

# Annual Report 2007

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In my introductory speech to the Central Council on 8 December 2006, I had proposed "10 golden rules" whose application, I thought, should breathe new life into ELEC. After debating them, the Central Council adopted those orientations, and in the course of 2007 they began to be implemented here and there. I can only rejoice over this fact, but I will nevertheless keep urging all ELEC members, especially the Presidents of its national sections and working commissions, to strive further in order to confirm and amplify this nascent recovery.

I want to mention in particular two fields in which ELEC's potential vitality manifested itself to my eyes in 2007. First, while listening at the Central Council of last December 7 to reports by delegates of eight national sections over their respective activities, I was struck by the number and variety of such activities but also by the fact that most participants at the meeting appeared to be struck as well and that this *tour de table* was, for them as for me, a revelation. I drew therefrom the obvious conclusion that each national section's activities were not sufficiently known not only to other national sections inside ELEC but also outside it, and that efforts at better communication, both internally and externally, were essential in order to project ELEC, both to its membership and to outsiders, as an organization not content with living on glorious memories but which today remains active, dynamic and innovative.

The second field I will mention concerns ELEC's collaboration with other European organizations that pursue similar aims, collaboration for which our presence in Brussels offers many opportunities. We have thus in 2007 organized activities with Eur-Ifri (the European branch of the *Institut français des relations internationales*), with the TEPSA (Trans-European Policy Studies Association) network, with Promeuro and the European Teachers' Association, and with *Réalités Européennes du Présent*. Besides, we have carried on our efforts at collaborating with the European Movement International (EMI), and they gave rise to a first attempt at systematization, which was discussed in depth by our Central Council last December 7 as well as by the EMI Executive Committee.

But ELEC's major weakness today lies in its geographical coverage, which over the years has become much too narrow. Following the demise of our Czech section, alas! confirmed in 2007, we only have 11 remaining national sections, out of which 8 are in EU member states, that is, less than in one third of the EU-27. This situation, particularly brought to light during the debate which followed the Secretary general's report to the Vienna Central Council on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007, provoked reactions and proposals that bore witness to a spirit of positive thinking.

I will emphasize two that struck me as important: on the one hand, it was proposed by one national section, and supported by several others, that each existing section should undertake to set up a new one, in a European country of its choice where ELEC is not or no longer present, and the General secretariat, which must coordinate such efforts, has already received concrete proposals. On the other hand, it was decided that the Enlarged Central Council meeting in Berlin in June 2008, which is due to discuss the results of EU's latest enlargements, should also be used as a springboard for enlarging ELEC itself, notably by inviting to Berlin personalities from New Member States who might give support to the creation of new ELEC sections in Central and Eastern Europe.

I fervently hope that, in our next annual report, I will be able to rejoice over the first successes of these new efforts.

Anton van ROSSUM

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## **THE CENTRAL COUNCIL**

The **June enlarged Central Council** on June 1<sup>st</sup>, which was kindly hosted by the Austrian section with the Liechtenstein section's support, heard a speech by German Ambassador to Austria Gerhard WESTDICKENBERG on the operation of the "tripartite Presidency" (meaning three successive presidencies of the Council which coordinate their programmes) and on the priorities of the current tripartite (namely Germany, Portugal and Slovenia). It also heard a speech by Governor of the Central Bank of Austria Klaus LIEBSCHER on "EMU and globalization: opportunities and challenges".

The Central Council heard in addition a report by the Secretary General, who first recalled ELEC's normal *modus operandi* before analyzing the difficulties increasingly experienced by ELEC compared with this ideal model. The report gave rise to an elaborate discussion which referred, several times, to the "10 golden rules" proposed by ELEC President to the Brussels Central Council in December 2006.

After hearing reports by the working commissions, the Central Council adopted a resolution proposed by the Economic and Social Commission and entitled "Economic nationalism or European patriotism?", as well as a text of conclusions born of the Neighbourhood Commission's meeting, which had focused on the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The **Brussels meeting** of December 7<sup>th</sup>, which was held, as in previous years, at the European Parliament, heard a talk given by Dr Peter PRAET, Director of the National Bank of Belgium and Chairman of the Banking Supervision Committee of the European System of Central Banks, on the financial crisis and its progression within banking institutions and on financial markets.

It also heard a brief account by the Secretary general of the first informal meeting of the "Executive Committee" which had taken place the evening before, as well as a report laying stress on both the activities undertaken during the year in partnership with other organizations and the first results of discussions conducted by the President and the Secretary general with the leaders of the European Movement International (EMI) in order to intensify the cooperation between the two organizations.

After hearing reports by the national sections and working commissions on their respective activities, the Central Council held a debate over ELEC's future and made a number of proposals concerning on the one hand the cooperation initiated with EMI and on the other hand autonomous efforts by ELEC to redress its situation.

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## **ACTIVITIES of the NATIONAL SECTIONS and MEETINGS of the WORKING COMMISSIONS**

### **8 January - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Prospects for the German EU-presidency".

**30 January - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate: "La defensa de los derechos humanos en la UE".

**2 February - Vienna - Austrian section**

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Current and future challenges for the European Union".

**12 February - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate: "La reforma de las normas de la competencia".

**12 February - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "A challenge: PPP in the Centropoe region".

**12 March - Paris - French section**

Lunch-debate: "Les progrès de l'intégration européenne en matière de services financiers".

**12 March - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Kosovo - the Gordian knot of the Balkans".

**15 March - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Session in collaboration with the Barcelona Circle of Economy: "Que Europa queremos para el siglo XXI".

**30 March - Rome - Monetary Panel**

President: Wim BOONSTRA. Topics: Towards a single market in retail banking - International economic environment.

**12 April - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate in collaboration with La Vanguardia: "China creciente, Europa menguante? Las relaciones a medio plazo entre la China y la UE".

**16 April - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Local authorities - players in the range of EU politics?".

**25 April - Madrid - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate offered by the Madrid Community on the occasion of the Treaty of Rome Anniversary: "Los retos de la presidencia alemana de la UE".

**26 April - Paris - Economic & Social Commission**

President: Philippe JURGENSEN. Topic: Economic nationalism or European patriotism? Resolution.

**3 May - Vienna - Austrian section**

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "The strategy of Austrian Railways within the context of the European transport policy".

**4 May - Brusels - Neighbourhood Commission**

President: Giselbert SCHMIDBURG. Topic: European Neighbourhood Policy: objectives and developments. Conclusions.

**7 May - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "The European Union in the media coverage".

**26 May - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Conference in collaboration the Financial Circle of "La Caixa".

**1<sup>st</sup> June - Vienna - Enlarged Central Council - General Assembly**

**4 June - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Marshall-plan and European unification".

**6 June - Brussels - Belgian section**

Lunch-debate "Enlargement of the eurozone".

**12 June - Brussels - Mediterranean Commission**

President: Carles GASÓLIBA. Preparation of the Barcelona Conference.

**18 June - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Objectives of the international trade unions".

**19 June - Brussels**

Symposium in collaboration with Eur-IFRI: "The EU-China Relationship".

**22 June - Paris - French section**

Lunch-debate: "La modernisation du Groupe SNCF à l'heure de l'eupéanisation de ses marchés".

**9 July - Vienna- Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Priorities of the Portuguese presidency".

**11 September - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "EU: a step backwards or a departure? The European elections 2009 as a challenge".

**17 September - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate: "El nuevo tratado en la Union de los Ventisiete"

**20 September - Brussels**

Conference in collaboration with TEPSA "L'euro: son impact et son avenir".

**1<sup>st</sup> October - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Climate protection and employment".

**5 October - Bern - Swiss section**

General Assembly of the Swiss section.

**9 October - Paris - Economic & Social Commission**

Conference at the Fondation Singer-Polignac "L'énergie, clef du futur européen?".

**9 October - Vienna - Austrian section**

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Institutional reform and enlargement - Where is the EU headed for?".

**25 October - Madrid - Spanish section**

Lunch-debate: "La presidencia portuguesa de la UE. Un nuevo tratado para la Union".

### **26 & 27 October - Barcelona - Mediterranean Conference**

President: Carles GASÓLIBA. Topic: "Social protection, economic growth and social balance in Mediterranean third countries".

### **6 November - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Providing information about Europe - mission impossible?".

### **9 November - Amsterdam - Monetary Panel**

President: Wim BOONSTRA. Topics: Cross border retail banking - Private equity.

### **15 November - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Lunch in honour of the President of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Manuel BARROSO.

### **15 November - Kronberg - German section**

General assembly.

### **15 & 16 November - Kronberg - Monetary Commission**

President: Rolf BREUER. Topics: Europe at 50: lessons from the past and challenges for the future - The international monetary system under reform stress: issues for Europe - Economic governance in the EU revisited - Crisis prevention in EU financial markets - Problems and open issues.

### **30 November - Bern - Swiss section**

Conference in collaboration with the **Neighbourhood Commission**: "EFTA-EU Relations".

### **30 November-1<sup>st</sup> December - Brussels**

Symposium in partnership with *Réalités Européennes du Présent* on "L'Europe: notre patrimoine".

### **3 December - Vienna - Austrian section**

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Troubles abroad - help at home".

### **7 December - Brussels - Central Council - General Assembly**

### **17 December - Vienna - Austrian section**

Lunch-debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Schengen yesterday - today - tomorrow".

And not to forget:

- the luncheon meetings with personalities from the business and political worlds organized by the **Polish section**, as well as information sessions on the use of European structural funds;
- the discussion fora on the relations between Switzerland and the EU organized by the **Swiss section**.

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