



# EUROPEAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS aisbl

## Insight

28 YEARS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACHIEVEMENT SEPTEMBER 2004

[www.eldr.org](http://www.eldr.org)



## En avant les lib raux!

Le jeudi 29 avril, l'ELDR aisbl a organisé un grand rallye électoral. Cet événement a remporté un grand succès et près de 1000 personnes ont répondu présent au lancement de la campagne électorale pour les élections du Parlement européen, qui auront lieu du 10 au 13 juin. Ces élections correspondent aux 25 ans de la première élection directe du Parlement européen. En 1979 il semblait ne pas y avoir de limite

pour les libéraux. L'avenir était radieux. Les idéaux libéraux d'une Europe libre, démocratique et pacifique, dotée d'un Parlement puissant au cœur de la démocratie européenne étaient en vue. Cette vision est présente aujourd'hui encore dans notre logo où elle est symbolisée par l'oiseau de la liberté et du progrès.

En 1979 les libéraux préparaient la première

campagne électorale européenne, à bord d'un train et voyagèrent dans toute la Communauté européenne formée de neuf Etats membres. Depuis quatre élections du Parlement européen ont eu lieu lors desquelles le Groupe libéral s'est chaque fois renforcé. Pour le lancement de cette cinquième campagne électorale l'ELDR aisbl a rassemblé nos leaders politiques en particulier, Pat Cox, Président du Parlement euro-

péen, les Premiers Ministres de Belgique, Guy Verhofstadt, de Finlande, Matti Vanhanen et de Slovénie, Anton Rop ainsi que la plupart des têtes de listes de nos partis membres. Cette nouvelle élection du Parlement européen a été organisée dans 25 Etats membres et près de 450 millions de citoyens ont été appelés à s'exprimer. L'élargissement est une priorité pour l'ELDR aisbl, depuis la chute du mur de Berlin et la reconstitution d'une Europe libre et sans divisions. Il est temps pour nous de libérer le potentiel de l'Europe comme nous l'affirmons par ailleurs dans notre Manifeste électoral.

Ce rallye a été organisé dans le Skyhall, l'ancien terminal de l'aéroport de Bruxelles National qui constitue un symbole historique, présentant à l'expo universelle de 1958 la vision de l'ère nouvelle qu'elle ouvrait. 1958 fût également l'année de la signature du Traité de Rome. L'organisation du rallye à cet endroit offrait aux participants une fenêtre ouverte sur l'Europe et le monde, reliant Bruxelles à l'Europe, tout comme l'ELDR aisbl relie le Parlement européen aux citoyens. Cet événement a bénéficié d'une large couverture médiatique. Non seulement il a permis à nos leaders politiques de se rassembler avec nos nombreux candidats mais il a aussi permis à des centaines de militants d'être présents pour fêter ensemble le lancement de la préparation des élections, aider activement à la campagne et participer au succès de ces élections: en avant les libéraux.

## ELDR Party aisbl Member Parties obtained 58 EP seats

The ELDR Party aisbl Member Parties' candidates for the European elections 2004 have obtained 58 seats in the European Parliament. Our MEP's are seated in the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). You can find all our MEP's in the following list. First in order of country, and then alphabetical order.

- **Belgium** (5 out of 24 Belgian MEP's): VLD (3) Annemie Neyts, Dirk Sterckx, Johan Vanhecke; MR (2) Antoine Duquesne, Frederique Ries
- **Denmark** (4 out of 14): radikale venstre (1) Anders Samuelsen; venstre (3) Niels Busk, Anne E Jensen, Karin Riis Jorgensen
- **Estonia** (2 out of 6): Keskerakond (1) Siiri Oviir; Reformierakond (1) Toomas Savi
- **Finland** (5 out of 16): Keskusta (4) Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Hannu Takkula, Paavo Väyrynen, Kyösti Virrankoski; Svenska Folkpartiet (1) Henrik Lax
- **Germany** (7 out of 99): FDP (7) Alexander Alvaro, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, Wolf Klinz, Silvana Koch-

- Mehrin, Holger Krahrmer, Willem Schuth
- **Hungary** (2 out of 24): SZDSZ (2) Gabor Demsky, Istvan Szent-Ivanyi
- **Italy** (3 out of 78): Lista di Pietro (2) Mr Chiesa, Antonio di Pietro; MRE (1) Luciana Sbarbati
- **Latvia** (1 out of 9): Latvia's Way (1) Georgs Andrejevs
- **Lithuania** (2 out of 13): LCS (2) Eugenijus Gentvilas, Margarita Starkeviciute
- **Luxembourg** (1 out of 6): Demokratesch Partei (1) Lydie Poelfer
- **Poland** (4 out of 54): Unia Wolnosci (4) Bronislaw Geremek, Jan Kulakowski, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Grazyna Staniszevska
- **Slovenia** (2 out of 7): LDS (2) Jelko Kacin, Mojca Drcar Murko
- **Sweden** (3 out of 19): Centerpartiet (1) Lena Ek; Folkpartiet (2) Maria Carlshamre, Cecilia Malmstrom
- **The Netherlands** (5 out of 27): D66 (1) Sophie In 't Veld; VVD (4) Jules Maaten, Toine Manders, Jan Mulder, Jeanine Plasschaert
- **United Kingdom** (12 out of 78): Liberal Democrats (12) Elspeth Attwooll, Chris

- Davies, Andrew Duff, Fiona Hall, Chris Huhne, Saj Karim, Liz Lynne, Baroness Sarah Ludford, Bill Newton Dunn, Baroness Emma Nicholson, Diana Wallis, Graham Watson

### Results European elections online!

Please find the results of the ELDR Member Parties for the European elections on the website of the ELDR aisbl:

<http://www.eldr.org/>

### ELDR Party becomes ELDR Party aisbl

On the 30th of April 2004, the ELDR Congress adopted the new legal statute and the ELDR aisbl (international non-profit association) was founded. As the first European Party created 28 years ago, ELDR aisbl was the first European political party to obtain legal personality (under Belgian law). The statutes were published in the Moniteur belge (\*04111833\*). The entry into force this year of the new "EU Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 of the EP and Council of 4-11-2003 on the regulations governing political parties at European level and the rules regarding their

funding" has finally provided the European political parties with a precise legal and financial framework to carry their political activity. The new EU regulation sets out the duties and the responsibilities of European political parties. The new EU Regulation provides for the necessary financial resources for our European Party - ELDR Party aisbl - to continue to exist and carry its political activity. As a result, the ELDR aisbl submitted amongst the first, on 20th of July its application for funding as set under the new EU Regulation.

**New address ELDR Party aisbl office: Rue Montoyerstraat 40, 1000 Brussels**

## L'attribution du Prix Charlemagne 2004 Pat Cox, Pr sident du PE

Le 20 mai, Pat Cox, Président du Parlement européen, s'est vu décerner le prestigieux "Prix Charlemagne" pour sa contribution importante à l'unité européenne, lors d'une cérémonie à Aix-la-Chapelle, en Allemagne. Parmi les précédents récipiendaires, on compte Winston Churchill, Jean Monnet, Helmut Kohl, Tony Blair, Jacques Delors et Bill Clinton.

Exceptionnellement, le Prix Charlemagne, qui est la récompense politique la plus renommée en Allemagne, a été décerné deux fois en 2004, à Sa Sainteté le Pape Jean-Paul II et à Pat Cox, pour leur contribution remarquable à l'élargissement historique de l'UE qui a eu

lieu le 1er mai de cette année.

La ville d'Aix-la-Chapelle, qui avait été pratiquement détruite au cours des derniers mois de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et qui attribue ce prix chaque année pour des actions de promotion de la paix et de l'unité en Europe, a fait la déclaration suivante:

"Le comité directeur de la société chargée de l'attribution du Prix Charlemagne international d'Aix-la-Chapelle a donc décidé d'attribuer en 2004 ce prix à Pat Cox, Président du Parlement européen, en reconnaissance du rôle précurseur joué par le Parlement européen dans une phase cruciale du

développement de l'Europe, ainsi que de sa contribution personnelle remarquable à la réalisation de l'élargissement de l'Union."

La cérémonie de remise du prix, au cours de laquelle le Président Pat Cox a prononcé un discours de politique générale sur l'avenir de l'Europe, a eu lieu le jeudi 20 mai à Aix-la-Chapelle, en Allemagne. Le Prix Charlemagne était remis par Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

(Source: site du Parlement européen)



## Vacancies at ELDR Party aisbl Secretariat

The ELDR Party aisbl in Brussels is a dynamic team of dedicated professionals who support the activities of the liberal democrat and reform national parties at the European level. In order to support our growing activities, we are now seeking a Political Advisor and a Communications Officer.

### Political Advisor:

Function: Under the general supervision of the Secretary General, the political advisor will be in charge of monitoring policies and developments. S/He will draft policy papers, prepare assessments and background material for meetings and conferences and maintain databases over various ELDR networks.  
Deadline 15 September.

### Communications Officer:

Functions: Member of a small team, the press officer will be responsible for the communication between the ELDR Party aisbl, the national Parties, partner organisation and the European citizens. S/He will be in charge of press relations, press and media contacts and drafting press releases.  
Deadline 22 September.

More information: [www.eldr.org](http://www.eldr.org)

## Rue Montoyerstraat

The regulation on financing for the European political parties, as adopted last year by Council and Parliament, has several consequences. One of these is the requirement that the ELDR Party aisbl secretariat has moved out of our offices in the building of the European Parliament. The Bureau and the secretariat prepared the move in the last few months. New offices have been found in close proximity of the European Parliament. The move took place during the summer months.

The new address is:  
**Rue Montoyerstraat 40**  
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### New e-mail addresses and telephone numbers:

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## Fight against terrorism



Terrorism is an attack against the values of liberty, democracy, tolerance and the rule of law, and it denies the very values on which the EU was founded. The EU is fully committed and united in the fight against terrorism. Of course, in this fight we must always remain vigilant to preserve personal freedom. A Europe of security and justice is also a Europe that guarantees the fundamental rights of all European citizens.

The European Security Strategy sees terror-

ism as a "growing strategic threat to the whole of Europe". It is essential that the Member States of the EU work closely together to counter this threat. Terrorism is international and the response has to be international too. The EU strategy must therefore build upon and strengthen the work of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other multilateral organisations. Internally, the EU has become an area without internal borders, and that obliges Member States to work together to avoid that criminals and terrorists move and operate freely while police, intelligence and law enforcement officers remain confined to their national areas. Through the legislative framework created by the Union for the purpose of combating terrorism and improving judicial cooperation the EU can help its Member States to combat terrorist activities.

An important part of my work is to help Member States in implementing the decisions we have already decided upon at EU level. The EU must ensure that our intelligence and security services, our police forces and our judicial authorities work closely together, and improve our capacity to share and analyse information. We have to look at how the different agencies of the member states, which have already beefed

up their collaboration, can be made to work together even more effectively.

The EU has already gone a long way in the fight against terrorism with for example the creation of the European Arrest Warrant, the possibility of making Joint Investigation Teams, Eurojust, legislation on terrorist financing and with the creation of Europol. At the European Council of the 17th and 18th of June EU counter-terrorism efforts will be reviewed including a plan to pool intelligence from the members' domestic security and intelligence services for analysis in Brussels.

We live in an open society in Europe, where people enjoy many liberties. We must preserve this free and open character of our way of life, while acknowledging that open societies are vulnerable: we can never reach a guaranty of 100 % security. However what we must do, and what our citizens expect, is that as governments and as institutions of the EU we do everything in our power to strengthen our collaboration and to make sure that all the necessary measures are in place in time, with the EU supporting the vital work of our national authorities.

*Gijs de Vries,*  
*EU Counter-terrorism co-ordinator*



# Remember the Europe of Values

*ELDR Insight interviewed Pat Cox, former President of the European Parliament.*

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** You have represented Parliament at the various European Councils, and successfully raised its profile. What did you consider to be Parliament's biggest contribution to the debates within the European Council during your Presidency?

**Pat Cox:** I believe that the Parliament has demonstrated that a European Parliament given responsibility, acts with responsibility. The extent of our legislative engagement and our engagement across the European institutions has contributed to a climate of trust and provided legitimacy, efficiency and confidence and bears testament to the general up-scaling of Parliament's work in the course of its fifth mandate. I think the European Council has understood that this Parliament does make a political difference.

This has been a key message of this mandate: that the European Parliament has shown itself to be a mature and reliable legislative partner for Council and Commission. We have emphasised at all times the primacy of politics.

During the last five years, 403 codecision procedures and 86 sets of conciliation negotiations have been successfully concluded. This is 250% more than in the preceding five years. The legislative legacy of this Parliament, from 1999 to 2004, is one which will improve the quality of lives of our peoples, and lay down the conditions for improved prosperity. The list of legislation illustrates the range and depth of our activity in fields including environment, transport, cultural exchange, financial services and consumer protection.

As with the Lisbon Agenda on economic reform, everything to do with the Tampere agenda on helping to bring about a more effective EU policy on asylum and immigration policy, there is no implementation gap on the side of the European Parliament. If and when issues came on our agenda we have delivered because we know that these issues are matters of real concern to EU citizens. I am proud that we in the Parliament have delivered - the only one of the European law making institutions to be able to say this.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** Two out of the three headline goals you set for yourselves at the beginning of your Presidency, enlargement and enhancing communication with the citizens have been very successful. Nevertheless the third goal, internal reform of the European Parliament, particularly the adoption of the common Statute for Members proved to be more difficult. What's your verdict?

**Pat Cox:** A major disappointment of my mandate has been the failure, finally, of the Council to find a qualified majority for the adoption of a common Statute for Members of the European Parliament. We made the compromises asked of us, even those suggested by the Council, and yet at the last moment a minority blocked our way.

An arrangement whereby Members of the same parliament have 25 different legal and financial regimes is, in my view, neither desirable nor tenable in the long term. Although our efforts did not come to fruition this time, it is my hope that the Statute can finally be adopted early in the next legislature. The Parliament, as we have illustrated in our vote for reform last December, clearly needs to adopt a Statute for Members.

On the issue of expenses, important progress has been made by Parliament in reforming our rules and regulations to ensure greater transparency and accountability. Specific reforms on travel allowances, on the secretarial allowance and other allowances have been decided by the relevant bodies of the European Parliament in the course of recent years and have continued under my presidency.

At the outset I sought a global reform based on two main elements: the fair treatment of MEPs on the basis of equality, and transparency on allowances to be based on actual costs incurred. The failure by the Council is not our failure. It is regrettable, however, that currently there is a campaign, using questionable and deplorable methods, the main purpose of which appears to have been to seek to discredit this institution, and which seeks to call into question the honour of Members of the Parliament. This has been done to wreak maximum damage on zero evidence against individuals, their careers and their families.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** You have represented the constituency of Munster in the Republic of Ireland since 1989. What did the European Union bring to the Munster region, and what did Munster bring to the EU in those 15 years?

**Pat Cox:** The Ireland of my childhood just a few decades ago boasted political independence but economically was almost totally dependent on its former colonial power, the United Kingdom. In effect Ireland was the poorest region of the wider British economy. As a people we gave up our young to emigration, breaking the hearts of our families and the backs of our communities. It diminished

our sense of who we were.

In 1973 Ireland joined the European Economic Community as its poorest member state. So much has changed and changed positively in the past three decades. The creative exploitation of Irish sovereign independence was the moment when through pooling some of our sovereignty we added real value to our small state's influence. It was this choice that paved our way for the transformation that brought us from stagnation to opportunity and achievement, from being a failed entity in a regional economy to being a competitive player on the global market.

I believe that what Munster and Ireland have brought to the EU is a positive role model, particularly for some of the new, smaller member states. It is a model of intelligent interdependence - connecting, not isolating, belonging, not standing back - allowing the possibility, as a small state, to develop a greater sense of self-worth and a genuine sense of greater opportunity in this wider world.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen recently unveiled the "European Neighbourhood Policy" to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines and to take the opportunity to enhance the EU's relations with our new neighbours. He also said "the enlargement process is finished for the time being". Where does Europe end for you?

**Pat Cox:** After the current wave of enlargement, the door to the EU must not be closed. The negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria are on track. The Monitoring reports of the Commission confirmed the differentiated progress of Bulgaria and Romania in their membership preparations and we should not relax our commitment and determination to assist. Nor should we renege on the principle of 'own merits': a candidate state has the right to be assessed on its own merits irrespective of extraneous political considerations. Equally, our engagement requires full reciprocity of effort on the side of the candidates: we fully expect delivery on what has been promised. It is no secret that certain sectors, particularly administrative and judicial capacity, still require especial care and attention.

The remarkable progress made by Turkey in the last year, under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdogan, surpasses the efforts made by previous governments over four decades. The enormously positive impetus of the legislative reforms under way is widely



acknowledged. Turkey stepped in the direction of satisfying the Copenhagen criteria but as the Commission has pointed out significant implementation gaps remain and more needs to be done. We shall look forward with interest to the Commission's report this autumn.

I visited the Western Balkan region last autumn. We need to encourage and foster the movement towards Europe. We need to encourage the states to cooperate among themselves, not only in economic and trade terms, but in their common battle against organised crime. That new network of cooperative links and working towards shared objectives will itself prove a valuable preparation for membership. We need to encourage the efforts of, for example, Croatia and Macedonia, and acknowledge progress where it has been made. I was proud to be the first President of the European Parliament to go on that mission to the region last year and to speak in every parliament in the Western Balkans and to bring to each and every one of them a message of European perspective, hope and connection, differentiated of course, but nonetheless determined. I believe that will be a major challenge for all of us in the years to come.

Those who joined the EU this May and in the second wave of the fifth enlargement in the years to come

bring with them their old neighbours who become our new neighbours. We know when Greece, Spain and Portugal joined France and Italy in the EU we developed a Euro-Mediterranean process - a southern dimension. We know when Finland and Sweden joined we developed a northern dimension. I am sure that Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the three Baltic States will bring with them a new eastern dimension. This is part of the challenge, of the potential which we need to free and see as a positive challenge in the coming years.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** After June 13 you will say goodbye to the European Parliament. What would be your key message to your successors in the ELDR Group?

**Pat Cox:** Remember the Europe of values - our Liberal values - of pluralist democracy, the rule of law, sustainability and solidarity with those less fortunate than ourselves. Speak in plain language, and focus on delivery and so be able to talk of real achievements; animate our reason with the conviction of our Liberal passion and energy; be engaged and focussed and together we can continue to punch well above our weight.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** Thank you very much.

# Electoral Rally 2004

29 April 2004 - Skyhall Brussels Airport

Snapshots



On Thursday 29 April the ELDR aisbl organised a big electoral event. It was a huge success as nearly 1000 people participated in the Election Rally 2004. To kick off our fifth European campaign the ELDR aisbl united our political leaders like European Parliament President Pat Cox, the Prime Ministers Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium), Matti Vanhanen (Finland) and Anton Rop (Slovenia), Ministers and Party leaders amongst others, with our many great leading candidates from throughout the European Union.





## Images from the Brussels 2004 Congress



# Open door or closed minds

*ELDR aisbl interviewed Hungarian Liberal Mr István Szent-Iványi*

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** Let me start with a personal question: What do you consider as milestones of your political career in Hungary?

**István Szent-Iványi:** I have been very fortunate as I could witness, and to a certain extent, shape policies at a time when three historic changes took place. As a member of the democratic opposition I could take part in the "grave-digging" of the socialist system, witness the political transformation and re-democratisation. In March 1999 as chairman of the parliamentary committee of foreign affairs I had the honour to take part in discussions and negotiations leading up to Hungary's accession to NATO. And later as chairman of the parliamentary committee on European integration I could follow closely Hungary's negotiations with the EU and be present in the ELDR as an observer.

I have to admit that I even shed a tear when I saw the flag of Hungary being raised in

Strasbourg on 3 May. Hungarian history has not been replete with success stories of this proportion and Hungarian liberals have worked hard to achieve them. All three accomplishments are liberal success stories.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** As a Hungarian observer you chaired the ELDR seminar on free movement of labour on 27 March and you spoke on the May plenary in Strasbourg on that topic. What were your arguments and the main message?

**István Szent-Iványi:** I have called on governments to lift restrictions on free movement of labour without delay. I have given two main reasons for that. One is of principle: free movement is one of the four freedoms that the Union is based upon. Restrictions imposed against certain citizens would run counter to these principles. Free movement of labour should never have been made negotiable. The

idea of restrictions renders citizens of the new countries second class, which is unacceptable.

Apart from principles, facts do not substantiate the introduction of restrictions either. It is no surprise that if the capital does not go where the workers are, then workers will go where the money is. However, it is an exaggeration to claim that a flood or deluge of migrants is to be expected from the new countries. According to a recent survey, in fact, only 2% of Hungarians have expressed serious interest in moving to Western Europe for the purposes of work. Previous enlargements also prove that no mass movement is expected. Besides that, the professionals and skilled workers who will move are labourers the economies of Western Europe urgently need. In reality, it is the new countries that may have reason to fear a brain drain. The Union should welcome the new members with open doors, not

with closed minds.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** What do you think Hungary and especially Hungarian liberals bring into the Union?

**István Szent-Iványi:** It is a cliché, but Hungarian talent and creativity are not negligible. Innovation, originality and a capacity for life-long learning are characteristics we all need in our time.

Liberals in Hungary have learnt to appreciate freedom and are proposing policies that prefer the individual to the state. Tax cuts, hospital privatisation, full separation of state and church are just a few examples that mark our policy and are to be translated into Hungarian reality. These policies fit harmoniously into the ELDR policy line. Now let me ask you a tricky question. What is it: small, yellow and makes you healthier?

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** What is the answer?

**István Szent-Iványi:** It is vitamin C



*István Szent-Iványi*

that was invented by Hungarian Nobel-prize winner Albert Szent-Györgyi. I hope that there is still some hidden knowledge we Hungarians may reveal.



## Interview with Willy De Clercq

*ELDR aisbl Insight interviewed Willy De Clercq, Minister of State and ELDR Party aisbl Honorary President*

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** You are one of the few liberals, maybe the only one that has experienced the EU institutional triangle, Parliament, Council of ministers and Commission, from inside. Parliament used to be the weakest in this triangle but has grown significantly stronger. Is it now on par with the other institutions?

**Willy De Clercq:** Absolutely. It's a big misunderstanding still seeing the EP as a "powerless just talking tool": giving declarations and making resolutions, with some political values but without any real political power or real influence in the political decision making. Especially the Treaties of Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) have enlarged the power of the European Parliament. It has far-reaching powers on different levels. The co-decision is now without doubt the most important power of the EP.

The co-decision is at this moment applicable in 38 policy-fields, what means that the EP is a full co-legislator in more than 80% of the European legislation. In other terms, without the approval of the Parliament, European legislation in these policy-fields is not possible anymore!

This is important not only on European but on national level as well: 40 to 60% of the national legislation is today only the execution (may I say, the "translation" into national law) of European directives. The most important examples are environment, protection of consumers and of course all rules and regulations related to the internal market.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** Belgium, as founding EU Member State, has always played a significant role to further European integration. Could you highlight three policy areas where from a Belgian perspective still more "Europe" is needed?

**Willy De Clercq:** First of all, there is an internal question. In view of the last enlargement, it is not only up to the candidate-countries to be well prepared for joining the Union. The European Union itself is in -urgent- need of reform: reforms which clarify the division of competencies and responsibilities between the European Union and the Member States; reforms which will reduce the need for central regulation; reforms which will entail greater transparency and democratic control.

The European house was originally built for 6 inhabitants, so there is a real danger of paralysis, with the European Union being unable to act. In short terms, Europe must concentrate itself on what we call the core tasks: Europe has to do well in what it has to do!

Secondly, I hope that the work of the European Convention can be successfully finished with the realisation of the European Constitution. For me, a European Constitution is strongly needed: Fundamental values, citizens' rights and an efficient organisation of the European institutions, must be incorporated in a common European constitutional instrument. The existence of a European Constitution would have the twin advantages of providing the citizens of Europe with a reference text and simplifying the rules governing the European institutions, which is essential.

Finally, a third challenge of the European Union is of course securing our security and the fight against new, before unknown, almost invisible enemies (fight against organised crime and against terrorism). An effective Common Foreign and Security policy is one of the biggest challenges for this new century. Europe is an economic giant, but it is still a political dwarf.

We need more international cooperation instead of protectionism or nationalism. The European Union failed in Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Africa, Afghanistan, and now we fail in the Middle East... Europe needs an own political and security identity. Europe should take its own international responsibility and provide the European Union with the necessary instruments. I see little progress in this field but I am afraid it will not be enough yet

to let the European Union play a crucial role in the world.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** What do you consider in your political career as your main milestones?

**Willy De Clercq:** I have to say that I liked all my political "jobs" that I had the opportunity to do in my 50 years long political career. On European level, my time as member of the European Commission Delors, between 1985 and 1989, was an important part of my career. I liked this time. Especially because I was responsible for external trade, I had the honour to represent the European Union during the GATT-negotiations and in the bilateral negotiations with the United States. Another interesting post was the time that I was Minister of Finance of Belgium and that I was (even for two times!) elected as president of the IMF Interim committee. It is an international post "in the grand manner", as you are elected by all your colleagues Ministers of Finance of the whole world.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** After June 13 you will say goodbye to the European Parliament. What advice would you like to give to your successors in the ELDR Group?

**Willy De Clercq:** My message is simple: Keep your liberal ideas. Liberals believe in Europe, in the ever-developing project of European unification and integration. Liberals are people who believe in and give priority to

mankind, to human beings, their freedom, their fundamental rights and their quest for liberty and equality. To succeed in all this, liberals believe in good governance, in the rule of law, in the usefulness and the necessity of good, fair working and functioning institutions.

The European integration is a liberal and universal project. Freedom, democracy, human rights and an open market economy, are the cornerstones of this. The defence of our common liberal values and interests, and the political willingness, are the key factors that must help us to face the important challenges of further European integration.

We should keep pursuing further integration, based on our common European, liberal values and principles, such as freedom, responsibility, solidarity, tolerance, efficiency, flexibility, modernity and pluralism. It is the only guarantee to survive our unique societal model. It is now up to us to further express and propagate our liberal message all over Europe.

**ELDR aisbl Insight:** And a final question. Your bow ties have become a trade mark of Willy De Clercq. How many of these accessories do you have in your collection?

**Willy De Clercq:** Especially for the ELDR aisbl, I have counted my collection, for the first time. I can tell you: I have 112. But of course I only wear one at the same time.

## "LYMEC asbl with passion and conviction"



This autumn LYMEC asbl will be facing with great expectations some important in-depth political discussions. This is partly due to the official agenda of the European Union, but also because as liberals we see a number of key issues that should

be placed on the top of our political agendas. In this way, LYMEC asbl is committed on a number of fronts and launching some public debates that we hope the European Liberal Democrats can also make theirs:

1. The relations and ongoing partnership between the EU and Russia (as well as all with the Commonwealth of Independent States). On that respect, this year's Young Leaders Meeting in Estonia will allow us to establish further contacts with the youth leaders (and not that young anymore) from this region and define some common points in our political strategy and work programme for the upcoming years, especially with the Russians from Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces, but also with Moldovans, Ukrainians, Armenians and Belarusians.

2. When it comes to the specific case of Belarus, one of the few remaining "hardcore" dictatorships in Europe, it is of moral imperative for the liberals to struggle for free and democratic parliamentary elections on October 17th, and thus to fight for general freedom and democracy in this country. LYMEC asbl will send a delegation of observers to Minsk. Furthermore, LYMEC asbl will encourage its members to observe the electoral process on October 17th in all the Belarusian embassies around Europe and will try to increase the public awareness about the need to put more efforts for a sustainable democracy in a country that has ever witnessed anything but autocracy.

3. The third political key question we would like to identify as intrinsically crucial in our public

debate will be the Turkish question. This year is an important turn for Turkey's accession to the EU, not least because the European Council summit in December will have to take the most important decision since the Helsinki summit in 1999. For us, liberals, Turkey is not only a question of further democratisation of the country itself but also a clear expression of this laic and secular Union we as liberals stand for.

But we are not only becoming a more visible and solid organisation with a strong and coherent political message from the external perspective, important steps are also being taken from an internal perspective;

Many new steps that are taken with the conviction that they will become useful tools for LYMEC asbl to better serve its Members

and to be higher positioned in the public debate. We are committed to continue working with the European Liberal Democrats (ELDR Party aisbl and ALDE Group) to make our voice heard in Europe, and to achieve our main goals as described in the ELDR aisbl and LYMEC asbl electoral manifestos for the next parliamentary term.

In this context, it is important to underline that President Pat Cox will no longer be seating in the Parliament, neither as Member nor as President, and therefore it is our duty to pay tribute to the person who has been able to enlighten the path towards a more liberal, democratic and human Europe by continuing to walk in his footsteps.

*Roger Albinyana i Saigó  
President of LYMEC asbl*

## The ELDR Group strengthens its position in an enlarged Committee of the Regions

On May 24th, the ELDR Group in the Committee of the Regions (CoR) gathered in Brussels for its extraordinary group meeting. It was the first time since May 1st that the Group met in its enlarged composition. Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary were particularly well represented at the meeting.

Slovenia and Estonia are two other countries, where liberal democrats do particularly well on local and regional level. Of the 95 full members and 95 alternate members from the 10 new Member States in the Committee of the Regions, as many as 31 belong to the ELDR group.

At the meeting, the group gave me its confidence to continue as Group President for another two years. Ivo Opstelten from the Dutch VVD was elected First Vice President and Istvan Sertoradics from the Hungarian Alliance, Second Vice President. Additionally, the Priorities and

Objectives for the remaining two years of the current term of office were discussed one last time before they will be subject to decision at the June 16th meeting. A number of themes are brought up in the draft Priorities and Objectives.

One of the main themes is the campaign for the adoption of the draft constitution, which considerably strengthens the role of the CoR.

It particularly increases with respect to the subsidiarity principle. The CoR, alongside national parliaments, is granted the right to bring a case before the European Court of Justice in the event of infringement upon the subsidiarity principle. It is the first time that the CoR is provided with a truly powerful tool for defending its political convictions. This will spectacularly enhance the position of the CoR in the EU institutional context.

The future of the EU cohesion policy is another area, which the Group feels very strongly about. In a position paper adopted last year, the Group set out its fears for a possible renationalisation of the cohesion policy. It has also opposed the proposal – submitted by six Member States some months ago – to cut the EU budget to 1% of the Community GDP.

We were honoured to welcome Slovenian Commissioner Potočnik – responsible for enlargement – as guest speaker. We had a very interesting debate with him on the future borders of the European Union. Commissioner Potočnik said that granting Croatia the status of candidate country might provide positive knock-on effects and ensure stability on the Balkan peninsula as a whole. Furthermore, he stated that after May 1st the Balkans have become somewhat of an island surrounded by EU members. It is therefore very important to include these countries in future negotiations. The Commissioner also stressed that it is still premature to discuss future enlargement of the European Union.

The European Commission has launched a new neighbourhood policy that offers far-reaching cooperation with the new neighbours of the European Union. This policy is not an enlargement policy, nor does it exclude future enlargement of the Union. Ruth Coleman, British member of our group, considered bringing stability and democracy to future Member States the main objective of further enlargement, just as the EU has done in the past for countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal.

*Kent Johansson  
President of the ELDR Group  
in the Committee of the Regions*





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

Before the summer holidays I saw images on television of the landings in Normandy, France. The quality of the black and white images was poor, however the message these images contained, were strong. D-Day took place 60 years ago. That day, whereby so many young soldiers paid the

highest price for freedom, marked the beginning of the peaceful, free and prosperous Europe that we now know since decades. Never before in European history, did we have such a long period without armed conflicts or wars in a growing part of our continent. Commemorating D-Day is still as valid as ever. It reminds us of the need for European integration and that freedom and democracy cannot be taken for granted.

Turning to the European elections and the results. Overall, the ELDR aisbl member parties have scored well. The UK Liberal Democrats returned to the European Parliament with 12 MEP's. German liberal FDP finally after 10 long years can be welcomed back to the European Parliament with 7 MEP's. The Polish Freedom Union obtained 4 seats. Other countries where we scored well are Finland, Hungary, Slovenia and Estonia. In two traditional liberal strongholds we unfortunately obtained lower than expected results, in Denmark and The Netherlands.

The autonomous growth of the ELDR aisbl member parties is encouraging. We've grown to about 9% of the European electorate from previously 8%. But it is still not the 10% I was hoping for. The results of 9% nevertheless do deliver us a respectable number of seats, almost 60. It means concretely that a growing number of citizens agree with the liberal manifesto to free Europe's potential, favouring liberal European politics over gridlock and uniformity.

In the history of the Party an important step was made, when on 5 May, HM Albert II, the King of the Belgians officially signed the ELDR Party statutes. Hereby the ELDR Party has become an international non profit organisation under Belgian law (AISBL). One of the practical consequences was that we had to leave our premises in the European Parliament and move to a new office close by the EP buildings in Brussels. A political consequence was an emergence of a new phase to European party politics, introducing more independence for the Euro-parties, seeking new balances, increasing transparency, but unfortunately also increasing red tape.

The Heads of state and Prime Ministers during the European Council of June in Brussels decided upon a more than acceptable agreement for the Constitutional Treaty. Their decision means that now a long process will start to ratify the draft Constitution in all the 25 Member States. In a number of countries the ratification will have to be approved by the citizens in a referendum. The results of the European elections, with a number of Euro-critical or sceptical parties, show that winning the referenda will be a battle hard fought. Liberals should lead the way.

**Member Parties and Affiliate Parties**

Member Parties		Kosova	
<b>Albania</b>	Partia Aleanca Demokratike <a href="http://www.aleanca.org">http://www.aleanca.org</a>	Partia Liberale e Kosoves (PLK) <a href="http://www.plk-kosova.org">http://www.plk-kosova.org</a>	
<b>Andorra</b>	Partit Liberal d'Andorra <a href="http://www.partiliberad.ad">http://www.partiliberad.ad</a>	<b>Latvia</b>	Latvia's Way (LC) <a href="http://www.lc.lv">http://www.lc.lv</a>
<b>Austria</b>	Liberales Forum <a href="http://www.liberale.at">http://www.liberale.at</a>	<b>Lithuania</b>	Lithuanian Liberal and Centre Union New Union <a href="http://www.nsjunga.lt">http://www.nsjunga.lt</a>
<b>Belgium</b>	Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (VLD) <a href="http://www.vld.be">http://www.vld.be</a>	<b>Luxembourg</b>	Demokratesch Partei (DP) <a href="http://www.dp.lu">http://www.dp.lu</a>
	Parti Réformateur Libéral (PRL) <a href="http://www.mr.be">http://www.mr.be</a>	<b>The Netherlands</b>	Democraten 66 <a href="http://www.d66.nl">http://www.d66.nl</a>
<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	Liberalno demokratska stranka (LDS) <a href="http://www.liberali.ba">http://www.liberali.ba</a>		Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en democratie (VVD) <a href="http://www.vvd.nl">http://www.vvd.nl</a>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) <a href="http://www.dps.bg">http://www.dps.bg</a>	<b>Poland</b>	Unia Wolności <a href="http://www.uw.org.pl">http://www.uw.org.pl</a>
	National Movement Simeon II <a href="http://www.ndsv.bg">http://www.ndsv.bg</a>	<b>Romania</b>	Partidul National Liberal (PNL) <a href="http://www.pnl.ro">http://www.pnl.ro</a>
<b>Croatia</b>	People's Party (HNS) <a href="http://www.hns.hr">http://www.hns.hr</a>	<b>Serbia and Montenegro</b>	Liberals of Serbia <a href="http://www.liberali-srbije.org.yu">http://www.liberali-srbije.org.yu</a>
<b>Cyprus</b>	United Democrats (UDP) <a href="http://www.edi.org.cy">http://www.edi.org.cy</a>	<b>Slovakia</b>	Aliancia Nového Občana (ANO) <a href="http://www.ano-aliancia.sk">http://www.ano-aliancia.sk</a>
<b>Denmark</b>	det radikale venstre <a href="http://www.driv.dk">http://www.driv.dk</a>	<b>Slovenia</b>	Liberalna demokracija Slovenije (LDS) <a href="http://www.lids.si">http://www.lids.si</a>
	venstre <a href="http://www.venstre.dk">http://www.venstre.dk</a>	<b>Sweden</b>	Folkpartiet Liberalerna (FP) <a href="http://www.folkpartiet.se">http://www.folkpartiet.se</a>
<b>Estonia</b>	Estonian Reform Party <a href="http://www.reform.ee">http://www.reform.ee</a>		Centerpartiet (C) <a href="http://www.centerpartiet.se">http://www.centerpartiet.se</a>
	Estonian Centre Party <a href="http://www.keskerakond.ee">http://www.keskerakond.ee</a>	<b>Switzerland</b>	Parti Radical Démocratique (FDP-PRD) <a href="http://www.fdp.ch">http://www.fdp.ch</a>
<b>Finland</b>	Suomen Keskusta <a href="http://www.keskusta.fi">http://www.keskusta.fi</a>	<b>United Kingdom</b>	Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems) <a href="http://www.libdems.org.uk">http://www.libdems.org.uk</a>
	Svenska Folkpartiet (SFP) <a href="http://www.sfp.fi">http://www.sfp.fi</a>		The Alliance of Northern Ireland <a href="http://www.allianceparty.org">http://www.allianceparty.org</a>
<b>Germany</b>	Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP) <a href="http://www.fdp-bundesverband.de">http://www.fdp-bundesverband.de</a>	<b>Affiliate Parties</b>	
<b>Hungary</b>	Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége (SzDSz) <a href="http://www.szdsz.hu">http://www.szdsz.hu</a>	<b>Croatia</b>	Hrvatska socijalno liberalna stranka (HSLs) <a href="http://www.hsls.hr">http://www.hsls.hr</a>
<b>Ireland</b>	Progressive Democrats (PD) <a href="http://www.progressivedemocrats.ie">www.progressivedemocrats.ie</a>		Liberalna stranka (LS) <a href="http://www.liberali.hr">http://www.liberali.hr</a>
<b>Italy</b>	Italia dei Valori - Lista Di Pietro <a href="http://www.antoniodipietro.it">http://www.antoniodipietro.it</a>		Libra <a href="http://www.libra.hr">www.libra.hr</a>
	Partito Repubblicano Italiano (PRI) <a href="http://www.pri.it">http://www.pri.it</a>	<b>Czech Republic</b>	Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) <a href="http://www.oda.cz">http://www.oda.cz</a>
<b>Macedonia</b>	Movimento Repubblicani Europei <a href="http://www.movimentorepubblicaneuropei.org/">http://www.movimentorepubblicaneuropei.org/</a>		Path For Change <a href="http://www.cestazmeny.cz/">http://www.cestazmeny.cz/</a>
			Liberal Party of Macedonia (LPM) <a href="http://www.liberalna.org.mk">http://www.liberalna.org.mk</a>
		<b>Norway</b>	Venstre (V) <a href="http://www.venstre.no">http://www.venstre.no</a>

**ELDR AISBL CALENDAR UPCOMING EVENTS 2004**

<b>July 2004</b>	
1	Dutch EU Presidency begins
6-8 July	ELDR EP Group Bureau meeting, Bath, UK
20-23 July	Constituent session European Parliament, Strasbourg
<b>September 2004</b>	
3	Steering Committee
5-6	Bureau Meeting, De Panne, Belgium
11-12	Congress Radikale Venstre, Denmark
19-23	Congress Liberal Democrats, Bournemouth (UK)
21-23	LYMEC, Bureau Meeting, Helsinki, Finland
23-26	LYMEC, Young Leaders Meeting, Tallinn, Estonia
<b>October 2004</b>	
18	Council Meeting, Berlin, Germany
18	Bureau Meeting, Berlin, Germany
18	Prize of Freedom, Berlin, Germany
<b>November 2004</b>	
4-6	Liberal International Conference, Costa Rica
	Congress Liberal Centre Union, Lithuania (tbc)
20	Congress D66, The Netherlands
30-5/12	LYMEC Executive Committee, Rome, Italy
<b>December 2004</b>	
16	Leaders and Ministers Meeting, Brussels, Belgium
16	Bureau Meeting, Brussels, Belgium
<b>March 2005</b>	
	Liberal International Congress, Bulgaria



**ELDR aisbl**

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## Sharon Bowles, new Vice-President of the ELDR Party aisbl



Sharon Bowles was elected vice-president of the ELDR-Party aisbl on the Congress that was held on 30 April in Brussels.

Sharon Bowles offers political, technical, legal and business expertise.

Sharon has been one of the Liberal Democrat's high profile European campaigners and policy makers for over 15 years. This will be her fifth major election campaign, her third as a European Candidate. Sharon is co-chair of the Liberal Democrat International Relations committee, a member of the Party's Federal Executive and until stepping down recently also served on the Federal Finance and Administration Committee.

She is well known as a frequent participant at ELDR aisbl and LI Congresses, in recent years as British delegation leader. Within the Liberal Democrats she has served on many policy groups on topics including science, genetic engineering,

economy, civil liberties and presently on the group putting the final touches to a paper on international trade. Often a leading speaker in debates at Party Conferences, her speeches frequently attract significant media attention.

Academically Sharon is a solid state physicist and mathematician and researched on semiconductors at Oxford University. Professionally she is qualified as a European Patent Attorney and runs a professional partnership that she founded over 20 years ago. Her own practice includes writing, prosecuting and litigating patents for some of the world's leading companies in the fields of semiconductor fabrication, communications technology, computer architecture, aeronautics, oil extraction and industrial fermentation.