



Schools of Political Studies NEWSLETTER

SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Issue 3, July 2013

Editorial

Just how challenging the environment facing the Schools of Political Studies' is, in their mission to strengthen democratic processes and practices, has been regrettably highlighted by two Schools who find themselves in an unwelcome spotlight:

Despite numerous calls by European and international organisations for the immediate release of the **Director of the Baku School of Political Studies, Ilgar Mammadov** has been jailed for over five months on politically motivated charges and the School has had to suspend its regular activity. In the Russian Federation, the **Moscow School of Political Studies**, like other civil society organisations in that country, is threatened by the new law on 'foreign agents'. Implementation of this law is likely to have far-reaching negative consequences on the functioning and independence of the School. I am pleased to report that **Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe**, raised this issue at his recent meeting with **President Putin**.

These situations are particularly extreme, but all the Schools are working in a context where democracy is facing widespread threat. The problem is not limited to Eastern European countries; there is a dangerous rise in populist movements in Western Europe, undermining 'old' democracies. In this context, the Council of Europe is convinced that **expanding the Network of Schools to Western Europe is a priority**. The recent establishment of the **Visegrád School of Political Studies**, which brings together young leaders from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic, has led the way in this direction.

The important role the Schools play in strengthening democracy has been repeatedly proven. The Secretary General has confirmed that the Schools are one of the success stories of the Council of Europe and I am pleased to note that, for the first time, **the Schools of Political Studies programme is defined as a political priority of the Organisation** for the next two years. I am sure that this will help develop further our work and increase the Network's visibility in Europe and beyond. **The World Forum for Democracy**, which will bring together participants from the Schools in Strasbourg in November, will also make a significant contribution to reaching this goal.

Ambassador Piotr Świtalski

Directors' meeting focuses on greater visibility of the Schools of Political Studies



A series of information meetings on the activities of the Schools of Political Studies was organised during the Directors' meeting in Strasbourg on 13-14 June 2013.

These included a meeting with **Members of the European Parliament**, in order to strengthen co-operation with other European institutions, and another meeting with **Major Administrative Entities of the Council of Europe** in order to **mainstream the Schools into other activities of the Organisation**. The Directors' meeting also discussed recent developments within the Network and its future challenges, as well as a **Report on Quality and Impact Assessment Standards**.

Participants from the Schools joined a seminar on "Democratic citizenship and diversity" in Strasbourg



The **European Association of Schools of Political Studies (EASPS)** organised a two-day seminar for the Network of Schools of Political Studies on "Democratic citizenship and diversity" (Strasbourg, 21-22 May 2013). The event formed part of the "Celebrating Europe" month which is sponsored by the City of Strasbourg each year.

Through a series of meetings and workshops, ten representatives of the Network **shared their experiences with young leaders from Western European countries and debated European citizenship, diversity, migration, gender equality and the integration of young people in public life**. With the support of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), the event **fostered exchanges between the Network and similar initiatives in Africa**. It also provided an opportunity to make the Association and the Network more visible to a wider public.

FOCUS ON SCHOOLS' NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

“Culture of Dialogue” at the heart of the Georgian–Russian bilateral meeting



The Tbilisi School of Political Studies – in cooperation with the Moscow School of Political Studies – organised the **Second Georgian–Russian experts meeting** (Tbilisi, 21–22 June 2013) on the “Culture of Dialogue”. This event also received support from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. The high-level experts from both countries discussed ways to **improve the Georgian–Russian relationship**; they examined issues regarding the breakaway regions and explored the **perspectives of European integration for both countries**. The parties agreed that following the Georgian Parliamentary elections in October 2012, the long-term opportunities to improve relations between the two countries had increased.

The Albanian School of Political Studies alerts first time voters



In preparation of the recent parliamentary elections, the Albanian Academy of Political Science, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, implemented a **pre-electoral assistance programme on “Awareness Raising of First Time Voters”** in Albania. The campaign was run in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Central Electoral Commission. **It consisted of three lectures and an election simulation exercise for 33.000 first time voters in 350 high schools**. Special guests from diplomatic missions and Albanian prominent personalities were involved in the activities and a [civic educational website](#) has been set up providing information to young people on election education and democracy in a wider sense.

Yerevan School explores gender issues in Armenia



A seminar on **“Women in Public and Political Life”** (Tsakhkadzor, 14–17 March) was organised by the Yerevan School of Political Studies. Armenian women leaders from the National Assembly, Government, political parties, municipalities, mass media and civil society, coming from different regions of Armenia, attended the event together with many local experts. **The seminar highlighted the achievements of Armenian women and the challenges they face in realising their rights and achieving gender equality**. A special session was organised by the Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. At the end of the seminar a report on the “Participation of Women in Public and Political Life” was issued by the participants.

Montenegro School of Democratic Leadership celebrates its 10th Anniversary



The School of Democratic Leadership (SDL) in Montenegro organised its **2nd Alumni Forum** to celebrate its 10th anniversary. The Introductory lecture was delivered by Mr Ranko Krivokapić, **President of the Parliament of Montenegro after the participants had been welcomed by Prof. Sonja Tomovic Šundić, President of the Academic Council of SDL and Dean of the Faculty of Political Science**. An interactive forum brought together **all generations of Schools’ participants** and enabled them to actively participate in the panel discussions. Other participants included members of diplomatic missions and international organisations, prominent artists and representatives of neighbouring countries.

The Moscow School of Political Studies: 20 years of civic education in Russia



The Moscow School of Political Studies (MSPS) celebrated its 20th anniversary from 25 to 27 April 2013. The event was attended by 131 alumni from 42 regions of the Russian Federation and four other countries. International experts included **Alvaro Gil-Robles**, former Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, **Catherine Lalumière**, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the actor and film director **Ralph Fiennes**, **Piotr Świtalski**, Director of Policy Planning of the Council of Europe, **Ivan Krastev**, Chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies (Sofia), **Lord Robert Skidelsky**, House of Lords, United Kingdom.



The themes explored power, politics and people through the prism of media, arts, institutions and economics. The interconnection of “**Art and Power**” was particularly central. Ralph Fiennes presented his film “Coriolanus”, based on Shakespeare’s tragedy and the ensuing discussion analysed parallels between the current political reality and the era Shakespeare portrays.



In the [Opening address](#), **Lena Nemirovskaya**, Founder and Director of the Moscow School, deplored that civic education in Russia always was, and still remains, a risky business. Nevertheless, over the last 20 years the MSPS has endeavored to build a truly open, democratic and effective civil society in Russia and has helped to create a real spirit of civic life.

The Moscow School of Political Studies, a **model and inspiration for all the other Schools of the Network**, received congratulations from Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Vladimir Lukin, Human Rights Commissioner of Russia as well as Members of Parliament of Russia and many outstanding alumni of the School.

FOCUS

ON ALUMNI OF THE MOSCOW SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES (JULY 2013)

Armaz Akhvlediani, Director of Tbilisi School of Political Studies, Executive Secretary of the political unity “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”

Marina Beshpalova, Mayor of Ulyanovsk City

Sergey Bozhenov, Governor of the Volgograd region

Alexander Burkov, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation

Saak Karapetyan, Head of General Department of International Legal Co-operation of the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Russian Federation

Konstantin Likeman, Deputy of the Federal State Statistics Service

Rafael Mardanshin, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation

Larisa Mishustina, Senior Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation

Nikolay Mladenov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (2010–2013), Member of the European Parliament (2007–2009)

Sergey Nedoroslev, Chair of the Board of Kaskol Group of Companies

Tatyana Nesterenko, First Deputy Finance Minister of the Russian Federation

Jambulat Ozdov, Commissioner for Human Rights in the Ingushetia Republic

Vladimir Ryzhkov, Co-Chair of Political Party RPR–PARNAS, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (1993–2007)

Igor Sapko, Mayor of Perm City

Sergei Stanishev, Prime–Minister of Bulgaria (2005–2009)

Mikhail Seslavinsky, Head of Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation

Andrey Spicyn, Commissioner for Human Rights in the Astrakhan Region

Olga Timofeeva, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Co–Chair of the central staff of civic movement ‘The Popular Front’

Tatiana Yakovleva, Deputy Minister of Health of the Russian Federation, Member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (1999–2012)

Irina Yarovaya, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Chair of the Legislative Support of Anti–Corruption Committee



The School of Political Studies' "brand" exported to Central Africa

The Civic and Political School of Yaoundé (EPCY), Cameroon, which took its inspiration from the Council of Europe Network of Schools of Political Studies, held its inaugural seminar on 13–15 March 2013. The School is an independent initiative supported by the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF); it prepares young leaders to meet future challenges of African societies. The seminar was attended by sixty young leaders from all sectors of society, both from Cameroon and other countries of Central Africa. The theme “**Political Actors: roles, missions and challenges**” served to recall the basic principles of democracy. In a context where the political and civic culture in many African countries is weak, the School intends to contribute to the prevention of crises and conflicts. More information can be found in an [article by Mr Emah Etoundi](#), Director of EPCY.



Key forthcoming events

18-21 SEPTEMBER 2013	INAUGURAL SEMINAR
Warsaw, Poland	Visegrád School of Political Studies
11-13 OCTOBER 2013	REGIONAL SEMINAR
Tunisia	Schools of Tunisia and Morocco
27-29 NOVEMBER 2013	WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY
Strasbourg, France	“Re-wiring democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age”

For the full calendar, please visit the [Schools' website](#)

CONTACTS

DIRECTORATE OF POLICY PLANNING

Ambassador Piotr Świtalski
Director
piotr.switalski(at)coe.int
+33 (0) 3 88 41 30 95

Michael Rimmert
Deputy to the Director
michael.rimmert(at)coe.int
+33 (0) 3 88 41 34 05

Ruth Goodwin
Project Officer
ruth.goodwin(at)coe.int
+33 (0) 3 88 41 34 96

Suzette Saint-Marc
Project Assistant
suzette.saint-marc(at)coe.int
+33 (0) 3 88 41 28 67

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Jack Hanning
Secretary General
jack.hanning(at)gmail.com
+33 (0) 6 75 79 73 27

Yuliya Kochneva
Project Manager
yuliya.kochneva(at)coe.int
+33 (0) 3 88 41 21 89

www.schoolsofpoliticalstudies.eu

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 other Schools have been created. The Schools' Network now covers the whole of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and, since 2012, the Southern Mediterranean region and countries of the Visegrád Group.

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 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 please go to the [Schools of Political Studies website](#).