

GREEN BALKAN NEWS LETTER

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GR

A Balkan focus on the agricultural dimension of Green New Deal

Welcome Note

Dear friends,

This is the first issue of the Balkan Network newsletter. It includes articles and photos on a variety of themes from the Balkan countries. We plan to improve the newsletter as time goes on and hopefully issue this several times a year.

We would like to hear from you. Feel free to send us your comments, ideas and suggestions on key issues, as well as information on your campaigns, demonstrations and other events. You may use the following address:

balkannetwork@europangreens.eu

Best wishes,

**OLGA KIKOU AND
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**THIS PUBLICATION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE
SUPPORT OF THE GREEN INSTITUTE, GREECE**



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The Green New Deal (GND) is the Greens' comprehensive response to the current economic, social and environmental crises¹. The GND looks to convert current intensive and industrial agricultural practices into greener methods. It envisages a sustainable agriculture and farming infrastructure that produces seasonal, healthy, local food. Green agriculture would provide quality jobs in Europe and allow fair trade with the developing world². Agricultural and Rural Convention³ points out new challenges that have emerged since the framework of a current European agricultural policy that has been created in 2006.

Until well into the 20th century, far more than half the people in the Balkans earned their living through agriculture. In the 19th century, the newly independent and autonomous Balkan states began building roads and railways and founding banks to foster economic development, borrowing from French and German investors, leaving insufficient financial resources to meet development needs. The interwar Balkan governments, which became increasingly authoritarian, concentrated on foreign policy and military build-ups. The thirst for industrial and consumer goods was met during the Great Depression largely by Germany, which had the fateful effect of politically linking the Balkan states to Hitler's regime. The communist governments of the post-World War II period focused on the improvement of the infrastructure, providing basic levels of housing, health care, and education; and developing energy sources, heavy industry, and mining. However, they failed to provide a basis for qualitative improvement. The service sector, as well as consumer production, lagged behind, and little groundwork was laid for today's transformation to the information age – not to mention the sector

of environmental protection⁴.

In Eastern Europe, investment in the agricultural sector has dropped substantially due to the political and economical changes during the 1990s (reflected in the sudden drop in the use of nitrogenous fertilisers)⁵. The share of organic farming in the Western Balkan countries was only 0.13 % of the total agricultural land, in 2006. According to an optimistic approach, the 2006 figure could be compared with the similar level (below 0.5 %), seen in the EU-10 Member States at the end of 1990s⁶.

According to a new study about the GND in Poland⁷, clear political signals are necessary for an ecological agriculture reform, and the first example given is reform of the CAP subsidy system. Additionally, suitable economic instruments require tax reform, involving taxation of the agricultural activity depending on its type and ecological tax reform, i.e. special tax on industrial agriculture and allotment of financial resources for environmental protection.

From all the above, a set of directions can be proposed for a "greening" of the agriculture in the Balkan countries:

- Support of small-scale farming, use of local varieties of seeds, and recording of traditional techniques and knowledge
- Localisation of food production, processing, distribution and marketing (producers' markets and BioBazaars)
- Protected Geographical Status: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG)⁸
- Direct connection of producers with consumers, through special networks, reducing the intervening middlemen
- Incentives, technical expertise and special awareness and training projects to encourage organic methods for farming and raising domestic animals – modern industrial methods of raising animals in tight enclosures is cruel and damaging

for soil, water and air.

- Integration with agro-tourism, eco-tourism, and nature conservation
- Incentives for the reduction of pesticide and fossil fuels use
- National plans for the management and conservation of natural resources - soil, water, biodiversity - and the reduction of irrigation to sustainable levels
- Pressure against the spread of genetically modified cultivations
- Special tax on industrial and intensive agriculture and allotment of financial resources for environmental protection
- Promotion of the reduction in meat consumption for reasons of climate change, food security, and animal welfare.
- Focus on education, research and innovation
- Networking of organic farmers' associations, consumers associations, and environmental NGOs from different Balkan and European countries

1. <http://greennewdeal.eu/> and http://europangreens.eu/fileadmin/logos/pdf/manifesto_EUROPEAN_GREENS.pdf
2. <http://greennewdeal.eu/agriculture.html>
3. Agriculture and Rural Convention, www.arc2020.eu
4. <http://www.cotf.edu/earthinfo/balkans/BKeco.html>
5. High Nature Value farming in the Western Balkans. Final report of Workshop on High Nature Value farming in the Western Balkans, 2-3 February 2006, Belgrade. WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, UNEP-Regional Office for Europe and the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism. http://see.efncp.org/download/BelgradeHNVFworkshop_Final-Report_Sept06.pdf
6. <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/western-balkans>
7. Szwed D. 2011. Green New Deal in Poland. Green European Foundation. http://www.gef.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/final-GEF-10-08_web_GND_Poland_english.pdf
8. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_Geographical_Status

Slovenian News

SI

Dear readers of the Green Balkan Newsletter, I would like to share with you information on activities and events in Slovenia. I am a member of The Youth Party - European Greens (Stranka mladih - Zeleni Evrope,), a green extra-parliamentary political party in Slovenia led by Darko Krajnc, with 2 mayors, 4 vice mayors, 45 municipal members (councillors), branches in around 60 municipalities and the president of the National Council of Slovenia. I believe that by taking part in national, regional and global networks and activities and closer co-operation with civil society organizations, the party will be able to re-enter the Slovenian Parliament at the next elections.

Speaking of green civil society activities, on March 24, the global civic action named World Cleanup 2012 was launched by massive cleanup days in Portugal and Slovenia, followed by cleanup days elsewhere which will continue through the 6-month period of the World Cleanup 2012, ending on September 25 this year. The aim of the action led in Slovenia by Slovenian NGO Ecologists Without Borders is to solve illegal dumping problem on a local and global level both short and long term – by engaging people to the cleanup activities on action days, raising issues related to illegal dumping and engaging both experts and leaders to find more sustainable solutions. The initiative comes from the international civic movement Let's Do It!'s goal to make a clean and healthy environment a reality. Slovenia, did it the second time around as the record holder

in the movement, 250.000 Slovenians participated in the action in 2010 and 270.000 people in 2012 who helped clean up to 5000 tons of illegally dump waste and update the first digital register of illegal dump sites in Slovenia. Members of green NGOs and political parties took part in the project as well.

Recently, around 80,000 public sector workers took part in the general strike, according to union officials, to protest against planned government's austerity measures which include cutting public sector wages by 15% aimed at wrestling down Slovenia's high budgetary deficit of 6,4% of GDP in 2011 to the 3% of GDP ceiling set out in the European Union's Stability and Growth Pact. The strike closed schools and other public services across the country. Currently, there are still negotiations going under way between government and trade unions while the amendments to the Article 148 of the Slovenian Constitution are being adopted together with the golden fiscal rule at the level of the Constitution.

Of course, it is necessary to have countries' budgets as balanced as possible but it must not be always the chosen few who get profits privatized and 99% of others who get debts and losses redistributed. The failure to take economic management beyond the dictates of austerity has even worsened the global as well as European financial situation and ruined lives and prospects of the future generation because of the impunity of the financial elites. As elsewhere, ordinary Slovenians are asked to pay for the debt the elites have created but the fact is that austerity measures alone

cannot deliver economic growth if there exists bad support for alternative economical projects such as investments in solar energy and green projects such as reviving organic farming. We greens can offer here sustainable and fair solutions based on ecological wisdom and holistic approach to problems.

As the co-ordinator of the NGO GCAP Slovenia (Global Call To Action against Poverty), I believe it's very important to strengthen co-operation and joint projects on both regional and global level between green parties and movements from global North and global South especially in the framework of official development assistance (ODA). GCAP Slovenia is active in projects such as small-scale organic farming projects in developing countries led by Slovenian NGOs. I am pleased to say that Youth Party - European Greens (Stranka mladih - Zeleni Evrope) has been the only Slovenian political party which officially supports the allocation of 0,70% of Slovenian GDP for ODA by 2015 as promised by EU 27. As a Slovenian delegate to the Global Greens Congress in Dakar, Senegal, I had an opportunity to meet representatives of both green parties and NGOs and to talk about possible co-operation in future. I believe our party members will join me in the support for projects of ecological farming in developing and ODA-receiving countries. I am looking forward to further co-operation among Balkan Green Network members as well.

With best wishes
Robin Dewa



EDP – GREENS: Not simply a unification

TR

The Green Party of Turkey (Greens) and Equality and Democracy Party (EDP) decided to start talks aiming at close cooperation in November 2011. Both parties declared their will that this cooperation can lead to the unification of EDP and Greens. The main idea was not a mere unification but to create a new center of attraction for wide masses in search of their expectations in the political arena.

A contact committee was formed by each party's Party Councils. The committee is composed of 4 members (2 women and 2 men) from each party for the moderation of the process between the parties. A contact committee informed about all these activities and negotiations to their party bodies for a transparent and participatory process.

The first activity this committee performed was the organization of a

daylong Ecology and Democracy Conference in İstanbul. During this conference the initial concerns of EDP and Greens, democracy and Ecology matters were discussed by both party's spokespersons and a group of writers, activists, intellectuals and politicians from different opposition groups and parties. Helene Flautre from the European Parliament and Gültan Kışanak co-president of BDP were among many invited contributors. The conference was attended by more than 300 people and at the end anonymously a need for a reliable opposition was expressed.

After the success of the Democracy and Ecology Conference, forums were organized in 30 cities all throughout Turkey. In each city where the Ecology and Democracy forum met, the local party members and independent activists came together and brought their regional political and ecological prob-

lems. In these local forums two representatives from contact committee, one from each party gave information about the cooperation and unification process and tried to hear the responds from local organizations. After the forums, local party members were encouraged to act together and organize campaigns regarding their local problems.

In order to create opportunities for members of Greens and EDP to know each other better, the contact committee organized a series of workshops under titles: Ideology and Kemalism, Organizational Culture, Economy and Developmentalism, Climate Justice etc.

EDP and Greens held a joint Central Executive Boards meeting and decided to act together on various matters and support each other's campaigns.

After 5 months of negotiations and cooperation Greens and EDP are aiming to unite in June 2012.

Agriculture and Tourism in Croatia as possible impeller of development



Croatia has a little less than 4,500,000 inhabitants. Croats make up 89.6% of the population, while the rest are minorities. The most significant national minorities are Serbs, who constitute 4.5% of the population, while each of the other national minorities constitute less than 0.5% of the population. The land area is 56,542 km² and the area of the territorial sea is 31,067 km², which places Croatia among Medium sized European countries. The capital city is Zagreb, and it is the economic, cultural and political center of the country.

The climate in the interior of Croatia is a moderate continental climate, in the mountain areas a pre-mountain and mountain climate, and the coast has a Mediterranean climate with dry summers and warm, wet and mild winters. The Croatian climate is affected by its position the northern temperate zone.

With an average of 2,600 hours per year the Adriatic coast is one of the sunniest in the Mediterranean, and the average summer temperature is 25 °C to 27 °C.

These climate characteristics and the geographic location turn Croatia into an inevitable European and world tourist destination.

In the past few years Croatia has rapidly climbed the ladder of tourist destinations, and was listed among the world's top 10 destinations of 2012.

Those are great news for a time of deep

recession. Earnings expected by workers in tourism as well as the by state budget, unfortunately, is still largely not based on the quality of service and quality food and drinks. The leaders are large hotel chains that only care for the quality of accommodation and not the mentioned. Their catering is based on imported food (vegetables and fruits) and drinks and tourists get the impression that the cuisine is equal to other tourist destinations.

Vegetables are produced in the Republic of Croatia at about 70 000 hectares which is 4.8% of total arable land. In Croatia, 70% of vegetables are produced on family farms (OPG), of which only 3% of falls in the production of vegetables in protected spaces (greenhouses).

On these surfaces around 400 000 tonnes of vegetables are producer per year, which certainly is not enough for Croatian needs, especially for meeting the needs of the tourist season.

To overcome growing imports of fresh and processed vegetables, in 2006 the Croatian Government instated The Operational Programme for the Development of Vegetable Crops, which aims to encourage the increase of land used to grow vegetables, especially in protected spaces to raise production to a level that would be sufficient for the needs of Croatia, and growth of export, while improving production technology, packaging and storage of vegetables and raising the quality of the products. In 2010 there

were 1300 manufacturers of eco fruits and vegetables registered in Croatia.

In the past five years, Croatia has strongly supported the development of vegetable and fruit production on family farms, especially in Slavonia, and Istria and Dalmatia. Painstaking education of the population supported by the EU funds managed to drive the development of these economies, but for mixed use. A family business includes its own production of fruits and vegetables, meat, own cured meats, olive oil and wine, dairy products such as goat and cow cheese, cream, etc. In the same time, family can offer tourist and gastronomic services in an authentic environment. Tourists can find accommodation mostly in detached stone houses, mini-villages (Istria) and mini-farms (Slavonia). Consumption of complete services like those is limited to a very small number of users who are generally permanent long-term guests.

However, in Croatia there are also those who only produce fruit and vegetables. The inability of placements and years long recession, as well as reduction and then elimination of state aid to small farms has resulted in further reduction of what was already a small amount of existing manufacturers. The gap in the market of fruits and vegetables was then used by large shopping centres, both domestic and foreign, and the import of these foods increased several times.

And so we find ourselves in a stalemate position.

Large quantities of poor quality food (even harmful to human health) are being imported, while our family businesses are failing or abandoning family farming and produce food only for their own needs while their children are emigrating. I believe that a similar situation is present in other countries in the Balkan region as well. The manner and style of living in this area is very different to other European regions, and this calls for different measures. The people of the Balkan region are not keen on development of industrial agriculture.

Fishing and farming of traditional Mediterranean crops such as fruits, olives, wine, etc. has never been the choice of development of socialist government in the past. On a contrary, it used to be systematically ignored, which doomed it to extinction. The consequences today are immeasurable.

The problem can be solved by implementing a joint program of more intense population education at small farms and in tourism.

The advantage would, of course, be given to those who have not yet decided to start this kind of production, and tourism workers who know very little, or even nothing about the benefits of a quality indigenous cuisine.

Our main goal is the development of domestic agriculture to such levels that 80% of food products on the Croatian market are of domestic origin. Conditions for this (soil and climate) are present, but there isn't enough government regulation, education and information available to the interested population, and conditions for the re-organization of the market in this sector of the economy, in order to allow such a reversal, need yet to be established.

For example, Croatia imports 90% of the garlic in the market, and the population is very reluctant to plant this culture. Millions of dollars we spend on imports could remain within Croatian agricultural manufacturers if we grew our own garlic.

In any case, it is necessary to highlight the eco-agricultural production in line with global ecological standards of food production. This is one of the models to attract more tourists. Our tourists do not want to eat French, Italian or Greek "cuisine". They want an authentic cuisine with foods (vegetables, fruits, wine, cheese) grown in the region.

Reorientation of agricultural production from the so-called conventional intensive to so-called integrated is not quick and easy. Eco food production applies environmentally friendly methods and uses less

than 50% of maximum allowed quantities of chemicals in plant protection and fertilization. Integrated production gives equal, but far more environmentally friendly results than the conventional, and represents a realistic and attainable positive change. Objective conditions for organic agriculture in Croatia do exist - this is the size of agricultural holdings, and reduced use of chemicals in the recent past.

Small farms (family farms) are more suitable for organic production, because there it is possible to rotate evenly different crops, which is appropriate for organic farming practices. This generally means abandoning monoculture intensive farming with high use of artificial fertilizers and chemical plant protection products (wheat, corn, barley, sunflower). Simultaneously, the government must help to develop the market and stimulate the purchase of organic products from a large number of small producers. Workshops and study tours (to EU countries - exchange of experience of direct producers) can encourage this way of farming.

Cooperation of the "coast" and "the plain" is also possible through day excursions from the coast into the interior (Kopacki rit, rural tourism, adventure holidays, volunteers on farms, etc.). The distance between the coast and the interior can be overcome by small planes (family airlines). These examples of co-operation between agricultural and tourist sectors implies a limitless potential for development and job creation.



RO

A hard year to come

We don't need them to "frack" us

2012 is not only an election year on both local and parliamentary level, but it proves to be the hardest time for fighting to protect and preserve our environment in Romania. After 15 years of continuous struggles against using cyanides on large scale in gold mining, year 2012 brought new threats and new words were introduced in common language such as: "fracking". The shale gas resources were recently popped up in the public agenda after much secrecy covering the official decisions. Instead of officials informing the public, Chevron Company was the first to publicly announce the intention to exploit shale gas in the southern perimeters of Dobrogea, and elsewhere. It is not only this company benefiting from similar agreements with our authorities. The first exploration well will be installed soon, near the towns of Costinești Adamclisi and Vama Veche in the Black Sea coast, very vulnerable areas regarding their ecosystems, in terms of historic heritage (Adamclisi, or Calatis antic city) and tourism. Moreover the government has used a trick: citing confidentiality for these projects they demanded that the contracts are treated by law under strategic national interest objectives.

Considering experiences of other countries, the Green Party of Romania considers the shale gas plan as extremely dangerous for the environment and for the future health and safety of Romanian citizens. A considerable number of people can be affected, decreasing also the economic potential

of those areas. We expressed concerns regarding the use of "fracking" and had a clear voice in the awareness campaigns starting this January.

Moreover we were much against the opacity of Romanian authorities in granting permits for shale gas extraction by using fracking method, without any consultation with local authorities, or citizens in these areas, and without any environmental impact studies.

We claimed that the authorities involved need to ensure a coherent procedure, for core authorization and permissions on one hand and the environmental procedures and other permissions on the other, in order to be more specific and transparent to the public in all areas connected to natural resources.

We informed public opinion about the risks involved, through press releases and television. We sent open letters to the Prime Minister of Romania, Speaker of the two Chambers and the President of National Agency for Mineral Resources, asking them to cancel the plans for shale gas through hydraulic fracturing (fracking), as there is no proper legislation in place, or solid guarantees on environment protection, and without consulting local authorities and citizens that might be affected.

The central issue in our debate over the environmental aspect of shale drilling is whether its risks are known and assumed. Long-term underground remains are extremely harmful and poisonous, polluting deep aquifers and groundwater, as well as the water

supply while the operations also affect the soil. In addition, the process needs enormous quantities of water that is currently used for agriculture and other uses. But the real danger is a possible irreversible ecological catastrophe. The practice of injecting water into deep rock formations may also cause earthquakes. It is exactly at this early stage that public participation is required the most. While France banned fracking because of the risk of contamination last year and Bulgaria followed suit earlier this year, the Romanian government is issuing new licenses.

We have seen the devastation fracking has caused in communities across the USA, from Pennsylvania to Colorado. It is becoming overwhelmingly clear that European residents do not want to be exposed to the same public health and environmental problems. We showed clearly that exploration and exploitation of shale gas requires regulation in the fields of environment, chemicals, civil law, worker's health and safety, resulting in a much diversified legal framework that involves different authorities. We consider unacceptable for Romania to contribute financially to this disaster completely contradicting the principle of "polluter pays", and to support it by state subsidies. We also regard it as an unfair competition that will diminish public investments in renewable technologies - vital for fighting against climate change and European targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

The price of gold

Green Party Romania was solidary and actively involved in public protests during the last months in Bucharest and around the country, not only as part of the anti-fracking campaign, but also continuing protests against the cyanide gold exploitation as intended by Rosia Montana Gold Corporation and almost authorized by the government.

The company, Rosia Montana Gold Corporation, a subsidiary of the Canadian company, Gabriel Resources, wants to extract 300 tonnes of gold at a site in north-central Romania using the cyanide process, which is banned in several countries.

President Traian Basescu actively supports the project, criticized by environmental groups and advocates of heritage protection because the site is near Roman galleries dating from the second century, unique in Europe.

There are only few approvals left to be issued until the monstrous open-pit using cyanide project will start. The Green Party (Partidul Verde) joined ngos during the latest events, including the protests in front of the Ministry of Environment, held on January 28th (photos attached). As the public media refused to cover those protests, there are genuine flash mobs organized in the country and even recent events such as the Greenpeace protest inside the Ministry of Environment (when a couple of activists asked the Minister to ban the project, two of them chaining themselves in his office), that aim to draw attention of public authorities and request an official response

Resources:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zmCLG_ytG34
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1bME7T5s-o&feature=player_embedded
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmCLG_ytG34&feature=player_embedded
<http://www.partidulverde.ro/2012/01/28/verzii-la-mitingul-pentru-salvarea-rosiei-montana/>
<http://www.partidulverde.ro/2012/04/11/traian-basescu-trebuie-sa-demisioneze-dupa-declaratiile-prin-care-sustine-interesele-companiilor-straine-rm-gc-si-chevron/>
<http://www.partidulverde.ro/2012/02/21/verzii-acuza-anrm-de-iresponsabilitate-si-rea-vointa-in-problema-exploatarii-gazelor-de-sist/>
<http://www.partidulverde.ro/2012/02/10/verzii-trag-semnalul-de-alarma-ca-extractia-gazelor-de-sist-a-fost-aprobata-pe-sest/>
 Our monthly magazine:
<http://www.buletinulverde.ro/>

to this issue. Since January, we joined civil society in the Constitution Square, calling on the Romanian president and prime minister to stop lobbying in favour of this harmful project.

"We want to draw attention to the lies spread about the project, which is to use large quantities of cyanide and destroy all that represents the value of Rosia Montana village, with its 2000 years of history in place" our statement read.

The project is waiting for the go-ahead from the environment ministry. Under the pressure of both civil society and official lobbyists on the other side, the Minister of Environment resigned a month ago. We still hope the newly appointed Minister to take a responsible decision and not follow the orders of the President and Prime Minister.

We shall continue to address our request to the European Greens, to consider the ban of using cyanides in EU countries. Actually the intended project for Rosia Montana, is not the only one in Romania, but is the largest of this type in Europe and mosly affecting the landscape (four mountains will be destroyed), the environment, the cultural heritage - the oldest mines in Europe, and public health and security.

Our rivers might disappear

Last but not least we need to mention another hot issue and campaign that is to preserve the rivers in the Carpathian Mountains included in the full arrangement of hydro fever. Rivers on both sides of Trans Fagarasan suffered abusive work flows and the crystalline water dis-

appeared under excavator crawlers and cups. In the heart of the reserves Natura 2000 site, the Fagaras Mountains, an area protected by measures imposed by the European Union, "investors" are digging with excavators. They violently invaded places untouched for thousands of years. At the end of 2011, 34 rivers in protected areas were already under the weight machines.

A entire country's hydro power plants ranging from 3,400 rivers, of the 4011 existing in our country, are likely to be destroyed in the name of business with profits of tens of millions of euros, which dig into the heart of nature reserves. The entire ecosystem in place destroyed, ironically, in the name of green energy.

Legally, no equipment would be needed to reach the river bed, piping must be held half a meter above the river flooding point, which is above the water surface or above ground. While committing to comply with these conditions, investors have drawn up a technical memorandum which expressly states these obligations. But the landscape reveals a different picture.

Papers seem to be fine considering our internal law, but what one may find on the ground contradicts documents and the law. Between papers and what happens in reality there is a difference from heaven to earth.

Partidul Verde, Romania
 Ovidiu Iane - President
 Georgeta Ionescu - Deputy Chair
 Silviu Dumitru - Secretary general

LGBT Balkan tour

The Gender working group of the Serbian Green Youth is working on project LGBT Balkan tour. This project submitted by FYEG and supported by GEF and HBS is following a series on three seminars on the topic of LGBT rights in Zagreb, Belgrade and Tuzla. After last year's debacle with Belgrade pride, when the government refused to provide security for the parade which resulted in its cancellation, it was obvious that serious measures had to be taken. LGBT organizations in Serbia are not threatened in terms of their existence, but their activists are. Finding media space is almost impossible, apart from personal space on social networks and webpages. Conducting activities that promote social justice, solidarity and freedom is also not possible since nationalistic and fascist groups are showing high level of

violence against these activities and their actors. Belgrade pride was organized for the first time in 2001, and resulted in violence and serious injuries. In 2010 Pride was organized under serious police escort, when violence again occurred still the object of it was Belgrade itself, and none of the participants of the pride was hurt. When it seems that it's getting better and that the situation slowly but visibly improves, there was a clash again. The government refused to provide security for the event in 2011, under the excuse of not having material resources for that, even though just two days later, they provided security for a football match with as many policemen as there were in the Pride in the previous year. The organization of the Pride 2011 was canceled; ngos proved their support to human rights by a public protest in front of the government building. Look-

ing at the upcoming elections none of the running parties support LGBT rights, even though many speak about social justice, including some of the far right parties. On the contrary, a significant number of officials and supporters of some of the parties use a very specific hate rhetoric toward LGBT on their personal internet space. For that manner, the Serbian Green Youth would like to draw attention to this issue before the elections but also further on. The Pride Parade needs to take place this year because we need to choose the path of social justice. We hope that this series of seminars will ensure international support and help to stop the violence and hatred, push forward understanding and solidarity and break society's ignorance for its members. For us, there is no compromise when it comes to freedom.



Protests in Serbia

During January 2012 the Greens of Serbia organized two protests, because their initiative to ban GMOs and to publish all documents on the construction of storage of radioactive waste in Vinca near Belgrade had no official reply from Serbian government.

On January 19th the Greens of Serbia organized a protest in front of the Serbian parliament on the occasion of 3

months with no response to an anti-GMO petition signed by 36,000 citizens and the draft law on GMOs, which were submitted to this highest lawmaking body in Serbia on October 26th.

On January 24th a protest was organized in front of the Public Company "Serbian Nuclear Facilities" because the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) were not published.

These documents are required during the construction of storage of radioactive waste in Vinca, near the Serbian capital, Belgrade. Regarding this problem, the EGP adopted emergency resolution on its Congress in Paris last fall. The Greens of Serbia are not giving up the fight for these important requirements and are ready for further radicalization of the protests, according to green practices worldwide.

Positive Radiation

The Greens of Serbia have organized the event "POSITIVE RADIATION" on Sunday, March 11th, to mark the anniversary of the tragic nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan. At this event that took place on the Kalemegdan fortress, by the statue "The winner" which is Belgrade's landmark, members and supporters of the Greens of Serbia, together with all the people who were willing to join us, created a long "human chain". Positive thoughts and common message of people forming a "human chain" expressed solidarity with the people of Japan, who will suffer the consequences of this disaster for years to come.

Ivan Karic, President of the Greens of

Serbia, told the media that: "The Greens of Serbia share the values of families of European and worldwide green parties, which strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy. Events like the one that happened on March 11th 2011 in Fukushima only confirm the nature of the nuclear accident - even though there is a small probability they will happen - once they occur, they leave the long-term radioactive legacy. According to official estimates by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, with the existing 400 active reactors, accidents involving a nuclear meltdown - the worst of all scenarios - should happen once in 250 years. However, we have witnessed three such accidents (Three Mile Island in 1979, Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima

2011) in the last three decades. One year after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, we do not need to wait for another disaster to finally convince ourselves to give up nuclear energy."

The Greens of Serbia, as a member of the European Green Party, strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy. Last year's tragic events in Fukushima (where the total number of victims will only magnify with the following generations), shows once again that nuclear power remains the most dangerous one. Nuclear energy is also the most expensive, because when something goes wrong - the environment is threatened and we pay with our lives and the lives of our children.

RO

AL

DEMONSTRATION

Import of urban waste into Albania

In 2011 Albania adopted the law of waste import from local government. According to the statistics and the current situation in Albania, there is not a genuine method or a solid waste management system; also there is no facility for recycling. We have rejected this law and we are united for a referendum

against the import of waste, arguing that firstly the waste should be recycled in our country, and only after this method is properly working for treating our waste, we must approve the import of fertilizer according to the green list. We have collected over 300 signatures for the referendum of urban waste, and also have

proceeded with public information campaigns in many cities of Albania about the problems of urban waste, its treatment, and why Albania should not import any. There have been protests in front of the parliament and also two national conferences on the issue.

EVENTS

1. UPCOMING EVENTS

Artificial Lake Protection Conference

On April 22 we are organizing a local conference for the protection of artificial lakes and the entire surrounding environment in Tirana, giving it the "Regional park" status. The main subject of the conference will be protecting the park from building other facilities on its land. After the conference, the youth movement group, EEYA, will embark on a temporary protection for the forest, surrounding the lake and providing an incentive for all citizens to protect this area.

Ecological summer camp

In August 2012, in collaboration with JEF Albania, the second ecological summer camp will take place, bringing together foreign and Albanian trainers and youth participants, who will be trained

in environmental policies and activities, thinking green.

2. PAST EVENTS

Ecological summer camp 2011

In July 2011, an ecology summer camp was organized, on the activism of youth in environmental tasks as well as the rehabilitation of the Qeparo area, implementing a primitive ecological system for waste recycling. Creating a system with native tools (eg cardboard, paper, adhesive, etc..) and by promoting the differentiation of waste, as well as sensitization of the citizens of the area. Also, activists were trained on alternative ways of energy and environmental management.

"Sub-urbanism" exhibition

On March 17, the European Environmental Youth Alliance, with the youth and Vitrina University as its main partners,

opened a photographic exhibition entitled "Sub-Urbanism" at Hotel Sheraton. The moderator of this activity and also president of the Ecological Youth Alliance Ms Franceska Korance, welcomed the first Environmental exhibition in Albania on behalf of the organizers. Through the photos, the youth reflected on what young people have in their subconscious, think that harms not only the eye, but also many other elements such as thinking, living, deceased, etc. of Albanian community. There were four main issues of focus through the photos: the environment as a concept, green civilization, wretched beings in cages and gray spaces. Participation in this exhibition was great, and also there was considerable media attention. This was the first activity of this size, which will be take place again with many other similar activities involving the youth.



A green political breakthrough at the elections in Romania:

For the first time in this century the Greens will have a good chance to win seats in the Parliament and in the local Councils in Bucharest

The new green party called "Greens Movement – Democrats Agrarians" (Mișcarea Verzilor – Democrați Agrarieni, MV-DA) succeeded in finalizing all procedures in order to become a registered party in Romania on March 15 2012. Unfortunately, there were some attempts from other ecologist parties in our country to stop or to delay this procedure in order to make our running for elections impossible for this year. But our lawyer was very skillful and won the lawsuit at the Court of Bucharest on November 4th 2011 and the recourse at the Court of Appeals on March 15th. Local elections in Romania will take place on June 10th and parliamentary elections in November 2012.

Soon after the end of the lawsuit we organized a congress on April 7th. Mr. Remus Cernea was elected President of the party and Mr. Ștefan Sebastian Szobotka – Executive President. On April 7th, after the congress, the president of MV-DA signed the protocol of an alliance between our party and the opposition parties (Social Liberal Union, Uniunea Social Liberală) for local and parliamentary elections. This alliance of opposition parties which includes social democrats (PSD), liberals (PNL) and a small conservative party (PC) has a big chance to win the elections this year. The polls indicate that USL has about 60% in pre-election polls. MV-DA has joined this alliance so we can have a few eligible seats in the local elections in a few districts of the capital Bucharest and the local council of this city, as well as in few other counties.

There will also be a few seats for MV-DA in the next parliament of Romania.

This will also be a very good opportunity for us to put on the agenda of the alliance some of our priorities. For instance, the president of the social democrats, Victor Ponta, made a statement that the Union will oppose the mining project based on cyanide from Roșia Montană. This mining project has the support of the president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, and his party PDL (Democrat Liberal Party) which is a part of the European People's Party and is the leading political force of the current government. They put a lot of pressure to start this mining project and this maybe our most important battle in Romania at this moment. Civil society and many public voices are also against it.

Our political partnership with USL is our only chance at this moment to become a green political force for real. Without participating in local councils and the parliament, there is a small chance for us to become a strong voice in Romania. The threshold is 5% and the green parties in Romania only have about 1-2% each. Standing for elections on our own this year is the certain way to fail. At this moment the presence of MV-DA in the alliance of opposition parties may provide the chance to build a strong green political party for Romania in the future. Just a few of our people will be elected this time, but we have a strong confidence that this will be the first important step in order to attract most of the people with green views from Romania and to build

a strong green party. It's a fact that many people will follow and support a political way not only because of its noble ideas and values but also if it shows that it has a good chance to achieve success. Without pragmatic solutions for elections, the green values may remain in the underground of the political scene in Romania for too long. That's why we've decided to make a breakthrough and to accept the invitation to take part in social-liberal alliance. This invitation is a result of the work, campaigns, statements and other strong efforts that took place in the last three years and which have built a credibility. The president of the party, Remus Cernea, has about 13% of strong and very strong confidence at the national level according to a CSCI poll from January 2012.

Among many other things, some of our main goals are: the protection of the natural environment, cleaner sources of energy, including stopping the construction of two additional nuclear reactors at the Cernavodă Nuclear Plant, protecting biodiversity, defending human rights, including the individual rights on the internet, protecting vulnerable persons and communities, especially Roma, women and LGBT, preserving the cultural/urban heritage, and defending the separation of church and state.

There is a real potential for a green party in Romania but it is important to find pragmatic ways to make it a reality. The local and parliamentary elections will be a good opportunity for us to prove that we have a solution.

Referendum on the convention of 26th October

It has been some months now since the proclamation by the ex-prime minister of Greece, Georgios Papandreou, of a referendum for the validation of the convention of 26th October and this incident looks already as an old tale.

This incident nevertheless provoked radical changes in the Greek political scene that led to the fall of the socialist government and the formation of a new coalition government with an increased majority, mainly by the old socialist ministers with a few right-wing, far-right and technocrat elements. This incident may also serve as an example of fake participative practices.

First, a few details for the situation in Greece since the emergence of the debt crisis last year. On April 2010, the Greek Government requested the EU/IMF bailout package be activated. At that time the European parliament had already requested a eurobond (after a proposition of green MEP Sven Giegold etc), nevertheless the Greek Government preferred instead to promote this idea and make alliances to support it in order to force an agreement with the IMF and oblige the EU to initiate a stability programme for the Greek economy. This example serves just to point out that at that moment there were possibly more alternatives and that the Greek politicians preferred to accept what they were told rather than negotiate.

Since then the agreement was revised many times, with the most important one being the fourth "mid-term" austerity package that provoked strong opposition throughout Greek society and the "Indignant Citizens Movement" (May-June 2010).

Every Greek loan package is accompanied by strict anti-social measures. We could say that the conditions placed on every loan are not really different from

those imposed by the IMF on 'third world' countries. At the same time, even the most ambitious plans aim to minimize the growth of the debt and not the debt itself. People express fear about the future and are angry because of the diminishing standards of their quality of life. Official unemployment figures have reached 18.5% while real unemployment levels exceed 25%.

People don't see any alternative. At the moment this article is being written, the first party in all opinion polls is the 'no party' option. The socialist party of PaSoK (the socialist party - in government) reached its nadir in the polls with about 10% of the expected vote.

Nevertheless, till now the austerity measures seem not only socially unjust but also simply wrong because they do not present any concrete results. The government and the entire political system seem to be incapable to understand the situation. One by one many socialist MPs have left the socialist party. At the moment of proclamation of the referendum the government had a majority of only three MPs as opposed to a majority of 10 MPs 2 years ago.

With the agreement for the 6th austerity package new measures were to be taken and the government was not strong anymore to pursue them. The demonstrations against the entire political system and especially against the president of the republic on the National Day celebrations of 28th of October illustrated this in an obvious way.

Hence we have to do a plebiscite for tactical reasons the same as dictators did in the past (in Greece in 1973, also Napoleon First and Third, and others) with the obvious difference that it would have been conducted by a democratic regime.

The difference between a referendum and a plebiscite is clear. The latter is a punctual event in an undemocratic

decision making system. The characteristics of a referendum based democracy demand

1. A Citizens' initiative.
2. Those supporting the referendum will formulate the question to be asked.
3. Two options followed by an application program for each one.
4. The question occurs before a decision and not after or in the middle of a decision making process.

In the case of Papandreou's referendum we had a proposition for a clear referendum by governmental initiative while they did not ask peoples' opinion for the first memorandum neither they started a real debate on the alternatives.

The aim of this move was clearly the survival at any cost of a government that was falling apart. If there was a question to ask the people that should have been whether the parliament should be dissolved.

This government that avoided two months ago to institutionalise the citizens' initiative referendum in the new law about referenda (a law that basically repeated the constitutional obligations that already existed without making any progress). This prime minister who became the leader of his party with an a la cart participatory plebiscite 7 years ago when he was elected by postal election from members and 'friends' of the socialist party thought he was a unique candidate... This government was elected on a program making reference to strengthening participatory decision making only to increase the use of tear-gas in demonstrations.

This ex-Government finally fell from a dishonest, bad move towards 'participatory' democracy. The slogan of the Greek direct democracy movement was once again confirmed:

"Error 404, Democracy was not found".

Double victory of Zelenite

on the road of renewable-based energy independence

Within three months Bulgaria introduced a ban of shale gas extraction by hydraulic fracturing followed by the collapse of the project of building a new nuclear power plant in Belene. Both decisions of the Bulgarian government were forced by long and persistent street protests and hard media work against the will of the overwhelming fossil and nuclear lobbies. The Zelenite party was instrumental in organizing many of the protests together with several environmental NGOs and civil society groups. They provided the clear political platform that led to these bans by demonstrating to the public, that a national energy independence is achievable (economically, as well as technically), based on renewable alternatives and energy consumption efficiency.

BA

On 15 March 2012 the Municipal Board Centre, Sarajevo of Our Party organized a public debate about the current issues that the Canton Sarajevo faces with regards to free-ranging dogs. The two hour debate, initiated by Sanja Lazar, President of the Central Board, and moderated by Lejla Somun-Krupalija, Member of the Central Board, was well attended, with many animal care experts, as well as citizens and politicians present.

The public debate organized by Our Party was a response to the continuous disregard of the Law for Protection and Welfare of Animals that was passed in 2009, by the Canton authorities. Specifically, the Canton authorities ignored the calls, as well as legal requirements, to initiate the procedure for the construction of an asylum for free-ranging dogs for an entire year after the law was passed. Several months prior to the debate, Our Party issued an official

denunciation of the municipal authorities in charge, stating, "We are witnesses of the rising numbers of free-ranging dogs on the streets of Sarajevo, as well as negligence on the part of municipal services in solving this issue". Several topics were addressed during the debate, including an asylum for dogs in Praca, which was being built at the time of the debate but has since been opened, and plans to open an asylum in Trnovo. The issues with the asylum in Praca that were mentioned included the inability of that single asylum to solve the problem of free-ranging dogs in Sarajevo, as well as seemingly overestimated numbers of dogs that are supposed to reside in the asylum in its first year. Meanwhile, an option of building an asylum for dogs in Trnovo was discussed in the absence of Hamid Mesic, the initiator of the project, who offered to donate his privately owned land for the construction of an asylum.

These two victories did send a strong message to the region and to Europe. One year ago Zelenite initiated a Balkan-wide anti-nuclear initiative of green parties and NGOs. The collapse of the Belene nuclear plant is a major step towards nuclear-free Balkans. The anti-fracking campaign that started almost a year ago had a major ripple effect not only in the region, but also was carried on as an example of a successful campaign by sister parties and organizations as far as Romania, Poland, Scotland, and Ireland.

Despite all these major successes, the old fossil and nuclear lobbies in Bulgaria are again starting a powerful campaign to reverse the late decisions of the Bulgarian government. Only a common political platform shared by all EGP member parties will help to preserve the victories in Bulgaria and elsewhere. Zelenite are

calling all EGP sister parties to build a common energy platform and fight for Europe-wide nuclear and fracking bans. The party is willing to share their experiences and help their European partners in building such common platform.

Zelenite is the only party not represented in the Bulgarian parliament, that historically was able to stop new legislations or correct existing laws and limit the damage caused by successive kleptocratic governments. Previously, under the pressure by Zelenite, Bulgaria banned all GMO products, a major incinerator project with potential catastrophic outcome for the environment, and protected many environmentally sensitive regions. Zelenite are constantly fighting for more democracy, transparent government, modern social policies, new green jobs and strong green society.

Arijana Aganovic, secretary of the

Regional Board of Our Party, was also present at the debate, and explained the views of the Regional Board on the subject. Principle positions taken by the board is that legal requirements, which include participation of municipalities in construction of the asylum as well as multiple small asylums in all municipalities, must be respected, and that more emphasis must be placed on registering and spaying dogs and using microchip implants.

The conclusions that majority agreed on at the debate were that the relevant institutions must start enforcing the law, that additional asylums for free-ranging dogs must be constructed, that municipalities must set aside funds to support the asylum in Praca, small local asylums and privately owned shelters, that steps must be taken to penalize those breaking the law, and finally that we must work on media campaigns and education of citizens if we are to tackle the problem properly.



HR

News From Green List of Croatia

1. On 22nd of February the Green List had a open panel in Zagreb about climate change. This was a promotion of the brochure about climate change that on a popular and easy to read way describes climate change, its consequences and what should be done in order to prevent it. For those that understand Croatian language – the brochure can be downloaded from the web-page: http://www.zelenalista.hr/UserFiles/File/brosure/Klimatske_promjene_2012.pdf

2. As a part of its anti-nuclear campaign, on 3/11 the Green List organized a street event in front of the Japanese embassy in Zagreb „Remember Fukushima“. This was used once again to remind everybody of the existence of the nuclear power plant in Krsko (Slovenia) is only 30 km away from the centre of Croatian capital.

3. On the 22nd of March, the International Day of Waters, Green List dedicated its activities to the problem of waters.

Green List warned Croatian citizens that the water on earth is generally polluted and that we are all responsible to preserve what we have.

4. A forestation action in Lika with hikers' NGO Matica-Zagreb in April 2012. 2000 pine trees were planted by 50 people in only 4 hours. This action was our concrete contribution to fight global climate change and shows that we can contribute to a better world.

MARINA BARBALATA

The Green New Deal website: www.greennewdeal.eu

EU

The Green New Deal is the Greens' comprehensive response to the current economic, social and environmental crises. In order to make visible the many good proposals, as well as the concrete realization of the Green New Deal, the GND website was created.

The Green New Deal website, managed by the Green European Foundation, and bringing together materials of Green foundations, the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament and the European Green Party, explores the transformations that make up the Green New

Deal. It provides a wealth of research materials on core topics of the GND, as well as European best practice examples of projects that have successfully applied GND specific measures. The website further helps users identify key events where you can learn more or exchange expertise on the different policy fields connected to the GND.

The website is meant to provide a space for developing and exchanging ideas on a Green New Deal that efficiently tackle the triple economic, social and environmental crisis. The website features studies, policy papers and gen-

erally food for thought on core economic issues, as well as on adjacent GND policies such as agriculture, job creating and reducing inequalities.

We are constantly looking to enlarge the data base of best practice examples on the Green New Deal available on the website and we could use your help! If you know of any successful Green projects in your village, town, region or country, please signal them us by filling in this online form. We will make sure to put your example on the GND's European map!