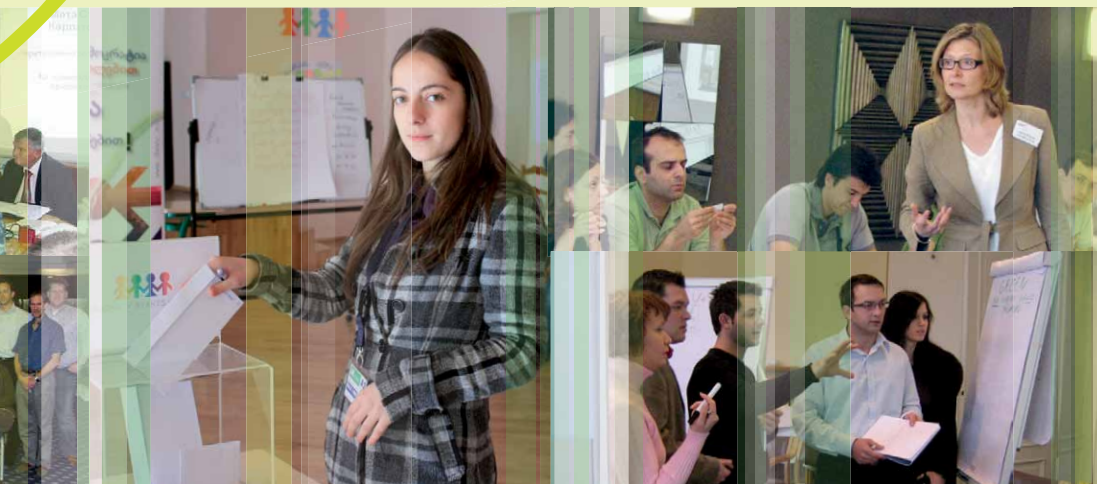


20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

THE ONGOING NEED FOR PROMOTING DEMOCRACY



20 Years of International Solidarity

The ongoing need for promoting democracy

CDA Foundation for International Solidarity 'Eduardo Frei'

Buitenom 18

PO Box 30453

2500 GL The Hague

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)70-342 4888

Fax: +31 (0)70-360 3635

www.cda.nl/eff

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Part I – Preface

Anecdote EFF trainer

Annet Doesburg:

A few years ago, I gave a training in Moldova for the youth organization of the Christian Democrats. Whereas the citizens encounter many difficulties and life is definitely not easy, the youth are optimistic about the future of Moldova, a country that they praise in the evening with own poetry and songs. Even though the trainings are exhausting, it is definitely worth it as I retrieve so much energy and inspiration from meeting brave and motivated people and get a chance to get to know our neighbors!



Part I – Preface

Dear reader,

In 1990, a little less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the CDA founded the Eduardo Frei Foundation, promoting international solidarity. The fall of the Berlin Wall made the need to establish relationships with our new neighbours all the more apparent. These neighbours had been politically suppressed and it was obvious that we needed to show them another means of political engagement: democracy. More than 20 years have passed since the Berlin Wall came down and we have been able to provide help by sharing knowledge in many of these new democracies. But the need for information and best practices in the fields of democracy, political culture and programmatic party politics is still very high.

The work of political foundations is unique and important as part of the process of democratisation in general. We have to work together with those political parties in these new democracies to encourage them to take responsibility and fulfil their role as representatives of the people. Free and fair elections are major elements of a democracy. However, the work does not stop there; the elected representatives need to take responsibility. This is where political foundations can add value and help establish and build democratic systems.

Over the past 20 years, the Eduardo Frei Foundation has been able to create close ties with sister parties in Eastern Europe. This network is important. One of the added benefits is that a number of former trainees have become ministers or deputy prime minister or hold other significant positions in government or other sectors. In addition, the CDA/EFF has been one of the main drivers behind setting up the Robert Schuman Institute in Budapest. This has had positive spin-off effects, for example the foundation of the Institute of Political Education in Ukraine and EDUCATIO in Lithuania. The transfer of knowledge is beginning to bear fruit.

This booklet includes background information on the EFF and some examples of the results of our work. It shows how our expertise can be of use elsewhere, on a demand driven approach. It also shows the strong networks that result and finally, it shows solidarity beyond borders based on the grounds of democracy, rule of law and thus creating mutual benefits. A big thank you goes to our volunteer trainers, our international partners and the many people that help us.

Marnix van Rij
President

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the Eduardo Frei Foundation carried out hundreds of projects on behalf of the development of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. The foundation focuses specifically on political parties, as they are key to a successful democratic multiparty system. Civic education is important to the overall process of democratisation, especially in terms of creating stability in the political landscape.

The countries in which the foundation operates and the political parties are in the mid of societal transformation. Therefore, a high demand exists for – for example – party programme development, ideas concerning the role of the individual versus state, subsidiarity and decentralisation but also political integrity. The added value is that political foundations are able to address these issues of civic education based on their know-how and principles, without imposing these. In 2010 the foundation conducted over sixty projects in which members of political parties and politicians participated.

The Eduardo Frei Foundation is linked to the Dutch Christian Democratic Party. The Eduardo Frei Foundation (“EFF”) - the foundation for international solidarity of the Christian Democratic Appeal (“CDA”) has set out three goals:

- Advocate Christian democratic thinking on the subject of international co-operation in general and especially that of development co-operation and human rights;
- promote continuous awareness in above-mentioned fields among CDA members and affiliated organisations regarding the above-mentioned topics; and
- develop and support initiatives, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and developing countries, aimed at promoting Christian democratic thinking.

The foundation has a board of 11 people and the foundation has over 60 trainers who admirably and voluntarily devote themselves to this work. Moreover, the foundation can always rely on various other people within the CDA political party.

Main partners

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the International Republican Institute are important partners. Successful projects are being implemented in close co-operation. The Eduardo Frei Foundation believes in the added value of joined activities in which knowledge and expertise can be shared. At least once a year, a consultation takes place between the Eduardo Frei Foundation and its main partners.



The EFF Board is grateful for the contribution and commitment from various committees and other partners with which the EFF co-operates, for example the CDA Foreign Affairs Committee and working groups from the European People's Party. Compliments must be extended to the EFF trainers who admirably and voluntarily devoted themselves to promoting Christian democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Without their efforts and support, the EFF could not exist.

Central and Eastern Europe: working procedure

The EFF Board of Directors acts on behalf of the CDA as receiver and custodian of the funds received. The EFF has a strategic, long-term policy plan as well as an annual plan in which priorities and policy have been set out. The foundation works demand-driven, so annual consultation processed with its partners determine the annual plans.

Pursuant to the conditions of the subsidy scheme of the Societal Transformation Programme (Matra) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EFF works with political parties from the following countries up to now: Armenia, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Belarus. The EFF secretariat receives project proposals from sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe. For each project a goal description, a draft programme and a budget proposal have to be submitted. The proposals are either approved or rejected by the Board depending on the content, the goals and the budget. The Audit Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently requests extensive financial accounts.

Projects in Central and Eastern Europe

In order to facilitate collaboration with Christian democratic parties in Central and Eastern European countries, the EFF Board has determined six categories in which projects can be classified.

1. Education and Training Courses

According to the EFF Board, Education and Training Courses is the most important category. It includes training courses (ideology, policy content, communication) which are carried out by CDA experts in Central and Eastern European countries. The trainers are informed extensively beforehand with regard to the specific local situation.

2. Conferences and Congresses

Conferences and congresses are meant to contribute to the development of the Christian democratic idea in Central and Eastern Europe. It includes activities that are organised together with foundations for solidarity and sister parties.

3. Regional Projects

Regional projects represent a cross-border regional image, including, for example, the annual (financial) EFF contribution - by EFF trainers - to the Robert Schuman Institute in Budapest.

4. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance on the one hand consists of direct and focused advice to a sister party in a certain country and, on the other hand, of composing or translating documents that could be of importance to the sister party. Direct financial support or other means of material support are not provided.

5. Exchanges

For individuals or groups, the EFF can organise a study tour to the Netherlands. During such a visit, one immediately observes the local existing structure, the functioning of society and the Christian democratic contribution thereto.

6. Orientation Visits

Orientation visits by the EFF are meant to gain insight into a country's political situation and the significance of Christian democracy in said country. Such a visit is usually in preparation of new collaborative efforts or projects.

Encouraging the debate on Development Aid

Besides its work of the foundation on behalf of the development of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, the foundation encourages people to debate on issues related to development aid. The board of the foundation believes it is important to continuously reflect on the future of development aid, based on issue related topics. In the spring of 2008 until December 2010 the EFF started an ongoing dialogue series on development aid entitled "Beyond Borders". Seven topics on development aid will be researched over this three-year period: religion, the 3D approach (Defence, Development and Diplomacy), globalisation, new scarcities, new donors such as China, democracy and human rights, and the Millennium Development Goals. On these issues, many meetings were held and seven conferences were held that each were attended by approximately 150 to 225 individuals.

Publications

Lastly, since its founding in 1990, the EFF has published (and translated) several publications, which, for example, are used in education and training courses. A list of these publications is available upon request.



Part II – Historical overview

Anecdote EFF trainer

Michiel Butselaar

Georgia changed from a communist dictatorship to a country dominated by capitalism. During an EFF-training of a Georgian teacher on public finance, we – the Dutch trainers – started a discussion about his argumentation about our way of making decisions and administering finances. According to him, the Netherlands is a country that has gone way too far concerning the role of the state when it comes to public services. Pointing at the holes in the streets, we wondered whether a flat tax of 20% is the solution to sound public finances. *The state a shield for the weak?* After some time of disagreement, mutual understanding eventually developed. Also the participants – skeptical of everything that looks like communism or socialism - seemed to be learning from another way of thinking about public services. New insights were the result of the debate.

Part II - Historical overview

The 20th anniversary of Eduardo Frei Foundation means 20 years of commitment and solidarity with the people in neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. This section describes the foundation's coming into being, devoting a great deal of attention to the international setting and factors leading to the set-up of the political foundation of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA).

An interview with four people that were all involved from the very start and at later stages.

The Eduardo Frei Foundation was founded in 1990. What were the internal and external factors leading to the establishment of an international solidarity foundation of the CDA?

Wim van Velzen: “In the 1980s, international developments such as the freedom movements in Latin America and the collapse of the Soviet Union did not pass unnoticed. Helmut Kohl and other European party leaders expressed a vital interest in Eastern European countries. I noticed that we all wanted to increase cooperation with the democratic forces in those countries. We also realised that, whereas Germany and Austria already had political foundations as well as an extensive network including the democratic forces in those countries, the Netherlands had no such organisations and were not part of the show. This is one of the reasons why the CDA decided to become active, which resulted in two initiatives: the foundation of what is currently known as the Robert Schuman Institute, and the establishment of the Eduardo Frei Foundation, the international political foundation of the CDA. The latter became the instrument through which the CDA provides support to like-minded parties worldwide, particularly in Eastern Europe.”

Jos van Gennip: “The 1970s and 1980s were interesting times as freedom movements rose to power all over the world and introduced democratic reform. In Latin America, for example, the CDA developed close ties with the Christian Democratic Party, a freedom movement led by Eduardo Frei. The cooperation between the CDA and the Chilean Christian Democratic Party can be seen as the forerunner of the kind of cooperation that the CDA developed later on by founding the Eduardo Frei Foundation and the Netherlands



Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). When Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, I was asked by the Minister for Development Cooperation at the time to work out a formula which would enable political parties to support the upcoming elections and the post-apartheid democratic system. That was the beginning of the South Africa Foundation, which later changed its name to NIMD. At the same time, the CDA responded to developments taking place in Eastern Europe and established the Eduardo Frei Foundation. Shortly after that, with the financial assistance provided under the MATRA programme, the EFF was able to develop bilateral relationships with like-minded parties.”

Jan van Laarhoven: “Let me stress that, for the CDA, ideologically motivated reasons also played a major role in the establishment of the foundation. Development cooperation has always been an important topic within our party. In my position as chair of the Gelderland region, I was pushed by members of local and provincial councils to become involved in the EFF and organise activities. In the first years of the foundation’s existence, the region organised several conferences on development cooperation. These were the very first activities of the foundation.”

The Eduardo Frei Foundation aims to promote Christian democratic thinking. How does this fit into the context of Central and Eastern Europe?

Jos van Gennip: “In most African countries, it was almost impossible to identify parties that were ideologically oriented in the same way as we are in the Netherlands. However, many of the freedom movements under the former Soviet sphere of influence were oriented content-wise in similar ways as in Western Europe. For that reason, bilateral relationships between political foundations of the respective Dutch parties and their sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe made sense. An additional advantage was the fact that the party leaders were interested in cooperating with the Dutch foundations. After all, they provided an alternative to the already well-established German and Austrian foundations. Dutch involvement was very welcome.”

Piet Bukman: “If the EFF considers supporting a party, it looks at the mindset of the group and whether it fits broadly with our Christian democratic views. What matters for fruitful cooperation is a common ideological basis and similar ways of thinking. Parties need not be copies of the CDA. If you look at the European People’s Party (EPP) you will realise that parties with different party programmes work together. This is due to the fact that the aims and values of these parties share a common denominator. This is where one can find the connecting point with many of the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. It is for this reason that

it makes sense to cooperate while at the same time refraining from imposing our vision of what we consider to be good governance.”

Jan van Laarhoven: “The position of politics based on religious beliefs in countries that were dominated by atheistic systems is quite difficult. The position of religion in politics has developed differently compared with that in the Netherlands. Cooperation with political parties in those countries should not mean literally copying our model of Christian democracy. However, what works well is going there as a coach with a conviction and trying to apply it together with the participants to the country-specific context.”

Piet Bukman: “Let me add that the goals of the EFF are increasingly being interpreted in a less stringent way. This is due to the fact that you cannot transfer your model of Christian democracy one-on-one to the political context in another country. This is even more relevant if you have a closer look at the countries the EFF works in today. In the Netherlands, we are inclined to say that the way we see democracy is the right way. However, the work of political foundations is not about transplanting the Dutch model; rather, it is about discussing the Dutch model and together discussing the best model within the local context.”

*To what extent does the Netherlands benefit from the work of the EFF?
Is there a self-interest?*

Wim van Velzen: “In the period prior to the establishment of political foundations such as the Eduardo Frei Foundation, the CDA, PvdA and VVD agreed that the envisaged work of such foundations was necessary. There was consensus about the fact that we needed to become involved. It was obvious that it was also in our own interest to have stable neighbouring countries. At the same time, these countries had an immense economic potential. Our country, with its export-oriented economy, had additional reasons. The Netherlands is probably one of the countries that has benefited most from the opening up of the Eastern European neighbours and their integration into the European Union. ”

Will the work of the Eduardo Frei Foundation continue to be important?

Piet Bukman: “Absolutely. What we see in the countries concerned – including the new member states of the EU – is that it takes much longer for them to stabilise than we had hoped. It was naïve to think that



a suppressive government that had been in power for several decades would simply vanish without leaving significant scars in society. The absence of active civil societies in all former CIS countries is the biggest social challenge that is left from the communist regimes. However, active civil societies are crucial to being able to influence politics and stabilise the political situation. This stability is still lacking in many of the countries, as is illustrated by the fact that political parties can do well at one point, but suddenly implode and disappear from the political stage.”

Wim van Velzen: “I am convinced that the work of the EFF and political foundations in general is still very important. Today, 20 years after the establishment of the EFF, we have moved further to the East and are conducting activities in countries such as Georgia. However, it takes generations for countries to change. In 1991, I talked to a Czechoslovak who was 60 years old at the time. He said: *‘I expect that my grandchildren will live good lives. My daughter’s generation is a lost generation but I can only hope that my grandchildren will have good lives’*. I think this sentence says everything that needs to be said to answer this question.”

Jan van Laarhoven: “In addition to promoting Christian democracy, the EFF has devoted its time to the more general goal of raising awareness of development cooperation and human rights in the Netherlands. Keeping alive the idea of international solidarity is extremely important these days and maybe even more relevant than ever before. In Dutch society, individualisation has gone very far. Many people have lost all sense of what is going on in the world. This is where – especially from a Christian democratic point of view – we have to take responsibility.”

What do you think should be a focal point for the EFF in the years to come?

Piet Bukman: “In order to overcome political instability in the countries concerned, civil societies should be supported and encouraged to take responsibility and become more active. This is where the EFF makes a small but observable contribution. In this context, encouraging the younger generation is especially important to ensure that it does not become disillusioned by politics. In addition to encouraging the younger generation, it is also important to promote the development of networks such as trade unions, professional guilds, employers’ associations, etc., in order to transfer responsibility from the state to civil levels.”

Jos van Gennip: “From all over the whole world, Christian democratic parties approach the EFF for support. But also non-Christian democratic parties are

strongly interested in our thinking, from social market economy to the relation between faith and politics. Concerning Eastern Europe, it would be useful to select some topics that are relevant to the countries concerned and promote these. EFF should focus on content rather than skills training.”

Jan van Laarhoven: “People need to develop their own democratic systems. These are not the democratic systems as we know them in Western Europe. Eastern Europe should be looked at from a different perspective. Politics in these countries is not as ideologically oriented as politics in Western Europe. If we realise that our democratic system also has shortcomings and that no democratic system is perfect, but still the best form of all possible forms of government, we are on the right track. This is where political foundations can play a significant role. We need to look for unconventional solutions. It does not help if we teach others our way of thinking and then leave it to the trainees to apply the lessons learned to their specific cultural setting. Instead, we should support promising politicians in finding these unconventional solutions together. Also, I think that it would make sense to limit the activities of the EFF to three to five countries and then go more into detail in discussing how to translate democratic theory into practice in the countries concerned.”

Wim van Velzen: “Investing in the younger generation and supporting it in its personal development is crucial. International networks and exchanges between groups of youths are good ways to trigger mutual understanding and an awareness that several solutions to a problem exist. Looking beyond borders is important for Dutch youth as well as for young people in (South) Eastern Europe. At the same time, we should also invest in providing training on selected topics that are important for the country concerned. The fact that projects of the EFF are demand-driven ensures that the country’s challenges are discussed in training sessions. After all, in the end, a country’s inhabitants know best what that country is need of. We can only support them in this process. This approach should continue to be the most important element of the work of the EFF in the future.”



Anecdote EFF trainer

Huibert van Rossum

A small country as The Netherlands in a World that is more and more interwoven, makes it crucial to be part of the game. Especially in Europe we need to make an active contribution. The Eduardo Frei Foundation contributes to this. The Christian Democratic principles in this connection are the basis to talk and discuss with the people of countries that look for the right answers to difficult challenges in society. As trainer I got the opportunity to make my contribution. Twenty years Eduardo Frei Foundation demonstrates that construction works meet a lot of stumbling blocks. Democracy is never perfect. Not in the Netherlands, not in Europe. This is why the work of EFF will always be needed.

Part III – Alumni of EFF courses

Anecdote EFF trainer

Wouter Hoff

One of the Croatian participants of the study visit to the Netherlands in 2009 told me that she uses the logic of the communication training during her work with the minister. Often, she needs to present reports of more than 100 pages to the minister in a very clear and structured way. She uses the pyramid thinking that she learned during the training so that the message is short but built out of facts. She is very enthusiastic and it helps her to communicate her message effectively. Some news you like to hear as trainer!

Part III – Alumni of EFF courses



Alaksandr Milinkievic, Chairman Movement for Freedom, Belarus

Authoritarian rulers always try to isolate their citizens, by breaking the solidarity links both between themselves and external world. This is why it is vital to support the development of the civil society and self-organisation of individuals. The Movement for Freedom pursues this objective inside the country. The international and especially European support for Belarusian democrats is of paramount importance. We appreciate the interest and engagement of the Netherlands for greatly supporting the civil society organisations in Belarus, in particular within the MATRA Program. The Eduardo Frei Foundation is an important partner for us in spreading among more knowledge and awareness about democracy, human rights and market economy. I am confident that together with our European partners we will achieve our goal of Europeanising Belarus and bringing it back to the European family of democratic nations.



Marin Piletic, mayor of Novska, Croatia

In its everyday life, a person, especially a politician, occupies himself with problems from his local community and sometimes forgets the „bigger“ world around him. In situations like these, the seminars of Eduardo Frei Foundation, in which I participated, are more than useful: meeting young people with similar interests, problems and new solutions from their own experiences is very useful in development of one's political career. Besides the political education and exchange of experiences, one always gets an opportunity to learn and find out even more through informal meetings. These kind of seminars are very useful, especially to young people who are trying to contribute to their local community. Trainings like these give participants the possibility to ask themselves some new questions, get to know new methods in the sector they work in, meet interesting people, gain new experiences and then, with all these new information, return back to their everyday lives. Besides the personal benefits, these seminars are important for the cooperation between states of the European Union, but also the ones which are yet to become member states.



Vasko Naumovski, Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, FYROMacedonia

„When it comes to sharing my personal experiences as one of the participants at the Young Leaders series of training organised by Robert Schuman Institute with support of the EFF, I can first of all underline the importance of these kinds of trainings organised by political foundations.

The training is a great preparation for the young people involved in politics and their further political career through learning how to organize effective and sophisticated political campaign. It also provides theoretical and practical knowledge for the political, social, cultural, economic and civic challenges in European countries. Young leaders can further develop and upgrade their communications and social skills that help improve their daily political activities.

From this perspective and my experience I can underline that apart from the knowledge I acquired through the studies, the most important benefit I got out of it was the linkages established with young leaders from a variety of political and cultural backgrounds.

Through the synergy of the different nations, cultures, exchange of knowledge, ideas and languages I was encouraged to implement my theoretical knowledge into practice. The time spent with my colleagues and the opportunity to meet many people helped me maintaining communication on a professional level and broaden my horizons in my personal development.

Students are the driving force of each nation. My personal experience after attending this training showed that all I needed was the energy, motivation, time and patience to implement the acquired knowledge in everyday life.”



Rok Prešern, Director of dr. Janez Evangelist Krek Institute, Slovenia

“The “Young leaders series” organized by Robert Schuman Institute (RSI) and Eduardo Frei Foundation is an example of excellent practice of helping the future politicians and leaders to develop their potential, improve their skills and gain the knowledge needed in their future political work and professional career. RSI through these

series also makes it possible to start building your network of very important people, politicians, professionals all over Europe, to enhance your ability and effectiveness of your work.

By attending the “Young leaders” series I learned about basics of personal skills such as rhetoric, time management, leading people, networking, developing values ... professional skills and knowledge of politics, political parties, economy, ecology, education, international politics ... civic understanding of democracy, civil society, economy and government. It is important to understand the whole picture to be successful in public life, politics and professionally. The “Young leaders” series went even beyond basic information and indicated to me possibilities and perspectives in future, something to think about. I have learned to observe, think, make a decision and act in accordance with my beliefs, faith and knowledge mentioned before. All these have been remarkable and unique experience to start a successful carrier within the institute and the political party.”



Vasyl Gatsko, Chairman of Democratic Alliance, Ukraine

„With great pleasure and admiration I participated in the courses “Young Leaders” which were organized by RSI with the support of the Eduardo Frei Foundation. Innovative approaches to learning, open and talented trainers, actual knowledge and remarkable atmosphere, contributed to the fruitful work, establishment of contacts and experience exchange with the colleagues from other countries. Participation in the series of courses in Buda-

pest is always inspirable for new accomplishments in Ukraine. And I am very glad that the members of my organization, as well as myself, had and still have the opportunity to experience this feeling, visiting the courses organised by RSI and supported by EFF - that both belong to one political family of Christian Democrats of Europe.”



Hanna Znakhorenko, local councilor, Ukraine

My name is Hanna Znakhorenko, I was fortunate to experience the educational programs organized by the political foundations, and the EFF in particular. This experience found expression in gratitude for the result of the acquired knowledge and skills and implementing these into social work. First of all, the broadening of outlook and a new information gave way to a better un-

derstanding, and comparative analysis. Secondly, certain topics and discussions evoked new activities and projects in the local NGOs and in the city council I am the member of. The trainings which included personality developing methods provided me with decent mental tools which I have been using successfully till now. One of the important advantages has turned was to meet the like-minded people both from Ukraine and abroad, the opportunity to exchange contact data and stay in touch sharing the current news, tendencies and experience. This was greatly showed after the Budapest Training “Enhancing of Woman’s Participation in Politics” which has inspired me to promote the increase of the number of women taking part in social and political matters here in my city. Also the precious impact was seen after the range of the seminars dedicated to the local self-government efficiency performed by The Institute of the Political Education; they comprised educative trainings for young politicians dealing with the main problems of their local communities. These were great experiences!



Solontay Olexandr, expert of the Institute of Political Education and local councilor in Ukraine

I am the expert of Institute of Political Education since 2005 and often take part in common activities of Institute and the Eduardo Frei Foundation as a trainer, give lectures and spend practical classes. In 2006, I had the opportunity to visit the Netherlands when Ukraine was the “spot-light country” of EFF. During the week-long visit, me and my colleagues - Ukrainians, local government representatives familiar with the basic principles, values, powers and functions of local government of the Netherlands. But for me the most valuable and informative became the visit of the oldest cross-border region “Euroregio”. I graduated from Uzhhorod National University but that day, thanks to Eduardo Frei Foundation, I learned about cross-border cooperation and understand its crucial role in the development much more than after many years of theoretical exercises. It is from that visit that I had an idea to develop cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, what I try to engage in the Institute of Political Education as coordinator of 2 international conferences on the subject, held in 2009 and 2010.

Part IV – Added value, cases of successful co-operation

Anecdote EFF trainer

Harry van der Molen

Any time I go to Eastern Europe to give a training, I see the surprise in the participants' faces that someone from the Netherlands joins them and gives a training voluntarily. Most thankful are trainings on ideology as political thinking is often not very developed which makes the parties vulnerable and instable. New input should come from the new generation. You therefore try to support and consolidate the political conviction of the youth. Long term commitment is key. This is not because we know it better but because we should take care of that democracy and a healthy role of political parties take roots in our neighboring countries.

Anecdote EFF trainer

Heidi van Haastert

It was in August 2009 when I had the opportunity to train political youngsters about the concept of socio-economic dialogue in Sarajevo. After my lecture, the trainees worked in groups on tasks which they had to present in front of the whole group. They did well, but once more I stretched them and explained the essence of trust, taking responsibility and shared success. Eventually I saw their eyes blinking and thought “I really hope that I inspired them for different ways of politics”.

Case I: Institute for Development and Training, EDUCATIO - Belarus



Europe still has one dictatorship: Belarus. Since over a decade, President Lukashenko has ruled this country south-east of Lithuania and north of Ukraine. A country that borders the European Union. The Eduardo Frei Foundation has supported Belarusian opposition parties since 2006. In cooperation with EDUCATIO, EFF succeeded in keeping a long-term relationship for the benefit of Belarusian democracy. EDUCATIO, based in Vilnius and having close ties with Lithuanian Christian democrats, is extra motivated in supporting opposition parties: Belarus and Lithuania are neighbouring countries, with the capital Vilnius being only thirty minutes away from the Belarusian border. An interview with Inga Auguniene, director of EDUCATIO, and Vaidas Augunas, chairman of EDUCATIO, provides more insight into the kind of cooperation between EFF and EDUCATIO.

Vaidas and Inga, please tell us about the start of the cooperation between EFF and Lithuanian Christian democrats.

Vaidas: Before EDUCATIO was set up, EFF had been supporting the Party of Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LKDP) from 1994 onwards. Ten years of fruitful cooperation provided Lithuanian Christian Democrats with knowledge and skills that helped us to become a modern and pro-European party being in government from 1996 to 2000. Excellent working relationships between our party and the CDA even intensified cooperation, so that in 2004, when the last event was organised for the LKDP, cooperation reached the next level: partnership through the establishment of EDUCATIO.

Inga: Yes, I remember the last event that EFF organised in Vilnius for members of the LKDP. In 2004, reviewing the results achieved in 10 years' time, it was agreed to hold a conference for approximately 100 LKDP activists. Jan van Laarhoven, chairman of the EFF at the time, and Meindert Stolk, Director of the CDA, joined this event. I will never forget the farewell dinner, with Dutch and Lithuanian participants dancing Lithuanian national dances on music played by a band led by LKDP's national board member. Such cooperation and friendship could not simply be ended.



How did the idea come up of working with Belarusians?

Vaidas: As always, this was initiated by young party members. Young Christian Democrats of Lithuania (JKD) had always been in contact with their neighbours, including Belarusians. When the situation in Belarus started to deteriorate, we were the first to see it. In the beginning, we only sent specific experts to the events organised by our partners in Belarus and promoting Belarusian interests in the Youth of European People's Party (YEPP), concluding bilateral cooperation agreements. However, we soon realised that this was not enough. The regime in Minsk increasingly tightened its grip on the country. Our speakers were denied visas, organisers and participants were arrested just prior to the event, and speakers were intimidated by special services. Conducting events in Belarus became more and more difficult.

Inga: In addition, the fact that parties and movements in the centre-right spectrum were moving away from each other made it virtually impossible to attend all meetings of the various organisations. That is why the people who were actively involved in activities in Belarus decided to start the Belarusian opposition programme in Vilnius. This coincided with what were referred to as the coloured revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia. We recommended that the EFF use our contacts in Belarus and conduct joint events in order to discuss the possibilities of changing the regime in Minsk by peaceful means. The board of the EFF approved this suggestion and we organised a conference on lessons learned from Georgia and Ukraine in February 2006. This also marked the beginning of our cooperation for the benefit of Belarus. In 2007 we conducted three events in Lithuania, including a roundtable on the issues of religion and ethnic minorities in Belarus. Feedback was excellent, the results tangible, so that it was not a difficult decision to continue cooperation.

How would you describe the impact of the training and seminars?

Inga: The main aim of training and seminars we organise together with the EFF is to create a pool of competent young leaders who demonstrate European values and thinking. We want them to gain insight into the present political situation on the continent, understand the political ideology they represent and ensure that they acquire the skills needed to convey their messages to the electorate. Since the start of our projects for Belarus, hundreds of people have attended the seminars and training sessions in Lithuania. I am pleased to see that the majority are still active in politics and that some of our alumni are currently high-ranking in their parties and organisations.

Vaidas: One of the main challenges at the moment is the lack of unity among different political parties and organisations. I would like to stress that by bringing together all activists from different parties, we not only provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills, but also substantially contribute to the unification of present and future political elites in Belarus, also improving their bilateral contacts.

What is the focus of the current series of training sessions?

Vaidas: Our cooperation with the Eduardo Frei Foundation is based on three-year plans. The current three-year plan ends this year, but we have achieved a great deal. First, in 2008 we devoted our attention to the parliamentary elections, trying to prepare as many campaign leaders as possible for democratic candidates. We organised a course for young leaders and improved the skills of quite a few of them. They performed well in the election campaign and will be able to use their skills in the future campaigns as well. 2009 was devoted to preparing regional leaders for the municipal elections of early 2010, and to strengthening political parties in Belarus by providing them with knowledge in the fields of project implementation and human resources management. Finally, in 2010 we aim to build a solid structure among centre-right oppositional forces with a view to the Presidential elections of 2011.

Inga: Unfortunately, the opposition was not allowed to enter even local councils. Only three centre-right representatives will have seats in local councils. Please bear in mind that there are more than 22,000 seats in total. It was clear that opposition candidates (more than 100 of them participated in EFF training) would have won in a number of constituencies but were not allowed to be elected. However, support for the opposition is growing and their actions have become more professional, partly thanks to EDUCATIO and EFF efforts.

What are your hopes and dreams for the Republic of Belarus in the coming years?

Vaidas: The only thing I wish for our Belarusian partners is to create more unity to maintain the same strong determination they are showing now. I do not believe in rapid change if we want to bring it about peacefully. The only way we can achieve change is by working hard in order to change the hearts and minds of our fellow Belarusian citizens. I am sure that the EFF and EDUCATIO, together with other foundations



that support democratisation in this country, have achieved a great deal already. However, the most important thing is not to forget about Belarus and democracy once one or more elections are lost.

Inga: I completely agree with Vaidas. I hope that democratic Belarusian forces will combine their efforts to achieve a better future for their country. They are working under very difficult conditions; it is therefore very important to work together to realise a single aim – a democratic Belarus.

Case II: Institute of Political Education – Ukraine



Cooperation between the Eduardo Frei Foundation and its Ukrainian partner, the Institute of Political Education (IPE), is one of the EFF's oldest partnerships of in Eastern Europe. Today, Andriy Strannikov has been director of the IPE since its foundation in 2001. The IPE today employs ten people in its office in Kiev. Each year, the IPE implements about 40 different kinds of activities – training, conferences, seminars, etc.

Andriy, cooperation between the Institute of Political Education and the Eduardo Frei Foundation has existed for a long time. Can you describe how cooperation started?

The Institute of Political Education was set up in 2001. A group of young Ukrainian politicians wanted to set up an institute that would bring together young politicians in Ukraine so as to demonstrate that centre-right parties could be united. Through an institute promoting political education at large, the young members of the parties created a common base for cooperation. The Eduardo Frei Foundation was one of the main supporters of the Institute.

But cooperation with the Eduardo Frei Foundation had already started before 2001. During a training session at the Robert Schuman Institute in Budapest, in which I participated together with several other young politicians from Ukraine, we came up with the idea of doing something on our own. Jan van Laarhoven, who was one of the trainers and a member of the board of the RSI and EFF liked the idea and we decided to stay in touch. This is how cooperation with the Eduardo Frei Foundation came into being. From the very beginning, our Dutch friends believed in the success and the added value that such an institute could provide for Ukraine. The first real IPE training financed by the EFF was held from 1 to 4 May 1997. The EFF was our first real partner. Other western European foundations followed a few years later.

Why did you choose an institute of political education as the unifying factor?

Unfortunately, in Ukraine, a great deal of misunderstanding about politics and political scandals is caused by the lack of political education. Because of a lack of



understanding of what politics mean, what political parties should do and what the main objective of political parties is, etc., people in Ukraine have lost interest in politics, with the latter having nothing to do with the original idea of democracy as the rule for and by the people. In order to overcome these misunderstandings and create a common basic understanding of democracy and politics, we focused especially on young politicians, who could participate in two types of training of the IPE: content-oriented training focusing on the ideology of Western European political parties, and practical skills training.

You just mentioned that IPE focuses especially on youth. Why is that?

Working with youngsters is extremely important in Ukraine, but it is not the only target group we are working with. You must understand that Ukraine has been under totalitarian rule for more than 70 years. Those in power today have not only grown up under a communist regime, their parents have never known anything else. The impact on civil society has been immense, leading to two main challenges: first, overcoming disillusionment with politics and state affairs; and second, inducing citizens to take responsibility in society.

We try to meet the first challenge by providing training and exchange programmes to the youth. They are the ones who will rule the country in a few years' time. If we are unable to demonstrate to them that democracy can actually work and politics are not necessarily dictated by corruption and egocentric decisions, the future of Ukraine as a democratic European country looks grim. We tackle the second challenge by providing training especially to people at local political levels: local councillors or people working in cross-border cooperation, for example. I worked as a local councillor for several years and I can tell you that the real power is exercised at the local levels. The supreme power can produce laws and regulations, but it is up to the local levels to interpret and implement these laws. Well-educated local councillors taking responsibility and working for the community they live in add real value to a working democratic society. Using this as a basis, democratisation can reach the top level. The issue of taking responsibility in particular is crucial in this respect. The idea of the state organising everything for everyone is deeply rooted in people's thoughts. That is why we need to address the people at the lowest levels in particular, raising awareness and ensuring that people take responsibility.

Have you been successful over the past few years?

During the Orange Revolution, we heard from many of the former participants in our training sessions that they had participated in the peaceful demonstration

on Independence Square in Kiev. Although many factors must have influenced their decision to do so, we observed that people were becoming active and participants let us know that they stood behind the movement. The fact that Jan van Laarhoven and Bart van Winsen both demonstrated their support for the movement also meant a great deal to us, as it showed the close network and friendship that we had developed over the years.

The general feeling behind the Orange Revolution was that no one really knew what was going on, but that, at least, something big was happening. After the Orange Revolution, there was a sense of freedom and hope that went through society. Even though these hopes were destroyed a few years later owing to corruption scandals of those in power and the economic crisis of 2008, people seem to have woken up. They are increasingly critical of politicians, and politicians nowadays have to show at least a few results and demonstrate sound politics.

In February, the new President of Ukraine came to power. What do you expect from the new government?

Unfortunately, in his first 100 days, the newly elected President showed a tendency toward cutting down democratic procedures and freedom. The protests of the mass media, especially TV journalists accusing the new government of censorship, have become a daily routine. However, we have not had such a situation over the past five years. We also understand that media censorship is on the increase, which is the first step to setting up a totalitarian regime.

Perhaps President Yanukovich will achieve economic development and bring democracy in another way?

The problem is that people who came to power regard Ukraine as a business project rather than as a country with 46 million people. For example, one of the first acts of the new government was conclude a new treaty between Ukraine and Russia signed by both Presidents concerning the continued stay of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Ukrainian territory until 2042. This means that Russian military forces which were supposed to be leaving the country in 2017 will stay in Ukraine another 25 years, which will cause a great deal of trouble in Crimea. To compensate for this, Russia has agreed to reduce gas prices, which will mostly benefit enterprises owned by oligarchs – Yanukovich’s sponsors – but not ordinary people. This is a good example of how economic inter-



ests of certain business groups are protected by political means and by means of national security and independence.

The ‘orange’ team was weak as a result of democracy, whereas the present team is strong due to the absence of democracy. If you introduce democracy, you allow others to criticise you, speak freely, etc. But if you are totalitarian-minded, you can stay in power by not allowing others to speak or information to flow freely, because ordinary voters can decide for themselves what to do. All they need is true information. However, if you want the ordinary voter to like you, you use information from one source; if the ordinary voter does not have an alternative source of information, he or she is made to believe that those in power are right. All totalitarian regimes, for example that in Belarus, operate in this manner.

How will activities develop over the next few years? Will you change focus?

In the beginning, the EFF supported especially skills and media training. Over the years, it has developed more and more content-based conferences that we were happy to organise. As mentioned above, local politics, cross-border cooperation and training of youngsters are the main focus of cooperation. As I explained earlier, that way we try to tackle two major challenges in Ukraine.

In the coming years, the IPE wishes to organise major conferences, such as the ones we did together with the EFF, for example on cross-border cooperation. These conferences have a lot of potential as they provide a platform for discussion between members of parliament/decision-makers and experts working in the field and at local level. To name just one example, the experiences of experts on the applicability of a certain legislative act to the local situation in Ukraine is very important to decision-makers.

Case III: A regional approach – Robert Schuman Institute, Budapest



Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union and the communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe, politicians belonging to the European People’s Party (EPP) and the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD) – realised that after more than 40 years of totalitarian systems, the time had come to show our solidarity with the people (and political parties) in those countries and help them reintroduce democracy and civil society. Some elderly people in the Central Eastern and South Eastern European countries had lived in democracies before. However, they always reflected on the Christian democratic ideas from the past. The younger generation in these countries had no knowledge of democracy, civil society and Christian democracy.

In Strasbourg, on 12 July 1991, the EUCD and the EPP decided to establish the ‘Christian Democratic Academy for Central and Eastern Europe’ in Budapest. Four years later, we chose the name of Robert Schuman, the most famous Christian democratic ‘father of Europe’. An interview with Mr. Von der Bank, Director of the institute.

The Institute has existed for eighteen years. It focused on a geographical area that has changed a great deal in the past two decades. What were important moments in time? How would you describe the impact of the Institute?

Over the years, the RSI has obtained a great deal of information on issues arising in the countries in Eastern Europe. This information enables the Institute to be flexible and respond to specific developments and to develop its educational activities in terms of content and structure. The main event in the past years was the expansion of the European Union in 2004. The admission of eight countries (with two more three years later) from ‘our’ region gave a clear signal that our work on developing democracy in these countries had contributed successfully to their transformation into developed democracies.

Consistent examples of success and a continued high demand for the activities of the RSI illustrate our impact best. Through education we actively contributed to the strong development of democracy and stable parties throughout the region.



We are proud to have a solid reputation in cooperating with other parties interested in meaningful and relevant training of their staff, activists or young politicians. We have built a unique pool of knowledge, expertise and networks. More importantly, the impact of the RSI experience involves multiplier effects: as a model for establishing own training centres, such as the Institute of Political Education in Ukraine, the development of adaptive curricula for parties' local seminars, for example at the Statehood Foundation of the Croatian Democratic Union, or for former participants organising their own training sessions for local branch members who are unable to attend English-language events.

The Institute organises a wide range of political training events. How many people have enrolled to date?

Since 1991, 2,091 people in total have attended training sessions at the RSI, with another 1,267 having attended our conferences, representing 196 different political parties and organisations in 41 countries. However, we conclude that the intensity and output of our activities is better demonstrated by referring to “participant days”, being days of participation per person. We should therefore point out that, so far, the RSI has had over 15,000 participant days. This means that we involve up to 120 different participants for an average of 800-1,000 participant days of training in one year.

Readers of this booklet will be interested to know that most participants have met at least one Dutch speaker. The Eduardo Frei Foundation is a major supporter of our activities, and not only financially: 28 different EFF delegated speakers and trainers volunteered at 33 different seminar series (more than one course) over the years.

RSI regularly updates its list of former participants. Many of them are currently ministers, state secretaries, MPs, municipal councillors, party functionaries, parliament advisers at home or in the European Parliament, but many have made their careers in NGOs or other spheres of social life. A Czech participant of our “Young Leaders” seminars became Vice Prime Minister of his country a week after returning home, an inspired participant from Serbia founded a successful women’s forum for her party between two courses of the “Gender in Politics” series, and one of the last participants from Moldova has been elected Vice President of his party.

What is the added value of bringing together participants from different countries?

The added value of bringing together participants from various countries relates to the power of networking. International network building is extremely important in a part of Europe where regional cooperation has a bad historical track record and has seen armed conflicts even during the existence of the Institute. Beyond that, we still have great expectations of input, support and initiatives from other countries, mainly in Western Europe, whereas local issues can only be resolved by local parties, and much easier with regional cooperation and by working together. Using specific examples, having a Russian participant elected “best student of the course” by fellow group members from the former Soviet bloc, or being able to have a Serb, Croat and Albanian share a hotel room, while a war is going on in their home country - demonstrates the importance and effect of such personal experiences. It is very important to influence the coming generation of leaders and politicians in this respect.

How do you envisage the role of political foundations in Eastern Europe? What potential do you see?

Well-functioning political foundations and frameworks for civic and political education are important to developing and stabilising democracy. The engagement of people in general with public life, their confidence in public institutions, political parties or, for that matter, the European Union, is not very high particularly in our target region. Inducing change in this respect would be a crucial element in which political foundations can play a role.

Local legislation creates very different conditions, providing for different resources for the very existence of political foundations. Former and current target countries’ political parties are, however, increasingly establishing their own foundations and training centres. This demonstrates that parties believe in their added value. Ideally, these foundations should also play an active role in transferring their own experiences to other countries in the region also aiming to develop closer ties with, and eventually becoming members of, the EU, in that way also bringing new members to the EPP as well. However, such cross-border activity is quite rare at the moment, and rather relates to national security and economic interests.

With regard to the near future, do you foresee any new developments that would require the work of political foundations to continue? If so, in which particular areas?



To mention a negative example: In a number of countries, it may very well happen that the centre-right political parties that we have invested a great deal in simply disappear or are no longer relevant forces. We have seen that in Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, to some extent in Hungary, and it is happening in Serbia right now. We have even seen former government majorities drop out of parliament, which is a disappointing outcome after so many years of being in government. This may change focus to recently rising movements or parties, or to strengthening the democracy building aspects of party programmes, paying more attention to grassroots and civil society. This objective of development cooperation has been somewhat overlooked over the past few years.

Recent trends in party cooperation and assistance shows a strong emphasis on pragmatic and technical elements, such as improving campaigns, PR, etc., which are independent to a great extent of party identity and core values. Hardly any attention is devoted to content. At RSI, we have always focused on Christian democratic value bases regardless of the actual topic of a seminar; When addressing values and ideology in political education, we noted that many partners have difficulties putting it on their own training agendas, including appropriate methodology, module content and trainers.

On the other hand, circumstances may arise in which local partner parties will continue to have a strong need for assistance because they are unable to maintain their own independent and self-sustaining institutions. This is the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina , for example, where stable but small parties have no public funds available for that purpose, or in Moldova, with a good party infrastructure and well-trained party staff being in place as a result of past investments, where actual projects are not sustainable without continued assistance.

Case IV: EU “Democracy Starts With You” project in cooperation with the KAS in the South Caucasus

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Eduardo Frei Foundation jointly run a large civic education programme in the three countries of the South Caucasus. Initially, “Democracy Starts With You” aims to update teachers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on modern teaching methods and contents concerning Civic Education. Second, the programme provides second-grade pupils from especially rural and minority-populated areas with information on how democracy works in practice. More precisely, the pupils draw up their own political agenda on issues of local concern during a four days’ simulation game. They will elect one of their classmates to attend the annual “South Caucasus Youth Parliament” in order to represent his or her classmate’s agenda. A delegation of the “South Caucasus Youth Parliament” will afterwards present the results of the petition from the Youth of the South Caucasus to EU officials in Brussels. In total, over 180 teachers and 5,000 pupils will participate in this programme in the coming years.

Katja Plate, director of the regional office of KAS: “For me, this is a thrilling project. I have been based in the South Caucasus for a few years now. I see two things: First, youngsters hardly receive civic education in the manner I did during my school time. Second, the dramatic loss of belief in the democratic system. Democracy is such a precious thing. Education is the key to understanding it.”

This is a huge project that entails much more than educating pupils. How do you handle it?

Katja Plate: “The project started by getting support from the Ministries of Education in all three countries of the South Caucasus: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Fortunately, they all are convinced that the knowledge and expertise we have will boost their education system. Qualifying teachers is key to making “civic education” a success in the South Caucasus. After all, teachers in these countries usually do not receive any further training once they graduate from university. In winter time, some pupils cannot go to school because the heating is not functioning properly. Any help to the education system is more than welcome.



What added value do we provide in the South Caucasus?

Katja Plate: “As I said before, we offer a great deal of expertise and knowledge on civic education. However, let me add three things: The development of the South Caucasian societies is of great relevance to the EU. These countries are the EU’s immediate neighbours and they are situated at a strategic crossroads between Turkey, Russia and Iran. We need to build reliable bridges between the EU and this important area. Second, we do not impose this project. We are in close contact with local experts and the Ministries to ensure ownership and cooperation. After three years, they should be able to use the programme’s core elements in their own teacher training programme and curricula. Third, the KAS and EFF are driven by Christian democratic spirit. However, the Ministries of Education trust us not to promote any political party in particular inside the classroom. By acting credibly we are a living example of pluralistic democratic attitude. This is of great importance.

The project started only very recently. Could you share a first success with us?

Katja Plate: “Perhaps the first success is the close cooperation within our team: People from Germany, the Netherlands, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are working together excellently. This is a first and important step. On a more serious note, the Georgian Minister of Education likes our project so much that, instead of the 20 schools which we wanted to include, he wants to involve many more teachers in the training sessions and more schools in the democracy simulation! When I told him that, unfortunately, we have a fixed budget, he informed us that he would try to find a way to achieve this. How about that?” A second result is, that we convinced the teachers to educate their pupils based on the principle of “learning by experience”. Of course, within the handbook we have various educational theories included such as “behaviourism”, “cognitivism”, “social learning” etc. to keep the teacher in her comfort zone. Nevertheless, the principle of “experience” is guiding the pupil through the simulation! Thirdly, we finalized the trainings for teachers. Most of the teachers reacted positive and were enthusiastic about this new method. They believe they can offer something new to their pupils! Also, the Ministries and even Ministers of Education show a lot of interest in our project. Then finally, we just finished the first simulation in the Georgian city Gori. The pupils were engaged and after the democratic vote, they presented their outcome to the Mayor of Gori: improvement of the playing grounds of their school. And what happened after a week or two? The school head master received a phone call from the town hall their playing ground will be refurbished! Now, the pupils could really experience what democratic action means!

Case V: Bosnia-Herzegovina

Aldin Medjedovic, President of the Centre for Regional Initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina



From 2008 - 2010, the Eduardo Frei Foundation and the Centre for Regional Initiatives worked together in a series of conferences and training sessions on social and economic dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Why is this topic relevant to your country?

“If we look at the current developments in social policy in Bosnia- and Herzegovina, paying particular attention to the role of social and economic dialogue, we cannot be satisfied. Bosnia and Herzegovina are seen as an example of a new feudal society in which the common citizenship model of ‘normal’ welfare regimes does not apply as a result of separatist ethnic claims and loyalties and the fragmentation and multiplication of political authority. Social policy does not only lack consensus on goals and strategies to improve the situation, it also lacks political attention. A policy vacuum can be observed in healthcare, social care and pensions. Furthermore, the redevelopment of social welfare structures is hampered by competing and inconsistent visions and activities by local, entity, state, international and supranational institutions. Therefore, an alternative concept of social and economic dialogue as an integrative factor is more than needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

When was the Centre for Regional Initiatives founded and what are its objectives? Can you describe how the Centre contributes to the debate held in your country?

“The Centre for Regional Initiatives (CRI) was established in 2005 with a clear intention to contribute to regional development, accepting and emphasising democracy, pluralism, tolerance and the social market economy. Our activities focus on building social and economic policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, strengthening regional cooperation and preparing for membership of the European Union. Cooperating with a wide range of domestic stakeholders and international partners, particularly emphasising cooperation with the Eduardo Frei Foundation, the CRI organised a number of national and international meetings, roundtables, seminars and conferences across Bosnia and Herze-



govina aiming at improving social and economic conditions. These activities were supported and boosted by many relevant publications prepared and published by the CRI and its partners.”

The conference on social and economic dialogue held in April 2009 drew many people from various backgrounds representing different stakeholders. Who was involved and why is it important to bring these people together to discuss the issue of social and economic background?

“The conference on “Strengthening Social Dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, organised by the EFF and CRI in April 2009, welcomed about 100 participants, including representatives of trade unions, employers’ associations, business associations, governments, universities, international organisations, the NGO sector, the private sector and political parties from the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including social partners from entity levels and the Brcko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the final conclusions of the conference was that broad consensus should be achieved among social partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This conclusion shows the importance of bringing all these participants together, providing them with a platform to discuss social and economic development and make important decisions.”

The conference was followed by a series of training sessions for young politicians. Can you tell us why it is important to train young people on this issue? What backgrounds did the participants have?

“Previous activities and engagements of the CRI have demonstrated the need for a focused and comprehensive approach to a wide range of social and economic stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of them is youth. Young people represent one third of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s society. They are growing up in an economically and socially difficult environment. At the same time, they are an important tool for reshaping society. Based on the fact that social and economic development represents a process to be implemented in the medium term, including all existing youth branches of political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina in further project activities is strategically important. In connection with this, working with young politicians focusing on social and economic development has been recognised as a significant and necessary activity to improve the overall social and economic situation in the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of this initiative is to establish a young politicians’ network, including young Serbs, Croats and Bosnians advocating improvements in the area of social and economic issues, using their contacts with government sectors and parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities for that purpose.

The training sessions were given by Dutch trainers. The social and economic dialogue is well-developed in the Netherlands. Did the trainers provide any added value, and in what way? Is the Dutch model ready to be copied, or do you think that specific circumstances will cause the model to develop differently in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Training and lectures provided by Dutch trainers to social partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the EFF-CRI cooperation are extremely important for the development of social and economic dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presentation of the Dutch model and European best practices in this respect provide immediate added value to Bosnian social partners. However, just as other countries, specific circumstances apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which does not make it logical to just copy the model of some other country to this country or to any other area. Further engagement and development of its own social and economic dialogue model is the only solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Part V – Closing remarks

Anecdote EFF trainer

Anton Ederveen

As mayor of the city of Valkenswaard, I like to get out and change the perspective from time to time. In June 2010, I went to Crimea in Ukraine to give a training on local politics. Such trainings benefit not only the target group, in this case candidates of local councils, but also those who go to another country and expose themselves to new ideas and different perspectives. By interacting with young politicians I not only can teach them something, it also inspires me and gives a lot of positive energy and new perspectives. It is motivating to see that Ukraine has a lot of potential, especially in the younger generations! It goes without saying that this kind of experiences is also useful for me in my function as well, and it is good to realize what democracy means and how we need to be aware of that.

Part V - Closing remarks

Twenty years after the Eduardo Frei Foundation was established, it is now time to reflect on our achievements as well as the negative aspects of our work in Central and Eastern Europe. This booklet presents the EFF from different angles, providing an introduction to the coming into being, the working methods of the EFF and the added value of political foundations in the context of democratisation.

The whole idea of setting up a political foundation of the Christian Democratic Appeal was boosted by a wave of democratisation in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Since that moment, the Eduardo Frei Foundation has been able to establish close ties with sister parties in Eastern Europe and organising many events. The countries in which the foundation is active increasingly included those in the east. Today, it even conducts activities in Turkey.

Turkey, in particular, is a country in which the programme has been tailored to suit young members of political parties from Turkey and countries beyond. Even more importantly, topics such as human rights, the rule of law and the values of Christian democracy in a Muslim context are also being discussed. It is remarkable to note how seemingly silent participants are listening, but also dare discuss these very issues with their colleagues and other participants from other countries and cultures.

With respect to political education, although we can transfer knowledge and send trainers, it should always be applied to the local context. The trainees, politicians or young members of political parties should be able to apply the acquired knowledge to their own situation and reflect on best practices from a different country and a different culture.

In these times of globalisation, a country such as the Netherlands should not be isolating itself and become inward-looking. We need to work together with the countries surrounding us and with the European Union. Also in geo-strategic terms, this is more true than ever. Looking beyond borders and knowing what is going on is important not only to the decision-makers at the highest level, but also to political parties and the people they represent. The opportunities in these countries are immense and education is key to development and mutual understanding.

Janne Nijman and David Vriesendorp
EFF board members

Annex members of the board and trainers

Current Members of the Board of Eduardo Frei Foundation :

Marnix van Rij (chairman),
Janne Nijman,
David Vriesendorp
Wopke Hoekstra (treasurer)
Hillie van de Streek
Ineke Giezeman
Bart van Winsen
Arnoud Strijbis
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Former presidents of Eduardo Frei Foundation:

Jan van Laarhoven
Norbert Schmelzer

Current trainers of Eduardo Frei Foundation

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The Eduardo Frei Foundation, linked to the Dutch Christian Democratic Party (CDA), was founded in July 1990. Eduardo Frei was one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Party of Chile (Partido Demócrata Cristiano) and president of Chile from 1964 to 1970. President Frei has become a symbol to a great number of people who work towards the goals of democracy, the maintenance of respect for human rights and social justice.

The CDA is proud to have named its foundation after this eminent Christian Democrat. Through its activities, the Dutch Eduardo Frei Foundation seeks to contribute both to consolidating existing Christian Democratic institutions and to nurturing peaceful transitions to democracy.

