

FUTURE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL CRISIS ON EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

A conference organised by the European Liberal Forum asbl (ELF) with the support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (Germany), the Centre for Liberal Studies (Czech Republic). With the special support of the Association for International Affairs (Czech Republic). Funded by the European Parliament. Official media coverage by EurActiv.cz.

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**Asociace
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otázky**
Association
for International
Affairs



Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**

Contents

Synopsis	3
Panel #1	4
Panel #2	5
Panel #3	6
Programme	7
Speakers	9
Team	14
European Liberal Forum	15
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom	17
Association for International Affairs	18
Logos of organizers and partners	19

Synopsis

Although the ongoing crisis in the EU is primarily depicted by the media as an economic one (the “Greek Crisis” or, more precisely, the “Sovereign Debt Crisis”), it is becoming more and more clear that it is equally (if not more importantly) also an political and institutional crisis. What seemed unthinkable for a long time is now looking rather inevitable: a thorough institutional redesign of the EU that goes far beyond the hard-fought compromises reached in the Lisbon Treaty is necessary if the Eurozone is to be prevented from collapse with severe consequences for all member states.

European Integration has always been driven forward by political and institutional crises. While crisis management in the club of 6 and later 12 and 15 member countries always led to some results, the consensus about the future in the club of 27 (28 in 2013) members (with significant differences in their political systems and even with more divergent historical experience) is the ultimate challenge. There is a notable confusion of basic notions and terms. A case in point is the debate about the federalisation of the EU. If federalism is understood by some Western-European experts and citizens as a decentralising shift of power, it has very different connotations in Central and Eastern Europe (federalisation of the EU is interpreted as a creeping centralisation and the transfer of more power to Brussels).

In the Czech Republic, the debate on the future of European Integration is more important than ever. The incumbent Czech government won the parliament elections in 2010 by promising austerity measures and fiscal discipline. Yet the same government refuses to join the fiscal pact in the EU, which is based on the same principles (the only member state to do so along with the UK). This stance is defended by euro-sceptic ODS (Civic Democratic Party – the conservative party leading the government) and the Prime Minister Peter Nečas. The other two coalition parties are highly critical of the European policy of the government, which further increases tensions within the coalition. At one point, the Czech Republic seemed on the verge of political crisis, which could mimic the situation in Slovakia from autumn 2011, when the Freedom and Solidarity Party (a small liberal party) let the coalition government fall by voting against the membership in the EFSM.

On the top of this, the latest opinion polls show that the majority of Czechs are against membership of the EU (what is more striking – the young generation is even more sceptical). The same poll also revealed an alarming fact: people in the Czech Republic consider the EU the cause of the crisis (more responsible than any other organisations – including banks). The distrust of citizens in the European Integration project is quite staggering.

Goals of the conference

The international conference is going to bring together politicians, economists, think tankers, journalists, and academicians with a leading question: Does the EU need an institutional redesign in order to survive the current crisis? What are the lessons learnt about the causes and roots of the crisis? How and why do the perspectives among member states differ? If everybody speaks about federalisation, what does that mean practically in political and economic terms? Why is the prospect of federalisation perceived so differently in Western and Eastern Europe?

Václav Bacovský

Conference Coordinator, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Panels

conference paper by Vít Dostál and Viera Knutelská, Association for International Affairs

The debate of values

(text for panel#1 - Is the European solidarity breaking apart?)

The problem of solidarity is sometimes presented as the centre of the current debate. Should the rich be in solidarity with the poor, and should this solidarity go as far as rescuing troubled economies or even mutualising debt?

Solidarity is one of the key values upon which the European integration is built. The very Preamble of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) lists the desire “to deepen solidarity between (the) peoples (of Europe)” as one of the reasons for the establishment the European Union. Article 2 of the TEU then lists the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among member states as one of the main goals of the Union. There should be little doubt that solidarity has been proclaimed as a shared European value at least since the signing of the Treaty on European Union in 1992. So why has it suddenly become such a troublesome topic?

The above-mentioned goal of economic solidarity has so far been transformed into structural and cohesion policies. However, the sovereign debt crisis has led to many questions about how broad this solidarity in the economic sphere should be. Some of the adopted (European Finance and Stability Facility) and proposed measures (European Stability Mechanism (ESM), bond-buying or common-bond-issuing) translate this goal from mere reduction of regional disparities into open burden-sharing and rescue missions for troubled economies. The trouble is that this point of view can then be translated by some as a shift from the solidarity with poor to the solidarity with the irresponsible.

The reason is that the current crisis concerns public finances, sovereign debt and the banking system. And while solidarity might be a shared European value, the member states do not seem to share those values when applied to public finances. At the same time, some of these domestic values, especially the price stability embedded in the German Basic Law come into conflict with the value of solidarity.

Moreover, the need to act quickly and decisively in order to adopt measures that could resolve the crisis has led many to challenge other European or national values, even values perceived as intrinsic to modern European culture, such as the value of democratic legitimacy achieved through representative parliament. Indeed, suggestions to postpone elections in Greece, or to limit the powers of parliaments (the latter being aimed especially against the Bundestag) to be able totackle the crisis effectively, or adopt unpopular measures, go against this basic European value.

At the same time, Europe is experiencing the rise of populist parties, many of which voice opposition to these and other European values – solidarity with other nations in and outside Europe, tolerance towards minorities etc.

While some claim that the current debate is just about “putting out fires” and reacting to whimsies of the markets, and is devoid of values and vision, it is in fact first and foremost about the conflict of shared European values and some national values. This conflict is occurring both at the European level among the member states, especially those emphasising austerity the need for some leniency and solidarity in order to sustain growth, as well as on the national level. The second case is especially visible in Germany, which may, for the first time, be experiencing a true and lively debate about the merits and drawbacks of European integration and the German role in it. The upcoming decision of the German Constitutional Court regarding the establishment of the ESM may be crucial in this regard if it decides to tackle the difficult questions of priorities among such values as solidarity, strong parliament and price stability.

Panels

The more things change, the more they stay the same?

(Text for panel#2 - EU after crisis: Learning from the past to shape the future)

The current crisis may call into question not just the applicability of some of the European values, but also other widely acknowledged attributes of European integration. There is a narrative tradition in European integration, a learned belief that any crisis of intergration is an occasion to make a leap forward, to achieve better and deeper integration. Based on this belief, the current crisis could be perceived as – and sometimes is claimed to be – yet another opportunity to deepen European integration and proceed “to the next level”.

This is usually illustrated by the example of the Empty Chair Crisis and the resulting Luxembourg Compromise in the 1960s. But what do the solutions to these two crises, the past and the current one, have in common?

Indeed, at both occasions, there was a clear disagreement about organisational aspects and especially the financing of some of the European policies: the agriculture policy and the European budget in the first case, the financial assistance in sovereign-debt crisis, mutualising of debt etc. in the second case.

Again, on both occasions, the existing framework of the Founding Treaties was not the tool of choice to resolve the crisis. The Luxembourg Compromise, acknowledged as the solution to the Empty Chair Crisis, was not an amendment to the Treaties, but merely a political, or, if you will, a gentlemen’s agreement – a few legally non-binding sentences inserted into the Final Communiqué of an extraordinary session of the Council. While the current crisis is apparently still far from being over, the member states seem to end up with measures taken outside of the EU’s legal framework as well. True, the first reaction – the so called six-pack – has a form of ordinary European legal acts. However, just about a month after its final adoption, the member states started planning another measure, similar maybe in content, but not in form – the Fiscal Treaty. At the moment, formal rules for banking union are being prepared. These will probably be proposed within the existing legal framework, but it is too soon to presume their final form.

So do the solutions to these two crises have much in common? Yes, (some of) these solutions were adopted outside of existing Treaties. But the similarity ends here. While the Luxembourg Compromise, an agreement of six member states, could have been “adopted” without any legal tool, the current solutions to be agreed upon by over 20 member states all do have some legal form and are legally binding, at least to some extent.

Moreover, while it was clear at the time of the Luxembourg Compromise that the crisis could be resolved and an agreement achieved only if all member states participated, it seems today that the belief is that agreements are necessary, and if some of the member states must be left behind, then so be it. The Fiscal Treaty – a Treaty among 25 member states only – was the first proof of that. And while the banking-union proposals are not yet known, voluntary participation of non-Eurozone members is apparently not out of the question either.

Thus, it would be wrong to believe that the current crisis must out of historical necessity result in deeper integration. We may learn from past crises (and the fact is, in the EU, there have not been very many of this severity), but no past result is a guarantee for the future. Moreover, what we have learned so far from the current crisis calls for caution. Yes, the European nations seemingly always arrive at some compromise. But now the compromise obviously does not necessarily have to include everybody. And those who achieve it rely more on legally binding measures than on gentlemen’s agreements.

Panels

Worries of European leaders

(text for Panel#3 - Visions for Europe?)

The Eurozone crisis brought uncertainty not only about the rules of the game but also about the game itself. Acute problems are being solved through ad hoc and minimalist measures, like circumvention of Treaties allowing the aid for bankrupting member states, the establishment of the European Monetary System or signing of the Fiscal Treaty. Sceptics and opponents of the deepening of European integration perceive these steps as a last deep breath of European Union or as a way of centralising more power in Brussels. On the other hand, proponents of the United States of Europe are dissatisfied with a chain of minor solutions and call for a new grand strategy.

Proponents of this grand plan desire to link necessary technical steps with a larger political control over the new mechanisms as well as over old institutions. This mix of a new supranational integration (in the form of stricter budgetary rules, extension of bank regulation or debt mutualisation) and strengthening of the state-like attributes of the EU (such as single list for European Parliament elections, direct vote of the President of the European Commission) would mean subsequent federalisation of the European Union or its part.

It is improbable that such Big Bang federalisation, provided that it materialises, will include all the Union's member states. The F-word triggers rage among British politicians who are now questioning even the current framework of United Kingdom's membership. Moreover, the political elites of some Central and Eastern European members (e.g. the Czech Republic and Hungary) fear that the federalist project would impose a new shared identity and more power yielding to Brussels. This argument, weird as it might be, is a good target for nationalists and populists who kidnap the debate about European policy of these countries. However, just as British worry that the Brussels' overregulation will enter their life through the back door, Central Europeans should fear that the European Union will use the back door to leave them.

Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether federalists' ideas have any chance to succeed. Comprehensive visions were presented only by the so-called Westerwelle Group. However, their concepts do not offer much new. The same institutional innovations could have been heard in the Conventions and seen in the Constitution for Europe where they also failed. The biggest foes of the federalisation of Europe are currently the member states. The Lisbon Treaty together with the Eurozone problems, which came short after the Treaty, came into force has weakened the supranational institutions (mainly the European Commission) on the expense of their intergovernmental counterparts. Thus, the federalisation would mean the transfer of competencies from the hands of the politicians convening a couple of times a year for the European Council meetings to another level and barely one of them desires such advancement.

The word federalist or federal is now, therefore, used only instrumentally to support some selective notions and proposals. We could have heard about the "federalisation of debts", which simply means that some countries will participate in financing the debts of other members. This example shows the limited nature of the visions of European leaders.

Programme

Prague, 6 September 2012

Venue: Kaiserstein Palace, Malostranské náměstí 23/37, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

9:30 - 9:45 Welcome remarks

Susanne Hartig, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum (ELF)

Borek Severa, Representative for Central Europe and Baltic States, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

09:45 - 11:15 Panel#1

Is the European solidarity breaking apart?

Moderator:

Martin Ehl, journalist (Daily Hospodarske Noviny), Czech Republic

Panellists:

Jan Hamáček, MP, Social Democratic Party, Czech Republic

Jürgen Martens, State Minister for Justice and European Affairs, Saxony, FDP, Member of the ALDE Group in the Committee of the Regions, Germany

Agnieszka Pomaska, MP, Platforma Obywatelska, Poland

Taavi Roivas, MP, Reform Party, Estonia

Richard Sulík, MP, Chairman of Party Freedom and Solidarity, Slovakia

11:15 - 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 - 13:00 Panel#2

EU after crisis: Learning from the past to shape the future

Moderator:

Richard Robinson, General Director, British Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic

Panellists:

Frank Hoffmeister, Deputy Head of Cabinet to Commissioner Karel De Gucht, DG Trade, Germany

Radovan Durana, Co-founder of Institute for Economic and Social Studies, Slovakia

Luděk Niedermayer, Economist, Deloitte, Czech Republic

Iliya Lingorski, Executive Director, LIPA, ELF member organisation, Bulgaria

Programme

13:00 - 14:15 Lunch

14:15 - 16:30 Panel#3

Visions for Europe?

Moderator:

David Král, Director, Europeum - Institute for European Policy, Czech Republic

Panellists:

Thomas Klau, Head and Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations, France

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, Research Fellow and Head of Programme, Centre for European Policy Studies, Poland

Giulio Ercolessi, Fondazione Critica Liberale, ELF member organisation, Italy

Krisztina Arató, Associate professor, ELTE University, Hungary

16:30 - 17:00 Closing remarks: Where does EU go now?

Jacques Rupnik, Director of research, CERI at Sciences-Po, France

17:00 End of the programme

Speakers

Krisztina Arató



Krisztina Arató is associate professor and deputy director at ELTE University, Faculty of Law, Institute of Political Science in Budapest. She studied history at ELTE University in Budapest and political science at the Victoria University of Manchester, England. She wrote her Ph.D dissertation on the social dialogue system of the EU at Corvinus University, Budapest. She is the general secretary of the Hungarian Political Science Association and chairperson of the legal and political science jury of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund. Her research interests are history and theory of European integration, civil and social dialogue, and EU cohesion policy.

Radovan Ďurana



Radovan Ďurana is co-founder and member of INESS Institute of economic and social studies. He completed the Faculty of Management at Comenius University in Bratislava with focus on financial management. Before his work at INESS, he was employed in commercial financial institution with the specialization on corporate credit. He focuses on public finance system, taxation and pension system. He is the author and co-author of several publications, policy proposals and regularly comments on daily economic issues in public media.

Martin Ehl



Martin Ehl is Czech journalist for the Czech Daily Hospodářské noviny. He is political scientist by education. He has been working for Hospodářské noviny since 2001 and now he is head of their foreign section. He writes a regular column about Central Europe as well as essays for Radio Česko and blogs in Czech, English and Polish. He often comments on foreign policy on Česká Televize (Czech Television). His most recent book on Central Europe is „The Third Decade. On life, politics and people between Brussels and Gazprom“.

Giulio Ercolessi



Giulio Ercolessi is a former politician. He was a leader of the Italian Radical Party in the 1970s. He abandoned active politics in 1982. He is the author of *L'Europa verso il suicidio?* (Europe towards its suicide? Dedalo, Bari, 2009), a regular contributor to the monthly review of the *Critica liberale* Foundation (an independent ELF member liberal think tank) and co-edits its European affairs supplement *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa* (The United States of Europe). He is a founder of the website *italialaica.it* and has also contributed to the Italian edition of *Lettre International*, to the journals *MicroMega* and *Confronti* and, as international affairs commentator, to the Genova daily paper *Il Secolo XIX*.

Speakers

Jan Hamáček



Jan Hamacek is a Czech Social Democratic MP. He was first elected to the Parliament in 2006 where he currently serves as the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and heads the Czech Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. In the previous Parliament (2006-2010) he was the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Hamacek is one of the most prominent voices on foreign and security policy issues both in his party and across the Czech political spectrum. In his current capacity he also serves as the Shadow Defence Minister.

Susanne Hartig



Susanne Hartig, Executive Director since 2008 of the European Liberal Forum asbl. (ELF), the European political foundation of the ELDR party. Previously, she held the position of Programme Director at the Brussels office of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, the German foundation for liberal politics. Susanne Hartig holds a master's degree in Political Science and was educated at the University of Münster/Germany and at the University of Dublin, Trinity College/Ireland.

Frank Hoffmeister



Prof. Frank Hoffmeister is the Deputy Head of Cabinet in Commissioner De Gucht's Cabinet (international trade). Previously, he worked in the Legal Service of the European Commission's as well as for the United Nations Special Advisor on Cyprus. He is a part-time Professor at the Free University of Brussels and was before academically active as assistant at the Walter Hallstein Institute for European Constitutional Law of the Humboldt University of Berlin and a research fellow at the Max Planck-Institute for international law and foreign public law in Heidelberg. He has served as a guest lecturer at numerous universities including Berlin, Prague, Istanbul, Zagreb, Novi Sad, The Hague, Maastricht, Sevilla and

Oxford.

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński



Piotr Maciej Kaczyński is a Research Fellow and Head of Programme at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), a Brussels-based EU think-tank where he is responsible for the EU institutional and political issues. He has published widely on EU politics as well as on the EU foreign policy. Previously, he ran the European Programme at the Warsaw-based Institute of Public Affairs. In the past, he has been awarded the European Marshall Memorial Fellowship in 2012 and has been consulted by the Council of Europe, various members of the European Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, for which he has authored five reports on EU-related issues. Mr. Kaczyński graduated in

international relations from the Warsaw University and in European studies from the College of Europe. He is also a visiting fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael in The Hague and advisor to the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation in Warsaw.

Speakers

Thomas Klau



Thomas Klau is Head of the Paris Office and Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. He is an expert on French, German and Eurozone politics; European economic policy; Franco-German relationship and European integration. Mr. Klau has previously held senior positions at organisations such as Agence-France-Presse, Associated Press, European Voice, Börsen-Zeitung. In 2000, he helped launch the Financial Times Deutschland. Mr. Klau served as the newspaper's bureau chief in Brussels (2000-2005) and correspondent in Washington (2006-2007) and wrote a column for it until 2009. He is a regular commentator for publications such as the

Financial Times, the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, the Irish Times, Les Echos, Le Monde, Liberation, and many other publications across Europe. Mr. Klau has chaired or participated in numerous public debates and conferences about European and international politics. He regularly provides analysis and advice for governments and other public and private institutions.

David Král



David Král has been the director of EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy since 2000. He graduated from the Law Faculty at Charles University in Prague, where he later lectured at Faculty of Social Sciences as well as at the Metropolitan University. During the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe and the Intergovernmental Conference 2003/2004 he was a member of advisory groups of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister, and member of an advisory group on foreign relations to the Vice-Premier for EU affairs for the Czech EU presidency in 2009. Since June 2010 he serves as the Chairman of the Board of PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society),

gathering think-tanks and policy institutes from Central and Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States. His main areas of expertise include the EU constitutional and institutional issues, EU enlargement, European neighbourhood policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy and transatlantic relations.

Iliya Lingorski



Iliya Lingorski is Executive Director and a founding member of the Liberal Institute for Political Analyses (LIPA). He has worked closely with Simeon Saxe-Coburg (H.M. King Simeon II) serving as his Vice-President of the National Movement for Stability and Prosperity and as Deputy Minister of Finance and Head of the State Treasury in his cabinet. In the Saxe-Coburg government Iliya Lingorski was National Authorising Officer for the EU funds, Alternate Governor for the IMF and chief government official for relations with international financial institutions, credit rating agencies and the banking sector. He co-chaired the government task force for EU accession negotiations on Protection of

Competition. Prior to that Iliya was Chief Political Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Executive Director of the National Tourism Promotion Agency.

Speakers

Jürgen Martens



Jürgen Martens studied law in Freiburg/Breisgau. His professional career started with work for the European Commission. Afterwards, he became a lawyer and set up his own office in Meerane/Saxony. In the age of 18 years he began his political engagement within the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP). After the electoral success of FDP in Saxony in 2009 he was appointed as Saxony's Minister of Justice and for European Affairs. In this capacity he is now member of the European Committee of the Regions representing Saxony, where he follows in particular territorial cohesion policy issues. He also is Member of Saxon's State Parliament and has been FDP Saxony's interior issues and legal policy spokesman for many years. He also joined Saxony's Parliament's European Affairs Committee.

Luděk Niedermayer



Luděk Niedermayer is a graduate of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University (now the Masaryk University) in Brno, his field of study being Operational Research and Systems Theory. Since 1991 he was working in Czechoslovak National Bank (later Czech National Bank), where he was promoted to Executive Director and became a member of Bank Board of CNB four years later. During his presence in CNB he was appointed Vice-Governor twice and participated in the restructuring of the Czech banking sector. When his term ended in 2008, he joined Deloitte in Czech Republic. Apart from this main occupation, he is a member of Scientific Council of Czech Banking Association, the Management Board of Prague Twenty and Financial Market Committee.

Agnieszka Pomaska



Agnieszka Pomaska is Member of Parliament for the Civic Platform Party (Platforma Obywatelska, PO). Her entire life is associated with the Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot), which is the place of her birth, education and current work. Her degree in Political Science was issued at University of Gdansk in 2005. From the beginning of her political career were her activities linked to PO, first in Management board, National Council, then as Secretary and Regional Coordinator and since 2010 as Chairman. She remains an active member of the European Ideas Network, European Network of Political Foundations and the European Values Network. In addition to her professional life, Agnieszka Pomaska has been very successful in sports, such as windsurfing or skiing.

Richard Robinson



Richard Robinson is currently a General Director of the British Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic (BCC CR). His core areas of work include Public & Corporate Affairs, Membership and Strategy of BCC. Robinson holds a diploma in Accounting and has participated in establishing new branches in Moscow and Kiev. His wife, J.E. Sian MacLeod is British Ambassador to the Czech Republic, therefore his presence in Prague has a diplomatic function as well. Besides his political and commercial activities, he is fond of classical music and singing.

Speakers

Taavi Roivas



Taavi Roivas is an Estonian politician and member of the liberal Estonian Reform Party. In the years 1999-2002 he served as an adviser of the Minister of Justice. Later he worked as an adviser to the Minister of Ethnic Affairs. From 2007 to 2011 he had been a member of Estonian Parliament where he was re-elected in the last parliament elections in 2011. Currently he holds the position of the Chairman of European Union Affairs Committee.

Jacques Rupnik



Jacques Rupnik is Director of Research at Centre for International Studies and Research (CERI) at Sciences-Po in Paris and professor at the College of Europe in Bruges. He was born in Prague in 1950, studied History and Political Science in Paris, completed his MA in Soviet Studies at Harvard and obtained PhD in History of International Relations in Sorbonne University. During his professional career, Rupnik worked as specialist in BBC, professor at Sciences Po and was an advisor to the last Czechoslovak president, Václav Havel. He was also a member of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo between 1999 and 2000 and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation in The Hague in 2010. His recent work focuses on democratisation and European integration of East-Central Europe and nationalism and post-conflict reconciliation in the Balkans.

Borek Severa



Borek Severa currently works as Project Consultant for Central Europe and Baltic States in Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF). After his emigration to Germany in 1968 he soon began actively to engage in German politics for the liberal party (FDP). His studies were completed with doctorate in Economics at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. He stayed in Frankfurt to work for different PR agencies and later on as Press & Communications Director for Banking and Financial institutions. Apart from his long-term cooperation with FNF, he is also founder of Media Trust Communications. His interests stretch to producing films and TV projects.

Richard Sulík



Richard Sulík is member of Slovak parliament and the founder and Chairman of the party Freedom and Solidarity. After the 2010 parliament elections he served as the Chairman of National Council of the Slovak Republic. He was born in Bratislava but in 1980 his family emigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany. Revolution in 1989 redirected his life path from studies in Munich back to Bratislava where he successfully established a company FaxCOPY, a.s. Meanwhile, he returned to studies at University of Economics, specializing in taxes. His diploma thesis became a core part of the new tax reform in 2003 and gained him a seat on the Advisory board of the Minister of Finance. Before establishing Freedom and Solidarity in 2009, Mr. Sulík became advisor to the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and a year later to the Minister of Finance for another tax reform.

Team

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We would like to thank all those whose help and cooperation have made this event possible.

European Liberal Forum



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What is the European Liberal Forum?

Founded in the fall of 2007, the European Liberal Forum, asbl (ELF) is the non-profit European political foundation of the liberal family. ELF brings together liberal think tanks, political foundations and institutes from around Europe to observe, analyse and contribute to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration, through education, training, research and the promotion of active citizenship within the EU.

The role of the European Liberal Forum is to:

Serve as a framework for think tanks, national political foundations, institutes, academics and leading liberal personalities to work together at European level.

- » Develop close working relationships with and among its member organisations, the national parliamentary groups, the European Liberal Democrats (ELDR Party) in the European Parliament, Liberal International (LI), the world federation of liberal political parties, and the European liberal youth (LYMEC), the youth organisation of the ELDR Party.
- » Observe, analyse and contribute to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration, through education, training, research and the promotion of active citizenship within the European Union, particularly with regard to young Europeans.
- » Strengthen the liberal, democrat and reform movement in the European Union and throughout Europe.
- » Seek a common position, as a transfer of experience gained from the contracting Members, on all important matters affecting the European Union.
- » Support liberal democracy throughout Europe and its neighbourhood.
- » Inform the public and involve it in the construction of a united European democracy.
- » Support and cosponsor European seminars, conferences and studies on such issues between the aforementioned stakeholders.

How does the European Liberal Forum work?

The ELF General Assembly is the supreme decision-making body. It elects the members of the Board and approves the common annual activity programme, upon proposal by the Board of Directors. It also approves the annual accounts, the annual report, the budget and any other form of financing.

The ELF Board of Directors provides the foundation with day-to-day guidance. Currently, the Board is composed of: Alexander Graf Lambsdorff MEP, President, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck MEP, Vice-President, Thierry Coosemans, Treasurer, Felicita Medved, Board member and Eugenijus Gentvilas, Board member. The secretariat is run by Susanne Hartig, ELF Executive Director.

How to become an ELF member organisation?

Membership of the foundation is open to those think tanks, national political foundations, institutes and leading liberal personalities that promote liberal, democratic ideals and values.

Applications for membership shall be sent to the Board of Directors.

Full list of ELF member organisation?

- » Asociación Galega para a Liberdade e a Democracia/Galician Society for Freedom and Democracy (GALIDEM) – (Spain)
- » Atvira visvomenė ir jos draugai/Open Society and its Friends (Lithuania)
- » Bertil Ohlin Institute (Sweden)
- » Centre Jean Gol (Belgium)
- » CentreForum (United Kingdom)
- » Centrum Liberálních Studií/Centre for Liberal Studies (Czech Republic)
- » Edistysmielisen tutkimuksen yhdistys r.y. e2/Think tank e2 (Finland)
- » Fondazione Critica Liberale (Italy)
- » Forum for Greece (Greece)
- » Forum för reformer och entreprenörskap/Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (FORES) (Sweden)
- » Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit/Friedrich Naumann Foundation for (Germany)
- » Fundacija Libertas (Slovenia)
- » Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata CatDem (Spain)
- » Fundacja Klub Obywatelski/Civic Club Foundation (Poland)
- » Fundacja Projekt: Polska / Foundation Project: Poland (Poland)
- » Haya van Someren Stichting/VVD International (Netherlands)
- » Institute for Liberal Studies (Romania)
- » Kentro Fileleftheron Meleton (KEFIM)/Liberty Forum of Greece (Greece)
- » Liberaal Kennis Centrum (Belgium)
- » Liberal Institute for Political Analyses (LIPA) (Bulgaria)
- » Liberales (Belgium)
- » Liberales Zukunftsforum/Liberal Future Forum (Austria)
- » Liberalismi Akadeemia/Academy of Liberalism (Estonia)
- » Lokus (Finland)
- » LYMEC
- » Magma (Finland)
- » Movimento Liberal Social (Portugal)
- » Mr. Hans van Mierlo Stichting (Netherlands)
- » Nadácia Liberálna spoločnosť / Liberal Society Foundation (Slovak Republic)
- » NOVUM – Institute for strategic and applicable research (Slovenia)
- » Prof.mr. B.M. Teldersstichting (Netherlands)
- » Republikon Scientific, Educational and Research Foundation (Hungary)
- » Stichting Internationaal Democratisch Initiatief (IDI) (Netherlands)
- » Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy (Denmark)
- » Swedish International Liberal Centre (Sweden)

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**

www.freiheit.org
www.msoe.fnst.org

At a glance

Freedom, as a fundamental value, is the basis of our work. Through our projects we contribute to a world in which all people can live in freedom, human dignity and peace. Together with our partners - liberal political parties, think tanks and other non-governmental organisations - we support the emergence of democratic institutions based on the rule of law, and the development of a market economy. By promoting well proven liberal concepts we also contribute to increasing people's opportunities to work for their own prosperity. Development policies are not a one-way street. We engage in open dialogue and introduce the success stories of our project countries into the German political discussion.

Today the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom has seven regional offices, 44 project offices and over 60 project countries worldwide. More than 250 highly committed employees are putting into practice a hundred individual projects in their respective regions.

Our work is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the German Foreign Office and, increasingly, from the European Union and other development aid policy bodies.

Central Europe and the Baltic States

Since the region's political changes, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) has been assisting, in an advisory capacity, liberal parties, think tanks and NGOs in Central Europe and the Baltics. The FNF project office in Prague is responsible for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Although all eight countries share a common communist past and joined the European Union together on May 1, 2004, their political, social and economic development still differ greatly. For instance, only Slovenia, Slovakia and Estonia have so far introduced the common European currency, the euro. Furthermore, the global financial crisis hit all of the sub-region's countries hard, with the exception of Poland, and blocked the now incipient process of consolidating economic and democratic and economic development in Central Europe and the Baltics. The crisis was severe enough in some countries to trigger not only economic but also social, inner-party and political upheavals.

Our efforts are thus focused not only on local or regional issues, but also on issues relevant for the whole sub-region from a liberal point of view.

In order to promote the development of civil society in the sub-region, one of the Foundation's main goals in all eight states is to transmit liberal values and stress the importance of Europe as a community of values. Another focus of FNF's education and advice are the concepts created with its local partners to combat regressive tendencies in state and society. This applies especially to the re-appearance of a strengthened, burgeoning nationalism. Some of FNF's most important allies in supporting liberal reform efforts in the sub-region are a number of renowned liberal think tanks. They have formed a cross-border network (4Liberty.eu) at the initiative of the FNF.

Association for International Affairs

Association for International Affairs (AMO) is a preeminent independent think-tank in the Czech Republic in the field of international affairs and foreign policy. The mission of AMO is to contribute to a deeper understanding of international affairs through a broad range of educational and research activities. Today, AMO represents a unique and transparent platform in which academics, business people, policy makers, diplomats, the media and NGO's can interact in an open and impartial environment.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS AMO STRIVES TO:

- formulate and publish briefings, research and policy papers
- arrange international conferences, expert seminars, roundtables, public debates
- organize educational projects
- present critical assessment and comments on current events for local and international press
- create vital conditions for growth of a new expert generation
- support the interest in international relations among broad public
- cooperate with like-minded local and international institutions



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RESEARCH CENTER

Founded in October 2003, the AMO's Research Center has been dedicated to carrying out research and raising public awareness of international affairs, security and foreign policy. The Research Center strives to identify and analyze issues important to Czech foreign policy and the country's position in the world. To this end, the Research Center produces independent analyses; encourages expert and public debate on international affairs; and suggests solutions to tackle problems in today's world. The Center's activities can be divided into two main areas: First, the Center undertakes research and analysis of foreign policy issues. Second, the Center fosters dialogue with the policy-makers, expert community and broad public.

Conference Organizers



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