

democrats

UITGAVE VAN HET INTERNATIONAAL SECRETARIAAT D66

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Turkey Votes 12 June 2011 - Turkish Election night in Amsterdam

By Marieke van Doorn, IDI Board Member

The question was not whether the AK Party of Prime Minister Erdogan would win the Turkish parliamentary elections, but with how many seats AKP would win. The governing party obtained a good result, winning 50% of the seats in Parliament. However, the AK Party will need coalition partners to agree on the revision of the constitution. This news was cheered upon by those assembled for 'Turkey Votes'.

In a full Sugar Factory, more than 300 people followed the election results in Turkey. The audience switched from announcements of new results to Turkish music, short clips filmed by (Route66) young members of D66, a Skype-interview with former Groen Links MEP Joost Lagendijk (now a political advisor at the Istanbul Policy Center), comments from Dutch and Turkish political experts and a debate between Dutch politicians.

The election results in Turkey show that four parties have made it to the Parliament (threshold of 10%): AKP, CHP, BDP and MHP. AKP is the party of Prime Minister Erdogan, a conservative right-wing party that has implemented many reforms in Turkey over the past years and is known for its international orientation. The BDP is the Kurdish party, advocating rights and liberties for Kurdish citizens. CHP, the social-democrats, is the largest opposition party with 26% of seats in Parliament. Since one year the party has a new leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The MHP, the third largest party (13% of seats) in Parliament, is strongly Turkish-nationalist.

During the evening the participants voted in their own Turkish Elections, the results being very different. CHP became the largest party, and even the Greens (Yesiller) made it into Parliament.

IDI's next political café focuses on Turkey's new constitution. You are cordially invited to attend this meeting on [5 September in Utrecht](#).

Revolutionary growing pains of the new Egypt

By Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament



Last week I visited Egypt to meet with activists, journalists and other Egyptians to discuss human rights, politics, campaigning and (new) media after the revolution. The meetings and trainings went well but the country's challenges are daunting, especially for the liberal minded. Without much infrastructure and with new found freedom to mobilize and organize, political parties are popping out of the ground like mushrooms. This celebration of pluralism is wonderful but has a downside when considering the strategic importance of working together. Mubarak's former party the NDP as well as the Muslim Brotherhood have much more solid networks and organizations. The newer political parties and civic movements are struggling to balance individual manifestation and the need to work in coalitions.

Additionally, the transitional period in Egypt is full of uncertainties. The Supreme Council of Armed Forces is overseeing the transition, but demonstrators are also tried in military courts.

Despite these challenges, the ambition of the new generation of politically and civically active men and women is inspiring. Yet, there is little time to catch up with in building experience. We must not forget that transition takes time and ongoing energy. From this perspective, Europe has important experiences to share. How to rebuild and reconcile after dictatorships were overthrown? European and Egyptian societies are very different, but it is important that Europe invests in its neighbouring countries. Given the negative image of the United States in Egypt, Europe, and especially parliamentarians have a role to play. We must share the ins and outs of parliamentary work, coalitions and opposition. These practical examples were most welcomed by Egyptians.

D66 will work to realize ambitious policies on economic development and improved trade

relations when reforms guaranteeing human rights, democracy, the rule of law and checks and balances are met. In the European Parliament, we are currently reviewing Europe's Neighbourhood Policies. Political parties and politicians additionally can share their experiences and work with the aspiring new leaders of Egypt. D66 has historically worked with like minded movements, parties and individuals, even in the most difficult circumstances. While the situation in Egypt is challenging, the revolution is a strong manifestation of people's inherent desire to live in freedom. Most Egyptians would not want to trade back the revolution and walk with their chins up a little higher. Let's hope these are growing pains after the revolution, and that freedom, human rights and opportunities will be guaranteed in the new Egypt.

Sharing best practices, the case of Iceland and Turkey

By Maartje Jansen, IDI Coordinator

As you are probably familiar with, Turkey is going through a process of constitutional reforms. According to the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoan preparing a new constitution is a priority of the new government, adding that it should be written not only by constitutional experts but through the input of civil society and Turkish society at large. This era is described as a "historic opportunity to create a constitution that fits the description of a social contract."

The current constitution was adapted after the military coup in 1980. The principal amendment to be made is to anchor the separation of powers and include a better defined checks and balances system. Some current weak spots in the constitution concern the power lying with the military and the not altogether independent appointment of judges.

ARI movement, a partner of IDI in Turkey, has rolled out a project to involve civil society in the discussion about the new constitution. ARI is looking to Iceland for good examples. Iceland is '[crowdsourcing](#)' its citizens to involve them in drafting the new constitution. In ARI's project several international experts will give their comments on what the new constitution should look like. These comments and a preliminary publication will be the basis for a series of round table discussions with students, civil society organizations and academics. The envisaged end-product is a well-documented publication, rich in international best practices and with a large support base in Turkish society.

In the Netherlands IDI has also planned for a discussion evening on this topic. On 5 September the Jonge Democraten Utrecht and IDI foundation organise a political café about the new Turkish constitution "[Fen nieuwe grondwet voor Turkije, hoe, wat & waarom?](#)". For more information please check

57th LI Congress "Human Rights and Trade"

By Ivo Thijssen, IDI Board Member and IFLRY Board member



The Liberal International (LI) Congress took place in Manila, the Philippines on 16-19 June 2011. The first LI Congress ever organised in Asia gathered over 250 delegates and guests from all over the world. D66 was represented by Robert Farla, Maartje Jansen, Tjeerd Dierckxens and Ivo Thijssen.

At the opening session of the Congress, President of the Republic and Chairman of the **Liberal Party of the Philippines Benigno S. Aquino III**, gave the keynote speech in which he said that the LI Congress has chosen to locate Human Rights as parallel to Free Trade as its theme "because we believe that the latter must be pursued to ensure that the former is upheld." The delegates assembled at the Congress had the task of voting for a new Bureau. Amongst others, the President of Liberal International, **Hans van Baalen MEP** was reelected. The Congress also adopted a number of resolutions on issues, such as those initiated by D66 on media freedom in Morocco, the power of social media, biodiversity and the rule of law. [Click here](#) for the full texts of all adopted resolutions.

At the Congress, the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLY) and CALD Youth organised a Fringe Meeting 'Leading Non-violent Political Change in the Twitter Generation'. Former leader of the EDSA student revolt Chito Gascon (Philippines) was one of the inspiring speakers. The meeting was moderated by **Ivo Thijssen** (D66, IFLRY Bureau).

On 14 and 15 October LI holds its Executive meeting in London. Vice Prime

ELDR Congress

Each year liberals from all over Europe (56 member parties) come together for the ELDR Congress. This year the Congress takes place from **23-25 November in Palermo, Sicily** (Italy). The theme of the congress is "Refining the EU Budget, reforming Europe", kindly refer to the special [Focus Year website](#) for more information. At this congress, ELDR Vice-President Lousewies van der Laan is up for re-election.



If you are interested to learn more about your fellow liberals, if you want to experience an international congress or if you want to learn about other parties' views on the EU budget, you are very welcome to be a part of the D66 Delegation. D66 is not able to offer any compensation for travel or accommodation. Fortunately participation in the congress is free and catering and meals are included.

Please contact the International Bureau if you require further information or if you want to register for the ELDR Congress.

Calendar

5 September: Political Café "Turkey's new constitution", Oudaen, Utrecht, the Netherlands

7-9 September: Summer Seminar "Liberal principles compared", the Netherlands

23 September: Political Cafe "The future of democracy in North Africa", Amsterdam, the Netherlands (to be confirmed)

30 Sep – 2 October: Libseen conference "Closure of disputes as a precondition for EU-accession", Skopje, Macedonia

14-15 October: Liberal International Executive meeting Responsibility to Protect", London, UK

4 November: "Liberal Values seminar: the Rule of Law", the Netherlands

23-25 November: ELDR Congress "A liberal perspective on the EU budget", Palermo, Italy

Minister Nick Clegg is one of the speakers and the British Liberal Group hosts a one-day seminar on the [Responsibility to Protect doctrine](#) on 15 October. D66 members that wish to attend the meeting are welcome. Unfortunately D66 is not in the position to cover travel and lodging costs or the participation fee. For more information contact Maartje Jansen at the International Bureau

North Rhine Westphalia's international committee hosts meeting on Dutch-German transnational cooperation

By Coen Brummer, on behalf of the Mr. Hans van Mierlostichting

On Saturday the 30th of July, FDP Northrhine-Westphalia's state committee on international politics (Landesfachausschuss Internationale Politik) organised a meeting with representatives of both VVD and D66. The main goal of the meeting in Aachen was to get more acquainted with Dutch liberalism and the Dutch political landscape.

On behalf of D66 I participated in this meeting. The representative of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) was the former party chairman and current regional minister for Limburg, Mark Verheijen.

Mark Verheijen and I explained to the approximately twenty committee-members VVD's and D66's positions to national and international subjects, such as European integration, sustainability goals, and social-economic policy.

Afterwards, there was room for discussion. The members of the committee were interested in hearing about the differences between the two liberal parties. For them it was not quite clear how there could be one liberal party in government and the other in the opposition. Especially considering the fact that they cooperate in the ALDE group in the European Parliament. Furthermore, immigration and integration policy was a central issue during the discussion. In the end, Verheijen and I could agree that after years of liberal decline in the Netherlands, the recent electoral gains of both D66 and the VVD are good news for Dutch liberalism.

Colofon Democrats

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For more information on our international activities and blogs about monitoring liberals in Europe go to www.d66.nl/internationaal and

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