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BULLSEYE

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Interview With Gérard Bokanowski



What Europe will we bequeath to the future?

• **José Manuel Durão Barroso**
President of the European Commission



**How may Students
make the difference
in the next
European Elections?**

• Article by EPP President Wilfried Martens



DEALING WITH CHANGE



editorial

The world is changing every second and people always tend to resist to change. The economic crisis brought out lots of questions. More than that makes it clear how fragile can strong trusted structures become. And these fragilities make people feel concerned. Are we prepared to deal with the changes? Are we prepared to get the good parts of the changing processes? Are we prepared to accept the changes and get over them? Are we prepared to continue believing in a world where institutions are not as strong as they seem? In this Bullseye edition, I would like two articles to your attention. The ones coming from Mr. Wilfried Martens, President of the European People's Party and from Mr. Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission. These messages that they kindly wrote for Bullseye, for EDS, are full of significance. Not only because of the role that these men play in the European project and their unquestionable importance as European actors, but mostly because of the way they really believe in it. The message they gave us is a message of belief. Belief in Europe. Belief in future. Belief in Europe's future. And we, as EDS, as students, as young people, are actively part of that future. But we can only be part of it, if we have enough courage and determination to commit with that project and to deal with changes. Are we prepared?

Joana Lopes
Chief Editor
EDS Vice Chairwoman



The news magazine of European Democrat Students

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Chairman's letter



Dear friends of EDS,

„Sapere Aude – Have Courage to be wise!“ With this slogan, with this campaign EDS is going into the European Parliament Elections 2009. We are looking back to a really active half year since our summer university at Malta. We strengthened the administrative structures of EDS in book keeping and within the European People's Party. At its November Political Bureau, we had the great opportunity to present EDS to the Political Bureau of EPP in a 15 minutes presentation. There we promoted as well our new campaign “Sapere aude” in which we call for better financial conditions, better funding of Higher Education and Research institutions as central mean to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based power in the world. We had the chance to meet many high politicians within the structures of the European Union e.g. The President of the European Parliament Prof. Hans Gert Pöttering, the head of the committee on Foreign affairs Jacek Saryusz Wolski and Mrs Doris Pack, who is in charge of the Life Long Learning Programme and the Bologna Process within the Committee on Culture and Education. We were not just able to promote our position on Higher Education policies, we also stressed our engagement in Human Rights and European Policies. Especially the sad circumstances in Georgia have shown that we have to face these challenges and that we cannot stop but have to stand together with our friends and partners. To spread our opinion, we improved our web presentation, set up a professional newsletter and launched a facebook supporter group with a new image film of EDS. The next half year will be dominated by our engagement for the European Parliament Elections and our engagement for a new Bologna Process which should be driven by the people and for the people. We know that it is us, who have to stand up for student interests to improve our situation. We know that this needs a lot of courage but I am sure, that we have this courage – This courage to be wise. Sapere aude,

Thomas Uhlen
EDS Chairman

Natural development of EDS

A group of people of all ages has a get together in the beautiful landscape of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung every two years. For a couple of days during the Spring they have a short vacation from their jobs and they meet to talk about the main political topics and live issues. Among them there is a particular atmosphere: confidence and friendship are in the air.

The Garrick Club is the means of bringing together all those people who are protagonists in the political scene of their countries, in the bank systems, in the professional lobbism world. They all have been chairmen or vice chairmen in the long history of the European Democrat Students: they contributed greatly to the growth of the biggest platform of center right minded student organizations of Europe. With them, a piece of history has been added to the personal relationships that have always been an integral part of our movement.

The Garrick Club was created exactly to preserve this store of experiences to keep a close connection among people who identify themselves in the same values even if they make different choices about their lives. The Garrick Club, according to article 19 of EDS Statute, simply exists to collect de officio all EDS officers. Once you have been elected in the bureau, you know that in a couple of years you will join the Garrick Club and you will discover a deeper dimension of what EDS really is. This is in fact the force of an association of "formers" like the Garrick Club: its force is the reason why this reality continues to exist and to be useful. We give our contribution

to the process of European integration because we believe in the values of the European Peoples Party. Year after year we meet to work on motions, papers and on campaigns. We create and organize them to defend our ideals and all that we believe in. But it is much more than this: working together we become friends, we cooperate and keep in touch with people from all around Europe. We have a common interest in politics: some of us simply wants to give their university experience a deeper meaning, others want politics to be their vocation for life.

Thanks to EDS we keep in touch with people from different nations: there is no better way to create a "European integration".

There are many organization platforms on the European level: why is EDS better than the others, something better than a simple school to learn politics? Just in the Garrick Club we find the answer: Europe, the integration among peoples, is not merely a principle and a value. It is a process, and as a process it finds its fulfillment in constancy and continuity. The Garrick Club is exactly what links past, present and future together through the alternation of the members of EDS. The atmosphere that arises from our meetings and cooperation, not only during our works but also living and going out together for a few days, becomes stronger as time passes. In Cadenabbia old friends have the possibility to meet again and exchange their experiences, and the climate is just that of a big family reunion. It also happened that in the past members of EDS got married and they still do not miss a single meeting of the Garrick Club.

This is how EDS can become a central element in the lives of its members and in the history of the European Union and of the European Peoples Party as well. We must thank every president, but also every single member who had the fortune to take part in it.

Giovanni Vagnone
EDS Vice Chairman

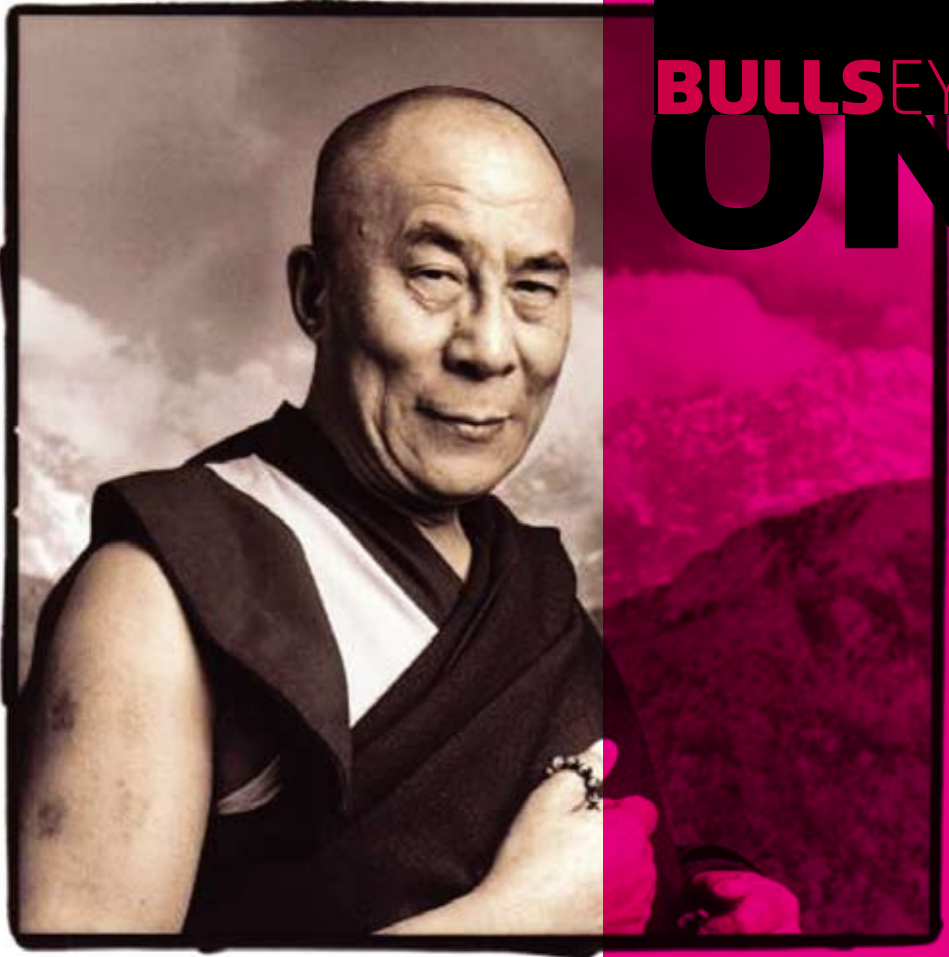
Dalai Lama's non violent approach an extraordinary example, says EP President. In his welcoming address, European Parliament President Hans Gert Pöttering alluded to the recent atrocities in Mumbai, saying that in such times faith leaders who preach a message of peace and reconciliation between peoples can make a major contribution to our society. Turning to the situation of Tibet, the EP president stressed that the European Parliament seeks to be a voice raised in defence of human rights and human dignity. In this respect, Parliament has consistently sought to highlight the human rights of the Tibetan people. While respecting China's territorial integrity, he stressed that in our dialogue with China, we have a responsibility to be open and honest in expressing our commitment to our shared values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and freedom of expression. Concluding, he told the Dalai Lama, Your non violent approach provides an extraordinary example of committed and peaceful campaigning for a worthy cause.

Dalai Lama: happiness can be based on religious or non religious values

While asking MEPs to take note of his written statement (see link below), the Tibetan spiritual leader chose to speak without notes. Describing himself as just one of 6 billion people, he said his first concerns were to promote human values and religious harmony. He stressed the importance of leading a happy life, which could best be achieved by having peace of mind and argued that there was nowadays too much emphasis on material values, with too much stress, suspicion, ambition and greed. However, he believed that inner value does not necessarily come from religious teaching but is a biological necessity, since we are social animals. In fact, he saw secular ethics and an emphasis on inner peace as a basis for a happy life, and he advocated secular methods, including common sense, common experience, religious and scientific findings. He pointed out that Buddhism was a non theistic religion. Commenting on the number of women MEPs in the Chamber, the Buddhist leader said the historical emphasis on physical strength was now being superseded by an emphasis on mental powers a development which would give the advantage to women and which he welcomed since women were more feeling and more sensitive.

Tibet

Turning to his other major concern, the fate of Tibet, the Dalai Lama reiterated his well known position that he sought not independence but general autonomy for Tibet within the People's Republic of China, and also that he was committed to non violence in pursuing that goal. The Chinese constitution, he pointed out, specifically mentions minority rights. Indeed, his approach was best for China itself, argued the Tibetan spiritual leader, since general harmony and unity can only come through trust and mutual respect. He also asked the European Union to play a role, saying that while it should keep close to China, nevertheless to quote a Tibetan saying if you are a true friend you will make clear your friend's faults. The Dalai Lama concluded by thanking the EP Tibet Intergroup for its support and said he was joining their 24 hour fast in support of the Tibetan people.



Font: Press Services of the European Parliament

Dalai Lama's visit to the European Parliament

Common human values, inner peace and Tibet: Dalai Lama at European Parliament

The importance of individual happiness, which can be achieved with the help of universal human values whether religious or non religious was one major theme in an address by the 14th Dalai Lama to the European Parliament on Wednesday. The other topic raised by the Buddhist spiritual leader was the current plight and the future of Tibet. The Dalai Lama gave his speech to a formal sitting of the House as part of European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.



New Challenges for Europe's Eastern Border



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The Kremlin justified Russian aggression against Georgia as “concern for its citizens and their civil rights.” This justification warrants attention, not just on account of its historical analogy to the Hitler and Stalin eras, but because it is closely related to the national security of the former Soviet Union. The fact that the Russian parliament plans to pass a law this fall regarding the distribution of a special Russian Federation Compatriots Certificate to Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and the Baltic States demonstrates a desire to achieve an externally legitimate foundation for this concern for Russians living outside of Russia. The dramatic events in Georgia prove that these “concerns” are dangerous from the standpoint of the national security of the aforementioned states.

The 1991 law “On the State Policy of the Russian Federation in Regards to Compatriots Abroad” includes a point that states that compatriots must be given special certificates that confirm their status. However, up until now, this point has not been implemented, for it is a complex matter both legally and administratively.

Now, after reexamining this idea, the Russkiy Foundation and its president, retired Major General Leonid Shershnyev, has come forth with an initiative to pass another law, “On the Russian Card.” The Russkiy Mir (“Russian World”) Foundation, which was established by the Kremlin and is currently very influential, has also expressed their support for this law. The Russkiy Foundation developed the concept for the law and organized several round tables where it presented the law and invited experts to discuss its ideas. The last round table took place on June 24, 2008, with the participation of State Council deputies as well as representatives of the Federation Council, the President’s administration, and both governmental and public organizations. According to information supplied to the media, after these discussions the bill was submitted to state institutions to be refined and prepared for acceptance in the State Council.

The Russkiy Foundation was established in October of 2007. Its aim is to consolidate Russian compatriots and to form a united “Russian world.” One of the foundation’s main tasks is to achieve official status for the Russian language in countries with a large community of Russian speakers. The foundation’s president, Leonid Shershnyov, is a former member of the armed forces and was the deputy director of the Special Propaganda Administration at the Defense Ministry of the U.S.S.R.; he is currently the president of the National and International Security Foundation, an expert in security matters at the Russian State Council and the Federation Council, one of the ideologues at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the editor in chief of the magazine *Bezopasnostj*.

In order to better comprehend the meaning and significance of the “Russian card,” it is important to understand the essence of the supporter of the cards, the aforementioned Russkiy Mir Foundation. The “Russian world” concept was developed by Russian political scientists close to the centers of Russian power. As a cultural phenomenon, the idea intends, without any legal consequences, to unite all the compatriots who emigrated from Russia at various time periods, including those Russians who were left outside of the country’s borders after 1991. Special hopes are being placed on compatriots in the “near abroad.”

On June 21, 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree regarding the establishment of the Russkiy Mir Foundation. This decree stressed three main features that characterize affiliation with the “Russian world”: the Russian language, Russian culture, and a demonstrated interest in Russia as a homeland. People who speak Russian and emigrated from Russia or the former U.S.S.R. are considered part of the “Russian world,” even if their ethnic heritage is not Russian. It is precisely the Russian language and Russian-speaking Russian or Soviet culture, along with the accompanying historical memory, that combines and constructs the “Russian world.” This gives rise to one of the goals of the “Russian world”—namely, to confer upon the Russian language the status of an official language in those countries in which at least one third of the population speaks Russian as a first language. This would result in two official languages in a string of former Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Latvia, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan).

The “Russian world” is a program currently under development, and has expanded to include more and more spheres and directions of activity. Judging from the information

on the Russkiy Mir Federation’s website, the development and expansion of the project is still underway.

Recently we have seen a new approach to the consolidation of the “Russian world” and the influence of the Russian Federation. One of its methods is to educate the target audience. In the past, various interested Russian governmental and non-governmental organizations would provide financial support those political leaders and parties that were most “beneficial” for them. But today we see a tendency for these organizations to get involved in linguistic, cultural, educational, and religious (more specifically, Orthodox) projects in the Russian diaspora and to tutor and cultivate the members of these communities according to Russian interests. This new approach is being actualized, first and foremost, in Russia’s spheres of interest—the C.I.S. and the Baltic States. The “Russian card” is one of the “Russian world” program’s methods for consolidating the community of citizens in other countries who are loyal to Russia.

The policy makers who developed the law foresee that the implementation of the “Russian card” will provoke resistance and objections from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic States. In order to reduce the possibilities for these states to criticize Russia, the policy makers recommend that the Russian exile community in each state be activated in a timely matter, so that it may provide support from the

The Central European Youth Cooperation

as a regional initiative for the youth of Eastern Central Europe

In July 2007, several youth organisations from the Central European Europe, mainly members of EDS, but not exclusively, came together in Budapest to think about the future of the region, a common identity and how they could enhance regional cooperation in a more proactive and vivid way. 18 years after the democratic transition in Europe, the Eastern Central European is just about to establish itself in a free and united Europe. Taking the good experiences from the Nordic Conservative Student Union (NKSU) as vital and positive example for regional cooperation, several EDS members from this region had the idea to form a similar kind of collaboration.

The participants of the first meeting in Budapest created a loose form of cooperation named Central European Youth Cooperation (CEYC). Youth organisations from the Visegrád countries and all the neighbouring countries of Hungary were the first to raise awareness for this incentive. The promoter of the idea of CEYC was the youth organisation of Fidesz Hungarian Civic Union, Fidesz Youth Section. The EDS members MK (Poland), MK (Czech Republic), ODM (Slovakia), Fidesz Youth Section (Hungary), USA (Ukraine), OSPD (Romania), KLIKS (Serbia), HAZ (Croatia), SOHSS (Croatia), SAU (Slovenia) and AG (Austria) as well as the regional unit of RCDS (Germany), RCDS Bavaria were the founding members of CEYC. Initially, CEYC was intended to be a regional platform to promote the good relation between Hungary and its bordering states, but since already in the very beginning of the formation of this political idea, Czech and Polish affiliates joined CEYC, this cooperation became even more. During the year 2008, several other youth organisations from the Baltics, Moldova, Belarus and Macedonia expressed their wish to take part in the work of CEYC so this initiative could widen its field of activity to most countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Today, CEYC is a lobby for a region that for so long has been locked away from the free world and deprived from the democratic participation. It aims to accentuate the common beliefs, goals and policies of the Central and Eastern European young generation. The members are working on the creation of a free and united Central European region. They find it necessary to promote the idea of Central Europe as such, to strengthen the identity of our region and to make louder the voice of the region within Europe and the world. CEYC is an organisation where EU members and non-members, recently joined and prospectively to be joining member states as well as smaller and bigger countries are equal and have the same rights and the same obligations. We do believe in a Europe where the freshness and the new spirit of the East are considered to be a gain, not a threat. We do believe that Europe is much more than "core Europe" and we do believe in shaping our future on a common ground, based on the principles democracy, freedom and human rights.

For achieving these purposes, the member organisations meet on a regular basis in one of the member countries. Recently, the last session was held in Kiev/Odessa from 29th, October - 2nd, November 2008 where the Statutes were adopted, a Chairwoman and a Secretary General elected and a resolution passed that gave full support for the Czech Presidency of the European Council and that was later adopted by the EDS Council Meeting in Trier in December 2008. The next conference is planned to be organised in Budapest, from 14th - 17th, May 2009. The agenda-setting is ongoing and all youth organisations from the Central Eastern European region are invited to join this initiative as this organisation is as inclusive and open as it can be. Feel free to contact the Chairwoman Tatyana Gostieva (Ukraine), the Secretary General Bence Bauer (Hungary) or browse the internet for CEYC by clicking on www.ceyc.info or even join the facebook group.

Bence Bauer

inside for Russia's plans. Another counterargument is the precedent in the European Union: In March of 2008 the law "On the Polish Card," passed by the Polish parliament, went into effect, and in 2001 Hungary passed the so-called "Status Law," which provides for a special identification document for Hungarians living abroad. But these examples are based on a totally different historical premise, and cannot be compared to the case of Russia and the former Soviet republics. In addition, the Hungarian law was challenged by the O.S.C.E. High Commissioner on October 26, 2001, who stressed that one-sided ventures accepted by a state in order to protect its national minorities outside of its jurisdiction can cause tension and should be avoided.

Passage of the law "On the Russian Card" may include the following risks for the domestic policy of the former Soviet republics:

The establishment of consolidated and therefore controllable Russian-speaking communities in these states, with the help of which Russia could actualize aims that are beneficial for Russia both in the countries of residence of its compatriots and on an international level;

The formation of split societies, which would promote Russian speakers' sense of belonging to Russia;

The formation of economic and educational links with Russia for a significant portion of society may substantially hinder the integration of the C.I.S. into the European Union.

The existing trend shows that, overall, support for the implementation of this policy from Russian compatriots living abroad is becoming more intense and effective. The "Complete Target Program for Support for Compatriots Living Abroad, 2006-2008," which was developed by the Moscow government, prescribed the spending of 440 million rubles in financial support. These funds are intended for the improvement of lawmaking in the compatriots sector; the organization of various international events, including conferences, seminars, and courses; the establishment of structures to coordinate compatriots' organizations, as well as support for their activities; the promotion of collaboration between compatriots' organizations and Russian state structures; the organization of events in compatriots' countries of residence; the ensuring of information support for compatriots (the establishment and support of websites, press publications, and TV and radio programs for compatriots); collaboration with Russian-language mass media abroad; the protection of compatriots' rights (including in courts of law in their countries of residence); collaboration with compatriots' youth organizations; the distributions of history books made in Russia to schools in compatriots' countries of residence; information support for Russian-language press abroad; etc.

These activities cover the entire social, cultural, and information spheres in the former Soviet Union, particular its smaller countries. Studies have shown that the Russian media, or local Russian-language media loyal to Russia, forms the opinions of Russian-speaking citizens almost completely. In their minds, the majority of these people already live in Russia and are loyal to Russia, not to their countries of residence. Therefore they become an instrument of manipulation for achieving Russia's political aims. The latest popularity ratings for political parties show that in Latvia, for example, the pro-Moscow party *Saska* as centrs ("Harmony Centre") currently has the highest popularity rating among political parties.

The implementation of "Russian cards" would give Russia the right to use this long-developed weapon—Russian-speaking citizens outside of Russia—in their own interests and to meddle in the domestic affairs of other countries, justifying these actions as "concern" for their compatriots. And there is no reason to doubt that this will be done immediately. References to the defense of Russian-speaking citizens' rights may be found in almost every public speech by Russian officials, as well as in the Russian foreign-policy concept accepted by the President in July: "Russia considers the protection of compatriots in Latvia and Estonia to be a fundamentally important task. The strategic goal is for these compatriots, by strengthening their ethno-cultural singularity, to come forth as an authoritative intellectual, economic, and culturally spiritual partner for Russia in international politics."

Ieva Dzelme
Latvian Conservative Youth Union -



Interview

With Gérard Bokanowski (FR)

2001_2007 • Director General for Translation and Publication, European Parliament, Brussels
 1990_2001 • Director for Publications, European Parliament, Brussels
 1986_1990 • Director for Informatics and Telecommunications, European Parliament, Brussels
 1980_1986 • Director of Registrar and General Services, European Parliament, Brussels
 1968_1980 • Deputy Secretary General and later Secretary General, EDA Group, European Parliament, Brussels

**Secretary General of the International Paneuropean Union
 Special Adviser to the President of the European Parliament**

Dear Mr. Bokanowski,

EDS wants to thank you very much for this personal interview possibility.

Before your meeting with our President Thomas Uhlen in the Cabinet of the President in the European Parliament, have you been familiar with European Democrat Students? If yes, how did you get to know our organization?

I also want to thank you on my behalf for the interview. It is always a big pleasure to meet and discuss with young committed Europeans who work for our common goals and the strengthening of our union. Of course I have been familiar with the student organisation of the European Peoples Party as it sets important activities in representing the interests of young academics. I also want to stress that Paneuropeans are involved in your movement. I was delighted to receive your President Thomas as stagiaire in the Cabinet of the President Hans-Gert Pöttering and we had very fruitful discussions. Facing the interviewer, a former stagiaire too in the EP Presidency too, I will add how proud we are of their commitment, faith and dynamism in the Cabinet's work.

Where do you identify the major challenges Europe-wide working youth and students organizations have to face nowadays?

In my opinion it is imminent for all youth organizations on European level to continue in representing their interest and communicate their needs. For example to struggle for a better integration in the political decision making process is of high importance. When you have a look on the average age of MEP's, it is obvious that very few are mandated by political youth organizations. This is especially valid for the old member states. Young people are the future of Europe, hence the EU has to improve its cooperation with them in many fields. Though I have to stress that also the youth organizations themselves should try to be more networked in this case, find common strategies and develop ways to implement their ideas. The better the ideas and the stronger the representations are, the more you will be taken into account by decision makers. But I know that strong financial support and political will is vital, also in your case.

I also identify challenges in cultural differences, though I'm pleased to see that young people are sometimes more open minded than seniors in this case. When it comes to linguistic problems you communicate more easily in English, but I advise you not to forget that on the basis of "unity in diversity" our different languages are also a cultural enrichment. Some complain about the expenses of translation and interpretation in the European institutions, which represent 3 Euros per citizen and per year, recalled Commissioner Figel'. Of course the costs should be reduced as far as possible, and the Commission is doing efforts in this area, but we must not forget that the European citizens have to be informed in their own language; it means the necessity to assure multilingualism in 23 official languages. This is the cost of culture, efficiency and democracy. People do not speak the language of experts. A deputy for example cannot work properly in the Parliament, if he is not allowed to work in his own language even if he is able to communicate with colleagues and officials in another one. When you are a law maker, which is nowadays the case of the EP, each word of a regulation can generate important effects with economic and social consequences for citizens. To underline its importance, the European Commission developed even a Commissioner for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban.

In politics it is not always easy for youth and student organizations to be heard by decision makers and to be taken serious. Where do you personally see the potential and importance of organizations like EDS to contribute to the European unification?

Good question, your importance lies definitely in two main fields. First you can represent better the interests of young people as you are close to the needs and problems of your generation. Secondly it is imminent that you become active in the communication of the European Union. You have to point out the benefits to your clientele and motivate them for the European idea. This is nowadays more important than ever before, and young people listen superiorly to you than to senior officials.

... Is there something which youngsters can do better than seniors in your opinion? There are a lot of things which young people can do better. We need the spirit of your generation. The French Presidency of the Council has ended and important success has been reached in many areas. Do you think President Sarkozy had also sufficient engagement for improvement of student and youth policy in Europe?

Absolutely, we have to admit that the circumstances of the last presidency have not been easy. President Sarkozy was facing for example the Irish "No" to the Lisbon treaty or the crisis in Georgia, which demanded for rapid changing of the presidencies agenda. Nevertheless important steps in youth affairs were reached, as in the health and welfare of young people by recommending cross-sectoral, specific inclusion of youth in public health policies. In the frame of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue the youth dimension has been highlighted and on the subject of the mobility of young volunteers networks, synergy and exchanges in between the European institutions and the member states were enhanced. Though still numerous avenues have to be explored, the



Gérard Bokanowski



Interview



the AktionsGemeinschaft in Austria and the OSPD-L in Romania, is for example an important contribution on this issue.

The financial crisis, the election of Barack Obama as new US President, the unstable situation with the Lisbon Treaty – Europe is facing many upcoming challenges in 2009. How do you personally see the standing of the European Union in today's World?

I think – and it has been the position of the European Parliament debating with Sarkozy in December the 16th – that the French Presidency, confronted with important and sudden issues demonstrated that we had “a pilot in the plane”. The events in Georgia, the financial crisis, the decisions on immigration, climate and energy, Nato's cooperation, relations with Russia, demonstrated that these vital issues have to be dealt in the framework of the EU. It is why we need this new Lisbon Treaty with a lasting presidency organising the cooperation of member states and the leadership of the European institutions.

EDS is also cooperating with non EU member states. Nobody really knows though where EU should define its necessary borders, and start with its ENP (Neighborhood policy). What is your opinion on this topic?

This is a key topic of our movement and it is important to make a difference in between cultural, political and geographical borders. First the citizens in Europe and its political leaders have to question themselves what they expect in the future from the European Union – do we want more political or cultural unity or just a common market, accompanied by regulations to keep it functioning. Answering this question will also give indications for the future borders. Finally I want to stress that without any doubts all countries in South-Eastern Europe have to become member of the EU, as well as Ukraine as it is already an important partner in Eastern European policy. Turkey is a more difficult question; this is not for this generation. As a Paneuropean, I noticed also three major improvements: a strengthened neighborhood policy with Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldavia as far as

with Caucasus countries. The building of a real concrete Mediterranean policy even if the situation in Middle East stays dramatic. The way of enlargement paved for western Balkans enlargement starting with Croatia and Macedonia before the end of the decade and a precise plan for all the South east country. As president Pöttering said its values are the real boarder of Europe.

Beside your long expertise in the European Parliament and politics in general you are Secretary General of the international Paneuropean Union. Do you see synergies and room for cooperation with European Democrat Students?

Definitely, I'm open for proposals from your side. Why not for example a common congress in 2010 which could bring an opportunity to reflect together the role of European Youth organisations in the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. It is of high importance for us to support engaged youth and build partnerships with other organisations.

Last but not least, is there something you want to say to the young people engaged in EDS?

Europe is a union of cultures, norms and values shaped on principles that provide respect for diversity. Only if we work together in making this respect for diversity a leading value of our Union, than we can expect and look forward for a true identity and a common feeling of belonging. Therefore, we all, policy makers, young people and other citizens of Europe, should work “together in diversity” in order to establish a community of stability, tolerance, peace and progress. I wish you all good luck and success for the upcoming years of your organisation and ask you to keep your motivation and young spirit. We all need your contribution, because you are the future!

Dear Mr. Bokanowski, we thank you very much for the interview.

Andreas Perotti
AktionsGemeinschaft, Austria



Czech Presidency

of the European Union successful crisis management

Czech Republic is in the first half of the year 2009 chairing the European Union. This function is taken as only the second country among so-called new EU countries (first was Slovenia, which chaired the EU in the first half of the year 2008). In this text I will try to introduce the priorities of the Czech presidency and in short recall and assess its existing history.

Original plans of the Czech Presidency

Czech priorities for presidency were formulated in time of preparations for the EU Presidency in the years 2007 and 2008. The main priority was emphasis on competitiveness and openness, in short economic liberalization. The main goal was to finally eliminate the barriers of four basic freedoms, the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital.



The main barriers of this are transitional measures invoked by many EU countries in the year 2004.

Beside this priority Czech presidency also wanted to focus on scope of energetics and EU budget, to support further enlargement of the EU and to help with negotiations on plan for justice and interior for the years 2010 to 2014. For summarization of the priorities and with way on its importance the Czech Presidency selected a motto „Europe without Barriers”.

This were plans, but live brings new challenges. So Presidency is hardly influenced by the financial crisis and also by problems with Russian gas, Irish „no” to Lisbon Treaty and by Israeli defensive actions in Gaza Strip.

The reality of Czech EU Presidency

On January 14 Czech Prime Minister Mr. Mirek Topolánek introduced in European Parliament final version of Czech priorities for EU Presidency. Summed up they are the 3 E's: Economy, Energy and External Relations. Behind this 3 E's is hidden further liberalization of common market (which



I have mentioned above). The most important issue of this agenda is eliminating barriers in order that citizens from new EU countries will no more be second-order citizens so that they will be able to work and to do a business in other EU countries. Personally I think that equality between citizens of EU member states, or respectively between citizens of

EU, is far more important and useful than further deepening of integration. That gets me on the institutional issues which were put before Czech Presidency by Irish no to Lisbon Treaty.

Czech government has been pushed to join pressure on Ireland in order to repeat the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty until this referendum is „successful”. The position of Czech government is clear. Any pressure on Ireland in this issue is inappropriate and sovereignty of each one member state must be respected.

In financial crisis issue Czech Presidency asserts conservative stance with emphasis on fiscal discipline and adherence of Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). Because rules must be observed especially in times of crisis.

In the beginning of its Presidency Czech republic have to participate on negotiating the solution of new conflict in Gaza Strip. This issue started when Hamas started rocket attacks on Israel. Czech Presidency worked on reinstallation of the cease-fire and minimalization impacts of Israeli defensive actions on non-combatant civilians. It must be clear for everyone that Czech role in this long-running conflict can be characterized rather like unpleasant obligation than like a key-player role. But it should be noted, that Czech Republic took its part with honour and grace.

The last big emergency issue in which Czech Presidency must be involved was the „gas crisis” when Russia stopped its gas distribution to Europe. This problem harmfully hit many EU countries especially Slovakia which is on this distribution fully depended. Czech Presidency was successful in mediation between Russian and Ukrainian government and significantly contributed to the final resolution of the disputes.

Brief assessment by conclusion

In this time is obviously impossible to rate Czech Presidency as a whole also is impossible to rate all its steps because many of their impacts will be known up in the near future or even later but it is possible to rate the atmosphere of the Presidency, its first impression and concrete steps in gas and Gaza issues.

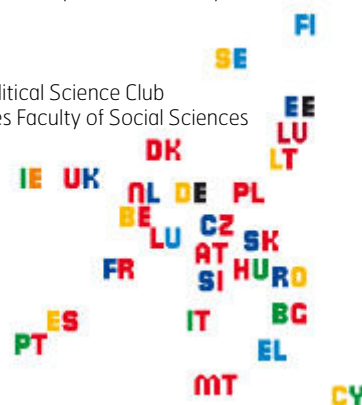
In these issues Czech Republic seems very good and acts positively and in accordance with interests of whole Union. So it can be considered that through extremely difficult

conditions in the beginning of the Presidency Czech Republic and its leaders have shown that they are able to fully and successfully lead the European Union.

Matj Trávníek

Chairman of Young Conservatives Political Science Club
Student of Institute of Political Studies Faculty of Social Sciences
Charles University in Prague

EU2009.CZ



What Europe will we bequeath to the future?

First, more growth and more jobs in Europe. The harshness of today's economic climate has underlined still further the importance of a competitive Europe for the future, creating jobs and maintaining growth. The work the EU is doing today to make it easier for new businesses to start up, to lower their costs and reduce their burdens, is an investment in tomorrow's jobs. Already, new business costs have been cut by a third. With EU action to ensure competition, the cost of telecoms has been going down 4.5% a year since 1998. At the same time, increased education and training today will open the door to more and better jobs tomorrow. There are 3 million more students in higher education and 1 million more graduates per year today than in 2000.

Second, a low carbon economy. Last year, the EU agreed to the European Commission's proposals to set up the most ambitious scheme anywhere in the world to tackle climate change. Over the next decade, the EU will make obligatory, year-on-year cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, leading to a 20% cut by 2020. At the same time, Europe is taking a lead in reducing the risk that Europeans will go short of energy in the future, encouraging new sources of supply and new pipelines, boosting home-grown clean energy like wind power, and targeting huge cuts in the amount of energy we waste.

Third, Europe's place in the world. Today's key global challenges - climate change, migration, poverty - can only be tackled by a truly global effort, and an effort sustained over many years. The EU has established itself an international record on trade openness, development and conflict resolution which makes it one of the most widely respected voices in the world. This leaves Europe in an excellent position to build on this in the future and ensure that European values of stability, democracy and openness are given a good hearing in the future. So today's EU is working hard to offer the right foundations for the future. An economy which mixes dynamism and solidarity. A leading role on addressing climate change and developing tomorrow's technology. And the benefits of enjoying respect from partners around the world.

As President of the European Commission, I am proud to have played a part in building the right legacy to bequeath to future generations. And I look forward to seeing the European Union continuing its march of progress in the years to come.

Jose Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission



Opinion

Europe today has a big responsibility. We live in a world of rapid change. A world where we face major challenges and great opportunities. A world where we can shape today what Europe will look like tomorrow.

Fortunately, we have the tools at our disposal to respond. Europe has never had so many well-developed democracies. Europeans have never had such access to education. It has never enjoyed more respect on the international stage.

And in the shape of the European Union, it has an institution tailor-made to translate these strengths into real long-term benefit. The European Union has now enjoyed over fifty years of working for Europe's citizens. Fifty years of continuity, of being true to values of tolerance, solidarity and social justice.

Fifty years of change, of adapting to new circumstances and opening new doors. This unparalleled record gives the right platform to look ahead. The European Union is hard-wired to take the long view. The fact that it must look at the common European interest frees it from the daily pressures of national political life and compels it to look to the long term.

Over the past few years, the European Union has been transformed. It now numbers 27 Member States, stretching from Estonia to Portugal and Ireland to Bulgaria. It is deeply involved in areas of policy once seen as national domains, such as foreign affairs and justice and home affairs. Europeans can move more freely than ever before, and can do so secure in the knowledge that their freedom to act is less constrained by borders than ever before. And globalisation has made it more and more clear that the major policy challenges of the day require action on a continental scale. In recent months, the onset of financial and economic crisis has once again underlined the central role of the EU. Instinctively, people looked to the EU for a response. The European Commission's proposals to rebuild confidence in the financial markets, and its European Economic Recovery Plan agreed by EU leaders last December, provide the spine for the European response.

So what will the Union's action today mean for the Europe of tomorrow? I would like to pick out three areas in particular where we are making sure that action today is truly sustainable.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

GDANSK

At 8pm we again got into the special solidarity train and we set out our further journey to the final destination- Gdansk- the city where freedom looks different, as the one of organizers have said comparing to what we have seen before "It's that second form of freedom that we're talking about—democracy, mutual respect, and toleration."

On Thursday we had the boat trip to Westerplatte - the place where Second World War began by shelling from German battleship Schleswig Holstein. After the lunch and sightseeing of the old city we were debating what world "solidarity" means for young people, people who are raised in different places, situations and different worlds. In conclusion we noticed that it actually means the same for most of us- being together, being emphatic, have the strength to help and to understand others. Let's hope that our generation will be able to be solidary, at least more than the previous ones were.

YOUTH FORUM AND SOLIDARITY FOR THE FUTURE

On Friday we have been present at the Youth Forum, where we met five great Nobel Peace Prize winners. Beside Lech Walesa, which jubilee we were celebrating there, we heard out about Dalai Lama XIV, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Frederik Willem de Klerk and Szirin Ebadi. All of them made interesting remarks and definitely what they wanted to devolve us were the statement which was repeating all over those six days- future belongs to youth, future belongs to you.

In the city where Solidarity movement was established, in the place where today was born we could not miss the exhibition Roads to Freedom. It is showing live under the communism times in Poland. It is interesting to see it particularly for the people who knows communism only from history lessons. On Saturday our group was participating in the international conference organised by Lech Walesa Institute especially for his anniversary- Solidarity for the Future. There were present prominent politicians from all over Europe. The three panels' agenda were about different part of the current world situation. During them we could get to know the views of the Nobel Peace Prize winners, or experts on particular issues, but we could hear out the President of France Nicolas Sarkozy, who presided then European Union and Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk.

At the end of the day we had an honor to participate in the Jazz Concert for the occasion of the jubilee of Lech Walesa and organization of the conference.

The Solidarity Express was the meeting not only to learn the history and the current situation in the world but that was the meeting with Nobel Peace Prize winners, people who fight for the freedom and democracy with young people who are now peace and freedom fighters.

There was a young guy from Palestine, who was trying to show us that Palestine is not only war, fight, terror and territory but, what the most important, Palestine is the nation with people. There was as well a girl from Burma who after she needed to leave her country because of political reasons is now leaving in England fighting for freedom and democracy in the peaceful way. There was young Belarusian activist- Franak Viacorka who has been kicked out of his university for his pro-democracy activities and now is arrested for next time. Most probably he will be enlisted to the army despite his health condition. At the end there were the others who are now fighting for the freedom of their countries. If you would say they are heroes they would start laughing- they just doing whatever they think is decent, they just want their countries to be free and want to live a normal life.

It is important to know our own history but maybe it is even more important to know our present. Thanks to the meeting like that we can learn both, we can meet, exchange ideas, and we can make friendship- Israeli can sit at the one table with Palestinian and just talk. We all there were young people and despite all the differences laying between us we always can find a common language. Maybe somebody can think it is too naïve and too idealistic but it is on us to change the world.

Maja Mazurkiewicz
EDS Secretary General



Solidarity Express

journey through the past, present and future.

Almost 200 young people from 44 countries all over the world gathered together in Poland 1-7 of December 2008. European Center of Solidarity together with Lech Walesa Institute and Polish Ministry on Foreign Affairs initiated the annual project names Solidarity Express in the year of 25 anniversary of President Lech Walesa being awarded Nobel Peace Prize. The event took place 69 years after the Second World War broke out, 64 years after wave of communism flooded Eastern Europe and iron curtain in between two Europes was built, 28 years after Martial Law was introduced in Poland, half a year after we been witnessing the fast war in Georgia and just few days before another Gaza conflict exploded.

But from 1st to 7th of December we have not been divided. Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese were sitting at the one table. They all just have been young people still believing in their power of changing the world. As Dalai Lama told us the generation of XX century was all in blood, but that new one will be generation of peace. Which does not mean it will be without problems.

CRACOW

Those 200 people made an unmemorable trip through Poland and through Polish modern history which actually is history of the whole world. The journey started on the 1st of December 2008 in Cracow. Participants were divided on 5 groups. First day we had a wonderful dinner at the hotel where we could get to know each other. Next day we started with the lecture on two totalitarisms- Nazi and Soviet made by George Weigel, historian specialized in Polish subject matter, who was our guard for whole the event.

Our first destination was German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz- Birkenau. The feeling when you are there it is the one which you can not describe. You always hear only those abstract number 1.1 million people killed. When you entering the camp and seeing shoes, suitcases, locks of hair, pictures of victims the history is becoming truth. It is not the feeling you thinking of all the time but that is the one which builds your look at the world. Just as one of organizers have said it was a place where freedom was marked by the smoke from the crematorium chimneys.

After coming back to Cracow we had an opportunity to go through the steps of Pope John Paul II, as it was the city he spent most of his life before becoming the head of Catholic Church. Afterwards we ate dinner in the typical Jewish restaurant.

WARSAW

On Wednesday Solidarity Express set out on the journey. All participants with journalists from all over the world made a trip with a special train to Warsaw.

After our arrival we attended the lesson of Władysław Bartoszewski, that not only has been twice the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, social activist, journalist, writer, historian, but has survived the Auschwitz concentration camp. He has been a soldier of Armia Krajowa (National Army) a Polish underground activist, participant of the Warsaw Uprising, chevalier of the Order of the White Eagle, honorary citizen of Israel. He gave us the simple advice- "I don't demand from anyone to be a hero, but you should to live well, it is just enough to be decent".

Afterwards whole group visited The Warsaw Rising Museum. The multimedia museum is telling a story of 63 days of the victory, strength, proud and failures. We could see there how once could become a hero, whereas other could died sleeping. Sometimes the line is really thin.





THEME

“How may Students make the difference in the next European Elections?”

Students have always been a major cornerstone of major political changes in Europe. Whether it was a battle against totalitarian regimes, support for dissidents or, as in my own case, fight for ideological causes, our student population in Europe has always shown strong engagement and political passion in its collective and individual actions.

I remember well my student's days when a group of young future academics managed to shake up Flanders, and successfully pursued the ideal of a federal Belgium. Ideas, which are still valid today, and which continue to be nurtured by a new generation of university students in the whole of Belgium.

Today's generation of European students has an equally demanding challenge before them – to shake up Europe and likewise seek out for a viable institutional framework for our continent. Nowadays, one of the major challenges that we are collectively trying to face regards a rising wave of euro-scepticism in our countries. This phenomenon is generated by various factors and manifested through equally diversified forms. Primarily, we need to look at the existing democratic deficit in Europe which hinders the full and direct participation of our citizens in the decision-making processes of the European institutions. Much more needs to be done in order to close the gap and bring our citizens closer to the EU.

Furthermore, European enlargement is more and more regarded as being a menace to the well-being of our citizens. It is increasingly perceived as an “economic burden” which can not be sustained further, especially during times marred by economic crisis. Both issues will need to be tackled not only during this important electoral year by our current political leaders, but will also represent a challenge to the future generations of European leaders, and thus the European students of today. They are both emotional issues which will deserve an equally emotional answer.

Eurobarometer polls for the last European elections in 2004 showed how low turnout and downwards trends in most of the countries of the European Union have contributed to widen the gap between the European institutions and the European citizens. As a matter of fact, numerous surveys testify that Europeans do not really comprehend the importance of the European Parliament, nor of the other main European institutions, to the full extent.

Even more worrisome is the fact that in the new member states less than 30% of citizens exercised their right to decide upon their representatives in the parliamentary assembly of the EU, and that the voter turnout amongst the youth was at a historical low. We shall not forget that with the blossoming raise of anti-EU populism in those countries, the European project is facing an ever-so-important pivotal point. The current financial and economic crisis, on the other hand, has demonstrated how much Europe is needed in order to deliver viable, coherent and coordinated solutions for our citizens. The strength of our common currency, the Euro, and of our coordinated monetary policy has demonstrated to be a firewall against even more dramatic consequences of this financial crisis on the stability of our economic sys-

tems. In this respect, it is especially upon the younger generations, bearing in mind that today's decisions will affect them tomorrow, to operate against a resurgence of protectionist measures, and to fight for a more sustainable and dynamic economy.

On this backdrop, the role students are to play in the continuation of our European project is not only of the utmost important for the outcome of the forthcoming European elections, but of the essence for the future well-being of our continent.

Repeatedly, polls have shown that major reasons why people tend to desert polling stations in the European elections, thus leaving room for the advancement of populism from both sides of the political spectrum, are lack of understanding of the EU institutions, political spinning that represents success to be “home-made” and all shortcomings as “Brussels-caused” and, especially when it comes to young generations, lack of representation and influence in important decision-making processes. Our European project, therefore, needs young ideas and fresh blood in order to revive its initial spirit of an “ever close Union”.

With their knowledge, enthusiasm and first-hand benefits gained from the various European projects – the Erasmus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Socrates and Tempus student exchange programs and grants are just some of the most lustrous examples –, students are the best and most efficient promoters. Who is better suited than you to persuade young and old alike to go out and vote, because it can truly make a difference if they do? Who is more passionate than you to show that there are no first grade and second grade Europeans, that the European model is still valid today, that we all strive to build a better future? It is you, the students, who have the clout to endorse change, who can reach out to those who remain untouched by the traditional political world, to bring forward a “common vision of the future”, which ultimately constitutes the backbone and true essence of a nation, and thus of our European dream. In this sense, I strongly believe that through joint campaigning efforts in your campuses, showing your fellow students the results of your common actions, through a stronger engagement and participation in public debates and hearings in your home countries, you will be able to impact much more than just these upcoming European elections. On the contrary, you will be able to shape Europe's agenda for the next generations, helping to build a Europe of conscious citizens, of democratic participation, and of solidarity and understanding. I am convinced that you, as I once did before you, can help improve the future of our European continent through more active participation in our civil society in general, and in our political life in particular. It should be your duty as the bright and capable students of today, to push the debate forward in order to continue your work as young leaders of tomorrow. Much of the outcome of this year's European elections depends on your commitment, on your political passion to change your world today. One of the European Union's founding fathers, Jean Monnet, once thought that “the community we have created is not an end in itself. The community itself is only a stage on the way to the organized world of tomorrow.” It is following Jean Monnet's vision that I put the future of the whole European project, not just that of the European elections, into your valuable hands. Let us pursue this together!

Wilfried Martens
EPP President



EDS AND THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Next June, European citizens will elect the members of the European Parliament for the term 2009-2014. Next June, European citizens will have the chance to vote in their representatives in the European level. Next June, European citizens are going to choose the ones that are going to stand for their interests in Europe.

All over Europe, citizens don't feel as committed with the European level as they should. Somehow, people failed to understand how much the decisions tacked at this level affect their lives.

EDS is an European Organization that represents more than 400.000. And EDS is aware of the importance of the European Elections. EDS is aware of the importance of the decisions make in the European level. Decisions that affects, more and more, students lives, all over Europe.

It is our mission to defend the students interests in the European level. It is our mission to fight for their rights.

With our work, we contribute to the construction of an European project that takes students concerns and best interests into truly consideration. With our work as EDS, we contribute to EPP project for the upcoming term, establishing goals that will improve the quality in Higher Education and Research.

But it is also our mission to make students aware about the importance of these Elections, the importance of their choices, the importance of their role in the success of the European project. This is an EDS responsibility.

If EDS is aware of this importance, it's up to EDS to spread the word. To make students commit with Europe. To make them care.

Together, we can make the difference.

Joana Lopes
EDS Vice-Chairwoman





University education is to our knowledge-based society what the school leaving certificate was to industrial society.

The European Democrat Students would like to put forward their opinion on Higher Education and Research in Europe for the upcoming elections for the European Parliament in 2009.

Democracy, Freedom and Peace are the European achievements of the last century and the base of European success in the 21st century. For these achievements education is and remains the most important mean. Further integration has to be based on these achievements.

European integration will just be crowned with success as long as the people are convinced by the European project. Higher education is extremely important in this area. A large percentage of European citizens is below the age of 30. The attitude of these people is especially influenced by their level of education. The openness towards Europe grows significantly through competences in foreign languages and in particular through the growing number of students who are participating within the "Life Long Learning" programme in different countries around the continent. Higher education has an enormous significance for the sustainability of the European countries and the European Union as a whole. The influence of Europe in the world is especially based on its status as an economic and knowledge based power.

As a continent, compared to other regions in the world with fewer natural resources, Europe's success is primary based on the technological and scientific advantage. The economic engine of Europe runs with the fuel "innovation".

Being under national influence, educational policy is a special and sensitive political area. Universities are undoubtedly the central recruitment place for national elites in politics, economics and of course for scientists.

The potential of European universities is enormous: more than 4000 institutions, 17 million students and 435.000 researchers. But that potential is not being used to its best advantage, particularly when considering the EU's agenda to increase growth and jobs. Universities have an important role to play in the EU's drive to become a global knowledge economy.

It is our aim to ensure that European universities play a key role in achieving the strategic objective laid down by the Lisbon European Council, namely to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. The European Union shall continue to take part in the Bologna Process in order to improve the quality of Higher Education. Europe needs a free and competitive academic environment.

Unfortunately European universities have missed to unleash their full potential in stimulating economic growth, social cohesion and improvement in the quality and quantity of jobs.

Therefore we call for a Europe where the financial conditions allow each citizen the access to education and a training which considers the personal abilities. Education was, is and remains the key factor for a realisation of equal opportunities in all areas of life.

We call for a Europe which budget is dominated by the expenses for Higher Education and Research. The EU goal in Research and Development expenditure, as set by the Lisbon summit strategy to achieve by 2010, a Research and Development intensity of at least 3% of GDP for the EU as a whole could just be the beginning.

Europe must strengthen the three poles of its knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation. Universities are essential in all three. Investing more and doing so efficiently in the modernisation and quality of universities is a direct investment in the future of Europe and its citizens.

We call for a doubling of the expenditure in all three poles and an increase in the Research and Development intensity to at least 5% of GDP for the EU as a whole by 2015.

Mobility forms new cultural, social and academic values, and creates opportunities for personal growth, improving one's self-confidence, and enhancing the employability of students both on the national and international labour markets, while improving intercultural understanding. We call for the European Union to enable students to spend a period of their studies abroad. Until 2015, 15 percent of European students should spend some time of their academic life abroad.

What educational establishments are most lacking is not a definition of curricula and their content. What the universities need is to restore confidence, credit and dignity to the entire community of academics, students and researchers. Investing more money in Higher Education, Research and Innovation will reinvigorate academic excellence on the one hand, and enhance the cohesiveness of the university's social and territorial fabric on the other.

If the stakeholders fail to react, the gap which separates European universities from their main global competitors risks growing wider.



READY FOR A NEW

BOLOGNA DECLARATION??

WE STAND FOR

YOUR RIGHTS!

HAVE COURAGE TO BE WISE!!



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EVENTS



ISRAEL Study Visit

Israel has been a country surrounded by controversy since its very foundation, but it is also a fascinating country. It is the place two peoples call home. It is a country of great religious significance to three world religions. It is a country of magnificent nature and great contrast – from desert in the south to mountains in the north. And it is a country with big possibilities for development and prosperity if peace can be found. From the 4th to the 10th of July, an EDS delegation composed by EDS Chairwoman Ana Filipa Janine, EDS Sec-Gen Elisabeth Torkildsen, Tatiana Gostieva, Stanislav Kutsenko (Ukraine), Bence Bauer (Hungary), Birger Birgersen and Christoffer Wiig (Norway) went on a study trip to Israel to learn more about this interesting country, and the two political youth parties – Young Likud and Youth of Kadima. The initiative of inviting us had been taken by Young Likud, the organization that had also been a guest at several EDS events wanted the opportunity to show us more, not just about their own organization but

especially about the reality of their country.

On the first day we had the opportunity to visit the historical Golan Heights and see, from an old defense point, the border with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan and to visit a museum that summed up the tensions lived in that area.

On the following day, we visited Nazareth and observed the coexistence of religions in such a significant place. During the drive to Jerusalem, we also observed the West Bank Security Fence. While in Jerusalem, the group visited the “Yad Va’shem” museum that documents the holocaust, visited the Keneset (the Parliament of the State of Israel), where we met with the president of the Likud parliamentary group and visited also the Menachem Begin museum that explained the life of the 6th prime-minister of Israel and one of the founders of the Likud. For one morning the study trip participants also had the chance of passing the Wall into the West Bank and observe the Palestinian way of living and the security procedures. On the last day, as the group was preparing to leave we made our way back to Tel Aviv through the town of Sderot, having also the opportunity to have a view of the Gaza Strip. At the end of the day, we met with Likud party members running in the upcoming elections for the Keneset. The Youth of Kadima has also contacted EDS to learn more about us, and we therefore also met with them.

During this study trip we met several Young Likud members who shared with us their views about the conflict they live and how they see the future of the country. The participants had the chance to see different realities and learn about the history of the State and the people. And it is sure that it was most enriching.

Ana Filipa Janine
EDS Honorary Chairwoman

Policy Days Bulgária

EDS Policy days in Bulgaria hosted by MGERB

In the period between 11 – 15 June 2008 EDS conducted its annual policy days in Bulgaria. The event was hosted by the Youth Organization of PP GERB – MGERB, and the topic of the event that took place in Plovdiv and was “The Center-Right Policy – One Year after Bulgarian EU Accession and Before the EU Elections 2009”.

The Policy Days of EDS and MGERB had two main goals: To introduce to the participants the challenges, in front of the new right policy in Bulgaria, emphasizing on the active involvement of Bulgaria and MGERB in the student space in the Balkans. Also to introduce the challenges in front of the Right space from both sides of the Atlantic.

After a brief welcome speech by the chairwomen of EDS and MGERB Ana Filipa Janine, and Monika Panayotova, followed by the international secretary of PP GERB – Radoslav Totchev, the participants were introduced to the MGERB idea for establishing a Balkan-European Student space by creating the so called Balkan Erasmus. The purpose of this project was to start a gradual process of overcoming the negative stereotypes and perceptions between the Balkan countries. The Balkan Erasmus is emphasizing on: The establishment of cooperation on the basis of shared common aims and interests; The program is oriented towards the young people, freed from stereotypes. The Balkan Erasmus is an instrument for creation of intercultural community of young people on the Balkans, sharing European values

On the next day the participants had the opportunity to see an interactive analysis of the “American elections, in the context of the forth-



coming European elections, and the methods of popularizing the right values” by Patrick Egan, a Director of the Regional Program for Europe, International Republican Institute. In the meantime Bulgaria and its cultural variety were introduced to EDS, having in mind that 2008 is a year of the multicultural dialogue in the EU.

Arriving in Sofia, EDS was welcomed in Sofia municipality by Malina Edreva – chairwoman of the group of representatives of PP GERB at Sofia City Council and Irina Yordanova – chairwoman of the commission on European affairs in the City Council, followed by a discussion on local and European issues with some municipal counselors and district mayors of GERB. During the farewell dinner, the leader of GERB and mayor of Sofia – Boyko Borisov joined the young people and wished everyone to have in mind that only with persistent work and positive ideas we can achieve our goals.

Hristo Gadzhev
MGERB International Secretary

From 1st to 5th of October

2nd YES University took place in the capital of Ukraine, Kiev. These already annual meeting is gathering people from three European political families- Liberals (LYMEC), Socialists (ECOSY) and Christian-Democrats (YEPP and EDS). Young people who have contrary political views were brought together to learn how to cooperate and how to debate even with people who are sharing different values.

The program of lectures was really wide and current. It started with economic issues, went through youth engagement and finished at European Union foreign policy and its enlargement.

The abbreviation of YES is Yalta European Strategy, and as we can read on the official web page it is an international network established to promote the development of a just, free and prosperous Ukraine, to open the country to the rest of the world and to support Ukraine's membership to the European Union.

That is why abbreviation is so good - YES for Ukraine. The YES net-

YES

work exists already 5 years. It has its annual meeting every summer, although the idea of University for youth is quite a new one. After two events we may say that organizers are presenting to young people interesting ideas, lectures and discussion.

This year we could hear out opinions of prominent politician from contrary parts of the political scene just to mention Mario David, Vice-President of the EPP, Member of the Board of YES, Founder of the YES University, Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of Poland (1995-2005), Member of the Board of YES, Jan Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth. The last but not least organisers showed us the part of the Ukrainian culture. Participants had the opportunity to watch interesting mini movies made in Ukraine as well as to visit Pinchuk Art Center- museum

of contemporary art. After that event we can ask the question when European Union will say YES for Ukraine. If the YES Agenda 2020 will be fulfilled we will see in the near future. ~

Maja Mazurkiewicz
EDS Secretary General

SU08

Summer University MALTA

After the Workshops, we walked a short distance to a park where we ate a typical Maltese dinner. The participants were then invited to experience Maltese clubbing with a Foam Party. This also worked well as a stress relieving event, with the tension building up towards the Council Meeting.

The Council Meeting was held as planned on Thursday at the hotel, which also included the election of the new EDS Bureau. Former EDS Bureau members Ukko Metsola and now Roberta Metsola Tedesco Triccas joined us for lunch where they shared some of their memories in EDS.

After the Council Meeting, all were invited to a Classical Concert in Commemoration of SDM's 34th Anniversary. The Orchestra was solely composed of students who attend The Malta University Junior College.

Friday saw a brighter day as we visited Malta's sister island, Gozo. There we visited cultural places such as the Victoria, the fortified capital city of Gozo, and the ancient Ggantija Temples. On our return to Malta, the Council Meeting was completed

followed by a Gala Dinner. The evening was hosted by Malta's Prime Minister Dr. Lawrence Gonzi at his summer residence in Girdgħ. This followed a long night of clubbing at Malta's best night life centre, Paceville.

On the special request of most of the participants, Saturday's programme was changed in order to visit Malta's capital city, Valletta. Since this was unplanned, everyone enjoyed exploring the small, but culturally packed city, even if just for a few hours. The rest of the day was spent at a beach in the North of Malta, with a typical summer BBQ for dinner.

Although SDM had a jam-packed programme for the 100 participants in SummerU, the disruptions in the programme were beyond our control. In this light, despite the unexpected protests, I sincerely hope you enjoyed your stay in Malta.

Janet Barthet
EDS Vice-Chairwoman



Hosted by SDM in Malta

SU'08 was held between the 15th and 20th July at the Coastline Hotel in Qawra. To the disappointment of the participants, and especially the organisers, due to a strike in the local transport system, much of the programme was changed as the event progressed.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the participants all enjoyed free time at the hotel, as well as at the bay close by. The Workshops were held at the Hotel. Here we also welcomed the American Ambassador to Malta Molly Bordanaro when she also gave her input on the Working Group for Human Rights. Here she expressed her admiration for the work done by EDS and commended the high-level discussions held even within student organisations.

THOMAS UHLEN CHAIRMAN



Thomas Uhlen is 23 years old and studies Political Science and Economics at Bamberg University in Germany. After one year at Keele University he will finish his degree this summer. Since 2006 he is the head of the RCDS committee on European affairs and international secretary of RCDS. He works part time for a member of the German Bundestag and served as trainee in the Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament Prof. Hans-Gert Pöttering. At the summer university 2007 in Ohrid/FYROM he was elected Vice-Chairman of EDS and responsible for its web presentation and as well online campaigns. In 2008 Thomas Uhlen got elected as new Chairman of EDS at its summer university in Malta. His main aims are an update of the statutes as well as a stronger visibility of EDS in public. Therefore the campaign "Sapere aude – Have courage to be wise!" was launched. In his leisure time, Thomas plays the trumpet in a wind band and helps at home at his family's sheep farm.

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ANDREA SOLOMONIDOU VICE CHAIRWOMAN



Kostas Doganis monidou [23] is finishing her studies in Music Science at the National University of Athens while also attending Event Management courses by the PRIL. She has been living in Athens the past 5 years and been an

active member of Protoporia that she served as Secretary General at the year 2005-2006. Currently she is a member of the International Secretariat of Protoporia and also in charge of the communication between Protoporia and the DH.SY [mother Party]. Andrea is serving as EDS Vice-Chairwoman for the second time.

KOSTAS DOGANIS VICE CHAIRMAN



Kostas Doganis lives in Athens and he is 25 years old. He is finishing his studies of political science and public administration at the National University of Athens. He is the Secretary International of AP-NDFK and a member of the

ONNED Secretariat of International Relations and Expatriate Hellenism. He was re-elected EDS Vice-chairman in 2008.



Council Meeting Trier

The first EDS Council Meeting within the Working Year 2008/2009 took place in Trier, the oldest city of Germany, from 10th to 14th December 2008. It was kindly hosted by the Catholic Academy and its leader Mrs Zey-Wortmann in the Schuman-House in Trier.

Under the title "(Re)Thinking Bologna in European dimensions – Culture and Education in the European Higher Education Area" RCDS invited well-known speakers on Higher Education and the Bologna Process to focus on the requirements for a Bologna after 2010 which is actually European and not just a melting pot of different national understandings of an European way. Prof. Volker Gehmlich, one of the national coordinators for the European Credit Transfer System, who is a Bologna expert from the first hour, pointed out, that we have to look further now. "We need a content-based next step of Bologna" he asked for, "to actually create a European Higher Education Area". His opinion was shared by Doris Pack MEP who is rapporteur for the Life Long Learning Programme and took part in a panel discussion on the Friday together with Peter Zervakis who is in the Bologna-Team of the HRK Germany. But EDS was not just discussing about Higher Education and Research. With Horst Langes, Honorary President of the Robert Schuman Foundation, who thankfully supported the seminar, the participants discussed about Turkey – EU relations. Another well-known speaker on the European level, who also attended the EDS seminar was Peter Jungen, Co-President of SME Union and Chairman of the Economic Policy Council of EPP. His speech handled the current financial crises and focused on the high influence of investing in Higher Education, Research and Innovation to get out of the crises at its best. Nevertheless, the participants had the opportunity to visit the historic city of Trier, as well as the traditional Trier Christmas market. The wine tasting in the Episcopalian Winery was well appreciated. So a big thank you to RCDS, especially Catherine Becker and Cathrin Gräber for organizing this event and thank you to Robert Schuman Foundation for the kind support.

Thomas Uhlen
EDS Chairman



JOANA LOPES VICE CHAIRWOMAN



Joana Lopes is from Portugal, was born in 1985 and studies Law in Lisbon University. She is a member of Lisbon's JSD Council and JSD National Council. Besides that, she is Secretary General of a Lisbon section of JSD. She

is part of European Law Students Association since 2004/2005, being President of ELSA Lisbon in the term 2007/2008. Now, she serves as President of ELSA Lisbon's Council. She was also committed with students at University level, being Secretary General of her University Students Association (AAUL). In the last semester of 2008, Joana interrupted her studies to work as Parliamentary Assistant in the European Parliament. It's her first time as member of EDS bureau.

DAVID BOZIC VICE CHAIRMAN



David Božić Born 23.5.1983 in Kranj, Slovenia Primary School: Pirni e High School: Šentvid Currently: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology, lay theology, hobbies: reading, chess, sports David is actively involved

in student organization at the Student Organization of University of Ljubljana since 2005. Since then he has been a member of Student Parliament and now for the second term a student minister for social affairs and healthcare. David works on a pilot program for recognition and validation of non-formal learning experience, qualifications and skills. He is currently in a process of writing his degree on European Union and the Founding Fathers.

BERNADA CUNJ ADMINISTRATOR



Bernada Cunj is a senior at Faculty of political science, department of international relations and security, at Zagreb University. She worked previously for several companies and NGOs as project manager, translator and consultant.

She was a Secretary General of SOHSS Croatia. She was International secretary of SOHSS and Secretary of Zagreb branch of SOHSS 2003 – 2005. She worked as a corresponding journalist of the magazine of philosophy students'. For last two years she works as EDS' administrator in Brussels.

BENCE BAUER VICE CHAIRMAN



Bence Bauer (29) was born in Budapest, but spent large parts of his life in Germany where he graduated at the University of Bonn after his studies in Law and Economics in Passau, Würzburg and Bonn. He fulfilled a one

year term as deputy chairman and treasurer of RCDS Germany in the headquarters in Berlin. After absolving his additional legal studies at the Catholic University in Budapest, he became a trainee lawyer in different International Law Firms in Germany and Hungary, which he accomplished with passing his bar exam successfully. Bence is currently preparing for an LL.M. in International Law. He became member of the Youth Section of Fidesz Hungarian Civic Union in its first year of existence and is running the International Cabinet as International Secretary from 2007. He is also member of the International Cabinet of his mother party. After serving a term as co-chairman of the Permanent Working Group "Policies for Europe", Bence was elected EDS Vice-Chairman in July 2008. Together with other youth organizations from Central Eastern Europe, he was one of the creators of the Central European Youth Cooperation (CEYC) where Bence holds the position of Secretary General. Apart from politics, he is running a publishing house in Passau and writes articles in different forums, loves swimming and collecting books about geography, history and politics.

THOMAS THALER VICE CHAIRMAN



Thomas B. Thaler (25) has a law degree from the University of Innsbruck and is currently undertaking his obligatory court year. Additionally he is a doctoral student at the faculty of law of the University of Vienna.

In the year 2005-06 he was Erasmus-student in Paris, France. He is International Secretary and as such member of the national board of Aktionsgemeinschaft Austria. He has been into student politics since 2003, holding numerous positions as elected student representative from the faculty up to the national level. Within EDS he worked already one year as Co-Chairman for the Working Group on Higher Education and Research. This year he was elected as one of the Vice-Chairmen of EDS.

JANET BARTHET VICE CHAIRWOMAN



Janet Barthet (21) has a degree in Communications and European Studies from the University of Malta. She is currently reading for the degree of Bachelor of Laws at the same university. Janet has been involved

in Studenti Demokratjani Maltin (SDM) for the past 3 years where in she holds the post of International Representative. Janet is also active within several Maltese & European organisations. She volunteers with the EPP group in Malta, Partit Nazzjonalista (PN) and the European Voluntary Services (EVS). Janet is chairperson of various committees within KSU (the National Students Council) and is also responsible for various projects within this council. Janet Barthet has been elected to the post of Vice-Chairperson of the European Democrat Students (EDS) in July 2008.

EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC STUDENTS

ANCA PLESA DIRECTOR



Anca Plesa is 26 years old and was born in Deva, Romania. Anca has a Marketing degree and is the Manager of her own Advertising Agency. Since September 2007, she is Vice-Chairwoman and Responsible for External Relations of PNTCD-

OT, Romania and was in charge of the local campaign for European Parliament. It is Anca's first time as member of EDS's Bureau and she is working as EDS Director. Anca's hobbies are Internet, travels, music, sports and movies.

CARINA OLSÉN DIRECTOR



Carina Munck Olsén, 28, holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Copenhagen and recently finished her master's degree in Political Science with particular emphasis on European Studies, African

Studies, and International Relations. She has held a number of positions within DKS, including Chairwoman of the Copenhagen branch and Member of the National Board. In 2007, she was appointed International Secretary, and the following year, she was appointed EDS Director of Communications.

MAJA MAZURKIEWICZ SECRETARY GENERAL



Maja Mazurkiewicz [23], is a fifth year law student at University of Gdansk. This year she was a stagier in the Press Office of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and last year she was an exchange student at Chi-

cago-Kent College of Law, USA at the LL.M. Program in International Intellectual Property Law. Since 2002 she has been an active member of Young Conservatives Poland [MK RP] and at the moment she is the board member in the organisation. She is also a member of Civic Platform. This year she was appointed EDS secretary general.

GIOVANNI VAGNONE VICE CHAIRMAN



GIOVANNI F. Vagnone di Trofarello e di Celle is 25 years old, is studying Law in Torino and is member of the official training magazine of Forza Italia, on which writes especially about international news. He had been in

charge as Director of internet and communications for the FIG department in the province of Torino for 2 years, he is a member of the local and regional board, and now he works on national level in the foreign affairs department as delegate and responsible for EDS. He is counselor in the Regional Parliament of Piemonte for Youth Policies. He is also vice-president of Il Circolo Università di Torino, member of Liberal Foundation, and member of other non-political associations such as European Law Student Association [ELSA] and Rotaract Club [in which he's former president and former district secretary]. Currently he is practising as notary in an office in Torino. This is his second term as EDS Vice-Chairman.

FRIEDRIK SAWESTAHL DIRECTOR



Age: 31, Education: Law degree from the University of Uppsala, Work: Project Manager for the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation (the International department of Moderaterna), Politics: International Secretary for the FMSF 2007,

Vice Chairman FMSF 2005-2007, Secretary General NKSU (Nordic Conservative Student Union) 2005-2007, Member of National Board MUF (Young Conservatives Sweden) 2002-2004, Chairman Moderaterna Tyresö (Local branch of the Moderate party), Member of municipality council, municipality board and board of education in Tyresö, Vice Chairman of Öppna Moderater (a LGBT organisation within the Moderate party)

ANA JANINE HONORARY CHAIRWOMAN



JAna Filipa Janine Simões Martins [25], has a law degree from University of Coimbra and is currently preparing for the bar exam. In 2005-2006, she was an Erasmus student in Siena, Italy. She is a member of JSD National

Board and International Secretary. Since 2000 she was first Vice-President of local JSD board in Coimbra, Member of the National Board, and President of the National Board's Secondary Education Office. She was also Coordinator of International Education Policy for her university students Association [AAC – Associação Académica de Coimbra], a member of the law Students Association of Coimbra, University and Class Representative. Ana has served three terms as vice-chairwoman [2003-2006] and two as chairwoman [2006-2008]. In July 2008 she was elected EDS Honorary Chairwoman.

Bureau Meeting in Istanbul



Bureau

The 2nd Bureau Meeting was kindly hosted by Youth of AK Party in Istanbul from 19th to 21st September 2008.

As most of us arrived during early afternoon we had time for short sightseeing which included Blue Mosque and Agia Sofia followed by a dinner with the organisational team.

Saturday was busy and it started with Bureau Meeting after which we had meeting with Egemen Başı, AK Party Vice Chairman for Foreign Relations. This meeting was really interesting and we got the realistic presentation of EU – Turkish relations with all ups and downs between two acting sides.

Subsequently, we went to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to attend the meeting with H.E. Dr. Kadir Topbaşı, Mayor of Istanbul. After meetings we were headed our way for the yacht-tour and traditional Turkish dinner. During the tour our hosts kindly asked the Captain to bring us to the Asian side on which we took group picture and ran back since, unfortunately, it has been raining that night.

On Sunday morning we had meeting with H.E. Mr. Fikret Kasapoğlu, Deputy Governor of Istanbul after which we enjoyed the city centre during the second part of our sightseeing. Unfortunately just the half of the group had the opportunity to do so, since that rest had had to catch their flights. Istanbul remains in our memories as a beautiful city with many secrets left for us to be seen in some future visits with less hectic schedule.

We wish to thank our hosts for this experience!!!

Bernada Cunj
EDS Administrator

Chairman visits Romania

From 9th to 11th September 2008, Thomas Uhlen, Chairman of the European Democrat Students, paid his first official visit to Sulina, Romania which is located in the Danube Delta, the second largest delta in Europe at the the Eastern border of the European Union. He was invited by the Student Organisation of the PD-L (OSPD-L) and its Chairman Sorin Moldovan. At his visit Uhlen was glad to announce that he will appoint Maria Lapadatu from Cluj to chair the EDS- Working Group on Human Rights. OSPD-L is Full Member of EDS since 2008. Its mother party PD-L is Full Member of the European People's Party. Uhlen had the opportunity to take part in a panel about Higher Education politics in Europe. "We have to ensure, that the student flows in Europe are not just going from East to West, but also from West to East", was Uhlen's appeal to ensure that the "Freedom of Knowledge" is beneficial to all European countries. Especially those European countries which suffered under Communism and planned economy need university teachers, scientists and high-skilled workers who are following and supporting the way to a free market economy, welfare and democracy. EDS calls in its Strategy for the European elections for a doubling of the expenditure in education, research and innovation and an increase in the Research and Development intensity to at least 5% of GDP for the EU as a whole by 2015 to ensure that the potential of Europe's universities is used to its best. On Wednesday evening Uhlen furthermore addressed the Council of OSPD-L with a speech. He pointed out, that Romania has to actively follow its commitments to get fully integrated into the European Union. "The EU-Accession is like a medicine", compared Uhlen, "you cannot stop taking it, as soon as the symptoms of anti-democracy and economic failure seem to disappear. You have to take it until you are actually healthy." EDS promotes the principles of the rule of law. "You have the power", Uhlen called upon the young politicians of OSPD-L, "to actively influence Romanian politics to the benefit of the people." He thanked OSPD-L and its Chairman Sorin Moldovan again for the great cooperation and the invitation to the Summer University in the beautiful Danube Delta.

Font: EDS Website





EDS Chairman visit to SO HSS

CROATIA

Thomas Uhlen, Chairman of the European Democrat Students, paid his first official visit to Zadar, Croatia on the invitation of the University Organisation of Croatian Peasant Party (SO HSS) and its Chairman Hrvoje Horvat on the occasion of their 11. Summer Academy. The main theme of the event was the preparation of youth for the upcoming local elections in 2009 in Croatia. Young of Croatian Peasant Party had the opportunity to learn: how to make high-quality local campaign, the basics of TV interview, the calculation of votes in local elections, history of Croatian Peasant Party and all related to EDS. SO HSS is Full Member of EDS since 2007. Its mother party HSS is associated member of the EPP. During his visit from 7th to 9th August Uhlen had the opportunity to meet Darko Till, the International Secretary of HSS as well and addressed the conference with a speech. Uhlen pointed out that HSS, which was formed already in 1904 as a political party seeking for freedom and peasants' rights, is standing in the great tradition of Ante and Stjepan Radic. As a party which was forbidden and banned due to its fight for greater autonomy, HSS and SO HSS could give a lot to its European affiliates. Commemorating the 80th anniversary of Stjepan Radic's death at 8th August 1928 SO HSS laid a wreath in the city centre of Zadar. Being full member of EDS and associated with the European People's Party through its mother party, SO HSS is an important partner in the world-wide protection of human rights and human dignity. "With your commitment to these values and with your history you are giving hope to all the people in the world who are under repression of other powers" Uhlen said further, "we cannot forget about these people. That is why we are supporting the people of Belarus and Tibet!" The opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing/China took place while SO HSS was having its Summer Academy. "The 23-year old great Croatian high jumper Blanka Vlasic signed a declaration today for the protection of freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of opinion in China, including Tibet. She is as old as we are" Uhlen called upon the young politicians of SO HSS, "let us be like her. It is our duty to stand up for our values – everywhere."

Font: EDS Website





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