

EPP-ED Young Members Network Steering Committee Meeting 27 and 28 February 2009 in Riga, Latvia

This long-planned visit to Riga was subject to last minute changes caused by the sudden nomination of Valdis DOMBROVSKIS, MEP and Co-coordinator of the EPP-ED Young Members Network, as Prime Minister of his country. However, the Steering Committee meeting, as well as the working dinner on the Friday evening, were held in the presence of Mr DOMBROVSKIS.

Meeting with representatives of the Latvian Ministries of Economics and Energy



energy situation is not set to improve by the agreed closing-down of the IGNALINA power plant which is planned for the end of the year 2009. This closure was part of the EU Accession Treaty which foresaw the subsequent dismantling of nuclear power plants built on the model of the Chernobyl reactor.

Currently, the biggest challenge in Latvia is to solve the problem of energy isolation. This is actually an issue of all three Baltic States which while being interconnected amongst themselves are marked by isolation as well as by closed markets. The connection to a European grid is deemed to be the most important project for the future.

In view of these facts, the European Commission proposals for Latvia and the two other Baltic States included in the



In the afternoon of Friday 27 February, Andreas SCHWAB MEP and other Members met with representatives of the Latvian Ministry of Economics and Energy, Andris KUZNIEKS, Deputy State Secretary, and Ansis TETERIS, Political Adviser. The topic of discussion was Latvian views on energy issues of common interest within the EU in preparation of the next EPP-ED Young Members

Network Meeting which will centre on the issue of energy.

As the representatives of the Ministry pointed out, there is a high energy dependence in Latvia: 64% of all energy is imported, 30% of which is gas. Only one natural gas provider serves the market: Gazprom/Ruhrgas. The gas-market is as yet completely closed.

The country's rather difficult

recently-published 2nd Energy Strategy Revision Review indeed foresee a quick connection of the region to European markets. The upcoming Swedish Presidency has already set out to work on a roadmap for market integration of the Baltics, Sweden and Finland.

The very interesting and fruitful discussion was concluded by the remarks of the Ministry's representatives on the Climate Change Package adopted by the European Council and the European Parliament during the French Presidency: the target which Latvia was supposed to reach in the renewable energy sector was very high and the implementation was expected to be very difficult.



Steering Committee Meeting

In the Steering Committee Meeting which took place between Messrs Valdis DOMBROVSKIS, Andreas SCHWAB and Ott LUMI, the future activities of the EPP-ED Young Members Network Meetings were addressed. This, particularly in view of the planned key EPP-ED Young Members Network Meeting foreseen for the second half of 2009 and which should address the question of energy and related issues. While initially foreseen in Berlin with the participation of Chancellor Angela MERKEL, thoughts about another venue were equally taken into account, in the event that the Chancellor is unable to meet the group.

It was decided that Andreas SCHWAB, as Coordinator of the Young Members Network, should visit Rome as soon as possible to forge links with Young Italian Members who until now have not participated in the EPP-ED Young Members Network. Furthermore, the possibilities for holding the next YMN Meeting in Rome should be reviewed. Andreas SCHWAB will relay his findings to the other Members of the Steering Committee as soon as possible to facilitate further planning.

The meeting was concluded by setting further targets, such as the linking of closer ties to young members in Turkey and Croatia.



Party Congress of New Era on Sat 28 February 2009



As guest of honour welcomed by the party President, Solvita ABOLTINA, SCHWAB held a 10 minute speech at the beginning of the congress and delivered the congratulations of the whole EPP-ED Group and specifically of Chairman DAUL on the nomination of Mr DOMBROVSKIS. He stressed that Mr DOMBROVSKIS had been an outstanding Member of the European Parliament with an impressive track record and an important network in the European Council and the European Commission. As well as the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, Valdis DOMBROVSKIS stood for sound economic principles, against protectionism and for defending the principles of the Single Market and the Stability and Growth Pact.

Relations with National Parliaments Young Members Network

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Messrs SCHWAB and LUMI visited the Congress which mainly celebrated Valdis DOMBROVSKIS' nomination as Latvia's new Prime Minister as a major achievement. On the contents, the severe financial and economic crisis which the country is facing, alongside the rest of the world, was an important issue of discussion and was taken up by most speakers.

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