

# EUROPEAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS



| 29 years of liberal democratic achievement |  
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# Insight

## 3 Bulgarian liberals in coalition government

The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the National Movement Simeon II (NMSS) and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) have formed a coalition government

## Swedish Liberals seek to dethrone socialists

Four parties have formed a centre-

right alliance to oust the Swedish socialists in the 2006 elections

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## Enlargement - a success story that deserves to be told

After the French and Dutch referenda, some politicians were quick to call for a slowdown or even a stop to enlargement of the EU. Certainly we need to pace ourselves after last year's Big Bang, but it would be irresponsible to put an end to a valuable and successful policy.

It would be irresponsible to go wobbly about the Western Balkans' long-term prospect of membership- our influence would be seriously eroded just when the region is entering a very difficult period of talks on Kosovo's future status. And it would be irresponsible to go back on our promises to Turkey, at a time when it is crucial to continue to build bridges with the moderate strands of Islam. The 21st century world is not doomed to terror or a clash of civilisations, but can be built on dialogue and co-operation. Enlargement is one of the EU's most powerful foreign policy tools. The

pull of the EU has helped transform Central and Eastern Europe from old-style communist regimes to modern, well-functioning democracies. Lately it has inspired tremendous reforms in countries like Turkey and Croatia. We all benefit from having neighbours that are stable democracies and prosperous market economies.

### Economic realities

So, what about jobs being lost? In fact, last year's enlargement has boosted growth and created new jobs in the European economy. The velvet revolutions of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe opened up a market of 100 million people to the companies of Western Europe, giving great business opportunities e.g. for French supermarket chains and Dutch telecom makers and for countless other companies.

Since 1989, the EU has become the

main economic partner of its Eastern neighbours. Exports from Western Europe to Central and Eastern Europe have tripled since 1993, creating far more jobs for EU citizens than were lost by the relocation of low-cost production.

*«It would be irresponsible to put an end to a valuable and successful policy»*

How about 'social dumping'? Countries that are joining the EU must enforce EU labour standards, including minimum standards of safety at work and measures to combat discrimination. These standards prevent 'social dumping' within the EU. Of course wage-levels differ across the Union, as with

non-member countries, but that helps to keep the EU as a whole competitive in the global economy.

I do not wish to downplay people's concerns about employment and their future. But it is not fair to blame enlargement for effects that have more to do with globalisation and inadequate domestic responses to new competitive realities. The EU is rather a political response to steer economic globalisation and boost growth and jobs by making a large internal market with common innovation policies and social and environmental standards.

### Consolidation, conditionality and communication

So, there are political, strategic and economic arguments for continuing enlargement, at least as far as concerns commitments already made. This means that Bulgaria and Romania can join the Union in 2007, if they fulfil the rigorous conditions set in the Accession Treaty. This means that accession negotiations will start with Croatia and Turkey once they meet the strict criteria set by the EU. And it means that the countries of the Western Balkans maintain their European perspective. I find it reassuring that The European Council in June clearly re-confirmed these existing commitments and consolidated



the enlargement agenda.

Obviously accession is not automatic. Every candidate country has to respect the strict criteria for membership. We must also make sure that future members will not disrupt the Union- that was, after all, the fourth (and often forgotten) condition set at Copenhagen in 1993, stating that we must ensure the momentum of European integration. Contemporary European politics often fails to emphasise our common interest. This is seriously felt in enlargement policy. Now it is the joint responsibility of both civil society and political leaders to put the record straight on enlargement. Let's show what it really has done to enhance democracy, security and prosperity. Let the facts overcome the myths. Let us communicate better and tell a success story that deserves to be told.

By Olli Rehn - European Commissioner for enlargement

## Werner Hoyer's hopes and expectations for European liberalism

**E**lected President of the ELDR Party in September 2000 and re-elected for two more terms, Werner Hoyer has overseen major developments in the party's organization and significance. During his leadership in the past five years, the party has substantially enlarged its membership and strengthened its influence on European politics.

*What future do you see for Europe's Constitution and how could ELDR and its member parties play a role in the "period of reflection"?*

European liberal democrats have always been advocates for a closer Union, leading to a European federation. We have been strong supporters of the European Convention and Constitution, which will make the EU more open and democratic. We should build on the work that has already been done. But for a new effort to convince the citizens I think we need better economic circumstances and a slimmer version of the constitutional treaty, a paper which is limited to the really constitutional

core and is stripped of unnecessary secondary legislation. And of course the active support for this document by the national liberal parties.

*ELDR has always seen EU enlargement as being compatible with deepening EU integration. This has been put into question in the recent referenda on the Constitution. Do you think that an enlarged Europe means the end of the federal dream?*

It is high time for a fundamental debate on the EU, its borders and "final status" as Guy Verhofstadt recently put it. After 30 years of providing inspiration for the European liberal democrats, we should consider revising the Stuttgart declaration and come up with a clear vision for the future of Europe. In March 2006, the ELDR will celebrate its 30th birthday and this will provide a good occasion for such a debate.

*You have been president of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) party for the last 5 years. When you look back, what moments do you consider the most important? Certainly, the European elections 2004*



and the preparation for it! And quite a few successes of our member parties. The liberal democrat family has gained strength in national parliaments and governments as well as in Council, Commission, and EP.

Each leaders' meeting has provided space for intense networking and the strengthening of the European liberal democrat family. The last one, in June, shortly after the negative results in France and the Netherlands, had a special spirit, bringing inspiration from our most senior leaders in the member states, the Commission and the Parliament on the direction Europe should take.

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## Renegotiating the constitution

**F**or the Liberal Democrat MEP Andrew Duff, the best option is to renegotiate the Constitution now to make it better and more appealing to public opinion. He wants the Constitution's revision to be more than a cosmetic exercise.

The Constitution has been ratified by a majority of member states representing a majority of Europe's citizens. But its rejection by France and the Netherlands - and, to all intents and purposes, by the United Kingdom - means that the present text will not come into force. If the Constitution is to be salvaged, it will have to be renegotiated.

In June, meeting in some panic, the European Council ordained a 'period of reflection', to last a year, but with no

focus or specified goal. Liberals must fill in the spaces left blank by Europe's leaders. The aim should be to agree to establish a new Convention with a fresh mandate. The Constitution of 29 October 2004 should be treated as a good first draft.

There are, of course, some alternatives to renegotiation of varying degrees of legality, desirability or probability. The EU could abandon the Constitution and try to make do with the Treaty of Nice - effectively saying farewell to further enlargement, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and all the promise of the Constitution in terms of improved democracy, capacity and efficacy. This would be seen, at home and abroad, as an admission of failure by this generation of Europe's leaders.

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# editorial



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

September. Millions of children start school. Beslan reminds us of barbaric and horrific shattered dreams for the future generation. North Caucasia, a constitutional powervacuum.

TV images are dominated by surreal pictures of the hurricane prone swamplands of Louisiana, the land of blues and jazz. Through a US request to the UK Presidency, the countries of the so called "old Europe" come to the rescue of the city of Big Easy. One can wonder whether this new catastrophe is a consequence of climate change and the impact of mankind on the environment. The richest and most powerful nation of the world did not show us an example of good governance. As Hobbes stated, providing security is a task of the state. Basic human aid to the victims of Katrina simply took too long to arrive. 70 percent of New Orleans is Afro-American. Warnings were made, ignored by some. Is this a reflection of the current internal democratic deficit? A city in total lawlessness, in which citizens are left to survive shows that the United States are faced with a constitutional dilemma. A power vacuum, a lack of administrative capacity, which may be a result from a constitutional choice in 1776 not to set up a form of structured collective solidarity, which comes to immediate rescue. Meanwhile, an Irish request for a co-ordinated EU action remains ignored.

We wake up every single morning with another death toll in Irak amid a debate on the consti-

tutional future of this country. Have we spent enough effort and energy to sell the European constitution to the citizens? I hope we will wake up one day, without morbid radio ratings, and achieve to bring back the rule of law and peace to Iraq and the Middle East. I hope we will discuss in-depth the future of our own common European house in order to provide our children with a future in a strong and free Union. We should not shy away from debating our constitutional Union, before we enter the eleventh enlargement. As liberal democrats, we are committed to enlargement based on the Copenhagen criteria. We should enter the next European campaign with clearly formulated priorities and an appealing liberal democrat vision for the future.

The European Liberal democrat party will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2006; it should not pass by unnoticed. In shaping European party politics, ELDR was the first party founded and the first to transform itself into a true legal personality, it took the lead in membership. That is why we need to commit ourselves to deepen our priorities and thereby consolidate the lead of true democrat and liberal values. We must engage ourselves in a true dialogue with the European citizens. After all, did Maastricht not acknowledge that parties have a role to play in raising the awareness with European citizens?

Over the last two year the Party experienced its biggest change, dominated by the effects of a new EU regulation on the financing and status of European political parties. We can now step away from the mirror in which we looked during our transformation process and turn towards real politics again. We have new means and worked over the last year to increase the involvement of our member parties through common political activities, besides the statutory events we organize. The idea to organize our events at the fringe of Liberal International proved to be successful; furthermore the party is committed to further deepening its relationship with its members and increasing its membership, as we exist only through our members.

Lex Corijn

## Karin Resetarits, new ALDE MEP, will represent Austrian interests in the group

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the European Parliament approved on 8 June the admission of Austrian MEP Karin Resetarits who had so far been sitting with non-aligned members of the Parliament.

To inform Austrian journalists about the positive effects of her presence in the ALDE group, a press conference was held in Brussels with Karin Resetarits, Liberales Forum Chairman Alexander Zach and two German MEPs, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis and Alexander Graf Lambsdorff on 15 June.

Alexander Zach expressed his happiness that the Austrian liberals will be represented in Brussels with a "personified face in this group". He stated that this was not only important for the Liberal Forum, but also for Austria: "Until now Austrian issues as the transit-problem did not have a voice in the third-largest group in the EP. With Karin Resetarits this will change." German MEPs, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis and Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, emphasised the importance to represent another country.



Resetarits will continue her work for control and transparency in future: "In the past year, I found out that a strong group is needed to change things. The liberals are the driving force in the European Parliament", Resetarits stated. Another important issue for the new liberal MEP is the dialogue with Turkey during the upcoming accession negotiations. "For me, nothing is more positive than reaching more democracy during the process of negotiations."

## ELDR now counts 47 members

The Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya and the Civic Alliance of Serbia were unanimously approved as new members of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) party during the Council meeting on 14 May 2005. Commenting on this new expansion, Party President Werner Hoyer said: "The fact that more and more parties all over Europe are seeking to become members of the European Liberal Democrat political family confirms the growing appeal of liberalism to Europe's citizens and their faith in our ability to best release Europe's potential. I welcome with great pleasure our friends from Catalonia and Serbia".

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform party now counts 47 members in 31 European countries. While ELDR membership extends beyond the borders of the EU, the party has members in 21 of the 25 EU member states and acts as a driving force for the EU.

For more information on these parties, visit their websites :

Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya: [www.convergencia.org](http://www.convergencia.org)

Civic alliance of Serbia: [www.gradjanskisavez.org.yu/](http://www.gradjanskisavez.org.yu/)

## Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe spreads to the Committee of regions and Council of Europe

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats spread its wings with the official launch in the Committee of regions on 2 June 2005 and in the Council of Europe on 20 June. Since its inception a year ago following the European Parliamentary elections, the new centre force in European politics has established itself as an unashamedly pro-European, pro-reform alliance holding to a vision of prosperity, solidarity and security in Europe.

The Liberal Democrat family now boasts 7 Prime Ministers, 7 European commissioners, 89 members of the European Parliament, 85 members in the Committee of Regions and now 95 members of the Council of Europe parliamentary assembly as well as a group in

## In short

### • Danish Venstre MPs and Finnish Keskusta visit ELDR headquarters

ELDR party secretariat was pleased to receive the visit of 7 Danish MPs and 3 staff members dealing with European Affairs in its offices on Monday 23 May. The group, led by Charlotte Antonsen, Venstre spokesperson for European affairs, visited Brussels for a few days in view of improving the cooperation between the EU institutions and the Danish MPs sitting in the EU committee. The secretariat was also pleased to receive the visit of staff members of the Finnish Centre party Keskusta this spring.

### • New life in the making

Kim Putzeys, ELDR long standing support manager, is expecting her first baby. Kim will be away from **25 November until 10 March**.

### • Still an office to rent

ELDR party has an office to rent at its headquarters, 18 m<sup>2</sup>, 850 euro (all charges included). For details, viewings, please contact Sabine Dechamps ([sdechamps@eldr.org](mailto:sdechamps@eldr.org) or + 32 2 237 01 42).

the NATO parliamentary assembly.

As part of the official launch of the ALDE Group in the Committee of the Regions, Graham Watson, MEP, leader of the ALDE group in the European Parliament and his counterpart in the Committee of the Regions, Kent Johansson, participated in a debate about the "Power of Citizens to Develop the European Union". They called on all EU institutions and political players to focus efforts and resources on promoting citizen mobility within the EU. The ALDE group in the Committee of regions has backed this call with a small booklet informing the public of the EU opportunities to develop their personal and professional interests.

## ELDR hosts LI farewell reception for Annemie Neyts and Federica Sabbati

Liberal International (LI) held its farewell reception for former LI President Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck and Secretary General Federica Sabbati at ELDR headquarters on 28 June.

Newly elected LI President Lord Alderdice thanked them for having developed LI so much during their time at the helm of the organisation. "LI has enlarged its membership to all continents and become a truly international organisation during your leadership", he stated.

"Being LI President for the past six years has been a great adventure, a good mixture of work and dedication to liberalism. The battle for liberalism is never really won, contrary to what US writer Francis Fukuyama had predicted. The liberal inspiration of EU policies has been recently put under fire. So the battle needs to be continued. Seeing our congresses becoming ever more successful has been a great motive of satisfaction", commented Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck.





# Sweden's liberal and center parties form alliance with right to dethrone socialists

The Center and Liberal parties of Sweden have formed a centre-right alliance with the Moderate and Christian Democratic parties in an attempt to beat Göran Persson in Sweden's next legislative elections in September 2006. The Social Democrats have ruled Sweden for 65 of the last 74 years but current surveys show this may change.

Centre Party leader Maud Olofsson, welcomed Moderate Party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt, liberal party leader Lars Leijonborg and Christian Democrats party leader Göran Hägglund onto the stage of the Center party congress on 20 June 2005. The four party leaders demonstrated the strong unity of the so-called "Alliance for Sweden". Maud Olofsson has played a leading role in forming the alliance, organising a summit of Sweden's centre-right party leaders in her farmhouse in Högfors, northern

Sweden in August 2003. The parties have announced they will stand on a joint manifesto in 2006 and promised that everything on their manifesto will be fully costed.

The alliance attacks the socialist government for failing to get the jobless into work and for having loose controls on sick leave. According to them, the real unemployment rate is closer to 20 % than 5 %, as the government proclaims. They also pledge to reduce the number of people receiving state subsidies, from which half of the population supposedly benefits.

Maud Olofsson said she wants welfare and care services to be more closely in touch with the needs of individuals. Motivating people for work and adapting the social system to individual needs were among the key issues discussed at the three-day Congress of the Center party on 18-20 June 2005. The Congress started with a joyful "Maktskiftetåg", a procession to call

for a new government in Sweden, through the streets of Stockholm. During its three day congress, the Centre Party approved a wide range of policies on political strategy, job creation and growth, gender equality, migration and integration, education and culture, sustainable development, environmental policy and energy and social welfare (health, family policy and social matters).

On the topical issue of promoting job creation, participants agreed that actions have to be taken on both the supply and demand sides. To increase the demand for work, the Center party wants to reduce unemployment benefits, adapt training programmes, give a higher status to manual work and apprenticeship. Improving the supply would go through the promotion of entrepreneurship and easing conditions for companies, reducing the payments for sick leave, building strong networks at local level and invest more and in research and innovation to name but a few proposals.



Centre Party leader Maud Olofsson, liberal party leader Lars Leijonborg, Christian Democrats party leader Göran Hägglund and Moderate Party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt have formed an alliance for next year's election.

Heated discussions took place about whether it is best for children and for the social system to send children to kindergarten or to allow them to stay at home with one of their parents receiving benefits.

The Centre Party also agreed to reduce taxes, notably on alcohol. A motion,

supported by the leadership, was passed to that effect, but only after heated debate on the conference floor. On the environmental front, the party maintained its long-standing opposition to nuclear energy and rejected a proposal by the party's youth movement to drop its anti-nuclear line.

# A liberal change for Germany and for Europe

On 18 September Germany will vote for a new parliament, following the (intentionally) lost vote of confidence for the German government in the Bundestag in July this year.

The present red-green federal government under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) has opted for this way after the disastrous losses for his party in the regional elections in the Land of Northrhine-Westphalia, the most populous state in Germany traditionally governed by the SPD. The decision of Chancellor Schröder to call for early elections is not only due to the fact that he has lost the majority in the Bundesrat, Germany's second chamber representing the Länder, but also due to his legitimate lack of confidence in his own narrow parliamentary majority in the Bundestag itself. The government thus acknowledged that it is no longer capable of concluding its - already modest- reforms of the German welfare state.

In the past few years, Germany has fallen more and more behind its European neighbours in economic terms, with the lowest growth rates in the EU. The half-hearted reform policy of the Schröder government has clearly failed. Germans have to acknowledge that others have become more successful than them, and that more reform efforts will be needed to get Germany back on track. Only a new government with a strong liberal participation will have the political will and perseverance to proceed with a true reform of Germany's outdated tax and social system.

A change of government in Germany will also have strong implications for the EU. The Council, which continues

to be the most important decision-making body of the EU, lacks a strong liberal voice from Germany. The ongoing discussions about the future financing of the EU illustrates that the present government shows no will to focus on priorities of the 21st century - such as research and education - and



rather prefers the old focus of agricultural subsidies and regional reallocation. The one-sided and unproductive focus on the French-German axis (which has been dubbed 'the axis of the lame and the blind' by some media) needs to make place for a multilateral co-operation also with smaller member states, which have

often shown more will for economic reform than the bigger ones. A German government with a liberal participation will be needed to come to a successful conclusion of the financial negotiations, and also for a successful German EU Presidency in the first half of 2007.

The German Liberals in Europe, (FDP Auslandsgruppe Europa - AGE) have contributed to the election campaign

in Germany with a position paper on German liberal policy in Europe, which can be accessed on our website [www.fdp-europa.de](http://www.fdp-europa.de) (in German).

By Marcus Scheuren, Secretary General of the German Liberals in Europe (FDP Auslandsgruppe Europa)

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# Liberals form coalition government with socialists in Bulgaria



Bulgaria does not have a lot of options to choose from. The results from the last parliamentary elections premised the options for forming the country's government in a way that a coalition was mandatory. It is a fact that there has been a clear winner with the intention of governing the country until the 2005 elections. The last elections changed this. Now, the largest political force- the left-of-centre coalition received 82 seats or one third of the 240 parliamentary seats, NMSS received 53 seats or a bit more than a quarter of all seats and the third parliamentary force- MRF received 34 seats or one seventh of the votes. In light of the fact that there are seven parties in Parliament (there are that many parties in Parliament

for the first time in Bulgaria), it is clear that the option of centre-right government was virtually impossible. The three right-of-centre coalitions consist of more than twelve parties, which encounter difficulties communicating even within the coalitions they have formed. Therefore, the premise for inevitable government coalition of liberals and left-of-centre parties was clear-cut. The Socialists were charged with forming a Cabinet and long, complicated negotiation talks started in Bulgaria under the circumstances of unclear governmental mandate given by the voters. In the process of negotiations a lot was reached such as an agreement on the priorities and objectives of the Government as well as a common governmental platform between BSP, NMSS and MRF, who have in total two thirds of all seats in Parliament. When negotiations were reaching their conclusion, NMSS withdrew. Consequently, a minority Government

between BSP and MRF was formed which had 116 out of the necessary 121 votes. This Government did not gain the trust of the Parliament and NMSS was entrusted with the task of forming a Cabinet. The NMSS mandate failed as well despite the fact that NMSS held talks both with the Socialists and with the right-of-centre parties. The President gave the third and last mandate according to the Constitution to MRF. MRF played a fundamental role and resumed coalition talks between the Liberals and Socialist. Thus, the inevitable Socialist-Liberal Cabinet structure, suggested in first place, was upheld. The Cabinet portfolios are allocated as follows: BSP has the Prime Minister and eight Ministers, NMSS has five Ministers, MRF has three Ministers and the Minister of Finance has very clear right-of-centre views and has been appointed jointly. Put in other words- the votes in the Cabinet are

nine to nine. Therefore, it is difficult to qualify this Government predominantly left-of-centre or predominantly Liberal. Yet, it can be defined as a Cabinet of parity. The Cabinet demonstrates a clear balance of social-democratic and liberal values and has explicit pro-European views, which will significantly facilitate the integration of Bulgaria in the EU. It is important to point out the fact that something extremely important happened in Bulgaria during these elections- the population confirmed their choice of willing to have the Liberals in Government. Yet, again for the first time, something negative took place- a pro-fascist formation entered in Parliament.

Mr. Dzhedvet Chakarov, M.D. Vice-President and Member of the Bureau of Liberal International Minister of Environment and Waters Member of MRF Central Operative Bureau

## Renegotiating the constitution (continued)

Alternatively, the EU could try to oblige France, the Netherlands and the UK to have another go at ratifying the existing text once Chirac, Balkenende and Blair are retired – presumably not before 2007. This approach may be desirable but hardly seems to be possible. Another option would be to select a small number of institutional reforms and try to implement them not by treaty amendment but by changes in rules of procedure, by inter-institutional agreements, or by cooking up new arrangements outside the EU structure altogether. Although one or two ad hoc improvements could be made to the conduct of EU affairs at national level, the governance of the EU itself would be left almost untouched. This scenario lacks transparency and would put into reverse the drive for simplification.

A fourth option is to convene a new IGC to modify the existing Treaty on European Union so that the Constitution could be brought into force when ratified by fewer than all member states. A similar proposal, however, was vigorously opposed in the Convention, and would be hard put to survive the test of national ratification.

Effectively, this is the scenario of last resort.

A fifth scenario is to adopt a piecemeal approach to treaty reform, ditching the constitutional mantle. The precedents are not encouraging. Agreement on priorities for reform would be problematic. In sacrificing the package deal that was the Constitution, the Union would also be dismantling the impressive consensus behind it. Ad hoc treaty revision according to no long-term strategy smacks of pre-Laeken days. It would not settle the constitutional future of the Union but, on the contrary, threaten further bouts of instability. Deprived of the promise of a comprehensive constitutional settlement and of better policy making across a wider spectrum, public opinion would be justifiably suspicious. The political consequences of such a tactical retrenchment might be severe, especially in those countries where in any case referendums will have to be held to bring any revised EU treaty into force, as well as in those which have already ratified successfully the original Constitution.

The best option is to renegotiate the Constitution now to make it

better and more appealing to public opinion. Renegotiation needs to be informed not only by dissenting opinion in France and the Netherlands but also by the need to re-build a democratic consensus. The Constitution's revision must be more than a cosmetic exercise and intended genuinely to rectify some of the flaws which have been identified in the present text, especially with respect to Part Three.

*« Most EU citizens appear to want to live in a united Europe that is a constitutional democracy »*

On the other hand, the renegotiation must respect the main lines of the constitutional settlement reached by the Convention and IGC in 2002-04. There is no majority for a less powerful Union with weaker institutions. Most EU citizens appear to want to live in a united Europe that is a constitutional democracy.

The revised Constitution needs to reach a better definition of the social market as one which ensures European employability in a globalised economy, with emphasis on control of inflation, industrial democracy, investment in R&D and education, and anticipation of industrial change. It must install a more powerful economic governance for the monetary union, including the use by the eurogroup of enhanced cooperation provisions. It needs a new emphasis on climate security, involving modernisation of agriculture and environment policies. And it should better articulate the threshold of EU membership and the criteria and processes involved in enlargement.

As far as institutions are concerned, the revised Constitution would do well to create a proper hierarchy between the four parts of the Constitution, and to extend and improve the softer amendment provisions for Part Three. It should make the exclusive competences subject both to the subsidiarity and the enhanced cooperation provisions. A bold renegotiation, going well, would also seize the opportunity to have another look at the proposal for a Law Council, at the QMV threshold in the Council, the size and com-



Andrew Duff MEP (Liberal Democrats, UK) is the Parliament's co-rapporteur on how to salvage the Constitution.

position of Commission and several other less-than-perfect aspects of the 2004 text.

A new Convention that began work in September 2006 could be invited to transmit its new draft of the Constitution to the European Council in June 2007, with the aim of finally bringing the Constitution into force during 2009. Those countries that chose to have consultative referendums would be invited to hold them on the same day.

By Andrew Duff, MEP

## Interview with Werner Hoyer (continued)

**In your view, how could a closer cooperation between ELDR, its member parties and parliamentary group be ensured?**

The ELDR party political committee should determine a list of priority issues for European liberal democrat family. As MEPs can thoroughly discuss the content of future European policies and find liberal democrat solutions to the common issues faced by European countries today, the European Parliament is one of the best places to coordinate messages. But let's be honest: We still have an insufficient coordination. And the synergy effects which I mentioned do not refer exclusively to vertical cooperation, i.e. EP plus national parliaments, but also to the horizontal exchange of views between liberal democrat national MPs. This can be much better organised.

At the next European parliament elections in 2009, we should offer a distinctive programme to voters, a strong candidate to become president of the European Commission, and – by the way – also a common logo in combinations with the respective national logos. Here we can learn from others – for instance, the Eurogreens.

**What lessons can be drawn for ELDR and its member parties from the last European elections? What ideas do you have to improve our coordination and message to voters?**

In the run up to the next European elections, ELDR leaders, like high

ranking liberals in the national parliaments and governments, Bureau members, MEPs and Commissioners should refer to their belonging to the European liberal democrat political family whenever possible. It is also very important for representatives

the wheel many times at different places instead of learning from one another. Too few national parliamentarians continuously communicate with their colleagues in the respective committees of other countries and even the EP.

**Commissioners would make policies according to their European parties' manifesto and assume a more public role, like national ministers?**

In the spirit of the draft Constitution where the election of the commission president by the European

democrats should keep the legacy alive and make sure that the liberal philosophy inspires each and everyone of us to find answers to the challenges faced by today's and tomorrow's Europe.

Liberalism is a comprehensive concept. It cannot be reduced to a few single issues. Freedom policies are needed in almost every aspect of our societies: in a free market economy as the basis also for the ability to assist those who need the solidarity of society and state, in a legal framework for the organization of our societies, in which the dignity of woman and man and his or her freedom and responsibility must constantly be defended, and in an international policy concept which is based on multilateralism, international law, human rights, and a fair organization of trade and competition in a globalized world.

This takes courageous liberals, liberals who are proud to express "I am a liberal". We as the Liberal Democratic party in Europe bear the responsibility for the organized liberalism in Europe which will be needed in the years and decades to come more than ever. Let us tell loudly to our citizens what a convincing concept for the future and what an attractive spirit of freedom and responsibility liberalism can offer.



*« Let us tell loudly to our citizens what a convincing concept for the future and what an attractive spirit of freedom and responsibility liberalism can offer. »*

of ELDR to be present in different events around Europe, conferences and party congresses, to foster this shared community of thoughts. In the future, the European parties need more visibility.

We must produce much more synergy effects by a better networking between national and regional parliamentary groups and government officials in the different member countries. Too often, we invent

A constant discussion between ELDR member parties on the liberal agenda and policies is instrumental to the development of a strong and coherent message. ELDR could organise regular meetings between the parties' secretary generals or strategy managers to prepare the ELDR leaders' meeting in order to deliver a common message.

**Are you in favour of a more political European Commission where**

parliament is foreseen, we could indeed envisage to have a more political Commission that would somehow act as a steering force. Europe currently lacks public faces and Commissioners have a particular duty in communicating Europe and bringing citizens closer to it.

**Is there something you would like to say to your successor?**

The ELDR family has an impressive history and a strong identity. Liberal

# Les leaders Libéraux Démocrates Européens débattent de la crise de l'UE

Réunis dans le cadre du Sommet du Parti Libéral, Démocrate et Réformateur Européen (ELDR), les Premiers Ministres, Commissaires et Présidents de partis Libéraux Démocrates ont procédé à un débat ouvert sur la réponse à apporter à la crise constitutionnelle de l'UE le 16 juin.

Werner Hoyer, Président du Parti ELDR, a exprimé la nécessité d'une vision claire pour sortir l'Europe de la crise actuelle et a souligné l'engagement du parti à refuser de faire



Michel

de l'élargissement un dommage collatéral de cette crise. "Les Leaders Libéraux Démocrates Européens pensent que nous devons respecter nos engagements, pour autant que les critères d'adhésion soient remplis," a-t-il déclaré.

Le Premier Ministre Belge Guy Verhofstadt considère que les Leaders européens doivent maintenant décider du «statut final du processus d'intégration européenne». «La Constitution est difficile à défendre face à l'opinion publique parce qu'elle est le résultat d'un compromis entre deux visions. Après une analyse approfondie de l'opinion publique, les leaders de l'UE devront clarifier la forme que devra prendre l'Europe: soit une zone de libre échange avec une coopération limitée soit une

véritable Union politique avec une politique sociale et économique et une monnaie commune. Cette dernière incluant la capacité de développer une politique de défense et des affaires étrangères commune, la compétence en matière de justice et des affaires intérieures, et une dynamique pour le développement d'une politique commune et matière d'asile et d'immigration. J'espère que cette année ou l'année prochaine nous pourrons nous accorder sur la nécessité de déterminer le statut final de l'UE,» a-t-il déclaré.

*Anders Fogh Rasmussen : « Ça n'a pas de sens de faire voter les électeurs danois sur un texte qui sera ensuite modifié »*

Le Premier Ministre roumain Calin Popescu-Tariceanu a déclaré que lui et le peuple roumain dans son ensemble suivait avec émotion et intérêt les débats actuels sur l'avenir de l'UE. "C'est le rôle des hommes politiques de trouver la meilleure façon de communiquer et de montrer les avantages d'une Europe forte et élargie,» a-t-il expliqué.

Pour Siméon Saxe Cobourg Gotha, Premier Ministre bulgare, le résultat négatif des référendums sont peut-être le signal d'une souffrance croissante en Europe et doivent être analysés de près. Il a lancé un appel vibrant aux citoyens de l'UE de ne pas oublier tous les bénéfices qu'ils tirent de l'intégration de l'UE. "Nous soutenons entièrement ce projet merveilleux appelé Europe et je pense que c'est le cas de tous ceux qui savent ce que la guerre veut dire. Les jeunes européens doivent réfléchir à toutes ces opportunités fantastiques que le projet européen leur apporte,» a-t-il déclaré.

Le Premier Ministre danois Anders



Fogh Rasmussen a déclaré "La Constitution offre à l'Europe un bien meilleur cadre que le Traité existant. Toutefois, le résultat de ces deux référendums doit être respecté et nous ne pouvons pas continuer comme si de rien n'était. Chaque Etat membre doit avoir la possibilité de s'exprimer sur le Traité. Mais avant de poursuivre ce processus, il y a une condition préalable: il nous faut savoir si le texte sera ou non renégocié. Ça n'a pas de sens de faire voter les électeurs danois sur un texte qui sera ensuite modifié. Sans cette clarification, je propose de remettre à plus

tard le délai pour la ratification et d'utiliser ce délai comme période de réflexion. Premièrement, pour réfléchir à la façon d'impliquer le public européen dans l'avenir de l'Europe et

*Guy Verhofstadt : « Il faut déterminer le statut final de l'UE »*

de l'UE. Deuxièmement, pour répondre aux réelles préoccupations de nos citoyens; au lieu d'entamer des débats

institutionnels, nous devons nous concentrer davantage sur la politique et la substance. Telle sera la voie à suivre pour établir une plus grande confiance entre les hommes politiques et leur électorat en Europe ».

Andrus Ansip, Premier Ministre estonien a déclaré qu'il était convaincu "que le résultat négatif des deux référendums ne signifie pas la fin du processus d'intégration de l'Europe". Il a mis en lumière les défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés: "Nous devons améliorer le marché intérieur commun et créer une politique étrangère et de défense européenne". A son avis, "il ne serait pas raisonnable de rouvrir le texte du Traité constitutionnel sachant qu'il n'est pas sûr que l'on puisse parvenir à un meilleur texte". Il a rappelé que, malgré une économie en pleine croissance et une attitude généralement positive face à l'intégration européenne, le soutien de son peuple au Traité constitutionnel chute et se situe actuellement à peine 25% de la population. "L'Europe a besoin de plus de temps pour la ratification et d'explications claires de la France et des Pays-Bas sur la façon de poursuivre", a-t-il ajouté, rappelant que l'Estonie avait choisi une ratification par le Parlement.



# MEP Viktória Mohácsi seeks to end Roma segregation

**V**iktória Mohácsi is a Hungarian MEP of romani background. She replaced outgoing Member Gábor Demszky, Budapest mayor, on 1 December 2004. Prior to this, Ms. Mohácsi worked with the Hungarian Ministry of Education as Commissioner Responsible for Integration. In her whole career as journalist and researcher, she has consistently fought to end roma segregation and to improve education rights for romani children.

## What impacts has the EU accession had on the situation for roma?

If you look at the situation of Romani people in former communist states and other countries in the world, you will find that Roma are suffering from poor conditions: unemployment rate is extremely high, children are segregated in schools and often declared disabled, there is no cultural and linguistic autonomy, life expectancy is shorter and people live in ghettos. While other minorities have museums, exhibitions, and publications in their languages – Roma enjoy none of them.

EU accession has created a lot of hopes in the Romani community which counts as many as 12 million people in the EU 25 plus Romania and Bulgaria. The structural funds could help a lot if the money is well spent. The EU has already brought some changes in the sphere of political representation – the mere fact of having two Romani members from Hungary in the European Parliament is a big achievement. In most countries, Roma are settled and not traveling

any longer and they have seen that national governments, whatever their colour, have not acted strongly to end discrimination.

## Why has Hungary managed to have two Roma MEPs and not other countries?

In Hungary, the Romani movement started earlier than in other countries like Slovakia, more than 20 years ago.

*“60 % of the Romani children are segregated in schools and receive a low quality education”*

We have approximately 4000 NGOs dealing with roma rights and Roma can elect their own minority self-governments. The local government can give their opinions and participate in debates on social and cultural issues.

As a result Hungary adopted a minority law in 1993. Hungarian political parties want to catch Romani votes and therefore try to cooperate with Roma in the field of accession to political life, providing better education and cultural rights, etc...

*Roma suffer from educational, housing and health segregation, e.g concentration of Romani children in ghetto schools within Romani neighborhoods, creation of Roma-only classes within mainstream schools, and channeling of Romani students into special schools for children with learning disabilities. How widespread is this phenomenon?*

We are carrying research on this in the new and old Member States and have found some shocking figures. In a German region, eighty percent of the children that have been declared mentally disabled are Romani. Generally in Europe, I would say that 60 % of the Romani children are segregated in schools and receive a low quality education. Romani children are not learning foreign languages and do not have access to computers. Since most of the families are poor and poorly equipped at home, they finish school without having ever touched a computer and are really disadvantaged. There is a case made by the European Roma Rights Center NGO in front of the European court of human rights in Strasbourg to end segregation in a school in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

## What policies do you advocate to put an end to Roma “Ghettoisation”?

In Hungary, a law was passed to enforce the desegregation of schools. It included a definition of what segregation at school means and a budget was provided. About 20 percent of the schools practicing segregation have changed. Resources are needed to organise catch-up trainings so that Romani children can be part of mainstream class rooms. The others are now operating illegally but officials are seeking to change it.

In terms of housing, I would destroy all the ghettos in Hungary because it would cost more to rehabilitate them than to create new accommodation for Roma. To ensure a mix of people, I suggest relocating roma in the city center if someone old is living his/her place without relatives.

*“EU accession has created a lot of hopes in the Romani community”*

*In April, a joint resolution was passed by all EP parliamentary groups. It specifies that average Roma communities face unacceptably high levels of unemployment and that specific measures are required to facilitate access to jobs. What specific measures*



*do you want governments to take? Are you in favour of positive discrimination and quotas to improve Roma representation and participation in society?*

Positive action is a sensitive issue in every country. I would not say that you could solve the problem of unemployment with such a tool. But people that have been declared mentally disabled and have a certificate from such a school are not equipped to find a job. So special education and schooling has to change to curb roma unemployment. To help these people find a job, trainings have to be organised.

*What actions do you intend to take for Roma during the rest of your mandate at the EP?*

I am thinking about the creation of a desegregation directive. Selection on the colour of the skin in unacceptable.

## ELDR parties to help strengthen Roma civil society

The creation of a strong Roma civil society will take center-stage during a high-level conference organised on 27-28 October in Bucharest, Romania, by ELDR Dutch member party D 66, together with the Partidul National Liberal of Romania. Among other speakers, Romanian Prime-minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, Hungarian MEP Viktória Mohácsi (SDS), Bulgarian Minister Dzevdet Chakarov(MRF), Dutch MPs, institutions such as the World Bank, Open Society Foundation will present their ideas on involving Roma in the decision-making process.

Participants will debate how to ensure that the implementation of the National Action Plans/Strategies includes the views of Roma. The discussions will revolve around three main questions:

- What are the main obstacles to create a strong Roma civil society? What measures could be taken to promote the Roma civil society?
- What mechanisms can ensure better access of Roma organizations in EU programs?
- What are the arguments for and

against a “European Roma Program” to guarantee the rights of Roma all over Europe?

The spotlight will be turned on three key issues for the Roma : education, gender mainstreaming and strengthening of the Roma civil society. Education is seen as the critical element in short-, medium-, and long-term programs supporting the development opportunities for Roma. If Roma children are included in education systems from the very beginning, they have better chances of avoiding the spiral of poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. Participants will examine strategies and solutions to improve roma education and discuss how to make the Roma Education Fund of the World Bank the most effective.

In terms of gender equality, the conference will focus on ensuring the participation of roma women in designing programmes aimed at them and on promoting involvement of Roma women in politics. Roma women face dual challenges arising from their ethnicity and gender. The

limited evidence that is available on the status of Roma women suggests they are at a significant disadvantage in employment and education. Because of early childbearing (sometimes before age 15), and substantial family responsibilities, girls tend to drop out of school earlier than boys, and hence are less equipped for the labour market. Low levels of education also have implications for family health and the welfare of children. Women themselves have heightened risks stemming from poor reproductive health, including high numbers of closely spaced births, inadequate prenatal care, and poor nutrition. There is also growing evidence that Roma women are increasingly involved in prostitution and are at higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

This two day conference will gather a wide-range of participants. Among them Roma organizations : European Roma Rights Centre (Hungary), Integro(Bulgaria), Spolu (The Netherlands), Impreuna, Roma Women Initiative, Association for Roma Women Emancipation – AFER

and Romani CRISS from Romania.

Liberal parties in countries where a strong minority of Roma people exist and whose governments have signed the Declaration of the Decade of the Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 will participate in the conference: Liberal Party of Macedonia, Alliance of Free Democrats, Hungary, Alliance of a New Citizen, Slovakia, Civic Democratic Alliance, Czech Republic, Liberal Party, Croatia, Croatian Social Liberal Party, Croatia, Movement for Rights and Freedoms, Bulgaria, National Movement Simeon II,

Bulgaria, Partidul National Liberal, Romania and Civic Alliance of Serbia, Serbia. This conference provides an opportunity for ELDR parties to follow up on the European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Roma in the EU of 28 April 2005 which calls on political parties to review their party structures and procedures with the aim of removing all barriers that directly or indirectly militate against the participation of Roma and incorporate policies geared to full Roma integration into their mainstream political and social agenda.

### Roma, victims of transition

Increasingly severe poverty and exclusion of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe has been one of the most striking developments in the region since the transition from socialism began in 1989. While living standards have declined for many during the transition from the socialism to market economies, conditions for Roma have deteriorated more severely than for others, and Roma have been poorly positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the economy and society. Poverty among Roma is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon related to poor health and education status, limited chances in the labor market, discrimination, and unique aspects of Roma social organization, which together contribute to their exclusion.

# Braindrain from a liberal democrat perspective

This Spring Academy 2005 of the International Democratic Initiative Foundation D66 focused on battling the problems caused by brain drain in the areas of education, business and policymaking in Central- and Eastern Europe. Participants to the Academy adopted a resolution stating that by a mix of policies, mobility must be promoted while still promoting the economic development of sending countries. The multilateral conference took place on 9-11 May 2005 in Sofia (Bulgaria) and involved participants from Bosnia (Liberal Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Albania (Mjaft Foundation and Democratic Party of Albania), Turkey (ARI Movement and Motherland Party), Macedonia (Liberal Democratic Party and Liberal Party of Macedonia), Serbia (Civic Alliance of Serbia) and Romania (National Liberal Party). The participants were young representatives as well as members of Parliament of the parties mentioned above.

The three-day programme was filled with various interesting speakers. Among them were

Dirk Verhofstadt, Belgian author and liberal theorist; Lord Alderdice, President of Liberal International and Danny Sriskandarajah, Senior Research Fellow at IPPR. The emphasis throughout the Academy was on the positive aspects of brain drain (high skilled mobility) and possible solutions. The combination of presentations and discussions has resulted in a resolution and questions for Parliament. The next step will be to create public attention for the issue of brain drain and our resolution. The participants have been asked to present the questions for Parliament in their respective national Parliaments. Moreover, the resolution will be submitted to the upcoming Liberal International Executive Meeting and ELDR congress this autumn. The European Parliament will also be notified of the resolution.

For more information on IDI and D66 work please contact: Emily van de Vijver (e.v.d.vijver@d66.nl)



# Upcoming political and information activities

## Belgium: VLD and Lymec

**Title: Sex, drugs and tolerance: where do liberals draw the line?**  
**Date and place: from 29 September to 2 October, Blankenberge, Belgium**

Description: The key topic of the Young leaders' meeting is the right of the individual to seek pleasure in activities such as dangerous sports, sex, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, parties... How far does this right go? Should the State and the European Union interfere in steering citizens' behaviour or is everyone responsible for his or her own choices? What should be the role of authorities in both encouraging (e.g safe sex campaigns) as well as discouraging (e.g non-smoking campaigns) the human behaviour? Over 150 young people from all over Europe will discuss whether a consensus exists between liberal democrat parties on issues such as the legalization of drugs and prostitution.

More info: [Office@Lymec.org](mailto:Office@Lymec.org)

## The Netherlands: VVD

**Title: Democracy building beyond Europe's new borders, and capacity building for the liberal political spectrum**  
**Date and Place : 17-18 November**

Description: The aim is to organize a European wide working conference in The Netherlands concerning EU accession and EU foreign policy in relation to several non-EU (and non-candidate) countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The countries to be focused on are: Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. The assertion is that Europe has not yet developed a common approach towards "third" countries on issues of enlargement and intra-state conflict needed for being an effective partner in democracy assistance. Accession is the spearhead of almost every liberal party's policy. This is the reason why we would like to invite the (parliamentary) spokespersons for European Affairs/International Affairs of our sister parties from the above mentioned CEE countries for discussions and debates with high-level EU policymakers.

More info: [Caroline Van Thessen \(c.van.thessen@vvd.nl\)](mailto:Caroline.Van.Thessen@vvd.nl)

## Spain: Convergencia Democratica de Catalunya

**Title: "The clash of Mediterranean cooperation and dialogue"**  
**Euro-Mediterranean Liberal Summit**  
**Date and place: 11 November 2005, Barcelona, Spain**

Description: On 27th and 28th November, EU Heads of State and Government will gather in Barcelona to discuss the Euro-Mediterranean policy and review the Barcelona process. The pre-liberal summit, which shall gather ELDR member parties from Albania, Catalonia, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, aims to define the liberal approach to the Euro-Mediterranean policy.

More info: [Carles Llorens i Vila \(relacionsinternacionals@convergencia.org\)](mailto:Carles.Llorens.i.Vila@relacionsinternacionals@convergencia.org)

# Draft Resolution IDI Spring Academy 2005 - From Braindrain to Brain mobility

### Situation

- Western European countries are facing economic challenges related to their ageing population and a lack of young people with relevant skills.
- Eastern European countries and Turkey are a potential source of young talented workers.

### Mutual interest

- It's in the mutual interest for 'receiving countries' – current members of the EU – and 'sending countries' – accession countries – , to cooperate on education and employment practices.

### Difficulties/Problems

- Every country has specific problems for which different solutions are necessary.
- Visa regulations are too strict in the Balkan region, which makes brain circulation difficult.

- Lack of knowledge, data and awareness of the problem.

### On mobility

- Individuals are not the property of the state.
- Individuals have the right to live in a stable and prosperous country.
- "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" John Stuart Mill.

### On economy

- Sending countries should create an environment which attracts investments and stimulates entrepreneurship:
  - By ensuring rule of law.
  - Without disturbing the free market.

### On diasporas

- Create a database:
  - 'Who is who?'
  - 'Who is where?'
  - Why do people leave?
  - What are the push and pull factors?
- Create networks between the members of the diasporas and, between diasporas and domestic people.
- The members of the diasporas must be stimulated to become the best ambassadors for the home countries.

### On education

- Sending countries should invest more in education:
  - Sponsor the education and training of particular skills in sending countries (i.e. fund the 'brain factory').
- Regional cooperation.
- Receiving countries should prevent 'brain waste' amongst immigrants.

### Strategy

- By a mix of policies we must promote mobility while still promoting the economic development of sending countries.

### Recommendations

- The EU sets up regular meetings between sending and receiving countries.
- The EU has to create a data system on the diasporas of the sending countries.
- Due to the fact that the EU profits from the public investments in education, we recommend the EU to invest in public education in candidate member states (Demetrius programme).
- The EU should investigate the current problems with the visa system and make it more transparent and equal.
- Countries in the Eastern and Southern European region should cooperate, to allow for people in the region to travel without visa between their countries.

## Enhancing a more liberal transatlantic dialogue

Lymec was invited to participate in the National Convention of the Young Democrats of America in August.

Since 2002, we have witnessed how political differences between the EU and the US have widened significantly due to numerous irresponsible moves by actors such as Bush, Chirac, Schröder, Blair, Berlusconi and others.

Even though the United States and the European Union share the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world, accounting for over \$1.5 trillion, the political environment and its impact on the economy and trade relations are far from ideal.

The old idea that Europeans are willing to share the leadership with Americans, but not so committed to share the subsequent costs, whereas Americans would not put any obstacles to share the costs but not the leadership is definitely false. It only responds to few situations that occurred throughout the past few decades, but it is not in any case based on essential and permanent grounds.

We are unequivocally united by a common history, culture and geography, but also by common economic and geopolitical interests. Nonetheless, some circumstances have caused a dilution of this alliance; demonstrated lately on the manner in which the Americans, and particularly the Republican adminis-

tration, have been addressing the question of international security and terrorism. Whereas we do share the analysis of the problem, we question the instruments and means they use in order to tackle these issues. Alternatively the trade frictions are a result of some regulatory differences and remaining trade barriers and could even be accountable to an increasing technological dispute...

*«It is absolutely true that any approach to a party political structure from the US will bring you to a different political culture».*

In simplifying the reality, one could conclude that whereas European Christian Democrats only look to the far west and European socialists to the far east, the European Liberal Democrats are the only political force able to prioritise a true dialogue of civilisations that brings the west closer to the east, making Europe a more dynamic and plural region from an economic, social and cultural point of view, that is able to connect the classical western civilisation with the Islamic world.

LYMEC has been intensifying this transatlantic dialogue by strengthening a partnership with the largest political youth organisation in the US, the Young Democrats of America



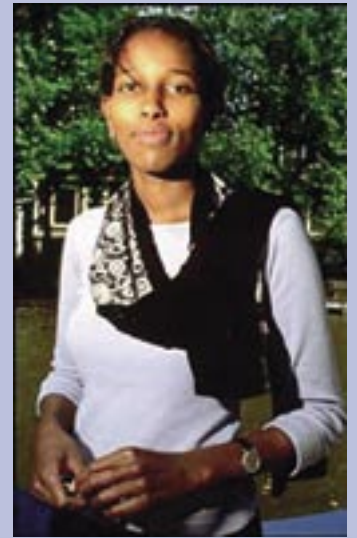
(YDA), and has been successful in adding a liberal component to the public policy dialogue between North America and the European Union. It is absolutely true that any approach to a party political structure from the US will bring you to a different political culture. There is no chance for liberals to find a true political counterpart in the US. There is only a chance to find a structure with which you can share some values and you can benefit reciprocally from that partnership in the media.

With this aim, a delegation led by Minna Miettinen, LYMEC Secretary-general from Finland, Pietro Paganini, LYMEC Vice-President from Italy and myself were invited to attend the national Convention of the Young Democrats of America in San Francisco (California) in the beginning of August. The Convention under the theme "Values, voices, victories, it is our fight now!" gathered more than 975 delegates from all across the States. Concurrently, YDA leadership visited LYMEC on the occasion of our Executive Committee in Rome (Italy) last year.

LYMEC as their only European partner was asked to deliver a speech in the plenary of the Convention in which the role of YDA was stressed in order to bring back the dignity and respect to the United States: protecting and defending individual and civil rights, fighting against the death penalty, returning the country

## Ayaan Hirsi Ali awarded liberal democracy prize

At a ceremony in Stockholm on 29 August 2005, Dutch liberal MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali was awarded the 2005 Democracy Prize of the Liberal Party of Sweden, by party leader Lars Leijonborg. Mrs. Hirsi Ali was selected prizewinner for her courageous work for democracy, human's rights and women's rights. She also participated in a seminar on "Integration and Diversity", presenting her views on Islam, tolerance and multiculturalism, which have recently been published in her latest book "The Caged Virgin".



Mrs. Hirsi Ali is Member of the Dutch parliament for the liberal party VVD. Living under death threats, she calls for 'enlightenment' of Islam and struggles for the rights of Muslim women. In 2004, she made the controversial film "Submission" about the oppression of women in many Islamic cultures. The film was made together with Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who was later murdered. In 2003, Mrs. Hirsi Ali was included in the Time Magazine list of the

100 most influential people in the world.

The Democracy Prize of the Liberal Party of Sweden was first awarded in 2002 to the founders of the free libraries in Cuba, and Mrs. Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the second winner. The Prize is awarded to individuals or organisations struggling for freedom, democracy and human rights.

to the path of multilateralism in the international scene and working towards a full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. All this happened in a pure American style context, with several interviews and speeches from Governors, Members of

the US Congress and Senate, and the exciting speech from the Mayor of the most liberal city in the US, Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco.

*Roger Albinyana i Saigó, President of LYMEC, European Liberal Youth*

### Member Parties and Affiliate Parties

#### Member Parties

Albania  
Partia Aleanca Demokratike  
<http://www.aleanca.org>

Andorra  
Partit Liberal d'Andorra  
<http://www.partitliberal.ad>

Austria  
Liberales Forum  
<http://www.liberales.at>

Belgium  
Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (VLD)  
<http://www.vld.be>

Parti Reformateur Libéral (PRL)  
<http://www.mr.be>

Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Liberalno demokratska stranka (LDS)  
<http://www.liberali.ba>

Bulgaria  
Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)  
<http://www.dps.bg>

National Movement Simeon II  
<http://www.ndsv.bg>

Croatia  
People's Party (HNS)  
<http://www.hns.hr>

Cyprus  
United Democrats (UDP)  
<http://www.edi.org.cy>

Denmark  
det radikale venstre  
<http://www.dr.dk>

venstre  
<http://www.venstre.dk>

Estonia  
Estonian Reform Party  
<http://www.reform.ee>

Estonian Centre Party  
<http://www.keskerakond.ee>

Finland  
Suomen Keskusta  
<http://www.keskusta.fi>

Svenska Folkpartiet (SFP)  
<http://www.sfp.fi>

Germany  
Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP)  
<http://www.fdp-bundesverband.de>

Hungary  
Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége (SZDSZ)  
<http://www.szdsz.hu>

Ireland  
Progressive Democrats (PD)  
[www.progressivedemocrats.ie](http://www.progressivedemocrats.ie)

Italy  
Italia dei Valori - Lista Di Pietro  
<http://www.antoniodipietro.it>

Partito Repubblicano Italiano (PRI)  
<http://www.pri.it>

Movimento Repubblicani Europei  
<http://www.movimentorepubblicanieuropei.org/radicali>

www.radicali.it

Kosova  
Partia Liberale e Kosoves (PLK)  
<http://www.plk-kosova.org>

Latvia  
Latvia's Way (LC)  
<http://www.lc.lv>

Lithuania  
Lithuanian Liberal and Center Union  
[www.lics.lt](http://www.lics.lt)

Naújoji sąjunga - New Union  
[www.nsajunga.lt](http://www.nsajunga.lt)

Luxembourg  
Demokratesch Partei (DP)  
<http://www.dp.lu>

The Netherlands  
Democraten 66  
<http://www.d66.nl>

Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en democratie (VVD)  
<http://www.vvd.nl>

Poland  
Partia Demokratyczna  
[www.demokracja.pl](http://www.demokracja.pl)

Romania  
Partidul National Liberal (PNL)  
<http://www.pnl.ro>

Serbia and Montenegro  
Liberals of Serbia  
<http://www.liberali-srbije.org.yu>

Civic Alliance of Serbia  
<http://www.gradjanskisavez.org.yu/>

Slovakia  
Aliancia Nového Občana (ANO)  
<http://www.ano-aliancia.sk>

Slovenia  
Liberalna demokracija Slovenije (LDS)  
<http://www.lds.si>

Spain  
Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (CDC)  
<http://www.convergencia.org>

Sweden  
Folkpartiet Liberalerna (FP)  
<http://www.folkpartiet.se>

Centerpartiet (C)  
<http://www.centerpartiet.se>

Switzerland  
Parti Radical Démocratique (FDP-PRD)  
<http://www.fdp.ch>

United Kingdom  
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems)  
<http://www.libdems.org.uk>

The Alliance of Northern Ireland  
<http://www.allianceparty.org>

Affiliate Parties

Croatia  
Hrvatska socijalno liberalna stranka (HSLs)  
<http://www.hsls.hr>

Liberalna stranka (LS)  
<http://www.liberali.hr>

Czech Republic  
Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA)  
<http://www.oda.cz>

Macedonia  
Liberal Party of Macedonia (LPM)  
<http://www.liberalna.org.mk>

Norway  
Venstre (V)  
<http://www.venstre.no>

### ELDR AISBL CALENDAR UPCOMING EVENTS 2005

#### September 2005

17-22 Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference, Black Pool, UK  
22 ELDR Party aisbl Bureau meeting, Bratislava  
23 ELDR Party aisbl Council, Bratislava, Slovakia  
23-24 ELDR Party aisbl Congress, Bratislava, Slovakia  
29/9-2/10 Lymec Young Leader's Meeting, Blankenberge, Belgium

#### October 2005

27 (tbc) PM meeting, Brussels (tbc)

#### November 2005

4-5 ELDR Party aisbl Bureau meeting, Mallorca (tbc)  
4-5 Liberal International Executive Committee, Mallorca  
11 Euro-Mediterranean Liberal Summit, Barcelona, Spain  
15 Local Elections, Denmark  
18-20 VLD Congress, place tbc  
25-26 VVD Party Congress, the Netherlands  
26-27 Venstre, annual Congress, Odense Congress Center, Denmark

#### December 2005

15 (tbc) ELDR Leaders and Minister's meeting, Brussels, (tbc)

### ELDR aisbl

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