

**Kosovo Refugee Project**

**Liberalism in Austria**

**IFLRY's Youth! Seminar**



**Guerrilla Forces in Control:  
Crisis in Columbia**



# IFLRY

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<p><b>President</b> Jonas Renz Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 2 95448 Bayreuth Germany renz@fliix.de</p>	<p><b>Globalisation: Meeting the Global Village</b> 4</p>
<p><b>Secretary General</b> Rolf Schmid Reiserstrasse 16 4600 Olten Switzerland Rolf.Schmid@atel.ch</p>	<p><b>Kosovo Refugee Project</b> <i>Forward</i> 5 <i>Macedonia and Kosovo Refugees</i> 7 <i>IFLRY and Kosovo Refugee Project</i> 7 <i>Project Evaluation</i> 8</p>
<p><b>Vice-Presidents</b> Meaghan Conroy #303, 10125 - 109 Street South Tower Edmonton AB T5K 3P1 Canada mconroy@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca</p> <p>Dario Dangon Moises A.A.350249 Santa Fe de Bogota Colombia daridang@openway.com.co</p> <p>Djibril Sambou 776 Rue Desnoyers, App. 14 Montreal, QC H4C 3E2 Canada dsambou@hotmail.com</p> <p>Emil Kirjas Naroden Front 31/31 91000 Skopje Macedonia emil@freemail.org.mk</p> <p>Sara Saegrov Ruud Ullevalsveien 113 A 0359 Oslo sara@venstre.no</p>	<p><b>Quelques Considerations sur le Conflit en Tchetchenie</b> 9</p> <p><b>Liberalism in Austria: Austria's Political Situation Past and Present</b> 10</p> <p><b>Guerrilla Forces in Control: Crisis in Columbia</b> 12</p> <p><b>Youth Seminar-How to Run an International Youth Organization</b> 14</p> <p><b>Transición a la Democracia y a la Sociedad Civil</b> 18</p> <p><b>Contributions &amp; Subscriptions</b> 20</p>
	<p><b>International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth</b> P.O.Box 781 1000 Brussels 1 Belgium Tel. +32 2 5124457 Fax +32 2 5024122 office@iflry.org www.iflry.org</p>

**about LIBEL**

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Opinions expressed in LIBEL are - except if otherwise stated - the personal opinions of the authors, which are not necessarily the same as those of IFLRY or the IFLRY Bureau.

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**Editors** are the IFLRY Bureau with Jonas Renz as responsible Editor. Layout and type-setting by Marie Tillema and Suzie Pritchett.

## Dear fellow readers:

In the business of compiling and formatting magazines you can be as careful as possible, but never be sure of printing mistakes. Now it is our turn to apologise for such a mistake. In the last issue of Libel (2/99) the article entitled “Border Games in the Caspian Sea: Newly Independent States vs. Russia and Iran” was not cited correctly. It was actually written by Mirza Abdul, a political columnist for the Azadlyg newspaper in Baku, Azerbaijan. Imke Roebken was so kind to forward the article to the IFLRY office with an adequate explanation of its source. But, unfortunately, we mistakenly attributed the article as hers. Our sincere apologies to Mirza Abdul. We wish to give credit where credit is due.

In late summer of 1999 IFLRY organised a project in co-operation with our friends of LiDem in Macedonia, in the same region as many Kosovo war refugees. This Libel reports about it and our experiences with the people there. Many thanks to our Vice-President Emil Kirjas and LiDem for running the project under such difficult circumstances. Even if IFLRY’s project only ran 15 days, we are convinced of being a help for many individuals and providing various short-term benefits.

As regions in crisis and war are not so rare at the moment, we feel the need to report on their status. In this Libel we included a report on Chechnya, where the meaning of human rights and democracy are not known. Furthermore, Colombia is still under the guerrilla influence and their people strive for survival between government control and guerrilla oppression. Some information from inside the country can be found in one of the articles of this issues.



In September we held an IFLRY seminar on youth organisations in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France. For those who could not attend ‘Youth!’, we included some information about it.

After the feared election success of the Austrian right wing FPÖ in their federal elections, the European governments imposed sanctions on this small and recent member state of the European Union. This “political” isolation shall force the Austrian government to cease co-operation with the democratically correctly elected FPÖ, but is there not a risk of having the opposite effect? What about the stronger solidarity of the Austrian people with FPÖ’s populist Jörg Haider that are against the rest of Europe? And what will happen with the liberal forces in Austria now that the Liberales Forum unfortunately missed the threshold to the national parliament?

Hoping to give you some useful information on the discussed topics.

Yours liberally,

*Jonas Renz*  
*IFLRY President*

# *Meeting the Global Village*

**by Alison Clement**

The last two years have been witness to the ever-increasing globalisation of the world around us. In striving to meet this challenge, IFLRY has increased its participation in youth organizations and events in order to further promote its democratic ideals around the world.

IFLRY has responded to this increasing trend of globalisation through a number of measures. Thomas Krautz has been very instrumental in assisting IFLRY to modernize and expand its communications and promotion, most notably by revamping our website. A concerted effort has also been made in securing alternate funding sources from the organisation's outreach work throughout the regions, which will serve only to expand and solidify our program development.

We have seen an increase in the participation of new candidate members, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, and in that spirit, our Bureau has grown to better reflect the international scope of our organisation. This is a tradition which has been maintained in the election of our current Bureau, now with members from four continents and seven countries, and which will most certainly ensure IFLRY's ability to accurately reflect and better secure its membership in the future.

Seminars were held over the last year in Lithuania on 'Youth Unemployment' and in Strasbourg on 'Human Rights', reflective of the prompt address of important youth issues by IFLRY. In its continued state of cooperation, IFLRY has presented a summer camp in Ireland in conjunction with LYMEC. These events help to foster understanding and personal connections from around the world, which are at the very heart of IFLRY's work.

We are further encouraged by some stability in our Secretariat office, with the recent employment of Anne Tillema as our new Executive Director. We welcome her knowledge and expertise as she takes on her new role, and we look forward to assisting her in any way possible in the future.

As the global village becomes both less ambiguous and more consequential, it is our hope that IFLRY will continue to diversify, expand and further its tradition of being the organisation best able to serve young people around the world in search of liberal ideals well into the future.

# **The Kosovo Refugee Project**

*by Emil Kirjas*

## **Foreward**

Central and Eastern Europe faced the collapse of the former socialist and communist regimes in the late eighties. Ever since, a vast majority of these countries have chosen the path toward democratic, economic and political development and transition. The new democracies applied varied, yet similar, political reforms.

Faced with the same situation of collapsing former regimes in some South Eastern parts of the continent, the spirit of democratisation did not manage to rest among the citizens. This was due to the new dictatorial regimes lead by nationalistic ideas. While other parts of Central and Eastern Europe have been developing and transforming themselves into real market economies, some Balkan countries evolved with inter-ethnic conflicts and wars for domination over territories. The wars in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina killed thousands of innocent people and left hundreds of thousands of civilians as homeless refugees. The international community was not eager to react quickly and interfere in the conflict, resulting in worldwide criticism.

The final conflict that was about to explode in 1997 was the Kosovo problem. The province, being part of Serbia, is one of the members of the bipolar new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since the 1970s, this province has been a troubled region as a result of frequent clashes among the dominant ethnic Albanian population and the Serbian minority. Kosovo was one of the autonomous provinces of the former Yugoslavia, but the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and his supporters cancelled all the political rights of the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo in 1989.

The appeals of neighbouring countries and some international experts that the Kosovo conflict deserved immediate attention were neglected until

1997/1998 when the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army clashed with the strong Serbian forces. It took terror tactics conducted by both the Serbian paramilitary forces and the KLA, for the international community to react.

Kosovo, having only 2 million inhabitants itself, was nearly emptied and cleansed by military actions undertaken in the conflict. The whole world was shocked by the pictures of hundreds of thousands of people pouring into neighbouring Macedonia and Albania.

The Kosovoars, being victims of war, became refugees in one of the poorest European countries. They were without sufficient food, shelter and healthcare. Furthermore, the tragedy was deepened by their feelings of abandonment as they were without any care. In such a situation as this, the logical consequence was thus prevailing nationalistic and racist emotions. A militant spirit was empowered.

The most fragile victims of the conflict and all its consequences were the children. Having only dark thoughts and thinking only of the devastation, killings and mass murders, the children suffered greatly. In dealing with their feelings of revenge and horror, the children will continue to have negative long-term effects of the conflict.

While the international relief agencies and organisations were preoccupied with the immediate aid to the refugees, the problem of the children war victims became a project for the 'second stage'.

In such a situation, it is to our knowledge that one of the rare institutions who undertook immediate steps to help the young Kosovars was the Council of Europe through its Youth Directorate, and also the

European Youth Foundation, by allocating special and extraordinary finances for Projects with the young people in the region of Kosovo and its surroundings.

IFLRY immediately reacted and through the Macedonian member organisation LiDeM (Liberalno-Demokratska Mladina/Liberal Democratic Youth) applied for a Project called Informative Youth Newsletter in a Refugee Camp in Macedonia. Immediately upon receiving the grant from the European Youth Foundation, both

LiDeM and IFLRY have realised the project in a slightly different environment. It is in this new light that they push forth efforts towards further restoration and healing.

As explained, now that the war is over and the refugees have returned to their destroyed homes it is our duty to continue helping the young people who suffer. We must direct our efforts to help build democracy not only in Kosovo, but also in the whole region of South East Europe.





## Macedonia and the Kosovo Conflict

The inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo have always had direct influence on the situation in Macedonia. The large ethnic Albanian minority in the country has always been closely linked to the Albanians from Kosovo.

The lack of stability in the Yugoslav province reflects the stability of Macedonia. The negative influence from the instability of Kosovo and the wars in the wider regions have kept foreign investors from peaceful Macedonia, thus resulting in a poor economic situation for the country.

The start of open conflict in Kosovo in 1998 has led to further crisis in the region. With increased fighting in the province, the people of Kosovo began leaving their homes and seeking refuge in neighboring countries, especially Albania, Macedonia and the Yugoslav Republic of Montenegro. Being very poor itself, Macedonia had officially announced that the country could not cope with more than 20,000 refugees. The number of the refugees in mid March was not more than 10,000 people.

Then NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo purged refugees in large numbers into neighboring countries. At the end of

March, in only seven days, Macedonia was overflooded with some 1,000,000 refugees. The wave of refugees continued and by mid June, Macedonia was home to over 350,000.

Most of these refugees were ethnic Albanians, but there were also some Romas and Serbs. Luckily, a majority of them were accommodated by their friends and relatives in Macedonia while some 150,000 had to stay in camps with very poor living conditions. The capital of Macedonia, Skopje, which is 22 km from the border of Kosovo, welcomed more than 100,000 refugees.

The refugee crisis deteriorated the economic situation in Macedonia and increased the inter-ethnic tensions. The country was left on the edge of collapse.

The end of the military action in late June and the consequential withdrawal of the Serbian troops from Kosovo allowed the refugees to start returning to their homes. By the end of July, most of the refugees returned from Macedonian camps to Kosovo.

## Visions of the IFLRY Refugee Project

### Objectives

Since the break out of war in Yugoslavia, Europe has witnessed the biggest mass exodus of the population since World War II. The final number of refugees and deportees that have left Kosovo and found shelter in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro was around 1,000,000 people.

In concerns to the living conditions of the refugee camps in Albania and in Macedonia, the situation took elements of yet another disaster. The quality of life for the refugees was unbelievable low. In regards to these conditions, one has to take into account not only the poor accommodations, but also the social aspects of the refugees' lives.

The population in the camps consisted mostly of young people, women, and elderly persons. People in the camps, especially the youth, had been left without any daily activities.

The only thing that was provided to the young refugees was basic education, something that was guaranteed by the convention for the protection of the refugees. Under such circumstances the only preoccupation the young refugees had was discussing the tragedy that had befallen them and their horrifying stories leaving Kosovo.

This situation was abused by paramilitary and extremist groups that were trying to engage the young people in the realisation and promotion of their own political ideas. If the situation remained unchanged, the short term result would have been an even greater possibility for internal disturbances. In the long term, the situation would have diverted their futures entirely.

## Project Flow and Evaluation

The Project started on July 27, 1999. The participants were split up into groups as there were only five personal computers to work with. The aim of dividing them into groups was to enable each of the participants to have a daily amount of time that he/she could work on the computer, and also to present the Newsletter with a varied composition.

On the third day they were all more or less capable of starting up the computer, starting the Word program, and changing font settings, paragraph styles, etc. At the end of everyday, the Newsletter was taken to the photocopier.

1000 copies of the first two Newsletters were all distributed within 30-40 minutes. Thus we raised the number of copies to 1500, but there were still children coming up and crying that they did not get their own copy. Finally, we increased the number to 2000 for the last 7 editions. They were distributed on street crossroads and in neighbourhood squares.

The Project reached its goal. In a period of 15 days we created a recreational working atmosphere with the young refugees and young children from Macedonia. At least for those 15 days, we helped them escape from the sorrow and difficulty in their daily lives. We tried to get them to put aside the pain of their destroyed homes and the deaths of their loved ones for the duration of the project.

With this project, IFLRY has proven its constant determination to fight for Human Rights. Not only have we proven that we firmly stand to the political principles we are fighting for, but we also have shown that we have the capacity and desire to act immediately. IFLRY is determined to continue its work in the region with all different people, regardless of ethnicity, and to contribute to stabilization and democracy.



# Quelques considerations sur le Conflit en Tchetchenie

by *Olivier Leblanc*

J'ai décidé de rédiger cet article car je travaille pour les réfugiés Kosovars en Belgique. Lors des combats dans ce pays, l'Europe ainsi que les Etats-Unis sont intervenus. Tous ces pays criaient au scandale, cela était inacceptable. Les organisations humanitaires se sont vite impliquées, la population s'est très vite mobilisée afin d'aider les familles, les enfants dans leur malheur. Des médicaments sont transportés, des vêtements sont collectés, de la nourriture est rassemblée dans le but de pourvoir aux premières nécessités.

Ensuite, après avoir réussi à interrompre la guerre, les réfugiés sont envoyés dans tel ou tel pays en attendant que la paix se fasse mais les familles ont été rapatriées. Des primes au retour vont être délivrées ainsi que des primes à la reconstruction. Un suivi psychosocial a été assuré du mois de juillet 1999 au mois de juin 2000. La population belge pourra être fière de l'action qu'elle aura menée pour cette population.

La Tchétchénie, pays situé près de la Russie, est menacée, depuis quelques mois, par cette puissance car elle a décidé de se l'approprier. « C'est notre pays... » disent-ils... « Etrange que ce conflit apparaisse en pleine campagne électorale. Quoi qu'il en soit, quelle est la réaction des pays voisins? » J'entends beaucoup de personnes se plaindre de ce qui se passe là-bas. J'entends parler de certains organismes humanitaires qui se seraient investis afin d'aider la population tchétchène. Par contre, je ne vois aucune initiative des pays environnants. Quelle en est la raison?

La situation dans ce pays est-elle pas la même que celle qui s'est produite au Kosovo? C'est un véritable génocide auquel la population participe en silence, participe de manière passive. N'est-ce pas être coupable que de ne rien faire lorsque nous savons tous ce qui se passe dans telle région? Je le pense. Je me sens moi-même coupable et c'est une des raisons pour lesquelles j'écris cet article. Je tiens à m'exprimer sur un sujet pointilleux. Le peuple n'est pas tenu au courant de ce qui se passe là-bas car la Russie, régime totalitaire, censure toutes les images que les reporters étrangers filment. Les seules images qui nous arrivent sont celles que la télévision russe veut bien nous montrer. Suite à ces divers reportages, les Tchétchènes semblent être des barbares qu'il faut exterminer. Mais si nous y regardons bien, si nous y accordons un regard critique, nous constatons que les massacres ont lieu en toute impunité. J'entends parler de camps de concentration, de torture, de viol, de véritable extermination.

Pourquoi ne faisons-nous rien? Pourquoi ne pas accueillir de familles tchétchènes comme dans le cas du Kosovo? Pourquoi les forces internationales n'interviennent pas? Plein de questions auxquelles je voudrais pouvoir répondre mais pour lesquelles je n'ai aucune information...

# Political Liberalism in Austria

*by Georg Hammerer*

I remember having a discussion with the president of the parliament of Brussels this year in which he, after I stated that I am member of the Austrian liberal party, replied “which one?”. I was quite puzzled for a moment because there is of course only one liberal party in Austria-which is the Liberals Forum. But then I recalled that Jörg Haider’s FPÖ calls itself “freiheitlich”, which means liberal when translated into English. Of course, the FPÖ is not a liberal party, but it has been one in the past. This is reason enough to take a small glimpse at the history of this party, as well as on the history of the Liberales Forum – two histories that are in fact tied closely together.

In 1949, a party called “Verband der Unabhängigen” (VdU-Association of Independent People) was founded to join all voters from the “Drittes Lager” (Third Camp). It was meant for all people who were independent from the socialists and the conservatives. The party’s main supporters were former minor members of the NSDAP who were not allowed to vote in the first democratic elections in Austria after the Second World War in 1945, but could vote for the first time in 1949. The VdU managed to group together these former members of the NSDAP as well as many other people who were against the socialists and conservatives, and they won 12% in the 1949 parliamentary elections.

The VdU was an explicitly German-national party, its programme stated: “Austria is a German state. Its policy must be a policy for all German people.” In 1955, Austria signed the state treaty with the victors of the Second World War, which clearly forbid any initiatives to make Austria a part of Germany again. So the VdU lost its political possibility to exist and was dissolved. In the same year some former politicians of the VdU founded the so-called “Freiheitspartei” (Freedom Party), which existed for only one year.

In 1956, the rest of the VdU and the Freiheitspartei parties founded the “Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs”

(FPÖ-Liberal Party of Austria). The FPÖ wanted to be the party for the “Drittes Lager”, that is for everyone who could not identify himself with socialism or conservatism. This included German-nationalists, liberals, and also a few unionists, etc. The FPÖ clearly stood for an independent Austria, but in its programme strongly underlined that the German-speaking Austrians belonged to the so called “German people-and culture-community”.

Within the FPÖ there was a distinct wing of German-nationalists and old Nazis, and another wing of young liberals. The liberals’ rationalisation was simple: all the old Nazis would die sooner or later, so the FPÖ would transform into a liberal party over time. This reasoning worked out quite well and the liberal wing gained strength over the years. At the beginning of the sixties, the FPÖ established the first contact with Liberal International and soon the word “liberal” found its way into the party programme. In the seventies the FPÖ became a member of LI and its youth organisation. In 1977 the “Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend” (RFJ, Circle of Liberal Youth) became a member of EFLRY (the predecessor of IFLRY on European level).

Liberalism flourished within the FPÖ at the beginning of the eighties under the party President Norbert Steger. The 1985 programme was a true liberal programme and was in favour of the European integration, the protection of minorities, etc. At the same time, however, the programme still spoke of its dedication to the “German people- and culture-community”. But even today some Austrian liberals (mainly from the right side of the liberal spectrum, of course) insist that this programme was “more liberal” than the programme of the Liberales Forum.

After the parliamentary elections of 1983 in which the FPÖ won roughly 5% of the votes, the liberals entered a coalition with the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party had lost its absolute majority in the elections and needed FPÖ’s support.



Jörg Haider

At about the same time a young, yet ambitious politician named Jörg Haider started his political career in the Land Carinthia, southern Austria. Haider was supported by the remaining German-nationalists who opposed the liberal course of Norbert Steger and saw their chance to regain power within the FPÖ through Haider. Haider cleverly used this support, and in 1986 he ran against Steger for the presidency of the FPÖ and won. The Socialist Party immediately cancelled the coalition with the FPÖ.

In 1989 Haider was elected as the governor of Carinthia with the support of the conservatives, but he lost this position only one year later. This lack of confidence by the socialists and the conservatives was due, in part, to Haider's comment "at least in the Third Reich there was an orderly employment policy" in a session of the regional parliament.

From 1986 on the FPÖ changed into a populist, right-wing party led in an extremely authoritarian way. Thus many liberals started to leave the party, but Haider needed the liberals to maximise electoral votes for the FPÖ. In order to keep the liberal voters loyal to the FPÖ, he appointed Heide Schmidt from the liberal party wing as Secretary General of the party and later, in 1992, as the party's candidate in the presidential elections. That way, a small group of liberals stayed in the party and quickly gained popularity: be it because they hoped that the FPÖ would change back to a liberal party one day, or because they were just trying to make a career in a rapidly growing party.

In the presidential campaign of 1992 the conflict between Schmidt and Haider escalated, and Haider withdrew the support of Schmidt's candidacy for presidency. Nevertheless, Heide Schmidt respectively won 16% of the votes in the elections.

At this point, the FPÖ had grown strong enough that Haider did not need the small group of liberal voters anymore, so he intensified the policy against immigration and against the EU. This was just shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia, and refugees from eastern and south-eastern Europe were pouring into Austria.

In 1993, the FPÖ initiated an extensive racist and xenophobic campaign, which partly led to a polarised political climate in Austria. While Austria refugee-shelters were burning, the FPÖ's campaign slogan was the "Lichtermeer" (sea of lights). The public reacted with a huge manifestation of 300.000 people all holding candles the streets of Vienna, protesting against FPÖ's racist policy.

Another result of FPÖ's campaign against foreigners was that six liberal MPs, led by Heide Schmidt, left the FPÖ and founded the Liberales Forum in March 1993. At the beginning, the Liberales Forum received a lot of support from Austrian voters and established itself in the national parliament as well as in some regional parliaments. In the parliamentary elections of 1995 the Liberales Forum even won 5,5% of the voters. But, over time, the Liberales Forum lost this support due to various reasons. This year the liberals lost their only MEP as well as all of their MPs since they only reached 3,7% in the parliamentary election in October.

Meanwhile, the FPÖ continued its campaigns against foreigners, against the EU and – recently – against the Euro, always increasing its success in elections. Also, the FPÖ broke away from LI, and its youth wing - the RFJ - left IFLRY (just before both of them were excluded from the organizations).

In the spring of 1999, the FPÖ won the regional elections in Carinthia with a frightening 42% of votes.

Haider was elected as the governor in Carinthia for the second time. The national elections in October brought another landslide victory for the FPÖ, which is now, for the first time in its history, the second-largest party in Austria with 27%.

Although it is unsure at the moment as to which parties will form the new Austrian government, there is the possibility that the FPÖ might be in this new government – a fact that, of course, might lead to an even stronger polarisation of the political climate in Austria.

The future of the Liberal Forum is unsure as well, and it doesn't look too bright. The liberals lost all their party funding, and their not being in parliament might also mean the loss of any media attention. Furthermore, the party leader and founder Heide Schmidt declared that she would resign in January next year. This is, of course, a severe loss for a party whose electoral results heavily depended on the popularity of its leader.

Time will tell if political liberalism itself is sufficiently rooted in Austria, or if the success of the Liberal Forum solely relied on its charismatic leader and its opposition against the FPÖ.



**Heide Schmidt**

## ***Guerrilla Forces in Control: Crisis in Columbia*** by Alonzo Emery

The conflict in Colombia is a unique and complex juggernaut, pitting guerrilla forces against paramilitaries while the government armies stand virtually useless on the margins.

In Colombia, the distinctions between combatant and non-combatant have been irrevocably blurred, making civilians the primary targets of paramilitary and guerrilla aggression. The first guerrilla movement—and to date the most powerful—is the FARC (Armed Forces of Colombia). FARC originally emerged in the midst of the 1960s' liberal

party militia movements, and was headed by Manuel Marulanda. The advent of guerrilla movements such as FARC and the ELN (National Liberation Army—a quarter of FARC's size) spawned the emergence of countless bands of paramilitary groups serving as unofficial appendages to the weakened Colombian army. At one point in time, the level of violence in Colombia was relatively contained by a limited amount of resources available to these paramilitary and guerrilla groups. However, in recent decades, these groups have become the "inheritors" of vast fortunes gained from



drug trafficking. While it remains true that violent conflict would still be a reality in Colombia with or without the presence of narcotraffickers, the money it provides aggressive forces has only allowed matters to escalate. Thus, the speed, structure and scope of the conflict has snowballed out of control.

The recent economic fortune of rebel bands becomes even more startling when considering the fact that the money wrought from the global narcotics trade inevitably enables guerrilla and paramilitary groups to be arms dealers in the international market. FARC and ELN have gained financial independence from the States that once supported them, and thus they have been freed from the State pressures that might have curtailed their violent operations of kidnappings, assassinations, and explosive sabotages.

Beyond mere financial alterations, the structure of these groups has recently changed as well. No longer solely relying on the efforts of adult males, paramilitaries are forcing women, teens, and even children to join their ranks. Increased paramilitary revenues from narcotrafficking has enabled the combatants to employ mercenaries willing to fight for whomever offers the highest wage. Thus, the conflict has wound its way into every crevice of Colombian society—virtually no family remains untouched by the violence. And with this spread of

violence there has also been an increase in the annual homicide rate. It has reached seven times that of the United States (the most murderous of all developed countries).

While random murders and assassinations have been increasingly used as means to achieve their ends, they are not the principle scare tactics employed by the guerrilla and paramilitary forces. Kidnapping and civilian hostages—in conjunction with the use of torture—have grown to unparalleled heights in recent years. FARC and ELN generally target politicians and foreigners whom they believe will fetch a hefty ransom. Although no definitive numbers have been collected, it is estimated that over 4,500 kidnappings occur every year.

The humanitarian concerns raised by the conflict in Colombia are quite salient. However, the conflict has not only had a major effect on the death toll. The effects of such a massive spread of violence has spilled into areas of social, political and economic concerns. Despite its glorious record of positive economic growth since 1932, Colombia is currently facing its worst economic crisis in decades due in no small part to the reluctance of foreign investors to set-up shop in a battle scarred nation.



While the situation in Colombia appears quite bleak on both the humanitarian and economic level, there is a significant ray of hope beaming from the executive leadership of President Pastrana. In September 1998, he unveiled a national program entitled *Plan Colombia*, which aims at addressing Colombia's major economic, national security, social and political

problems. While the plan is quite promising, it also requires an estimated \$7.5 billion dollars to implement over the next three years (\$4.5 billion of which are being sought from foreign investors). At present, US aid to Colombia remains in limbo. The current intensity of budget battles do not bode well for US involvement in funding *Plan Colombia*. Nevertheless, Colombia remains third in US security assistance spending, and this year the US has guaranteed \$289 million in aid (three times the amount of 1998).

Even if resolution to the problems in Colombia seems a distant achievement, one thing remains clear: the crisis in Colombia cannot be ignored. Vestiges of the conflict are cropping up in bordering Panama and Venezuela, and narcotrafficking remains a global problem. Although the prospective effectiveness of *Plan Colombia* needs to be assessed, what remains indubitable is the exigency for close monitoring of

the Colombian situation and movements toward peace talks with the guerrilla and military groups, but also the augmentation of Colombian martial and police forces to help control the narcotrafficking that is plaguing the nation.

It should be the role of IFLRY and its member organisations to encourage further involvement from the international community in the effort to address the crisis in Colombia. While UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's appointment of Norwegian diplomat Jan Egeland as special envoy for Colombia is a step in the right direction, it once again falls short of the role the UN and other multinational powers need to play in a conflict that effects us all. Raising global awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Colombia will be an effective measure in ameliorating the situation, and is, perhaps, the course of action best suited for the efforts of youth organisations.



*Facts and Figures obtained from the Embassy of Columbia--Washington D.C. Photos and Images from <http://cnn.com> and <http://www.intl/crisis/group.org>.*

# Youth! How to run an International Youth Organisation in Today's Changing Youth Culture

by Anne Tillema

## *Foreward*

Throughout the world, political youth organisations play an important role on the national as well as the international level. They offer an opportunity for young people to get involved in politics and to have their voices heard throughout the world. Furthermore, liberal political youth organizations rarely get the opportunity to discuss the role they play in society, or the means through which they fulfill this role. It is the purpose of the Youth seminar to provide liberal political youth organisations the chance to discuss and learn how to do this more effectively.

## *Introduction, Expectations, and Culture*

Edgar Hutte started the day off with a brief welcome to the participants and an introduction of the members of the seminar team. The participants were divided into pairs. The pairs then interviewed one another and prepared a short written summary about the other person.

The next activity of the day was one in order to reveal participants expectations for the seminar. The participants kept in mind three questions. What did you enjoy about the seminar? What did you miss? And what did you dislike?

## *Introduction to EYC and Council of Europe*

Maria Koutatzi began her overhead presentation with an introduction about the Council of Europe and the European Union. She briefly described the differences between the two European Institutions. The Council of Europe was formed in 1949, is housed in Strasbourg, and includes 41 countries. The European Union was formed in 1951, is housed in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg, and includes 15 countries. Maria then discussed the Council of Europe and the relationship between the

CoE and the European Youth Centre. As Maria Koutatzi described the Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organization similar to the United Nations.

## *Youth in the Information Society*

Lasse Siurala, the Director of EYC and a Sociologist, gave a lecture about the youth of today. He explained that the youth can be analyzed with the concepts of rational life course, hedonistic consumerism and liberalism. Then he went on to say that there are strong elements of traditionalism present. Young people have to make more individual choices. Lasse Siurala used 4 words to describe youth: diversity, ambiguity, mobility, and new forms of involvement.

## *What makes a successful youth organization?*

Jan Weijers, Secretary General of Liberal International and former Executive Director of IFLRY, gave the next lecture. He explained that it is difficult to make generalizations about youth organizations because what is effective in one country may not be effective in another. There isn't one recipe for success – apart from working until you drop. In each country, each culture, each political system you need to find your own truths and your own ways forward. Jan Weijers went on to point out that for a political youth organization and political party alike, there are three essential and indivisible pillars of success: identity, unity, and presentation.

His first suggestion was to define a political identity. Not too narrow, not too wide. Don't be exclusive but also do not try to be everything to everybody because you'll end up being a nobody. Jan Weijers also explained the importance of building up contents: ideas, solutions, manifesto's, reports. He stressed educating members, staff and leadership. Unity is

important, but political debate is also good. Once there is a decision by your congress you will have to stick by it (or quietly leave). Jan Weijers pointed out the debating about people is always wrong.

He went on to say that it is not only about being the right choice, the right organization to join, the right party to vote for, it is about being seen as the right choice. This takes a lot of thinking, a lot of planning and most of all, a lot of work. Make sure you have a press department or spokesperson who is available.

The order of the pillars of success is important. Politics in the end is about programs and ideas. People will vote for a gimmick exactly once and not more than once. The worst mistake to make is to underestimate your audience.

Jan Weijers explained the importance of the people who run youth organizations: they have to like what they are doing. People must enjoy being active in the organization, and it must have some benefits for their future. There must be education and training opportunities in your organization for your members.

He went on to say that political organizations, both parties and youth organizations, are losing out to so-called single issue organizations (Amnesty International, Greenpeace, ANWB). Believe it or not, some people actually like to clean parks and waterways rather than sitting in a meeting room writing resolutions.

### ***Activities of the Council of Europe***

Ulrich Irmer, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, from Germany, explained that the council is very active on human rights affairs. Human rights is one of the main issues with which the Parliamentary Assembly deals. Ulrich Irmer said that it not only monitors committees of the Assembly, surveys “critical” countries, and gives suggestions about which actions can be taken against the violations of human right. However, the Council of Europe has limited means to protect the human in its member states. It can only give advice. If other means are indicated, they have to be taken by other international bodies like the Security Council or UN.

### ***What is IFLRY?***

Thomas Krautz made us a little more familiar with IFLRY. IFLRY is the International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth. He explain that today it has over 80 member organizations in more than 60 countries. Its main activities are promoting the Liberal and Radical point of view to international organizations, organizing seminars, and giving a platform for multilateral contacts between member organizations.

### ***How to Prepare an International Program***

Anne Tillema, Executive Director of IFLRY, led the participants in a 45 minute presentation/brainstorming session about how to prepare a international program. The information used for her presentation was based on the European Youth Centre Training Courses Resource File Vol. 7 entitled “Planning and Organizing International Meetings, Seminars, Etc.” (which was given to each participant). Anne’s own expertise came directly from the planning and running of the “Youth!” Seminar.

Anne began the workshop with the question: What are the different types of international activities that you may have to plan for your organization or for IFLRY? The responses included conferences, general assemblies, statutory meetings, seminars, colloquies, symposiums, and workshops.

Anne explained the importance of varing different types of methods used during the seminar. It is important to balance games/exercises to theory and small groups to plenary sessions. It is also important to include in the seminar various activities which force the participants to play an active role. She explained that the program for this seminar was used as a good example on how to plan a seminar and meet various training objectives.

The workshop ended with a question/answer period during which the participants asked specific questions of Anne and she tried to offer responses. One of the questions asked was:

Q: About how long in advance should you begin planning an international event?

A: A long time in advance. In other words, often more than a year in advance. The first meeting for an international seminar should occur around 6-12 months before the seminar. The application for a seminar often has to be prepared 1 1/2 years in advance. This all depends, of course, on the type of international event that you prepare. It is important to be aware that international events take a lot longer to plan than national events.

### ***Presentational Skills***

Marcel Homan, from JOVD Netherlands, discussed presentational skills. He emphasized that it is essential to be able to present your organization in a professional yet creative fashion. He explained that people will judge your organisation according to what they have understood from your presentation on how your organisation operate, what it stands for, etc. Consequently, people may decide to either support or not support your organisation. In this lies the importance to be able to deliver a good presentation. Marcel started by asking each participant where he/she thinks lie the his/her weaknesses.

Marcel suggested three main guidelines with which a presentation should be in accordance: physical skills, vocal skills, and additional means such as promotional materials, etc.

A few participants were asked to give 1-minute presentations for the group on a word chosen by the group. The presentations were then critiqued by the audience.

### ***Campaigning Techniques***

Marcel Homan and Edgar Hutte started out by explaining the most important matters to consider when setting up a political campaign, elaborating on several campaigning techniques. They provided an outline of steps to take in order to create a successful campaign. Special attention was given to the role of the media and the role of doing thorough research before starting off a campaign. Edgar emphasized that it is very important that one investigates the political situation in a particular country before anything else.

### ***Prepare a mini-campaign***

Maria Koutatzi began the simulation game, and the participants were divided into four groups. They were then asked to prepare a mini-campaign based on certain criteria within a few hours. The preparation of the mini-campaign began the same afternoon, but most of the preparations occurred on Friday morning.

The participants were challenged to plan a campaign that would bring a new era for the Liberal Youth Organization. The campaign should have dealt with some of the problems/challenges mentioned above. Participants had to define the target group, the different levels of the campaign (local, regional, national), the step-by-step strategy as well as the maximum media coverage of the campaign.

### ***The Future role of IFLRY***

Jonas Renz, the president of IFLRY, spoke briefly about the role that IFLRY can play in helping member organizations to develop into more effective youth organizations and the ways in which organizations and individuals can play a more active role in IFLRY. Some of the main suggestions offered by Jonas was the greater use of the internet and the IFLRY WebPages. IFLRY offers organizations and individuals the opportunity to take part in dialogs with others from all over the world.

### ***Mission Statements***

In order to ascertain what participants had learned during the seminar, the participants were asked to write short mission statements saying specifically what they would do with any knowledge they had gained from the seminar. The mission statements were then summarized and/or read to the rest of the group.

All in all, the seminar was a success. The participants were able to develop more sophisticated means of campaigning, public speaking, activism, corresponding to other youth organisations, and they also were able to make new friends.

# Transición a la Democracia y a la Sociedad Civil – Informe de un seminario

por **Hernán Valenzuela Cabello**

*El seminario “Transición a la Democracia y a la Sociedad Civil” toma parte en el Instituto del Ciudadano en Santiago de Chile bajo el patrocinio de la Fundación Friedrich Naumann.*

**INTRODUCCIÓN.** En Chile el tema de transición resurge con notable fuerza invocatoria con motivo del desarrollo de los procesos judiciales seguidos en distintos países en contra de quienes supuestamente aparecen como los responsables de violaciones a los derechos humanos cometidas durante las dictaduras chilena y argentina.

Para algunos, la transición chilena no habrá concluido mientras no se haya eliminado los últimos vestigios de la democracia protegida, denominados por la coalición gobernante como „enclaves autoritarios“ o „válvulas de seguridad“ (senadores designados, noción de las Fuerzas Armadas como garantes de la institucionalidad, inamovilidad de los comandantes en jefe, y en general excesiva autonomía militar respecto del poder político, Consejo de Seguridad Nacional), vale decir, en tanto no termine la total transferencia del poder a la soberanía popular. Desde aquella perspectiva la transición chilena no ha concluido, al cabo de ocho años de gobierno democrático.

Para un sector de la derecha chilena, la transición terminó con la transmisión del mando al Presidente Patricio Aylwin y la instalación del Congreso Nacional, pues se pretende señalar que el régimen político no requería de innovación alguna después de constituido el nuevo gobierno.

**TEMA CENTRAL.** Este seminario tuvo como intención metodológica primera, formar algunas orientaciones en el grupo de jóvenes profesionales que participan en Vanguardia Liberal e integrar a los directores del Instituto del Ciudadano, para esto se llevó a cabo un trabajo analítico de las realidades políticas que vivió y vive el país motivo de la detención de Augusto Pinochet en Londres y se contextualizó tal acontecimiento en el marco de las transiciones a la democracia y el rol del estado de derecho y la

sociedad civil en tales procesos.

Don Raúl Campusano, profesor de Derecho Internacional Público de las Universidades de Chile y la República presentó una muy completa ponencia sobre el „Sistema Internacional de Protección a los Derechos Humanos“. Los principales aspectos conclusivos se resumen en:

- a) El concepto de soberanía estatal que se gesta en Europa hace cinco siglos está en crisis por diversos factores de globalización e intercambio de las culturas.
- b) Existen profundos problemas en cuanto a la definición de un código universal de conducta en materia moral y de consagración de derechos humanos a la luz de las diversas costumbres y visiones antropológicas que chocan entre sí.
- c) El avance en materia de codificación universal de derechos humanos es un proceso liderado por el primer mundo al cual sólo adhieren las culturas del tercer mundo.
- d) El término del proceso conocido como guerra fría conlleva el ánimo de juzgar a las autocracias que vulneraron los derechos humanos, creándose tribunales especiales y entrando en crisis todo el derecho penal clásico y sus principios de garantía que obstaculizan el castigo a los jerarcas de dichos regímenes; y
- e) la soberanía estatal reconoce como limitación la jurisdicción universal de vida convencional alcanzada en materia de protección a los derechos humanos.

Por su parte, don Julio Subercaseaux B., ex-senador de la República y ex-embajador del gobierno de Patricio Aylwin y miembro del novel Partido Liberal, expuso sobre el manejo de las relaciones internacionales que sostiene el gobierno de Chile en el caso Pinochet. En forma preliminar, analizó la diversa consideración que asumen valores como la vida en las culturas a la luz de la religión, y así, lo

diferente que resulta para un oriental o un musulmán la importancia de la vida humana individual ante valores comunitarios o globales, que inciden en el desarrollo de sociedades cerradas; esto contrasta con la filosofía existencialista, la llamó, que impera en Europa y en sus gobiernos de corte socialdemócrata. Se repasó en su discurso, el número de víctimas que arrojaron las guerras mundiales de Europa y Oriente, el holocausto y las bombas atómicas, el muro de Berlín y su caída, las guerras balcánicas y como estos hechos han generado en el primer mundo una supraconciencia de reivindicación de ciertos límites infranqueables para el poder estatal o militar.

**PARTICIPANTES.** Se contó con la presencia de veintidos participantes, entre los cuales pudimos contar con personas provenientes de Copiapó y Valparaíso com estudiantes y profesores universitarios, profesionales y autoridades eclesiásticas. Al seminario asistió el señor Jochen Hoettcke, economista, en representación de la Fundación Friedrich Naumann.

**CONCLUSIONES.** Entre las conclusiones de fondo del seminario, pueden apuntarse fundamentalmente dos:

- 1) La transición chilena hacia la democracia, a diferencia de lo que sostuvo el gobierno de Aylwin y de lo que piensa la derecha, no ha concluido y para los liberales no concluirá en tanto no desaparezcan los vestigios de democracia protegida, rol tutelar de las Fuerzas Armadas, senadores designados, apartheid ideológico con fuerzas políticas que son excluidas por los sistemas electorales, cogobierno de las Fuerzas Armadas, solución a los temas de verdad judicial sobre el paradero de los detenidos desaparecidos durante el régimen militar, etc.
- 2) Existen en el país grupos de extrema izquierda política cada vez más anulados en su participación por el sistema cultural e institucional, y entre ellos están, a su vez, los que son igualitarios y los que son autoritarios, o sea, como dice Nolberto Bobbio, los que siguen creyendo que la igualdad sólo puede ser conseguida a partir del sacrificio de la libertad. En la centro izquierda de nuestras sociedades están, en cambio, doctrinas y movimientos a la vez libertarios e igualitarios y que son aquellos que

consideran a la par legítimo y posible conciliar libertad con igualdad, y que aspiran al fin conseguir sociedades más igualitarias, sin que para ellos tenga que inmolarse la libertad de las personas. Seguidamente, en la centro derecha chilena y latinoamericana están las doctrinas y movimientos a la vez libertarios y no igualitarios, o sea, los sectores liberales fieles al método democrático, pero que, en lo que a igualdad se refiere, frenan sus expectativas en la mera igualdad jurídica y política de las personas, y quizás también, en la llamada igualdad de oportunidades, pero que se oponen a utilizar el poder del Estado, confiando únicamente en el mercado y en el crecimiento de la riqueza, para atenuar las desigualdades en las condiciones materiales de vida de las personas.

Por último, en la extrema derecha, que resurge en las sombras de la política en defensa de los autócratas de esa condición, se hallan las doctrinas y movimientos antiliberales y antiigualitarios, cuyos ejemplos históricos mejor conocidos son el fascismo y el nazismo. En este marco social y plural emerge la sociedad civil, como ámbito de ciudadanos libres, en los que éstos desarrollan al amparo y con las instituciones y los grupos, con la ayuda del Estado y sin ella, sus proyectos individual y colectiva en forma autónoma. En la sociedad civil, se educa el ciudadano y aprende además que la opción liberal de nuestros días no se agota en la bandera de ningún partido o facción y que va más allá, queriendo conjugar los valores de la libertad y la igualdad en forma armónica, no renunciando a la búsqueda de solución de sus conflictos y relaciones, es decir, sin renunciar a la felicidad.

El Instituto del Ciudadano tiene como objetivo abrir debate sobre temas de relevancia para los liberales, como son la libertad, la igualdad, la tolerancia, la diversidad. Hemos querido iniciar nuestras actividades en la ciudad de Santiago de Chile con este seminario sobre la „Transición a la Democracia y a la Sociedad Civil“, esperamos haber contribuido al debate directo e indirecto que de este tema puede resultar.

**Hernán Valenzuela Cabello** es el Director académico del Instituto del Ciudadano en Santiago de Chile (Tel. +56.2.6873492; Fax +56.2.6950295, o a través de su Secretario Ejecutivo Waldo Parra Pizarro (e-mail: wparra@ctc.cl).

