UEF Newsletter January-February 2011

Dear Friends,

These days we are all deeply concerned about the turmoil in Tunisia, Egypt and throughout the Arab world. We are full of hope for a democratic spring to come. As Europeans, we have to stand by the side of all democrats, against oppression and violence. The President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, has delivered on behalf of all our elected representatives a very strong and clear message for democracy. Bearing in mind his own history in the Solidarity Movement of Poland, he is perhaps our most vigilant and vocal representative in the world.

Hence, we are very delighted to offer you the opportunity to listen to President Buzek who will honour our Congress of 25*27 March in Brussels with his welcoming address on Friday. More information on the Congress and other distinguished guests will follow.

At the moment, we all do our best to make our Congress a memorable event for you. I want to thank those of you who have already drafted proposals for resolutions or volunteered to help. Enjoy more news in the update below!

Sincerely yours,
Christian Wenning
UEF Secretary General

UEF NEWS

XXIII UEF European Congress "Federal Union - Time to Decide"

XXIII UEF European Congress under the title "Federal Union * Time to Decide" will be held in Brussels in 25*27 March 2011. The discussion on the continuing euro crisis, the reform of the European Parliament and the collapse of the momentum behind further enlargement will be the core of the theme resolution.

We expect over 200 participants, delegates, guests and observers from all over Europe. As the sovereign body of the UEF, Congress will elect new representatives and define the UEF's policy for the next years.

You can consult the draft agenda and register on XXIII UEF European Congress.

The deadline for registration is 7 March 2011. Delegates can submit proposals for resolutions until 11 March 2011.

NEWS FROM SECTIONS

Rainer Wieland visiting UEF Bulgaria

The Vice-President of the European Parliament Rainer Wieland MEP visited Bulgaria from 19 to 22 December 2010, at the invitation of Dr. Andrey Kovatchev, MEP and President of UEF Bulgaria. Mr. Wieland was received by the Mayor of Sofia Mrs. Jordanka Fandakova and leaders of the Sofia City Council. He also met the President of the Bulgarian Parliament Mrs. Tsetska Tsacheva and the Committee on European Affairs and the Oversight of European Funds.

During a meeting organised by UEF Bulgaria, Rainer Wieland was introduced to MPs from all political parties represented in the Bulgarian Parliament, to whom he presented the activities of EUD Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag. He welcomed at the occasion of that meeting the initiative for the establishment of UEF Parliamentary Group in the Bulgarian Parliament, supporting the development of federalist ideas among Bulgarian MPs. Beside the official programme, Mr. Wieland had an informal meeting with JEF
members to discuss keys for success of their organisation.

PAST EVENTS

Increasing the role of the citizens in the European Project

UEF Bulgaria was co-organiser of the international seminar “Increasing the Role of the Citizens in the European Project” held in Sofia. Participants from Austria, Bulgaria, Greece and Slovenia discussed the active participation of young generation in the democratic life of the Union through debates, public consultations and citizens’ initiatives at local, national and European level.

The event was opened by the Belgian Ambassador Marc Michielsen who made an assessment of the Belgian EU Presidency. The former President of UEF Bulgaria Svetoslav Spassov delivered a greeting address on behalf of Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov.

Among the topics discussed were the changes in the functioning of the EU, brought by the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the need for common European economic governance, making citizens’ Europe a political reality, and user*friendly ECI Regulation. Panel discussions, working groups, debates, lectures and plenary sessions were part of the methods used to debate these issues.

The rest of the speakers included Philippe Autie, Ambassador of France, Dietrich Becker Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy, Vladimir Shopov, a political scientist and Velko Ivanov, Secretary*General of UEF Bulgaria.

The participants also enjoyed a rich social program, including horse ride in Vitosha mountain, parties and sightseeing trip to the Rila Monastery.

UEF Belgium: Belgian Budget minister about European budget

On January 11 UEF Belgium organized in the framework of their project “Europe lunch: European challenges and citizenship” a seminar on European budget issues. Melchior Wathelet, the Belgian Budget Minister was the guest speaker of this discussion held in Brussels.

Citizenship and the Lisbon Treaty – can the British ever be European citizens?

On January 20, organized by Federal Union (UEF United Kingdom) "Citizenship and the Lisbon Treaty - can the British ever be European citizens" was the fourth conference in a series undertaken jointly with the Global Policy Institute and co-funded by the European Commission Representation in the UK,
which examined citizenship in the light of the Lisbon Treaty and whether the British, given their long history of separation, physical and political, from the European continent could ever be European citizens in a real sense.

To discuss the question, a distinguished panel of speakers took part:

Georgia Georgiadou, Policy Officer, Citizenship Unit, DG Justice, European Commission
Richard Laming, Chairman, Federal Union
John Palmer, former Political Director, European Policy Centre
Professor Jo Shaw, Salvesen Chair of European Institutions, University of Edinburgh
Chaired by **Brendan Donnelly**, Director of the Federal Trust

JEF NEWS

The Young European Federalists (JEF) have released the new issue of their bi-weekly Newsletter JEF-INFO. To find the full version of the newsletter at the homepage of JEF Europe, click here.