la Légalité et de la Justice.

Nous considérons, comme les Libéraux européens, que ceux-ci soient le principes-guide de référence. Seul le respect de ces principes permettra d'aboutir à une cohabitation civile et pacifique, où soient exaltées et stimulées les capacités d'amélioration de l'individu, sans négliger ceux qui sont dans le besoin. Une société libre où tous les citoyens sont soumis à la reconnaissance des mêmes droits et surtout des mêmes devoirs.

by Antonio Di Pietro, MEP

25 years of ELDR: the liberal paradox

The EU is a liberal project: free movement of persons, capital, goods and services. Is there anything more liberal? Yet within the EU structures liberals are weakly represented. For example, there are only two liberal commissioners. The EU has but one liberal prime minister. In the European Parliament the ELD-Group consists of only 52 members out of a total of 626, and has none from France, Germany, Austria, Portugal and Greece.

Seeing this liberal paradox, are we then, after 25 years of the ELD-group in the European Parliament, on the right track? Yes, there is a positive element in all this. Liberals play a balancing role in the European Parliament. When the two parliamentary groups of the Christian democrats and the Socialists have different positions, the ELD-Group is needed in order to obtain a majority in the House. Thus, in 1999 a pact was concluded which in all likelihood will result in the election of a liberal president of the EP, the first in twenty years.



Jan-Kees Wiebenga MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament.

Nevertheless much remains to be done. The relations with liberals in candidate states must be intensified, their party-organisations must be strengthened. Secondly, I think it is time to start a debate about our long-term strategy. Should we be a small group of pure liberals or should we try to become a broad movement uniting all members of Parliament

who favour the combination of a social market-economy and the right of self-determination of individuals? The second could lead to a broad and larger parliamentary group reflecting the emancipation of the modern citizen. Parallel to broadening the party, the implementation of our European liberal program is essential. Political reform (more transparency and accountability), radical decentralisation and the fight against corruption, are classic liberal priorities indeed. The ELD-Group thus has two clear tasks to fulfil in the next 25 years.

by Jan-Kees Wiebenga, MEP

1984

Second direct elections. 9.7%, 31/410.

World News: Indira Gandhi assassinated



Congress, Groningen. Colette Flesch, President. (PHOTO)

Mechtild Von Alemann, Sec-Gen.

P.R.D. (E) joins.

World News: Glasnost and Perestroika (PHOTO)

1985



1986



P.S.D. (P) joins Congress, Catania. Named "ELDR" (PHOTO)

World News: Chernobyl and Challenger (PHOTO) explode



1987



Congress, Lisbon.

World News: West German pilot lands in Red Square (PHOTO)

5th billionth baby born



(above)
ELDR Prime Ministers gather in Nice 2000 for the ELDR Leaders and Ministers Meeting. (From left to right) **Marc Forné Molné**, Prime Minister, Partit Libéral, Andorra; **Guy Verhofstadt**, Prime Minister, VLD, Belgium; **Pat Cox** MEP, President of the ELDR Group; **Werner Hoyer** MdB, President of the ELDR Party; **Janez Drnovsek**, Prime Minister, LDS, Slovenia; **Andris Berzins**, Prime Minister, Latvia's Way, Latvia. Not present on this photo is the fifth ELDR Prime Minister, **Rolandas Paksas** of the LLU, Lithuania.

(below)
1979 – Lors de la première élection du Parlement européen au suffrage direct, les partis libéraux et démocratiques ont recueilli 14% des suffrages, soit 39 des 410 sièges attribués au sein du Parlement européen.



(above)
The Nice 2000 ELDR Leaders and Ministers meeting – The ELDR Leaders and Ministers meeting convenes at least twice a year on the eve of the European Council and allows the political leaders of ELDR member parties, ELDR Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Commissioners, and other key liberal personalities in attendance at the summit to discuss and debate the decisions to be taken by the European Council. It is a vital opportunity for European liberal democrats to put forward our positive, forward looking and distinctive political message.



(above)
Le Congrès de Copenhague, en juin 1981 – Gaston Thorn, nommé entretemps Président de la Commission Européenne, fut remplacé dans ses fonctions de Président par Willy De Clercq.



(left)
Le Congrès de Munich, en décembre 1983 – Les travaux furent essentiellement consacrés à l'élaboration et à la mise au point du second programme électoral des LDE, intitulé « Pour une Europe libérale et démocratique ».



(left)
Le Congrès de Bruxelles, en novembre 1977 – Les Libéraux et Démocrates ont été le premier « parti européen » à formuler un programme politique s'articulant autour d'objectifs clairement formulés et permettant de définir une identité libérale aux yeux de l'électeur européen.

(right)
Gaston Thorn addresses 1,200 liberal politicians and delegates from the 12 member parties at an electoral rally in Luxembourg, 1979.



(right)
Le premier Président élu du Parlement européen fut Simone Veil, membre du Groupe Libéral. Martin Bangemann, leader des libéraux allemands, fut élu à la tête du Groupe Libéral. Les Libéraux apparaissent comme une force politique incontournable.



(above)
Dîner du groupe des libéraux et apparentés du Parlement européen à l'occasion de la constitution de la fédération des partis libéraux de la Communauté Européenne, le jeudi 25 mars 1976 dans le salon Berlin de l'hôtel Stuttgart International.

1988

*PD (IRL) joins.
Congress, Luxembourg.*



1989



*Third direct elections - 10%, 49/410.
C.D.S. (E) joins.
World News: Berlin Wall falls (PHOTO)
Tiananmen massacre (PHOTO)*

1990

Congress, Shannon.

World News: Mandela freed (PHOTO)



1991



*Christian Ehlers, Sec-Gen.
Congress, Poitiers. Affiliate: LP (SWE).
World News: Soviet Union collapses (PHOTO)
Apartheid ends*

Defining political liberalism

European liberalism will survive the Third Way. European voters are starting to realise that there is no third way, and will opt for a straightforward one...

The nineties have been the era of liberalism and have witnessed the triumph of the liberal creed, but history has by no means ended. Especially in Europe, where the success of liberalism and the downfall of the iron curtain has frightened the leftwing leaders into a jealous political frenzy, and into a strategy of recuperation commonly labelled "The Third Way". I say it is nothing but conservatism disguised as new socialism. Blair, Schröder, D'Alema, Cardoso, Jospin, Chirac: former nominal socialists and even communists, glossing over their apostasy and utter failure to achieve what they promised, glossing over their differences for fear of letting the liberals "end" European history and in the hope of luring new democracies away from political liberalism. They have lost faith in their former social-democratic creed; they have in fact embraced economic liberalism, but shy away from



*Annemie Neyts,
President of Liberal International.*

the word. They come up with a so-called third way, because they are unwilling to sever themselves from the prestigious label of "la gauche", because they are unwilling to embrace political liberalism. They are unwilling to relinquish their political power to their own citizens, and that, is precisely the core, the essence of political liberalism.

Political liberalism is not about benevolent father politicians pretending to know best and polishing their own image, it is about empowering the multitudes, it is about devising the indispensable institutions of

civil society and political democracy, it is about ensuring the observance of civil liberties and human rights, it is about organising true economic markets and keeping them open to newcomers, it is about allowing and organising the free flow of ideas, goods and people, it is about safeguarding all these aspects for the future of Europe.

European liberal politicians and liberal

minded political parties embody political liberalism better (if still imperfectly) than any third-way high priests ever could. What we need to do in the immediate future is to further define and promote political liberalism along the lines I have briefly sketched. Once again we face a difficult struggle, but there is no reason why we should not progress and proceed as we have done for 25 years.



Gaston Thorn, first President of the ELDR Party

Uniting liberals on a common platform

The biggest success during my membership of the ELDR was the fact that we were the first political group which managed to agree on a programme for European elections that was binding to all participating parties. Of course, it remained possible to expand on the agreed text and to be more specific in national campaigns, but it proved possible to unite liberals in a common platform. That unity of purpose and willingness to work together on concrete formulae has made our drafting exercises a rewarding experience. Our challenge for the future is to expand liberalism among the future member countries of the European Union. There we are lagging behind. The Benelux countries have demonstrated that liberal parties do appeal to wide sections of the population. In our communication age with new opportunities for everybody we should be able to make clear that we stand for individual development, for choice in the use of our talents and for responsible citizenship.

Wim van Eekelen, Chairman of the ELDR group in the North Atlantic Assembly

Creating opportunities for young liberals

The Liberal and Radical Youth Movement of the European Union will celebrate this year, like the ELDR, its 25 year birthday. Many of the youngsters currently active within LYMEC were born after 1976. Our generation grew up in a time when Europe was still divided and the European Community a small club of only 9 member states. Since then a lot has changed, mostly for the better. The Community grew from 9 to 15 members, became the European Union and the Iron Curtain fell. And now we approach the biggest ever opportunity for the EU: enlargement. The European Union is a liberal project, securing already more than 50 years of peace, freedom and democracy in a growing part of Europe. Young people, now more than ever, are eager to cross



*Daniel Tanahatov,
President of LYMEC.*

borders and make use of the many opportunities which have been made possible through the EU to go and study or work in other regions and cities on this continent. LYMEC contributed by making it possible over the years for thousands of young liberals to participate in congresses, seminars and young leaders meetings all over Europe. Many have

continued, within the ELDR and its member parties, to be active for European liberalism.

During the Presidency of Dennis Straat, LYMEC, as the first European political youth organisation, established an Individual Membership Section. The IMS is designed in the spirit of the Treaty of the European Union, to give young European citizens the opportunity to get directly involved in European liberal politics. In the hopefully not too distant future, when we live in a liberal democratic, federal and decentralised European Union, the IMS will come into its own and allow growing numbers of Europeans to join in the work of the ELDR and to promote European liberal democracy.

by Daniel Tanahatov

1992



*Det Radikale Venstre joins.
Affiliate: FIDESZ (HUN).*

Affiliate: CP (FIN)

*Congress, Copenhagen. (PHOTO)
Affiliate: SzDSz (HUN), SPP (FIN)
and LDS (SLO), HCP (SVK).*

1993

*40 years of the ELDR Group
P.V.V. (B) rejoins as V.L.D.*

*Affiliate: LP (MK), LP (FIN), LA (A)
and FDP-PRD (CH).*



*Congress, Torquay.
(PHOTO) ELDR -
becomes European
political party.*

1994

*Affiliate: LP (BIH) and HSL (HR).
Fourth direct elections - 43/567 seats.*

*Dec
Parti Républicain (F) withdraws. D66
(N) and FdLi (I) join. Affiliate: SD-OH
(CZ).*



*World News:
War in Sarajevo
(PHOTO)*

1995



*Congress, Stockholm.
Uffe Ellemann-Jensen,
President (PHOTO)*

Affiliate: Reform (EST), DU (SVK)

World News: Ebola outbreak

Liberalism at the heart of the European project

Oddly enough virtually everybody has turned Liberal nowadays with the notable exception of the majority of the electors.

If the European Union has turned out to be what it is today, it is mainly thanks to a few political thinkers that directly belonged to the Liberal parties, or who shared liberal ideals. To begin with Jean Monnet - the father of the European Union said it so well with those words engraved on the bridge at the Kirchberg: "We do not unify nations, but people". If that is not what liberalism is all about, what is?

But Jean Monnet's ideas would never have become near realisation if, after the European Defence Community stumbled in 1954 over the nationalism of de Gaulle and others, a Liberal party leader, Gaetano Martino; a liberal politician without party adherence, Jan Willem Beyen, and a Socialist leader Paul Henri Spaak had not taken a new initiative to continue the ECSC with EEC, thus making market integration the

motor of unification that it has become. It may be said that theirs was a purely liberal initiative, to develop the wellbeing of the individual through economic development. However, it cannot be claimed that this is the sole and only idea of Liberals, nor that in further developments in the European integration they were without allies in other political formations, but to enforce economic development by the discipline of the market is again pure Adam Smith.

Even if the representation of the Liberal Group in the European Parliament - the first one to be officially create - has steadily remained the third largest throughout the existence of this institution, it remains considerably smaller than the two other traditional forces in the European political. The temporary ascent and decline of more extreme



Florus Wijsenbeek, 1st Secretary-general and former MEP (1984-1999).

groups has definitely had its influence on these two overwhelming powers, drawing the Socialists to the left and the conservatives towards nationalism. It is nevertheless a tremendous achievement that Liberalism has been able, on both economic and social issues, to draw these two forces time and again towards the centre; towards the acceptance of a social market economy; towards the observance of strict budgetary

and public finance criteria in EMU; towards a truly level playing field in the liberalised internal market.

Although none of these goals have been fully realised yet, it cannot be denied that they are the established and accepted goals of the Union, which serves again and again to make Socialists refrain from interventionism and overspending on the back of the taxpayer, and to prevent

Conservatives from protectionism and social exclusion.

I was very much involved, both as Secretary-general and as President of the drafting committee, in formulating four common electoral programmes between 1979 and 1994 and we have always stressed that our ideal of a social market economy incorporates the need to provide freedom for individual ideas, beliefs, thoughts and development. As Giovanni Malagodi expressed so well in the preface to our first programme: "The only thing which we cannot tolerate is intolerance".

The cause of our limited success on the electoral front - as opposed to our ideological success - may be that the ELDR party has never become the real centre of Liberal party politics. May ELDR become in the next 25 years the true centre of integrationist European Liberalism. I still hope to live that day, as I did everything I could to make it just that.

by Florus Wijsenbeek

Liberal politics - enabling individuals to develop their full potential

When I was nominated Secretary General of the ELDR Party in 1991 it turned out to be the most important career step in my political life and the most thrilling professional experience I have made so far. Did I anticipate it to be that way? To be honest, not quite. But we faced the period when communism in Europe was overthrown, offering a historic chance to unite the old continent again, and I was convinced that liberalism has its role to play in this process.

The ELDR Party went out to look for potential partner parties in Central and Eastern Europe. It is true, in the course of the years we more than doubled in size, but the first impression I got when I travelled to Central and East European countries was: Maybe the "hour 0" does exist! Everything we "Westerners" take for granted did not have a chance to develop in the East over the

last 40 years: freedom, democratic structures, political debate over value orientation, market economy and prosperity. I learnt a lot: you have to move steadily but slowly, you cannot impose, you can only offer and assist. Whatever has not grown naturally, whatever has not been embraced out of free will, will not last. The countries and parties have to find their own way.

Speaking of Central and East European countries one quote got stuck in my mind. Victor Orban, the Hungarian Prime Minister, once remarked: "Ever since the peaceful revolutions in Central and East Europe, our countries seem to be 10 years away from EU membership." Shame on us.

While we were looking for partner parties in Central and Eastern Europe, we also tried to further improve the cohesion among liberal parties in Europe. We did



The first meeting of the party executive took place on the train to Bonn in 1976.

so by sharpening our common political profile, on the one hand, and by broadening the mutual understanding that liberalism must always be understood in the context of the respective political culture, on the other. If you asked me about the common European political feature which distinguishes liberals from other party families, my answer would

be: the confidence in the individual. Consequently, liberal politics aim at enabling the individual to develop his and her full potential.

Over the last 25 years the associations of like-minded parties in Europe came a long way from being an occasional meeting point to establishing structures of political parties. I am convinced

that, in time for the European elections 2004, a Council regulation, currently under discussion, on the statute and financing of European political parties will have entered into force. This regulation will render operational article 191 of the Amsterdam Treaty. The original proposal dates back to 1992, when the secretaries general of the then three European party families mapped out the key elements, which have largely been retained in the draft regulation. It is exciting to see an idea become reality.

Let me finish on a more personal note. It also has been a tremendous experience to build up and work with a small, dedicated team of colleagues. It was amazing what we have achieved. Would I start again in the same job? Any time!

**Christian Ehlers,
Secretary-general of the
ELDR Party 1991-1999**

1996

*Affiliated: LP (AD), LP (Kosova), DIKO (CY), UD (CY)
Congress, Vienna.*

1997

*Full members: SzDSz (HUN), MPP-MOS (SVK), LP (BIH), FDP (CH), LP (I)
Affiliate: CM (SVK), LCU (LTU), NPR (RO), LDP (MK), LW (LVA), LLU (LTU)*



World News: Dolly cloned (PHOTO)

1998

*Full members: LDS (SLO), Reform (EST)
Affiliate: LS (HR)*

World News: Good Friday Accord

1999

*Full members: PNL (RO), LP (Kosovo)
Affiliate: LDU (BG), DA (AL)*

*Congress, Berlin (PHOTO)
Fifth direct elections. 11%, 51 seats.*



World News: Six Billionth Person born in Sarajevo (PHOTO)



Promoting Human Rights and Democracy

Once we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ELDR we shall probably realise how short time is and how quickly it passes. 25 years ago, I was a nine year old girl living in occupied Estonia and I did not have any idea of the birth of ELDR. Today I am one of the ELDR Vice-Presidents and daily implementing liberal values at home in Riigikogu, as well as in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where I have been Chairing the LDR Group since January 1999.

The LDR Group in the PACE has 82 members from 32 countries - the third group in size. Our size is changing often because we are dependant on the domestic elections in the Council of Europe member states. However, we are very active in the Assembly, not only preparing reports and monitoring elections, but we are also known as human rights and democracy promoters, especially in the countries like the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

I believe that liberals are playing an important role in the integration of Europe, not only in their home countries, but more and more at pan-European level as well. In order to guarantee a free Europe we should keep our basic values in the field of economic freedoms and the personal liberty of choice. And of course, tolerance, human rights, democracy and rule of law - these values keep us together and makes us strong.

Kristiina Ojuland,
Vice-President of the
ELDR Party

Liberalism is based on the force of the law, not on the law of the strong

For me Liberalism is the movement for the emancipation of the individual, based on a basic trust in the possibilities and natural gifts of every human being. From there also comes the belief in the free market; the decision of the individual economic subjects are better by definition than those that are taken for them from above.

Liberalism is based on the force of the law, not on the law of the strong. The idea of a Liberal rule of law should also be transferred to the international community. Who lives in freedom has

the responsibility to defend the rights of others to live in freedom - for freedom is universal and indivisible. A goal of liberal foreign policy should be to establish a world wide commonwealth of citizens, with the largest possible decentralisation of government to protect the rich patchwork of cultures. Protecting the rights of the individual is more important than protecting the interest of states. After all, for Liberals states are nothing but a tool to organise common interests and activities.

by **Jules Maaten, MEP**



Jules Maaten MEP, Treasurer of the ELDR Party, with Group President Pat Cox MEP.

Early European days



Mechthild von Alemann, Secretary-general of the ELDR Party 1985-1990, receives a bouquet of flowers from then Party President, Colette Flesch.

In 1975 I got elected to the Landtag of Northrhine-Westfalia and stayed till 1980. As I am a convinced Federalist, this was a good place for me. The first direct elections to the European Parliament were planned for 1978 but in fact took place in June 1979, as the political compromise about the number of members per coun-

try took a long time.

This was uncharted land, the electorate was totally uninformed and I became fascinated by the challenge to change statutes, elect candidates, and write an election programme. In my party, the German F.D.P., Martin Bangemann became head of the list and I was number two.

Freedom from conflict

Liberalism is about more than just freedom to trade and travel. Liberalism is also about freedom from evils like poverty, disease, ignorance and war. The European Union is an unprecedented experiment in the liberal commitment to freedom from war - not just international conflicts but also ancient feuds like Northern Ireland. Europe brought Britain and Ireland together and gave us the models of cross-border co-operation, pooling of sovereignty and institutional inventiveness on which the Belfast Agreement is built. It is the liberal political culture of the European Union that makes freedom from conflict possible in my country.

by **Lord Alderdice**



Lord Alderdice,
Speaker of the
Northern Ireland
Assembly, ELDR
Vice-President.

After years of hard - but theoretical - work, I became now (1979) member of the first directly elected European Parliament, choosing to be in the transport committee and the women's committee. At the LDR-Congress of Copenhagen I was made President of the Federation's campaign committee for 1984, building on my experience at German level.

I realised that the centralist approach the Federation of Liberal Parties had employed in the campaign of 1979 had left many scars. The elite in Brussels had prepared the ground, but now parties/people had to shape Europe. This is why later, when I became ELDR Secretary-general, we founded the meetings of the Secretaries-general of our member parties. This has certainly ensured a continuous interest in Europe, even though the information which should be made generally available to the public is still too much confined to limited numbers of directly involved people.

I also started regular contacts (in the shape of lunches) with my counterparts from the two other big families, the Christian-Democrats and the Socialists. We knew we had to put the financing of European campaigns on a sound legal footing, but it would take until the Treaty of Amsterdam to achieve at least the theoretical basis...and the 2001 May plenary session to adopt practical solutions.

Looking back, we have come a very long way, and I am still a convinced European and Federalist.

by **Mechthild von Alemann**

PR - a European liberal achievement

British Lib-Dems owe their success in Proportional Representation to the European Liberals - without their help and support we would never have got PR for Scotland, nor for the European Parliament. The latter was the breakthrough; to achieve that goal was my main reason in seeking to work for the ELDR from 1988-94. But, I did suffer one big disappointment. I proved unable to convince European liberals of the vital need to reform the CAP and to adopt new policies for energy and the environment in accordance with good and proper scientific principles. Despite that failure, I get some slight pleasure in seeing all around me growing evidence that I was right all along!!



Dr. Gordon Heath, 10 years work with the ELDR

2000

Werner Hoyer, President.
(PHOTO BELOW) Lex Corijn,
Sec-Gen. (PHOTO RIGHT)

Full members: CP (SWE),
LW (LVA)



World News:
Milosevic falls



2001

Full Members: LP (H)
LP (MK)
ELDR 25th Anniversary



25ème ANNIVERSAIRE

Solid Identity - Trust for Change



Lex Corijn, Secretary-general of the European Liberal Democrats (ELDR PARTY)

The European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party has reached its 25th anniversary and this will be remembered in activities throughout the year. This newspaper is a big part of the celebrations and I hope that you will find the various contributions of value, especially as they not only take stock of achievements made since 1976, but also sketch out responses to which we will have to react in an ever changing world.

Of course we must stay honest and modest even during an anniversary - neither European Liberal Democrats nor its Member Parties changed Europe all alone during the last 25 years. But it is also clear that the enormous achievements made in integrating and uniting Europe since 1976 have broadly followed liberal democrat lines. The Single Market, Monetary Union and democratic progress in each IGC are successes we can call our own. The ELDR Party as such did not win the Cold War, but it is important to remember and recall all those liberal democrats that were in the front line against dictatorship during those years, on both sides of the iron curtain. The liberal democrat attachment to democracy and human rights has created a continent of shared values and prosperity, the unification through EU enlargement cannot come too soon. However, much remains to be done and there are many challenges ahead. It is clear that the steps towards European unity and integration have left many citizens unconvinced and globalisation has far more opponents than only those that smash cars and make trouble at European and international summits. Political parties, especially those on European level, have a responsibility to reach out and include all in democratic dialogue on how our European society should develop. There is a positive message for Europe, for free trade and for globalisation that must be re-emphasised in the wake of anti-capitalist radicalisation on the left and re-emerging nationalism on the far right.

25 Years after the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties was established by its nine founder members the modern ELDR Party unites 40 political parties, with 29 full members and 11 affiliated parties.

Austria	Liberales Forum	http://www.lif.or.at/
Belgium	Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (VLD) Parti Réformateur Libéral (PRL)	http://www.vld.be/ http://www.prl.be/
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Parti Libéral Démocratique (LDS)	
Denmark	det radikale venstre venstre	http://www.radikale.dk/index3.htm http://www.venstre.dk/
Estonia	Estonian Reform Party	http://www.reform.ee/
Finland	Suomen Keskusta Svenska Folkpartiet (SFP)	http://www.keskusta.fi/ http://www.sfp.fi/
Germany	Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP)	http://www.liberales.de/portal/
Greece	Liberal party of Greece	http://www.liberals.gr
Hungary	Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége (SzDSz)	http://www.szdsz.hu/
Ireland	Progressive Democrats (PD)	www.progressivedemocrats.ie
Italy	Italia dei valori - Lista Di Pietro Partito Repubblicano Italiano (PRI) I Democratici	http://www.antoniodipietro.org/ http://www.pri.net/ http://www.democraticiperlulivo.it/
Kosovo	Partia Liberale e Kosoves (PLK)	
Latvia	Latvijas Ceļ* (LC)	http://www.lc.lv
Lithuania	Lietuvos Liberalu Sąjunga	http://www.lis.lt
Luxembourg	Demokratesch Partei (DP)	http://www.dp.lu/
The Netherlands	Democraten 66 Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en democratie (VVD)	http://www.d66.nl/ http://www.vvd.nl/
Romania	Partidul National Liberal (PNL)	http://www.pnl.ro
Slovenia	Liberalerna Demokracije Slovenije (LDS)	http://www.2000.lds.si
Sweden	Folkpartiet Liberalerna (FP) Centerpartiet (C)	http://www.folkpartiet.se/ http://www.centerpartiet.se/
Switzerland	Parti Radical Démocratique (FDP-PRD)	http://www.fdp-prd.ch/
United Kingdom	Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems) The Alliance of Northern Ireland	http://www.libdems.org.uk/
Albania	Partia Aleanca Demokratike	
Andorra	Partit Liberal d'Andorra	http://www.partitliberal.ad
Bulgaria	Liberal Democratic Union (LDU)	
Croatia	Hrvatska Socijalno Stranka (HSSLS) Liberalna Stranka (LS)	http://www.hssls.hr http://www.liberali.hr
Cyprus	Democratic Party (DIKO) United Democrats (UDP)	http://www.diko.org.cy
Lithuania	Lietuvos Centro Sąjunga	
Macedonia	Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Liberal Party of Macedonia	
Norway	Venstre (V)	http://www.venstre.no/

ELDR - élément essentiel du libéralisme mondial

Lorsque la Fédération des libéraux démocrates et réformateurs européens fut créée en 1977, dans la perspective des premières élections directes du Parlement européen, elle était formée de plus ou moins les mêmes membres que l'Internationale libérale. Les libéraux européens ne sont plus aujourd'hui, 25 ans plus tard, la clé de voûte de l'Internationale libérale, et c'est ainsi que cela doit être. Mais la maturation de l'idée européenne en une structure à part entière qui contienne davantage qu'une politique économique commune, a rendu nécessaire pour l'ELDR d'établir et développer un réseau étendu. Il faut ajouter à cela que des contacts intensifs en Europe et au sein de notre famille libérale constitue pour nous une chose naturelle. La jeune pousse qu'était l'ELDR, a dès le départ mis davantage l'accent sur un travail politique concret que son parent l'Internationale libérale. Peut-être est-ce l'élection tous les cinq ans, du premier et toujours unique Parlement supranational directement élu, qui a donné à l'ELDR sa force et son esprit d'équipe? Cela a fait de l'ELDR un complément vitaminé essentiel pour l'Internationale libérale.

Annemie Neyts, Présidente de l'Internationale libérale

ELDR's lesson for the future - synergy between the Group and Party

From my vantage point as Secretary-general of the ELDR Group, having also served for a brief period as Secretary-general of the ELDR Party, I believe that the synergy between the ELDR Group and Party is of the utmost importance to both. The ELDR Parliamentary Group provides the framework for the expression of the politics of the party within the European Parliament



Bo Manderup Jensen, Secretary-general of the ELDR Group in the European Parliament.

and the Party provides the group with a framework for establishing the overall political guidelines for its actions within the Parliament. The lesson for the future is clearly that the more the EU develops, the more we need to harness the synergy between Group and Party. In particular, the reuniting of Europe proves the indispensable nature of this partnership.

ELDR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS 2001

June 2001

- 4 - 6 June ELDR Group Seminar, Sweden (S)
- 6 - 7 June ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 6 June ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Brussels (B) (18h30)
- 7 - 8 June ELDR Party Spring Conference, Brussels (B)
- 8 June ELDR Party Council Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 8-9 June European Movement, Federal Council, Stockholm (S)
- 9-10 June European Congress, VLD, Blankenberge (B)
- 9-10 June Congress Svenska Folkpartiet, Pargas (FIN)
- 13 June Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 14 June ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Gothenburg (S)
- 14 June ELDR Leaders and Ministers Meeting, Gothenburg (S) - evening
- 15 June ELDR Party Leaders working breakfast meeting, Gothenburg (S)
- 15 June LYMEC seminar "Enlargement, Growth and Employment", Gothenburg
- 16-19 June Centerpartiet Sweden Congress, Västervik, (S)
- 27-28 June Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 25-29 June Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (F)

July 2001

- 13 - 15 July European Liberal Regatta, Kiel, (D)

August 2001

- 29 - 30 Aug. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels, (B)

September 2001

- 19 Sept. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 19 Sept. Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 22-23 Sept. Venstre Congress, Odense (DK), Contact person Niels Kirkegaard tel +45 45 80 22 33 email: niels@kirkegaard
- Liberal Democrats Conference, Bournemouth (UK)
- 17-23 Sept. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (F)
- 25 Sept. ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Ljubljana
- 26 Sept. ELDR Party Council Meeting, Ljubljana
- 26 - 28 Sept. ELDR Party Autumn Conference-Congress, Ljubljana
- 24 - 26 Sept. ELDR Group Study Days, Ljubljana
- 28 Sept. LI Bureau Meeting, Ljubljana, Slovenia

October 2001

- 6 - 7 Oct. Secretaries General Meeting, (venue to be confirmed)
- 5 - 9 Oct. Meeting Liberal Group in the North Atlantic Assembly, Ottawa
- 17 - 18 Oct. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 18-21 Oct. Folkpartiet Liberalerna Congress, Lund (S)

November 2001

- 5 - 6 Nov. ELDR Group Bureau Meeting, (venue to be confirmed) (B)
- 7 - 8 Nov. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 9 Nov. LI Bureau Meeting, Copenhagen (DK)
- 10- 11 Nov. LI Executive Committee Meeting, Copenhagen (DK)
- 14 Nov. Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 17 Nov. D66 Congress, Rotterdam (to be confirmed)
- 28 Nov. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)

December 2001

- 5 - 6 Dec. ELDR Group Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 13 Dec. ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Brussels (B)
- 13 Dec. ELDR Leaders and Ministers Meeting, Brussels (B) - evening
- 14 Dec. ELDR Party leaders working breakfast meeting (B)



ELDR Party Secretariat - 2001

ELDR

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