

# democrats

UITGAVE VAN HET BUREAU INTERNATIONAAL D66

[www.d66.nl/internationaal](http://www.d66.nl/internationaal)

## As of 2012 IDI active in North Africa



As of 2012 the IDI foundation will be supporting liberal movements and parties in North Africa. Currently we are taking stock of all organizations already active in the region, such as the Friedrich

Naumann Foundation, NDI, ALDE, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy and the Network of Arab Liberals. The funding of the Foreign Ministry can be employed for projects in Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco.

Any D66 member that speaks fluent Arab or French is encouraged to contact the IDI foundation (contact details in the colophon).

## D66 International bloggers becoming ever more active!

Since the start of the international blog page [www.d66blog.nl/internationaal](http://www.d66blog.nl/internationaal) more and more bloggers have joined to inform D66 members on political developments in e.g. Georgia, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Turkey, Iceland and Austria.

If you wish to share your perspective on the political developments in a country or share news about a liberal party, you are most welcome. Please contact Maartje Jansen at the International Bureau.

## Liberal International and the International Criminal Court



At the Liberal International Congress in the Philippines in June, a resolution proposed by D66 and VVD on the International Criminal Court was adopted. [Please click here for the](#)

[resolution](#). Not long after the adoption of this resolution, the Philippines ratified the Rome Statute and became [the 117<sup>th</sup> state party](#) to the International Criminal Court. This is an excellent example of how resolutions or discussions in international networks can lead to concrete action.

## Presentation of international issue IDEE: "Rule of law: fundamental rights and shared values"

On 10 December International Democratic Initiative and the Mr. Hans van Mierlostichting will present the 2011 international issue of IDEE to **ELDR Vice-President MEP Sir Graham Watson** during a Europe mini-congress in Utrecht. This issue is dedicated to the "Rule of law: fundamental rights and shared values".

The underlying question of the issue is whether citizens from the Southeast European EU accession candidates consider compliance with EU legislation a textbook for modernization or an unwanted and enforced interference with national affairs. Do citizens in the region share the same values, are fundamental rights sufficiently enshrined in the heads of people and in their countries' legislation and what do they think is the largest challenge for their country on the road to become EU member?

For more information about this event, check [the website](#)

## Visit of young liberals from South-East Europe to D66 and JD Leiden-Haaglanden

By Nitin Sood, JD Leiden-Haaglanden

D66 and JD Leiden-Haaglanden invited eight young enthusiastic liberals from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Turkey to share their experiences and views on the rule of law and European integration both with D66 and JD-members. Lousewies van der Laan, ELDR Vice-President and Sophie in't Veld, MEP, welcomed the young guests on Friday evening at the D66-headquarters and initiated a thought-provoking discussion about the rule of law in the European Union and enlargement-process in the South Eastern Europe, a debate which continued among the participants throughout their stay in the Hague.



Our guests joined the D66-congress on November 5 and held a fringe meeting on the topic of "Rule of Law and EU-enlargement". The meeting was a huge success as a number of D66-members eagerly attended the meeting in which the young liberals voiced their point of views regarding the feasibility of Rule of Law in the Southern Eastern European countries and their hopes and concerns about the EU-enlargement.

Besides meeting with D66-members at the Congress, JD Leiden-Haaglanden organized various activities for the guests such as a tour at Peace Palace, a cultural evening with delights from the Balkans and the Netherlands, a round table meeting with renowned international lawyer Mischa Wladimiroff who worked as a defence lawyer at the ICTY, a chilly November-visit to the beach and a tour of Dutch Parliament.

Although the event sadly came to end on November 8, the event provided a good platform for strengthening and enriching communication and co-operation between young liberals in the Netherlands and the Balkans. This platform is only the beginning and coming December JD Leiden-Haaglanden, with the support of IDI, will travel to Zagreb during the Croatian parliamentary elections to organize a training session and observe Croatian political life at its heart.

## Good neighbourly relations key for Balkan region

By Pieter Copper

From 30 September to 2 October 2011 liberals from across the Balkan gathered in Skopje (Macedonia) for a conference to discuss policies to close regional disputes as a



precondition for EU accession. The conference was organised by LIBSEEN in cooperation with the Liberal Party of Macedonia and the International Democratic Initiative. It was financially supported by the Transformation Program Central and Eastern Europe (Matra) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

All Southern Eastern European (SEE) countries are undergoing political reform. Some more successful than others but a common trait is their ambition of EU membership. Croatia is the closest to achieving this goal, joining the Union most probably in 2013. Croatia's upcoming accession is perceived as a an inspiration for many other countries in the region to reinvigorate reform measures.

Though political reform may be underway, various issues currently hamper or even prevent future membership, namely mutual recognition (Serbia – Kosovo), border disputes (Slovenia-Croatia) and historical (name) issues (Greece – Macedonia). Liberals at the conference were unanimous that the key to overcoming these issues is to strive for solutions that are mutually acceptable. This involves making compromises. Bridges need to be built because many see good neighbourly relations as a precondition for EU accession. Without neighbouring support EU membership seems an unlikely outcome. The principle of [Libseen](#), that combines political parties not on the basis of a national or ethnic background but on the basis of ideology is a good example in itself.

"All problems are in the head, it's all about perceptions", says Mr. Jelko Kacin MEP from the Slovenia Liberal Democrat party referring to the Greek-Macedonian name dispute. The issue will remain in a deadlock if neither party is willing to compromise. Many problems seem trivial that is why more tolerance and dialogue is needed. In the end, concessions need to be made. However, politicians need to realize that popular support in many Member States is diminishing and conflicts in candidate countries undermine accession altogether. Liberals at the conference agreed that the most effective way for SEE countries to follow Croatia's example is to be more assertive and take ownership and responsibility for improving bilateral relations. Proactively exchanging the "waiting room" for the "exercise room" will not only increase the likelihood of joining the EU in the nearby future, but will strengthen the stability of the region as a whole.

## Calendar

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

27 Nov – 1 Dec: IFLRY Seminar "Freedom of expression", Istanbul

28 November: IDI and Centre Forum symposium "The future of European Multilateralism in NATO", London

2 – 4 December: IFLRY General Assembly, Istanbul

10 December: Europe Mini-congress "De staat in de Unie", Utrecht

12-14 December: Libseen conference "A joint energy policy for Southeast Europe", organized by LDP Serbia in Belgrade

### **Colophon Democrats**

The International Newsletter "Democrats" is published by the foundation International Democratic Initiative (IDI) and the D66 International Bureau. This newsletter was composed by Maartje Jansen with contributions by Tim van der Weide, Pieter Copper and Nitin Sood.

### **For more information on our international activities and blogs about monitoring liberals in Europe go to**

[www.d66.nl/internationaal](http://www.d66.nl/internationaal) and  
[www.d66blog.nl/internationaal](http://www.d66blog.nl/internationaal)

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## Route66 visits Radikale Venstre

By Tim van der Weide, Route66



Inspired by the until recently similar political situation in Denmark, a delegation of Route66, the young professional talent development program of D66, travelled to Copenhagen from Thursday 20 to Sunday, 23 October. We encountered a celebrating sisterparty: Radikale Venstre (RV). In the September 15 parliamentary elections RV achieved a great electoral victory and became part of the new government.

From the many conversations we had, it became clear that RV's election victory was due to focusing on the themes of education, immigration and economy. Especially the pension agreement signed prior to the elections, convinced voters on the right to vote for RV. It showed that RV advocated a realistic economic policy. Radikale Venstre was also really the only party that wanted to change the inward looking immigration policy. All other parties have incorporated the anti-immigration language and policies from Danske Folkpartiet and the former rightwing minority government.

Radikale Venstre almost doubled in the election, receiving 9,5% of the votes. They were the only real winner in the leftwing coalition as the other parties lost votes in the elections. Radikale Venstre will be represented by six ministers in the new government. Party leader Magrethe Vestager is Minister for Economy and Home Affairs.

Route66 also had a meeting with rightwing Venstre. Some Venstre members expressed their disappointment in the anti-European attitude of their party. The debate in Denmark is dominated by Europe, yes or no, rather than by a substantive debate.



Deze nieuwsbrief is gemaakt en verzonden met de nieuwsbriefmanager van PDC Informatie Architectuur.

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