

democrats

UITGAVE VAN HET INTERNATIONAAL SECRETARIAAT D66

www.d66.nl/internationaal

IDI Liberal Values Conference 2010



"Liberalism and Religion, to believe or not to believe, questions in liberal Europe"

The relationship between liberalism and religion has often been discussed. It is not always clear how they relate to each

other, for example seen from the perspective of the secular state. The key note speech will present an overview of different (European) concepts of and experiences with secularism, liberalism and politics. MEP [Sophie in 't Veld](#) and Professor of International Relations [Ali Carcoglu](#) will respond to this speech from the political and academic perspective. In the afternoon conference splits up in working groups that will discuss

- The role of religion in conflict situations
- Freedom of speech vs. freedom of religion
- The Secularization myth: are we as secular as we think
- Religious symbols in the public sphere.

A spoken column by [Boris van der Ham](#) will conclude the day. For the full programme please go to www.d66.nl/internationaal

The conference is open to D66 members and international guests; the fee is € 15,- and includes lunch, coffee and a concluding reception.

Date: 5 November, 10:00 – 17:00
Location: Jewish Historical Museum
Registration: idi@d66.nl

Our special guests for this conference are members from liberal parties or likeminded civil society organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Fringe meeting D66 Party Congress: Borders of Europe

'Geographical Europe' (stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural mountains) has always been divided in two parts that developed separately: the one half was bound to ancient

Political Cafes with Marietje Schaake in Amsterdam and Istanbul



Chairman Vesna Pusic at the Libseen Leaders meeting in Osijek

Amsterdam, Felix Meritis, 23 September: Marietje Schaake was a panelist alongside Baskin Oran and Esra Arsan. The panelists discussed the current situation in Turkey, **"30 years after the 1980 military coup"**. This political café was organized by IDI in cooperation with the Turkey Institute. A report will soon be published on www.d66.nl/internationaal

Istanbul, Bilgi University, 8 October: in cooperation with ARI Movement, IDI organised a political café **"How to involve youth in politics"** was discussed by panelists from AKP, CHP, LDP, IFLRY and D66. Marietje Schaake represented D66 and Bart Woord was there on behalf of IFLRY.

All speakers agreed that it is important to involve youth in politics. The speakers held different opinions on how to involve them. For example, AKP has 350.000 (!) youth members, and a clear structure to accommodate them. However, this youth branch does not distinguish itself in any way from the 'adult' party. Youth members are primarily used to help in campaigns but they own no political profile or playful actions. In Turkey there is no progressive, social-liberal party like D66. Therefore progressive and internationally oriented young people look for ways to be active outside the network of existing political parties. To have impact on society is the most important aspect being politically engaged according to IFLRY President Bart Woord. Marietje Schaake added that youth do not need institutions such as a political party youth wing to come into action and have impact on society. Young people have certain characteristics in common: they can

Rome and the catholic church, the other was linked to Byzantium and the orthodox church. After 1945 the border between the two Europe's was relocated a few hundred kilometers to the West. Several peoples that had always considered themselves to be part of the West, suddenly discovered that they now belonged to the East'.

Czech author Milan Kundera's statement indicated how fluid and how temporary borders can be. The expansion of the European Union is stagnating, what does this mean to people that consider themselves European more than anything else? Can we derive a meaning from categorizations of geographical borders, cultural and social-economic borders and also borders of civilizations?

International Democratic Initiative foundation invites you to take part in the discussion about the borders of Europe. International Secretary Robert Farla interviews e.g. MEP Marietje Schaake, MP Wassila Hachchi, Radikale Venstre's Party Leader Margrethe Vestager and liberals present from e.g. Bosnia, Croatia, Turkey and Macedonia. The short interviews will be followed by a public discussion.

Date: 6 November, in the afternoon break
Location: World Forum, The Hague

think and work outside of the system, they have specific interests such as internet freedom and they tend to think on the longer term – they'll be here for a while after all.

Progressive cooperation in South-East Europe

Osijek, 1-3 October, LIBSEEN Leaders meeting attended by Robert Farla, IDI President, and IDI Coordinator Maartje Jansen.

Liberals from Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Kosovo assembled in Osijek, Croatia for the annual Libseen Leaders meeting. The participants discussed better mutual cooperation and adopted a joint declaration: the [Osijek Declaration](#). The Liberals from Bosnia-Herzegovina could not attend due to national elections.

LIBSEEN is the Liberal South East European Network that was founded to gather liberal political parties in the Balkans. It is the only network of its kind in the region. From the very beginning in 2008, IDI has been one of the main partners of LIBSEEN. For more information go to www.libseen.org.

D66 supports policy-making in Uganda



By Wouter Dol

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) recently invited Joris Backer to share his extensive D66 experience in formulating a party's political principles and election manifesto during a 3-day training workshop with the six parliamentary parties in Uganda.

Policy-making skills are often taken for granted in democracies where political parties have well-developed internal mechanisms, but in a country like Uganda these skills and processes have always played a marginal role within political parties. Instead, mainly individual political leaders are the biggest distinguishing factor between parties, and not their policies. Therefore, NIMD's

ELDR Congress 13-15 October Helsinki



*Delegation:
Maartje Jansen,
Ivo Thijssen,
Lousewies van
der Laan, Marijn
Bosman, Anne
van Meer,
Ingeborg
Baltussen,
Roelien Kramer,
Robert Farla*

and Corina Hendriks (not on picture: Bernd Jan Sikken, Ahmed Fadlaoui, Han Entzinger)

Theme: Demographic Change

During the ELDR congress which took place from 13-15 October in Helsinki, the 58 member parties adopted a theme resolution on demographic change to which D66 contributed a whole new paragraph on international cooperation. Furthermore several other resolutions were adopted amongst which one on single-person households initiated by D66. For more information on the resolutions please go to www.eldr.eu/en/news.

Can migration defuse Europe's demographic timebomb?

IDI in cooperation with Centre Forum organized an ELF breakfast seminar "Can migration defuse Europe's demographic timebomb?" British author Philippe Legrain, MEP Graham Watson and Dutch Professor of Migration Studies Han Entzinger

programme in Uganda is geared at making a modest contribution towards a shift from strong personality-based politics to more issue-based politics.

To support this process, Joris Backer was asked to present his experience in D66 on how to identify a party's political principles and to share practical 'tips and tricks' on how to on this basis develop a quality election manifesto with realistic policy pledges.

In Uganda, as a result of its electoral system and not yet fully developed political culture (only one recent multiparty election in 2006), political competition is not about ideas but rather a war between competing factions all striving for the top position. In response, Joris showcased D66's experience in government but also our achievements as opposition party. The fact that even in the opposition a party can have significant influence on public policy served as a real eye-opener for the Ugandan parties. "I told them that the role of opposition parties is not to oppose, but to compete for alternative ideas in support of the common good", Joris said. "In Uganda, when a certain policy was also proposed or adopted by another party, the first reaction used to be anger about the fact their idea was 'stolen', but I argued that it actually wasn't that bad when it would result in the proposed policy actually being implemented".

The workshop was given together with a training module on drafting manifestos by Jerome Scheltens from the Institute for Political Participation (IPP) in the Netherlands. The training started from a technical perspective on the steps needed to arrive at a comprehensive policy document, after which a practical tool was used that offered parties a simple and easily applicable instrument to carefully analyse problem-statements and to sharpen their respective proposals related to national issues.

For instance, Joris worked as resource person with the ruling party NRM and managed to facilitate some out-of-the-box thinking and in making the pledges more realistic: "We worked together to move from promising electricity for all, to a statement to increase rural electrification in certain regions by 5-10%". In the end, all parties received a tailor-made brochure with their policy pledges to be used as input for their manifesto.

Participants considered the workshop valuable and timely since all six parties are currently in the process of preparing for the upcoming elections (due in February 2011). Several follow-up activities related to policy development are also planned in the run-up to the vote. For Joris, the workshop and visit to Uganda allowed him to also reflect on the Dutch democracy and his own role in it, reconfirming for him "why politics matter".

The workshop was part of NIMD's policy capacity strengthening programme for the parliamentary parties in Uganda. NIMD works to strengthen political parties and democratic systems in developing or young democracies. It is governed by the seven Dutch political parties that founded it, including D66. It currently operates democratisation programmes in 16 countries worldwide.

For more information on this event or on other NIMD programmes and activities please contact D66's political advisor Wouter Dol on wouterdol@nimd.org or surf to www.nimd.org.

discussed the facts, figures and public perception of migration and provided useful expertise for the attending politicians to counter populist claims.

ELDR Bureau elections

The congress had to elect four new board members. Roman Jakic (Zares, Slovenia) was elected new treasurer. Vesna Pusic (HNS, Croatia), Dick Roche (Fianna Fail, Ireland) and Graham Watson (Liberal Democrats, UK) were elected Vice-Presidents.

ELDR President statement on Dutch politics

ELDR President Annemie Neyts congratulated new Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte (VVD) with his government but also stated that "I am also apprehensive because his government is dependent on the good will of the radical right wing party of Geert Wilders... It isn't a choice I would have made, but then, as I told a Flemish journalist lately, I never made it to Prime Minister. In any case, all eyes will be on Dutch politics from now on. Mark Rutte knows this well and I trust that he won't stray from liberal principles."

FDP Berlin – D66 The Hague exchange visit

By Tjeerd Dierxcksens

A delegation from D66 The Hague, consisting of Rachid Guearnaoui, Tjeerd Dierxcksens, Chris Gerritsen, Gregory Scholten and Tomas de Jager visited FDP Berlin 17-19 September.

The delegation was received in the Abgeordnetenhaus of Bundesl nd Berlin. The building in which the parliament resides is of great historical significance and was part of the Berlin wall. In the Berlin parliament FDP, our liberal sister party in Germany, holds 11 seats – making it the smallest group. Initially FDP held 13 seats but two MP's have changed to CDU. In the polls FDP has been losing ground since the national elections in 2009. Taking the German threshold of 5% into account the work is carved out for FDP (Berlin).

During the first discussions between D66 and FDP Berlin, the latter indicated to feel closer related to VVD. This provided an interesting starting point for discussions about content matters in local politics. FDP host Bj rn Jotzo explained Berlin's financial explanation. The city, dominated by leftist political parties, is actually in worse shape than Greece. Austerity measures and spending cuts are not even on the agenda, while at the same time income decreases steadily. More than enough reasons for FDP to raise attention for its solid economic policies.

The second day of the visit we went to Neuk lln, one of Berlin's "Vogelaarwijken". In terms of architecture and city planning we would not qualify the area as a Vogelaarwijk. However, the area has to cope with considerable huge unemployment, education and language problems. This was a topic on which FDP could learn from D66. Rachid Guearnaoui had a busy time explaining all the measures that are currently being taken in the municipality of The

Hague. After the visit, and the mutual learning experience, FDP Berlin concluded that it had a lot more in common with D66 than expected. In particular issues of integration proved interesting to exchange experiences and good practices. D66 The Hague looks forward to fruitful cooperation and a return visit.

If your local chapter is interested to start up an exchange programme with a local chapter of a liberal party abroad, you can contact the International Secretariat for suggestions and contacts.

Calendar

26 October: Lecture by Karel van Kesteren, author of "Lost in chaos" (Verloren in wanorde), organized by D66 Thematic Chapter International Affairs. The lecture will take place at 19:00h in the VOC room of the University of Amsterdam.

5 November: IDI Liberal Values conference: Religion and Liberalism, Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

6 November: D66 Party Congress, World Forum, The Hague: fringe meetings "Borders of Europe" and "Liberalism, religion and morality".

11 November: Turkey Political Café "400 years of Dutch-Turkish relations", time (evening) and location to be announced.

11-13 November: Liberal International Executive, Cape Town, South Africa.

18 November: Debate on the European Citizen's Initiative, time (evening) and location to be announced.

16 December: Political Café and presentation of Turkey IDEE, time (evening) and location to be announced.

12 February: *I love Europe seminar*, organized by D66 Members of the (European) Parliament and the International Secretariat, in cooperation with thematic chapters Europe, International Cooperation and International Security and Defense.

Eastern Neighbours Film Festival

From 21 until 24 October the third edition of the **Eastern Neighbours Film Festival (ENFF)** takes place in the Louis Hartlooper complex in Utrecht. The festival features many different movies from the Balkan and offers a programme on the side with workshops, debates and interviews. The festival aims to show how societies in Southeastern Europe develop and how this is reflected in movies from the region. The movies provide a look into current affairs and culture of Southeastern Europe.

For the programme & logistical information: <http://enff.nl>

Colofon Democrats

The International Newsletter "Democrats" is published by the foundation Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (IDI) and the D66 International Secretariat. This newsletter was composed by Maartje Jansen. With contributions from: Wouter Dol, Tjeerd Dierckxsens and Robert Farla.

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

www.d66.nl/internationaal and www.d66blog.nl/internationaal.

If you wish to unsubscribe kindly notify IDI and send an e-mail to idi@d66.nl

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