

Annual Report 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In my introduction to the previous annual report, I expressed satisfaction over the potential strengths I had observed in ELEC in 2007, but I could not help underlining its major weakness, namely a geographical coverage that had become, over the years, much too narrow. This situation even worsened with the demise of our Italian section, which was confirmed at our meeting of December 2008. Still, the debate we've had in Berlin following the Secretary General's report on ELEC's enlargement clearly showed our common will not to accept this tendency as irreversible but, on the contrary, to reverse it by creating new national sections, with the help and support of existing sections.

Rays of hope have pierced the gloom in this respect: the presence among us in Berlin of Mr. Radu Deac, likely to take the lead in founding an ELEC section in Rumania, was such a signal, and we have good reasons to believe that his efforts will bear fruit in 2009. I also had the pleasure to travel last February to Lisboa and to meet, through an initiative of our Spanish section, several prominent Portuguese citizens who seemed determined to set up an ELEC section in Portugal. Lastly, thanks to our French section, we have established with Greece a contact which, I hope, will prove fruitful.

But the rejuvenation of ELEC must at least keep pace with its enlargement, as we are all convinced. For a number of years the necessity for ELEC to attract members that are younger and still active has repeatedly been stressed at its Central Council meetings. Let us admit this is no easy task, for the talented young Europeans we would wish to entice into ELEC's activities are generally occupied in professional pursuits that leave them little time for other activities. But let us observe nevertheless first that some of our national sections - I think in particular of Poland and Spain - have proved capable of attracting young adults to their meetings and we should derive more inspiration from their efforts, and secondly that other competing organizations pursuing goals similar to ours succeed in capturing in Brussels the interest and the enthusiasm of a younger public.

On the other hand the meetings of our working commissions, no matter how good - and they are generally very good - the speakers we invite, no matter how interesting the debates that follow their presentations, only succeed in attracting a very small proportion of ELEC's membership, and the documents produced by those meetings fail to receive much attention outside ELEC, and even within it. Presumably the spatial extension of its network and the travelling expenses implied by attendance at its meetings explain part of this difficulty, which other associations operating for a European public that lives and works in Brussels do not encounter to the same extent.

Until now we have almost exclusively counted on our working commissions' meetings to stimulate within ELEC the reflection and debates necessary to bring forth eventually its resolutions and position papers. Perhaps this is no longer adapted to present-day circumstances, and we must learn how to rely more on a parallel network - Internet - to nourish such reflection and debates, both within our national sections and among them. Let us modernize our website, let us make it more interactive, let us organize a better synergy between a more intensive use of this website on the one hand and on the other hand commission meetings that could possibly be held less frequently, or more often merged together. I am convinced this would be worth the effort.

Anton van ROSSUM

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

In 2008, ELEC Central Council met on June 6 in Berlin and on December 12 in Brussels, under Anton van Rossum's chairmanship.

The **June enlarged Central Council** was generously hosted by the German section and devoted a session to the "EU enlargement 10 years after". Ms. Marion MÜHLBERGER, Assistant Vice President, DB Research, analyzed the economic aspects thereof in a presentation on "the economic catching-up process in the New Member States", and Mr. Reinhard SILBERBERG, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Federal Government of Germany, retraced the political process which led to successive enlargements of the EU in 1995, 2004 and 2007, as well as the arduous pursuit of institutional reforms. Finally Mr. Elmar BROK, member of the European Parliament, turned his attention to present-day challenges and underlined the problematical character of future enlargements.

Furthermore the Berlin Central Council heard a report by the Secretary General on the enlargement of ELEC, followed by a debate, as well as reports by national sections on their own activities and by working commissions. It adopted a resolution jointly tabled by the Neighbourhood and Economic & Social Commissions on "the effects of EU enlargement" and a message proposed by the Mediterranean Commission entitled "For a renewal of the Barcelona process". Finally it conferred upon Mr. Olivier Giscard d'Estaing, former president of the Economic and Social Commission and former president of the French section, the title of "Member of the Central Council".

The **Brussels meeting**, which was hosted by the Representation of the European Commission in Belgium, heard a speech by Mr. Jean-Martin FOLZ, President of the *Association Française des Entreprises Privées*, on the "Climate-Energy package", followed by a debate. The Central Council also heard in succession reports by the Secretary General, the national sections and the working commissions, and it adopted a contribution from the Economic and Social Commission on "reforming global governance", as well as the conclusions of the Monetary Panel meeting on "Fighting the crisis". Furthermore it adopted a brief "Central Council internal rules" aimed at putting a time limit on the mandates of individual Central Council members. Finally it appointed Mr. Jerry van Waterschoot as ELEC new Secretary General and conferred upon Mr. Jean-Claude Koeune, outgoing Secretary General, the title of "Member of the Central Council".

ACTIVITIES of the NATIONAL SECTIONS and MEETINGS of the WORKING COMMISSIONS

14 January - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Slovenian EU presidency", Ernest PETRIC, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia.

14 January - Barcelona - Spanish section

Symposium: "La politica de investigacion y desarrollo de la UE".

22 January - Paris - French section

Lunch-debate: "Les pays émergents dans l'économie mondiale: défis et opportunités", Angel GURRIA, Secretary General OCDE.

25 January - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "The significance of the Lisbon Treaty for the future of Europe", Othmar KARAS and Hannes SWOBODA, members of the European Parliament.

4 February - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "The Lisbon Treaty and its ratification - loss of sovereignty or gain of solidarity?", Reinhard RACK, member of the European Parliament.

11 February - Brussels - Belgian section

Lunch-debate: "Challenges for Euronext", Bruno COLMANT, CEO Euronext Brussels.

10 March - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC and the European Club: "Continuity or change of policy? Russia under Dmitry Medvedev", Gerhard MANGOTT, Leopold-Franzens University, Innsbruck.

31 March - Barcelona - Spanish section

Symposium: "Políticas europeas de inmigración. Modelos y propuestas".

7 April - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Kosovo's long road to independence", Albert ROHAN, Former Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary general for the future status process for Kosovo.

9 April - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Financial crisis - fate or political failure?", Ewald NOWOTNY, Vienna University for Economics and Business Administration.

10 April - Barcelona - Spanish section

Symposium: "La agenda de Lisboa: resultados de la cumbre de primavera bajo presidencia eslovaca a la UE".

18 April - Warsaw - Monetary Panel

President: Wim BOONSTRA

Topics: Prospects for the introduction of the Eurocurrency in Poland (Katarzyna ZAJDEŁ-KUROWSKA, Polish Vice-minister of finances) - The international credit crisis and its consequences (Ewlin DE GROOT, Head Financial Market Research - Rabobank International).

22 April - Brussels - Economic and Social Commission

President: Philippe JURGENSEN

and Neighbourhood Commission

President: Giselbert SCHMIDBURG

Topic: Economic balance of the impact of the coming of new member states into the EU (Marie-Hélène BÉRARD, former Advisor to Raymond Barre - Jean-Loïc GUIÉZE, Country risk analyst, BNP Paribas - Filip KEEREMAN, Head of Unit, DG ECFIN European Commission - Philippe TRAINAR, Chief Economist, SCOR).

Resolution "The effects of EU enlargement".

5 May - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Financial markets and the crisis", Franz NAUSCHNIGG, Austrian Central Bank.

5 May - Barcelona - Spanish section

Symposium: "Las reformas político-institucionales en el Tratado de Lisboa".

8 May - Bern - Swiss section "European Day"

"Ziele und Realitäten der Europäischen Integration: Eine Standortbestimmung aus Schweizer Sicht", Thomas COTTIER, President of the Swiss section.

14 May - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Energy 2020 - challenges for the electric power industry", Michael PISTAUER, CEO Verbund.

27 May - Brussels - Mediterranean Commission

President: Carles GASÓLIBA.

Preparation of the 9th conference (Spring 2009).

Message "For a renewal of the Barcelona process".

29 May - Paris - French section

Lunch-debate: "Lisbonne: un traité, une stratégie et après?", Sylvie GOULARD, President of the European Movement- France.

2 June - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "One year before the EP elections: the EP through the eyes of the citizens and the media", Cornelia BRANTNER, Institute for journalism and communication, Vienna University - Wolfgang HILLER, Head of the information office of the EP in Austria - Harald PITTEERS, Austrian Gallup Institute.

5 June - Berlin - Infrastructures Commission

President: Klaus MILZ

Topics: Importance of transport infrastructures for mobility and sustainable development (Lothar ABEL, Siemens / Verband Bahnindustrie Deutschland) - Status of European Rail Infrastructure and FERRMED Planning (Jacques BERNIS, FERRMED) - The use of the EU Cohesion and Regional Funds in the New Member States for transport - Actions to foster PPP.

6 June - Berlin - Enlarged Central Council - General Assembly.**9 June - Barcelona - Spanish section**

Symposium: "El euro en la economía mundial. La política económica y financiera de la UE en la coyuntura económica internacional".

11 June - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Austria's role within the EU", Rudolf LENNKH, Austrian Foreign Affairs Ministry.

11 June - Brussels - Belgian section

Lunch-debate: "The turmoil in the financial markets and the regulatory framework", Eddy WYMEERSCH, Chairman Supervisory Board Belgian CBFA.

24 June - Brussels

Debate in collaboration with TEPSA: "From why to how: Reflections on the Lisbon agenda post 2010", Anne METTLER, Executive Director Lisbon Council.

7 July - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Priorities of the French EU presidency", Pierre VIAUX, Ambassador of France in Austria.

8 July - Brussels

Public presentation, in collaboration with the European Banking Federation, of Cahier Boël n°13 "Pan-EU retail banking. What industry wants and consumers need".

1st September - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Inflation - causes and appropriate counter measures of economic policy", Ernest GNAN, Austrian Central Bank.

19 September - Bern - Swiss section

General Assembly of the Swiss section.

23 September - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Europe in today's world", Hannes ANDROSCH, Androsch International Management Consulting.

9 October - Brussels - Mediterranean Commission

President: Carles GASÓLIBA

Topic: Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Paris (Andres BASSOLS, Deputy Head of Unit - DG RELEX, European Commission).

10 October - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Necessary reorientation of EU policies", Herbert TUMPEL, President of the Austrian chamber for workers and employees.

23 October - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "European foreign policy from a German perspective", Gerd WESTDICKENBERG, Ambassador of Germany in Austria.

28 October - Paris - Economic and Social Commission

President: Philippe JURGENSEN

Topics: Economic consequences of the financial crisis (Jean-Marc DANIEL, Professor at ESCP-EAP - Mathilde LEMOINE, Chief Economist, HSBC France - Philippe TRAINAR, Chief Economist, SCOR) - The reform of world governance (Georges BERTHOIN, Honorary President of the Trilateral Commission - Olivier GISCARD d'ESTAING, Founder of INSEAD - Philippe MOREAU DEFARGES, research scholar at IFRI).

Contribution "Reforming world governance".

31 October - Paris - French section

Lunch-debate: "L'Europe vue par l'entreprise", Ernest-Antoine SEILLIERE, President Business Europe.

4 November - Vienna - Austrian section

Debate in collaboration with the European Club: "Challenges for communicating European issues", Richard KUEHNEL, Head of the Representative Office of the European Commission in Austria.

7 November - Brussels - Monetary Panel

President: Wim BOONSTRA

Topics: Forthcoming changes in banking supervision and financial regulation in the EU (David WRIGHT, Deputy Director General, DG Internal Market and Services, European Commission) - Financial crisis, banks' business models and policy issues (Peter PRAET, Director, National Bank of Belgium).

Conclusion "Fighting the crisis".

14 November - Brussels - Neighbourhood Commission

President: Giselbert SCHMIDBURG

Topics: Role of the OSCE in the countries of Eastern and South-East Europe (Bernard SNOY, Former Coordinator economic and environmental activities, OSCE) - The Ukraine-EU relationship: problems and prospects (Jean-François RIVALAIN, Director "Wider EU advocacy & projects agency").

27 November - Vienna - Austrian section

Lunch-debate in collaboration with IVC: "Experiences in politics and business - two worlds and their differences and similarities", Brigitte EDERER, CEO Siemens Austria.

11 December - Brussels - Mediterranean Commission

President: Carles GASÓLIBA

Topic: Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean meeting of Marseille (Alexander ZAFIRIOU, Secretary general Middle East / Mediterranean Unit of the Council of Europe).

12 December - Brussels - Central Council - General Assembly.

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