

Issue 7, September 2014

Editorial



The Council of Europe has responded to the alarming situation in Ukraine with a package of immediate measures funded by voluntary contributions. The Ukrainian School of Political Studies and other partner organisations are contributing by organising confidence-building activities in eastern and southern Ukraine and throughout the region. The Kyiv School's capacity to respond rapidly and concretely to the crisis illustrates the dynamic role our Network is able to play.

The third Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy (3-5 November) will host School participants from 26 countries, including from our new Schools in Turkey and Greece, as well as participants from Kyrgyzstan and Cyprus. This year there will be ample opportunities over two additional days for the Schools to hold their own meetings; these will include regional and bilateral meetings, visits to the European Court of Human Rights and meetings amongst professional groups.

I should also like to let you know that my secondment to the Council of Europe will end this December. Working with the Schools these past four years has been a great pleasure for me; experiencing first-hand the professionalism and political vision of the Schools has been inspiring. Getting to know the Schools' directors, participants and alumni has strengthened my conviction that young leaders are emerging throughout Europe, eager to play their part in democratic and pluralistic governance.

I and my colleagues have been, and remain, committed to reinforcing the role of the Schools both inside the Council of Europe and throughout Europe; I am convinced that the Schools, and the positive attitudes which have been fostered by all those who form a part of the Schools' network, will continue to thrive both within the Organisation and beyond. For my part I am sure we will stay in close contact wherever my professional commitments may take me.

Ambassador Piotr Świtalski

Confidence-building workshop brings together seven Schools of the Black Sea region



Co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Central European University School of Public Policy, the "Policy Development and Confidence Building Workshop for Civil

Society Leaders and Policy Makers from the Black Sea Region" (Budapest, 6-10 October 2014) will bring together 30 participants to reflect on the future of democracy, security and economic policy in the region, which is deeply affected by recent developments in Ukraine. **The regional dimension of the event will facilitate and strengthen confidence-building.** The five-day immersion workshop will allow young leaders and policy-makers from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia to share their experiences and concerns and will encourage collaborative discourse, research and action on regional policy problems in the spheres of democratic institution building, human rights and cooperative security policy.

A Pan-European Leadership Academy: a new School project in the pipeline



The Council of Europe and the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin are working together with a view to setting up a Pan-European Leadership Academy in 2015. With this initiative, which is

presently in the initial fundraising phase, the Council of Europe seeks to further **broaden the geographical scope of the Schools** and to share and extend the benefits of the unique framework provided by the Schools **to the Western part of the European continent.** The project seeks to bring together around 25-30 young people with leadership potential from countries with more established democratic traditions, as well as those from younger democracies, to work together on the challenges facing today's Europe. It is hoped that each year the **Leadership Academy will initiate 5-7 innovative and viable projects to build upon a strong network of young professionals** trained in governance and leadership skills.

FOCUS ON SCHOOLS' NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Ukrainian School introduces a special confidence-building course



The ongoing conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine and the nation's East-West divide, led the Ukrainian School of Political Studies to launch a number of **additional projects aiming at confidence-building and peaceful dialogue** among young leaders. Through the Council of Europe's 'Ukraine Immediate Measures' package, an additional group of 30 participants from the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine were recruited by the School to follow a **parallel course focusing on key issues of public policy**. The project aims to **restore trust and mutual understanding and help reconcile regional positions on**

major political and societal concerns. The first event took place near Dnipropetrovsk, Eastern Ukraine on 7-13 July 2014 and will be followed by a second seminar in Odessa, Southern Ukraine in October. Participants will also attend the World Forum for Democracy where they will be able to meet and discuss with their peers from other Schools, in particular from the Russian Federation, and hold networking meetings with the other delegation from the Ukrainian School.

The Civic School of Political Studies in Greece opens its doors



The Greek School of Political Studies opened in Thessaloniki, having been established in co-operation with a distinguished local organisation [Symβiosis](#), thereby becoming the **21st member of the Council of Europe's Network of Schools of Political Studies**. In August 2014, the new School held its **first seminar on "Democracy challenges in Europe: representation, legitimisation, publics and social inclusion"** (Xanthi, 21-24 August). The four-day event brought together young politicians, civil society activists, journalists and public administrators to address issues such as the interlinked crises of national and

European representativity, the role of national and European parliamentarians in the internet age and direct forms of citizens' public participation as a means to reinvigorate European democratic institutions.

Visegrád Group (V4) meets Eastern Partnership Programme (EaP)



A new co-operation project has recently been launched by the Visegrád School of Political Studies to **share the collective and individual V4 democratic transition experience with young political, social and governmental leaders from Eastern Partnership countries**. The "V4 meets EaP" project will bring together 120 participants over two years from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine for week-long **seminars that focus on EU integration, civil society development and general transitional experience**. The next session will take place on 15-19

September 2014 and will discuss successes and failures in regional V4 co-operation, twinning as an institution building tool, EU decision making and lobbying, social media campaigns for political activism, the role of think-tanks in public policy and ways of fighting corruption and fostering political transparency.

Moscow School continues its training for education professionals



The Moscow School of Civic Education is holding a seminar on "**Civic Education in the Modern World**" (Golitsyno, Moscow region, 28-30 October 2014) as part of its joint project with the European Wergeland Centre, Norway on the "Promotion of Civic Education in Russian Regions 2013-2015". The Seminar is addressed to **80 leaders in the field of education** from the Russian regions and from a number of other countries who are professionally interested in the problems of civic education in secondary and higher schools. The event will explore civic values as an element of identity formation, considering them through the lens of Russian and European history, culture and the arts.

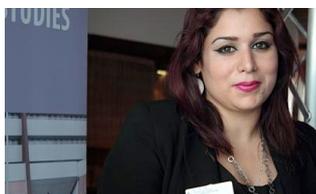
ALUMNI CORNER

School alumni contribute to 2014 World Forum for Democracy on youth participation

The Council of Europe organised the **first international alumni meeting in Strasbourg** on 19–20 June 2014 on “**Harnessing young people’s potential for building a democratic future**”. The strategic goal of this event was to **build a viable alumni community** by tapping into the vast potential for networking offered by the political and civic leaders who have participated in the Schools’ programmes, many of whom have today achieved high office. In his opening address, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe stated: “We are keen to build the foundations for a more sustained co-operation within the Schools’ alumni community and explore ways in which alumni could become steadfast long-term partners of the Schools’ Network and of the Council of Europe in strengthening democracy throughout the European continent”. [The results of the discussions](#) of the seminar will serve as a **contribution to the 2014 World Forum for Democracy** (Strasbourg, 3–5 November) the theme of which will be “From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy?”



School Alumni on how to encourage civic and political participation of young people and enhance their impact:



Sabrina GHOUBANTINI,
Member of the National Council, Political Party "Nidaa Tounes", Tunisia

“Institutions should integrate and encourage young people and give them the possibility to express themselves. Political parties should reinforce the position of young people to help them to realise their plans and attract new young people to activism. We should not forget that change starts with us and that it is through young people that it can progress, not through the previous generations. We should be supportive and in permanent contact with young people within the different parties in the same country and in different countries. We should work together for the youngsters.”



Mirza USTAMUJIC,
MP at the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, House of Representatives, President of the Committee for Youth

“The real question is what young civic, political and business leaders can do to encourage other young people to take responsibility and participate politically in the places where they are, and where they can have the most influence – they can do a lot! Their actions will encourage others, and more and more young people will participate and help strengthen democracy, bringing a new energy which we all need; I call on them to stay brave, determined and honest.”



Edlira GJONI,
Media analyst and co-ordinator, Swiss Agency for Technical Cooperation, Albania

“This is what I’ve done: being constantly politically active, bringing forward new ideas and initiatives that involve youth and new ideas. Institutions can become more appealing by being truly open to newcomers. No fake positions or junior roles to fill the seats; youth want to feel they are in charge of their fate, even if it is to a modest extent. They want to be proactive, and not passive members of decision-making bodies.”



Costel BERCUS,
President of the Board, Roma Education Fund, Romania

“Both well-established and young democracies cannot exist without well-educated people; so investing more in education means strengthening our democratic values. We should consistently and continuously push our political leaders, and work with them, to improve equal access and quality education for all.”



Watch the video message by School alumni to Forum participants!



Over 550 School participants will attend the World Forum for Democracy 2014



The 3rd edition of the [Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy](#) (Strasbourg, 3-5 November 2014) will engage with young people, decision-makers and opinion-formers in a **reflection on the patterns of youth exclusion and involvement**. It will explore **new ways of engaging the youngsters in re-visioning the democratic arenas of today**. As every year, the Network

of **Schools of Political Studies** will actively participate in the Forum's discussions, share ideas and experiences with other Forum participants and plan future co-operation. For the first time, **intakes from the two new Schools in Turkey and Greece will join the event**, as well as **representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Cyprus civil society** as a first step towards the Network's expansion to these regions. In addition to the main programme, **special side events for School participants** will include visits to the European Court of Human Rights, regional and bilateral meetings and a diploma ceremony.

Video: Schools of Political Studies Network seen through the eyes of alumni



What value do the Schools' alumni attach to their experience with the Schools' programmes? What do the Schools mean for their personal and professional development? How important is the Network dimension to the Schools' programmes? By giving insights to **concrete personal experience and viewpoints** from School alumni, this short

film presents the Network Schools of Political Studies in all its richness and diversity. [Film](#) by [Marina Lalovic](#) and [Francesco Adolini](#).

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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 created. 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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