

Think Tank Korčula School

“Transforming Politics – Inter-generational Dialogue on Gender Equality and Solidarity”

Cavtat, Hotel Croatia, 26 - 27 August 2017

E-mail:
ceegendernet@gmail.com

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CeeGenderNetwork>

Twitter:
[@CEEGENERNET](https://twitter.com/CEEGENERNET)

Blog:
<https://ceegendernetnetwork.wordpress.com>



2017 “Korčula School” Think Tank, in its sixth annual session, was held in Cavtat (Croatia) on Saturday, 26 and Sunday, 27 August 2017.

Over forty participants from South Eastern and Western Europe from the academia, political parties and NGOs discussed the political and ideological challenges in fostering inter-generational dialogue and the inclusion of, especially young, women in political life.



The School was organized by the CEE Network for Gender Issues and the Center for New Initiatives (Zagreb) in partnership with the Party of European Socialist Women, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Olof Palme International Center. International Union of Socialist Youth and YES also contributed to the meeting.

2017 Korčula School has opened up, through the prism of inter-generational and gender

dialogue, some key issues and challenges, but also opportunities for left, progressive and social democratic parties to pursue.

The “School” has proven the potential to be a venue for such substantive dialogue between and among women and men, young and old, politicians on the progressive left.

It has demonstrated that this, continuous, dialogue is lacking at the regional level and should be picked up especially in view of:

- i. common challenges, rise of authoritarianism and “illiberal” democracies, but also of new trends like the success of the social-democrats in Macedonia which can open up new possibilities;
- ii. the potential for strengthening regional cooperation between and among left and progressive parties in the region to promote regional peace, stability and cooperation and also engage with civil society initiatives across the region.

Serious consideration should be given to the development of a broader activist network that would take the issues forward, as well as meetings on the Korčula topics in different countries and progressive parties in the region. Steps are being taken in this direction.

KEY MESSAGES

- The young generation is feeling that they are a “lost” generation. They are looking for progressives and social democrats to provide responses and address their concrete, specific and often individualistic interest.
- Young women seem to show more interest in public life and politics but still do not see their space in male dominated politics.
- Good connectivity and communication with the young favors left and progressive options but they do not see the space for their political engagement on the left.
- Reaching out to the younger generation through a three-pronged approach: i. identifying issues of common interest; openness for broader participation in party decision making and dialogue with the CSOs which also implies trust building; iii. communication beyond PR and clear messaging.
- Civic movements, especially those resting on specific issues rise and ebb and political parties need to pick up their concerns and channel these into political discourse and decision-making.
- Political parties also need to change/transform warranting a broader discussion on political identity and ideological direction as parties prepare new party platforms and election strategies.
- Women’s and youth forums do not have corresponding influence in the parties, but are generally subject to follow decisions of party leaderships.
- History shows that social movements led by political parties on the left have shaped the last hundred plus years, so what needs to be done for us to assume leadership again?
- New trends show that important change is possible in the region of South Eastern Europe, e.g. Macedonia example, through a different approach resting on openness, clarity of message, solidarity and participation.
- Progressive and SD parties need to step up their international (regional and European especially) to counter the tacit support authoritarian regimes are receiving from European institutions. in the name of regional stability the West, especially the EU as the biggest player, is supporting authoritarian regimes and turning a blind eye to this democracy deficiency arguing for “stability”. The EU seems coerced to force ‘stabilitocracy’ in Balkans. But is it really stability or a transitory phase until a social eruption?

