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Editorial



European democracies today are exposed to a complex blend of threats. It is now more than ever important to reinforce democratic societies based on a political culture marked by pluralism, tolerance and dialogue. This is also highlighted in the Secretary General's 3rd

Report on the 'State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law: A security imperative for Europe', the preparation of which has been entrusted to DPP. In his presentation of the Report at the 126th Ministerial session on 18 May, the Secretary General underlined internal and external challenges which our democracies are facing today, such as weaknesses in the systems of checks and balances, terrorism, migration and conflict.

Our Schools of Political Studies are well placed to engage young political and civic leaders in reflection on how democracy should respond to these new realities. This is why the Network of School of Political Studies recently held the first event of the Civic Roundtable, bringing together high level alumni from the Schools, along with invitees from Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom. The outcome of the Civic Roundtable, which will be presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in June, will contribute to the Organisation's ongoing reflection on how to build robust democracies based on European values.

Another key priority for the Schools in 2016 is to further strengthen our Network by developing regional and peer-support activities between Schools. A couple of exciting initiatives in this respect are the forthcoming Summer Academy for Strengthening Democracy in the Euro-Med Region initiated by the Bulgarian School of Politics for the Tunisian and Moroccan Schools, and a new anti-corruption programme designed by the Visegrád School for the Western Balkans part of the SPS Network.

Matjaž Gruden, Director of Policy Planning

The Civic Roundtable: a new pan-European programme for young leaders



Co-organised by the Council of Europe and the European School of Politics in Istanbul with the support of the Mercator Foundation, [The Civic Roundtable](#) is a new feature in the work of the Network of Schools of Political Studies. It brings together selected alumni

from existing Schools and a number of young leaders from Western European countries, hence 30 participants from the whole of Europe. Structured into two working sessions, the event aims to address the prospects of inclusive economic growth, trends related to inequality and social mobility, Europe's role in the world, human rights issues, migration challenges and the associated changes to social capital and the social contract. During the first phase of the programme (2-4 May 2016, Berlin), participants were given the opportunity to discuss current global trends and challenges with eminent personalities, including Joschka Fischer, Ivan Krastev, Kalypso Nicolaïdes and Claus Offe. On 16-17 June 2016, the Roundtable will meet again in Strasbourg for the second part of the programme and to present their joint report "Towards a new European civics" to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The Strasbourg meeting will also include a public debate with French politician Rama Yade, former Secretary of State, and an exchange of views with Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission.

Visegrád School launches Western Balkans Anti-Corruption Forum



In June 2016, the Visegrád School of Political Studies in partnership with the Western Balkans part of the Network of Schools of Political Studies will launch a new initiative entitled "Western Balkans Anti-Corruption Forum". The

objective of this regional programme is to identify the gaps in combating corruption in the Western Balkans, to share the V4 experiences in the field, and to equip participants with skills and knowledge required to improve anticorruption measures in their countries. Structured in three parts, the Forum programme will include a specific workshop on improving anticorruption measures, raising social awareness and improving young leaders' skills that are essential to combating corruption (13-17 June 2016, Belgrade); a study visit to major Polish anti-corruption institutions with the aim to share their successful experiences in combating corruption during the post-transition period (12-13 July); and a series of six town hall meetings in six Western Balkan countries to present and promote the project's conclusions (21 September - 31 December 2016).

FOCUS ON SCHOOLS' ACTIVITIES

Key challenges to Ukraine at the heart of the School's first seminar



The first seminar of the 2016 national programme of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies was held from 21 to 24 April in Kyiv. During the three-day session, participants discussed the most important and urgent problems of Ukraine such as corruption, economic development and economic crisis, the constitution and the rule of law, the role of the media in politics, and geopolitical and security strategies of Ukraine in a globalised world. With regard to the fight against corruption, participants concluded that particular attention should be given to the reform of the prosecution in the country and explored effective ways to tackle money laundering. Relating to the role of the media in politics, it was highlighted that media literacy and education – starting with secondary level education – is one of

the ways to improve the quality of public debates between society and politicians and their impact on policies.

Moroccan School explores effective territorial governance



As part of the national training cycle 2016, the Citizen School of Political Studies in Morocco held its first seminar on 8-10 April in Afourer on "Governance and Democracy: Towards a Citizen-Management of Territories Based on Transparent Decision-Making and Inter-Actor Dialogue". The 2016 class brings together participants from a wide range of backgrounds from young leaders to public policy actors at various levels. They come from more than 25 Moroccan cities, representing 10 regional territories. Four main themes were addressed: the characteristics of the transition process towards democracy in Morocco, the main changes in the field of territorial governance and the requirements for a new framework for local government, the role of civil society towards new legitimacy of

decision-making, social changes in Morocco and the core values required for democratic change.

First Albanian national course focused on political parties and elections



The Albanian School of Political Studies held its first national seminar on political organisation and electoral systems on 19-21 February 2016 in Pogradec. The seminar focused on fighting corruption in Albanian politics, internal democracy of political parties, political communication and electoral campaigns, as well as delivering a succinct training on public speaking. Key speakers included Oerd Bylykbashi, Co-Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Code Reform, Afrim Krasniqi, a political scientist and active protagonist of political developments over the past 25 years, and Professor John Parrish-Sprowl from the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts in the US.

YSPS seminar on Armenia and international developments



On 12-14 February 2016 in Tsaghkadzor, the Yerevan School of Political Studies (YSPS) organised a seminar on "Armenia and International Developments", which brought together YSPS participants and alumni. During the two-day event, participants were given the opportunity to listen and debate with distinguished speakers and lecturers such as Seyran Ohanyan, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Ambassador Piotr Świtalski, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Armenia, Ambassador Richard M. Mills, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Armenia, Ambassador Christer Michelsson,

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Finland to Armenia, and prominent local experts. A candid and open exchange of views between guest speakers and participants led to an informal and constructive dialogue.

ALUMNI CORNER

3rd Summer Academy for Strengthening Democracy in the Euro-Med Region



Building upon the achievements of the first two events of the innovative regional peer-support programme initiated by the Bulgarian School of Politics, the Third Summer Academy for Strengthening Democracy in the Euro-Med Region will take place on 25-30 May 2016 in Bulgaria. The event is organised in partnership with the Tunisian School of Politics and the Citizen School for Political Studies in Morocco, with the financial support of the Council of Europe/EU South Programme II.

The third edition of the Summer Academy will be attended by 21 School alumni from Morocco, Tunisia and Bulgaria to explore the impact of formal and informal education on democratic stability in the Euro-Med Region. Based on the discussions and debates, participants will prepare recommendations on strengthening the effectiveness of education policies for the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; policy implications for the societies on both sides of the Mediterranean to ensure education for successful integration of migrants; and education and non-discrimination as pre-conditions for education for democratic citizenship and human rights. An overview of the main outcomes of the Summer Academy will be presented at the annual World Forum for Democracy (7-9 November 2016, Strasbourg) which will focus on the theme "Education and democracy: how to bridge the social divides?"

BSoP Alumni "Bound into Networks"

On 23 April 2016, representatives from different cohorts of the Bulgarian School of Politics Dimitry Panitza (BSoP) benefited from a specific training session "Bound into Networks" on how to effectively create networks of supporters and to develop successful partnerships for philanthropic causes. During the training, participants were introduced to the basic principles of creating effective networks, the importance of working in networks and the key elements for establishing a successful partnership. The founder of the Idea in Action Foundation and initiator of the Caps in Action Campaign, Iva Koleva, presented the experience of her foundation and its main initiatives, as well as the practices of other organisations from Bulgaria and abroad.

FOCUS

ON ALUMNI OF THE BULGARIAN SCHOOL OF POLITICS 'DIMITRY PANITZA' (UP TO MAY 2016)

Nastimir Ananiev, MP, Chairperson of the Transport, Information Technologies and Communications Committee; Deputy Chairperson of the "Bulgaria for Citizens Movement" Political Party

Stanislav Anastassov, MP, Deputy Chairperson of the Foreign Policy Committee

Angel Dzhambazki, MEP, Deputy Chairperson of the IMRO – Bulgarian National Movement

Yordanka Fandakova, Mayor of Sofia Municipality; Deputy Chairperson of Citizens for European Development Political Party; Former Minister of Education and Science

Orhan Ismailov, Deputy Minister of Defence

Ivan Ivanov, MP, Deputy Chairperson of the European Affairs and Oversight of European Funds Committee

Kalin Kamenov, Mayor of Vratsa Municipality; Former Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports

Polina Karastoyanova, MP, Chairperson of the Culture and Media Committee; Head of the Delegation to the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Parliamentary Assembly

Danail Kirilov, MP, Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee

Diana Kovatcheva, Deputy to Bulgaria's National Ombudsman; Former Minister of Justice

Ilhan Kyuchyuk, MEP, Chairperson of Youth Movement for Rights and Freedoms

Maya Manolova, Bulgaria's National Ombudsman; Former Deputy Chairperson of the National Assembly

Daniel Mitov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Nina Naydenova, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports

Valentin Nikolov, MP, Deputy Chairperson of the Energy Committee; Former Deputy Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism; Former CEO of the Bulgaria's Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant

Korneliya Ninova, MP, Chairperson of the Bulgarian Socialist Party

Lyuben Petrov, Deputy Minister of the Economy, Deputy Chairperson of the Union of Democratic Forces

Daniela Saveklieva, MP, Deputy Chairperson of the Economic Policy and Tourism Committee; Chairperson of the Standing Subcommittee on Oversight in the Area of Consumer Protection and Restriction of Monopolies to the Economic Policy and Tourism Committee

Irena Sokolova, MP, Deputy Chairperson of the Culture and Media Committee; Chairperson of the Women's Organisation of the Citizens for European Development Political Party

Mr Ivan Velkov, Deputy Chairperson of Sofia Municipal Council



SPS Network invited to join the 2016 Online Forum on “Civic education to civil society”

On 24 March 2016, the School of Civic Education (Moscow) launched its annual online forum of civic dialogue “Civic education to civil society”. Throughout the year, this online platform will broadcast discussions with eminent Russian and foreign experts on vital issues surrounding the challenges that European society is facing today. The forum is open to participants from other Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe’s Network in order to create an environment which encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices. The forum will offer participants from different countries and with varied expert backgrounds an online space to broaden their vision of the world and to understand each other’s point of view. The opening discussion of the 2016 Forum was dedicated to the situation in post-soviet states and is available online at: http://civiceducation.ru/i_classes/

A selection of SPS forthcoming events

25-30 May Pravets	3rd Summer Academy for Strengthening Democracy in the Euro-Med Region on ‘Education and Democracy’
29 May – 3 June Segovia	Sapere Aude Seminar of the Association of Schools: ‘Freedom and the Rule of Law as a Foundation for Freethinking’
13-17 June Belgrade	First session of the Western Balkans Anti-Corruption Forum: Workshop on improving anti-corruption measures
15-16 June Strasbourg	Meeting of the Directors of the Network of Schools of Political Studies
16-17 June Strasbourg	2nd session of the Civic Roundtable Presentation of the Report “Towards a new European civics”
12-13 July Warsaw	2nd session of the Western Balkans Anti-Corruption Forum: Study visit to Polish anti-corruption institutions

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ABOUT THE SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

The Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies train future generations of political, economic, social, cultural and environmental leaders in countries in transition. They run seminars and conferences on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The first School was created by civil society activists in Moscow in 1992 and since then 20 further Schools have been established. The Schools’ Network now covers the whole of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the countries of the Visegrád Group, the Caucasus and the Southern Mediterranean region.

The twenty-one Schools are (in order of their founding): [Russian Federation](#); [Georgia](#); [Bulgaria](#); [“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”](#); [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#); [Moldova](#); [Kosovo*](#); [Serbia](#); [Romania](#); [Croatia](#); [Armenia](#); [Ukraine](#); [Azerbaijan](#); [Albania](#); [Montenegro](#); [Belarus](#); [Tunisia](#); [Morocco](#); the countries of the [Visegrád group](#); [Turkey](#) and [Greece](#). [*All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.]

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