

The schools of political studies of the Council of Europe



The Council of Europe schools of political studies were established to train future generations of political, economic, social and cultural leaders in countries in transition. They run annual courses of seminars and conferences on topics such as European integration, democracy,

human rights, the rule of law and globalisation, with the participation of national and international experts.

Since the creation of the first school of political studies in Moscow in 1992, by a group of civil society activists seeking to promote democratic values, a number of others have been set up along the same lines and there is now a network of 16 schools covering the whole of East and South-East Europe and the Caucasus¹.

The Council of Europe schools of political studies are NGOs set up under the legislation of the country in which they are located. They are governed by a Board, which appoints a director, selects the annual intake of 40 participants and draws up its programme of activities. Every year, each school runs at least three national 3-day seminars and takes part in the Summer University for Democracy, held in Strasbourg in early July and attended by over 650 participants and guest speakers.

1. The Moscow School of Political Studies, the Tbilisi School of Political Studies, the Bulgarian School of Political Studies, the Moldova School of Political Studies, the Pristina School of Political Studies, the Skopje School of Political Studies, the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, the Academy for Political Development (Zagreb), the "Ovidiu Sincal" European School (Bucharest), the Yerevan School of Political Studies, the Ukrainian School of Political Studies, the Baku Political Studies Programme, the Academy for Political Excellence (Sarajevo), the Albanian School of Political Studies, the School of Democratic Leadership (Podgorica) and the East European School of Political Science (Belarus).

SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Since its creation in 1949, as a pan-European organisation the Council of Europe has undertaken the mission of defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law. To this end, the network of schools of political studies was set up, as one of our principal instruments, to accompany democratic transition in eastern and central Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. I am convinced that it would be possible to apply this concept elsewhere in the world, in countries attached to the same universal values as those which we encourage young leaders in new European democracies to promote



Jean-Louis Laurens
Director General of Democracy
and Political Affairs
of the Council of Europe –
Strasbourg, June 2009

A priority for the Council of Europe

The network of Council of Europe schools of political studies is part of the Action Plan adopted by the Heads of State and Government at their Third Summit in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005. It is one of the Council of Europe's main tools for strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law and for preparing a new generation of leaders, committed to the values underlying the European project of the last 60 years, for senior positions.

Participants

Participants are young leaders (average age 35) in the public and private sectors, selected according to their level of social or professional responsibility, taking account of relevant political, social, cultural and ethnic factors in each country. Gender balance is another criterion of the schools' selection procedure. Guest speakers are practitioners, academics or experts recognised in their field of competence. Council of Europe Offices and European Commission Delegations in countries hosting such schools are regularly involved in their activities.

Themes

The main themes studied by schools of political studies are basic principles of European construction, expansion of the EU and its neighbourhood policy, forms of governance and the role of citizens in debating the major issues of the day, regional co-operation, conciliation and dialogue in crisis regions, conflict prevention and recognition of cultural specificities and cultural diversity. Other subjects debated by the schools include global challenges such as combating terrorism and organised crime, environment protection, as well as new technologies and their impact on the functioning of democratic societies.

Management and functioning

The programme is run by the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs, which is responsible for its general co-ordination with the Organisation's other priorities and programmes and for its financial management.

The directors of the schools meet at least three times a year as members of the Steering Committee which has been set up by the Council of Europe. A representative of the European Commission also sits on this committee which will, in due course, include other members representing partner organisations and donors. Its main role is to co-ordinate activities, exchange examples of good practice and experience, prepare the Summer University for Democracy and assess each year's activities.

The network of the schools of political studies receives financial support under a Council of Europe/European Union Joint Programme.

NETWORKS



“The European project is a large-scale project with an economic dimension, a social dimension and a philosophical dimension - making it a genuine political project. This Association gives us an opportunity to collectively think about what the European project means and the international role of the Europe that we are building together. I firmly believe that the Association of Schools is vitally important as a forum for continuously reflecting on and revitalising the European project and for ensuring that it is about more than just economic prosperity»



Catherine Lalumière
President of the European
Association of Schools
of Political Studies

Bilateral and regional meetings

Over the last few years, as the schools' network has gradually expanded, co-operation has been established between the different schools and they now hold regular bilateral and regional meetings. This type of meeting provides the opportunity to establish informal, in-depth dialogue on relations between countries in the same region (for example between Russia and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia).

Since June 2008, the schools' network has extended its field of action by introducing a programme to facilitate inter-community dialogue in Cyprus, with the support of the European Commission. Interest has also been expressed in establishing a school in Turkey, and a feasibility study may be conducted in 2009–2010.

Alumni associations

Alumni associations have been set up in the participating countries to strengthen the ties forged within schools and during the Summer University in Strasbourg. The alumni include many ministers, members of parliament, local councillors, senior officials, businessmen, journalists, NGO leaders and lawyers. One of the special features of the Council of Europe's schools of political studies network is the opportunity it provides for meetings between leaders from different professional and political backgrounds in countries where there is as yet no established political culture based on dialogue and tolerance.

European Association of Schools of Political Studies

In July 2008, the directors of the schools of political studies founded the European Association of Schools of Political Studies to strengthen ties, foster their development and support the Council of Europe's activities to promote the schools' network.

The association is non-profit-making and has no political or religious aims. It is governed by a board made up of the directors of schools of political studies of the Council of Europe network and three to ten members elected by the General Assembly for four years. Catherine Lalumière, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe, was elected Chair of the association.

SUMMER UNIVERSITY FOR DEMOCRACY

Since 2006, the Council of Europe has held an annual Summer University to increase the visibility of the programme and forge stronger ties between participants from the various schools. The event is attended by all the participants of the schools of political studies (over 600 every year). It provides an opportunity to discuss common problems, to organise bilateral and regional dialogue, to listen to prominent European and international figures and to meet many experts from Europe and other parts of the world.



Eminent guest speakers

The most distinguished speakers invited to address the Summer University include Boris Tadic, the President of Serbia; Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria (alumnus of the Moscow School of Political Studies); Milan Kucan, former President of Slovenia; Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada; Goran Svilanovic, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia; Oliver Dulic, former President of the Parliament of Serbia (alumnus of the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence); Adrian Severin, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania (founder of the Bucharest "Ovidiu Șincai" European School); John Hume, Nobel Peace Prize-winner; Alexander Milinkevic, winner of the Sakharov Prize; George Soros, President of the Open Society Foundation; Jacques Paul Klein, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations; Catherine Lalumière, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe; Jean-Paul Costa, President of the European Court of Human Rights; Filip Vujanovic, President of Montenegro; Meglena Kuneva, European Commissioner; Egor Gaydar, former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation; Danilo Turk, President of Slovenia; Michel Rocard, former Prime Minister of France; Petre Roman, former Prime Minister of Romania...

The programme

Each Summer University focuses on a general theme: in 2006 – *Challenges to democracy in today's Europe*; in 2007 – *The future of the European project*; in 2008 – *Governance, power and democracy* and in 2009 – *Global challenges to democracy*. The Summer University discusses the general theme at plenary sessions, topics of specific interest at conferences, holds workshops using participative methods and has discussion periods providing opportunities for bilateral and regional exchanges. The programme also includes a visit to the European Court of Human Rights during which participants meet the judge from their country.

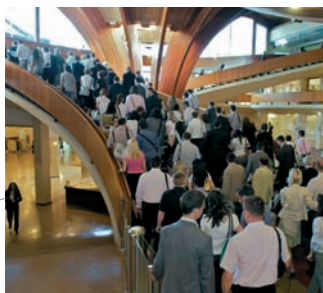
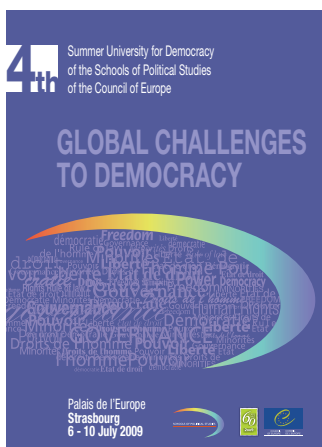
The Summer University for Democracy programme is drawn up in close co-operation with partners which include Strasbourg University, the French National School of Administration (ENA) and the local authorities: the City of Strasbourg, Département du Bas-Rhin and the Région Alsace. France, the Council of Europe's host country, makes a financial contribution to the Summer University.

Working towards a World Democratic Forum?...

Following the success of the first three summer universities (2006, 2007 and 2008) organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, this event is now a major gathering at which the young leaders of the "new Europe" discuss and exchange ideas and seek answers to current issues. The Summer University could gradually open up to participants from countries which are not members of the network, including non-European countries, to achieve increased synergies and foster the establishment of a worldwide network. It has the potential to develop into a much larger, international event, on the scale of the Davos World Economic Forum.

FUNDING

As well as receiving € 3,630,000 from the joint Council of Europe/European Union programme for 2009-2010, the schools of political studies are financed by national resources in the form of voluntary contributions from member and/or observer states and international foundations.



LIST OF THE SCHOOLS

Moscow School of Political Studies (founded in 1992)

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11/6, 103 006 Moscow, Russia
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E-mail: msp@msps.ru
Website: www.msp.ru
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Tbilisi School of Political Studies (founded in 1999)

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E-mail: director@tsps.ge
Website: www.tsps.ge
Director: Armaz AKHVLEDIANI

Bulgarian School of Politics (founded in 2002)

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Fax: +359 2 952 66 64
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slomeva@schoolofpolitics.org
Website: www.schoolofpolitics.org
Director: Svetlana LOMEVA

European Institute for Political Studies in Moldova (founded in 2003)

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Pristina Institute for Political Studies (founded in 2003)

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Leonora Kryeziu: lkryeziu@pips-ks.org
Director: Leonora KRYEZIU

Skopje School of Politics (founded in 2003)

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Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (founded in 2003)

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Academy for Political Development (Zagreb, founded in 2004)

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"Ovidiu Sîncăi" European School (Bucharest, founded in 2004)

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Yerevan School of Political Studies (founded in 2005)

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Director: Armen ZAKARYAN

Ukrainian School of Political Studies (founded in 2005)

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Director: Ihor KOHUT

Baku Political Studies Programme (founded in 2007)

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Albanian School of Political Studies (founded in 2007)

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Website: www.coealb.org
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School of Democratic Leadership (Podgorica, founded in 2007)

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East-European School of Political Studies (Belarus, founded in 2007)

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