

International activity

Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe has expanded

The Political Bureau meeting of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe took place in Kyiv on April 12. This day, Kyiv hosted leaders of Christian democratic parties and civic movements of Moldova (PPCD), Georgia (CDM), and Belarus (BCD), Latvia (KDS), Estonia (ECD), and Ukraine (CDU), as well as Russia.

"We are glad to see our colleagues from Latvia in our organization, and we are looking forward to further expansion of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe. The larger our organization is, the more efficient our work on spreading Christian Democratic values in Eastern Europe will be," Alex Shein, head of AHDSYE, said.

"It's a good sign that we have gathered today in Kiev, as the situation in Europe and in the whole world worsened," MP Volodymyr Stretovych, member of the CDU Board, said. "It is needed that Christian democrats maintained the unity of thought and unity of action in bringing the values written on our flags and in the our parties' papers to life".

During the Political Bureau meeting, new members were admitted (KDS of Latvia). Also, the participants discussed and approved priorities of the ACDEE's activities for 2011 — protection of children's rights and family values.

The members of the ACDEE have agreed to carry out a joint event

dedicated to the International Children's Day on June 1, 2011 simultaneously in all member-countries represented in the ACDEE considering the needs and actual problems in every country represented in the Association.

The Association conducts a very close and fruitful cooperation with the European Christian Political Movement, which has made an important contribution to setting the Association's goals and supporting its endeavours. The participants of the meeting stressed that the ECPM remained the main partner of the ACDEE, and they expressed hopes for future joint projects and campaigns. The idea was supported by Mr. Peeter Vosu, the President of the ECPM.

The meeting resulted in taking the decision on further enlargement of the Association by conducting negotiations with Christian-democratic parties from Eastern and Central Europe. ■



International activity

CDU and CDUY representatives have made study tour to Kingdom of Netherlands



On May 23—29, representatives of the CDU Ukraine and the CDU Youth Organization made a study tour to the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the framework of the CDU's cooperation with ECPM and Christen Unie.

The study tour was aimed at learning more about the political system of the Kingdom of the Netherlands from inside, about the country itself, as well as about its culture and traditions. In the framework of the event, the CDU/CDUY representatives visited the Haag, the administrative capital of the Netherlands, where the Parliament and all ministries are situated. Ukrainians had several meetings in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament. They discussed the current political situation, tendencies and mechanisms used by the Assistants to MPs of Christen Unie and SGP to approved the Dutch laws. The CDU/CDUY representatives also carried out a meeting with Esme Wiegman, the MP from Christen Unie, where most attention was given to the possibilities and ways of improving the situation concerning disabled children and children with special needs in Ukraine. The participants had an excursion through the building of the Second Chamber of the Parliament and afterwards went to the Senate — the First Chamber of Parliament; there, they had a chance to experience a live work of the Dutch Senate.

The theoretical part of the study tour was very successful due to the contributions of such speakers as

Guido van Beusekom, Rob Nijhoff, Johannes de Jong, Meno van Hlust and others. Ukrainian delegation discussed ideological background and values, as well as their practical implementation in the party work and politics.

The tour's practical part included visit to the city of Enschede. On the

proposal of Jacque Bazen and with the support of the youth organization of the Christen Unie PerspectiveF and Jonathan van Tongeren, the CDU/CDUY carried out a presentation of Ukraine and debates at the secondary school of the city.

One of the study tour's most exciting moments was the meeting with the MEP Mr. Bastiaan Belder, Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group, during which very important issues of EU-integration of Ukraine, lobbyist groups and visa liberalization process were discussed.

Besides the studies, the participants had a chance to visit such cities as Utrecht, Amersfoort, Apeldoorn and Amsterdam. The study tour took place under support of ECPM. ■

International activity

Leo van Doesburg has visited Ukraine

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Officer for Relations and Networking, Regional Representative in Eastern Europe, visited Ukraine on May 30 —April 2, 2011. During his visit, he has conducted several meetings with CDU MPs David Zhvaniya, Volodymyr Stretovych, Oksana Bilozir, and Volodymyr Marushchenko; the parties exchanged their visions on the development of cooperation between ECPM and the CDU, discussed the project of Ukrainian prayer breakfast to be held in Autumn 2011, and agreed on importance of the parliamentary hearings dedicated to family values in Ukraine, as well as carried out consultations on development of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe and its strategy.

On June 1, Leo van Doesburg held a lecture "Europe between Integration and Identity" for activists of the CDU Youth Organization.

During the lecture, such key issues of modern Europe have been discussed with the young Ukrainian Christian democrats: supranationality or intergovernance, economic cooperation or social-cultural, humanitarian sphere. ECPM is not a Euro-optimist or a Euro-pessimist; ECPM is a Euro-realist.

As for current EU problems, Leo van Doesburg noted that provision of equal rights for LGBT people is given preference over the freedom of speech and thought. He gave an example of a person on trial for mentioning stating that homosexuality was a sin on his blog, and a Swedish pastor sentenced for prison for his sermon.



Leo van Doesburg, ECPM

Nuclear energy

Zhvaniya: Renouncing nuclear energy is betrayal of national interests



David Zhvaniya

The international community is to help Ukraine to withdraw the nuclear fuel which remained under the ruins of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. MP David Zhvaniya, Ex-Minister of Emergency Affairs, stated that dur-

ing the TV-marathon commemorated to the 25th Anniversary of the Chernobyl accident on April 26, 2011.

“The decision on construction of the confinement Ukryttiya had been taken by specialists of the EBRD with minimum consideration of Ukrainian specialists and scientists. It is an issue of debates now, if the new confinement would allow withdrawing the nuclear fuel. However, it is clear that Ukraine is to do that with the financial and expert help of the international

community”, the Secretary of the CDU stressed.

In addition, the MP expressed the point of view that it is not reasonable to unite Ukrainian nuclear energy with the Russian one. Ukraine has an absolutely independent system of nuclear power plants. That energy is maximum diversified, unlike gas and oil products supply. Thus, the question of merging Ukrainian nuclear energy with the Russian one is not even on the agenda.

David Zhvaniya emphasizes that renouncing nuclear energy is the betrayal of national interests of Ukraine today for domestic nuclear power plants produce almost a half of all the electric energy in the country. ■



Children's rights

CDU has discussed problems of children with special needs

A panel discussion on providing rights of children with special needs dedicated to the International Children's Day and initiated by the CDU took place on May 30. Public organizations representing disabled children and their parents, MPS – members of the CDU Board, and Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Officer for Relations and Networking, Regional Representative in Eastern Europe, discussed the problems existing in the sphere.

“Around one million physically and mentally challenged children are living in Ukraine today. However, their problems are the problems of their parents rather than the state. If we

set such a task, we will be able to solve one problem a year,” MP Volodymyr Stretovych, member of the CDU Board, stated during the sitting.

The panel discussion resulted in taking a decision on establishing a working group for providing rights of children with special needs. At the same time, MP Volodymyr Marushchenko, member of the CDU Board, promised that the group's work will become the basis for laws and the all-state program “National Plan of Actions for Implementation of the Convention on Rights of Physically and Mentally Challenged People and Development of the Rehabilitation System”.

The panel discussion resulted also in a resolution sent to the President and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

According to the decision of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe Political Bureau Meeting, similar events on protection of children's rights are taking place in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Georgia, Belarus, and Armenia. ■



Europe Day

CDU has celebrated Day of Europe



"Be Ukrainian — become European!" That was the slogan of the Day of Europe celebrated by holding the Europe-Center music festival which took place under the aegis of the CDU party in Rakhiv city (Zakarpattia region) on May 20.

Hutsul music groups and European folk music groups were performing on several stages during the day. Along with that, a large-scale autorally was held starting from Lviv, Uzhgorod, and Ivano-

Frankivsk, Chernivtsi and Ternopil. In the evening, a concert by Oksana Bilozir, Adriana, Atmosfera, Lilia Vavrin, Dazzle Dreams and TIK groups took place.

Many guests from European partner cities came to the festival; the festival's hosts organized a bright and distinctive fair of folk craft masters for them.

The place of the festival was not chosen by chance; the city was recognized to be Europe's geographic centre in the year 1887.

"Ukraine is our home. We want to live according to European standards in it. For that, the house has to have a strong foundation which is an efficient Constitution", David Zhvaniya, the CDU party's Secretary, head of the Right of Choice MP group, said. The politician is sure that we have no time to impede adoption of a new Constitution today. Speaking of developing the European-style democracy in Ukraine and strengthening the institute of parliamentarism, it is logical to introduce the parliamentary form of government instead of the presidential-parliamentary one. That would once and for all prove that Ukraine is a state which meets European standards and is worth being in the European Union.

A lot was said about the European level of life that day. "I seek Ukraine to join the big European family as soon as possible", Oksana Bilozir, member of the CDU Board, stressed.

The festival finished with fireworks. ■



Social policy

Marushchenko: We will insist on introducing fines for salary payment delay

Right of Choice MP group, which includes 7 CDU MPs, will insist on considering the draft law on introducing fines for

salary payment delay during the next session of the Verkhovan Rada of Ukraine. "Today, the wage arrears have reached 1.5 million UAH...

The Right of Choice MP group is sure that the draft law will stimulate employers to take more responsibility in paying salaries. However, deputies have not supported our initiative today for some reason", Volodymyr Marushchenko said.

He noted that the group would insist on considering the draft law during the next VR session. ■

Concentration Camps Prisoners Liberation Day

CDU has paid tribute to victims of Fascist concentration camps



V. Marushchenko, V. Stretovych, O. Bilozir

April 11 is the International Day of Fascist Concentration Camps Prisoners Liberation. On the eve of the day, representatives of the Right of Choice deputy group, members of the CDU Board, visited the memorial at the death camp in Auschwitz. Over a million of people, mainly Jews, have been killed here in the years 1940-1945.

“One has to come here just to understand what life is and where the line between good and bad lays... I believe that every person who values life is to visit this place and see everything with his or her own eyes; because everything we read in books and see in films is abstract”, Oksana Bilozir, member of the CDU Board, said.

“I remember the One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest by Ken Kesey, when a person finds himself in inhuman conditions and gets destroyed by the system. Stories about people bringing their dead friends to call-overs to receive another slice of bread are terrifying”, people’s deputy Volodymyr Marushchenko says.

“Many young people come here, including German youth. I have seen students stay in barracks for a long time, staying silent... Seeing that all is a certain warning for the things happened to people during the Second World War not to happen again ever”, people’s deputy Volodymyr Stretovych is sure. “Ukraine also has places witnessing crimes of

Ethnopolicy

CDU is for resuming of dialogue between state and national minorities

The 7 MPs of the CDU who are members of the Right of Choice MP group ask Viktor Yanukovich to establish a consultation-advisory organ, the Council of All-Ukraine National Minorities Organizations’ Heads. This is stated in the appeal of the deputy group to the President of Ukraine, the press service reports. The MPs turn attention to the fact that the Council for Ethno-National Policy under the President of Ukraine and the State Committee of Ukraine for Nationalities and Religions have been liquidated recently.

At the same time, the deputies stress that according to the census of the year 2011, representatives of national communities constitute 22% of Ukraine’s population. “Such step would be assessed positively by representatives of national communities,” the appeal reads.

Hitler’s and Stalin’s repressive machines; however, our youth knows about them far too little, unfortunately”. ■



Rights of religious organizations

Right of Choice group demands from government to protect rights of religious organizations

The Right of Choice MP group, which includes 7 MPs from the CDU, demands from the government to resume work of the Commission for Providing Rights of Religious Organizations under the Cabinet of Ministers. This was the main issue raised during the meeting of the CDU's representatives and the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations on April 6, 2011.

During last year, the Commission has not conducted any meeting. The above mentioned fact is assessed negatively by representatives of the Churches and religious organizations. The situation does not conduce to development of relations between the state and the Churches in Ukraine.

According to the CDU Secretary David Zhvaniya, a full dialogue between the state and Churches is of great importance today. The meeting between the MPs and

the All-Ukraine Council of Churches and Religious Organizations would promote developing a unified position in solving problems and intensifying the inter-confession dialogue. The meeting resulted in taking a decision on establishing a working group formed by the Secretariat of the All-Ukraine Council of Churches and Religious Organizations and people's deputies Oksana Bilozir, Volodymyr Marushchenko, and Volodymyr Stretovych.

The Right of Choice deputy group as a representative of Christian democrats in the parliament stands for resuming of a full dialogue between the state and the Churches; it asked to take measures for resuming activity of the above mentioned Commission and stated it would support draft laws aimed at protection of freedom of conscience, morality and traditional family values. ■



E-government

Stretovych: E-government will reduce level of corruption in Ukraine



Introducing the e-government will reduce the number of officials and documents and facilitate more efficient fighting against corruption in Ukraine. Volodymyr Stretovych, deputy head of the VR committee for legislative provision of law-enforcement activities, member of the CDU Board, stated that answering questions in the air of the ERA Radio.

Commenting the fact that Ukraine occupied the 134th of 178 places in the corruption rating list of the Transparency International, Stretovych stressed that that was the lowest Ukraine's rating during its independence period.

"To reduce the number of officials and documents and to minimize human factor in taking decisions, the on-line governance should be introduced along with e-signatures", Stretovych stated. However, the deputy believes that the authorities today do not want to lose their influence and thus impede the process of introducing the system.

At the same time, Stretovych said he was sure the President would sign the law on principles of preventing and fighting corruption in Ukraine, as all the required documents had been voted already.

Children's rights

Stretovykh calls not to turn health resorts for children into entertainment centers

MP Volodymyr Stretovykh has called upon the Ministry of Defence to prevent losing the Evpatoria health resort which specializes on the CSIP, the party's press service reports.

"That is a unique health and rehabilitation complex with all equipment required. In fact, it is almost the only one in Ukraine. Today, we

have information that the health resort is planned to be subordinated to the other government structure. Thus, there are no guarantees that it will be not turned into another entertaining complex," Stretovykh stated.

Also, the politician drew attention of MPs and representatives of local self-government to problems of children and adults with special needs.

"Specifically, that is solving the problem of access to public places. I call upon the KCSA to solve the problem of access to transport stops and crossings. The provision on the barrier-free environment is not followed during construction of new buildings, say nothing of reconstruction of old ones", the MP stressed.

"We have heard from the specialists and parents themselves what they were anxious about. The most terrible thing is that not only we are short of money, but also our officials lack diligence in performing their work. Unfortunately, there have been a lot of cases when health resorts refused to accept such children for recreation", the MP added. ■

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