



new

# LIBERTAS

New Libertas is a publication of European Liberal Youth

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# LIBERALISATION OF EUROPE



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# LIBERALISATION

## Editorial

Dear friends,

This is the first editorial I write for this magazine since I was appointed chief-editor of New Libertas as a part of my work for the bureau. It was a busy job to get this new issue done, while also working on various other tasks and planning the work for a completely renewed bureau for the next two years, but here it is.

In the meantime, a lot happened in political Europe. The sovereign debt crisis went on, and also caused a monetary crisis. The countries of the European Union bailed-out Greece and are facing new troubles on this very day. If you ask me, the coming years will be a test for the economic cooperation that the European Union is, and especially for our common currency, the Euro.

In New Libertas we will try to keep up with those developments and give young liberals a platform to express their political ideas, and motivate today's politicians not only to think about today, but also about tomorrow and the day after.

To keep this magazine up-to-date, modern and young we will give it a complete redesign in regards of lay-out, but especially in regards of content. From next magazine you will find more place for debate and discussion, and not only opinion articles or columns. On the left side of this page you already see the names of the new board of editors. Don not hesitate to contact me if you want to contribute to the next issue or if you have ideas.

In this issue you will find a presentation of the new bureau members, but also interesting articles about the reasons for the economic crisis and a call for more autonomy for European universities to strengthen our knowledge-based economy. Personally I can recommend you to read the reportage of our new editor Liv Holm Andersen about the Greek immigration crisis.

Jeroen Diepemaat  
Chief-editor of New Libertas  
Bureau member of LYMEC

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Issue no. 10

## Liberalisation of Europe

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## SEND US YOUR CAMPAIGNS

An important part of LYMEC is to facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices among our members. Therefore, we ask you to send us your recent and best-running campaigns!

We will present the most interesting ones in one of the upcoming issues of New Libertas, so the rest of liberal Europe can have a look and marvel at them.

Whether a thematic campaign or an electoral one, just send us whatever material you have in digital form (PDFs, pictures, etc.) to:

[newlibertas@lymec.org](mailto:newlibertas@lymec.org), or to Claudia; [claudia@lymec.eu](mailto:claudia@lymec.eu)

with a short English explanation / translation what the campaign is about and what impact it had. Maybe you also have some pictures of the material being distributed on the streets?

Just send us all the stuff you have!

# Alexander Plahr President of the European Liberal Youth



## Deletion, not blocking

How the European Commission jeopardizes the future of the Internet

When politicians talk about the Internet, good intentions are no substitute for technical knowledge and good policies. This once again is illustrated by the recent proposals for a directive published (COM 2010 94) by Commissioner Celila Malmström.

Article 21 of that proposal calls on Member States to create a censorship infrastructure to block access to websites that show images of child abuse. While the fight against this cruel and loathsome crime deserves the support of every righteous individual, this recent initiative is deeply worrying.

Blocking access to these websites does not make them go away. They are still on the Internet and can be accessed by anybody capable of circumventing the filters. And since circumventing the filters is as easy as entering a new DNS server in your computer, it can be done in 10-15 seconds without any technical knowledge. (There are even YouTube videos showing how this can be done.)

The approach of blocking websites therefore is counterproductive and outright dangerous, since it decreases pressure on Member States to effectively go after these sites. An analysis of current blocking lists from Sweden and Denmark showed that for sites which were on those lists and therefore were known for at least two years in several countries, law enforcement authorities apparently did nothing to try and get this illegal content removed.

In stark contrast, a civil rights working group managed to take down these sites in hours just by sending a few emails, even though they were hosted in the United States of America and India as well as the Netherlands.

The proposal of the European Commission furthermore requires the instalment of a censorship infrastructure. Experience tells us that such infrastructure can easily be misused and that it once in place will whet politicians' appetite to extend it to other areas such as copyright violations, hate speech, and many more.

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Even without misuse, the mechanisms employed to censor access and the technical infrastructure of the internet make it quite probable that when blocking some websites which one wants to target, one also blocks numerous others, which are located with the same webhoster. This is what is called overblocking and which certainly is not desirable.

Blocking websites is too easy an answer to a difficult problem and not an ambitious policy goal which really would benefit the victims or prevent further crimes. Instead of easy populist answers, the policy must be to remove pictures of child abuse from the Internet and to investigate the perpetrators. Priority must go to hunt the culprits down through international cooperation of law enforcement agencies.

Sexual abuse of children is one of the few crimes that is outlawed on a global scale. Experience from leaked blocking lists indicates that most websites in question are located in the USA and Western Europe. Taking them down and getting information on who uploaded them is not black magic, but rather should be the standard.

Unlawful content should be deleted, not simply hidden by creating censorship infrastructure! Perpetrators should be investigated and jailed, not providing with shopping lists in form of leaked blacklists.

Instead of employing a useless but dangerous tool, we have to make sure that European law enforcement agencies finally start cooperating in fighting these awful crimes!

LYMEC therefore started a petition to the European Commission and Parliament to scrap article 21 of the directive proposal. It can be signed online: [www.deletion-not-blocking.eu](http://www.deletion-not-blocking.eu)

Join us and sign as well! Because good intentions are no substitute for good policies.

Alexander Plahr  
President of LYMEC –European Liberal Youth  
[alexander@lymec.eu](mailto:alexander@lymec.eu)

# Crimes should be punished and not hidden.



Oppose plans to block parts of the internet.

## petition

Recently, Commissioner Cecilia Malmström published proposals for a directive to block access to websites that show images of child abuse. While the fight against this cruel and loathsome crime deserves the support of every righteous individual, this recent initiative of is deeply worrying. The approach of blocking websites is counterproductive and outright dangerous.

Blocking access to these websites does not make them go away. They are still on the internet and can be accessed by anybody capable of circumventing the filters. And since circumventing the filters is as easy as entering a new DNS server in your computer, it can be done in 10-15 seconds.

The proposal of the European Commission requires the installment of a censorship infrastructure. Experience tells us that such infrastructure can easily be misused and that it-once in place- will whet politicians' appetite to extend it on other areas such as copyright violations, hate speech, and many more. Even without misuse, the mechanisms employed to censor access and the technical infrastructure of the internet make it quite probable that when blocking some websites which you want to target, you also block numerous others, which are located with the same webhoster. This is what is called overblocking and which certainly is not desirable.

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Unlawful content should be deleted, not simply hidden by creating censorship infrastructure! Perpetrators should be investigated and jailed, not providing with shopping lists in form of leaked blacklists. Instead of employing a useless but dangerous tool, we have to make sure that European law enforcement agencies finally start cooperating in fighting these awful crimes!

SIGN NOW!!

[www.deletion-not-blocking.eu](http://www.deletion-not-blocking.eu)



# CRISIS

## Liberalism shouldn't be blamed for crisis

Article by Danijel Hinšt

“The fact that certain people were using financial systems in order to make wrong and irresponsible decisions should not lead us to the conclusion that we need more regulated economic systems.”

Since the last financial crisis, critics against liberalism and capitalism started to rise drastically. Led by generalised and populist beliefs, many people have still been convinced that capitalism and economic liberalism should be blamed for the crisis, in particular the U.S. model of capitalism.

There is no doubt that causes of the last financial crisis could be found in certain people and their actions, as well as particular segments of U.S. and international financial system. However, should particular problems inside those systems lead us to a conclusion that capitalism and economic liberalism should be blamed for crisis and recession? The core idea of populism is to provide simple, generalised and imprecise answers, which would attract mass attention and create popular misconceptions, instead of any rational approach.

The fact that certain people were using financial systems in order to make wrong and irresponsible decisions should not lead us to the conclusion that we need more regulated economic systems. Particular elements inside financial systems may be changed in order to prevent future crisis. However, aims to increase regulations and interventions in our economies could result in negative outcomes.

Almost each new regulation represents additional costs for entrepreneurs who work hardly to overcome the crisis, as almost each intervention requires additional governmental costs. Moreover, why should we restrict economic freedoms only because of particular irresponsible actions? It would be the same as putting restrictions on any other freedom just because there can always be people who decide to misuse their freedoms.

The question is why do we need all these interventionist measures? Only because some people have been convinced state intervention and regulation are necessary in order to deal with problems caused by “neo-liberalism”?

Why would reasonable people think that free-market capitalism should be blamed for crisis if it is a matter of fact that many mistakes were also done by U.S. governmental interventions?

Many economists started to propose extensive interventionist policies which would stimulate employment and consumption. It cannot be denied that government can spend taxpayers' money for useful development projects which could stimulate economic activities.

However, all these interventionist policy proposals do not have long-term orientation and sustainability. When governments ask their taxpayers how long do they want to pay more taxes in order to finance these anti-recession policies, or even tolerate increased budgetary deficit and debt, people mostly become opposed.

People may like extra public spending, but not extra taxation. In fact, taxation is the core problem of all interventionist policies. Therefore, liberals have always been considered as defenders of liberty.

All this leads us to several important policy conclusions. First, free-market capitalism has contributed growth and prosperity of many nations and individuals. Second, interventionist policies could not have positive long-term effects, due to higher taxation and/or deficit. Third, in addition to the previous conclusion, rising deficits and debts have become main problems of public finances in many European countries.

The main principle of the Stability and Growth Pact has not been respected by all members of the Euro zone as budgetary deficits in many countries have crossed the permitted ration in GDP. Policy shift towards fiscal discipline and responsibility is an ongoing process which will stimulate governments to cut their spending and look for private investments and exports as main generators of GDP growth and employment.

The European Union, facing its own strategic challenges, which have been put in the Lisbon strategy 2010 and Europe 2020, aims to increase the level of its competitiveness and employment.

This objective could be achieved only by serious structural and fiscal measures related to tax and spending cuts, labour market deregulations and increased labour mobility. If governments would aim to intervene with positive long-term effects on employment, they should consider active labour market policies, focused on matching educational programmes with competitive economic needs and increased employability. Many other spending programmes may be found expensive, without good outcomes.

In future, the main challenge will be maintaining fiscal responsibility. This policy principle is important because policy makers must become aware of their responsibility towards taxpayers. This principle exists in the essence of liberalism.

This fact gives us strong motivation to advocate for responsible policies which will consider taxpayers interests as the most important.

“If governments would aim to intervene with positive long-term effects on employment, they should consider active labour market policies, focused on matching educational programmes with competitive economic needs and



In some European countries there are no liberal youth organisations that could provide young liberally minded people the access to LYMEC. Also, some European idealists also would like to work directly on the level of European politics even if they are already members of their national liberal youth organisations. To those people the Individual Members' Section (IMS) is a great opportunity to get direct access to LYMEC and its events.

Individual members, together with the Member organizations form the backbone of liberal youth politics in Europe. They elect their delegates to the congress via an online election in advance to the congress. All individual members that have paid their membership fee can vote at this election of the IMS-delegates to the LYMEC congress. The amount of IMS-delegates depends on the membership figures of the IMS.



## The economy of tomorrow through autonomy and innovation today

Article by Patrick Krassén

“In our opinion, it would be more beneficial if the Bologna standards could be implemented as a parallel system, side by side with autonomous and through experience evolved national systems – not in place of them.”

The EU’s Lisbon Strategy, adopted in 2000, aims to make the EU “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. One important vehicle in this process is Europe’s universities. For promoting innovation and a “learning economy” in Europe, universities are essential, since they are the main arenas for enhancing the academic skills of European citizens and promoting broad research.

However, to truly be able to spur the best research, innovation and growth-creating ideas, universities have to have freedom to be diverse, and to compete with each other by implementing different strategies, types of specialization and characterizations. By having freedom to innovate and to specialize, universities across Europe can foster a competitive environment. Competition among universities may at first seem unnecessary, but it is crucial for the discovery process of research and innovation that universities are allowed to differ and to foster those respective traits that make them attractive. Since students and researchers are different, it is a positive thing if universities are also allowed to differ.

A competitive environment is best secured through high levels of autonomy for the individual universities. Through autonomy, they are free to form their research agendas and curricula, make priorities and take responsibility for financing their projects, in a more robust way than if every university is centrally managed by the national government. Autonomy also leads to more diversity and choice for students.

Since 1999, the European Commission has been an important contributor to the Bologna Process, which seeks to create academic degree and grading standards compatible across Europe.

The goal of this, to assure quality and increase mobility, is of course well-intentioned; it is however problematic in those cases where the Bologna Process has led to excessive centralization and a smothering of diversity.

In our opinion, it would be more beneficial if the Bologna standards could be implemented as a parallel system, side by side with autonomous and through experience evolved national systems – not in place of them.

We strongly believe that the way forward for European universities is not more centralized regulation. On the contrary, only autonomous universities can provide the environment needed for a spur in research-induced innovation. Autonomy means freedom to form organizations and curricula, more decentralized responsibility for funding (more sources for funding and less reliance on the state as sole provider would breed more diversity in organizations and production methods) and more competition among universities (which would mean a clearer market process, where good strategies are rewarded and poor strategies are weeded out gradually). The personal freedom of students to have a choice regarding the organization of their studies is also of paramount importance for the skill of tomorrow’s workforce to create and innovate further.

In short, Europe’s universities need autonomy to be free to innovate, and it is through this innovation Europe’s knowledge-based economy will grow.

Patrick Krassén  
Policy Officer, European Liberal  
Students Network (ELSN)



# LYMEC

## NEW BUREAU

In May LYMEC elected a new bureau at the congress in Sinaia, Romania. Good news for the girls in LYMEC: the majority of women in the bureau has never been so big with five out of seven! Instead of standard texts about themselves they introduce each other to you, as they already know each other quite well after exchanging hundreds of e-mails a week in the last few months.

Alexander Plahr (JuLis, Germany) – President, [alexander@lymec.eu](mailto:alexander@lymec.eu)

Mette LykkeNielsen (RU, Denmark) – Vice-president, [mette@lymec.eu](mailto:mette@lymec.eu)

Matilda Flemming (SU, Finland), Treasurer, [matilda@lymec.eu](mailto:matilda@lymec.eu)

VedranaGujic (Mladi HNS, Croatia), Bureau member / political officer, [vedrana@lymec.eu](mailto:vedrana@lymec.eu)

Claudia Benchescu (CSL, Romania), Bureau member / campaigns officer, [claudia@lymec.eu](mailto:claudia@lymec.eu)

JeroenDiepemaat (JOVD, the Netherlands), Bureau member / press & communications officer, [jeroen@lymec.eu](mailto:jeroen@lymec.eu)

Mireia Huerta i Sala (JNC, Catalonia), Bureau member / projects officer, [mireia@lymec.eu](mailto:mireia@lymec.eu)

### Claudia about Alexander

We're gonna do what they say can't be done' - does this sound familiar? I believe it's obviously Alexander Plahr, LYMEC's president. According to his favorite saying and his name he is known as the typical German leader that the organization needs: very organised, self-confident, trustworthy, committed, a true colleague and friend who anyone can count on. He knows how to divide tasks, and is able to work with any sort of characters if the target is the same.

Alexander is 30 years old and comes from one of LYMEC's strongest organisations - JuLis Germany. But now he is representing the young liberal Europe. He strongly believes in a united Europe, in freedom, democracy and responsibility and he always fights for what he believes in.

### Jeroen about Mette

Mette is one of the veterans of this bureau and a convinced European. In the previous bureau she was campaigns officer, now she is vice-president. Mette already has a long history in LYMEC, when I attended my first LYMEC event in 2006, she was already there as international officer of Radikal Ungdom.

As you know liberalism has many different forms, from left- to rightwing and from social to classical. Although I hate to label different 'sorts' of liberalism, I would certainly say that Mette is a pure social-liberal, with a typical Nordic 'flavor'.

This causes, every now and then, a fierce debate on the principals of liberalism and many practical issues. But as liberals we luckily have more in common than we have dissimilarities.

Mette is one of the many liberal women who does not need any positive discrimination. She works hard for LYMEC and contributes very much to the work of this bureau. That is a big achievement, especially together with the busy job she has as Secretary General of the Danish European movement.

### Alexander about Matilda

If you are a bit like me, when you first hear Matilda describing herself as a feminist, you wonder why somebody like that would be active in a liberal organization. Don't be misled, though! Because there is the other Matilda as well: The hardcore fighter for individual rights, staunchly in favor of market-society and against all forms of government paternalism. Somehow these two political viewpoints also nicely manage to form a coherent personality. And what a personality it is!

Matilda is the tough northern-European-style custodian of LYMEC finances, always ready to veto an expense or hunt down unnecessary spending. Loved by the auditors and feared by claimants, she makes sure our finances are sustainable, debt-free and transparent. At the same time, it is not unusual for Matilda to move from one EU member state to another a few times a year. This also is the reason you never can be sure just on what mobile number to call – but rest assured, on one of them you usually catch her!

### Mireia about Jeroen

He is a student in Public Administration, at the University of Twente in Enschede, a hard working person with strong liberal values. His youth combined with his open character and his kindness makes him a good politician with a lot of future possibilities.

But what I love the most and makes him special, is that he always has a smile to show you. He always has a positive answer and I am sure, that he is the person that you can have confidence in.

### Mette about Vedrana

Vedrana Gujic is one of the best organized and well-structured persons I know, therefore it is a pleasure to work with her in the LYMEC bureau. When you think something is not possible just wait until you asked if Vedrana can handle it. Nothing is impossible with her. With all this structuring and organizing you should think that Vedrana was a bit boring when it comes to parties. But there you cannot be more wrong. She is always ready for a great LYMEC party.

This summer we had a bureau meeting in Zagreb. Of course Vedrana arranged the whole thing perfectly. She showed us great hospitality by letting some of the bureau members stay at her own home. She made sure that everybody had whatever they needed. She even made it possible for the LYMEC bureau to meet the Croatian president. LYMEC can be happy to have her as bureau member for the next two years. I am sure we are going to see LYMEC at new heights, with Vedrana greatly contributing to the team effort.

### Vedrana about Mireia

The first word that comes up to my mind when I think about Mireia Huerta i Sala is Catalunya. This simple, yet meaningful word describes a lot in itself. It presents the joy, the passion, the dedication and strong commitment of its people, not only to their national beliefs, but also to everything they do.

When she became a LYMEC Bureau member, she took a task of our project officer, a job she took serious and applied an in-depth approach to reforming and improving our modes of functioning. Also, her professional education made her a reliable expert in topics of liberal economy, which is indeed an added value to our Bureau in times when the economic topics are on the top of our priority list.

Besides the serious working relations, Mireia is a great friend, a good choice to hang out and go clubbing with and especially for shopping. She always has some really cool Catalan clothes and accessories that cannot pass unnoticed :).

### Matilda about Claudia

Our lovely Claudia is the campaign master of the bureau and she is also the Bureau Member responsible for ELSN. Her interest for student issues is not surprising considering that she does not mind studying – she has just started her Ph.D. She also has a background as Vice-president of the Liberal Students Club in Romania.

As the student of Economics she is, her main political interest lies in the field of Economics, but also in related fields such as youth unemployment, youth entrepreneurship and environmental issues.

She has been able to use her expertise on these issues as she has been the personal adviser on economic and financial issues for several Members of Parliament. She is currently the personal adviser for MP Daniel Chitoiu and MEP Renate Weber, Romanian MEP.

At times it seems that Claudia's Blackberry is a part of her whole being, since she is always connected to the outer world. From a Bureau perspective this is great news since this means that Claudia always replies first!



## Greece and the asylum crisis: A ticking political bomb and a European human tragedy

Article by Liv Holm Andersen, Radikal Ungdom, Danmark

One of New Libertas' new writers, Liv Holm Andersen, is doing her political science internship in the Danish Embassy of Greece.

Greece is a quite vulnerable country – in several sentences. In this article Liv describe the asylum crisis' political and humanitarian aspect from an eye witness position, since she is beside the internship in the embassy doing voluntary work with immigrants in Athens.

For the ones not aware of it Greece is experiencing increasing problems with irregular immigration: In 2009 126.145 irregular immigrants crossed the borders of Greece and according to forecasts the level will remain the same in 2010: In the 1st quarter of 2010 Greece counts for 82% of all arrests of irregular immigrants at EU's external borders.

The irregular immigrants come from both Eastern European, neighbouring countries in the Balkans, Asia and Africa. In recent years the primary countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq and Georgia and just as there are serious problems with irregular border-crossing a major problem as well is the phenomenon of "over-stayers" meaning foreigners who have had a temporary work or residence permit in Greece but which for some reason have not returned.

As a consequence of the above described massive migration pressures there has been a backlog of 46.000 asylum cases in the second body of the Greek asylum system which puts great pressure on the Greek authorities as well as on the Greek society in general. There are no screening centres at the entrance to Greece as well as there are very limited accommodation facilities for irregular immigrants and asylum seekers which in reality create the result that the irregular immigrants in the entrance to Greece get a stamp and then go to the centres of Greece's big cities where they try to find work, beg for money, live in the streets and from charity.

### The Greek asylum crisis as a European problem?!

Some get caught by the police, some get detained in camps under miserable condition and yet some try to get to other European countries – normally with the result that they're send back to Greece due to the Dublin II.

This has almost created political crisis among the member states of the European Union since many countries due to the Greek treatment of the irregular immigrants – lack of accommodation and health care plus many cases of violence, humiliation and even rapes are reported as well as the juridical insufficient handling of asylum cases – have stopped sending asylum seekers back to Greece.

That the Greek asylum crisis at least in reality IS a European problem has been shown not only by the Greek authorities and politicians who keep asking for – and even demanding – the European Union to take their share of the burden, but it has also been shown by the many rulings of both national courts of the EU member states, the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, the debates in all the national parliaments as well as the debates in the European forums on this ongoing topic.

Also Commissioner Cecilia Malström has been visiting Greece to get a first-hand impression of the conditions. She stated that the reception of the irregular immigrants as well that of the asylum seekers is unsatisfactory since people are living under bad conditions and are waiting years for a clarification on their case.

On her visit she also assured the Greeks that European assistance is on its way to Greece. It is expected that the European Commission, and later on probably the European Asylum Office (EASO), will play a coordinating role to facilitate that other member states of the EU step in with assistance in order to help Greece.

### A ticking bomb in a political Laredo land

And the EU better hurry because while the Greek asylum system and the authorities dealing with irregular immigration have already collapsed the political system in general is yet

“For somebody who actually follows the political debate and reads the newspaper from time to time all the above listed facts and analysis will have appeared a dozen of times and can easily be found because really the Greek asylum crisis has been the hot topic of the past months.”

only shaking under the feet of the Greeks. But the massive pressure from irregular immigration is a ticking political bomb (especially with the economic crisis taken into consideration) which has already turned some areas into pure Laredo lands with poverty, homelessness, begging, criminality and so forth.

And from this a wave of ultra-nationalism, racism and politically motivated violence has followed which again is putting yet more pressure on the state of law and a Greek political system which is to be considered very fragile at the moment.

All this is well known news. For somebody who actually follows the political debate and reads the newspaper from time to time all the above listed facts and analysis will have appeared a dozen of times and can easily be found because really the Greek asylum crisis has been the hot topic of the past months. And much has indeed been said on the juridical aspect, on political responsibility and on human rights on the paper.

**... in reality this is a question about people!**

A lot less, though, has been said about – and even from – the children in Omonia Square whose reality is that they will not eat if the Catholic, Orthodox and other humanitarian organisations didn't provide meals of out-dated groceries at their lunch time.

To be frank I was never really a huge fan of any kind of religious aid foundations but a friend from the Danish-Greek Association in Athens made me come to help out one day to see what it was like – and so I ended up as a volunteer in Caritas Hellas.

It is tough to say what one is actually expecting when going to such an event as making lunch for 250 asylum seekers from all over the world in Omonia in Athens, but I was shocked and at the same time – probably due to my political activities – somewhat indignant and even ashamed as a European citizen.

The preparations of the lunching starts normally at 10.30 with cutting vegetables, preparing trays, putting water and salt in all the tables in the poorly furnished room, which can host maybe 60 persons at the time. In a wall across the room from the entrance a large catholic cross is hanging between the big windows from where you can hear the noise from the street. From 10 o'clock or even before you can hear the noise of the crowd. The crowd, who wants to get in. The crowd who wants the lunch for themselves and their children secured for another day. I was surprised by the crowd and by the fact that several doormen are needed to control it. It looked mostly like an aid scene from a catastrophe area where people are pushing, waiting in line, hoping to manage to get something.



### Lunch with the “illegal” children

At 12 o'clock the crowd gets in – waiting with their food tickets in line. Men, women, elderly people, children and even babies fill the room. The children are many times smiling and sometimes it is possible to make a little fun with them while they're waiting in the line, but the grown-ups pretty much look like what they are: The world society's losers. They have eyes full of pain and mistrust and they look worn out, like the tiniest hope has left their mind a long time ago.

Some children at the age of 13-14 – mainly boys – are alone. They're eating their bowl of noodles or lentils and they're talking with their mouth full, making jokes and laughing just like normal 13-14 year olds. Which they could of course be. IF they had nicer clothes, better teeth and cleaner faces. And a mother, a father, a house and maybe even a dog to come home to. These are the illegal children. You read correct. The grown-ups are always – in the debate – referred to as “illegal immigrants” – and as a logical consequence hence the children are “illegal children”. But the right term, I believe, is irregular immigrant – and so we, the volunteers, are told to speak about them as irregular – because no person is illegal! A person naturally cannot be illegal.

No matter what, these children are the most vulnerable group of all the irregular immigrants since they are easily victims of exploitation of different kinds like prostitution, illegal labour, trafficking and so on and they're more likely to get attacked when carrying small money or even a chocolate bar from Caritas saved for later. In Athens metro missing children are reported constantly – but if these children get lost and are missing nobody will report them.

### The end of charity-lentils in Europe's very own 3.world

At 13.30 it is over. The food of today is all gone. More people though are waiting in line – today they were not able to get any lunch. It is heart-breaking and makes you realize that the hours of lunch-preparation today is not even a drop in a big ocean. 250 got lunch but if 25.000 are waiting what is the actual difference? At least it also provides an answer to the often heard argument “...but feeding them is really only a pull-factor!” because it is simply not true! Firstly because there is naturally not food for everybody and secondly because very few people are willing to risk their lives and pay all the money they have even IF they were secured to end up with catholic charity-lentils the rest of their lives.

Now it is time for the dish-washing, sweeping the floors, putting chairs in the right position. So that everything is ready for tomorrow's lunch. And at 14.00 I'm back in the embassy. Still in Athens, but in the up-scale area of Kolonaki.

Kolonaki is about two kilometres away from Omonia square but yet it is situated in a totally different world



# NEWS

Latest news

## When elections affect more than only a state

Article by Michael Postel



Sunday 16 May 2010 - German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has elected a new government. Not yet, some might say, but let's take a closer look:

Germany's largest federal state by inhabitants and economic power has been ruled by Social Democrats (SPD) for some decades, later assisted by the Greens and since 2005 ruled by a coalition of Conservatives (CDU) and Liberals (FDP). There were some good reasons in 2005 to change to this coalition, as NRW's economic power in absolute numbers did not reflect its welfare anymore. On the contrary, welfare was decreasing as leftwing political forces preferred to go on subsidizing the large but ineffective industry of coal mining.

These days, importing anthracite from Australia (sic!) to keep the numerous power plants in NRW running is less expensive than using „homegrown“ coal. Still, the impact of these non-sustainable subsidies (this might be a pleonasm) can be seen today, when looking at gross domestic product or unemployment rate: the first only a bit above, the second even above German average. But speaking in absolute terms of economic power NRW would be the 6th most powerful country within the European Union - so, decisions in NRW do affect more than NRW itself.

But the political importance of the latest elections in May 2010 may be even higher than the economic implications. Representing about 22% of the German population, NRW's 6 representatives in German Bundesrat ensure the majority for important decisions taken by the conservative-liberal coalition in Berlin. Any change in NRW's government will lead to even more difficult discussions between Berlin and the federal states. The time is more than unfavorable: Germany's national government is on the point to introduce a major tax decrease or at least a tax simplification reform, all put on the agenda by Liberals. Now speaking about the actual result of this election: it does not put many things clear but one thing: the coalition of Conservatives and Liberals has lost their majority, mainly because of a 10% loss in votes on Conservative's side.

Reasons can be found in an overall discontent with the national government, rather than with the federal situation. Secondly, it is the first time for the left-wing populist party „DIE LINKE“ to enter this federal parliament - by taking 11 seats (FDP has 13). Because of a notably gain of seats by the Greens (from 12 to 23) and a stand-off between CDU and SPD (67 seats each, with a marginal lead by CDU in votes) talks are remaining very difficult over the last days. Though we cannot be sure about the outcome of these talks, there do remain only two possibilities to form the new government: a grand coalition of Conservatives and Social Democrats or a left-wing coalition of Social Democrats, Greens and Left-wing populists. Liberals did favour to continue the coalition with Conservatives, while ruling out any talks with parties who fancy a left-wing coalition with populists from DIE LINKE. In the end, and after five days of argy-bargy, Social Democrats and Greens invited Liberals and left-wing populists on the same day, by then effectively putting an end to any talks with Liberals and a coalition with Liberal participation, as Liberal party speakers stated subsequently. However, observers now expect long ongoing talks for the left-wing or a grand coalition - these talks might even last until summer break in August. Until then, Liberal ministers Andreas Pinkwart and Ingo Wolf remain in office.

“Since then a minority government by SPD and Greens that is tolerated by Die Linke was formed. Liberals expect it to fall soon and work everyday on freeing citizens from that leftish government. - The Editors”



## Freedom not fear in Berlin

At September 11th, the yearly Demonstration Freedom not Fear took, as the main event from an international action day, place in Berlin. The demonstration was organized by a broad alliance of more than 100 organizations from parties, worker unions, associations and many more. Topics like the data retention directive, Freedom of Speech and website access blocking were the main topics. All in all, 7.500 people joined on the street and 2.500 followed the demonstration via the live stream.

Also JuLis and FDP were part of this alliance. Civil liberties, data protection and free internet are already for a long time among our core topics. We wanted to show that we are fighting for civil liberties in the government and want to take back the restrictions of the last years under the black-red and red-green coalitions. On the other hand, we also want to raise the awareness of that topic within the population and make sure everybody will stand up for his own privacy.

In case of any further questions please don't hesitate the International Officer of JuLis, Julia Hesse ([hesse@julis.de](mailto:hesse@julis.de)).



## Slovakia earned a liberal party in its Parliament's composition

Monday 5 July 2010 - The people of the Slovak Republic on 12th June 2010 elected a new liberal political party SaS - Sloboda a Solidarita (Freedom and Solidarity) to their national parliament, gaining 22 out of 150 mandates. Since founding the party only in 2009, it has become the third largest party in the parliament and the second largest in the government, becoming part of the new coalition, strengthening the center-right political spectrum within the government. The presence of the SaS party in the government will make it possible for making economic and social reforms possible in the forthcoming election term. The party chairman Richard Sulík, who is the author of the Slovak flat tax, which brought a significant economic growth in Slovakia, together with other political leaders and experts will make every effort to fulfill their pre-election promises and implement all coalition agreements as well.

"Young liberals throughout Europe welcome the outcome of the Slovak elections. Liberalism has a lot to offer to central and eastern EU member states. Economic and personal freedoms combined with individual responsibility are the driving forces to modernize our continent and to have an open and competitive society. Therefore, we congratulate SaS and the Young Liberals Slovakia to their impressive election results and welcome their aim to reform the country!" comments Alexander Plahr, the President of the European Liberal Youth LYMEC.

"The dream of the Slovak liberals came true and they have a serious representation in our Parliament. We strongly appreciate that the young people contributed to a positive change in our country" comments Richard Švihura, the chairman of the Young Liberals Slovakia.

"After four long years of leftist and socialist administration, the Slovak citizens voted for a change and with it transferred the responsibility to the new government, which is obliged to restart the economy, deal with corruption and a lack of transparency in order to revitalize the judicial system. The Young Liberals were intensively participating in the party organization and campaigning, which reflected in two young liberals obtaining a mandate in our Parliament (Richard Švihura - president, Stanislav Fořt - general secretary). I am confident that they will not forget where they come from and will support the young liberal population henceforward." states Pavol Szabo, international officer of Young Liberals Slovakia.

# LYMEC STATEMENTS



## Commission calls for common taxes, LYMEC calls for common sense

Thursday 21 October 2010 - In his recently published document titled "The EU Budget Review", Commission President Barroso considers the creation of common EU taxes, considering for example an EU Value Added Tax (VAT) or an EU corporate income tax.

European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) President Alexander Plahr comments: "For years already LYMEC along its policy book is opposing actions that impose more harmonised tax levels across member states. Instead of fiscal harmonization, we believe in fiscal competition, which in the long run leads to lower tax levels and thus higher competitiveness."

"While common EU taxes might look tempting at first sight, in today's reality one can hardly imagine an EU VAT -even if it might be in addition to the national one- having the same level from Helsinki to Athens."

"The argument of transparency is also misleading here: Even today member states could already print on every tax bill the amount of those taxes that goes to the Union level. All that it would require would be the political will to do so."

"Even more, the counterweight to the power to levy taxes always has to be democratic control. In this regard -and this for once might not be the fault of the Commission- the European Union is just not there yet. One just needs to compare the number of times the respective national evening news show reports from the European Parliament and how often from your own national Parliament. And this in a setting where way more than half of our laws are passed in Strasbourg!"

"Most importantly however, this is about trust and politicians keeping their promises. Before the second Irish referendum, Irish voters were told that a yes vote for the Treaty of Lisbon would not lead to EU taxes. Now, not even one year after its coming into force, the Commission is pushing hard for precisely that EU tax that so categorically was ruled out before the referendum. Does MrBarroso therefore really wonder why citizens do not trust the Commission?"

Plahr continues: "I would really love to see if the Commission would put the same daring and creativity it currently focuses on the income side of the budget on the expenditure side - just with a bit more common sense. Why does the European Parliament still not has a single seat? Why do we spend more than 40 percent of the EU budget on subsidizing our farming sector? Why do many of MsAshtons civil servants have to earn more than the foreign ministers of their respective member states? These are the points MrBarroso should be bold enough to address!"

## Don't jeopardize our common currency by mock reforms!

Thursday 28 October 2010 - Reacting to current negotiations regarding the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, the European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) calls on EU leaders to not jeopardize the Euro currency by agreeing only on mock tightening of the Stability and Growth Pact.

LYMEC President Alexander Plahr states: "The stability of the Euro currency is to a large extent based on the credibility of its regulations and safeguards. However, the sanctions envisaged in the Stability and Growth Pact for excessive overspending have not once been employed, despite massive violations of the pact by numerous member states. This non-employment is due to political meddling by the affected countries, big and small, in the ECOFIN council."

As a result of irresponsible budget policies and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis, the European Financial Stability Facility was set up as a temporary special purpose vehicle, able to provide up to 440 billion Euros of credit to those member states that private lenders would no longer serve because of the risk of their defaulting.

Plahr continues: "Citizens rightly fear the possibility of the transition of the Eurozone into a debt union, which is clearly forbidden in article 125 TFEU and ruled out in the promises given to the population when the Euro was introduced. This has to be strictly avoided, since it would diminish the credibility of not only the legal and political arrangements establishing the Euro currency, but also diminish the overall credibility of promises given in connection with the European integration process." We as the Young Liberals of Europe therefore call for:

- Strict budget discipline in all member states of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). As laid down in the treaties, member states ought to aim for balanced budgets, with a three percent budget deficit being the maximum allowed under extraordinary conditions. Stronger emphasis should also be laid on staying below the maximum debt level of 60% of GDP as defined in the second criterion of the SGP.
- A stronger enforcement of the criteria of the Stability and Growth Pact by creating gradual and automatic sanctions in the preventive and corrective arms of the Stability and Growth Pact which are not only financial, but also political, and calls for a new Stability and Growth Pact that would allow for temporary suspensions of payments from the cohesion and structural funds to countries that repeatedly violate the SGP.
- The depoliticisation of the power to enforce the Stability and Growth Pact, by moving the decision from the ECOFIN council to an independently enforced mechanism executed by the European Commission;
- The orderly phase-out of the EFSF on 30 June 2013, as planned and promised at the time of its creation;
- The introduction of European standards for EMU member states' financial accounts, including clear and enforceable reporting standards that are cross-checked by EUROSTAT.

Plahr, who also is a member of the ELDR Bureau, adds: "These are also the demands of the European Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR), as agreed on at the recent Party Congress in Helsinki. We call on all European leaders to take their responsibility seriously and deliver a stricter Stability and Growth Pact along those lines!"

## Young liberal leaders around Europe meet in Budapest to exchange views on Labour Mobility

Wednesday 3 november 2010 - More than 30 Presidents of LYMEC member organizations met last weekend, 29- 31 October, in Budapest (Hungary) to discuss about Labour Mobility across Europe.

LYMEC traditionally organizes once a year a meeting dedicated to Presidents and leaders of its member organizations to give them the opportunity to exchange views and opinions, to network and discuss some of the current topics around Europe.

This year LYMEC dedicated its annual meeting to discuss about Labour Mobility around Europe, a theme that affects all European countries and which has macroeconomic effects.

The meeting was divided in three panels: Introduction into the Labour Market: definition, principles and regulations; Models of Labour Market: Youth unemployment of job security?; and Liberal Solutions for Labour Mobility, where the participants could have an overview of what do we understand for Labour Mobility, which are the opportunities and the problems caused by the mobility, and which are the best practices in Europe to face this issue. The young leaders could exchange views and give their opinions during all panel sessions and the two workshops organised.

LYMEC will distribute a Summary of the meeting among all its members with the conclusions of the event.



## Pa viza në Europë

Article by Mette Lykke Nielsen

*“The underlying message for the EU is quite clear “if you want to become a member, if you want prosperity in a foreseeable future, then Albanian politics need to change fundamentally and fast.”*

I was in Tirana during the week and in all the streets there was signs and posters with free visa travel. There were signs to all over Europe. Nobody talked about the opinion from the Commission. I understand the profound symbolism and the joy and happiness of the Albanian people in getting rid of visas for short visits, but I think it has been blown out of proportion. Yes it will make travel much more convenient and dramatically expand the degrees of freedom when to travel. But it doesn't give every Albanian right to enter Europe, it doesn't make it easier for students to take an education in Europe (if the travel is above 90 days you still have to apply for visa). The fundamental requirements for entry into Schengen have not changed. Even though the Albania citizens are left to believe that when seeing all the new traffic signs in Tirana.

The Commissions Opinion on Albania's application for candidate status, however, gives cause for anything but celebration. It is a really sad document to read about the state of affairs in Albania. Not much is a surprise. It has been said and criticized for years by the international society - and has been ignored for a long time by the political class. The report is a important document - it is Albania's first real exam vis-à-vis the EU-membership. Unlike the yearly progress report, which tracks the changes from year to year, the Commissions Opinion is a report of what has been accomplished till now. It is also an evaluation of what is likely to be accomplished in the short to medium term as things are going. It is a document, which will be read by a much wider audience than the yearly progress reports.

Unfortunately Albania failed the exam. What is even more troubling is that the Commission sees few prospects for Albania passing the entry exam in the short to medium term. In certain areas, such as environment, long term seems to be the only realistic perspective. Thus there is no basis to start negotiations nor even grant candidate status. Unlike Montenegro who got a “yes”, “no” - Albania got a “no”, “no”.

Many Albanians had set their hopes for membership much sooner than now seems likely. It is a problem because many foreign investors and governments were counting on Albania being on track towards the EU. The report card shatters unrealistic expectations and the image Albania has been trying to present to the outside world. If you speak with the government you hear that the opposition is to blame and if you speak with the opposition Berisha and his government is to blame. For me it was clear that the answers lay on both sides. If the current political crises where the government and the opposition don't work together because of disagreement about the results of the last national elections, isn't solved, Albania will not move towards membership of the EU. The current political stalemate is not a cause. It is a symptom of what is wrong with the political culture. The Commission Opinion is constructed as a wakeup call to the Albanian political elite. And of course, indirectly to the Albanian voters, who cast their votes.

The underlying message for the EU is quite clear “if you want to become a member, if you want prosperity in a foreseeable future, then Albanian politics need to change fundamentally and fast. Membership of the EU is not like membership of NATO, WTO, OSCE etc. It is a huge undertaking for both the EU and the prospective member. And it is an extremely costly affair for the European taxpayers. Membership is simply not going to happen, if requirements are not met. Anything but full compliance would in today's political reality be political suicide in many if not most EU member states.

What was positive about the visit was the motivation, the drive and the energy among the young people. Many of the young people act and think like Europeans. Albania and the Albanians have the capacity - but there is a lack of will. The hope is that the Albanians will be able to see and be inspired by the outside world and that it will be the driving force for change.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

The LYMEC bureau drafted a working plan for the period 2010-2012. In this working plan the bureau sets its priorities for their mandate. Besides all kinds of proposals, which will be debated on the congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the working plan proposes the yearly themes for 2011 and 2012. For 2011 this will be state debt and intergenerational fairness and for 2012 Civil liberties. For 2011 the events and their topics are already planned and in preparation, below you will find a first agenda. As soon as the exact dates are confirmed, you will of course find these in the agenda on the website and in the LYMEC newsletter.

## Agenda 2011

Seminar about pension systems  
Congress

Spring, The Netherlands  
Spring, The Netherlands

Flexicurity seminar

Spring/summer, Italy

ALDE summer school

Summer, Brussels

Seminar about immigration in regard to  
demographic changes  
Congress

Autumn, Barcelona  
Autumn, Barcelona

Young Leaders Meeting about  
'Youth representation in politics'

October/November, Lithuania

ELDR Congress

Autumn

Healthcare seminar

Winter, Austria

**Crimes should be  
punished and not  
hidden.**



**Oppose plans to block parts of the internet.**

[www.deletion-not-blocking.eu](http://www.deletion-not-blocking.eu)