

# D66 International Quarterly

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## Issues of life and death

There are many doctors, specialists and general practitioners alike, who are faced with the question: 'doctor, can you help me to end my life?'. It seems that, with the ever increasing technical possibilities to extend life there is also an increasing demand for euthanasia, 'a good death'. People suffering from incurable diseases ask themselves to what extent they want to make use of the technical possibilities offered. What is preferable, to die with dignity at a chosen time or to cling to life with the use of all the techniques that one has at his disposal, with the possibility that one loses consciousness and therefore control over one's life and death? This question cannot be answered in general, because it is up to every individual to decide for himself.

To decide one's own life and death is an inalienable right of an individual. Medical-ethical questions come in when medical acts are involved in the termination of life. D66 recognized at an early moment that to protect patients and the medical sector, regulation was needed. The existing situation left doctors involved in cases of euthanasia practically outlawed. After many years of discussion the Dutch parliament adopted the law on euthanasia in 1994. The law is mainly procedural: It sees to it that doctors involved in cases of eutha-

nasia inform the public prosecutor of such cases. In this way the public prosecutor can determine whether the termination of life was done 'at the explicit and repeated wish of the person involved' or whether this was not so. D66 considered the law on euthanasia an important step ahead, but still insufficient. Introduction of the obligation to inform the public prosecutor meant that the legislator (parliament) left the substantive issue, namely the distinction between life terminating medical acts 'at the explicit and repeated wish of the person involved' and life

terminating medical acts which are not the result of such a wish, up to the judiciary.

D66 was and is of the opinion that to bring the legal situation into agreement with the existing practice, adaptation of the criminal code is needed. Whether such an adaptation is possible within the present legislature of the D66/VVD/PvdA cabinet remains to be seen, however. The agreement on which the coalition is based does not go beyond mentioning an evaluation of the obligation to inform. Rogier van Boxtel, deputy chairperson of the D66 parliamentary group and spokesperson on the issue of euthanasia, is optimistic: "I hope that as a result of the evaluation the Minister will change the legislation. But if there is no agreement on the need for new legislation in the cabinet it is not unlikely that parliament will present a bill".

Meanwhile Van Boxtel follows closely the developing case law on the obligation to inform the public prosecutor on life terminating medical acts. He thinks the standard questionnaire used for this purpose needs clarification on some points because of judgements passed by the Supreme Court. 'Since the decision to prosecute or not is based on jurisprudence, the requirements for a careful practice have to be as transparent as possible'.

*Marjanne de Kwaasteniet*

## Latest news on the Central and Eastern Europe Foundation of D66 (IVSOM)

The IVSOM programme 1996 has started; fifteen projects in Central and Eastern Europe will again be organised. The first project has already taken place, the preparations for the other projects are well under way.

### Bulgaria

Recent events in Bulgarian life put the relations between spontaneous social protest and the behaviour

of political parties in the centre of the public debate. IVSOM and the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Bulgaria organised a seminar on this theme. 'Civic protest and the political parties' was the topic of this seminar, which took place in the beginning of March in Sofia.

The main question of the seminar was how to mobilise political support for civil society protest, preserving its social character.

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**D66**  
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The three main objectives of the seminar were: to discuss the relations between ad hoc civic protest and political parties, to train party leaders how to use civic protest without misusing it, and to train society activists how to cooperate with the opposition parties. During the seminar lecturers, politicians and journalists expressed a variety of opinions on all issues, which they discussed in several discussion sessions. The conclusion of these discussions was as follows:

Civic protest is a necessary mediator that regulates the relationship between politicians and citizens. Citizens use civic protest as a means to inform politicians about their wishes and to force them to take these wishes into account. Politicians use the civic protest as a support that legitimizes their initiatives and as information they need to reform their policy. Citizens must protect the civic character of the protest and

not allow politicians to replace their goals with party goals.

During the seminar the Dutch experience in civic protest was compared with the Bulgarian experiences. Bert Bakker, D66 MP, explained the policy of D66 towards NGO's and gave the Bulgarian participants some examples and dimensions of cooperation. Peter Nighiff from the Dutch Foundation for Nature and Environment talked about how to use civic protest without misusing it.

### 1996 Programme

With the Alliance of Free Democrats in Hungary a conference on 'Peacemaking in the Balkans - changes of reconciliation and legal enforcement of human rights' will be organised in June 1996. At this meeting politicians from different levels will gather to discuss the topic and exchange views. 'Environment at a

regional level' will be the theme of a multilateral conference in Slovenia, organised with the LDS. 'Women in the heart of Europe', is the title of a multilateral conference on emancipation that will take place in October in Budapest. Both the Polish Union of Freedom and the Reform Party Liberals from Estonia will discuss the integration process of the Eastern European countries in the European Union.

IVSOM will further organise seminars and conferences in Rumania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Also, this year D66 will cooperate with the Dutch Christian-Democrats, Social-Democrats and Greens in Serbia and Russia. For the first time this year projects in Macedonia and Croatia are included in the IVSOM programme.

For more information you can contact Tanja Brok, who coordinates the IVSOM projects at the D66 National Office (phone: +31.70.356 6066/ e-mail [lsd66@d66.nl](mailto:lsd66@d66.nl)).

## Dutch support for the political process in South Africa: the Foundation for the New South Africa

Straight from its own establishment in 1966 onwards D66 has been committed to the struggle against apartheid and considered developments in South Africa as a long term interest for the party. Relations with politicians fighting apartheid have always been a matter of course. D66 more than welcomed the so called New South Africa and felt committed to support the shaky process towards democracy.

For that reason D66, with other democratic political parties in the Netherlands, took the initiative to establish a foundation to support and stimulate the democratic forces in South Africa at the end of 1993. Soon nearly all Dutch parties participated, most of them wholeheartedly, some nilly willy. A racist party represented in the Dutch parliament was not invited to participate in the

foundation, but all other parties joined forces to help effectively.

The Netherlands minister for Development Cooperation was willing to support this initiative financially and since 1994 the Foundation for the New South Africa has got a subsidy of 5 million guilders a year. Traditionally D66 had its closest contacts in South Africa with the Democratic Party and its predecessors, in particular Helen Suzmans Progressive Party. Besides that we have always kept closely in touch with the ANC. Although our sympathies have not changed, we understood that helping only these 'traditional friends' could not be the way to support the democratic process as a whole in the new South Africa. Seeing that president Mandela was not excluding the political extremes from government, the Board of the Foundation decided that all South African parties repre-

sented in parliament qualified for support as long as they abstained from violence and discriminatory behaviour.

Considering stable and well developed democratic political parties as a sine qua non for a sustainable peaceful development in South Africa, the foundation aims to support political parties as such. Therefore South African political parties got so called drawing rights for projects to strengthen their party structure, to train their executives or to develop and elaborate political ideas. Although we were not too strict in 1994, the money was not meant for campaign related activities nor for structural party expenses.

Besides development of the parties in South Africa themselves, strengthening the relations between Dutch and South African parties is

South-African schoolgirl using an Apple-PC as learning tool



another objective of the Foundation. Participation of Dutch politicians or other Dutch party executives in the programmes of the Foundation has been stimulated. This is a way to deepen longstanding relations with old political friends as well as to establish new contacts with relevant political forces in South Africa which were not so close thus far. In this framework for instance a D66 executive, responsible for our election campaign went to the ANC to train party spokespersons in radio interviews and writing press releases.

Since 1994 a lot of projects have been executed by parties from the ultra conservative Freedom Front to the extreme left wing PAC. Early

1995 a conference was held in the Netherlands with participants from all South African parties. The South African delegation was headed by vice president Thabo Mbeki. This conference was so successful that in November last year a follow up conference was held in Johannesburg in which over hundred of South African politicians participated. Getting acquainted between Dutch and South African might have been a main objective, acquaintance and growing respect among South Africans of different, even hostile parties turned out to be a more important result.

*Michel Groothuizen  
D66 representative in the Board of  
the Foundation for the New South  
Africa*

## THE FLEXWORKER

**A**t its annual party conference, D66 discussed various aspects of the labour market. More in particular during a part session on flexibility and in the plenary debate on the resolution on social security.

The latter was dealt with in little over twenty minutes, as there were no major issues. The congress voted almost entirely according to

the recommendations by the party bureau.

The most remarkable fact was the rejection, almost incidental, of an amendment and a motion concerning the introduction of a general basic income, something that had been received favourably by the congress on other occasions. Apparently this subject still doesn't get a very firm public support.

One amendment that was adopted, put the link between the Dutch social security system and the European social model in stronger wording than the original text. The latter just stated that national policy measures must not obstruct the development of a European social model. Johanna Boogerd, member of the European Parliament, pointed out to the congress that the D66 position paper for the IGC advocates convergence of the national systems, and in the long term maybe even harmonization. The final text states that the aim should be harmonization of policies, in conformity with the principles of the European Social Charter.

Other amendments that were adopted concerned tax-deductibility of odd jobs in and around the house, the simplification of rules, so that one-man businesses can hire personell more easily, and measures to make labour cheaper, particularly in the lower strata of the labour market.

One amendment mentioned the adaptation of the social security system to the increasing flexibility and diversity in the labour market.

### Flexibilization

These issues were raised also during a captivating panel discussion saturday afternoon, carrying the title "Flexibilization of the labour market". Under the presidency of Han Westerhof (member of the party bureau and senior consultant of the main Dutch labour union), the panel, consisting of representatives of a big Dutch retail company, the labour union and the biggest Dutch agency for temporary employment as well as an experienced "flexworker", gave its own definition of the term flexibility.

Topics were: flexible working hours, a-typical labour contracts and flexibility in the size of the staff.

Today flexibility has become a familiar term in our society. Everybody recognizes the need for and necessity of more flexibility in the labour market, but we have to be careful not to create a divided socie-

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ty of haves and have-nots. The need for more flexibility is not universal. Some people by contrast need more protection and security. It is far from imaginary that the introduction of "flexwork" will make the position of workers, especially those in low-skill jobs, increasingly insecure.

Various examples of flexibility were given. For instance: a big company could keep a "buffer" of flexworkers of 10 - 20% of the total staff, in order to absorb fluctuations. This is a good method to prevent commotion and trouble that usually accompany reorganizations among the permanent staff.

Another original form of flexibility we find in one of the major Dutch retail companies. The labour contracts state an average number

of working hours per month, to the effect that - within given margins - the number of actual working hours fluctuate according to the needs and wishes of the company and the workers.

The flexibility of the staff can also be increased by training the employees of the company for several functions, so they get more mobile and work in various places in the company.

It is clear that legislation has to be adapted to these new forms of work and the new organization of working life.

#### **Protection**

In particular the labour unions stress the need for adequate social protection of the workers.

Other members of the panel pointed out that recently in the Netherlands the position of all kinds of flexworkers has strongly improved. Agreements were reached on subjects like pension rights, training facilities, extension of the legal maximum of worked hours for the agencies for temporary work and on labour contracts for temps. Another improvement is extending the scope of collective bargaining to flexworkers as well.

A final remark concerned the relativity of flexibility: policy makers tend to have ideological motives for the promotion of flexibility, but at the workplace itself, people are a bit more sceptical about the changes.

*Sophie in 't Veld*

## **Using Financial Instruments for Environmental Purposes**

The future of environmental policy lies in the integration of environment in other policy fields. Of course this is not a revolutionary point of view, but unfortunately still a topical one. The integration process is falling behind the original expectations and for that reason we should look for new instruments to speed up this process. Much can be expected from the use of financial instruments for this purpose. Isn't money the engine that runs our economy? So if we wish to let it run differently shouldn't we start by adjusting the engine? Our tools are taxes and subsidies.

Our current tax system is primarily based on the charging of labour. This should be partly changed into environmental taxes, which discourage polluting activities.

Environmental taxes operate in two different ways. On the one hand these taxes are supposed to influence human behaviour. They discourage activities that pollute the environment. If successful, the revenues of these taxes will be low.

People will change their behaviour and switch to less polluting and less charged activities. For example: in some Dutch municipalities there have been experiments with a waste collection tax per kilogram. Resulting in less waste and, therefore, less revenues for the municipality. The prime objective, generating less waste, was reached.

The second kind of environmental taxes is mainly focused on revenues, that can be used for among others fighting pollution. These taxes will concentrate on those pollutive goods that will continue to be consumed. Petrol is a good example. In the Netherlands an extra 25 cent tax on petrol did not influence the level of consumption. It generates a considerable income for the government.

Although several national states have already introduced some small environmental taxes, an international approach is required. The taxes influence the ability of industry to compete internationally. For that reason national governments will

never come to environmental taxes on a large scale. Existing environmental taxes have numerous exceptions for industry.

Even a country like Sweden with a considerable experience with taxes based on environmental pollution makes these exceptions. Of course this endangers the effectiveness of the measures.

Fear for international competition is the main reason that the European Union has not come to the implementation of green taxes. In the Council of Ministers fiscal matters are decided unanimously, which means that every Member State has the power of veto. Until now the United Kingdom and some other Member States have been able to block any decision on a European CO2 tax.

To resolve this deadlock the Dutch government took the initiative by organizing a meeting of those European countries willing to intro-

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At the last D66 congress I had the chance to have a short interview with Jacob Kohnstamm, the D66 State Secretary for Home Affairs.

*Q I want to ask you some questions about the electronic Highway and the position of the citizen.*

*What are the advantages for the citizen and his participation in administration of the Electronic Highway?*

700 guilders. It is cheaper to download it from Internet. We have to watch out for a division in society but for the time being the advantages are greater than the disadvantages.

aper, should be on the net. But the search tool is a commercial product.

*Q In a workshop at this congress some participants said that the state invested too little money in the electronic highway. Do you agree?*

A This is absolute nonsense! The industry has to take the initiative. It is primarily a responsibility of the

## The Electronic Highway and political participation

### An interview with Jacob Kohnstamm

A Two aspects: The administration supplies the citizens with goods and services. Through the new media it is possible to offer these goods and services in a better way. A second aspect is that the citizen as participant in political decision-making can have a stronger say. He can receive better information more quickly.

*Q The Electronic Highway is still quite expensive for a citizen. One has to own a personal computer and a modem and one has to pay for a provider and the telephone company. These new possibilities, are these not exclusively for the new 'haves'.*

A The report of the enquiry Van Traa (see the last issue of IQ) cost

I'm in favour of libraries and community centres to offer Internet services to people. If we did not take this new road for information, it would be the same as not using the telephone because it was not commonly used.

*Q What kind of information will be put on the Internet by the authorities? What will be the criteria?*

A Primarily criteria are in the Law on openness of administration. This law states in which cases the authorities are obliged to give information. These criteria are useful for the Internet.

The net can stimulate more active openness of information.

We have to develop search tools that give the citizen efficient access to the information.

*Q Another new medium is the CD-rom. Some months ago your ministry together with the big legal publisher Kluwer launched the General Database on Legislation. It is a beautiful but expensive system to find legislation. Will this access to legislation become affordable for more citizens?*

A As state secretary I am bound to contracts made by my predecessors. So I cannot change this contract. But when the time comes to renegotiate the relation between the ministry and Kluwer there might be some possibilities. The basic information should be che-

market. It is impossible for the state to introduce and improve the electronic highway.

Together with the D66 minister of Economic Affairs we took the initiative to improve the synergy between state and free market. We have to bring services on the Internet and we have to stimulate citizens to use the electronic highway.

Personally I think one could say the companies invest too little in the electronic highway. The big companies should participate like in the United States.

*Q A last question. In the United States a law was accepted on censorship on the Internet. What does D66 think about this law.*

A It is a very complicated discussion. It is clear that it is impossible to regulate the anarchy of Internet on a national level. We have to develop international criteria to counter abuse of the net. One can see that the users of Internet intervene themselves. These interventions are at least as effective as attempts by national authorities. The anarchy has to control itself.



Jacob Kohnstamm

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**DEMOCRATEN**

duce a general energy tax. This meeting has taken place last february. As a spin off, the Italian presidency of the EU announced a meeting in June this year with ministers of the Environment and ministers of Finance. It is the first time that ministers of both departments will discuss this matter together. Very essential for succes.

Though the hurdles are still high, it should be possible to come to a small eco tax on non-sustainable energy. The effect for the environment will be small to start with, but it is very important that an environmental tax is recognized as a valid instrument. The first step is the most difficult. Once that step has been taken and Europe is getting used to it we may be able to expand it to the necessary level.

The fundamental fear of environmental taxes is to a large extent not right. First of all they will replace some of the current taxes on labour. Industry must be capable to save money on that. Furthermore it is a big stimulus to those companies whose production process is environment-friendly. It will enable them to compete better. Of course, polluting industry will pay for it, but

that is unavoidable in our pursuit of a sustainable society.

We should not wait in our armchair to see the described proces taking place. It is not that simple. Besides the continuous plea for environmental taxes D66 will in the short term put much effort in the abolishment of current fiscal instruments with a negative impact on the environment. Many examples exist: European agricultural subsidies that encourage overproduction, subsidies for Spanish and German coalmines etc. Greening the European fiscal system also means the abolishment of that kind of subsidies.

This is not without problems. A considerable part of our industrial policy, both national and at the European level, is based on this kind of subsidies and fiscal advantages. A bigger challenge still to start changing it.

The described developments should contribute to a further integration of the environment in other policies. By using financial instruments, polluting activities will be discouraged in the most effective way: through the wallet!

*Gerben Jan Gerbrandy*

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# EUROPE ON-LINE

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**T**he European Union has officially gone "on-line", with the publication of "Europe's Way to the Information Society", the European Commission's action plan on developing the multimedia industry in Europe.

The action plan forms the basis for a series of initiatives to prepare the Union for the information society and to promote European industry in this sector. Liberalisation, free competition, interconnection and interoperability, open network provisions and universal service guarantees are the main principles which

are part and parcel of each of these initiatives.

The future shape of European society and industry will be moulded by the twin forces of information and communication. Society will become increasingly "digitised", with the result that countries will depend heavily on the competitiveness of their information technology and multimedia industry. In response, the European Commission has produced its action plan to promote the European multimedia industry, and to reduce Europe's huge trade deficit in this sector.

The Commission's blueprint for change is called INFO 2000, and it reveals a multi-pronged approach. Both producers and consumers, large and small, are seen as necessary participants in developing the Union's multimedia sector. The content industry, consisting of print and electronic publishing and the audiovisual sector, is the main target of the programme, and is the single most important sector in the information industry at large, in terms of revenue and jobs, "content is the vital raw material of the information society."

Small and medium-sized companies will be the most important actors in the emerging multimedia market. They are a majority of producers in the market and are often the most dynamic. Actions directed at small producers aim to help them overcome market barriers and include promoting new business practices and developing multimedia trading systems. Alongwith promoting industry, INFO 2000 looks at increasing consumption of information products by raising awareness amongst consumers.

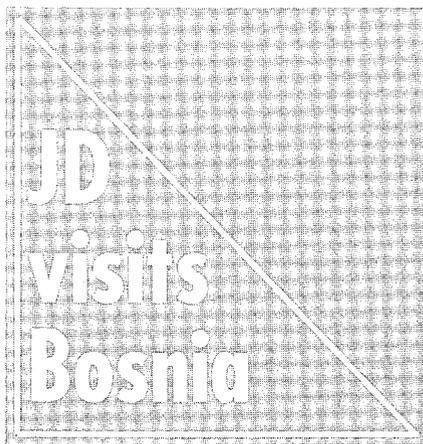
## Universal Service

The role of the public sector in the successful development of the multimedia industry is crucial: "It is essential that the public sector supports the emergence of the information society . . . by developing a vision, acting as a catalyst for change, and by creating a suitable regulatory framework." One of the chief obligations is to preserve universality of service in the information age, says Imelda Read, a British Labour MEP. Ms. Read argues that universal service is central to a debate on the information society and is more than an issue of consumer rights, "European rules for defining, costing, financing, and developing universal service are necessary".

## Social Impact

Marginalisation of the unemployed, women, the disabled, and

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The war in Bosnia seems to have ended. Although there are many problems in implementing the Dayton agreement, there are no more fights, and people try to begin a normal life again. JD was invited to attend the first congress of the MLBiH, the Young Liberals of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Zenica, February 9-11 1996. I went there by car with two members of Volksunie Jongeren (VUJO) from Belgium.

In December 1995 a D66 delegation with three JD members visited Sarajevo and was kindly received by the liberal party and its young members. We therefore decided to give them some moral support and look at the present situation in former Yugoslavia. At the moment it is possible to travel through Bosnia, as long as you don't leave the major roads and follow the advice of the police. There are many control posts of Croatian

and Bosnian police, but apart from some delay because of pass controls these don't cause any problems. A trip from the Adriatic coast via Mostar and Sarajevo to Zenica, in the middle of Bosnia, shows a country with villages that are hardly struck by the war, but also many ghost villages that only show a glimpse of light or some smoke here and there. Mostar is terribly destroyed.

It still causes major disagreement between moslims and Croats. Two days before we passed Mostar, the EU mayor had to be liberated from a Croatian crowd by IFOR troops.

Zenica has been moslim territory throughout the war. Its population was more than doubled by refugees from all over Bosnia. In Bosnia itself there are about one million refugees now. The mayor and some of his advisors told us about the infrastructural problems Zenica has to deal with. They also expect the demobilization of soldiers, i.e. almost every man between the age of 18 and 65. The EU decision of sending back refugees to Bosnia seems, even on the long term, ridiculous. I brought a map of Zenica back to the Netherlands, which I showed to a Croat refugee from Zenica. She concluded she wouldn't be able to ask for the way in her own city anymore: All street names that referred to Croats,

Serbs or Yugoslavia have been changed.

The people I spoke with were convinced that the war is over now. MLBiH is a multi-ethnic organization, and they hoped to be able to recreate a multi-cultural Bosnia again. Nevertheless, they are still very suspicious towards the Serbs. I can imagine so, after having seen Sarajevo, in which it is hardly possible to find ten meters of wall without the marks of heavy shelling. The stories people tell about the siege of Sarajevo go beyond my imagination. At the moment the news from Bosnia isn't that encouraging. We should therefore support our sister organizations in Bosnia as much as possible, and all Bosnian organizations that are working towards a new civic society. The JD will surely do so.

*Bart Hoogenboom*

**Europe On-line**  
(article starts on page 6)

inhabitants of peripheral regions, is a common theme in the fast-moving information age. Ensuring that all Union citizens have access to the new technology is a major challenge facing policy-makers. A picture of the future is presented in a report by Wim Van Velzen of the European Parliament's Social Affairs Committee. The author describes a future where the nature of work has changed dramatically. Gone are the days of "one job for life". Short-term contracts will be the norm, with companies displaying what Van Velzen calls an "onion structure", a core of permanent staff surrounded by an outer layer of temporary contract workers. According to Van Velzen the Union can look forward to the positive changes the information society will bring. Already, the computer-related sector accounts for more than 40% of employment growth in Europe. Increased flexibility in the workplace, he says, will reap rewards for industry in increased productivity, a highly skilled workforce, and greater job opportunities.



*Bosnia: Ghost Village between Mostar and Sarajevo*

*Leon Peijnenburg*

# The future of NATO depends on the EU

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The European defence structures are confronted with challenges they can hardly cope with. NATO was charged with an out-of-area responsibility for the first time when it was sent to Bosnia to uphold the Dayton agreement. The OSCE sent missions to Nagorny-Karabach and other regions in Eastern Europe with peace keeping instruments it is just in the process of developing. The EU was confronted with a conflict of a EU state with a neighbouring state and could only respond diplomatically when the whole crisis had died down. Its military arm, the West European Union (WEU) is still in the process of acquiring its technical and organisational facilities.

At the same time this whole mozaic is faced with well-founded requests for permission to enter by the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, putting a strain on relations with the biggest military power on the continent, Russia.

Wise and well-considered decisions are needed and painful questions asked. Can Europe in the long run rely on the US for military support? Without knowing the answer to the first question, are Europeans willing to invest their money in military equipment to guarantee their own safety? And if so, are they willing to develop a common European defence and security identity? And, are they willing to intervene in out-of-area conflicts to preserve their values and prevent large scale bloodshed?

Europeans want the best of all worlds. They want NATO to remain a cornerstone, but also want to obtain the additional opportunity to go it alone if they do not agree with the Americans, still using NATO (i.e. American and European) military equipment. If it suits their ideas they want to work with other EU countries, but at the same time they want to retain their sovereignty.

This will not work in the long run. The Americans will leave the lazy and irresponsible Europeans to themselves and because of the lack of unity and coherence, the role of

the European countries in the world will fade.

Therefore choices need to be made. I believe the EU during the current Intergovernmental Conference seriously should reform its foreign policy. Common analysis and planning needs to be established. Majority voting needs to be the rule also in foreign policy. A serious common foreign policy needs a military backbone. The WEU must be gradually integrated into the EU, starting with joint meetings of the foreign and defence ministers of the 15 member states. Neutrality should be abandoned, since it is an outdated concept.

Only then will the EU be able to play a serious part in NATO. NATO will only have a future when the Europeans build a European pillar which will match the American one in military terms and in terms of unity. Only fair burden-sharing between both sides of the Atlantic will overcome the American resistance against lending American military equipment for use by the Europeans under European control through Combined Joint Task Forces.

Only such an EU and NATO will be able to invite the Central and Eastern European candidates to enter the respective organisations. Otherwise security and unity will be sacrificed to overcome the divisions of Europe.

*Leon Peijnenburg*

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## A social and economic profile

*Bert Bakker, Member of Parliament*

Profiling Democrats 66' social and economic policy requires some degree of abstraction. Of course, we have clear views on any major or minor issue in this field. However, to create a profile, it's not enough to describe these views. It asks for some explaining of the background of our thinking.

**D**66's policies are inspired by three sources of thinking:  
- a liberal view on society, giving all actors (people and companies) freedom to operate the way they think it suits their needs best;  
- a social view, knowing that 'equal opportunities for everyone' are, of course, required, but not sufficient to give everyone in society a dignified way of living. Government policies are necessary to guarantee that everyone can live not only at the bare minimum level of existence,

but in a way that gives means to everyone to take an active part in society;  
- democracy, not only as a feature of modern societies, but as an ideology in itself: Thus giving people maximum influence on government policies, whether on the national, the local or the international level. Even within companies, we think active participation of workers in the decision-making process is essential for a good performance.

Having established these sources of inspiration, it is possible to put together the social and economic picture of D66.

When it comes to economic and labour market policies, D66 promotes a really liberal view. Companies and people should have maximum possibilities to choose for their own, to develop their own preferences, permanently adjusting to changing economic circumstances. In this field, D66 rejects too much government regulation. Of course, when the actors have a weak position (i.e. in the labour market), there should be effective protection against hazardous working conditions, against unhealthy working hours and against forms of exploi-

*Bert Bakker*



## Introduction

In this special issue of D66 International Quarterly we want to give you an impression of the social and economic profile of D66, the Dutch social liberal party.

In articles written by Bert Bakker, MP, by Arjen Bouter and Leon Peijnenburg (European Parliament) and Christian Hiddink of the Jonge Democraten an outline of this profile is given.

tation of people or situations. But useful means of protection should not degenerate into total regulation. For some time, policy makers, even in western economies, have believed they could 'construct' the economy, ignoring the fact that the economy is just an aggregate of individual decisions and individual behaviour of people (consumers, producers, workers, entrepreneurs) on labour and product markets. Recognizing this, gives government an important role to create the best possible conditions for the economic process: moderate tax levels, a good infrastructure, stimulating research and development, and so on.

But why then should governments pursue economic and social

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policies at all? Wouldn't it be better to leave it all to markets and individual responsibility, and to abstain from as many government actions as possible? We do not think so. Apart from the above-mentioned protection of workers, there is a clear and well-defined goal behind it. We do not see market economies as a goal in itself, as an ideology. Nevertheless, there are at least two very good reasons for governments to promote a healthy economy.

In the first place, we want to create a society in which every individual, having a job or not, has the opportunity to actually participate, whether in education, jobs or social activities. Whenever people can't earn their own money, it's a matter of honour and of civilisation to provide them with the necessary means of living. In the Netherlands, this has led to a comprehensive social security system. This system still has much public and political support. However, while establishing the system in the sixties and seventies, policy

makers forgot that a healthy economy is a *conditio sine qua non* for such a social system. In fact, they eroded the economic basis for it by high tax levels, by reducing investment in public infrastructure, by allowing people to abuse the system, which led to enormous amounts of people depending upon social security. What is essential in the nineties is to restore the economic basis, thus providing better chances in the future to take care of disabled workers, pensioners or people with health problems.

The second reason for restoring the economic basis of government policies can be found in the poor state of many government services. Facing huge budget deficits in the beginning of the eighties (due, mainly, to the overload of the social security system), consecutive governments had to cut their expenditure. This has led into 'public poverty': poor quality of health care facilities, homes for the elderly and public schools: with fewer nurses

and bigger classes than before, leaving us with an insufficient quality and quantity level of public services.

A lot of grumbling can be heard when social and economic policies are restructured. Strengthening economies and labour markets means less regulation and protection, reducing the government patronizing of economic actors, more flexibility, new opening hours of shops, and so on. It also means reducing government spending, in order to reduce government deficits and tax levels. Of course, this always affects established positions and interests. Still, modern politics asks for the urgent renovation of the economic and social climate, if necessary disregarding vested interests, concentrating on the essence of public social and economic policies.

So, in short, D66 has really liberal views when it comes to the earning capacity of the economy: but not by ideology. For us, a strong economy and a flexible labour market are seen as an instrument to enhance the quality of living of all people, not excluding anyone. A matter of social liberalism and of democracy.

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## D66 on EMU and EU employment

*Bert Bakker, Member of Parliament*

Among some politicians, it tends to become trendy to criticize the Economic and Monetary Union and, in general, economic internationalization. These critics are often responding to public uncertainty about the effects of EMU. Some months ago, even in the European parliament a majority of social-democrats and christian-democrats expressed their concern about the social implications of EMU.

**T**he EMU requirements on budgetary and monetary figures are, indeed, very strict. But they are so for good reasons. In the past, many governments, concentrating on short-term policies, forgot to take care of long-term economic consequences of their actions. Profits were taken today, costs postponed to future generations.

It is easy to see that these policies, dominating so many western countries during the seventies and eighties, were wrong. However, it is yet another thing to change them, when trade unions organize public protest in Paris streets, when politicians have to cut their spending ambitions and when elections, always, are so near.

Here's already one good reason for strict EMU conditions: protecting currencies and economies from short-term oriented politics. The best reason, though, for reduced budget deficits, interest rates and inflation levels, is found in the economy itself. Proper monetary and budgetary policies are providing for these requirements because they enable a healthy development of the economy, even without the perspective of the EMU. But this is a hard message for many politicians, who were brought up in a climate of unrestricted government ambitions. It is easier to blame EMU, thus providing an external excuse for necessary internal measures.

As a result, D66 supports very strongly the development towards EMU and is ready to take responsibility for inevitable measures. This is also the dominant attitude in the ELDR Group in the European Parliament.

On employment and social policies, however, there is still a lot of

discussion, even among ELDR parties. More specifically, the question is whether these issues should be on the agenda of the talks about the Maastricht Treaty during the intergovernmental conference of 1997. Unlike more right-wing political parties, D66 promotes the issue as a very important one on the IGC. Not because European talks or treaties would create any jobs. But that is not the point. For D66, international employment policies are increasingly important because of the internationalization of economies. National policies are becoming less effective because of the global economic reality. On the other hand, policies of other countries increasingly influence national effects. International employment policies

are, therefore, part of international economic coordination.

But there is still a more important reason, too. Since the internal market was formed in 1992, economic and financial markets and policies were indeed restructured into international dimensions. But markets and economies are of no importance of their own. They are concepts of people's behaviour. An economic Europe has to be rooted in the awareness of the European people. For D66, this means that social policies have to catch up with the monetary and economic unity. Government activities are, in the

end, only an aggregate of people's preferences. These preferences include a decent level of social standards and employment. The EMU itself is, of course, an important precondition for these social standards. But without more explicit European activities on social issues, the deterioration of social standards is a threat to all European countries. That result would be far beyond the political mandate of the European governments to continue European integration. Moreover, Europe was not only about economy, it was about idealism, too. For D66, this idealism implies the responsibility for employment and social conditions, also outside national borders.

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## The economic profile of D66 in the European Parliament

*Arjen Bouter*

The macro-economic policy objective of D66 in the European Parliament is:

- to create and maintain an environment conducive to sustained and sustainable economic growth,
- to increase and maximize the employment content of growth and to resolve the structural deficiencies in the economies of the various member states,
- within a monetary policy framework which is characterized by price stability and adherence to the convergence criteria set by the Treaty for participation in the third stage of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), i.e. the introduction of the single currency.

**O**bviously, this is not an easy task in the economic circumstances of today. Current growth rates are actually lower than predicted in most member states (though not in all) which makes it harder for these member states to at the same time try to meet the criteria for EMU and combat unemployment.

The position of D66, and of the ELDR Group in the European Parliament of which D66 is a member, nevertheless remains that it is simply sound economics to continue with fiscal and monetary policies

geared to maintain price stability, curb inflation and reduce public debts and budget deficits, irrespective of the criteria for the third stage of EMU. After all, such policies have proved to be successful, since those member states which have pursued these policies have seen their interest rates fall, thereby encouraging investment, which is in turn leading to durable growth and the creation of jobs.

Most forward looking economic models indicate, moreover, that the pursuit of such policies will achieve the best result in terms of employ-

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ment in the medium term, and this must be a top-priority now that unemployment in the European Union has reached an historically high level of approximately 18 million people out of work.

However, this is not to say that we can easily gloss over the fact of the negative short-term impact of deficit reduction on growth (and employment). This issue was addressed recently by Irish MEP Patrick Cox, ELDR member of the Economic Committee of the EP. He urged the central banks of the member states, first and foremost the German Bundesbank, to take their responsibility in this respect and lower their interest rates. The Dutch central bank had already lowered interest rates several times ahead of the Bundesbank, thereby boosting investment.

The Liberal position was subsequently supported by the latest OECD economic perspectives report, which stated that however beneficial the reduction of deficits is in the medium-term, it could lead to lower growth than predicted in the short-term. The OECD report then went on to recommend, as Pat Cox had done before, to use monetary instruments and reduce interest rates in order to support demand and employment.

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The direct possibilities of the European Union to boost employment are, of course, limited. The main actors in the field of employment policy are the member states and the social partners, and there is a large consensus that this should remain so. It is therefore unwise, and even potentially dangerous from the point of view of public support for the process of European integration, to overstate the role of the Union in this respect. It is all too easy to raise false expectations.

What the Union can do, however, it should exploit to the maximum. D66 in the European Parliament therefore regrets the half-hearted response of the European Summit of Florence to the Commission's proposals to make additional funding available for the Transeuropean Networks and for policies in support of small and medium-sized enterprises, which are the main creators of new jobs in the Union at present. Within the EU's limited possibilities, this, surely, is an opportunity missed.

takes some more time. Our Eastern neighbours have more time to give EU-exports free access (until 2005). For the countries of the Mediterranean Basin a reciprocal free trade zone is foreseen in 2010. With the European Economic Area reciprocal free trade has already been established. With Asia and Latin-America the EU is in the process of concluding far-reaching agreements. These agreements are very important to the EU, since these regions are economically amongst the most dynamic in the world. All in all, this makes the EU one of the most open economies of the world.

D66 is a strong supporter of free trade. Although regional cooperation in other areas of the world has rightly been supported by the EU, this should not lead to regionalisation in an aggressive closed trading system. Therefore the EU has also worked hard to establish a strong open multilateral trade system, the World Trade Organisation, which replaced GATT in 1995. That is the best guarantee for development all over the world. When the last GATT agreement was signed an overall decrease of import tariffs by one third was agreed. This is of major importance to the open economy of the EU.

One of the major achievements of the GATT Round was the inclusion of agriculture in the GATT-rules. This will gradually end European protectionism on agriculture and increase development opportu-

# Trade and aid

*Leon Peijnenburg, D66 Delegation in the European Parliament*

**1995 has been a bad year for the common foreign and security policy of the Union. The Union has by far not used all instruments it has at its disposal through the Treaty of Maastricht.**

**T**he lack of progress in the development of a common foreign and security policy, leaves the Union only with its trade policy as the prime instrument of foreign policy. The Union has the exclusive power to pursue trade policy and conclude trade and cooperation agreements. Moreover, the Union is the biggest trade bloc in the world, conducting 20% of global trade. This makes the Union into an effective major player in the world of trade and economics.

With respect to the international trade and cooperation agreements which the Union has concluded, 1995 has been a very successful year. Not only does the Union promote through its trade policy free trade and economic benefits for its own companies, it also pursues international politics through all aspects of its trade and cooperation policy.

Over the years the EU has through its variety of trade and

cooperation agreements built up a pyramid of preferences in trade. Exports of the poorest countries have almost complete free access to the EU, without the Union requiring any concessions from them. Central and Eastern Europe have free access, except for textiles, agriculture and steel, where dismantling of barriers



nities for the agricultural produce exporting Third World countries. Through these and other changes the EU can turn away from the selective openness it is too often showing in its trade policy. Other countries should be given a chance to profit from their comparative economic advantages in certain sectors.

D66 believes the EU runs the risk to becoming too eurocentric, focusing too much on Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Instead it should keep its eyes open also to developments and opportunities in Latin America and Asia, not forgetting the US of course.

D66 also is aware of the downsides of general free trade for the preferences offered to the poorest countries in the world. Through preferences for the Mediterranean Basin and Eastern Europe and through the general tariff reduction in the GATT-Round, the poorest countries experienced an erosion of their preferential treatment by Europe.

Therefore Europe should continue to assist the ACP-countries in strengthening their economic basis and invest in education, training and competitiveness.

Europe needs to combine trade and aid in a differentiated approach to the various parts of the world. It profits a lot from free trade as the biggest and most open trade bloc. But it should also continue to help those in need for assistance to promote stability and prosperity in other parts of the world.

# JD'conomics

*Christian Hiddink, Co-ordinator of the JD study group Economics*

**E**uropean integration and economic globalization provide us with two important pieces of information. First, these developments provide us with new growth possibilities, and second, European Integration and economic globalization show us the institutional deficits in our economy. In an open economy with fierce competition the importance of well designed institutional structures now becomes painfully clear. To exploit the possibilities this changing economic situation offers, we should restructure our present social and economic order in such a fashion that it does not interfere with our competitiveness, employment growth and the fundamentals of the welfare state. The study group Economics has initiated this discussion within the JD which has led to some interesting conclusions.

With the occasional 'Eureka' a system of a guaranteed minimum income, based on the ideas of Sir Thomas More from his book 'Utopia', is presented as the solution to all our problems. In such a system the government guarantees every citizen a basic income irrespective of income position or marital status. Following the preconditions in our discussion, however, the JD has come to the conclusion that such a system is not the key to social security in the future. The different options for this system seem to be either antisocial or unaffordable. An affordable system of guaranteed minimum income leads to a basic income which is under subsistence level. Especially if we consider that not all risks can be insured such as, for example, unemployment. A socially acceptable guaranteed minimum in-

come leads, on the other hand, to an increase in the burden on the taxpayer. The current tax level is already seen as a major obstacle to employment growth. Even higher taxes are therefore unacceptable. An intermediate system where a guaranteed minimum income is supplemented with social benefits is no option either. The clarity and the individuality of the system, the main advantages of a system of guaranteed minimum income, disappear whereas the disadvantages of the current system are still in place. Next to these disadvantages, we think a guaranteed minimum income system grossly undermines social solidarity within society.

Although the current social security system has some major construction failures, especially in the incentive structure, we believe that the underlying idea of this system should be maintained. Measures should therefore not be directed to the level of the benefits but to the number of people that are dependent on social benefits. Within social security we can, for example, think of temporary reductions of benefits when a job or education is refused. But the key to the maintenance of a

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social security system is an almost obsessive dedication to the creation of employment. Special attention should be paid to the institutional structures. This means elimination of all obstacles which hinder competition on the local markets and far-reaching liberalisation of the labour market. Such liberalisation can contribute especially to the job-creating potential of small businesses. Wage negotiations should be

more on enterprise level. This can lead to much more wage flexibility. The negotiations should be carried out, if present, by the works councils instead of the labour unions. Works councils have much more of an incentive to act in accordance with the interests of the company, whereas labour unions often have to cope with questions such as prestige and nationally set aspirations. The JD is also in favour of "ecologizing"

the tax-system, through which labour can be relieved of its heavy tax burden. Next to this, entering the new high-tech markets should be stimulated more, by which emphasis is laid on knowledge-intensive industries, and the idea of a legal right for part-time work should also be taken into account.

Our choice is clear; if necessary, far-reaching institutional restructuring which strengthens competitiveness and stimulates employment to preserve a social benefit system that can still be called social and affordable.

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## The demographic situation in the European Union

*Sophie in 't Veld, D66 Delegation in the European Parliament*

**I**n the committee on Social Affairs of the European Parliament, Johanna Boogerd-Quaak has been appointed rapporteur on the recently published studies by the Commission on the demographic situation in the Union.

This is the second report on the demographic situation in the European Union. Its reference year is 1995. In contrast to last year's report, which was mainly a statistical description of the Union's population, the focus of this year's document is the process of ageing and its impact on the economy at large, social protection provisions and society in general.

The first observation of the report is that the EU population will grow more slowly in the forthcoming period, and the most striking development is the demographic ageing. Europe will grow older, due to a decrease of the under 20 age group, as well as a sharp increase in the over 60 age group, marked by the emergence of a new category: the 'over 80's'.

This will result in a drastic change in the demographic structure of society, notably in the group of people of working age.

Furthermore, population growth in the Union will be marked by

strong regional disparities in demographic structure.

Johanna Boogerd-Quaak first of all wants to stress the importance of the demographic changes in the European Union. Many problems that have been identified as priority areas for action in the Union, are in one way or another closely linked to the demographic situation.

Current policy is often based on the assumption that the demographic structure of the population is a static factor, thus ignoring the effect demographic changes may have in the social and economic field. Although a general feeling of concern is emerging on the expected explosive growth of the cohort of pensioners in about a decade, demographics are still not a real issue on the political agenda.

Beside the obvious effects on the structure of society, the effects of ageing will in particular be the decreasing labour market participation, a changing demographic structure of the labour force, a smaller base for contribution for social security, a growing number of people depending on social security and a sharp rise in the costs of health care.

Therefore, one of the most important aims of policy is an incre-

ase in labour market participation. A decline in population of working age does not necessarily entail a decline in unemployment, whereas at the same time a shortage of qualified persons is expected. In view of this, a major effort must be made to improve the quality of the labour force and to limit drastically the number of people excluded from the labour market. This means for instance investing in education and training, especially of young people, immigrants and women, but also investing in training of older people.

Furthermore, a radical revision of the systems of social security and public health and their financing is also necessary, all in safeguarding the principle of the European social model.

The European Union has a role to play in analyzing the problem and co-ordinating the collection of data and the exchange of knowledge and experience among the Member States.

Also many of the existing Community actions in the field of education and training, regional policy, social policy and economic policy may prove useful instruments in the

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process of adaptation to the demographic situation.

In order to react adequately to these changes in society, both at Union and Member State level the demographic factor should be an integrated factor in social and eco-

nomics policies. In a first reaction, the Council has not shown great interest in the subject, but with her report, Johanna Boogerd-Quaak intends to trigger the debate at the European level.

ning the ELDR Party to individual membership would affect the ELDR as a federation of parties, as a corollary of a 'Europe of the nations'.

What struck the D66 delegation most was the feeling expressed by some parties that individual members organized within an 'individual member section' would be difficult to control, and could easily cause conflicts with the member parties of the ELDR.

In the view of D66 there is no reason to believe that a democratically organized individual member section, operating within the framework set in the ELDR statutes would cause trouble. On the contrary, we are convinced that it would enrich the discussion in the ELDR by making room for individual members of European liberal, democrat and reform parties who want to become directly involved in the work of ELDR.

On top of that an individual member section could attract liberals from southern Europe, who cannot take part otherwise in the activities of ELDR because there are no strong liberal parties in their countries.

For all these reasons D66 thinks the issue of individual membership should not be definitely off the agenda of the ELDR. The working group established by the ELDR council should not become a means to put this discussion on a side track, but be used as an opportunity to further study all aspects of individual membership, and formulate concrete proposals for the next congress.

## **ELDR: Individual membership: nuisance or surplus value**

*Marjanne de Kwaasteniet, D66 International Secretary*

**A**n item on the agenda of the ELDR council and congress that took place in Vienna from 10 to 12 July was the approval of the new statutes of the ELDR Party. The attention of D66 was particularly drawn to the proposal to introduce the possibility of individual membership of the ELDR.

D66 immediately took a favourable attitude to this proposal. The introduction of the possibility of individual membership could be a first but definite step on the road to a true European liberal party. The moment that we will vote for European parties in the elections for the European Parliament is still far away, but that should not mean that we lose sight of the objective. Those arguing that the last elections for the European Parliament showed, e.g. by the low turnout, that people are taking less interest in Europe than in the past and that for that reason, individual membership of the ELDR Party would be an unnecessary complication, are

not necessarily right.

One could just as well say that the lack of interest in the 1994 elections was caused by the distance of the EU countries and European political life. True European political parties could make the European dimension of these elections clearer and encourage people to take an interest in European politics.

The discussion in the ELDR council that preceded the congress showed, however, that most ELDR parties were not ready to take the step of a decision in principle during the Vienna congress.

Some parties felt that a decision should only be taken once all the details have been elaborated. Others were against because ope-



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# Minorities and human rights in the Balkan area

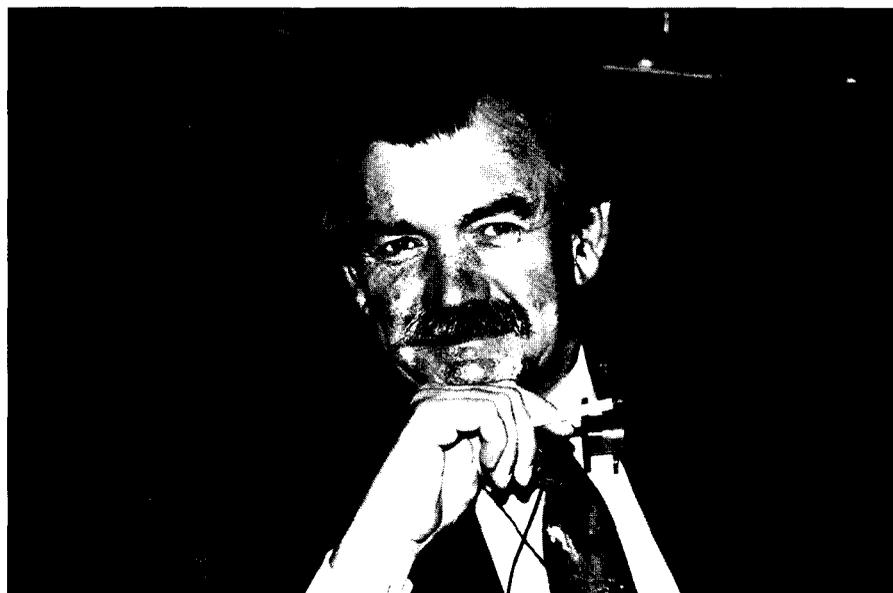
*Tanja Brok, IVSOM*

D66 and the SzDSz (Alliance of Free Democrats) from Hungary organised a conference on 14 and 15 June in Budapest about human rights, minorities and the peace process in the Balkan area. The participants of this seminar were representatives of Hungarian minority groups from Croatia and Serbia, and Serbian minority groups from Hungary. The D66 guests were Boris Dittrich, MP for minorities and asylum policy, Jan Willem Bertens, MEP, and Marjanne de Kwaasteniet, international secretary and president of IVSOM.

The Congress was opened by the state secretary of foreign affairs, Mr. Istvan Szent-Ivany. During the Congress it was made clear that Hungary has to deal with a stream of 60.000 refugees from former Yugoslavia. Ethnic Hungarians, who live in the Serbian province of Vojvodina, are repeatedly being threatened by the Serbs. The Hungarian minorities in Rumania and Slovakia are confronted with a violation of their human rights. They are not allowed to use their own language at schools and universities. The problems of the Hungarian minorities are being neglected by the media and they can barely discuss it on a

political level.

At the end of the Congress the following conclusions were drawn: 1) to make the Balkan peace process a successful one, the implementation of the Dayton agreement has to be guarded, and the IFOR mandate has to be prolonged, 2) there is a need for a follow up which addresses the problem of how to handle the integration of ethnic minorities in Hungary and the Hungarian minorities in the other Eastern European countries, also with a view to joining the EU. D66 hopes to discuss these issues with the SzDSz in the beginning of next year.



*Jan-Willem Bertens MEP*

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## Creating greater safety

**M**any people feel unsafe, and research indicates that feelings of insecurity are increasing. Some people do not leave their homes after dark. Or they arm themselves. Entire urban zones are considered to be unsafe whether it is day or night. Feelings of insecurity sometimes result in prejudice and racism.

What are the reasons for these developments? An important factor is reduced social cohesion. Individualisation, urbanization, increased mobility across borders and technological change, which are all positive developments, have the negative side effect of diminishing social cohesion. Individualisation and emancipation, for example, create greater independence and freedom of choice for the individual. At the same time they make solidarity less self-evident. Urban renewal which does not specifically aim at diversification usually results in concentrations of urban poverty. These are the zones where people feel most unsafe. Immigration without a coherent and sustained integration policy creates a 'second generation' with little chances of social advancement. Criminal behaviour becomes an attractive option for this group, and this again reinforces discrimination against all immigrants. Technological change is so fast that legislation lags behind. Norms and legislation are therefore less strictly adhered to and a 'permissive' way of government is often necessary. Uncertainty about social norms may be the result.

What can (local, regional and

national) governments do to improve this situation? Which new instruments have to be developed, and how can governments develop forms of cooperation with the private sector and people themselves to prevent specific groups (e.g. second generation immigrants) and specific urban zones from being trapped in a downward spiral? These questions were the subject of an extensive debate at the D66 national congress of November 23.

In the debate a central place was given to the concept of a 'comprehensive public safety policy'. The word comprehensive refers to the

idea that problems of public safety should not only be answered by repression (i.e. be considered as problems of the police and the judiciary), but need to be addressed with coherent policies in a number of areas, ranging from education and youth policies to immigration and town planning. In other words, in their attempts to create the conditions for greater social cohesion and empowerment of individual governments have to focus on the social as well as the physical environment.

A focus on the social environment is of particular importance

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## D66 elects new president



Tom Kok

At its last congress D66 elected a new president. Former member of the national bureau Tom Kok was elected with a overwhelming majority of votes.

In the next issue more information.

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the majority of the people live in low-cost public housing, ownership of houses should be increased.

with regard to young people who engage in criminal behaviour. Criminal 'careers' often start long before these children can be punished under criminal law. At this stage it is effective, however, to improve the social environment in which these children grow up. A policy which aims to create a more stable family life, and to set clearer norms of behaviour for these children is needed in those situations. This means that the police, the judiciary, employment agencies, schools and councils for child protection have to cooperate. Only through such cooperation the conditions will be created for effective preventive interventions.

In order to improve public safety the physical environment also needs more attention, however. Town planners need to pay more attention to the specific requirements of a safe urban area. Diversity in the residential zones contributes to preventing the development of homogeneous zones of poverty. A mixture of resi-

dential, industrial/office and shopping functions can avoid the development of uninhabited zones



*Amsterdam Police officers*

which become unsafe after dark. The building of residential apartments above shops and schools is an example of town planning which contributes to safety. The D66 paper on which the debate was based proposed to create a set of norms with which town planners should comply. Likewise residential areas of mixed socio-economic composition can contribute to combat concentrations of poverty. In areas in which

It was also suggested to give local governments more administrative instruments to combat minor nuisances such as the unlawful parking of cars, vandalism and noise and irregularities around 'coffeeshops' (places where soft drugs are sold). This would avoid an overload of the judicial system. A crucial precondition for such a development is of course that the level of protection of the rights of citizens must not be affected adversely.

The D66 congress also discussed the effects of organised crime on public safety, and concluded that the most effective policy with regard to combatting drugs trafficking is a combination of repression and intervention in the market. Since the latter is not possible for international reasons, and repression only results in the substitution of one crime network by another, public safety will suffer from drugs trafficking also in the future.

*by Marjanne de Kwaasteniet*

## **Norms and values: Only for Christian-democrats?**

**A** discussion about norms and values is going on in the Netherlands. Recently Marian Louppen-Laurant, member of the provincial executive in Gelderland, wrote an article in the *Democraat*. Extracts from this article are reproduced below.

My thesis is: every political act is an expression of certain norms and values. In every community opinions

exist about values, about maintenance and protection of values: Values about the individual, the community, culture or nature. Common opinions on values lead to norms (rules, guidance's). They structure mutual relations and enable people to function in a community. Common values and norms are a necessity for the continuation of a group. The interests of the individuals have to be considered in relation to the

common interest. Even primitive societies have normative systems. So these systems are not exclusive for Christianity or religion in general.

Norms are determined by cultural and social circumstances and can be very different. High-principled eastern cultures existed next to cannibalism. Today legal systems protect children and give them rights. In other societies child labour and exploitation exist. Norms can change in the course of time.

Public executions and slavery once were generally accepted in the Netherlands. We cannot imagine these norms now.

Norms are not absolute. We are not allowed to kill. Does this norm

exists in a war? Does this norm implicate that we cannot kill an individual asking for this because of suffering? In today's society norms are not as consistent and uniform as they used to be. In social groups, clear and strict norms used to exist.

Authority was accepted. Now authority is less accepted and private opinions play a greater part. This leads to a society with pluriform norms. This doesn't mean society has no norms.

It must be emphasized that it is necessary to have a certain mutual understanding about how we live together.

### Norms and values in politics

Political opinions are in fact judgements about values in society. Politics has to ask itself in which way values must be ensured and question the role of the state: Which mutual agreements are necessary.

Basic norms are: freedom and equality protection of the weak insurance of security and justice.

Laws, especially the constitution, reflect the common norms and values of a society. Politicians are continuously confronted with trade-offs between different values. What is more important: Freedom or equality, sustainability or economic values? What does society tolerate and what sanctions do we use? Acting politically is acting normatively acting. This is exactly the reason why government shouldn't be treated like a company, based on profit.

The existence of different political parties is a direct result of different opinions on questions in society. The party programmes are an expression of this. Every party has its own source of inspiration or frame of reference. Different opinions about norms and values legitimize the existence of political parties.

### The position of D66

What is the position of D66? D66 has its common norms and values, although we didn't write them down in a programme of principles. Our way of political

action is based on a basic attitude that combines individual freedom with respect for others. We feel responsible for the helpless and defenceless.

D66 wants to involve citizens in decision-making and give them responsibilities. We are averse from

paternalism in our personal life, but we do think government has an important task in social life. Knowing that circumstances and opinions change we are non dogmatic and open to new views. We are pragmatic in the way that we do not strive after utopias and we keep realities in mind.

*by Marian Louppen-Laurant*

## Youth in former Yugoslavia

**Bosnia and Herzegovina has had its elections. Within a year after the Dayton agreement, there is a government which is elected by the people of the federation. But there is still chaos, there are still ethnically clean regions, there are still Bosnian refugees who are not welcome in their homes. Other states of former Yugoslavia too have suffered from the effects of war. 17-20 October 1996 Jonge Democraten and the sister organization MLD from Slovenia organized a seminar in Ljubljana, to investigate the position of youth in the changes that are taking place in former Yugoslavia. The seminar was financially supported by D66 IVSOM and the Slovenian government.**

JD already visited Bosnia and Herzegovina twice last year, and one of the most striking impressions of our seminar was the change in the eyes of the Bosnian delegates since last time we visited them. In February this year they, although being able to have parties very well, constantly had a sad look in their eyes, and war still threw its shadow over Sarajevo.

Last month, there was hope in their eyes, and the conviction that Bosnia as well was building its future again.

Over all about 25 representatives of liberal youth organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands gathered in Ljubljana to discuss the role of their organizations in these countries. The Serbs cancelled their participation only one day before, because they were needed by their mother party for the elections campaign.

It was interesting to see how all these organizations had their ways to get attention for their interests. The Slovenians had just organized a campaign on building tunnels to enable frogs to cross roads, the Italians had to find even more specta-

cular ways to get press attention, the Bosnians use their spare means to publish their own magazine. Many of the national media in the region are still controlled by the governments and don't pay attention to liberal (youth) organizations. We hope to strengthen the independent local media in former Yugoslavia by establishing bonds between these media and local media in the Netherlands. Refugee policy was another theme during the seminar. Especially Slovenia has quite an extensive experience in hosting refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and since a few months also in creating programmes to enable them to go back to their homes. They don't facilitate

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*What is the extra value of having D66 in the government?*

Looking at the economic ideas of D66, I notice a long tradition of innovation of the economy. A major topic for D66 is the way in which to realize innovation and dynamics in the economy? The VVD is more a party of established interests. In that way one could call the VVD an established classical liberal party. D66 is a reformist liberal party. I must say this difference is stronger in parliament than in government. In government the difference is smaller. We make a strong point for outsiders (unemployed and newcomers) and want to create chances for people at the side-lines to enter the (labour) market.

We see the relativity of purchasing-power consequences more than other parties. At the same time we are not interested as much in defending higher income groups. We also want to stand up for people with low incomes.

In this you can recognize the social aspect of D66.

I must say in practical questions there is good cooperation between ourselves and the other parties in government.

More than the other parties, we are interested in the position of consumers. So if the market doesn't function we are in favour of maximum prices, e.g. for medicines.

Although the other government parties support us in the anti cartel policy, it has always been a strong D66 topic. It is an example of our interest in consumers. Being critical about dominant market positions, anti-cartel policy is clearly profitable for consumers.

A free market is profitable for consumers. It is not a D66 dogma. A free market is not a goal in itself, but it gives the best guarantee for getting a product with the quality consumers want at the lowest possible price. Cartels bring higher prices, lower quality and more unemployment.

*How do you see the relation*

*between the free market and environmental issues?*

If one enables the market to do what it wants, I am sure that there is not enough attention for environmental values. Many environmental values are not incorporated into the prices. An example: sustainable energy. It is better to reduce the use of fossil energy. At the same time new supplies of fossil energy are

*Doesn't decentralization bring a risk of new regulations?*

You must have confidence in local democracy. It is the arrogance of national politicians to think that they can do it better than local politicians. They have more contacts with local producers and citizens and because of that they can find more balanced and equitable solutions. You have to give local authorities the powers they need to realize these solutions.

True decentralization is not making the rules on a national level and leave the application of these

# ***D66 and Economy***

## **An interview with Hans Wijers, minister of Economic Affairs**

found regularly, which has a price reducing effect. To realize the goal of reducing consumption, prices should be higher.

The eco-tax is a way to correct this market effect. External effects should be brought into the prices, and not be dealt with by subsidies nor if possible by regulations.

A problem is that international agreements are necessary. A high eco-tax is only possible if the other European countries take similar measures.

A good market generally stimulates innovation and in this way helps to find solutions to problems. Producers can develop new technological solutions to environmental problems. This demands dynamics in the market.

The economic affairs ministry and the environment ministry cooperate in finding solutions.

We are working hard now to realize deregulation and to improve legislation. When a licensing system proves counter-productive or costs more than it solves, other solutions must be found.

Decentralization is an option.

rules to the local authorities.

I trust the local authorities enough to do both. I do not have problems with different solutions for regions in which circumstances are also different.

*You have advocated a purple party. What are the backgrounds of this plea?*

This is a story with many misunderstandings. I will try to explain it. Generally this government gets good responses and reactions. The new approach is generally accepted: less ideology and more discussions. If this approach is a success and the participating parties are rewarded for this, this government can be continued after the next general elections.

In all parties there are people who could easily function in another party. On the other hand parties have a heterogeneous composition, with members of whom you cannot understand why they are in that particular party. I don't see the logic of it.

It is also true for D66, which has its currents as well.

Differences within parties are sometimes bigger than the differences between parties. For example, look at the Labour Party with its 'liberal' and trade-unionist wings.

That could be a reason for thinking about the criteria for the existence of the specific parties. The factor of coincidence plays a role. In a way it is strange if a good cooperation in government wouldn't have an effect on the parties. But the chance that this really happens is small. It is not easy to have changes in the party system. Big events are required for that to happen. After the second world war the reconstruction of the Netherlands was such an event. In the sixties a government crisis was such an event, which brought the formation of D66.

I don't know what kind of event could happen now, but I don't exclude this possibility. For example, a development into a bipartisan system with a conservative and a renewal party, both comprising elements of today's parties, could be possible.

*Is D66 necessary for the government?*

The remark that D66 is not necessary because of this lack of differences is pure nonsense. One cannot forget that it is only because of D66 that this government has been formed.

Other parties said D66 didn't have a social-economic profile.

That sound has disappeared.

It looks as if the political market players don't allow a newcomer (D66) to enter.

A coalition of PvdA and VVD without D66 wouldn't exist for a long time. Don't forget that D66 is the bridge necessary for the coalition.



*The direction of the party has changed, less green. Doesn't this bring the risk that you alienate the green wing from the rest of the party?*

This is nonsense. I cannot agree with that kind of remark. You must not forget that this is the first time that the economic affairs ministry initiates so many green projects. Environmental innovation, covenants with industry, sustainable energy.

We support companies that want to develop environmental technology. We have projects together with the environment ministry.

The change in direction of the party is the change from an opposition party into a party with government responsibility, a party that takes responsibility for the implementation of an integrated environmental policy. The Netherlands has the highest R&D percentage in the environmental field, including sustainable energy, of the OECD countries.

When I speak with other ministers of energy from the OECD, they regard the Netherlands and Denmark as the two most progressive countries in their thinking about energy and environment.

Let us stop having a feeling of guilt about not taking green issues seriously. That is a real problem for the party.

*But when we look at the big infrastructural projects like Amsterdam Airport or the TGV and the big transport railway to Germany, you can see the discussions.*

I believe that the measures taken for Amsterdam Airport are favourable for the environment as well as for economic goals.

We create many jobs and lower sound emission levels compared to the present situation.

The TGV has as its goal to reduce the use of aeroplanes on short routes. This is only possible with a good railway, not with compromises with the "Not in my backyard" syndrome.

We have planned this project including many measures to spare the environment. Don't forget that these measures are being realized because of the efforts of D66. We can be proud of what we have realized.

D66 should express that feeling. Our green profile changes because

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now we can actually realize green measures.

*Before the elections we made promises about concrete infrastructural projects. Was that our mistake?*

No, we can probably explain that we realized 80% of our goals. We need more self-confidence.

*We have reached an important question: how do we find an equilibrium between public interests and individual interests?*

This is indeed a problem. You must be careful. You have to listen to individuals. It is the responsibility of politicians to find a solution which respects the individual interests as much as possible.

The railway between Rotterdam and Germany is a good example. This is a necessary investment to prevent that the roads cannot be used anymore because of the traffic jams with trucks. From this macro point of view it is a very good environmental investment. On micro-level, this railway goes through the backyards of citizens. You cannot solve this problem for 100%.

What you can do is to make a high-quality railway. We have succeeded in doing this. The decision was taken in the previous government but D66 demanded changes

to the project.

820 million Dutch guilders will be spent extra because of our demands.

Our attitude is to look at all the interests involved and all the aspects of a problem and to find the best solution in a pragmatic way.

We have a good eye for the public interests, more than the VVD, but don't expect as much from government solutions as the PvdA does. Pragmatism brings the solution, not dogmas.

My idea is to show the party profile, the party identity with a policy programme, not with a programme filled with abstract principles and dogmatic solutions. Our attitude is our identity.

I do not think labels like 'liberal' are important. They can help to explain the party identity to a world that uses these labels. We have a liberal economic profile. But what does it stand for when we see many differences between liberal parties in Europe. So this label doesn't give voters a clear picture of the profile of the party. This profile should emerge from our attitude, our actions. We have to emphasize our main goals for the years to come.

*Thank you for this interview.*

*by Wilfried Derksen  
and Constantijn Dolmans*

## **Rural development: new policies for the European Union**

**A**t the end of november the committee on Social Affairs of the European Parliament had its first exchange of views on my report on the demographic situation in the European Union.

The main aim of my report is to make demography an issue on the political agenda. The demographic factor has farreaching consequences for society the next few decades, and yet it is not considered to be an important parameter in the design of social and economic policies.

This lack of interest is unjustified, as the impact of demographic change will be much stronger in the next few decades than it has ever been before. The term demographic revolution is definitely appropriate.

Of course the most visible aspects of the demographic situation at the moment, are the slower population growth in Europe and the rapid demographic ageing. But I would like to focus on another demographic phenomenon: the increasing world wide urbanization and the depopulation of the country side.

The urban population is growing faster than the average population growth, and 93% of this urban population growth occurs in Third World countries. This rapid increase of the number of people living in a city is mainly due to migration. The number of very big cities is growing. At this moment fourteen of the biggest cities in the world have a population of over 10 million inhabitants! Again: all new metropolises are situated in the poorest countries. This development is paralleled by a strong depopulation and demographic ageing of the country side. Young people move to town, attracted by its economic "pull", as their chances of making a living in the

## **Youth in former Yugoslavia** (Article starts on page3)

refugees to go back when they don't have an official agreement of the local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without a safe place to go these refugees will only increase difficulties there.

Of course many other topics were discussed, but the main gain of this seminar was the opportunity it gave to these young people to meet and talk with their neighbouring countries. For some of them it was the first time in years that they went

abroad, for almost all it was the first opportunity to discuss freely with young people from Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia since the beginning of the war. We hope to build on this experience and meet again next summer. For the moment the so called "Balkan humor", very predominant during the informal parts of the seminar, seriously gives much hope for the future.

*Bart Hoogenboom*

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**Rural development:  
new politics for the European Union**  
(article starts on page 6)

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country side are getting ever slimmer.

Although the developments in Europe are less dramatic, they do follow the general trend of urbanization. Europe is the most urbanized part of the world: about 75% of its population is living in urban agglomerations of more than 10.000 inhabitants.

All these changes call for a new vision on the respective roles of the city and of the country side and their interdependence, to be laid down in a European urban policy and a rural development policy.

At the moment, cities are the main centers of economic growth. The country side on the other hand,

focussing traditionally on agricultural production for the world food supply, is strongly in decline.

The Community agricultural policy, regional policy and environment policy offer the perfect framework for a European rural development policy. General outlines for such a policy are described in the European Charter for Rural Areas, recently published by the Council of Europe.

A rural development policy, aiming first of all at the diversification of the economic activity, integrates for instance the above mentioned areas, SME's, industry, recreation, technology and research, energy, education and training, town and country planning, lands-

cape preservation, infrastructure and transports. The country side has to become more aware of what it has to offer to the city and the people living in it. Many new activities can be developed, not in the least in the services sector. Positive side effect: offers good opportunities for women to improve their economic position. New products will find their way to the market, like biomass.

Given the specific conditions of each region, a European rural development policy can not be a uniform plan for the entire Union. It will rather consist of steering, coordination, cooperation and the exchange of experiences.

*by Johanna Boogerd-Quaak,  
Member of the European Parliament,  
rapporteur on the demographic  
situation in the European Union*

## **IVSOM in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**S**ince a fact-finding mission of D66 and the Young Democrats in 1995, D66 maintains regular contacts with the Liberal Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One week before the national elections in September, D66 visited the Liberal Party in Bosnia. Wim Vrijhoef (President), Jan-Willem Bertens (MEP) and Jan-Dirk Sprokkereef (Secretary General) supported their election campaign in Sarajevo and Brcko.

During the entire war, the Liberal Party has pursued a Bosnia without ethnical boundaries. Nowadays, six months after the Dayton agreement, Bosnia still has a war economy. Only 5 percent of the total population is employed. Before the elections, politics was dominated by nationalist issues.

The first part of the visit was a political meeting between the Dutch delegation and Rasim Kadic (party leader of the Liberal Party) and Kleija Balta (vice-president) in Sarajevo. They talked about the election campaign and the expectations of the Liberal Party. The Bosnians explained their slogan and main theme 'European identity'.

During the press conference, which was held afterwards, the Dutch delegation was asked how the fall of Sebrenica had been expe-

rienced in the Netherlands. Jan-Willem Bertens explained that the parliament decided to order an investigation by the RIOD (the National Institute for War Documentation, which also investigated the developments of World War II.

The second part was a visit to a campaign meeting in the frontier-city of Brcko. Brcko is the only city which is still disputed after the Dayton agreement. The control of Brcko has yet to be established. In the meantime the muslims are being dislodged and the

Serbian refugees are moving into the abandoned houses. During the meeting, at which more than 500 people were present, Wim Vrijhoef suggested a 'fly-over'. The Liberal Party actually already suggested a proposal for a mutual 'right of way'.

The possibility to share and exchange opinions during this visit was of great importance to both the Liberal Party and D66. Both parties experienced this visit as successful.

*by Tanja Brok*

*Wim Vrijhoef*



# "Give a man a fish..."

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**A** Already more than 200 years ago clergyman Thomas Malthus predicted that population growth would exceed food production. Today, Lester Brown, the president of the World Watch Institute can be considered a modern Malthusian. He argues that the global demand for food will be many times larger than the world's capacity to produce food. Mr. Brown is not alone, many people believe that there will be a major food crisis in the early 21st century.

Against this pessimistic, outlook thousands of politicians, bureaucrats and lobbyists gathered this week for the second World Food Summit in Rome. Forecasts of famine seem to come up about every twenty years because the last global food conference was organised twenty years ago driven by the same anxiety. But, is it true, that the world is really running out of food?

More than 800 million people are chronically malnourished. However, it is too easy to dismiss this human tragedy to population growth reaching its natural limits. The answer to this problem cannot be solved with technical means such as more fertilizers and high yielding seeds or biotechnological inventions.

It is too narrow minded to think only in technical solutions. What is needed is not another breakthrough in farm technology, but a breakthrough in policy. People are hungry because they are poor and not because the world is running out of food.

Biotechnology offers enormous possibilities. But so far not for the millions of poor farmers in the third world. This technology will be far too expensive and complex for these people.

The coincidence of the World Food Summit together with the dramatic situation in Zaire demonstrates that hunger cannot be explained by a lack of fertilizers, but by civil war. It is not only a matter of overpopulation, environmental degradation, but also of distribution, access to land.

Many of these issues go far beyond the scope of the FAO food conference. Dealing with hunger is not only dealing with food, but with the complex issue of poverty. And poverty should be addressed by policy changes.

Political change is needed at all levels. But to stay close at home, we should not deny our own responsibility. The Common European Agriculture policy of the European Union through which the European market is kept closed for other countries and food prices are kept high, contributes to the problem. Even worse, are the fishery agreements between the European Union and African countries. From a social and ecological point of view, these agreements are unacceptable. The EU memberstates are exporting their problem of overfishing to poorer countries and with sophisticated equipment the Europeans make it impossible for their African colleague to fish in their own waters. Against this background it is very cynical that at the one hand the European Union is pumping money in food programmes, while on the other hand it undermines it by its agriculture policy and fishery agreements. "Give a man a fish and you can feed him one day, learn a man fishing and he can feed himself forever." In this context, unfortunately this basic principle of food security is losing more and more of its reality.

by Babette Graeber

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## State of play in Justice and Home Affairs

*Catharina de Lange, political assistant Prof. dr. L.J. Brinkhorst, MEP*

Cooperation between the members of the European Union in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs is not working. True, Conventions - on extradition, Europol, the EU's financial interests, the customs informations system, Schengen - have been signed, Joint Actions have been adopted and on paper the number of resolutions, recommendations, decisions and conclusions is impressive. But we are far from decisive and organised action in the fight against international crime in its many forms, nor are we anywhere close to a common European asylum and immigration policy. As such, the European Union is not providing an adequate response to the security concerns of the citizens.

**T**he main underlying reason is the reticence of the Member States: in this policy area, at the heart of national sovereignty, habits of cooperation are difficult to develop. Because of this reticence, the Member States did not give themselves the means for effective action at the time of the Maastricht Treaty. The result, as one analyst put it, is 'institutionalised intergovernmentalism': intergovernmental cooperation

which existed prior to the Maastricht Treaty continues to exist, although it now operates within the framework of the European Union. The legal status of the instruments at the disposal of the Member States is vague and the ministers have resorted instead to other quasi-legal instruments which are not binding. The unanimity rule leads to paralysis or to decisions of the lowest common denominator. And by curtailing

the role of the European institutions (except for the Council of Ministers), Member States have discarded a major source of impetus for further cooperation and raised widespread concern about the lack of judicial and democratic control.

The provisions of the Treaty in the field of Justice and Home Affairs are currently under review in the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) which must prepare the European Union for enlargement. Fortunately, Member States are growing aware of the expectations of their citizens with regard to internal security and therefore some progress is likely to be made in this area. The position of the European Parliament is clear: it is in favour of making policies such as asylum, immigration, visas and the fight against terrorism, organised crime, drugs, fraud, corruption and

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*One of Europe's mayor problems: drug dealing*



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trafficking in women and children, real Community policies. This means that the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice will fulfill their traditional roles of initiating legislation (in the case of the European Commission) and control. Furthermore, decision-making in these areas will be made easier through qualified majority voting.

Results from the IGC are also in the interest of the countries of central and eastern Europe who wish to join a European Union where free-

dom of movement and internal security complement each other. But a successful outcome is not guaranteed. There is resistance from Member States who prefer to view progress in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs as giving away national sovereignty rather than as increasing their capacity to counteract problems which require a transnational solution. To overcome this resistance, the idea of 'enhanced cooperation' is gaining ground: Member States who wish to integrate further will no longer be prevented from doing so by the veto of another

Member State. However much depends upon how this concept of 'enhanced cooperation' is given form in the Treaty. It will have to be understood as a means to deepen integration if it is to help develop effective action at the European level in Justice and Home Affairs.

## Some D66 issues in justice and home affairs

*Wilfried Derksen*

D66 has always been a party with many lawyers. Legal affairs have an important impact in the party profile. The rule of law and constitutional reforms are typical D66 topics. For the past several years the fight against crime has been a main topic.

**D**66 (and its Justice Minister, Mrs Winnie Sorgdrager) wants to emphasize the fight against crime. This involves a good cooperation between local and national authorities and the public prosecutor office. The public prosecutor has to tune his policy to the policy of the authorities. On the other hand, the authorities have the duty to prevent that a bad policy leads to a high burden for the judicial authorities. The question may be asked whether the penal system is the right answer to breaches of the law. Therefore, D66 is in favour of using not only penal reactions but also administrative reactions to these breaches. This leads to a differentiated approach and means that the public prosecutors can concentrate on their main task: penal reaction to crime. It doesn't conflict with the guarantees of the ECRM. Administrative courts



*Justice Minister Winnie Sorgdrager*

can check the administrative measures. A general opinion in the D66 justice policy is that penal law is an ultimum remedium (a last resort) and that administrative law and civil law can also be used as instruments to fight crime. The public prosecutor should have the possibility to initiate civil procedures if these procedures are more efficient than penal procedures. In this way it might be possible better to prevent crime.

### Financial possibilities

During the past year, D66 has advocated a strengthening of the judicial authorities. The judiciary should take responsibility for its own organization and should have the financial possibilities to respond to the wishes of the public.

### 'Gedogen'

A typical Dutch word is 'gedogen', to condone. It means that authorities tolerate breaches of regulations. It does happen in other countries as well, but it is now once again in discussion. An example: although soft drugs are illegal, they are tolerated under restrictions.

This is an extreme example, but it happens more. Local authorities have the possibility to tolerate breaches of building regulations. D66 advocates a regulation of 'gedogen' in the law. The rule of law stipulates a regulation.

# D66 and the Regions of Europe

**Hans van Mierlo, the D66 party leader, raised the issue during a fringe meeting of the D66 party conference 22nd and 23rd of March: the role of the regions in the European integration. This issue will prove to be one of the most important items on the European agenda the next few years.**

So far, the European Union has been a project of the member states, but it is becoming apparent that the local and regional authorities have to be involved in the integration process as well. Especially the big regions with legislative powers wish to participate more directly in the European decision making process.

The regions and cities of Europe very often get confronted with legislation and regulation that have been conceived at the European level, without taking into account the diversity of the regions and cities and the impact of such legislation and regulation at the local and regional level.

Article 198 A of the Treaty of Maastricht reflects this development, by providing the basis for a Community organ that voices the opinion of the subnational levels of public authority: the Committee of the Regions.

The Committee of the Regions is a consultative body, composed of 222 representatives of local and regional government, proposed by the member states and appointed by the Council, and an equal number of alternate members. The Committee of the Regions has to be consulted obligatorily by Commission and Council in the areas of economic and social cohesion, trans-European networks (transport, telecommunications and energy), public health, education and youth and

culture. If the Committee of the Regions considers that specific regional interests are involved, they can issue an own initiative opinion on the matter. In practice, the Commission regularly consults the Committee voluntarily on a variety of subjects.

The Committee of the Regions is a relatively young organ, and still in the process of finding its final shape and role within the European institutions. One of the recent developments is the formation of political groups and the installation of secretariats for these groups.

The ELDR group has 24 full members and 23 alternates. Thirteen of them are Dutch, including the president, Pieter ROSCAM AB-BING (VVD). D66 is represented by three members, Marian LOUPPEN (regional councillor of Gelderland), Michiel VERBEEK (alderman of Haren) and Annelies VERSTAND (mayor of Zutphen). This imbalance is mainly due to the fact that the Dutch delegation to the CoR sought to reflect the political situation in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands the administrative heads of municipalities (ma-

yor) and of provinces (Commissioner of the Queen) are appointed by the government. One of the spearhead issues for D66 has always been the elected mayor in stead of the appointed ones.

It is interesting to see the repartition of posts at the local and regional level between the political parties. The Netherlands have 572 mayors, 23 of which are D66 members. This is only 4% of the total, whereas D66 got 16% at the general elections of 1994. Equally disproportionate is the number of Christian-Democrat mayors: 39%, against 22,7% at the general elections. At the provincial level the same phenomenon can be observed: out of 12 Queen's Commissioners, one is a D66 member.

In the Committee of the Regions, D66 will pursue its ideas and values within the framework of the ELDR group, but also through cooperation with the D66 delegation in the European Parliament as well as regular consultation of the D66 association of local and regional council lers.

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## IVSOM in the Czech Republic

**Mid-December D66 organised a conference in Prague focusing on party organization and structure. A total of 19 participants from the Hungarian SzDsZ (Alliance of Free Democrats), the Czech SD-LSNS (Free Democrats/Liberal Social and National Party) and the Dutch D66 (Democrats 66) met in general sessions and workshops.**

Remarkable differences were apparent between the comfortable position held by SzDsZ and the more marginalized SD-LSNS. While the SzDsZ participates in the Hungarian government at the time, the SD-LSNS has lost severely in recent elections for Parliament en Senate. For this reason, SD-LSNS participates only on local and regional political level. The Czechs saw party restructuring as a necessary consequence of these defeats. The reduced size of the SD-LSNS led further-

more to a major decrease in subsidies from the Czech State. The SzDsZ, however, continues to strengthen its position as a democratic party with creativity and discipline without serious competition from the liberal side of the political spectrum.

During workshops on communication, media and internal party-organisation, several ideas were launched to help shape up the SD-

*Continue on page 8*

more thematic approach is needed for the future. The EU has to concentrate itself on themes which play a role in all the member states. For example the implications of the information society which make life-long learning very important. For this it is imaginable to develop activities to stimulate computer education for different age-groups in member-states. Another theme could be the specific social problems in the inner-cities of the member states.

The ESF is still the European Union's most important social and

employment-policy instrument. In view of the 18 million unemployed in the EU, restricting its range of operations is as unthinkable as cutting funds. Assistance from the ESF is often the only opportunity the long-term unemployed, young people out of work, women and the disabled are given to obtain additional qualifications and be integrated or reintegrated into working life. What the ESF needs is a reform for the coming years which takes into account the different challenges of the future. In this way it can contribute to a more social Europe.

Instead of setting specific requirements for a particular job, and limiting a medical examination to those requirements (e.g. testing of the eyes of someone applying for a training as a pilot) medical examinations were used to close the door to applicants with slight health problems unrelated to the particular job. D66 was of the opinion that this situation was undesirable. Not only did it create inequality of opportunities, the behaviour of employers was also based on the erroneous assumption that medical examinations at the beginning of a person's career in a particular firm have a predictive value, in the sense that they can give an indication of the future sick-rate of the person concerned. Research has shown, however, that this is not true. Sick-rates are more strongly related to the work environment, work satisfaction and other psychological factors than to the initial health situation of an employee.

### The right to know

The situation with regard to the pension scheme and life insurances was more or less similar. How to avoid that people, because of certain health problems, are excluded from these insurances? The discussion between insurance companies and D66 spokesman Rogier van Boxtel focused on HIV-infected and persons with a risk of developing inheritable defects in the future. The insurance companies argued that a ban on medical examinations would cost over a billion Dutch guilders and push premiums up to unacceptable levels. Van Boxtel questioned these figures and defended 'the right to know'. The two sides finally agreed that insurance companies were allowed to ask for a medical examination in case someone wanted to buy a life insurance of over 300.000 Dutch guilders. In the case of a disability insurance the figure was lower. Only when these changes were made, the government supported the initiative by Van Boxtel. Despite the changes he had had to make in the bill Van Boxtel was satisfied: Many MP's do not see tangible results of four years work, but he did!

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# Medical examinations banned

*Marjanne de Kwaasteniet*

**Due to an initiative by MP's of D66 medical examinations to be appointed to a job, or to be admitted to a pension scheme or a life insurance will soon be banned. The relevant bill (comparable to a "private member's bill") passed Parliament last November and it is not very likely that the Senate will block it.**

**W**hat were the reasons for tabling this bill? When Jacob Kohnstamm (former MP, now State Secretary for Home Affairs) presented the bill back in 1993, he was motivated by the fact that due to technological developments medical examinations could discover more and more, and that this resulted in unfair treatment of applicants for jobs. An applicant could be turned down for reasons which had little to do with the requirements for the job.

Initially the bill met with little support, but this changed in 1995, when it became clear that the privatization of the health insurance act (which put the financial burden of illness of an employee on the employer, with the objective of reducing the sick-rate) and the disabled act (which forced employees to partially insure against the risk of becoming disabled on the private

market), induced employers increasingly to use medical examinations for selection purposes. By that time it was Rogier van Boxtel MP who dealt with the bill in the D66 parliamentary group.



*Marjanne de Kwaasteniet,  
International Secretary D66*

## Social Policy in the European Union: re-inventing the European Social Fund

*Martin van't Zet, political assistant to Mrs. Boogerd-Quaak, MEP*

Employment is priority number one in Europe at the moment. The European Union is facing persistently high unemployment. In some parts of the European Union the unemployment rates are above 10%, for young people usually even higher. Unfortunately the role of the European Union in social policy is often criticised as weak and powerless. This became painfully clear after the closing of the Renault plant in Vilvoorde. If Europe wants to play an important role in the world economy it's essential to create new jobs and to secure the existing jobs.

European-wide there's consensus about modernising the European labour markets and making the tax and social security systems of the member states more employment-friendly. However the instruments for social policy are, with exception to some internal market related legislation, mostly concentrated in the member states. An exception for this is the instrument of the European Social Fund (ESF).

The ESF, the oldest Structural Fund, has been and still is the visible manifestation of the obligation which the European Union has set itself to make social integration and equal opportunities possible for citizens of the Union. It aims to stimulate job creation in member states by supporting training schemes and other employment generating initiatives. It is run on the 'matching funds' principle whereby the European Commission generally provides up to 50% of the financing for a project and member states come up with the rest. In less-developed regions, the ESF has been the driving force in improving education, training and further training systems. In other parts of the Union, the ESF has given member states support in adapting workers' qualifications to the constantly changing demands of the economy.

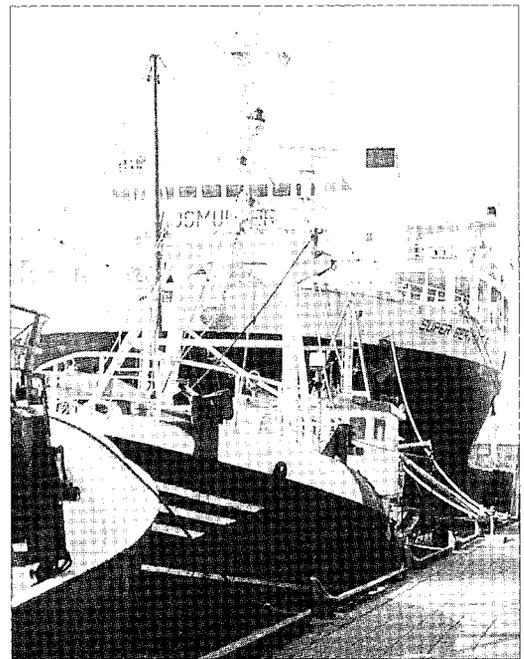
Despite all the good things about the ESF it does not mean the

fund hasn't received criticism. One of the fund's major weaknesses is considered the poor co-ordination with other key programmes, notably the multi-billion-ecu European Regional Development Funds. Another growing concern is the way the fund is run. Every year the EU's Court of Auditors attacks the Commission for its handling of the ESF (and other structural funds). For example almost one-quarter of the 7,400 million ecu available under the scheme in 1995 was not used because of the poor co-ordination between the institution and the member states. From local and regional authorities complaints are heard about the excessive administrative costs owing to the complexity of operations, the severe delay in the flow of ESF funds and inflexibility owing to the adoption of priorities to a three-year period. Complexity is strengthened by the multiplicity of activities, initiatives and objectives which make the fund very untransparent.

However, abolition of the ESF because of this complexity, inefficiency and untransparency isn't realistic and isn't a solution as well. The meaning of solidarity which lies

behind the ESF, must stay upright. To make the ESF better known the fund needs reform. A forthcoming reform must take into account the financial perspective for the period after 2000 and the enlargement of the EU to include Central and Eastern European countries. The member states' endeavours to consolidate their budgets in preparation for EMU make an increase in the Union's own resources unlikely. New tasks for the EU and the financial efforts required in connection with eastward enlargement also rule out an increase in funds for the ESF. Redistribution of the means is therefore unavoidable. Further on the procedures must be simplified and the fund must increase its effectiveness. Two things in relation to reform are important. Firstly it is necessary to reduce the current number of objectives to two core objec-

*The Port of Rotterdam employs  
tenthousands workers*



tives. One vertical based objective for specific areas in Europe especially focusing on regional development and one horizontal based objective for the whole of Europe. The latter includes the initiatives to combat unemployment. Secondly a

*Continue on page 6*

Recently I had the opportunity to interview Tom Kok to get an impression of his ideas on D66.

*clear position: You wouldn't run for a paid chairmanship. Why not?*

*Q: A first question: Why did you want to become party chairman?*

A: I like new challenges, new things to learn. I like to do things I have not done before. I expect that the persons who asked me to run for this office had the idea that I could probably use my experience in a good way for the party. The same will be done at the moment D66 needs a new chairman. I do not have the presumption to cause very big changes in the party.

*Q: In your professional life you have experience with chairing a big insurance company, FBTO, a cooperative organization. Do you see similarities in both functions?*

A: Not a direct similarity. But I am the same person at home as I am at my work and as I am in the party. My sense of norms and values doesn't change in these functions. The way I will deal with people is the same. I think in a certain way the cooperative character of FBTO has similarities with the way

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## Tom Kok, The new Party Chairman

### An interview

At its November congress, D66 elected a new chairman. After intense debates on the choice between a full-time paid chairman and a non-full-time paid chairman, congress opted for the latter. After this debate, congress elected Tom Kok, former member of the national bureau as the new chairman.

D66 works. In both organizations members have a lot of power and the possibility of direct influence on the decisions. The Members Council is the highest body in FBTO. Congress, the members assembly, is the highest body in the party. Every member has a direct entrance to the congress and has the right to vote in congress. This I find very inspiring.

FBTO is a direct writer company, it has direct contacts with its customers. This is the same as in the party. The party has direct links to its members and is not dependent on any branches to involve members. I must emphasize that this doesn't mean that every FBTO client should be a D66 supporter and every D66 supporter should be a FBTO client.

*Q: In the debate on a paid chairman, you had a*

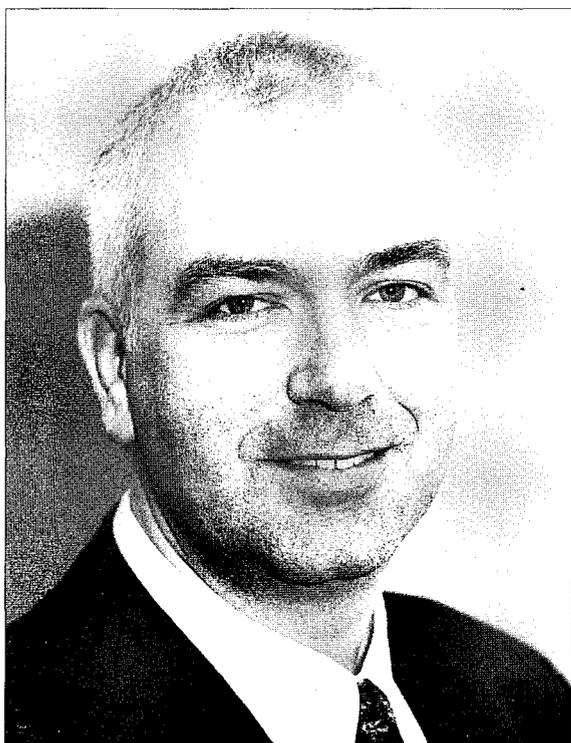
A: To say it positively: Why am I in favour of the old system of chairmanship? First a personal reason: I have a fine job and I don't want to give up this job to become party chairman. There is also a very good fundamental reason. Chairman is a political function. It brings responsibilities. If you make a political mistake, congress must be able to ask for your resignation. This is more difficult if a family depends on the income as party chairman. On the other hand, if the chairman doesn't agree with a party position anymore he must be able to resign without losing his job. This mutual independence is very important. One needs this absolutely.

*Q What do you want to realize in your chairmanship?*

A This is not a spontaneous answer. Many people asked me and I have thought a lot about it. An important electoral factor will be the "realness" of people. People saying what they think, people being prepared to listen to reason and to learn from mistakes. I will consider my chairmanship a success when at the end this realness will be regarded as typical of D66 representatives in legislatures and executives.

*Q Where do you place D66 in the political spectrum in the Netherlands?*

A The main characteristic is the reform and renewal attitude. For example: We demanded this quite successful purple coalition in government and we brought good ministers into this coalition. Although I will not deny the economic success of this coalition, a very important renewal is the green dimension. In every debate on infrastructural topics, environment is a big issue. A lot of money is spent to make these infrastructural investments more environmentally friendly. The environment has become an issue in economic development. This to me is an important D66 feature in government.



Q D66 is in the coalition with a social-democratic and a classical-liberal party. What are the differences?

A The main difference is the emphasis on democracy made by D66. We have trust in the individual possibilities of the Dutch citizens to make choices. That is the reason we have made the choice for direct democracy in the party without a system of delegates. That is also the reason we want to enrich parliamentary democracy with direct democratic features. Consequently, we advocate openness. People should have the possibility to get the information they need. This is also an attitude in D66: being open to information and impulses from citizens. I must emphasize that the centre position that we now have doesn't mean that we have unclear or vague positions. The bridge position that we have in this coalition is a necessity for the coalition.

Q In Europe we cooperate in a liberal democratic party, the ELDR, with the VVD party. What do you consider the main differences with the VVD?

A The VVD combines a traditional liberalism with the conservative wishes of many of its supporters. They have more an ideological position. Our position relies on arguments. We do not have any blueprints. I must say that at the moment we can see a growing difference of opinion on the introduction of the Euro and the enlargement of NATO. We have made a clear choice in favour of the introduction of the Euro and the enlargement of NATO. Mr Bolkestein, leader of the VVD, is speaking in a more sceptical way. He spoke against the enlargement of NATO. He does this in lectures and interviews and it is a way to influen-

ce the political agenda. But I wonder if it is a balloon or the real vision of the VVD. It will be discussed in parliament. We will not support him

and I don't think he will get a majority in parliament. (Editor: He didn't.) Another point. I see in Europe a task for D66 to promote its idea of consumerism. The position of the consumer should be better and it could be an important issue for D66 in the ELDR.

*Wilfried Derksen.*

## European Parliament in power?

*Bart Hoogenboom, JD*

**A**lready years ago, JD advocated increasing the power of the European Parliament, and we were not alone. Fortunately, or unfortunately? Fortunately, because it is always nice not to stand alone in your opinions. Unfortunately, because if there were indeed a large support for a stronger EP, then it is absolutely disappointing to see that the EP still can't really block policies of the European Commission. In the JD magazine 'Demo', Jan Willem Bertens (D66 MEP) was asked about the democratic control-mechanisms of the European Commission. He concluded - and seemed quite satisfied to me - that the power of the EP had been increased by 'Maastricht': 'We do have the opportunity to send the European Commission away'. If Bertens knows anything about Dutch national policy, and I assume he does, then he would know that only when there is really a clash between government and parliament, there is a chance that the government is sent away. Much of the power of the Dutch national parliament lies in the possibility to amend a legislative proposal, or even totally reject it. Are we so totally wrong to expect the same characteristics at a European level? So far no European Commission has been sent away. Bertens tries to save the situation by: 'Well, I'm not going to show my power by knocking you down.' Of course we agree that it would not be a pleasant situation if members of the European Commission were knocked down continuously, but some pressure would be fine. Bertens should have answered by summing up the means of the EP to produce that pressure. But if he is honest, he would not get very far. Are we so totally wrong to think that the European Parliament should have the right to amend or to reject policies of the European Commission without causing a European governmental crisis? (suggested editor's note: under the so-called co-decision procedure, which covers a large section of European legislative proposals, including all of the Internal Market legislation, the European Parliament already has -and makes intensive use of- the power to amend and ultimately to reject proposals for legislation, even if these are supported by the Commission and the Council.)

Are we so totally wrong to think that such national democratic procedures should at least be reproduced at a European level? The larger an entity, the more, the better and the opener the procedures should be to ensure democratic control. We know the EP has already more power than is generally thought. We know Bertens is very European-minded, but so are we. We know Bertens and other MEPs are always willing to clarify European policy to Dutch citizens. But we also know our democratic principles. And we expect D66 to know theirs. We cannot be satisfied with the limited influence of the EP in European Commission affairs. We expect every MEP not to be satisfied with it. And most of all we expect a European democracy.

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**IVSOM in 1997**

IVSOM will, also during this year, organise several projects with like-minded parties in Central and Eastern Europe. A summary of some of the planned projects in 1997:

**Hungary**

Together with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz), several different trainings and seminars have been organised the last four years. This year too, we will exchange political ideas and views during a seminar.

**Slovenia**

After the multilateral environment conference in the Hague last year, D66 will develop a new political conference with the LDS in Slovenia.

**Macedonia**

Last year was the first time the Liberal Party of Macedonia and D66 cooperated in an IVSOM project. The seminar on media policy has been very successful and a follow-up will be organised this year.

**Poland and the Czech Republic**

The Free Democrats from the Czech Republic and the Union of Freedom from Poland will most likely cooperate together in a seminar this year.

**Bulgaria**

D66 has been working together with the Institute of Liberal Strategies for several years now. This successful cooperation will be continued this year.

**Croatia**

The HSLS from Croatia visited the Netherlands in December last year. In February, a seminar on media and campaigning was organised in Croatia.

**For more information on the IVSOM projects you can contact: Tanja Brok at the D66 National Office, +31.70.3566066.**

# Change of leadership

At the last congress Hans van Mierlo announces that he will not run as party leader at the next parliamentary elections.

**A**t a press conference at 31 may Van Mierlo and party chairman Tom Kok proposed Mrs Els Borst, minister of health, as the new party leader.

Party congress has to confirm this choice.

