

Issue 4, October 2013

## Editorial



I would like to take this opportunity to particularly **welcome participants who are just beginning an annual cycle in their School of Political Studies**. Not only are you now part of a School which has built up a reputation for integrity and excellence, you are also joining a European Network made up of nineteen Schools spanning from Russia to the Balkans and from the Maghreb to the Caucasus.

Arguably it is the **Network** of the School of Political Studies which makes the Schools unique; it means, for example, that when the Schools foster dialogue between participants from countries with frozen conflicts, they are able to provide a safe forum where emerging leaders, like yourselves, can explore painful, but always shared histories. Of course our Network is not only about difficulties; it is also about **rejoicing in our common heritage and building common goals and dreams for a truly democratic Europe** spanning the entire continent.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> World Forum for Democracy** will take place in **Strasbourg from 27-29 November** and participants include some four hundred people from the Schools of Political Studies. Sadly, the Baku School of Political Studies will not be able to send a full delegation this year as our friend and colleague Ilgar Mammadov is, at the time of writing, still being held in prison on politically motivated charges.

The Forum's theme this year, **'Re-wiring Democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age'** provides a timely opportunity to explore ways of (re)building trust in, and engagement with, democracy. I know that many School participants have first-hand experience on the subject and I encourage you all to share your knowledge and allow us to learn from you.

Ambassador Piotr Świtalski

## Regional seminar in Tunisia seeks insight into the Arab Spring and beyond



Almost three years ago in December 2010, the tragic death of Mohamed Bouazizi became a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution. Within days, **Arab youth** all over North Africa as well as the Middle East **took to the streets, demanding social, political and economic change in their countries**. Now, in **November 2013 a regional seminar organised by the Tunisian School of Political Studies** and funded by the Council of Europe/EU South Programme **will analyse the current political situation in the region and its evolution over the last two years**. At the heart of the discussions will be the **importance of civil society in bringing about these changes and in helping build democracy in the region**. Some 40 people from the Tunisian and Moroccan Schools and from other countries of the region will participate. This first regional seminar in Tunisia will be followed by a **second such event in Morocco next year**.

## First University for Democracy for Schools of Political Studies in the Eastern Partnership region



The Schools of Political Studies in Eastern Partnership countries (**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**) will come together next Spring for the **first Eastern Partnership University for Democracy**. This initiative is supported by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The event offers the Schools a **unique opportunity to reinforce regional political and civic capacity building in the post-soviet space**. It aims to establish a regional network of young politicians, journalists, activists, and other civil society leaders to **strengthen links between the next generations of leaders in those countries**. The **Ukrainian School of Political Studies will take the lead role**, organising and hosting the first session. In future years these may be organised in other countries of the region.

## FOCUS ON SCHOOLS' NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Inauguration ceremony of the Visegrád School of Political Studies



On 18 September 2013, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Thorbjørn Jagland**, alongside with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, **Radosław Sikorski**, officially **inaugurated the Visegrád School of Political Studies**. The ceremony, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Przędziecki Palace, gathered together **more than one hundred guests**, including Polish Members of Parliament and Ambassadors based in Warsaw. **The Visegrád School is the latest addition to the 18 existing Schools of Political Studies** and the first genuinely regional School. It will, in the words of Katarzyna Pisarska, School Director, “enrich the Schools’ Network with its distinctive identity – a Central European one.”

### Croatian School explores ways to help relaunch the economy



The 7th Annual Conference entitled “**Croatia at the Bottom or at a Beginning? Models and Experiences in Re-launching the Economy**” was held in **Zagreb from 27 to 29 September 2013**, bringing together over 100 alumni of the Academy and more than 20 eminent politicians, academics and entrepreneurs. In the context of the country’s recent accession to the European Union, **the following themes were explored**: the role of the welfare state in today’s market economy; models to generate new jobs; Croatia’s export potential; the role of local government in stimulating the local and regional economy. The conference included a presentation by the 2012 generation of School participants of their project “Local development for a sustainable future”.

### Belarus School draws lessons from transformations in countries of Visegrád 4



The Belarus School seminar on “**Transformations in Countries of Visegrád 4: Lessons for Belarus**” (European Youth Centre, Budapest, 7–10 September 2013) focused on what **lessons Belarus could learn from the economic, political and social changes taking place in those countries** (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic). Renowned speakers from Belarus and the Visegrád region participated in the seminar including Pavol Demes, Transatlantic Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the USA and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. Participants of the seminar also underwent **training in leadership**.

### Council of Europe report on “Living together” promoted in Armenia



In the summer of 2010, the Council of Europe established a Group of Eminent Persons to prepare a report on “**Living together in 21st century Europe**” which addresses the **challenges arising from the resurgence of intolerance and discrimination in Europe** and makes a series of specific recommendations for “Living together” in open European societies. This report has been widely presented at high-level meetings throughout Europe and has been **translated into Armenian by the Yerevan School of Political Studies**, so as to foster debate on the challenges to diversity in this part of Europe.



Beogradski fond za političku izuzetnost  
Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence



## The Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE) celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary, the BFPE is organising a conference on **“The Fate of Democracy: Global Challenge, Local (non) Responses”** (14 November, Belgrade). In addition to stimulating panels with over **100 participants, mostly BFPE Alumni as well as leading regional and European experts**, the conference will host the launch of the Serbian edition of the book **“In Mistrust We Trust – Can Democracy Survive When We don’t Trust our Leaders?”** by Bulgarian political analyst **Ivan Krastev**.

**Founded in 2003, the Belgrade School** primarily focused on reform processes within Serbia as well as facilitating European integration, and then **widened its scope, fostering regional co-operation** through a variety of projects. The most well-known of its initiatives is **the annual Belgrade Security Forum**, the biggest international security conference in Southeast Europe.

In 2013, the **Regional Academy for Democracy (RAD)** was launched, supported by the European Union, the Balkan Trust for Democracy and the International Visegrád Fund. This initiative is **implemented by seven members of the Network of Schools of Political Studies** (Tirana, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Pristina, Skopje, Podgorica and Belgrade), directly **contributing to strengthening the Schools’ co-operation**. According to Sonja Licht, the founder and President of BFPE, **“RAD was born out of the desire to transform the Balkans into a region of dialogue and co-operation instead of a region of mistrust and conflict”**. We congratulate the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence on ten years of excellent work.



## FOCUS

### ON ALUMNI OF THE BELGRADE FUND FOR POLITICAL EXCELLENCE (OCTOBER 2013)

**Miloš Aligrudić**, MP, Member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
**Zoran Alimpić**, Deputy Chair, Belgrade City Assembly  
**Zoran Antić**, Mayor of Vranje  
**Ljubiša Antonijević**, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development  
**Maja Bobić**, Secretary General, European Movement in Serbia  
**Mirjana Bogdanović**, Founder and Executive Director, Gay Straight Alliance  
**Bojan Brkić**, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS)  
**Gordana Čomić**, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly  
**Marko Đurić**, Foreign Policy Adviser to the President of the Republic of Serbia  
**Goran Ješić**, Vice-President of the Government of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Provincial Secretary for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management  
**Ksenija Milenković**, Deputy Head of Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the EU  
**Hedvig Morvai**, Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans  
**Dejan Nikolić**, MP, Vice-President of the Democratic Party (DS)  
**Dejan Novaković**, State Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection  
**Meho Omerović**, MP, Chair of the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality  
**Saša Paunović**, Mayor of Paraćin Municipality, President of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities  
**Maja Sedlarević**, Deputy Head of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina in the Parliament of Vojvodina  
**Branko Stamenković**, Special Prosecutor for High-Tech Crime, Republic Public Prosecutors Office  
**Milica Vojić Marković**, MP, Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee  
**Dijana Vukomanović**, MP, Vice-President of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS); Head of the SPS parliamentary Group



## 2013 World Forum for Democracy: Bringing together the leaders of tomorrow



This year's World Forum for Democracy, taking place in **Strasbourg from 27 to 29 November**, focuses on how to **connect citizens and political institutions in the digital age**. The Forum provides a tremendous **opportunity for the participants of all 19 Schools of Political Studies to meet, exchange their ideas and experiences** and even plan future co-operation. For the first time, participants will also be able to **meet with representatives of Kazakhstan and**

**Kirghizstan civil society** who will be attending the Forum as a first **step towards establishing schools in Central Asia**. In addition to the main programme, **special side events for School participants** include **visits to the European Court of Human Rights**, regional and bilateral meetings and a diploma ceremony with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, to enhance the visibility of the Schools, a **plenary session** will present their work to all the Forum participants. Also, the Schools will have their own stand at the **Democracy Fair**. While the Forum concentrates on the benefits of digital participation, real live personal interaction will guarantee it to be an extraordinary experience for all its participants.

## Schools' side events during the Forum

### Wednesday 27 November 2013

14:00-15:30 Regional meetings

### Thursday 28 November 2013

13:30-14:00 Diploma Ceremony

14:30-15:30 Stand at Democracy Fair

16:15-17:00 Forum plenary session on the Schools of Political Studies

### Friday 29 November 2013

11:30-12:30 Stand at Democracy Fair

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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 18 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 nineteen 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 and the countries of the Visegrád group.** [\*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](http://www.schoolsofpoliticalstudies.eu).