



# European Forum

## for Democracy and Solidarity

### Annual report European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity 2021

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## **Introduction**

Herewith we present our annual report of the year 2021.

2021 was a year in which we were still dealing with the effects of the global pandemic. As a result, many of our activities took place online.

Fortunately, we were able to run our full program. It was especially nice that we were able to organize our annual network meeting with our partners from the regions in which we operate. This meeting took place in Belgrade from 12-14 November. We discussed the political situation in Serbia and all other countries in the region. Special attention was paid to Ukraine. At the time of the meeting, there was a major build-up of troops on the borders of Ukraine by the Russian army. This threat had a lot of influence on Ukrainian politics. We found that there are many similarities between the political situation in Ukraine and that in the Western Balkans.

Unfortunately, we see that democracy is under pressure in a number of countries. Freedom of the press, the rule of law and corruption are important political themes. Each country has its own specific problem. It is very important for the European Forum to remain active in these regions and to continue to support (social) democracy.

This annual report describes the activities we have undertaken in 2021 with the support of our partners. Our news service, our training, special programs for groups that remain politically underexposed and our permanent support for social democratic parties and foundations in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

We hope you will enjoy reading this annual report and we thank our partners, permanent staff and volunteers for their energy and continuous support.

## Regional training in the Western Balkans

*Partner: UK Labour Party through Westminster Foundation funds*

In collaboration with the UK Labour Party, the European Forum continued to implement a project to promote the rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders and Intersex people (LGBTI) in the Western Balkans in 2021. In the SEE region, many people have a traditional perspective on sexuality and the influence of religion is substantial. In 2015, the project partners, together with local



foundations, started putting LGBTI topics on the agenda of local social democratic political parties. What started with conferences in Belgrade, London and Madrid (as part of the WorldPride) has grown into a project with ToT trainings for new LGBTI activists, Pride march fringe meetings and local trainings in the four partner countries: Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.



2021 was also a special and complicated year for the LGBTI project. In close consultation with all partners, we continuously looked at which activities we could physically carry out and where we were forced to switch to online due to Covid-19 measures. Fortunately, we were able to carry out a large part of the activities through this flexible approach. However, we manage to finalize the first LGBTI project in the first quarter of 2021. In September 2021, we started with the new LGBTI project. The name of the project has changed to Inclusion and inequalities. Some activities have taken place in 2021 and the remaining will take place in 2022.

The participating local foundations are: Center of Modern Skills (Serbia), Forum of Left Initiative (Bosnia Herzegovina), Progres Institute (North Macedonia) and Fund for Progressive Politics (Montenegro).

### **Activities 2021 - LGBTI 1**

22 – 23 January	Montenegro – LGBTI fringe meeting
27 – 28 February	Serbia – LGBTI training
3 March	Online - LGBTI Final Conference

### **Activities 2021 – Inclusion and Inequalities LGBT 2**

17 - 19 September	Serbia – fringe meeting
1 – 3 October	Montenegro – fringe meeting
26 – 28 November	Serbia - Training of Trainers (ToT)
19 – 20 November	Bosnia & Herzegovina focus group

## **FMS-FEPS project: Reclaiming Democracy**

In 2019 we started the successor to the FEPS-FMS Deepening Democracy project. For two years, with this Reclaiming Democracy project, we focused on the shrinking space for (democratic) political parties and social organizations. The number of countries included in this project has been expanded from ten to eleven: Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco & Tunisia.

This project was officially launched during the Deepening Democracy conference in Belgrade in 2019 and eight of the eleven training courses were conducted in 2020. The last training took place in 2021 and the project was concluded with an online conference. The partners also provided input on exactly what the training should look like. The focus of the activities has been more on social democracy and policy development.

In addition, partners also wanted to invite national and international guest speakers more often to explain certain themes. The themes depended on the local context of each country, but good and frequently mentioned examples are corruption, brain drain and youth unemployment. We have also - forced by Covid-19 - made use of the training experience that has been built up within this network: the trainers who have trained FEPS and FMS. All training sessions were able to take place physically thanks to these local trainers.

### **Activities 2021**

June 11 – 13     FEPS-FMS Training in Lebanon

June 26             FEPS-FMS Reclaiming Democracy Conference Online

## **MENA Academy**

In collaboration with the Olof Palme International Center from Sweden we set up a training academy for the Middle East and North Africa, the MENA Academy. This academy brings together seven partners from OPC, EFDS and FMS: Ujsario, Western Sahara; Ettakatol, Tunisia; Jordanian Social Democratic Party, Jordan; Progressive Youth Organization, Lebanon; Fatah, Palestinian Territories; Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Iraqi Kurdistan; and People's Democratic Party (HDP), Turkey.

Initially, this was a two-year project, started in 2019, with four training activities. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project mainly took place online in 2020 and 2021. It has been decided to delay the project until the end of 2022, with multiple training activities aimed at women and young people. These activities focus on campaigning, communication, leadership, policy development and internal party democracy and in addition there are follow up activities with a Training for Trainers (ToT) training.

In the spring of 2021, a MENA Academy online series was set up in collaboration with the Swedish Collaboration Lab. This was carried out in the fall of 2021. During a series of 7 online sessions of two hours each, training was given on the above topics. Unfortunately this was not a success. Many participants had difficulty participating in the sessions interactively, often due to poor internet connectivity.

In the autumn, the organization of a physical MENA Academy training and at the same time a MENA Academy Follow Up (ToT) training was started. These will be implemented in January 2022.

### **Activities 2021**

September 7	MENA Academy Online, training 1: personal storytelling
14 September	MENA Academy Online, training 2: introduction to political campaign
September 20	MENA Academy Online, training 3: neuroleadership
September 27	MENA Academy Online, training 4: central message and communicating
October 6	MENA Academy Online, training 5: collaboration and transformational leadership
October 11	MENA Academy Online, training 6: stakeholder analysis
October 20	MENA Academy Online, training 7: conflict management

## Network Meetings 2021

In 2021, we continued our online meetings to inform the network about events in our target regions. We held several meetings about the election results in Kosovo and Albania. Besides that, we also did a few online meetings about the political situation in Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. These meetings gave the network more insight into the current power balances in the countries, the social democratic situation and we looked at the level of civil society.

In cooperation with Knut Fleckenstein and the FES, a mediation effort has started in 2021 in order to bring the social democratic parties in Serbia together. This is needed because elections will take place in April 2022. We held some meetings in order to inform the network about the situation in Serbia and the progress of the inter-party dialogue.

Also, the Korcula School took place in a hybrid form and we were able to organize the annual European Forum meeting for all of our partners in the EU, Western Balkans, and Ukraine.

## Activities 2021

28 January	Current situation in the Democratic Party – Moldova
19 February	Aftermath of the parliamentary elections in Kosovo
19 February	Political situation in Ukraine
26 February	Political situation in Belarus
12 March	Political Situation in Georgia
12 March	Thomas de Waal
26 March	What's is left book publication and discussion
8 April	Mediation Serbia
7 May	Aftermath of the parliamentary elections in Albania
14 May	Inter-party dialogue in Serbia
26 – 28 Augusts	Korcula School (Hybrid)
3 September	Meeting of foundations
12 – 14 November	Annual Meetings of Foundations in Belgrade

## European Forum News Service

Partner: Olof Palme International Center

As in previous years, we have continued to provide people working in the field of democracy support relevant information about the political context of the countries we are active in. Due to covid-19 we were able to invest extra time in the News Service, because it was an activity that was not influenced by travel bans or restrictions on meetings. We were able to almost double our output. This project delivers high level and unique information through the use of different tools:

1. Monitoring: the staff of the European Forum does actual day-to-day monitoring of the political situation in our target countries. We do this by following international and local media sources, as well as regular contacts with our partners on the ground.
2. Reporting short term: on a day-to-day basis reporting on the developments in our target countries through our website, Facebook and twitter. We published 94 articles in 2021 (88 in 2020.)
3. Reporting mid-term: every two weeks we provide our network with a so-called Newsflash, which contains all relevant political news on our target countries. We published 22 Newsflashes.
4. News alerts: we provide our network with News Alerts – short memos/briefings - whenever something extraordinary happens in our target countries or with our partners in the target countries. 2021 was a very fruitful year. There were 27 alerts (26 in 2020.) We provided unique information.
5. Country updates: the staff of the European Forum publishes country updates on the website. These country updates are refreshed after collapses of governments, elections, revolutions or other fundamental political changes. In 2021 20 country updates were updated (also 20 in 2020.)

## 2021 Financial report

The European Forum is not a legal entity in itself. The Foundation Max van der Stoel is the legal entity under which the projects are carried out. With accountants is responsible for the annual FMS audit and this includes the check of the European Forum finances.

### Income

SPD Germany	25.000
SAP Sweden	27.000
SDP Denmark	6.000
Labour Party Norway	-18.000 (depreciation 2018-2020)
SPOE Austria	6.000
Olof Palme International Center	34.328
PvdA Netherlands	6.000
<u>Labour Party</u>	<u>27.889</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>114.217</b>

### Expenditures

LGBTI Project (support Labour)	27.889
News Service (support Olof Palm International Center)	34.328
Conference/network meeting Serbia	9.152
<u>Salaries, rent, ICT, office costs</u>	<u>42.848</u>
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>114.217</b>