

Issue 8, January 2015

Editorial



Dear friends,

I am pleased to introduce myself and to wish you all a happy, healthy 2015, during which I look forward to working with you. As a former Deputy Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General I am already well acquainted with the remarkable achievements of the Schools of Political Studies. I will build on the impressive work of my predecessor Ambassador Świtalski and **ensure that the Schools remain a priority for the Council of Europe** and a key partner for other sectors of the Organisation and beyond.

I am aware that the global context we are working in is becoming more difficult. We need look no further than our Schools for proof of this: **Ilgar Mammadov, Director of the Baku School has now been imprisoned for over two years** and the final decision of the European Court of Human Rights is being ignored by the authorities. **The Moscow School of Civic Education, which was the first ever School of Political Studies, has been registered under the "Foreign Agent legislation" by the Russian Authorities** and is fighting for its very survival. **Ukraine is facing its second winter in a conflict situation.**

All of this makes **our mission to foster democratic leadership throughout Europe and build a culture of democratic values**, human rights and the rule of law all the more important. I am honoured to be able to join and support the work of the Network of Schools of Political Studies and I am sure that together we will accomplish great things.

Matjaž Gruden,
Director of Policy Planning

Strengthening the regional dimension for the Schools in the South Mediterranean



The second **South Mediterranean Regional seminar** was organised by the Moroccan School (28–29 November 2014, Marrakesh) and took place on the occasion of the **2nd World Human**

Rights Forum. Around 100 people attended the event including participants from the Moroccan and Tunisian Schools and civil society representatives from throughout the Mediterranean region, notably Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The seminar focused on **conditions for stability of democratic processes**, such as participatory democracy, the **crucial role of civil society** and the need to strengthen **human rights and democratic pluralism** in the South Mediterranean Region. The Regional seminar was funded by the Council of Europe / EU South Programme and contributed **to the development of a regional dimension** for the Schools in the South Mediterranean.

Training of Trainers initiative between the Bulgarian and Ukrainian Schools



From 1 to 7 December 2014, the Bulgarian School of Politics held a **"Training of Trainers"** seminar for experts and alumni of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies. This is the first time the

Schools' Network has organised such an event and it underlines the **deepening know-how exchanges between Schools.** Funded by the Council of Europe's 'Ukraine Immediate Measures Package', the seminar aimed at sharing the 13-year practice of the Bulgarian School in training political and civic leaders and at providing methodological support for the Ukrainian School of Political Studies. Six participants were introduced to different aspects of the **topics such as political parties and political culture, political processes and different approaches to public problem analysis.** The seminar also addressed public finances and sector reforms, decentralisation and local self-government, as well as the process of EU policy-making and current challenges facing the accession countries.

FOCUS ON SCHOOLS' ACTIVITIES

Turkish and Greek Schools come together to explore the “Politics of Friendship”



The first bilateral seminar between the two newly established Schools of Political Studies in Turkey and Greece took place on 27-30 December 2014 in Thessaloniki with the aim of **considering the possibilities for politics of culture and friendship** between the two countries despite their history of enmity and tensions. The seminar enabled some 20 participants from the two Schools to **engage in bilateral discussions on current politics**, cultural exchanges between neighbours, the role of civil society and institutions in creating a new civic space, and initiatives that have promoted contact between the two societies and encouraged rapprochement.

Seven SPS from South–East Europe work for energy efficiency in the region



On 4 December 2014 in Sarajevo the Network of Schools of Political Studies from seven countries of the Western Balkans, the German Agency for International Co-operation (GIZ), and the Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (BEF) signed a **new Memorandum of Understanding** marking the official start of the third phase of support to the **Regional Initiative “Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in South-East Europe”**. The Regional Initiative was established in 2010 with the goal of **fostering public dialogue on sustainable use of energy** involving members of parliament, governments, civil society, local representatives, the business sector and the media. It is supporting two parallel

projects aimed at strengthening the role of non-governmental organisations in policy-making processes on energy efficiency and climate change mitigation in the region.

RAD programme continues in 2015 with a final cycle on democratic institutions



The second year of the **Regional Academy for Democracy: Shaping the European Future of the Balkans – Building a New Political Culture and Political Elite (RAD Programme)** was **successfully concluded** in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 November 2014. This unique initiative in capacity building in the Western Balkans is supported by the EU, the Balkan Trust for Democracy and the International Visegrad Fund. The year-round discussion on the principal challenges to the **protection and advancement of human and minority rights** in the Western Balkans closed with a debate on how gender equality can become an authentic policy, one that is built on consensus of elites.

This three-year joint educational programme of the seven Western Balkan Schools of Political Studies **will continue in 2015 with its final cycle dedicated to the challenges of building democratic institutions**. The programme will bring together young leading politicians – state secretaries, deputy and assistant ministers, members of parliaments, party officials, diplomats, – as well as a number of the most outstanding mayors and regional leaders. For more information please go to the [RAD website](#).

Co-operation Agreement strengthens bonds between Bulgarian and Moroccan Schools



On 4 November 2014, the Bulgarian School of Politics “Dimitry Panitza” (BSoP) and the Citizenship School for Political Studies in Morocco (CSPS) **reinforced their already fruitful co-operation** by signing a three-year framework for co-operation. The signature of the Agreement took place during the bilateral meeting between the two Schools organised in the context of the 3rd World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg. The document confirms the continuation of the support provided by the BSoP to further **institutional capacity building** of the Moroccan School through **joint projects, regional initiatives and activities between alumni** of both Schools.

FOCUS ON THE WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY

Hundreds of School participants at the 3rd World Forum for Democracy



From 3 to 5 November, over **550 participants from the 21 Schools of Political Studies** of the Council of Europe, including the newly created Turkish and Greek Schools, participated in the third edition of the [World Forum for Democracy](#). The participants attended different events of the 2014 Forum, which formed a part of the Schools' annual cycle and explored **"From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy?"** Discussions focused *inter alia* on questions such as: How to increase democratic participation of youth through the labour market when employment opportunities decrease?; Is education a real promise for prosperity and security and is it a good vehicle for inclusion if well-qualified young people have less access to the labour market, leading some to speak of a 'lost generation'?

Schools participants also benefited from a **programme of additional events** specially organised for them from 2 to 6 November. These events included **meetings with judges and lawyers of the European Court of Human Rights**, exchanges of views with their peers in [thematic and professional group meetings](#) as well as **regional and bilateral meetings**. The programme also included a **solemn and lively diploma ceremony** during which the Secretary General handed certificates to School participants to mark their completion of the 2014 Schools cycle and **reaffirmed his strong commitment** to the Schools of Political Studies Network.

Ukrainian crisis at the heart of Schools' discussions during the Forum



As part of the additional events organised for the Schools during the Forum, a **special meeting on the situation in Ukraine** brought together the **two groups of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies (USPS)**, i.e. participants of the School's regular annual intake and participants of an additional training cycle set up in the framework of the 'Ukraine Immediate Measures Package', specifically for young leaders from Eastern and Southern Ukraine. A panel composed of representatives of the Council of Europe's major entities which are actively involved in addressing the situation in Ukraine **informed the USPS participants about their activities and projects and benefited from the first-hand expertise of**

young political and social leaders on the challenges, priorities and needs in their country.

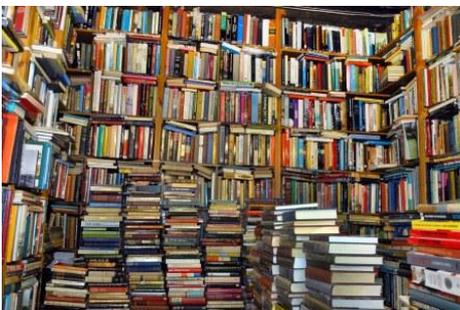
Furthermore, a spontaneous, informal and self-organised **bilateral meeting between participants from Ukrainian and Russian Schools** led to a vivid but constructive discussion on the ongoing conflict and possible reestablishment of a healthy and peaceful relationship between the two countries. This initiative once more demonstrated the **role that the Schools of Political Studies can play in facilitating confidence building and in-depth dialogue in divided regions**.



A new name for the Association of Schools

The Annual General Meeting of the European Association of the Schools of Political Studies, which took place on 4 November 2014 in the context of the World Forum for Democracy, agreed to change the name of the Association to “**Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe**”. This is in order to better reflect the composition of the Association which now includes the Tunisian and Moroccan Schools, and which aspires to extend further to other countries of the region and to Central Asia.

Key SPS publications in 2014



This year, the **Moscow School of Civic Education** published the Russian translation of the two volumes: “**The Way to Pangaea**”, by Ambassador Piotr Świtalski, former Director of Policy Planning of the Council of Europe, which states that the geopolitical way of thinking and acting is less and less efficient and that only the growing process of a

“new globalised convergence” could piece the puzzle of the New Pangaea together; and “**Global Civic: Responsibilities and Rights in an Interdependent World**”, by Hakan Altınay, Senior Fellow at Brookings Institution and Director of the Turkish School of Political Studies. This second book examines the concept of “global civics” and addresses the rights and ethical responsibilities of every citizen to ensure fair inter-dependence.

The **Pristina Institute for Political Studies** published a policy report on “**Kosovo’s* ability to fulfill the Council of Europe membership criteria: a comparative perspective**” by Pëllumb Kelmendi, Member of the School’s Board and PhD candidate in Political Science at Brown University, USA. The author supports the view that “Kosovo has the ability and willingness to apply Article 3 standards of the Statutes of the Council of Europe for democracy, human rights and the rule of law”.

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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.]

For more information and to subscribe to the Newsletter, please go to the **Schools of Political Studies website.**