



ELDR Party
RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT ELDR CONGRESS, BARCELONA, CATALONIA

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Resolutions adopted at ELDR Party Congress 2009

(Structured in thematic subgroups)

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ELDR Party
CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Civil Liberties

1. The citizen's right to free communication and freedom of expression in an online world

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

- Recognising that everyone has the right of freedom of expression and free communication, which includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers, and respect for their private life, their home and their correspondence, as protected by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as adopted by all members of the Council of Europe;
- Recalls that in the determination of their civil rights and obligations, or of any criminal charge against them, everyone is entitled to be presumed innocent until proven guilty by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law, acting in due process of a fair trial;
- Notes in the current state of the means of communication and given the generalised development of public online communication services, and the importance of the latter for the practical participation in democracy and expression of ideas and opinions, that the right of freedom of expression and free communication implies freedom to access such services;
- Recognising that the continuing development of Information Technology and growing use of the Internet as a means of communication, entertainment, political debate and filling important functions for society, often strain the existing framework of laws and regulations, both of the European Union and of the member states;
- Notes with concern that states around the world for political reasons are limiting their citizens' access to free communication, and that citizens exercising their right of freedom of expression online are being deprived of this right;
- Stresses that there shall be no restrictions on the exercise of these freedoms, except such as are proportionate, prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, notably in the interests of national security, public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary;
- Firmly believes that any monitoring and storage of citizens' communication by civil and public authorities must be laid down by law after independent judicial supervision in each case in line with respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular in relation to a strict limitation of the invasion of privacy;
- Notes with deep concern the importance of finding instruments to estimate and evaluate to what extent civil and public authorities should be given the right to collect and deal with information concerning the communication and correspondence of the citizen;
- Resolves to protect and uphold the rights of the citizen, as affirmed in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in all matters of legislation;

Calls upon:

- Its member parties to review existing and proposed laws, regarding the citizen's rights to freedom of expression and free communication as well as monitoring and storage of such communication, according to the principles of proportionality, necessity and transparency;
- Its member parties to abolish the data retention directive (Directive 2006/24/EC) which forces member states to store the communication data of all EU citizens for at least six months;
- Its member parties to strictly limit and control the extent to which the citizen's right to free communication is restricted, as well as the purposes for which retained data may be provided to law enforcement authorities;
- The European Parliament as well as the European Commission to closely monitor the level of media freedom inside the EU as well as to encourage framework conditions for a pluralistic media landscape;
- Its member parties to incorporate into their political work respect for the citizen's rights to freedom of expression, free communication, privacy and the inviolable right to a fair trial at every political level in order to create a liberal and open society.

2. Uniting for liberty

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Recognises:

- That everyone has the right to freedom of expression, as provided by article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and by article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- That freedom of expression is commonly restricted with reference to, inter alia, the need to prevent libel, defamation, the inciting of hatred or commenting on sensitive topics such as religion or ethnicity;
- That freedom of expression must encompass the freedom to express opinions that may be deemed by some individuals or groups to be unwanted or even hurtful since a freedom limited to expressing carefully worded opinions accepted by the majority does not constitute a right to *free* expression;
- That freedom of expression is being restricted both by governments and non government actors such as, inter alia, organised crime groups, political and civil society groups and influential individuals.

And:

- Stresses that allowing the citizens of a nation to freely express their opinions does not lead to any fiscal costs for the government of that nation and that the economic situation of a nation can therefore in no circumstances be considered an excuse for not allowing full freedom of expression to all its citizens;
- Firmly rejects the notion that certain individuals, groups, cultures or societies are less suited to have the right to freely express their thoughts and opinions;
- Stresses that there shall be no interference by a public authority in the exercise of these rights except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Notes:

- With deep concern that billions of people worldwide are still being denied the fundamental right to freely express their opinions and beliefs as well as receiving unbiased information from free media;
- With deep concern that according to the Freedom House International report of May 2009, press freedom declined in every region of the world during 2008, continuing a seventh consecutive year of overall deterioration worldwide;
- With concern that according to the Freedom House International report of May 2009 on freedom of the press, several member states of the European Union (Italy, Romania and Bulgaria) only receive a rating of "partly free", and that this also applies to the candidate states of Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.

Calls Upon its member parties:

- To promote legislation that supports freedom of expression on a national, European and international level, whilst accurately monitoring the level of

- pluralism through the definition of appropriate guidelines and objective evaluation criteria;
- To put forward and support measures to increase the proportion of national and European foreign aid directed towards the furthering of human rights, democracy and free media around the world;
 - To support measures to provide safe havens in Europe, inter alia, by the use of grants and stipends to persecuted authors, journalists, bloggers and other individuals putting themselves at risk by exercising their right to freely voice opinions and report on events, thus affording them the possibility of working in a safe and productive environment;
 - To support the granting of assistance by national and EU embassies, consulates and similar diplomatic missions to third country nationals being persecuted for exercising their right to free speech;
 - To apply diplomatic pressure on all governments and groups that do not respect the fundamental right of free expression.

3. Privacy: the EU is not my big brother

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Whereas:

- Since 9/11 and the so-called “war on terror” we have seen an escalation in the violation of our privacy rights;
- There are an increasing number of cameras in streets, on ships, in public buildings and even on buses;
- All data concerning each air journey that any passenger books, and increasingly also railway travel, car rental, and hotel reservations are stored in Passenger Name Records (PNR) databases. This information is increasingly transferred to non-EU countries such as the United States of America;
- The desire to create a central database of the biometric data currently stored on identification cards and passports is growing among many EU governments;
- The mobile phone, internet and financial transactions of all European citizens are recorded and retained by law for at least six months, thus allowing the creation of complete communication as well as location profiles.

Noting that:

- Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as adopted by all members of the Council of Europe, protects the right to respect for private and family life stating that there shall be no restrictions on the exercise of these freedoms, except if they are in accordance with the law and are necessary in a democratic society, notably in the interests of national security, public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others;
- We do not defend our way of living by giving up the essential freedoms that define it. If we give up privacy - a basic right of any individual - open society as we know it will cease to exist and will slowly but surely become more and more controlled and less free;
- The war against international Islamic terrorism most of all is a war of ideas. Only by sticking to the ideals of democracy, rule of law and an open society can this confrontation be won;
- Privacy (or any other basic human right) should not be sacrificed or suspended in order to fulfil a temporary and questionable goal. Or as Thomas Jefferson put it: “Those who desire to give up freedom in order to gain security, will not have, nor do they deserve, either one.”

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party:

- Calls on decision-makers at all levels of power to use the principles of necessity and subsidiarity in making rules that affect our privacy;
- Strongly opposes any kind of agreement between the United States of America or other third countries and the European Union which would grant automatic access to European SWIFT banking data without judicial oversight by a European judge;

- Opposes any kind of internet censorship other than where criminals abuse individuals, if there is no possibility to erase the website.
- Calls for a review of the PNR agreement currently in place;
- Prefers to fight crime and terrorism by having adequately funded, well staffed and best trained police and law enforcement services rather than automatic surveillance or symbolic policies such as changing privacy laws for the worse.

4. Digital freedoms

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Having regard to:

- The on-going discussion at the European Parliament on Electronic communications, the so-called "Telecom Package", which should result in the adoption of a new legislation by the end of the year;
- Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union on freedom of expression and information, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers";
- Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union on the Right to good administration, to Article 42 on Access to Documents and to the activities and documents produced by the European Ombudsman on the issue of access to public acts.

Whereas:

- The debate on internet rights has become a pan-European issue and a matter of political confrontation;
- The fundamental charters of almost every democratic country state that freedom and secrecy of correspondence and of other forms of communication is inviolable.

Considers:

- That access to the internet should be safeguarded as a fundamental right like those concerning communication and freedom of expression.

Invites all ELDR member parties to campaign to ensure that:

- No technology that would facilitate surveillance of internet users, such as technologies that mirror or monitor users' actions, and/or interfere with operations of users' network activity for the benefit of a third party, also known as "filtering", should be made mandatory by competent authorities;
- No restriction may be imposed on the rights and freedoms of end-users, without a prior ruling by the national judicial authorities.

Urges all ELDR member parties to foster national and transnational efforts to promote:

- An open debate on the possibility to legalise file-sharing of copyright-covered works through the adoption of extended collective licenses;
- The adoption of open formats and free software as good practice to guarantee the independence of institutions, transparency and accessibility of all citizens to public acts, thus resulting also in significant budget savings for public administrations.

5. Protection of persons belonging to linguistic minorities in the EU

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

The Slovak language law, recently adopted by the Slovak Parliament, raises grave concerns regarding the human rights of persons belonging to linguistic minorities in the European Union. The law is detailed and penetrates deeply into the everyday lives of linguistic minorities in the country by regulating the way meetings, gatherings and other forms of communication are carried out. As of September 1st, 2009, minority-language schools and providers of health services are obliged to run their administration in Slovak. The armed forces, the police and the fire service will be monolingually Slovak. The use of minority languages could be criminalised in certain areas of the country.

Notes:

- That according to the EU Treaties, language and minority policies fall under the competency of the Member States, which are supposed to know what is in the best interests of their own minorities.

Refers:

- However, to the wording of Article 6 in the EU-treaty stating “the protection of persons belonging to national minorities is an integral part of the respect for human rights, which is one of the principles on which the Union is founded” and “Member States should use all legal instruments available to them in order to guarantee the rights of the persons belonging to national minorities in accordance with their constitutional order and international law obligations”;
- To the European Charter for Fundamental Rights, which in its Article 21 prohibits discrimination on the basis of language and membership of national minorities.
- To the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and notes that the Slovak language law clearly breaches the principles of the Charter;

And:

- Considers the new language law in Slovakia as going against the spirit and values of the European Union;
- Questions how Slovakia can be a part of a multilingual EU while not tolerating a multilingual Slovakia;
- Condemns the law, which will place up to 15 percent of the Slovak population in a secondary position while the linguistic majority will reap benefits on the basis of their ethnic identity.

Calls on:

- The Slovak government to repeal the language law;
- Calls on the European Commission to monitor the implementation of the European charter for Regional and Minority Languages in all EU countries;
- The Commission to act in a more progressive and courageous way to protect the human rights of all citizens of the EU, including linguistic minorities.



ELDR Party
CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Economic Policy

6. Call for full implementation of the services directive and establishment of a services directive 'Bis'

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

The services directive has to be transposed at the latest by December 28th 2009. This directive is of great importance to obtain a free market for services. The services directive aims at constituting a freedom of establishment in all the member states of the EU as well as facilitating the free movement of services between member states. This directive also aims at extending consumer choice of services across the EU as well as improving the quality of the offered services.

Today, unfortunately, there are many exemptions in the free market for services under directive 2006/123. The services of employment agencies are also excluded. However, this sector will become very important once the economy is booming again. Child care is another excluded sector; nonetheless this sector is dealing with a lot of shortages on the supply side.

Calls upon:

- The new European Commission to continue with the construction of a real free market for services. The European Commission has to start with the preparations in order to create a services directive 'bis'. At the same time, many countries have not fully implemented the services directive.
- Its member organisations to continue pressing for full implementation of the services directive.
- Member States to support a greater role of the European Union in the areas already covered by the current services directive and that will be covered by the new one.

7. The Lisbon Process is needed as never before

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Whereas:

- The global financial crisis is likely to leave structural traces in the European economic landscape, and the economy could be on a structurally lower growth path unless action is taken;
- The analysis underlying the Lisbon Process, i.e. the need for Governments and the private sector to invest in knowledge and innovation to increase productivity and retain European competitiveness in an increasing competitive global environment; remains fully applicable;
- The 24 guidelines for economic leadership set in the Lisbon process, for 2010 will not be fully met;
- Europe will realise its competitive edge only by creating focus and critical mass in research and innovation on a European scale;
- The greying of the population underlines the need for increasing labour productivity, both in terms of costs and lack of labour force;
- The climate crisis adds the challenge of realising low-carbon economic growth.

Underlines the need to:

- Continue to give priority to investing in education, research and innovation, also in the context of the current economic and financial restraints, using public money to leverage financial participation of the private sector;
- Increase the flexibility of the European labour market by avoiding mandatory retirement, especially for knowledge workers, and facilitating both the immigration and migration of knowledge workers into and between EU Member States through a blue card scheme;
- Invest in high quality education at all levels, avoid early drop out, and ensure curricula correspond to the requirements of public and private employers; provide more funds to promote international student exchange programmes, in order to encourage students to develop into a more mobile workforce;
- Remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge by strengthening the role of the European Research Council as the central European institute for frontier research, by improving the single European patent system and facilitating cross border funding of research;
- Increase the efficiency and impact of public and private spending on research and innovation by concentrating efforts in joint European initiatives, focusing on long-term strategic goals, meeting demands from either industry or European citizens;
- Increase the global attractiveness of Europe as a location for research activities by investing in building state-of-the-art research infrastructures;
- Capitalise on the economic opportunities generated by the challenges of meeting the international climate crisis as well as the needs and demands of a greying population through research and innovation according to the strict criterion of the quality of research;

- Help small and medium enterprises to access knowledge and to increase support for knowledge-intensive SMEs to realise their growth potential.

Calls on:

- The European Council and the Commission to put forward a clear and viable timetable for the implementation of the Lisbon Process;
- The Council of the European Union to increase funding for Research and Innovation according to the strict criterion of the quality of research;
- The Council of the European Union and European Commission to strengthen the European Research Council, by increasing funding and creating opportunities for researchers to excel in their field;
- The Council of the European Union and the European Commission to prioritise the creation of a truly European education zone at university and vocational level, by increasing and facilitating the exchange of students and knowledge workers, and making degrees compatible and comparable throughout the European Union;
- Member States to decrease regulations that hamper knowledge-intensive SMEs' efforts to work and compete on a European level.



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CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Environment and Energy Policy

8. Energy and climate change

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Notes that:

The EU is responsible for approximately 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions covered by the UNFCCC. There are many analyses that show that it does not cost much to limit the effects from climate change. The investments needed to keep the level of greenhouse gases at 450 ppm have been estimated to cost only about 0.5 per cent of global GDP over the period 2013-2030. This corresponds to a fall in global GDP growth by 0.19 per cent per year up to 2030. According to the "Stern Report", a business as usual scenario may result in losses of about 15 per cent of global consumption in the future, due to damage to social and economic systems from climate change impacts. It is obvious that it is economically better for Europe and the rest of the world to act now rather than to wait.

Believes that:

Europe and the world need to develop a new sustainable economy, based on clean, renewable energy and the efficient use of energy and resources and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, to drive economic recovery, create jobs and help secure Europe's future energy supplies;

There is no need to choose between caring for the environment and promoting economic growth. They are deeply dependent on each other and mutually reinforcing;

Meeting the challenges simultaneously may create new business opportunities, markets and jobs and be a forceful engine for sustainable growth and competitiveness. There is an urgent need to shift to an eco-efficient economy that generates more wealth and new, sustainable, jobs whilst reducing consumption of natural resources and the impact on the environment;

Many European sectors such as renewable electricity and sustainable transport offer good examples on how an eco-efficient economy can function. Sustainable cities and energy efficiency are cross-cutting examples. In mature sectors, heating, iron and steel, chemicals and automotives may inspire. The eco-efficient economy is not only about eco-innovation. Mature sectors must also be included as they have very critical roles for employment and the economy and for resolving environmental problems.

There is scientific consensus, established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, as a result of human impact, is causing global temperatures to rise.

Any new global framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change must be effective, just and comprehensive, with industrial countries taking responsibility for their historic emissions;

To make sure that the world will not lose control over climate change it is necessary to decrease global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent by the year 2050, compared to 1990. According to the IPCC this would limit the increase in temperature to between 2 and 2.4°C, compared with pre-industrial times.

History shows that countries can move quickly together and that international cooperation is central to create incentives for mitigation action. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol are establishments that have made the biggest achievements so far.

When the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012 it will become necessary to find a new global agreement. That is why the United Nations Climate

Change Conference in Copenhagen 7-18 December 2009 is so crucial. It is more or less the last chance to come to an agreement before 2012.

Any new international agreements must be based on the best scientific evidence, which indicates that climate change is happening faster and more aggressively than previously estimated; and that to avoid catastrophic climate change, average global temperature needs to increase by no more than 2°C;

Responsibility for the delivery of international targets must come at local, regional and national levels, and the developed countries must set an example in tackling climate change by setting their emissions reduction target for 2020 at 40% below 1990 levels.

The active participation and commitment of Brazil, China, India and the USA are crucial to any successful agreement of a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen;

Calls for:

- An ambitious global agreement at Copenhagen including all the countries in the world;
- The transition of European industries and economies into an eco-efficient economy;
- The introduction of a European price on carbon emissions and setting common minimum levels of taxation of carbon emissions based upon that;
- The creation of a global carbon market that includes a larger number of countries, markets and sectors as a flexible and cost effective tool to reduce carbon emissions;
- Compliance and support of the European Council Conclusions regarding climate change and the transformation of Europe to a low carbon economy – based not least on the Stern Report's findings – which instruct the Council to follow a cost-effective and flexible way of attaining energy and climate policy objectives;
- Fast growing countries, such as China and Brazil, to agree on binding targets reducing their emissions to an extent that differs from a business-as-usual scenario by up to 30 per cent, compared to 1990;
- International climate investments to contribute to technical and financial transfer which are central in a new climate agreement and for sustainable development;
- The addition of biodiversity as part of a future climate agreement;
- The creation of incentives to reduce deforestation in developing countries.

In this respect calls also for a global agreement in Copenhagen to:

- Ensure commitments corresponding to an outcome where global average temperature will only increase by a maximum of 2°C, compared to pre-industrial times;
- Ensure that greenhouse gas emissions peak no later than 2015.
- Commit developed countries to reduce their emissions by 25-40 per cent of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, compared to 1990 and to phase out fossil fuel and industrial greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with at least 75% of these cuts being achieved domestically
- Ensure that the longer term objective for developed countries must be to achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 80-95 % by 2050;

- Include the possibility of adjusting reduction targets in a future agreement, based on the best scientific data;
- In addition to exiting funds for overseas development, commit developed countries to contribute at least 110 billion euros each year for the period 2013 – 2017 to assist with mitigation and adoption measures in developing countries and to ensure that these funds are invested in green solutions in developing countries in accordance with the principles of the transparency and efficiency;
- Establish all its funds and mechanisms as the responsibility of the United Nations, to be run in an open and transparent manner with an equitable decision-making process between developed and developing countries.
- Expand the global carbon trading system to include a larger number of countries, markets and sectors;
- Ensure the auctioning off of tradable carbon permits instead of “grandfathering” them;

Calls further for the implementation of the following policy instruments:

- A Leapfrog Fund to facilitate the development of low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy in developing countries, together with the reform of patent rules;
- A United Nations Adaptation Fund to provide grants for communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change without increasing the burden on indebted countries;
- A multilateral insurance mechanism available for developing countries which implement risk reduction under the Adaptation Fund, designed to cover climate-related risks or disaster losses;
- A fund to prevent deforestation and promote biodiversity, fully respecting the rights of local and indigenous peoples and consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Calls for action at EU level, including:

- Incisive political leadership in the global negotiations by the EU institutions;
- The ALDE Group and ELDR Party galvanising European and national parliamentarians to raise public awareness of the critical importance of the Copenhagen outcome;
- Emphasizing the post-Lisbon 2010 EU strategy on growth and employment on how to achieve the transition to an eco-efficient economy.
- EU targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency beyond 2020, including specific targets for 2030 and 2050, to be set within the next five years;
- Reducing the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020, compared with year 1990, regardless of the outcome from the Copenhagen Climate Conference;
- A binding EU target for energy efficiency by 2020, and approval by the European Parliament and the Council of the political agreement reached on the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;
- Reforming the EU budget so that it lays more weight on competitiveness and environment and reallocating available resources into areas such as research, innovation and entrepreneurship;

- Replacing the vast amount of directives and other legal documents in the environmental field with a Common Environmental Policy (CEP);
- An end to public money going into unconventional fuels such as tar sands.
- Development of a functioning EU energy market where economies of scale supplemented by microgeneration, carbon reduction, cost efficiencies and fair competition improve the security of energy supply and reduce costs for consumers;
- Development of a European supergrid to be fed by solar energy from North Africa and Southern Europe, wind energy from Northern and Western Europe, wave and tidal energy from coastal areas and other renewable sources;
- A European Emissions Performance Standard to ensure that new coal-fired power generation plants must use carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology to capture all CO₂ emissions from day one of operation, with a CCS regime phased in for all industrial emissions.

9. Agriculture and climate change

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Recognises that:

- World agriculture has a significant carbon footprint responsible for up to 7% of CO₂ emissions and is a major emitter of other greenhouse gases, notably methane and nitrous oxide;
- Agricultural production is itself affected by climate change, particularly in areas already marginal due to high temperatures and drought;
- Rising world population, which has almost tripled in fifty years, is putting increasing pressure on agriculture to meet demand and that a continuation of this population trajectory is unsustainable;
- Carbon sinks and natural habitats across the world are under threat and being lost in the quest for increased agricultural production;
- Increasing agricultural production simply by increasing inputs or clearing virgin land is unsustainable due both to adverse effects on climate change and to loss of habitat and biodiversity;
- Policies such as the CAP and agricultural policies of many other countries have often compromised agricultural production in countries too poor to support their agriculture and led to land abandonment;
- Returning abandoned land to agricultural use has significant, albeit insufficient, potential to increase production and should be encouraged;
- Agricultural production in all parts of the world, including Europe, contributes towards achieving global food security; self-sufficiency of individual countries is neither practicable nor desirable and the response to the problem of food security must have an international basis;
- Increased production must be achieved from the currently available area of agricultural and abandoned land and technological advance and transfer must play the key role in increasing yields to meet future demand for agricultural products.

Calls for:

- EU negotiators at WTO trade rounds should support the liberalization of agricultural markets, without neglecting the non-commercial aspects of agriculture.
- An immediate end to all agricultural export subsidies and progressive disappearance of tariff barriers, taking care to avoid possible negative impacts in areas such as food safety.
- Major food-exporting nations to desist from interrupting exports in attempts to control internal prices;
- Environmental criteria to be incorporated into WTO rules in such a way as to safeguard natural habitats and carbon sinks without encouraging protectionism;
- The development of internationally recognised sustainability criteria for the production of foodstuffs, such as soya, palm oil in former virgin forest, shrimp

- farming in mangroves, along the lines already developed for either bio-energy or forestry products, effectively halting the loss of further carbon sinks through the clearance of virgin lands;
- Reform of the CAP to minimise its adverse effects on agricultural production outside the EU, but to avoid the risk of both large-scale land abandonment in Europe and commodity-dumping;
 - EU representatives to use their influence on other parties (notably the US and NAFTA) to abandon protectionism and make reciprocal reforms to their agricultural policies;
 - EU aid budgets to seek to deliver a recovery in agricultural production and reforestation in recipient nations, through a combination of technology transfer, encouraging good farming practice and restoring abandoned land;
 - Recognition by European legislators that sustainable and resilient technological advances and improved methods must be harnessed both to increase agricultural yields and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of agriculture. Attention must be paid to promote greater use of neglected and underutilised food crop and other crop species;
 - The negotiators at the Copenhagen Climate Change talks to ensure that any settlement will achieve the objectives of allowing increased global agricultural production within a lower greenhouse gas footprint, and secure at least a 75% reduction in global emissions from deforestation by 2020, and the halving of the carbon intensity of global food production by 2050;
 - The EU to join with interested countries to establish a supranational system of reserve food stocks, whilst taking care to avoid undermining the market in agricultural goods;
 - EU initiatives to promote education and raised awareness on climate change and resource depletion, resilience and adaptation, as well as the education of girls and women, and full access to comprehensive family planning and sexual and reproductive health services for all those who wish to access these services.



ELDR Party
CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Food and Health Policy

10. The EU should bring down barriers for the use of GM crops

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Whereas:

- Genetically modified (GM) foods are food items derived from organisms that have had their DNA changed through genetic engineering. These modifications are not only aimed at improving productivity, but they can contribute to improving public health, increasing food safety, lowering food prices, protecting the environment and reducing waste;
- Denying European farmers access to GM crops is harming their ability to compete with their global counterparts, e.g. China, India, South America and the USA, where GM crops have already been widely adopted for years;
- If our choice is to relax patent protection on GM plants, though always granting a strict protection of plant variety, it will make the technology more accessible to humanitarian efforts as well as stimulate competition, leading to greater consumer choice.

Noting that:

- GM technology is a natural extension of modern breeding techniques, with the benefit of conferring a much greater control over unforeseen gene flow;
- GM crops may represent an opportunity to ensure food safety in the developing world by increasing yields and reducing losses to plant diseases and pests;
- GM crops may represent an opportunity to produce medicines in a way that is practical and affordable, in the EU as well as in developing countries;
- Strict anti-GM import rules act as a *de facto* trade barrier to the developing world;
- GM technology is still a relatively new technology and there are concerns that it can limit biodiversity and has the potential to lead to other undesired consequences;
- The use of restrictive and bundled contracts by seed companies has unfairly constrained the freedom of farmers to reap the benefits when adopting the technology in many parts of the world;

Concludes that:

- Crops (conventional or GM) should be permitted or banned on the merits of their health and environmental effects, not based on the methods used in their development (precautionary principle vs. equivalence);
- EU labelling rules should be the same for EU imports as for products produced in the EU, in order not to put the EU products at a disadvantage. Countries and regions should have the right to declare themselves as GM free growing zones.
- The EU should explicitly ban the use of bundled contracts for the growing of any GM crops it sees fit to authorise.

11. Malaria

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Considering that:

- Malaria is a devastating parasitic disease which is one of the leading causes of death worldwide, especially in developing countries;
- It affects 40% of the world's population and threatens 3.3 billion people in 109 countries around the world;
- Malaria currently affects the tropics and subtropics and is responsible each year for more than 300 million cases and at least one million deaths;
- 90% of malaria deaths occur in Africa south of the Sahara, mostly among young children and pregnant women;
- Malaria is the leading cause of child mortality under 5 years in Africa, killing one African child every 30 seconds;
- The pregnant woman and unborn child are particularly vulnerable to malaria, a major cause of perinatal mortality, low birth weight and maternal anemia;
- Malaria accounts for 60% of cases of school absences in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Malaria costs poor countries an estimated USD 12 billion every year in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Malaria is a disease promulgated by poverty, and yet one that is preventable and treatable, and that thanks to preventive methods such as long lasting insecticide treated nets, indoor residual spraying and intermittent preventive treatment for pregnant women can significantly reduce mortality and morbidity due to malaria;
- The Global Malaria Action Plan developed by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) has a comprehensive strategy for action and an integrated roadmap for donor countries, to eliminate malaria in the world;
- The fight against malaria contributes to achieving 6 of the 8 Millennium Development Goals, namely reducing extreme poverty (MDG 1), achieving universal primary education (MDG 2), reducing child mortality (MDG 4), improving maternal health (MDG 5), combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6) and developing a global partnership for development (MDG 8) and ensuring access to affordable essential medicines;
- Funding needed to fight against malaria is estimated at about USD 5.3 billion for 2009 and USD 6.2 billion for 2010;
- European Donor countries reaffirmed that they are determined to honor and respect in full their international commitments in order to achieve the Health Millennium Development Goals, and particularly MDG 6 on combating malaria.

Calls for:

- donor funding to be directed specifically at the proven reduction factors namely:
 - Increased access to long lasting insecticide nets; with the ultimate goal of achieving universal access;
 - Increased use of artemisin based combination therapies, through support and

- promotion of innovative financing mechanisms, such as the provision of Affordable Medicines Facility for malaria (AMFm);
- Ensure the effectiveness of aid, by supporting the access of recipient countries to the technical expertise necessary to access funds available;
 - Improve health systems, services and health infrastructure, training and transfer of medical personnel for diagnosis, prevention and effective treatment of malaria.
- Urgent action aiming to strengthen political support in order for European Donor countries to meet their financial commitments in terms of development assistance towards achieving the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially MDG 4 to reduce child mortality, the MDG 5 to improve maternal health and MDG 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases, but also the MDGs related to poverty, primary education for all and a global partnership for development;
 - Increased support to international efforts aiming to eradicate malaria, such as the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the Global Malaria Action Plan.
 - Increasing European Donor countries' contributions to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as well as other international innovative financing mechanisms;
 - Strengthening financial support for malaria research in order to enable further testing and research related to vaccines, malaria drugs and insecticides.

12. Major European hospitals

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Whereas:

- An ageing European population combined with a growing number of possibilities for new, highly specialised health care treatment are putting national health care systems under pressure – financially as well as regards manpower and specialised competencies;
- National health care systems experience difficulties in covering all rare diseases as well as complicated, expensive and highly specialised health care treatment;
- A combined European effort in the field of rare diseases and complicated, expensive and highly specialised health care treatment will be a solution for future health care treatment with a clearly European added value for patients as well as society as a whole.

Recalls:

- National competence in the field of health care as well as Article 152 of the treaties stating the European Communities' competence in supplementary actions for the benefit of public health.

Calls on:

- The European Commission to propose a financing arrangement of a limited number of major European hospitals to deal with research and development of treatment into rare diseases and highly specialised health care in order to pool and enhance European expertise on specific health care issues.



ELDR Party
CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Future of Europe

13. Iceland

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Recalls:

- The Icelandic economic downturn in 2008, which brought its financial system to the brink of collapse. Since then Iceland's economy has contracted sharply, shaken by inflation, a large jump in unemployment and a steep devaluation of Iceland's currency. It has been rendered almost useless for international trade, and it has made it hard for most Icelanders to pay back currency loans.

Observes that:

- The crisis has taken a heavy toll on the welfare of most Icelanders, seeing life savings disappear and facing grim economic prospects for the years to come. Thus, many well educated and dynamic Icelanders are leaving the country, draining it of a crucial resource.

Notes that:

- Iceland in part is a victim of the international crisis;
- The Icelandic parliament has formally approved a plan to reimburse savers in Britain and the Netherlands for the deposits they lost when Iceland's banks imploded last year;
- The said plan puts a heavy financial burden on average Icelanders, who were not to blame for the reckless dispositions of the large, and at that stage privately owned Icelandic banks.

And:

- Welcomes that the Icelandic Parliament has decided to initiate negotiations with the EU about possible Icelandic membership of the EU;
- Notes that the European Council has asked the Commission to put forward a roadmap to Icelandic membership of the EU;
- Criticises the use of anti-terrorist legislation against Iceland and labelling a whole nation and its people as terrorists.

Calls upon all ELDR member parties to:

- Display their solidarity with Iceland;
- Help the Icelandic Liberal Party stay closely linked to liberal parties throughout Europe during the crisis and its aftermath. This is of particular importance in relation to the forthcoming negotiations with the EU on Icelandic membership;
- Urge their respective governments to exercise fairness towards Iceland. There are many to blame for the lack of international financial regulations and oversight by virtue of which the Icelandic banks and many others grew out of control;
- Encourage governments and people throughout Europe to strengthen and deepen their relations with Iceland in terms of e.g. trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges.

Acknowledges that the financial crisis at large, and the Icelandic experience in particular, should be used to discuss how the international community can improve economic and financial regulations on an international level, and how to respond to dramatic economic downturns in a more effective and consistent way.

14. Establishing a system of substitutes in the European Parliament

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Whereas:

- There are an increasing number of cases of temporary absence of a Member, notably owing to maternity, which is causing disruptions in parliamentary work and is particularly detrimental to smaller political forces;
- The principle of longer term leave for maternity or paternity, illness and other incapacity should be established in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure in a way which would leave untouched the existing powers of the Bureau and provide the necessary flexibility at the moment when the Members' Statute will come into force;
- In several Member States there are rules allowing for the temporary substitution of an elected Member of the national Parliament (notably in Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands and Latvia). In other Member States (notably Austria, Finland, Hungary and Poland) Members of the national Parliament are excused from the sitting during maternity leave;
- As it is today, it is possible for a Member of the European Parliament to have parental leave. But there is no system of substitutes; if a MEP wants to take parental leave, the seat will remain vacant and the group will lose one member, and therefore one vote, for the duration of the parental leave. This again puts pressure on the parent concerned to take as short a leave as possible and certainly does not encourage fathers to take parental leave, as is otherwise one of the core equality objectives of the EU;
- The perceived democratic deficit stems from the fact that the European Parliament does not "look like Europe", i.e. only one out of three MEPs is female;

Concluding that:

- Convince the ALDE group to have a common stand on this issue and to put forward a resolution that asks for the establishment of a substitution system in the European Parliament i.e. Such as parental leave.
- Furthermore, in order to strengthen European democracy, the European Parliament should investigate the possibilities for establishing modern meeting procedures using IT-technology, such as videoconferencing and distant voting.

15. Cyprus

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

The young people of Cyprus deserve a future of lasting peace and prosperity that can be attained through freedom, democracy, equal opportunity, respect for human rights and cooperation.

We call upon the leaders of the two communities of Cyprus, Mr. Christofias and Mr. Talat, to respond positively to the responsibility which history has bestowed upon them, by reaching a timely agreement on the reunification of Cyprus, on the basis of the commonly agreed framework described in their joint statements of May and July 2008, that of a bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality as this is defined by the relevant Security Council resolutions. This partnership will have a federal government with a single international personality, single sovereignty and citizenship as well as a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent state, which will be of equal status.

This is the time for all concerned parties to look ahead into the benefits - both economic and political - that lasting peace on the island and peaceful coexistence and cooperation between a reunited Cyprus and its neighbouring countries will yield to the Cypriots, their neighbours in the Eastern Mediterranean and to their wider European family.

16. Turkey's Accession to the EU

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Noting:

- The European Commission's progress report on Turkey's accession process to the EU on October 14,
- Subsequent expressions of hostility to Turkey's full membership of the EU by some conservative politicians in current member states

Wishes to:

- Note that, according to that report, Turkey has made some progress towards meeting the Copenhagen political criteria;
- Regret the limited progress made in the area of freedom of expression and freedom of the media, notably as it concerns attempts to silence important parts of the media through imposition of unreasonable fines for alleged tax violations;
- Point out the crucial importance of a swift implementation of the judicial reform strategy for the functioning of the Turkish State and society;
- Welcome the efforts to resolve the Kurdish issue and encourage the Turkish Government to take concrete measures to address the situation of citizens of Kurdish origin;
- Reiterate its commitment to continue negotiations with a view to the eventual accession of Turkey to the European Union provided all Copenhagen criteria, including the criterion on the EU's integration capacity, are fulfilled.
- Regarding the issue of Cyprus, deplore the continued non-fulfillment of commitments stemming from the Additional Protocol to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement; call on the Turkish Government to contribute actively to the swift devising of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question; reiterate that a greater contribution on behalf of the EU is needed facilitating the reaching of an agreement between the two communities which reunifies Cyprus on the basis of a bizonal, bicommunal, federal, united republic and a lasting settlement to the dispute which will also end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

17. European citizenship – from dream to reality

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Recalling:

- That citizenship of the European Union was introduced with the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992;
- That it was further developed with the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 and the Treaty of Nice in 2001;
- That ELDR in the past has called for true European citizenship, e.g. in the resolution ‘Guiding principles for the work of the Convention’ adopted in Bath in 2002.

Deeply worried:

- About the response of the German consul during the Mumbai terror attacks claiming “I can take only the Germans“ when approached for help by fellow EU citizens and even MEPs;
- By the extremely bureaucratic and unhelpful response of the French consulate on the same occasion, not issuing laissez-passer documents to EU citizens;
- By the discriminatory treatment of EU citizens from Romania in Italy, where national laws have been changed to cater for anti-Romanian sentiments.

Criticising:

- The ongoing division between “first class” EU citizens from Western European countries and “second” class EU citizens from Eastern European countries;
- Protectionist measures especially, but not exclusively, in times of crisis.

Noting that:

- The concept of EU citizenship is essential for the emotional connection of Europeans to the EU and therefore for the success of European integration itself;
- True EU citizenship needs to become reality in a Union where internal borders become less and less relevant.

Calls on EU member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament to strengthen the concept of European Union citizenship by:

- Refraining from favouring national citizens over EU citizens;
- Bringing in line the rights of all EU citizens from old and new Member States such as the right to work in all Member States as soon as possible;
- Transforming the de jure right of EU-citizens to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of other Member States when in a non-EU Member State into reality;
- Treating EU citizens the same as national citizens in all areas;
- Supporting EU initiatives in favour of a widespread feeling of European citizenship such as the Programme “Europe for Citizens”, improving and strengthening its financial scheme;
- Including this in the Stockholm Programme which will be adopted under the Swedish Presidency and will set the strategic objectives for the further development of the Union’s area of freedom, security and justice from 2010 to 2014.

18. Speeding up the European integration process of the Republic of Serbia

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Reaffirms:

- The European perspective of Serbia together with its entire South Eastern Europe neighbourhood, as confirmed by the political commitment taken by the EU at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003.
- Its support for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as the court of law dealing with war crimes that took place during the conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990's and states that the arrest and delivery of the two main remaining ICTY-indicated war fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic, is a precondition for complete European integration of the Republic of Serbia.

Notes:

- That the Serbian authorities have started to implement unilaterally the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and Interim Agreement;
- The full membership of the Liberal Democratic Party of Serbia in the ELDR.

Welcomes:

- The recommendation of the European Commission to the Council to put Serbia with Macedonia and Montenegro, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania, on the Free Visa Regime and underlines that the right to freedom of movement will contribute most to the understanding of European best practice and European laws in the region.

Calls on:

- The Government of the Republic of Serbia to continue with fulfilling its obligations according to the Road Map for visa liberalisation;
- The Parliament and Government of The Netherlands to reconsider its position and once again to consider ratification of the SAA agreement and Interim Agreement with Serbia and believes that ratification will facilitate the process in Serbia of arresting and delivering the two remaining Hague-indicted war fugitives, namely Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić;
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia to accelerate its efforts to fulfill its international legal obligations, arrest and deliver the two remaining war fugitives as soon as possible.

Instructs:

- It's President to forward this resolution to the Governments and Parliaments of Serbia and The Netherlands and the President of the Council of the European Union.

19. The European Future of Kosova

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Noting the proclamation and recognition of the independence of Kosova by 63 of the most democratic and influential countries of the EU and the world, and in view of the many resolutions of the ELDR Party about the European perspective of Kosova and all Western Balkan countries.

Believing that the EU and ELDR Party are in favour of a European perspective of Kosova as an independent multi-ethnic and multi-religious country;

Calls for a start to negotiations between the institutions of the Republic of Kosova and the EU about the process of visa liberalisation for all citizens of Kosova, regardless of nationality, religion, age or gender, thus improving and supporting equality and democratic standards for all ethnic communities of Kosova;

Urges EU institutions, the EU Commission and the Council of Europe to consider the European perspective and process of integration of Kosova and all Western Balkan countries into the EU during the next round of European enlargement;

Calls on ELDR and ELDR Member parties to cooperate more closely with all Liberal and liberal-oriented political parties of the Western Balkan's, being aware of the importance, vision, profile and the role of liberals in this part of Europe for European values, peace, stability and a democratic future for the whole region.



ELDR Party
CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Foreign Policy

20. The failure to prohibit capital punishment in Russia

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Notes:

- That the Russian Federation is the only member of the Council of Europe which has not ratified so far the Sixth Protocol to the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, prohibiting capital punishment during peacetime, despite such commitment having been undertaken by Russia upon its accession to this international organisation more than 10 years ago.

States:

- That Russia's failure to irrevocably prohibit capital punishment actually places Russia beyond the pan-European space of humanism and democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and this fact requires special attention from the European institutions, including the European Parliament, as well as from the Council of Europe and OSCE.

Calls on:

- The Council of Europe to require the Russian authorities to condemn the uncivilised practice of capital punishment and to ratify the Sixth Protocol to the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms expeditiously.

21. People's access to the electoral system in Russia

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Notes:

- That during recent years the Russian electoral system has been significantly changed. While a majority electoral system was replaced by a proportional one, the technical requirements for registering a political party were significantly toughened, including increased minimal party membership (now – 45 000 members). In contradiction to Article 11 of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms new political parties are refused registration under the pretext of different 'technical' issues. Moreover, incumbent parties and their members are granted marked priority by law over all other associations and non-aligned citizens (e.g., candidates not belonging to a party, represented in the State Duma, must generally collect at least several thousands signatures to take part in elections);
- If democracy requires political balance and should ensure people's participation in the decision making process, it is obvious that this trend is non-existent in Russia.
- That the recent practice of elections in Russia is characterised by numerous rejections of the registration of independent candidates and a prejudiced attitude towards them in courts, strikingly unequal access of the democratic opposition to the mass media, administrative pressure on independent participants and their representatives, limited transparency and lack of access of independent and international monitors to different stages of the electoral process and many reported cases of outright falsification which were not followed by proper investigation.

States:

- That these issues taken together mean that elections in Russia have become significantly less free, fair, competitive and transparent. It contradicts Russia's international obligation according to the Charter of the Council of Europe and OSCE guiding documents.

Calls on:

- The institutions of the Council of Europe and OSCE to thoroughly analyse the existing discrepancies of Russian election legislation and practices with uniform democratic standards and demand that the Russian authorities abide by their obligations and the rule of the international institutions of which Russia is a part.

22. Russian Elections

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Observes that:

- The elections that took place in Russia on October 11 2009 demonstrated an unprecedented level of falsification of results of the voting and violations of the law, confirmed by observers from all political parties, except the ruling party, and the mass media.

States that:

- ELDR will closely observe the development of the situation as regards lawsuits and complaints of electoral fraud.

Calls on the Russian authorities to:

- Conduct a full inspection of candidates' and parties' complaints, and the evidence of electoral fraud published by the media, and take urgent remedial measures even to the extent of declaring the elections void;
- Observe democratic standards and Russia's obligations under its membership of the OSCE and the Council of Europe to ensure free and fair elections;

Ensure free and equal conditions for all political parties and candidates, and maximum public control over elections and voting.

23. The Mediterranean region

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

The Mediterranean Sea is often regarded as a fault-line between civilizations. The waters of the Mediterranean separate the European continent from the African one, at some points by a distance of only a few kilometers;

The Barcelona Process emerged during the Spanish Presidency in 1995 from the decision of the European Union and twelve neighbouring countries from the south and east of the Mediterranean region to establish a perspective of partnership and association. After more than eleven years of implementation, the outcome of this space for a deeper dialogue between both shores of the Mediterranean Sea showed contradiction, excessive bureaucracy and budgetary constraints;

That was the main reason why in 2008 the European Union re-launched its Mediterranean cooperation with a stronger strategy named the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, which was established at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean in July 2008. The Partnership now includes all 27 member states of the European Union, along with 16 partners across the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East;

This re-launching aimed to infuse a new vitality into the Partnership and to raise the political level of the strategic relationship between the EU and its southern neighbours. While maintaining the *acquis* of its predecessor, the Barcelona Process, the Union for the Mediterranean offers more balanced governance, increased visibility to its citizens and a commitment to tangible, regional and trans-national projects;

Some of the most important innovations of the Union for the Mediterranean include a rotating co-presidency with one EU president and one president representing the Mediterranean partners, and a Secretariat based in Barcelona, Catalonia, that is responsible for identifying and promoting projects of regional, sub-regional and transnational value across different sectors;

The Mediterranean area is gaining importance again, not only politically but also from an economic point of view; the Mediterranean region is also increasing its role while achieving the highest volume of shipping trade in the world in the 21st century. This anticipated expansion will be in part due to growth as a result of the Europe-Asia trade corridor, complemented by the projected enlargement of the Suez Canal. The Southern European Mediterranean ports will gain importance in global trade if they are efficient and cost-effective;

In this context, the Catalan ports –mainly Barcelona- should play a similar role to the Belgian and Dutch ports, which in the 20th century were at the forefront of the expansion of trade across the Atlantic Ocean.

Calls upon:

- The upcoming Spanish Presidency of the EU to focus on strengthening the political role of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, as a meeting place and not as a cultural dividing line between the North and the South;
- The Member States of the European Union to move towards the establishment of a EuroMediterranean free trade area in line with the objectives laid down by the

original Barcelona process from 1995. It would also enhance the credibility of the policy among the neighbouring countries and be coherent with the liberalising proposals that from the liberal side we have also promoted. This process has to be accompanied by a clear strategy on energy supply from the exporting to the importing countries, namely from the North African to the European countries;

- The members of the Union for the Mediterranean to strongly promote democracy, the rule of law, the principles of good governance in general, and respect for human and individual rights, gender equality and the environment, as well as the promotion of individual freedom, economic competitiveness and free market economy. These deep reforms must not be the result of cooperation with the EU only, but also of the internal reforms of these countries themselves;
- The members of the Union for the Mediterranean to take joint measures to prevent illegal immigration from Africa to the EU and to cooperate closely on the operational level of border controls, patrolling on sea c.a.
- The ELDR member parties to support the political parties in those not fully democratic UfM countries that clearly strive for democracy, human rights and free market economy.

24. Latin America and the totalitarian temptation

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Friedrich Hayek's book *The Road to Serfdom* opens with a quotation from David Hume: "It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once", which is particularly apt for describing what is happening in a number of Latin American countries that have embarked on "Bolivarian" agendas. Now it is not just Cuba, which continues to live under totalitarianism. All the civil rights of citizens in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua are under a permanent threat that is leading them to the loss of all their liberties.

In the footsteps of Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez Frías was the first to start a process of building "21st-century Socialism". After years of attempting to undermine the rule of Law his efforts have resulted in Venezuela's new Constitution, a text that violates the division of powers and concentrates those powers in the hands of the president of the Republic (who threatens to continue heading the Revolution until 2019!), and who is changing the territorial structure of the State and moulding it to an ideological and military model.

Constitutional changes apart, opposition politicians suffer the greatest harassment. Some, such as the businessman Emilio Cedeño, have been imprisoned without due process. Others such as the mayor of Chacao, Leopoldo López, have seen their political rights diminished through bans obstructing them from presenting themselves for election. And some, such as the former candidate for the presidency Manuel Rosales, have had to go into exile. And there are even those, like the student leader Nixon Moreno, who have to live in hiding. Neither should we forget that the mayor-elect of Caracas, Antonio Ledesma, cannot exercise the functions for which he was elected by the people.

Furthermore, Chavez's strategy places the media under the greatest pressure. Radio Caracas Televisión was closed down. Others are subjected to every kind of threat as well as dishonest competition from State-controlled media. Companies and the right to property are also under siege through nationalisation and extortion of every kind. Rice-growing and metallurgical companies, banks and the entire oil industry have already been nationalised regardless of whether this property be Venezuelan, Japanese, Mexican or European. The unions too are being replaced with committees controlled by the official party. The greatest alarm, however, has been caused by the new Education Law, which provides for figures known as *Controladores de Pensum*, responsible for ideological control, to be present in all schools, both public and private. On 5 September thousands of people protested against this law.

Chavism, however, is only the most advanced expression of this drift towards authoritarianism. The discourse of a large part of the Latin American left is aimed at discrediting representative democracy in favour of progressing towards a popular democracy. Thus, either with or without an indigenous tint depending on the latitude, democracy is veering towards authoritarianism and totalitarianism. The presidents of a number of countries have promoted constitutional reforms which would allow them to remain in power, from Correa in Ecuador, who managed, to Zelaya in Honduras, who was not successful. In Bolivia, like Venezuela, the supporters of president Evo Morales already constitute a paramilitary shock force which intimidates members of the opposition and occupies land and factories. In Nicaragua president Daniel Ortega also follows this model and in Managua, as in Caracas, Eduardo Montealegre has not been able to exercise the mayoralty despite having won the municipal elections.

The drive towards authoritarianism is not, however, limited to these countries. This dogmatic and militaristic left has a strategy for the whole continent and, either from a position of power or from other spheres, from Argentina to Mexico, there are forces that, from the most demagogic populism, are committing a series of assaults on fundamental rights and liberties.

In the face of the expansion of this dogmatic left that endangers people's liberties the path for European liberals to take is:

- Together with liberals from all free nations, we must not let our guard slip and neither must we back down;
- We must give resolute support to our liberal friends in Latin America in defence of democratic freedoms and rights throughout the continent;
- We must raise our voices against the totalitarian temptation with various formulas for containment and democratic response in each of the countries;
- We undertake to defend the tenet that diplomatic relations between our respective countries and the Bolivarian regimes are to include the defence of democratic principles;
- The defence of liberty in Latin America must form part of the ELDR Party agenda. The freedom of every man, every woman and every group of people is also something that affects us.

25. Arms trade

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

A number of groups and bodies associated with the defence of human rights, as well as private individuals, have, in studies; papers; and the media, raised their concerns about and expressed their disapproval of the trade in arms between countries, and especially those countries notable for their constant violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, it being the case that some of these countries receive economic aid in the field of cooperation for development from the countries arming them.

Furthermore, the European Union Code of Conduct states that arms should not be sold to countries that are sanctioned, unstable, in armed conflict, that violate human rights, fail to condemn terrorism or whose living standards are precarious. In view of the foregoing, the exports to a number of countries that do not meet the requirements of this Code of Conduct are surprising.

Calls on Member States:

- To promote the adoption of the European Union Code of Conduct on arms exports as a truly binding document for all the Member States of the European Union, and hence a legal instrument for all these states;
- To comply strictly with the terms of the European Union Code of Conduct, and in order for arms exports to be legal they must obtain government authorization and to implement this in such a way as to strengthen aspects of control and transparency of such decisions;
- To conclude all international undertakings aimed at controlling and reducing armaments and in favour of a culture of peace playing an active part in the process of drafting a world treaty to regulate the arms trade.

26. Call for democracy in Iran

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Notes:

- Whereas, since the presidential election in June 2009, the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran has deteriorated dramatically, with an escalation of violence leading to a climate of fear, far beyond its internationally recognised borders;
- Whereas, those who take a stand in defence of democracy and human rights are harassed, persecuted and killed.

And:

- Affirms the universality of human rights and the necessity of democratic, free and fair elections;
- Declares support for all Iranian citizens who embrace the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law;
- Condemns the ongoing violence by the pro-government militias, as well as the ongoing surveillance of citizens' communications through the Internet and mobile phones;
- Firmly believes that the monitoring and storage of citizens' communications in the Islamic Republic of Iran must be laid down by law in line with respect for fundamental rights and freedoms;
- Notes that the Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified conventions on human rights, and calls on the Iranian authorities to respect the international commitment assumed with these ratifications and immediately to release all "political prisoners".

Calls upon:

- The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully respect human rights, the rule of law and civil rights;
- The member parties to actively support democracy in Iran in their political work.
- Governments which are engaged in negotiations with Iran to affirm that normal relations with the international community are conditional on ending executions of child offenders.

27. Afghanistan

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

The war in Afghanistan is today one of the main concerns of the international community. It is also in the centre of the European political debate. Several European Member States are present in Afghanistan by delivering logistic, humanitarian, military and financial support to the war. Not only in Europe, but in the whole world, there is a growing consciousness that the war is not only about tactics and strategy. It is mainly about the construction of a stable democracy that can offer opportunities to all its citizens.

However, the conflict has evolved from a simple act(ion) against terrorism in a long-term conflict. The status quo of the situation results in increased military presence and political and diplomatic immobility and the situation is worsened by the permeability of the borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan and by the killing of many civilians in South Waziristan during recent military operations. Indeed, after six years of conflict, we are confronted with deadlock.

Therefore, asks:

- The European Council to reflect in the short-term about policy objectives with the aim resolving the actual impasse in Afghanistan avoiding civilians' casualties, of stimulating the process of stabilisation and democratisation of this country through the promotion of dialogue in Afghanistan between the incumbent Government led by Hamid Karzai and the main political counterpart led by Abdullah and through a better specification of the role played by Pakistan in the conflict. This period of reflection would signify a strong signal of the level of the foreign policy of the EU strengthen their unity and must initiate a discussion about the European political and humanitarian engagement in the conflict. We call on the European Council to play a more prominent role in resolving the conflict, in close cooperation with the US and our partners in NATO.

28. The Normalisation of Turkish - Armenian Relations

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Turkey and Armenia have announced their intention to establish diplomatic relations, open the border and launch a series of talks and confidence-building measures aimed at resolving long-standing disputes.

ELDR notes that these new accords, reached with the help of Swiss mediation, could transform regional stability in the Black Sea region and that they are also very good news for European interests.

An open border will contribute to the economic development of Armenia and rebalance the country's position between East and West. Improved relations can have an important symbolic effect. For Turkey a genuine opening to Armenia will reinforce the country's new approach to foreign policy, reminding Europeans that Turkey is a provider rather than a consumer of security in Europe's neighbourhood.

Calls on:

- Its member parties to promote and support any action that could achieve better relations between both parties at this crucial political juncture.

29. Constitutional Changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

ELDR supports the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in its entirety, and the amendments to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

We support the process of adopting a new reformed Constitution based on civic representation to make the country functional and governable

We call for the protection and enforcement of basic principles through the Constitution, such as individuality, liberty, human rights, equality, freedom, rule of law, democracy, free market, and secularism

We advise the ALDE group to support and protect these basic principles through the EP

Calls on:

- The leaders of parties from countries represented in the Peace Implementation Council to advise their national MPs to take the initiative in the political work of the PIC
- Our liberal commissioners in the EC to support our efforts, use legal instruments and enforce solutions through the OHR.