

democrats

UITGAVE VAN HET INTERNATIONAAL SECRETARIAAT D66

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Democrats

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- A new board member of the IDI Foundation: Marieke van Doorn
- IDI's Turkey activities
- European Conference on Youth Unemployment, 7 May in Rotterdam
- NCDO Masterclass
- Democracy update: Ghana
- D66 Party congress 17 april: International meeting
- Calendar
- Colofon

IDI Board Member: Marieke van Doorn

Dear Democrats,

My name is Marieke van Doorn. Late last year, the D66 party congress has elected me in the Board of the IDI foundation, the International Democratic Initiative foundation that is linked to D66.



Democratic development is one of the core values of D66, therefore I became a party member in 2003. On a daily basis, I work to support

democracy activists world-wide at the Brussels-based European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). The work of the IDI foundation focuses on supporting social-liberal thinkers, movements, political parties and politicians in the Balkans and in Turkey.

D66 is known for its positive attitude towards the EU- accession of Turkey. To contribute to an informed and critical discussion on this topic in the Netherlands, within D66 and beyond, IDI organises a series of three Political Cafés in Holland this year. Topics will touch upon the progress made in Turkey's political and economic development - Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU and Turkish-EU relations.

At this year's first Political Café in The Hague (14 April) on the economic and political challenges in present-day Turkey the successful economic reforms were discussed as well as the distressing polarisation between the reformist, but conservative AK Party on the one hand and the nationalistic leftist elites on the other hand. Turkish columnist Sahin Alpay and

IDI's Turkey activities

14 April 2010: Political café "Economic and political challenges in present-day Turkey" Café Dudok, The Hague

24 May 2010: Political café "A social-liberal perspective on democracy and fundamental rights" Café Otto Santral (to be confirmed) Istanbul

24-28 May 2010: IDI-LIBSEEN Fact-finding mission to Istanbul and Ankara

D66 foundation International Democratic Initiative (IDI) in cooperation with the Liberal South East European Network (LIBSEEN) are organising a fact-finding mission to Istanbul and Ankara in the end of May. The mission takes place concurrently with the European Parliament's Turkey Delegation visit to Istanbul. D66 MEP Mrs. Sophie in 't Veld will take part in the European Parliament visit. In the evening of 24 May, she will present her "Social-liberal perspective on democracy and fundamental rights" in the political cafe hosted by IDI in Istanbul.

With these activities IDI and LIBSEEN aim to find a partner in Turkey as Turkey is the largest country in the South-Eastern European region and political "hot issue" when it comes to Turkey's accession to the European Union. Over past years various organisations, including D66, have visited Turkey in hope to find a strong partner, but without any concrete progress. However, since many progressive



Dutch speakers amongst whom D66 MEP Marietje Schaake emphasised that there is a need for a Third Way in Turkey to accommodate the many 'orphaned' social-liberal thinkers in the country.

IDI facilitates activities in Turkey which aim at contributing modestly to support social-liberal thinkers and movements. Interested D66 Party Members are welcome to attend the Political Cafes or to even join the IDI Turkey Working Group, which is guiding the implementation of the project both in Turkey as well as in The Hague. Please send an email to Maartje Jansen, International Officer D66 at m.jansen@d66.nl.

people in Turkey feel not to be represented by the existing political parties we feel that now is the time to jointly make an effort to stimulate liberal thinking and support progressive politics in Turkey.

During this mission meetings with political parties which share or are close to liberal ideology, political analysts, and international organisations in Turkey, non-governmental sector, intellectuals and journalists. The aim of the mission is to establish a strong contact with these organisations/individuals and strengthen the liberal idea in Turkey.

ELDR Youth Unemployment Conference

On 7 May 2010 D66, OpenVLD (Belgium), Convergencia Democrática de Catalunya (Catalonia, Spain) and LYMEC jointly organise a conference to discuss policies and projects to counter youth unemployment. For more information contact: d.croese@d66.nl or go to www.d66.nl/internationaal.

NCDO Master Class

By Jonneke de Koning

In the first months of this year I was one of the participants in the Masterclass on International Cooperation organized by NCDO. NCDO is a Dutch organisation responsible for creating support for international cooperation and they organize a Masterclass on this topic at least once every year. The participants were active members of various political parties. The representation of each party was based on the amount of seats in Parliament. Once every two weeks we had a full day of courses, every time on a different topic related to international cooperation. We started off with the basics: the history of development aid. Other sessions ranged from inner political drives to the relation between international cooperation and climate change. Furthermore a lot of discussion was spent on the effectiveness of development aid and the importance of economic development in international cooperation. The final task was to write the chapter for your political party on international cooperation. I experienced this Masterclass as very inspiring. NCDO arranged excellent speakers for every session and I loved the passionate discussions we had amongst each other. The views on development aid varied widely, however we all agreed on one thing: progress for people living in developing countries is one of the most crucial challenges of our time. NCDO can look back on a successful Masterclass, with the positive result of having educated a group of politicians, with newly deepened knowledge of international cooperation.

NCDO hosts a debate on development cooperation between the Parliamentary Candidates (foreign portfolio's) in Dutch national elections. The debate takes place in the evening of **18 May in Utrecht**. For more information contact Joram van Donk at NCDO: j.van.donk@ncdo.nl.

Democracy update: Ghana

"You really do think and act internationally, even at lunch!"

By Wouter Dol

Ghana is often recognised as guiding light with regard to democratisation in the African context. It is a country where citizens now have a proper choice in electing their representatives and where multiparty democracy has rooted firmly after initial military government rule in the 1980s.

Moreover, in the recent decade it managed two successful alterations of power between the two main parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Both transitions took place without major violence or heavily contested elections, indicating a further consolidation of democracy in Ghana.

In the recent second round presidential elections (December 2008) the final result showed only a marginal 40,000 votes difference between the leading candidates. However the incumbent NPP conceded its defeat without major turmoil and in early 2009 the NDC candidate John Evans Atta Mills was inaugurated as the new President.

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), through its local partner IEA, has played a facilitating role in the democratic consolidation process in Ghana since 2002. By closely working with the main parliamentary parties in an open dialogue process that takes place on neutral grounds, the key political actors are motivated to cooperate and advance the country's democracy and development.

This specific interparty dialogue was recently praised by President Mills in his second 'State of the Nation' address, in which he called upon all parties to collaborate for the benefit of the country and to jointly tackle its key development issues (also see: www.nimd.org/news/ghana). He emphasised that the programmes of any government could not be divorced from its political party background, stressing the need to work together to demonstrate to the world that "power does not lie in the hands of one particular person".

Wanting to document the democratic advancement of Ghana in more detail, NIMD recently invited former de facto Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Obeng to talk about the earlier stages of the democratic transition process from military government in the 1980s, towards multiparty democracy in the 1990s. Mr Obeng was for 12 years Chairman of Secretaries of the military-led Provisional National Defence Council and was one of the drivers behind the process of democratisation. NIMD intends to draw key lessons from his account in order to apply these in other programme countries.

NIMD is a democracy assistance organisation founded in 2000 by seven Dutch political parties, including D66, which currently supports 17 comprehensive democratisation programmes worldwide mainly developed around a process of interparty dialogue.

For more information on this or other work of NIMD please contact the D66 Coordinator

*International guests at D66 congress
By Ivo Thijssen, IDI Vice President*

'Think and act internationally' is one of the five indicators of the D66 progressive vision, which is why D66 international foundation IDI invited a number of international guests to the 91st D66 congress.

It went to show that D66 has an excellent reputation abroad. Over fifteen people were on the guest list, including the international officers of sister parties Open VLD (Belgium), PNL (Romania) en Movement Réformateur (Belgium) and the ambassadors or senior diplomats of eg. the United Kingdom, Sweden, Turkey and Serbia.

During a lunch meeting, the international guests were addressed by a number of speakers. IDI board member Michiel Scheffer opened by giving an introduction to the history of D66 and its social liberal thinking. MEP Sophie in 't Veld spoke on current European affairs. Finally, former party leader Lousewies van der Laan shared her views on cooperation between political parties in Europe.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to meet with two D66 candidate members of parliament: Stientje van Veldhoven set out her vision for a knowledge-based economy in Europe. Christa Meindersma then explained the D66 position on international development aid and answered a number of questions about the future of Afghanistan.

In the tradition of saving the best for last, D66 party leader Alexander Pechtold made a surprise appearance to welcome our guests. Impressed by the number of high-profile speakers one of the guests commented "You really do think and act internationally, even at lunch!".

Wouter Dol on wouterdol@nimd.org or surf to www.nimd.org.

Calendar

3 May: Round Table D66 European correspondents network, D66 Party Bureau, The Hague

7 May: Countering Youth Unemployment Conference in cooperation with CDC, Open VLD, LYMEC and ELDR, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

14-16 May: ELF Workshop: Democracy in Turkey: Turkey's Road Map in the Process of EU Membership", Ankara (Friedrich Naumann Foundation in cooperation with IDI)

18 May: Debate about development cooperation, organised by NCDO and Dutch political parties, Utrecht, the Netherlands

24 May: IDI Political café "A social-liberal perspective on democracy and human rights", Istanbul, Turkey

9 June: Dutch national Elections

11-13 June: Liberal International Executive Council, Berlin, Germany

11-13 June: ELF Seminar "New Duties and responsibilities for the liberal Heads of Counties, Mayors, and Heads of Municipalities in Croatia", Bjelovar, Croatia (Friedrich Naumann Foundation in cooperation with IDI)

1-4 July: Libseen Summer Academy "Globalising Balkans", Sofia, Bulgaria

Helsinki ELDR Congress

D66 members interested in attending the next ELDR Congress (Helsinki, Finland 13-15 October 2010) as part of the D66 delegation, can notify Maartje Jansen at the International Secretariat. Please note that costs of travel, accommodation and meals are not reimbursed by D66 or ELDR.

Colofon Democrats

The International Newsletter "Democrats" is published by the foundation Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (IDI) of the International Secretariat of D66. This newsletter was composed by Maartje Jansen. With contributions from: Marieke van Doorn, Ivo Thijssen, Jonneke de Koning and Wouter Dol.

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