

**GREEN**  
**BALKAN**  
NEWS  
LETTER  
**#3**

May 2013



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# GREEN BALKAN NEWSLETTER #3 MAY 2013

Dear friends,

The current crisis has hit the Balkans in many ways. It is important however that we Greens remain strong and keep working at local and national level in order to inspire people and build a common future. We hope that this newsletter will contribute to the existing dialogue in the Balkan area and provide ideas to be explored and put into practice.

Enjoy reading!

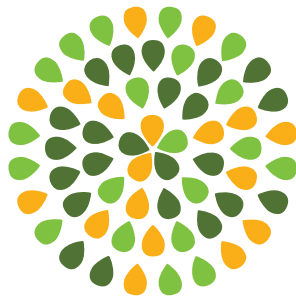
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## Unemployment among young people in Greece in 2013

The phenomenon of unemployment among young people today is deeply connected to the socio-political system of Greece formed after the collapse of the dictatorship and the restoration of democracy almost 40 years ago. Sadly, the Greek economy is currently in the worst condition compared to that of other European countries.

On the other hand, the most unethical effect of unemployment on the youth is the massive hiring of unqualified and incompetent employees in the public sector, a practice followed by all government parties over the last decades. This policy excluded all capable young people from working in civil service positions while the taxpayers' money was wasted by the corrupted groups and the protégées of the government who pocketed public funds for their own sake.

Obviously, the high rate of unemployment among young people is part of the general unemployment problem that has skyrocketed in our country regardless of sex and national origin and is interwoven with the 'black' market of work which has been established in Greece.

Unfortunately, there is no available statistics concerning the rate of unemployment according to age, sex or other specifications that would enable us to develop a better understanding of the subject. On the contrary, most of the published data are invalid and misleading.

The financial support of the young people by their parents, a standard and acceptable practice in contemporary Greece, resulted in the youth's dependence on their parents and often in their



obligatory streaming to higher education. Top notch universities and fields such as Engineering, Medicine and Law became very popular in the last decades because of the attained social prestige and high status. The result was an enormous number of unemployed young graduates waiting in line for a job. On the other hand, we are faced with a total absence of educational institutions for technical professions such as construction, waste control, tourist services, agriculture, farming, taxi driving etc.

All professions involved in the conservation of our natural resources and in planning the alternative ways of economy, as described in the Green New Deal of the Green Europeans, are now suffering a decisive blow resulting in large numbers of unemployed people.

As a consequence, hundreds of thousands of people work illegally in the "black market" now, providing to the employers benefits in tax evasion and hiring workers to work unconditionally and uninsured, and by the way, the main reason that Greece has attracted an influx of illegal immigrants, over the last 20 years.

Another factor contributing to the high rate of youth unemployment is that children under 15 years of age are hired to work although this consists an infringement of the law that prohibits minors to work.

Furthermore, youth unemployment has risen dramatically during the last decades, when Greek rural areas were deserted and its inhabitants swarmed to the urban centers and especially to metropolitan Athens. Almost two million people have exchanged agriculture and farming for small jobs in the city. Nobody is left behind to tend to the land and yield the crops that rot uncollected on the trees while over 50% of the youth is unemployed.

It is obvious that it is impossible to analyze in depth such a big problem in just a few pages. It is certain, though, that the consequences of the economic crisis in Greece call for radical reforms that will put an end on the job black market, tax evasion and smuggling. Then, we will be able to build a new society of mutual respect, justice and meritocracy, decentralization and solidarity, a society that will value the youth as its most productive force.

## Kurdish Question: An Equality and Identity Problem

**21**st of March, Newroz, a festival day for Kurds and all Middle-Eastern people, came with excitement and hope this year.

The AKP government made a long-sought deal with the related parties to give an end to the 30 year long conflict which took the lives of tens of thousands of people. The deal rested on three pillars: the armistice, the dislocation of armed guerillas from Turkish territories and constitutional changes to construct a new republic on fraternity and equality principles.

With the announcement of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of Kurdish movement, on the 21st of March, the armed wing of the Kurdish movement declared a unilateral armistice, later joined by the Turkish armed forces. On the 8th of May, the guerillas are expected to start leaving Turkish territories. Regarding the third and the most important pillar of the deal, the constitutional change, the outlook is not bright though. Among the political parties represented in the Turkish National Assembly, CHP (main opposition party) and nationalist MHP continue to block the drafting of

the new constitution.

We, as Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi, would like to remind the following facts:

1. The resolution method of the Kurdish problem is negotiation. It requires a dialogue and democratic steps. The democratic resolution of the Kurdish problem and accomplishing peace will mean peace for all people.
2. In this land, Kurdish people want to live side by side with all peoples, in a country with their identity, with their language, and free from oppression. Kurdish people ask for justice and equality for all people of Turkey.
3. Turkey is a country with different cultures, languages, religions and identities. The only right way of mutual existence of these differences is equality and freedom. Equality in the education, public services, constitution and in all spheres of life should be achieved.
4. Turkey needs a democratic, emancipatory, egalitarian, social and ecological constitution. It involves;

constitutional citizenship resting on a egalitarian spirit; constitutional guarantees for different religions, languages, identities and cultures; repeal of the law banning education in mother-tongue; the ending of central control over local governments and opening the way for decentralized and regional governance; the protection of division-of-power principle and redefining freedom of justice in the universally democratic standards.

5. Today, Kurdish Freedom Movement is keen on continuing its struggle in a democratic and peaceful way. Resisting this means provoking war. Therefore, the attitudes of nationalists cannot be accepted.

As before, today, we, as Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi, are committed to take part in the resolution process.

We ask for everyone who can contribute to the resolution of the problem to approach the road map with sincerity, to develop democratic political platforms and popularizing the idea of peace and to foster the feeling of trust and equality among our people.

A new start in ending the conflict which has taken the lives of tens of thousands of people. With this expectation, today millions of people take the streets, squares and cry their demands for democratic resolution, democratic republic and democratic emancipation.



## A call for Solidarity for Black Sea: Stop Channel Istanbul Project!

**T**he Turkish government insisted to construct a new water passage through western Istanbul. The new passage, named "Channel Istanbul," is planned to be built on the outskirts of the European side of the city and will connect the Black Sea to the Marmara Sea. The waterway will have a length of 45-50 km with a depth of 25 m. Its width will be 150 meter on the surface and 120 meter at the canal bed.

Source: <http://environment-ecology.com>

On the 22nd of January 2013, the Turkish Government announced that construction of the canal would commence in May 2013.

Although the project is located in Turkey, its effect will be felt across the Black Sea countries, simply because the project will alter the equilibrium between the inflow to (Danube and Dinyeper rivers) and outflow from the Black Sea (the natural Bosphorus Strait). In an attempt to silence the popular and scientific oppositions against the project, the government is trying to exclude these kinds of big projects from the Environmental Impact Analysis procedure by changing the already lax legislation. This is unacceptable.

AKP government is continuing to fuel its ambitious development goals at the expense of environment. Channel Istanbul is only a ring in the chain. The third bridge over the Bosphorus and the Third Airport at the expense of the last remaining forests and water basins of Istanbul; the alleged urban transformation at the expense of dislocated poors of Istanbul all reflect the New Deal type policies of the past, which was proven to be terribly wrong.



Therefore, we as Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi, strongly condemn the government's attempt to construct this channel and ask for your solidarity. The Channel Istanbul Project, if constructed, will kill Blacksea, and only our joint struggle will manage to stop it.

**PS:** Change.org Turkey office had already initiated a campaign against the project (<http://www.change.org/tr/kampanyalar/rt-erdogan-do%C4%9Faldengeleri-bozacak-cilginproje-kanal-istanbul-derhal-iptal-edilsin>).



# The Greens give the alarm about air pollution!

**T**irana- In two of the most polluted areas in Tirana "21 Dhjetori" and "Zogu I Zi", the Green Party candidates for the district of Tirana, protest against air pollution.

Through this protest, they seek to raise awareness citizens to high levels of pollution and the disastrous consequences. Contamination of the capital, has become the main enemy of life of citizens. It is now three to four times higher than the EU norm. Tirana is one of the most polluted cities in Europe.

One of the most serious consequences of this pollution is an increase in the number of people affected by cancer, deadly diseases and the shortening by one to two years of life for all residents of this city.

The three main causes of air pollution, according to the Green Party, are obsolete vehicles, car traffic and the burning of waste everywhere.

The Green Party has a program, which is the ultimate solution to the air pollution in the city of reaching EU standards on air quality.

Encouraging the use of new equipment, working with biofuels and improving public transport by using buses powered with electricity and solar energy, which reduce the level of air pollution and enhance the quality are some of our solutions.

- Stimulate the use of the bicycle as a healthy transportation alternative.
- Integrated waste management.
- Increasing the carbon tax and the use of filters from polluting industries.

All these measures are included in the program of the Green Party and if applied they will diminish the problem significantly and reduce pollution levels which would lead to improved air quality and improvement in the lives of the citizens.

In the June 23 elections, Green Party candidates are inviting

citizens to use their vote to bring change and vote for an environmentally friendly policy!

A vote for the Green Party is a vote to have more fresh air, less pollution. It is a vote against the destruction of the environment and in favor of the protection of natural resources. It is a vote for a Green Albania!



# EU must build on Serbia-Kosovo breakthrough

The deal between Serbia and Kosovo, brokered on 19 April by Catherine Ashton, is a sign of hope that the future of the western Balkans lies in the EU – but there is much more work to be done.

The agreement on 19 April 2013 between Belgrade and Pristina may justifiably be called a historic development. It paves the way for the further European Union integration of both Serbia and Kosovo. And this deal also demonstrates the EU's soft power – congratulations are due to High Representative Catherine Ashton and both prime ministers, Ivica Dacic from Serbia and Hashim Thaci from Kosovo, who have worked hard to achieve this breakthrough.

After this landmark deal to normalise Serbia-Kosovo ties the European Commission has recommended opening EU membership talks with Serbia and concluded that Kosovo fulfilled all short term conditions from the Feasibility Study in September last year. As consequence the Commission has proposed to the Council to authorize the start of negotiations for Stabilization & Association Agreement (SAA) with Kosovo. I strongly support that the decision about this will be made by the Council in June.

Serbia's leaders – despite, or maybe because of, coming from nationalist parties – have moved forwards during recent months, leaving behind their previous intransigent positions, by implementing the integrated border management agreement and thus accepting jointly-managed stations along the Serbia-Kosovo border, an important step towards recognition. They have also accepted that money from Belgrade goes to health and education structures in northern Kosovo via a fund in Pristina.

The EU's foreign affairs chief, Ashton, even succeeded in having the presidents of both countries, Serbia's Tomislav Nikolic and Kosovo's Atifete Jahjaga, meet for a

first-ever encounter in Brussels. But the most important and difficult issue in the EU mediated dialogue was Friday's solution for the dismantling of parallel structures of police and justice in the north of Kosovo. Now it is important that the agreement is implemented locally. Last week the European Parliament adopted my third report on the EU accession progress of Kosovo. In my reports I call for the restoration of the rule of law in the north, by intensifying the fight against organised crime and criminal structures operating out of control of any authority and using this area as a safe haven for smuggling and other illegal activities.

And more than five years on from Kosovo's declaration of independence, the report adopted calls on the five EU member states – Spain, Cyprus, Romania, Greece, Slovakia – that have not yet done so to recognise Kosovo. Victor Ponta, Romania's prime minister, has now said that Romania must move ahead jointly with other EU countries in recognising states. From Slovakia also positive signals are coming. This would be an important shift because the positive influence of the EU in Kosovo is undermined by the current lack of unity. This is weakening efforts and the effect of billions of euros being spent because, for example, Kosovo is not allowed to be a fully-fledged member of Europol and Interpol, which is harmful for the effort of the EU's biggest rule-of-law mission EULEX in its fight against corruption and organised crime.

Status neutrality has become a haunted term for all those who see that the EU as a whole is weakening itself by its lack of cohesion, materially and even more so politically. Many good intentions get lost in space, and therefore more and more Kosovars doubt whether the EU still is serious with its promise of the 'European perspective' – and whether their future really lies in the EU, or rather in a Greater Albania or in closer ties with countries like Turkey.

As rapporteur of the parliament on

Kosovo, I see my role also in advocating for the citizens of this youngest European country. After years of waiting and seeing neighbouring countries' citizens enjoy visa free travel, the EU in 2012 handed over the visa roadmap to the Kosovo authorities whose duty it is now to implement what is requested. The feasibility study has paved the way for the start of negotiations for a Stability and Association Agreement in 2013. My report now also calls for the swift implementation of this visa dialogue, with a view to realising visa-free travel for the citizens of Kosovo, as is the case for other citizens in the region.

The success of the dialogue is a good thing. But we should look further. For instance, a parallel screening process with Serbia and Kosovo could be started when Serbia gets a date for the start of accession negotiations. This could be done similarly to the twin-track approach already experienced with the SAA negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro, which started before the referendum in Montenegro about independence took place. Such a parallel screening process, proposed by experts like Verena Knaus from the European Stability Initiative, would give Kosovars again the feeling of belonging to Europe.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU in 2012 was a timely reminder of the principle of cooperation instead of confrontation that has ended a centuries-old history of bloodshed. And it is also a reminder that the European peace project will not be complete until south-eastern Europe is part of the EU. Therefore daring leaders are needed, as we have seen in recent days: in Serbia, in Kosovo, in the EU and especially in the five countries that do not yet recognise Kosovo. Today's agreement is a sign of hope, that there is such a political leadership and that the future of the western Balkans lies in the EU.

## Resistance against the privatization of water

**T**oday, the campaign against the privatization of water is one of the most dynamic social movements in Europe with grass roots at local level and organized lobbying at the European institutions. It has brought together private citizens and ngos reacting against the delivery of this essential commodity in the hands of private, for-profit companies and opened the debate about public goods in the hands of citizens.

Over the past year, at European level, the "Water is a human right campaign" [www.right2water.eu](http://www.right2water.eu) submitted a European Citizens' Initiative inviting the Commission to propose legislation for the right to water and sanitation and the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all. They urge that EU institutions and Member States be obliged to ensure that all inhabitants enjoy the right to water and sanitation, water supply and management of water resources are not subjected to 'internal market rules', water services are excluded from liberalisation, and the EU increases its efforts to achieve universal access to water and sanitation. Signature gathering started last September and it is heading steadily toward the two million mark.

Campaigns against the privatization of water have been launched at national level all over Europe. In view of the Greek government's plans to privatize the water utility companies in Athens and Thessaloniki, EYDAP and EYATH respectively, Green Institute, Greece organized an event to trace the movement at European level and present the on-going efforts taking place in the two largest cities in Greece. The Athens public water company EYDAP, although founded as a 100% state-owned company, has gradually fallen into private hands and together with EYATH, the public water company of Thessaloniki, they are up for sale.

The Greek initiative "Savegreekwater" [www.savegreekwater.org](http://www.savegreekwater.org) was launched less than a year ago in an effort to inform the public and to bring together those forces opposing the sale of the water utility companies to private corporations. It can be described as an action network aimed at informing and educating citizens about the impending commercialization of water and water privatization. Its main message is the call to all citizens to reclaim the water as a human and public good.

Citizen Initiative "Movement 136" [www.136.gr](http://www.136.gr) was created in the summer of 2011 by a number of collectivities and citizens in Thessaloniki. It aims to strengthen the opposition to the privatization of water, and all other public goods, and to move towards the acquisition of the water company EYATH by citizens through a democratic and cooperative process, using a social cooperatives union model, which is based on the idea of cooperation and the principles of direct democracy.

The Greek Green Party, "Oikologoi Prasinoi", strongly supports the movement against the privatization of water. In an effort to overcome the indifference and resignation of many citizens, the Greek Greens have been actively involved in the ongoing awareness campaign, setting up booths to collect signatures for the initiative and distributing relevant material in many neighbourhoods in the metropolitan area in Athens.

Oikologoi Prasinoi regard the access to clean water as a fundamental human right which should not be a source of profit. It should be regarded as an inherited good which should be provided to citizens at very reasonable prices. International experience shows that the privatization of water has resulted in disproportional price increases, abandonment of

infrastructure distribution and the deterioration of the safety and quality of water, threatening the health of the residents. In addition, due to inefficient investment in infrastructure distribution, there is usually reckless use which is unsustainable and contrary to the spirit of the European Water Framework Directive 2000/60. Therefore, the water supply must be kept out of privatization policies in order to ensure adequate and clean drinking water and sanitation for everyone at a reasonable cost.

The management of water resources should be based on the principle that water is a natural resource and a commodity which should be accessible to all citizens regardless of their financial situation and sufficient quantity and good quality water should be ensured for the needs of human societies and ecosystems. The Greek Greens are strongly against the privatization of any water supply company in the country, water supply system, drinking water sources, reservoirs or other artificial or natural bodies of water which are used for water supply. They rally with citizens and their collective organizations struggling for water companies to be taken off the list for privatization of public assets for reasons of sustainable water management primarily but also for social justice, good and effective governance. They support citizen initiatives for water policies that respect the needs of human societies and ecosystems arguing that the sustainable management of water resources is ensured through management plans for the water basins arising as a result of a systematic consultation within the regional Water Councils. Climate change, the increasing needs of citizens and the growing agricultural production and the tourism sector, make the water supply extremely valuable for our survival and privatization the proposed of natural resources is totally unjustified.



## Accession may be the carrot, but never the bait



**B**russels' does not exist. Okay, perhaps it does in a form. As a rather nice capital of a rather small country in Europe, where quite a lot of people from other EU countries live and work. But 'Brussels' as it often appears in the discourse and the media does not.

In my own country, the Netherlands, the image of 'Brussels' as a de-personified entity is often evoked by lazy journalists and sceptic politicians. Lazy journalists who think their readers won't be able to handle mention of a separate Parliament, Commission and Council. Politicians who think their voters won't be able to handle the truth that a small country like the Netherlands on its own is not equipped anymore to control the internationalising economy. In their discourse, 'Brussels' is an evil entity that wants to gather as much power as it can, to use it to swindle the poor unsuspecting Dutch out of their money and jobs and to undermine the pride we have in our once powerful little country. Once being a century or four in the past. In accession countries on the Western Balkans, the image of 'Brussels' is somewhat similar. It is an evil entity that has hatched a megalomaniac master plan to snatch any recently gained sovereignty away from Balkan countries, to impose its neoliberal rule and to force its progressive

values on the unsuspecting population.

As a European politician working in Brussels, I am always baffled by the amount of power and long-term vision that people seem to think the EU has. I am almost sorry to say that EU politicians have too little power, too little cooperation and too little agreement amongst themselves to even be able to hatch a master plan stretching across decades, let alone implement it. The image of 'Brussels' as a unified entity with a master plan is a myth.

'Brussels' consists of three different institutions, populated by actual people, chosen or appointed, that change with each election. First and foremost for accession countries, there's the European Commission. The Commission has civil servants on the ground in each of these countries. It tells accession countries what the benchmarks are and what needs to be done to comply with them, it gathers information about compliance and implementation, and it reports to those in the EU who take decisions about next steps in the accession process. The Commission doesn't formally take the decisions on whether a country may take the next step in the accession process, but it wields power as the source of information that these decisions are based on. Their advice is of vital importance. I've always said that if people and politicians in accession countries choose to listen to anyone, they should choose to listen to the European Commission. Not because they are without fault, they certainly are not. But because they are the least political of the EU institutions, the least influenced by opinion polls and populism.

Then there is the European Parliament, of which I am a Member. We talk a lot about the enlargement process and all accession countries, we do a report

on each country each year, we visit as often as we can, we talk to every journalist willing to put a microphone under our noses, we send stern letters to governments of accession countries, we maintain a network with civil society. And we have almost no decision-making power at all. We in the Parliament can decide that negotiations should be opened with Macedonia until we're blue in the face, but the EU treaties give us no power to do anything about it. The only things we do get to co-decide on are visa liberalisation and the final decision on accession when a country has finished its accession process, like Croatia recently. Listening to the Parliament is usually quite nice for accession countries. The majority is pro-European and pro-enlargement. In our debates, politicians try to emphasise some of the criteria according to their political affiliation, like I tend to do with LGBT rights and women's rights and more right-wing colleagues do with organised crime and corruption. But on the whole, we as a Parliament will applaud any step forward, however tiny.

The European Parliament can shame and blame, can shape the debate, but it cannot take the decisions. That power lies with the Council. And unfortunately, the Council is the most political and least European of the European institutions. Far from having a concerted master plan, the Council has no concerted or long-term plan at all. The people populating the Council dealing with enlargement are the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU countries. They spend most of their days debating with their national parliaments, talking to their national press and checking the national polls. Only once a month at most they come to Brussels to debate foreign policy with their counterparts in other EU countries. While Commission and Parliament stay roughly the same

for five years, a new face pops up in the ever changing group of ministers each time there are national elections somewhere. At the moment, these are mostly right-wing Christian-democrat or right-wing liberal ministers. They cater to what they think their national electorate wants to hear. Tough against corruption, hesitant about visa liberalisation, keep Turkey out. They have to decide unanimously, so each of them has veto power. Greece can block Macedonia, Cyprus can block Turkey, Slovenia can block Croatia. And five countries can block recognition of Kosovo, for reasons that have nothing at all to do with Kosovo. People and politicians in accession countries listening to Council need to always keep in mind that they are not the real audience of the remarks by ministers. The real audience are the voters back home. A clear example is visa liberalisation. The Dutch government was the one demanding an 'emergency brake' in case there would be too many misguided asylum seekers, and is now one of the most vocal countries in the debate on possible suspension of visafree travel for Serbia and Macedonia. Very strange, considering that the Netherlands has had all of eleven asylum requests from Balkan citizens last year. But not so strange when considering that the right-wing government thinks this will gain votes with their sceptic electorate.

I believe that conditionality, consistency and credibility are the keys to a successful accession process. The process should be as technical as possible: these are the conditions for the next step, it is up to the accession country to fulfil them, and once they are fulfilled, the next step is taken. The ball should always be kept in the court of the accession country's authorities, leaving only them responsible for reform and progress. A BiH politician lately said with great disdain that 'the

European Commission is populated by bureaucrats'. I personally thought that was a great compliment. The Commission should be populated by bureaucrats that say 'these are the conditions, fulfil them and you may count on the next step', without being influenced by undue political considerations.

The Commission tries to work that way, but is undermined from three sides. The first is Council. Council undermines conditionality by taking political decisions, not criteria-based ones. Macedonia can fulfill conditions for the opening of negotiations all it likes, but the name issue that has hardly anything to do with the accession process is dragged into it and blocks its progress. Serbia on the other hand can leave a few criteria unfulfilled in the visa liberalisation process, but got it anyway in the first tranche to support pro-EU forces in the country.

The second undermining force are the governments of accession countries. They tend to be less than open about what exactly the conditions for a next step are and what is expected of them. Croatia kept the benchmarks confidential until the negotiation process was fully over, even though there was no reason to do so. No negotiation position would have been endangered by being open, since the benchmarks once decided are non-negotiable. For NGOs and media, let alone citizens, it is very difficult to find out what their government should do to reform and align their legislation to EU laws. Therefore many conditions, benchmarks and criteria seem to suddenly pop up and are seen as new and unfair, undermining the trust that citizens could have in the accession process. I am often confronted with that feeling in Balkan countries. In Serbia for instance, many people thought their country could immediately accede once Mladic was caught. Both the government and the

European Commission had done far too little to properly explain all the steps and conditions before accession. It is no wonder that people feel let down and betrayed by both when their expectations are managed so badly.

The third undermining force is the European Commission itself. In my view, the Commission mixes enlargement and diplomacy far too much. It tries to solve diplomatic issues by making them part of the accession process or by having the same people manage the accession process and conduct diplomatic relations. While on the surface it might seem a good idea to use enlargement for a diplomatic breakthrough, in the longer run it undermines the credibility of the process.

Diplomacy and the accession process are different in nature. Diplomacy is about give and take, compromise, equal sides trying to settle differences by negotiation. The accession process is about criteria that need to be met, no negotiation possible, about the EU being clear on what needs to be done, no compromise possible. By mixing the two, both become political and country-specific. Politicians in accession countries get the idea that accession criteria are soft and open for compromise. Citizens get the idea that decisions are taken ad-hoc and arbitrarily. The Council of Ministers is reinforced in its idea that it's okay to take political decisions instead of criteria-based ones.

This does not mean that diplomatic problems shouldn't be solved. The Macedonian name issue needs solving, the Bosnian constitution needs overhauling, the Albanian parliament needs reforming, the status of Kosovo needs settling. But issues that are not directly part of the accession criteria need a different arena to solve them. In the European Parliament, the Greens have therefore introduced the idea of an EU arbitration mechanism,

where bilateral issues can be solved outside of other processes, for instance the name issue, but also issues like Neum and Ploce if they are not solved before the accession of Croatia. These issues should not be allowed to poison the accession process and hinder much needed reform. Furthermore, the European Commission has not only Commissioner Füle for enlargement, but also High Representative Ashton for foreign affairs. He should manage the criteria-based accession process, she should be involved in diplomatic negotiations. With Kosovo, this does happen now. The dialogue with Serbia is led by Ashton, not Füle. But chances are that Serbia will be rewarded for cooperation in the dialogue by Füle with a next step in accession, disregarding the other criteria that are yet to be met by Serbia.

There is of course in many cases a link between diplomatic or political issues and accession criteria. Good neighbourly relations are a Copenhagen criterion, and so the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo is needed to fulfil that criterion. Effective administration and functioning democratic institutions are a Copenhagen criterion, and so constitutional reform in BiH is needed to fulfil that criterion. But while solving a political problem may be a prerequisite for fulfilling the criteria to take the next step, it should not replace those criteria. It too often does now. Serbia proposed an aggressive resolution on Kosovo in the UN, in itself unrelated to accession, and was rewarded with a next step in accession for taking it off the table. BiH politicians manage to form a government and vote a budget, in itself unrelated to accession, and moves are made to close OHR without all conditions met. This confusing of diplomacy and enlargement is making the accession process too country-specific and arbitrary, leaving too much space for emotion and manipulation, ultimately

undermining the credibility of the process. I believe that the next accession step may always be a carrot, but never the bait. Bait is not actual nourishment, it is a means to a different end. Using a next step as bait means starting your reasoning from the country. A reasoning along the lines of 'What needs to be done in BiH to turn it into a copy of an EU member state as much as possible, and which next step in accession can we use to make sure that is done?'. A carrot is actual healthy food, it is an end in itself. Using a next step as a carrot means starting your reasoning from the EU Treaty, legislation and values. A reasoning along the lines of 'How can we assist BiH in its wish to become an EU member state, that is ready to handle all the obligations and rights that go along with membership?'.  
After all that, let me conclude by

saying that I am a staunch supporter of the enlargement process, flaws and all. Even though it doesn't always seem that way, the pace of progress and reform in all Balkan countries is a miracle, especially for vulnerable groups. There is a very long way still to go, but I'm in awe when I meet women's rights groups, LGBT activists, Roma people, environmental action groups and other civil organisations and see how their position has improved within a decade or less. They have taken what the accession process has to offer with both hands and are taking leaps forward. I want to concentrate on ways to make the enlargement process as useful as possible for those who want progress, who want to become EU citizens because of the finest thing that the EU has to offer in my view; its fundamental rights.



## LGBTQ discrimination in Serbia

One of the biggest problems in Serbia, on the field of human rights, is LGBTQ discrimination. Even though Pride was organized in 2010, in the previous two years both attempts to organize the Pride were banned. The Serbian Green Youth has been working a lot on the field of human rights, especially on the topic of LGBTQ discrimination. Last year, in October, an LGBTQ seminar, which was organized by FYEG, was held in Belgrade, during the Pride week. During the seminar, Serbian Green Youth had the opportunity to start the cooperation with Pride organizers and to get involved in the activities during the Pride week. For the last year IDAHO, Serbian Green Youth has organized panel debate on the topic of discrimination of LGBTQ population that can be found in the literature for high schools. As one of the biggest problems that was pointed out during the debate is discrimination that can be found in the media, the lack of visibility of LGBTQ people and how they are presented and perceived, so Serbian Green Youth will organize another panel debate with this topic during this year. Starting a cooperation with NGOs, which deal primarily with this topic is also one of SGYs aims, so this years' IDAHO will be organized in cooperation with other NGOs which deal with this topic. Working with young people is one of the Serbian Green Youth's priorities, which is the reason we have started giving lectures and workshops in one of the high schools in Belgrade. Through this lectures, we have the opportunity to inform students about green ideology and to work on building a tolerant youth.

12 As another important topic on the field of human rights, on which

Serbian Green Youth has been working, are women's rights. For the International day of women's rights, Serbian Green Youth has organized the street action, which aim was to raise the public awareness of the fact that women are usually seen and perceived as inferior to men. The street action that we organized took place in the centre of Belgrade and the slogan was "I don't want a flower, I want my rights", which should have pointed out that International

women's day is being misunderstood and that the attention has been drawn from its essential significance. Serbian Green Youth has also made a short movie on this topic that can be found here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5GdkZWMUj8>.

During this year, we're going to organize series of lectures targeting young women and aiming at their empowerment.



Notes:

LGBTQ refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. "Q" is for "queer" or "questioning".

FYEG: Federation of Young European Greens.

IDAHO: May 17 International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia.

## Croatia: From Commodified to the Common and prospective for the Greens

During last few years, if not a decade, Western Balkan countries have silently become exposed to land grabbing attempts, cases of privatisation of public sphere, conversion of agricultural into construction land and top-down large infrastructural projects that heavily rely on open or hidden privatisation of resources. In case of Croatia, from Istria to Dubrovnik, across case of Varšavska in Zagreb, defense of spatial resource became resistance frontier for a number of grassroot movements that aimed to reclaim right for public and for the commons exercising forms of innovative, non-violent but consistent struggle against corrupted local elites that usually demonstrated servility toward investor's agenda, sometimes even using repressive forms.

Through this struggle, and on that battleground, a birthplace of the new wave of social movements has been formulated as hybrid model of alliance between NGOs and new grassroot groups supported by intellectuals, artists and citizens. Broadly speaking, since the state was established they become a first demand driven step toward exercising deliberative democracy. Though these attempts are and were only partially successful in the terms of bringing tangible and immediate results they are even more important due to fact that they mobilise and educate new generations and they cultivate an exercise of resilience in some of the communities. Resilience that seeks alternative to current economic model, that searches for economic recovery through more sustainability and more social justice. While four years of campaign in Varšavska street

(where private investor usurped public space to build a new shopping mall) has become regionally recognised symbol of urban struggle against unsustainable schemes of urban development, most recent example of Dubrovnik referendum deserves special attention. For Croatia it is important that it is first bottom-up driven referendum that took place in spite of fully non-supportive legal framework. Although it failed due to inconsistency of the lawmakers and strong economic pressure for new investments it derived a number of 10.000 votes against the project (golf villa project at huge land area above the city) and channelled them in direction of formulating a new political group that will use parliamentary means to proceed with the struggle. While this pathway contains numerous risks it actually is the first alive example struggling for sustainable future of local community resulted with political formation that enters into political sphere. In a similar way, a new, so-called 'purple' political formation "Za Grad" in the City of Zagreb that requested green mobility to be implemented at local level is at the same moment fighting to gain votes in Zagreb, recognising that political arm and not only civic action need to be mobilised.

Coming back to the problem of commodification; it is clear that lack of innovation by existing political and business elites to cope with crisis in effective and efficient way has actually traced a path for the next way of privatisation primarily directed toward public resources as water supply systems, railways and electricity production. While people have invested part of their salaries during last decades into

maintenance of these services in public hands, now lack of political imagination and lack of courage of establishment is threatening with privatisation of the public goods.

All these groups on the ground like "Green Action", "Pravo na Grad" and "Srđ je naš" generated a valuable experience entering into political sphere as civic actors, using different tactics in field of unfriendly and uncomparably stronger social power of economic constitutionalism. And surprisingly, although with disproportionately smaller influence, resources and impact they were successful in reversing public opinion to consider sustainable options as realistic and achievable. Although at the moment they are still not on the side of winners, with this shift, they certainly are becoming a gravity point of resistance against unsustainable, costly and unfair models of governance across Croatia.

Gaining more support from citizens through their protests, they present a demand for social constitutionalism opposed to strong neoliberal agenda that aims to constitute societies in the order highly dependable on financialisation of nature. Although some can think it's odd to re-question role of State in young societies as Croatia is and to advocate de-growth when country seeks growth, their protests gain more on legitimacy as voters recognize that trajectory of current economic model coupled with crisis of democratic legitimacy is in a spiral fall and that currently the only available narrative is one on the Commons.



▶ Throughout last years HBF in Croatia has been actively involved through its partners (Multimedia Institute, Pravo na grad, Zagreb Subversive Forum, Green Action, Institute for Economic Democracy, Srd je naš) and through its own activities like Green Academy into fostering exchange and debate on the Commons as a new symbolic terrain, but also a true battleground. Although with clear limitations and as work in progress, Commons function as mobilising credo for social struggles that at one hand oppose to commodification and search for social equity and on the other hand they galvanise experience of self-governance and democratic forms that are more and more in danger.

On that track, last year HBF has organised a Green Academy on the Commons together with Green European Foundation and OSF Croatia, discussing its potential as the new interpretative framework and practical tool. Few months later, with number of local partners such as Pravo na Grad and Multimedia Institute an international conference "Economy of Crisis Capitalism and Ecology of the Commons" was organized where we focused our attention on avenues of possible political action and new political categories that would allow labor organizations, social movements and political actors to stop the paralysis imposed by the current dominant interpretation of the crisis as the crisis of public profligacy and unsustainability of the welfare state. In May 2013 at Zagreb Subversive Forum, HBF will continue with this group exercise and discuss impacts of privatizations of natural resources and build another milestone in the joint endeavour to create a transnational space to confront privatizations that come as a component of austerity programs.

## Seeds of Change - Sustainable Agriculture for the Western Balkans

*Prepared by Vedran Horvat,  
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**A**griculture has been a backbone of the Western Balkans for centuries and has always played an important role in their societies. Over a million people from the region are involved in agriculture. By maintaining soil fertility, landscape and biodiversity through the ages, farmers have been the true guardians of important national treasures – soil and biodiversity. They have been the invisible hand managing landscapes, agricultural habitats and enabling farm-linked biodiversity to provide a range of ecosystem services. Pollination; pest, disease, flood and fire regulation; preservation of genetic resources; and the provision of food, fibre, natural medicine, pharmaceuticals and appealing landscapes are only a few of these services. However, the current agricultural market does not value these ecosystem services.

the Heinrich Böll Foundation regional study authored by agricultural expert Darko Znaor state that re-orientation to organic farming is a promising solution for the Western Balkans region – both from the food productivity, environmental and economic point of view. Conversion to organic farming provides more jobs, grows more food, creates less environmental costs than the current production methods. The results also suggest that by opting for BAU (Business as Usual) scenario, Western Balkan policy makers would make a big strategic mistake: they would have more unemployed people, less food, less money and worse state of environment.

The study has been undertaken during last two years with an attempt to try to assess the environmental and economic consequences of a shift to "sustainable" agriculture in the four Western Balkan countries: Bosnia

and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. It aims to help policy makers and other stakeholders in the Western Balkan countries understand the potential positive impacts which could occur by investing in and designing sustainable policies for the agriculture sector.

The study is focused on the examination of what a major shift to sustainable agriculture would mean for positive and negative externalities – as well as the agricultural sector as a whole in the Western Balkans. As farming is linked to many other economic activities, the widespread adoption of sustainable farming methods could have broader impacts. The consequences might include effects on employment and the overall economic performance of some sectors (e.g. the fertiliser and pesticide industry and their distribution chains). In developed countries, the widespread adoption of sustainable farming is most likely

to result in lower yields, threatening agricultural profitability and most likely contributing less to GDP. To date, hardly any research has been carried out to assess the cross-sector effects of sustainable farming on the entire economic system. Policy makers lack studies providing a detailed insight into the corresponding economic, environmental and social impacts of both the present level of sustainable farming methods and scenarios involving its expansion on a larger scale. An increasing body of evidence suggests that the environmental performance of sustainable types of farming is superior to other methods. From the environmental point of view, the further spread of sustainable farming seems to be desirable. However there is some concern about the impact of this spread on society as a whole and the exact costs and benefits of this scenario and its associated trade-offs remain unknown.

In this study, organic farming is chosen as a "case" for assessing feasibility of sustainable farming in the Western Balkans. By opting for organic farming, it was not intent to prejudge that this is the most, or the only sustainable farming method. Organic farming was chosen as a preferred sustainable farming method because of a range of merits and practical reasons. It is regulated by law and it is part of the official agricultural policy in all Western Balkan countries. Besides, it is a fast growing sector and its socio-economic and environmental performance is well documented in the scientific literature.

In spite of various obstacles, the experiences and evidence from the Western Balkans suggest that a positive organic farming trend in the region already exists. The current agricultural area under organic management in the Western Balkan countries appears to be marginal: from 0.05% in BiH to 1.8% in Croatia. But what is more interesting and relevant is the trend of development. The area under certified organic farming in the region has increased ten-fold in the period 2005–2010, with an average annual rate of 57%. This is largely due to a booming organic farming sector in Croatia. But organic

farming is growing in other three countries, too. Organic farming is becoming more and more successful and wide-spread in the region. Organic farming subsidies or other support mechanisms are in place in all Western Balkan countries and consumers' demand for organic food is on rise.

Study compares three scenarios. First is Business as Usual scenario that assumes rather static development and no substantial changes in agricultural practices and policy by 2050 as compared to the baseline. Second is an "eco" scenario assuming well-developed social and human capital and a complete conversion to organic farming by 2050. Third scenario is ECO+ scenario based on the synergy that can be created with the energy sector. This scenario relies on the same assumptions as the ECO scenario, but includes more land under irrigation and greenhouse production and slightly higher yields because of the use of large quantities of wood ashes as a fertiliser, by-product of the sustainable energy sector.

Besides, farming, the assessment took into account also environmental and economic performance of fertiliser manufacturing. This is a most energy-intensive and polluting farm-upstream sector. In the Western Balkans it is an important employer and economic generator, whose existence would be threatened by a large-scale conversion to organic farming.

The results are quite favourable for the two organic scenarios. The BAU scenario involves the continued degradation of the agricultural sector, leading to 10% less jobs; reduced soil fertility and 10% lower food productivity than the baseline. It creates 41% higher RVA than the baseline, but still results in a negative value: -449 million Euros per year. The ECO scenario exhibits a 10% higher employment and produces 8% more food than the baseline. Its RVA is 1.7 times higher than in the baseline and results in 551 million Euros per year. The ECO+ scenario achieves a 13% higher employment and a 34% increase in production than the baseline. It creates 3.5 times higher

RVA than the baseline, resulting in 2 billion Euros per year.

The environmental damage of all scenarios is lower than of the baseline: by BAU 15% and the two ECO scenarios 17% lower. Damage to air accounts approximately 70% of the environmental costs in all scenarios. An additional nearly 20% is contributed by damage to climate, while damage to water and soil appear insignificant.

This study represents a pioneering effort in assessing the feasibility of different development scenarios of the agriculture sector in the Western Balkans. The current farming method in the region (baseline) results in low food productivity; creates substantial environmental costs and does not provide a positive RVA. It ought to be changed.

And last but not least, conversion to large-scale organic farming requires high human and social capital. Organic farming is low-input in terms of the use of agrochemicals, but is high-input in terms of knowledge and skills needed. However, a shift to large-scale organic farming is not just a question of skilled and committed farmers. It requires high human and social capital among many stakeholders: policy makers, scientists, farm extension officers, businessmen, farmers, consumers, etc. In the case of the Western Balkans where farmers (and some other stakeholders) have a relatively low level of general education and poor agricultural training, limited human and social capital will certainly be the main obstacle preventing a greater spread of organic farming. Policy efforts should therefore focus primarily on stimulating the formation of social capital and increasing the human capacities of all stakeholders involved in the organic food chain: production, processing, distribution/trade and consumption. Besides informative policy instruments, a mix of appropriate regulatory and economic policy instruments should be put in place to facilitate further development and a wide-spread adoption of organic farming in the Western Balkans.

# GEF's Campaign Handbook: What do you Think?



**C**reating change in the political arena is not just about having the right policies or ideas, important as those are—it rests equally on effective campaigning to make sure that your voice can be heard. To this end the Green European Foundation, with the support and collaboration of Green activists from all over Europe, has developed an online guide to successful political campaigning—the Campaign Handbook ([www.campaignhandbook.gef.eu](http://www.campaignhandbook.gef.eu)).

The handbook, available in both English and Spanish, is split into two parts. The first provides a comprehensive theoretical guide to campaigning strategies and techniques, covering how to prepare for a campaign, running the campaign itself, and how to follow-up a campaign effectively. This theory is then complemented in the second part which describes examples of best practice from actual political campaigns at all political levels—local, regional, national and European. These case studies provide concrete tales of

campaigns which show how campaigning strategies, tips and advice can be used to inform and steer your future work as campaigners and volunteers.

Learn, for example, how EQUO -a Green party in Spain- effectively used comedy and creativity, showing animated films and launching a public 'Idea Lab', to pull off an effective campaign against the privatisation of the health care system in the Community of Madrid. EQUO managed to get their views heard on state television and multiple radio shows and newspapers, whilst also forging useful links with other civil society organisations. Or perhaps how, during the last German election campaign, 200 volunteers from the German Greens spent three days working in shifts to answer as many questions from voters as possible—around the clock, day and night! The whole 72-hour session was broadcast live and was complemented by sofa talks and Skype interviews with prominent Green guests. You will also be able to discover how

Greens in Ireland and the Netherlands adapted this great idea to realities of smaller countries.

The Handbook, however, is still a work in progress! We are always looking for articles and contributions from green activists to broaden the range of material and to make it as useful as possible. We would be grateful to any readers who would be willing to contribute. You can either write your own contribution and send it in to us via the Campaign Handbook website, or get in touch with us via phone or email and we can interview you to get your story. Any strategies, tips or ideas about how to run a successful campaign (either from a Green party, or any other type of green activism) would be welcome. You can also send us your feedback and ideas for the Handbook, letting us know whether you find it useful and how it could be made more useful.

So read the Handbook, contribute your ideas, and get campaigning!

