



EUROPEAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

25 YEARS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACHIEVEMENT

25ème ANNIVERSAIRE

ELDR - A prominent voice

In its 25th year the ELDR Party is developing rapidly in terms of size, impact and political influence.

As the European Council in Laeken draws ever closer and the pressure builds for EU leaders to fulfil their responsibility to European citizens by seizing upon this critical moment in the constitutional development of the Union by defining the future of Europe, the voice of European liberalism is prominent. Many of the key personalities who contributed to the ELDR's 25th anniversary celebration in Brussels earlier in the year were unanimous on one point: that the European project can be seen to be fundamentally a liberal endeavour with an undeniable liberal instinct.



Dr Werner Hoyer MdB delivers his address at the ELDR Congress in Ljubljana where he was unanimously re-elected to the position of President of the ELDR Party

This appears particularly significant at a time when, with Guy Verhofstadt, the Prime Minister of Belgium, leading the Belgian Presidency of the Council, Romano Prodi at the head of the European Commission, and with ELDR Group President, Pat Cox, having been nominated as a candidate for the Presidency of

the European Parliament, European liberal democrats have their hands firmly on the tiller of the future of Europe.

The activities of the ELDR Party are reflecting this strength by developing strongly in terms of both political impact and visibility. Aside from the celebrations, the Spring Conference in

Brussels which marked the 25th anniversary of the ELDR Party was a high profile affair which responded to recent developments within the EU institutions by clearly setting out the common position of European Liberals in rejecting the policy of transition periods for free movement of workers from certain accession countries.

More recently the ELDR reasserted its hard-earned identity as the European political party most closely engaged with the processes of enlargement by holding its party Congress in Ljubljana - the first political family to organise its annual meeting in an EU candidate state. The old order mixed with the new as Hans-Dietrich Genscher delivered a keynote speech on Globalisation, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek addressed the delegates, and a whole host of leading liberal politicians from EU member and candidate countries, and from across Central and Eastern Europe, made their contributions to the Future of Europe debate.

In the context of providing a forum for the perspectives of the candidate countries, this year's "Virtual MEPs" initiative once again took place in Strasbourg alongside the European Parliament's annual plenary

session on the state of the enlargement. Twenty-four MPs from nine of the applicant countries were in attendance to inform the Group debate and outline liberal priorities, many from non-ELDR affiliated national parties.

Further evidence that the party is undergoing a period of significant development comes with the news that the membership of the European liberal family is set to grow further before the end of the year with a number of membership applications from parties in key accession states ready to be discussed at the ELDR Council.

The focus of the ELDR is now firmly on this meeting of the Council and on ensuring that the meeting of ELDR Political Leaders on 13 December will make an effective and timely contribution to the Future of Europe debate at the start of the Laeken summit.

Reuniting, reconnecting and reforming - Pat Cox contests the Presidency of the European Parliament

On 15 January 2002 Members of the European Parliament will vote to elect a new President to succeed Nicole Fontaine and serve until the end of the current legislature in June 2004. Liberal Democrats in the European Parliament have officially reconfirmed Pat Cox as their candidate for the presidential elections in November. As well as the full backing of his Liberal Democrat colleagues, Pat Cox also has the support of the largest Group in the European Parliament, the European Peoples' Party, following a constitutive agreement reached in July 1999.



Pat Cox MEP, President of the ELDR Group, takes part in a public debate on the campaign for the Presidency of the European Parliament. Visit the campaign website at www.cox-for-president.com

Taking part in a public debate on 28 November between the five declared candidates for the EP Presidency, Cox once again highlighted enlargement as the single biggest issue facing the next presidency and underlined his commitment to the successful completion of the accession negotiations in time for the European Parliamentary elections in 2004. He emphasised that the unprecedented nature of the enlargement challenge meant that the European Union was entering an "era of transformation" and that it was a "critical moment for self-awareness and transparency" in the

EU processes. He stressed that the European Parliament must provide a forum for serious public debate to keep the enlargement talks politically focused and to ensure that it is not reduced to a dialogue of bureaucracies.

Pat Cox emphasised the role of the European

Parliament as a continental scale legislator and said that its increased legislative responsibilities should be matched by a thorough reform of its working methods. He called for new strategies to be put in place for the improvement of the European Parliament's working relations with the Commission and for the reinvigoration of plenary debates, and stated that the internal processes of the parliamentary body must provide its citizens with a "best practice example".

Cox said that a key priority for the European Parliament should be to develop an improved information and communication policy capable of generating a continuous and active dialogue with EU citizens which could "reconnect" them with the European project. He emphasised the importance of raising the international profile of the European Parliament as the only democratically elected chamber of the European Union and added that it was the responsibility of elected members to "ask the most of the people we are for the people we represent. We must not fail our citizens - for to do so - we would fail ourselves".

Congratulations to Danish member parties Venstre and Det Radikale Venstre on their excellent results at the Danish General election. We look forward to a liberal led Danish Presidency in the second semester of 2002 - a presidency which we hope will bring closure to the enlargement negotiations with the largest possible number of candidate states. See ELDR press release - 21/11/01

A stronger ELDR is in sight!

In the ELDR we have ahead of us many organisational and financial challenges in the coming years. Firstly, we are looking forward to the new statutes concerning the financing of European political parties through the EU budget. According to this process the ELDR will in the future be organisationally more independent from the ELDR Group in the European Parliament. In future the ELDR Party should put more emphasis on strategic planning and ideological discussion, as opposed to the parliamentary Group's responsibility for day to day operations in the parliament.

Secondly, the ELDR should be creative in developing working methods that suit the broad variety of liberal parties that the ELDR is today. We could provide

member parties with more possibilities to discuss future strategies and working plans of the ELDR and thereby commit themselves to common goals. At its best the ELDR could be a true European political party, that is a lively and close network of member parties, using modern interactive working methods in its meetings and utilising fully new technologies such as the internet.

In order to be stronger as a political party, the ELDR should be better known among our national party activists and parliamentarians. This is possible if the ELDR can provide them with a challenging forum for liberal brainstorming on different policy areas. The European Union is not only about structures and institutions. It is about common policies and



Maria Kaisa Aula, Member of Parliament and Deputy Leader of the Centre Party of Finland, was elected Vice-President of the ELDR Party at the Congress which took place in Ljubljana in September 2001 and Chairs the meetings of the Liberal Women's Network

goals in areas such as fiscal policy, taxation, employment and labour markets, the environment, human rights, fighting racism, combating international criminality, promoting crisis management

and democracy building, development co-operation and others.

I am looking forward to more substantial discussion and ideological debate in the ELDR around various policy issues. In the course of these discussions we could learn to know better both each other and our respective parties. Developing a lively exchange of best practices and ideas across the liberal parties in Europe would enrich and strengthen us all.

All in all we could use more methods such as networking and workshops in the ELDR in order to utilise the potential that we have available in our member parties. The Women's Network of the ELDR has provided a good pilot project in this respect.

The third challenge for the ELDR is the enlargement of the Union. In order to attract new liberal and centre oriented member parties the ELDR has to be well known. We need new contacts, PR, media visibility and, most of all, clear policy lines. There have been some positive developments towards these goals recently and strengthening the ELDR as a European political party is the most important task for the new Bureau.

The Future of Europe does not need the repetition of the old dogmatic solutions of either the socialists or the conservatives. Liberals in Europe can have a strong impact on European policies through pragmatic visions, through the power of good argument and through the posing of intelligent questions.

The newly elected Bureau of the ELDR Party



WERNER HOYER
President of the ELDR Party
Germany - FDP

Education:
Studies in Economics, University of Cologne; Diplom-Volkswirt (M.Sc.Econ); Dr.rer.pol (Econ); Lecturer in international economic relations, University of Cologne.

Professional and political activities:

Dr Hoyer has been a Member of the German Bundestag since 1987, was FDP Chief whip for four years, and was party spokesman on security affairs in the Bundestag from 1990-1994. He was also General secretary of the FDP from 1993-1994 and was Minister of State in the Foreign Office from 1994-1998. He was elected President of the ELDR Party in September 2000 and re-elected in September 2001 for a two-year term.



BAS EENHOORN
Vice-President of the ELDR Party
The Netherlands-VVD

Education:
Social Geography at the University of Groningen

Professional and political activities:

Joins the VVD National Executive Committee as secretary for internal communication in the 1980s. In 1996 he became vice-President of Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (Management Consultants). Appointed party chairman of VVD in May 1999.



JULES MAATEN
Treasurer of the ELDR Party
The Netherlands-VVD

Education:
Diploma Atheneum. Propedeuse International Law.

Professional and political activities:

Former president of the world organisation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY). Secretary General of the Liberal International, 1992-1999. He has been Treasurer of the ELDR Party since 1999 and is in his first mandate as Member of the European Parliament. He also serves as the European Parliament's rapporteur on the introduction of the euro.



LEX CORIJN
Secretary-general of the ELDR Party
Belgium - VLD

Education:
Vrije Universiteit Brussel: Postgraduate study in International and European Law. Followed courses in Budapest, Amsterdam and Cambridge.

Professional and political activities:

Secretary General of the ELDR Party since February 2000; Prior to this he worked as Principal Administrator in the ELDR Party gaining six years experience of East and Central European issues. Over the past five years he has lectured on European Integration, Constitutional Law, International and European institutions.



MARIA KAISA AULA
Vice-President of the ELDR Party
Finland-Suomen Keskusta

Education:
Licentiate degree in political science at the University of Helsinki. Studies in media and politics at Harvard University, USA.

Professional and political activities:

A member of the ELDR Council since 1995 and has chaired this year's meetings of the Liberal Women's Network. She has been a member of the Finnish Parliament since 1991, where she currently chairs the Finance Committee. She is Deputy Leader of the Centre Party of Finland.



LAMBERTO DINI
Vice-President of the ELDR Party
Italy-Rinnovamento Italiano

Education:
Degree in Economics summa cum laude University of Florence, Postgraduate studies at the Universities of Minnesota and Michigan.

Professional and political activities:

Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (1976-80). President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Treasury, from January 17, 1995 to May 17, 1996. Also Minister of Justice ad interim, 1995-1996. Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1996-2001. Currently Deputy Speaker of the Senate and President of Rinnovamento Italiano.



PAT COX
President of the ELDR Group
Ireland - Independent

Education:
Educated in Limerick by the Christian Brothers at St. Munchins CBS and Ard Scoil Ris. Also at Trinity College Dublin - B.A. (MOD), Economics, MA (TCD).

Professional and political activities:

Member of the European Parliament since 1989. He was first elected President of the ELDR Group in 1998 and then was unanimously re-elected to that position in June 1999. The ELDR Group recently nominated Pat Cox as their candidate for the position of President of the European Parliament which will be contested in January 2002.



BO MANDERUP JENSEN
Secretary-general of the ELDR Group
Denmark-Venstre

Education:
M. Sc. Econ. (MBA), Copenhagen Business School

Professional and Political activities:

Worked as Executive Financial Controller in a private Danish company before joining the Parliamentary Group of the ELDR Party in 1985 as an administrator in External Economic Relations. Appointed Deputy Secretary-general in 1989, and Secretary-general in 1996.



LORD ALDERDICE
Vice-President of the ELDR Party
United Kingdom - Liberal Democrats

Education and professional activities:
Medicine and Psychiatry - The Queen's University of Belfast.

Political activities:

He has been a member of the ELDR Party from 1987 and was its Party Treasurer from 1995 to 1999 when he was elected Party Vice-President. He was also elected a Vice-President of Liberal International in 1991, became Chair of its Committee on Human Rights in 1999 and was elected Deputy President in 2000. Appointed to the House of Lords in 1996 he sits as a Liberal Democrat and is an elected member of the Federal Policy Committee of the Liberal Democrats. Following his resignation as Alliance Party Leader in 1998 he was appointed Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly and continues to hold this office.



KRISTIINA OJULAND
Chair of the ELDR Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Estonia - Estonian Reform Party

Education:
Includes studies at Tartu University, Faculty of Law; Estonian School of Diplomacy; University of Birmingham; and the Vienna Diplomatic Academy.

Professional and political activities:

A Member of the Riigikogu (National Parliament) since 1995, she is also currently the leader of the ELDR group in the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe and the Foreign Secretary of the Estonian Reform Party. She was elected Vice-President of the ELDR Party in April 1999.



WILLY DE CLERQ
Honorary President of the ELDR Party
Belgium - VLD

Education:
Doctor in law - notary. Master of Arts in Social Sciences, University of Syracuse, USA.

Professional and political activities:

Three times Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Belgian government. Chairman of the ELDR Federation, 1979-81 and 1990-95. Member of the Commission of the European Communities, 1985-89. He is currently in his fifth term as a Member of the European Parliament.



DANIEL TANAHATOC
President of LYMEC
The Netherlands - JOVD

Education and professional activities:

Student at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen in "Communication and Information sciences" living in Leeuwarden (Netherlands). President of LYMEC, the Liberal and Radical Youth Movement of the European Union since 2000. Member of Dutch Young Liberals (JOVD) since 1994.

We need more, not less development policy

All dramatic situations leave a political choice to be made. This has also been the case with the 11 September terror-attacks on New York and Washington. The choice is how do we react, do we isolate or do we take up the challenge and try to create a New World order. The first solution, to isolate oneself, seems perhaps on the surface to be the easiest solution. But it will be the most difficult to sustain in the long run.



Lone Dybkjaer MEP is 1st Vice-President of the Committee on Development and Cooperation and represents the Danish Social Liberal party

In spite of the fact that the attacks were performed by religious fanatics it is after all a very powerful illustration of the false illusion that we can maintain the good life of the west irrespective of the state of the rest of the world. The powers of globalisation have shown us that chaos in one country can only too easily be exported. We have now started a Global Alliance against terrorism. In order for this alliance to be a success it needs to be credible in the broader sense of the word. Weapons may remove the evil, but never the roots that cause evil. Here we need other instruments. Here Europe has one of the most important instruments with our development assistance to ensure that this alliance will maintain a reality. Not only food aid, but assistance for good governance, democracy, education, health, food security and sustainability, private investments, ICT (information and communication technologies), trade and economic growth, etc.

In short, all those policy areas that ELDR, has been working for in the development committee in the European parliament.

The necessity of this trade and aid becomes even more clear if we take a look at the increased widening of the distribution of income between the richest and the poorest countries. In 1960 20% of the world's population in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20%. In 1990 it was 60 times as much, and in 1997 it has increased too 74 times as much. (The figure is no doubt higher today). If we at the same time add the knowledge in the developing countries about our wealth, we have the roots of the next potential conflicts. Equally importantly, we will not be able to ensure the whole-hearted support in the developing world for the fight against terrorism.

The situation outlined above also requires that we focus much clearly on how our development assistance can contribute to ensure both development and democratisation at the same time, thus ensuring real partnerships between us and the developing world. Naturally the EU has a special role to play; we are not a military super-power, but rather an economic opportunity. We must ensure that EU as an international player always fights for the development countries in other global fora, as for example WTO.

But in order to maintain our efforts to be credible partners we also need to address the coherence of our own policies. We must ensure as a minimum that the various EU policies on for example important issues like trade, agriculture, and fisheries do not contradict or work against each other either at EU or member state level. This requires reforms of our policies on important issues, but reforms that we in the ELDR are happy to make.

At the same time we need to maintain our effort to address those issues that matter most. If we remove trade barriers we should also ensure that developing countries have something to trade with, that means we must work on capacity building. Education and health are the cornerstones. Attacking corrupt regimes and replacing them with democratic systems can best be done from within, by giving people a say in their own life. Naturally we also needs to broaden our minds and grasp the possibilities for new sources of wealth creation in developing countries. Here ICT can serve at least two objectives. It can facilitate growth and it can open societies and make them much more transparent in their support for democracy and stability.

So if one asks if the world has changed since 11 September, I would reply that at least development assistance hopefully has gone from being low politics into one of the high policy tools by which we should start building a better and more just world. This is what my work in the development committee is all about.

Less than a month to go

The recent months have shown some positive signs in the process of the introduction of euro banknotes and coins. In the Netherlands as well as in other countries old and foreign coins and banknotes are being collected for good causes whilst a little village in France used fake coins and bills for one day so that SME's and customers could experience how it will be to use the euro. These are positive examples of the innovative spirit of "euro entrepreneurs" who are making something out of the coming of the new European currency.

Statistics on the euro also demonstrate positive signs. Significant progress has been recorded regarding public awareness of the day when euro banknotes will become available; 84% are now aware of the correct date, compared with only 73% in July. Only Greece and Austria are lagging behind. The number of people thinking that the dual circulation period will last more than two months is also on the decline and is currently at around 30% as against around 40 % in July. An awareness of prices in euro is gaining ground, albeit slowly. France and Luxembourg lead the way with 46 % of the people polled there having tried to learn prices in euro, whereas Ireland and Greece are some way behind with a figure of 21 %.

A very positive sign is related to the knowledge of the exact conversion rate. Close to 90% of the person polled were able to give a conversion rate between 97% and 103% of the real value. Only in Greece are there indications that work on communication still remains with 18% of those polled scoring outside this range. As regards the question, "Will the euro cause you personally a lot of inconvenience?", the balance is slightly tilting toward the "no" side: 45 % "yes", 53.7 % "no". Finns, Austrians and Luxemburgers are amongst the most confident that they can cope with the changeover and, on the whole, the effect of the information campaign now begins to be truly felt: knowledge about the euro is rising in every country.

Nevertheless, it is clear that concerns remain widespread. 64% of those polled fear being cheated on prices and this figure is especially high in France and in Ireland; up to 70%. Renewed efforts are needed in regard to the preparation of small and medium sized enterprises, with figures suggesting that less than half appear to be properly prepared. As an example, a survey conducted in Belgium has found that a mere 5% of the country's retailers are currently working in euros and only 20% of retailers are planning to begin bookkeeping in euros before January 1 2002. For European companies the number of national payments in Euro is on the rise but remains insufficient having gone up from 7.8 % in the second quarter to 15.1 % in the third quarter.

In general terms, Luxembourg, Austria, France, Belgium and the Netherlands seem to be best prepared for the changeover. The rest of the Euro area countries belong to a homogeneous group that has taken satisfactory measures, with some improvements still needing to be made. Finland in particular is lagging behind and needs improvements in its national changeover plan. Nevertheless, the situation is evolving in a positive manner as member states face up to the challenges still to be met. To recognise problems means to depart from the overoptimistic attitude displayed by many member States and the ECB a few months ago and, in this context, heightened recognition is encouraging.

Finally, let us not forget what is at stake here. The euro is of historical importance; it is the decisive identity-building factor in the process of European integration. The introduction of the euro will foster competition between companies and encourage efficiency-driven mergers and acquisitions, all to the benefit of consumers. Consumers will easily be able to compare prices between countries. As a result, pressure will be exerted in favour of a more co-ordinated regulatory framework, tax system and economic structure across Europe, raising in turn the potential growth rate and bolstering employment. In short, the euro is and will remain a catalyst for increased dynamism and structural reforms in Europe.



THE EURO: THE EUROPEAN UNION
IN YOUR HAND



Jules Maaten MEP is the European Parliament rapporteur on the introduction of the euro.

ELDR

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THE ELDR CONGRESS 2001



Dr Werner Hoyer, President of the ELDR Party, welcomes delegates to the ELDR Congress in Ljubljana



Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek of Slovenia



Hans-Dietrich Genscher prepares to deliver a keynote speech



Lord Alderdice, Vice-President of the ELDR Party, addresses the Congress



Lord Alderdice leads a minute's silence to remember the victims of the terrorist attacks of 11 September



Lamberto Dini, former Foreign Minister of Italy, speaks in Globalisation



Dmitrij Rupel, Slovenian Minister for Foreign Affairs, welcomes ELDR delegates



Dr Werner Hoyer with Hans-Dietrich Genscher



Prime Minister Drnovsek is greeted by Graham Watson MEP



Graham Watson MEP, chairing a debate on globalisation, is joined by Ivor Bavcar, Slovenian Minister for European Integration



Dmitrij Rupel, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Slovenia addresses the Congress



ELDR President Dr Werner Hoyer at the head of the ELDR Bureau



George Vassiliou, Chief Negotiator for the accession of Cyprus to the EU, chairs the defence session



Lord Alderdice is joined by Dmitrij Rupel and Bertel Haarder MEP for a press conference



Delegates express their appreciation to Congress hosts LDS



Italian opposition leader, Francesco Rutelli, speaks to the assembled press

Raising the profile - ELDR publicity 2001

The ELDR secretariat has produced a significant amount of promotional and informational material this year with the aim of raising the profile of ELDR activities within the party itself as well as developing the party's public image. As well as this publication, copies of the following are available at all ELDR events and from the party secretariat:

- ELDR Congress Newspaper
- 25th Anniversary Newspaper
- ELDR anniversary poster - "25 years of liberal democrat achievement"
- ELDR Party Yellow Guide - a new initiative for 2002
- Congress CD ROM - "The Future of the Union" Ljubljana 2001
- Congress brochure - "Preparing for Enlargement" Tenerife 2000
- Congress brochure - "Making the difference" Berlin 1999
- ELDR chocolate business card

EU institutional reform: an ever ongoing Vienna Congress? Ambition means realism!

After the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice, and the forthcoming Declaration of Laeken, a new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) will prepare a new treaty revision. After the leftovers of Amsterdam, we now have the leftovers of Nice. In my opinion, the European Union should avoid getting trapped in an ever ongoing Vienna Congress dealing with institutional matters which will not inspire its citizens and will consume the time and energy necessary for the integration of new Member States.

The Americans fought and won the War of Independence which inspired their founding fathers to produce a Virginia Bill of Rights and a Constitution which reflected and represented their aspirations in a clear and consistent way. The starting point of the American institutions was a positive one: the birth and independence of a new nation with the ambition of pursuing freedom. American integration was one of the heart.

Europeans lost two destructive, demoralising civil wars and were liberated from the outside which left their political leaders with only one option: to prevent a third. The founding fathers of the European Union produced treaties which were a cunning compromise between the desire not to engage in another civil war by bringing the industries of war under supra-national authority, working together in implementing the Marshall Plan, and both to share and to preserve national sovereignty. European integration was and is one of the mind. However, European integration was and is the most successful peace project in the history of the world.

The Americans see their institutions as symbols of the ongoing fight for freedom. American independence was a revolution. European integration a process. Europeans see their institutions as bureaucratic organisations which should deliver; which should facilitate economic growth. This will only change when Europe finds a "Grand

Narrative", a reason for existence which is more than just a European welfare state in the absence of war. This greater cause can not emerge from semi-bureaucratic, semi-democratic processes, it can only emerge from the hearts of the people. The fight of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe to regain their freedom and cultural identity is the basis for that Grand Narrative. The enlargement of the European Union is the reason for its existence: to bring freedom and a shared identity to all Europeans. The perspective of EU membership has immensely improved the human rights situation in all candidate countries and, notwithstanding all the economic and institutional problems, has created free markets and functioning democracies.

To switch from the Grand Narrative to the institutional process: I acknowledge that there were leftovers from Amsterdam which had to be addressed in Nice. Decisions had to be taken on the compo-



Hans van Baalen MP Chairs a meeting of the ELDR 2004 Manifesto Committee and is joined by Andrew Duff MEP, ELDR Group Spokesman on constitutional affairs

sition of the European Commission, the counting of votes and the method of voting in the Council of Ministers, and the role of the European Parliament. I also agree that the results booked at Nice were rather poor. In this case, I refer to Andrew Duff's "The Treaty of Nice: from leftovers to hangovers". However, Nice produced the minimum change necessary to open the Union for enlargement and that was what it was all about. I also agree with the ELDR Task Force which produced "Towards a Liberal Laeken" that the liberal Europe which we all want to establish is not yet in place and that we should make constant and consistent efforts to bring it about. The Nice Declaration on the Future of the Union wants a new Intergovernmental Conference to make the European decision making process more transparent and democratic. Four issues have to be addressed in 2004: (1) how to establish and monitor a more precise delimitation of powers between the European Union and the Member States, reflecting the principle of subsidiarity, (2) the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in Nice, in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council in Cologne, (3) a simplification of the Treaties with a view to making them clearer and better understood without changing their meaning, (4) the role of the national Parliaments in the European framework. Important questions indeed. However, they should not rob us of our energy to accept and integrate the candidate countries which qualify on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria concerning free market democracy and the implementation of the acquis communautaire. We should offer that enlarged Union a solid financial basis by reforming the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy. If we know what to reform and how to reform, we will find the way to reform. If

we do not have a common understanding, no decisions will be taken, however institutionally perfect our Union might be.

We should make the 2004 IGC a success. We can formulate general rules concerning the division of power between Union and its Member States. However, let us not rob the Union of its flexibility. We already have a European Convention on Human Rights, let us give the Union the legal capacity to ratify it. To make Treaties simpler means to make them less Byzantine. Treaties were made in a Byzantine way in order to hide differences of opinion between the key interests of the Member States. To make them simpler means an enormous political operation which could easily end in deadlock. Let us therefore try to make the Treaties easier to work with and, at the same time, accept that they will never be perfect. Let us agree that it is of vital importance that Members of national Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament are colleagues and not competitors. It is conducive to the effectiveness of European democracy that the representatives of the people work together. We can find new structures. Let us be creative. However, we already have European political parties such as ELDR. Let us promote the national parties to include more MPs in their delegations to our Councils, Conferences and Congresses. The European political parties should become the focus of political debate between national and European Parliamentarians. A stronger ELDR means a stronger European democracy. Our Grand Narrative is to include the candidate countries in an effective European Union of freedom, human rights and democracy. To be ambitious equals to be realistic.

Hans van Baalen MP is Chair of the ELDR 2004 Manifesto Committee

Les valeurs libérales seront déterminantes pour l'avenir du Kosovo

"Vous ne pouvez pas imaginer comme il est difficile d'être libéral au Kosovo," m'a dit Gjergj Dedaj lorsque je l'ai rencontré dans le hall du Grand Hôtel à Pristina le 12 novembre dernier. "C'est parfois exaspérant, parfois même dangereux" disait encore le Président du Parti Libéral du Kosovo, " mais nous ne renoncerons pas, il est essentiel que soient maintenues les idées et les valeurs libérales au Kosovo, si nous voulons un jour faire partie de l'Europe."

En pleine campagne électorale pour les élections législatives qui se sont récemment tenues dans la totalité du territoire du Kosovo, je n'en attendais pas moins de la part d'une personnalité politique qui se bat pour maintenir et, je l'espère, renforcer son influence politique dans une région qui n'a jamais connu la démocratie et encore moins le libéralisme.

En règle générale, je suis obligé de garder pour moi mes



Lord Russell-Johnston, Président de l'assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe

opinions politiques de par l'impartialité liée à la fonction que j'exerce de Président de l'assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, mais, étant donné que cet article paraîtra après les élections au Kosovo, je peux avouer que j'ai ressenti une grande sympathie pour ce que me confiait Gjergj.

Lors de visites effectuées au cours des trois dernières années, j'ai systématiquement demandé aux leaders politiques des pays en transition dans quelle mesure ils se diffé-

rençaient de leurs adversaires politiques. J'ai rarement reçu une réponse claire à ma question. Tous disaient défendre la démocratie, les droits de l'homme, et l'état de droit.

Mais, c'est quant il s'agit de la mise en œuvre de ces objectifs, que l'on s'aperçoit que les divisions idéologiques subsistent. Il y a ceux qui croient en la promotion de l'individu, de la créativité, de la liberté et de la diversité et ceux qui préfèrent la dimension collective – l'état, la nation, un groupe ethnique. Belgrade offre un bon exemple de ces deux points de vue idéologiques.

Il n'y a pas de doutes quant à déterminer laquelle de ces deux approches offre les meilleurs résultats. De plus en plus de gens le comprennent. Cela devrait apporter un certain réconfort à mon ami Gjergj. Quel que soit le résultat des élections, les idées dans lesquels nous croyons tous les deux survivront, et, je l'espère, prospéreront.

Less Government!



Kristiina Ojula MP, Leader of the ELDR Group in the Council of Europe, attends a meeting of the LI Executive in Copenhagen

The liberal "bible" was adopted in 1947. For more than 50 years it has been serving many people and their governments. Now, at the start of the 21st century, Liberal International (LI) is discussing the liberal agenda for better governance. In the framework of the Executive Committee of the LI, a seminar was held to discuss the future steps of liberal parties in Copenhagen on the 9th of November. Lex Corijn was present at this meeting along with myself and we were able to hear a presentation on the subject which had been prepared by our

Hungarian friend Tamas Bauer. A final paper based broadly on this report should be adopted in March next year by the LI Congress.

Let me say at the beginning that a principle idea - less governance is the best governance - was agreed by all participants. It was also widely accepted that basic principles of liberalism have, to an increasing degree, been accepted by socialists and conservatives, and have obtained a much greater influence on global development than is shown by the

liberal parties in political power. It was also acknowledged that still the waste of human resources both by irresponsible governments and by unsuccessful business, the violation of human rights by authorities, discrimination against citizens, misuse of power to enforce one selected kind of confession, culture, taste or way of life continue to be experienced by people in many parts of the world. Mr. Bauer writes: "Thus liberals must continue to work and fight for freedom and to seek ways of co-operation with democrats of different political conviction also".

A broad ambition of the draft is to give new recipes for political cooks worldwide. One may criticise the draft saying that it is too European or even perhaps too much Central and Eastern European in its orientation. This may be partially true, however, it does not reduce the value of the whole draft resolution. Coming myself from a former communist country I mostly share the attitude of the draft. I also believe that many liberal friends in so-called "old democracies" and welfare states are not satisfied with existing comfortable systems. Liberals have always been the sort of people who show others the light - a lighthouse is even part of the LI logo - and I think that this paper can point the way for our socialist and conservative competitors.

The general idea of the draft is to gain more freedoms with the aim making people happier. One of the ideas in the

discussion was that less legislation helps to avoid corruption. Mr Bauers' paper demands more freedoms and lower taxes for businesses. At the same time he demands subsidiarity of government - governments should do only those things that cannot be done better by private persons or by non-governmental organisations. Governments should be decentralised, less expensive, neutral and transparent.

He calls for a reform of the welfare systems in order to give people more freedom to choose and freedom of media is also one of the central issues of the draft. He also calls for a separation of churches from states and for improvement of anti-discrimination legislation. Mr. Bauer argued also for a professional army that would increase the liberty of choice of individuals.

There are many other good principles and ideas for further discussion in the draft resolution. Based on Mr. Bauers paper, Liberal International has prepared a shorter version for a resolution that is now available for all members of the LI. In conclusion I would like to congratulate Mr. Bauer once again for opening an important discussion among the liberal parties - how to govern better in the new century. Are we ready for the new challenges?

Read the resolution and find out more at www.worldlib.org/executive/copenhagen/index

End discrimination for citizens of Gibraltar

On Tuesday 20th November Josep Pique and Jack Straw, representing Spain and the United Kingdom, were to meet in Barcelona to discuss the future status of Gibraltar and its 30,000 EU Citizens. The citizens' representatives themselves do not have any say whatsoever in their future. The true facts regarding this important EU issue are often swept to one side and seen as a 'problem' between the two powerful member states, and not something for our EU institutions to get involved with. One of the clear examples on this matter is the recent exclusion of Gibraltar from the Single European Sky. LYMEC, the ELDR youth wing adopted unanimously a resolution on this issue at its last Executive Committee meeting, recently held in St. Gallen, Switzerland. The resolution clearly states that it deplores the fact that Gibraltar is left out. It is of course totally absurd for a territory whose land is part of the European Union to have a sky above it which is not.

The exclusion is one of the many examples of discrimination against the citizens of Gibraltar. The residents of the rock are discriminated against on a daily basis. Another example concerns the elections for the European Parliament. Gibraltarians are the only EU citizens who cannot vote in elections to the EP, despite taking the UK to the European Court of Human Rights in 1999 and winning the case. Also the "Europe without borders" idea is not reality on the Gibraltar-Spanish border, a border inside the EU where waiting times to cross the frontier can run up to three hours.

Gibraltar was formally ceded in perpetuity by the Crown of Spain to the Crown of the United Kingdom under Article X of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. This near 300 year old Treaty states, amongst other things, that Jews and Moors cannot be allowed to live in Gibraltar and then it concludes that if the Crown of Great Britain ever wishes to give up their sovereignty it has to be offered to the Crown of Spain before anyone else. Spain uses the latter part of this Treaty as the basis for not recognising the Gibraltarian right to decide its own future, as any change of status, even constitutional, would mean a breach of this Treaty.

The view in Gibraltar is that the Treaty of Utrecht is not a barrier to the self-determination of the people of Gibraltar. Human rights and the right to self-determination did not even exist in 1713, and it was common at that time for countries to be passed from one monarch to another regardless of the wishes of the people living there. Today, the Treaty of Utrecht has been superceded by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by the Charter of the United Nations. The House of Assembly, the Parliament of Gibraltar is so confident in its case that it has called on the United Kingdom to take this legal point to an international tribunal; so far neither London nor Madrid want to test this point in court.

This August, LYMEC held its annual Young Leader's Meeting (YLM) on the topic of "regionalism" in Gibraltar. The many young liberal presidents that were present got a chance to experience the discrimination

and lack of free movement of peoples at the Gibraltar-Spanish frontier, something those EU citizens on both sides of the border experience on a daily basis. Jan Weijers, Secretary General of the Liberal International, made a speech in the meeting where he declared that: "the future of Gibraltar must be decided by the people of Gibraltar through the old Liberal principle of self-determination". LYMEC vice-president and Gibraltarian Rebecca Faller closed the YLM with the following assertion: "It is self-determination that must be paramount in the Gibraltar question and the right of the Gibraltarians to freely and democratically decide their own future cannot be curtailed by Spain's territorial ambitions."



Daniel Tanahatoo at the head of the LYMEC delegation to the ELDR Autumn Congress 2000

Dear liberal democrats,



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

Another year has passed and many changes and events have taken place which will be engraved in our memory for a long time. I would however like to dedicate this column to a small flower which is blossoming in Central Europe and which needs all the attention and support we can give for the moment. Two weeks ago I addressed a conference organised by Liberales Forum under the heading of "Global Europe". Around 200 participants attended the Conference and among the speakers were such prominent liberals as Graham Watson, Silvana Koch Merin, Xavier Bettel, Imrich Beres and Gabor Demsky.

Our Austrian liberal party is lead and run by a young team of very devoted professionals whose aim it is to bring a true liberal partner back within the Austrian political landscape by presenting a third, alternative platform. We must make it our aim to offer them the support of our European liberal network.

The ELDR Party today incorporates 43 member parties and, with three applications currently being processed, it looks set to continue its rapid development. The European Liberal Democrats have undergone a number of changes over the past year. Eleven parties have either joined or changed status within the our party and individual e- membership was introduced during the Congress of Ljubljana and is set to be online by the beginning of January 2002. The party has also significantly raised its profile, not only through its quarterly newspaper, but also through the in-house production of CD ROMS, brochures and leaflets. Our 25th anniversary CD is currently in production and will be available early in 2002.

It is my aim to make the party more cohesive and more visible, both through and with the support of our members, and to use our internal strength to facilitate our external ambitions. With this aim in mind the ELDR Party has embarked on a new internal project called 'Diogenes' - an information network which will be made available to all elected liberal democrats at national and regional level in 2002.

It is in this context that I invite you to support our friends in Vienna. The next two years will see a large number of crucial elections which will demand that the ELDR is, and is seen to be, strongly unified. The party must be prepared.

I wish you all a healthy, prosperous, liberal and democrat "Euro" 2002.

25 Years after the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties was established by its nine founder members the modern ELDR Party unites 43 political parties, with 32 full members and 11 affiliated parties.

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

Watch out for the ELDR "Diogenes Project" - a new information network for 2002

Liberals in local and regional government and EU enlargement

Enlargement is high on everyone's agenda, but one aspect tends to be overlooked: the role of local and regional authorities. Local and regional authorities are responsible for the implementation on the ground of many EU policies. In areas such as environmental policies, competition rules, public procurement, regional development, structural policies and public services, local and regional authorities play a key role. The preparedness for accession of local and regional authorities in applicant states is therefore of key importance to successful enlargement.

The ELDR Group of the Committee of the Regions used the occasion of its meeting in Ljubljana on 27 September 2001, to discuss with Jasmina VIDMAR (LDS), Secretary General of the Association of Municipalities of Slovenia and Peter JAMNIKAR, Secretary of the Executive Committee of LDS, the position of the Slovenian local and regional authorities. Like in many other applicant countries, the establishment of local and regional government is a relatively recent development, and making it work is the first priority. By consequence preparing for Europe remains an issue somewhat in the background for local and regional authorities. In addition there are hardly any resources available for an adequate preparation of local and regional authorities. The accession negotia-



The 41st plenary session of the Committee of the Regions took place in the European Parliament in November 2001. The Committee of the Regions, established by the Treaty of Maastricht, is an EU consultative organ, representing local and regional government. From its 222 members and an equal number of alternates, the ELDR group has 26 members and 24 alternates. CoR meets five times a year in plenary session in Brussels

tions are conducted mainly by central government, although it must be said that in some countries the representatives of local and regional government are being consulted.

Another concern for our liberal democrat friends in the applicant countries is democratic legitimacy and accountability of local and regional government. Liberal democrats call for directly elected bodies both at local and regional level. This is currently not the case in all applicant countries (or some EU Member States, for that matter). Decentralisation takes the form of decentralised government agencies or of a co-operation between local authorities, chaired by a

government appointee. However, decentralisation will fail without proper democratic legitimacy and the support of the citizens.

The ELDR group in the Committee of the Regions believes that enhanced co-operation within the ELDR Party family and an ELDR agenda with greater relevance to local and regional authorities would be very useful ways to support liberals in local and regional government. For its part, it is building up a network of liberal democrat contacts in local and regional government in the applicant countries, aiming at an exchange of information and experience, and at strengthening the liberal democrat grassroots in the future Member States.

It looks increasingly as if enlargement will take place with a big bang: 10 new countries to join in 2004, or possibly 2005. The CoR group will expectedly hold 12 to 14% of CoR membership in EU 25. Given that the political situation at national level in the new Member States is in some cases quite different from that at sub-national level, the group may get members from (nearly) all new countries. Already at this stage it involves and consults its partners in future Member States in its daily work.

Sophie In't Veld is Head of the ELDR Group Secretariat in the CoR.

ELDR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS 2002

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| January 2002 | 9-10 Jan. ELDR Group Meeting |
| | 21-25 Jan. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (F) |
| | 25-26 Jan. Congress VVD Extraordinary General Assembly, Arnhem (NL) |
| | 29 Jan. ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Brussels (B), 10h00 |
| | 30-31 Jan. ELDR Group Meeting |
| February 2002 | 2 Febr. Congress HSLS, Zagreb (HR) |
| | 6 Febr. Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B) |
| | 23 Febr. Congress Union of Freedom, Warschau (PL) |
| | 27 Febr. ELDR Group Meeting |
| March 2002 | 6-7 March ELDR Group Meeting |
| | 8 March ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Amsterdam (NL) |
| | 8 March Spring Conference Liberal Democrats, Manchester (UK) |
| | 13 March Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B) |
| April 2002 | 3-4 April ELDR Group Meeting |
| | 04-apr ELDR Party Bureau Meeting, Brussels (B), evening |
| | 4-5 April ELDR Party Spring Conference |
| | 05-apr ELDR Council Meeting, Brussels (B) |
| | 12-13 April Annual Congress VVD, Veldhoven (NL) |
| | 22-26 April Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (F) |
| May 2002 | May NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Sofia (BG) |
| | 8-9 May ELDR Group Meeting |
| | 9-12 May FDP Congress, Mannheim (D) |
| | 15 May Committee of the Regions Group Meeting, Brussels (B) |
| | 29 May ELDR Group Meeting |
| June 2002 | 5-6 June ELDR Group Meeting |
| | 14-16 June Congress The Center Party (Suomen Keskusta), Hämeenlinna (Finland) |
| | 20-21 June Political Leaders Meeting, Sevilla (E) (to be confirmed) |
| | 24-25-26 June ELDR Group Study Days |
| | 24-28 June Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (F) |
| | 26-27 June ELDR Group Meeting |



ELDR Party secretariat - November 2001