

## **International Federation of Liberal Youth**

Bureau meeting, minutes taken by Bart Woord

Copenhagen, 7 – 8 January 2006

Present:

Jacob Rasmussen (JR) - President  
Bart Woord (BW) - Secretary General  
Paola Silva (PS) - Vice-President  
Frederik Ferié (FF) - Vice-President  
Tafsir Thioye (TT) - Vice-President  
Frosina Kostovska (FK) - Vice-President  
Marc-André Gendron (MG) - Vice-President (from 7 January 13.30 o'clock, due to circumstances)

An agenda was drafted:

1. IFLRY priorities
2. Organisational structuring of the priorities
3. Responsibilities Bureau Members (BMs)
4. Plan of Action 2006/2007
5. Agenda 2006 (incl. bureau meetings)
6. Internal/external communication
7. Politics
8. Organisational/statutory matters
9. Finances
10. Any other business

Because of the absence of MG in the beginning of the meeting, the bureau decided to reshuffle the order of the agenda points.

### **9. Finances**

#### 9.1 Introduction

JR explains about the current financial situation and introduces. Most important grant for IFLRY is the European Youth administrative grant (about 35.000 euros), mainly because of the flexibility it offers for spending it. Seminars and activities have so far been funded by the Council of Europe and the European Union. The ED is usually in charge of writing the applications. JR indicates that the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) caused us problems with our seminar in Malaysia in 2004, though it does present us opportunities for IFLRY projects in 2006/2007. JR states that we have to work on getting funding from outside of Europe in order to globalize our work.

JR drafts an overview of the expenses. Main expense of IFLRY is the salary of the Executive Director. Secondly, the amount of rent we pay for the office might be doubled in the next year since we will probably have to move from our current office. PS asks what JR believes should be the price of the new office, but JR can't say that yet. JR offers a few suggestions about what could be the benefits of moving the office, f.e. the opportunity to find a bigger office with more facilities.

BW explains that in the Brussels meeting between him, JR and the ED in December they had a discussion on the level of exploitation of the different available funds. It seems like the CoE is being used on a rather full scale, but there are still many opportunities for getting ad hoc funding from the EU Youth programme.

#### 9.2 Auditor meeting

In February 2006 JR, BW, ED, auditors and Emil Kirjas meet up for the first auditor's meeting of 2006.

#### 9.3. Accounting

JR proposes that BW should start getting used with IFLRY's accounting program. If there's a need for it, every BM can have the same program in order for them to know what is financially going on in the organisation. JR proposes that there should be some quarterly financial presentation to the whole bureau, and asks what BW thinks about it; BW agrees.

#### 9.4 BM costs

BW explains that he is thinking about covering parts of the phone costs of the BMs. This could be funded project-wise (so per project which is coordinated), or by a fair monthly refund. JR agrees with the idea, but stresses that we have to watch out not getting too high expectations on these kind of reimbursements, because it might not be in our financial means. JR proposes as well that refund can only take place if the specified phone bill is handed in.

VP Marc Gendron arrives. The order of the agenda is taken up again.

### 1. Priorities 2006/2007

JR proposes to draft a list including the positive points and the negative points from the past few years, adopting a suggestion made by TT. Subsequently, a discussion should be held over IFLRY's future priorities.

A transcript of the discussion:

#### 1.1 Positive points

PS: our **financial basis**, which is much more secure nowadays.

FF: **Relationship with external organizations**, for example with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Liberal International, esp. during the LI event in San José.

#### 1.2 Negative points

JR: I'd say the **communication to the MOs**, f.e. E-news, was not as it is supposed to be.

FF: **struggle between LYMEC and IFLRY** was pretty ridiculous, mainly because nobody was willing to talk about it though you know everybody was talking about it

JR: LYMEC's growth has caused a few challenges. JR is in good communication with LYMEC's president. Interesting point is to see how we are going to handle future growth of other RO, esp. YLDA. IFLRY itself has to decide over its fate though.

MG: we should have been **more concretely present on the ground**, with flyers and brochures.

FF: we might indeed be too much of an umbrella organization.

JR: IFLRY's weakness is that it doesn't really have a platform to express its political statements, plus the fact that it is quite far from individual young liberals in order to efficiently mobilize them.

TT: IFLRY hasn't been really good in **spreading around its name** around the world. Besides that, **political resolutions** which have been adopted have not been implemented at all in IFLRY's work. As well, the **digital forum** is not working. **Regional organizations and IFLRY** have hardly been cooperating, and IFLRY VP's should focus on its communication with the specific points.

JR points out that in general IFLRY hasn't been growing parallel to a globalizing world with its enlarged and still enlarging challenges.

PS follows up on JR's point of view, indicating that staying in touch with each MO takes so much time. You have to make trade-offs.

BW: IFLRY should reorganize in such a way that it can cope with these new challenges. The bureau should be coordinative, and not executive.

JR: True, we shall have to define what we believe are core responsibilities of the bureau and the ones we can outsource.

#### 1.3 General discussion about IFLRY's future path

MG: Are we going to focus on getting IFLRY to become a truly political player with its own global organisation (global activist network), or are we focusing on facilitating our MOs? I believe there hasn't been such a choice made, and therefore our policies are fragmented.

JR: To avoid such a dichotomy, one can delegate organizational/executive responsibilities to our MOs, since these services for our MOs can be largely dealt with by them as well.

MG: Because of scarce resources, and the fact that there are already so many INGO's, we could be way more effective if we just completely prioritize.

FF: It seems like this decision has already been made because he can't remember anymore IFLRY to be associated with a global activist network. IFLRY might just have to facilitate its MOs, as seems to be our current path.

MG: take the example of amnesty international, would we like to become such a global player?

FF: our MOs are not as hierarchically organized as the local offices of amnesty are, so that seems not to be possible because of practical reasons.

BW: it's a question between education and concrete action. You need your education in order to be concretely and efficiently active, but you always have to keep in mind that you want to change the world around you, and therefore all our projects have to be set up related to that goal. This also offers opportunities, because this ambitious approach can gather a lot of support from our MOs and many people will be willing to join our ranks.

PS: we have to keep a balance though, because esp. in non-european countries it is currently very hard to be effective. One could be thinking of having seminars in one half of the year, and in the other half of the year to work on the follow-up.

MG: we should be more link-facilitating, and past experiences have shown that IFLRY faces some practical problems when setting up big publicity campaigns. We simply can't be really effective in this, therefore we have to be more pragmatic: IFLRY should provide services for its MOs.

JR doesn't think that we cannot do both things. Initiatives like concrete actions that didn't work in the past, might just not have had a priority by then, and that might have been the reason why they didn't work out.

FF agrees almost completely with MG. FF wants IFLRY to be a service centre and a knowledge base, and to help out MOs when they are in need for it.

MG: To nuance my position with an example: if we adopt a campaign during our GA, we can set-up a framework/campaign kit and ask our MOs to work out this framework on their national level. That's service-providing.

JR: not as a criticism, but just a reminder: we have a relatively small secretariat which cannot provide as many services as we would like.

BW: As well, this discussion seems to me to be about the means, not about the goals. The goal should be completely clear, and that is to change the society around us. We need education for this in order for our MOs to gain the skills in order to work on this idealistic attitude.

FF doesn't see a contradiction between the means discussed and the goal BW proposes.

BW agrees, but wants it to be explicitly said because it will be easier to mobilize and engage people. As well, it forces IFLRY to be proactive and not waiting for the MOs to approach IFLRY.

MG: being a service centre doesn't imply not being pro-active nor not being interested in working with individuals. Example: essay contest on a specific topic. We have to start with small things like that, which can be very effective.

TT: Besides offering information to our MOs, we should as well work on working on international platforms, like the United Nations.

FK: Another priority I reckon to be one is to look at the feedback from the MOs about IFLRY's work. As well, what about twinning projects?

FF Agrees that we might have to do some survey about our MOs. Past surveys have been badly conducted, and that's why it hasn't worked in the past. Twinning projects might be part of the facilitation we offer MOs.

As a summary, a mission statement of IFLRY is drafted, and more discussion follows about the actual wording.

**Mission statement: Spreading liberal values globally by empowering and uniting liberal-minded youth organizations.**

End of the day.

Continuation of the bureau meeting, Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2005

#### 1.4. Priorities

A discussion is held on the key priorities for the bureau's mandated period.

A transcript of the discussion:

FF: **Seminars and their educational aspect** keep on being very important aspects of our organization.

BW: True, but maybe the content of the seminars is fine, but to me there seems to be no true multiplier effect.

PS: Maybe, but we can't go after our MO's, it's their responsibility to multiply the knowledge and skills gained at the seminars.

BW: we spend a lot of money and energy on the participants, so I think we are legitimated to push our MO's to act more responsible when it comes to the multiplication of knowledge and skills throughout their organisations

MG: As a start maybe we could ask participant candidates to write an essay?

FF: when it comes to **the empowerment of our MOs**, we should distinguish strong MO's and regions with strong MO's, from weak liberal regions where we hardly have any MO's. I'd therefore like to focus on the **Middle-East**.

MG: A little related as well to the seminars we've just talked about: we could ask more affluent MO's to pay higher participation fees and thereby enable us to cover more costs from non-European MO's, in order to engage them more in our projects.

PS: Right so, but then we also need to set '**funding**' as one of our priorities.

BW: yes, the set-up an international liberal youth fund embraces both the idea of involving more non-European MO's as the strengthening of our financial means.

FF: We have to get rid of the mentality that we do not have any knowledge about what our MO's want from us. We can easily **conduct a survey**.

MG: I don't think MO's actually do know what they want from IFLRY, so the results of this survey might not be worth the effort. Let's wait for at least quite a period and then evaluate what they think of this.

BW: I might agree that people don't really know what they want from IFLRY. What if we just wait with the survey for a year and up till then lets contact our MO's on specific issues?

FF: The risk we might run into is that by only contacting MO's on specific issues, we will only receive answers from those people who are already active, though we would like to involve the non-active people and find out what they want from us.

FK: It is important to get **feedback** as well after seminars, also in order to get people to get more engaged with our work

PS: another priority is the improvement of our specific **regional organizations**, being JULIA, OALY, YLDA.

JR: I think this is an important priority. LYMEC can be excluded here since they hardly need any support from us anymore.

JR: one priority might be the **UN**, because that is our true international platform. Another strong priority is our **webpage**.

BW: webpage is indeed important, but what is it exactly that we can do with the UN?

JR: UN is f.e. the birth place of the Youth Employment Network, in which Emil has been putting a lot of effort in.

PS: We can also think of promoting the opportunity of sending youth delegates to UN events, f.e. the GA.

BW: Can we legitimate our work with the UN with our just established mission statement?

FF: Yes, since it might be a good source for funding as well, being a possible cooperation partner.

BW: our strength is our expertise on political youth participation, which is strongly related to **democracy-building**. Starting from this assumption it is clear that we have to support democratic movements in non-democratic countries. We can use our name and brand for this.

TT: as an international federation we have to work on our **political action**. Secondly, we have to realize that we need to create good partnerships with foundations in order to achieve our goals.

JR: I suppose political campaigns are part of that political action.

BW: But before political action, we need to clear up our political vision as well. Right now we can hardly say what we are actually standing for.

MG: I was thinking about first working out our **organizational framework**, and only next year starting to work on things with campaigns.

BW: True, but establishing more thoughtful and extensive political ideas is part of that preparatory work as well, I'd say.

JR rounds up the discussion and lists down the priorities.

## 2. Organisational structuring of the priorities

JR proposes to discuss how the mission statement and the mentioned priorities can be structured in order for them to be executed as efficacious and efficient as possible.

A transcript:

MG: Apart from the apparent need of a committee on **fund raising**, every BM should have its own specific tasks, possibly including their own committees as well. Give non-BM active people certain positions including titles inside our structure.

FF: We might have tried to set up too many structures already in the past which seemed not have worked, so I think we should be a little bit cautious on that.

MG: A committee on **communication** is truly important as well.

JR: finances is definitely worth a committee, coordinated by the SG. Very essential it is to set up a committee on the organization of **seminars**.

BW: when it comes to this seminar committee, lets try to outsource it as much as possible to the hosting MO. Its fine to have such a committee, but it should be a coordinating one and not so much an executive one.

FF: I don't know whether it needs any committee, but regarding my potential future work with the Middle East I'd like to have some people cooperating with me as well.

JR: a lesson learned from past bureaus, is that people need to be responsible and need to be held responsible. Let's keep that in mind.

BW: We should also watch not to rely too much on the same kind of people for the different committees. Furthermore, a **political committee** could be set up to coordinate ad hoc political reaction to immediate events, or maybe it could do even more.

JR: what about merging my idea about a **committee on the UN** work with this political committee?

PS: this political committee should be chaired by the president. I'd also like to have a committee on supporting our regional platforms.

JR: I would prefer not to head this committee directly since I want to be of help for every of the committees. A regional platform committee doesn't seem to be necessary.

BW: what is the communication committee all about?

MG gives an impression how it should look like, involving different people for different tasks, like The Libel, E-News, website. Two VP's will have to keep a close eye on it.

JR: it is important that we're not creating some behemoth inside our organisation here, so have at least two BMs keeping the coordination.

A concluding discussion follows on how the working groups are going to be structured and which bureau members are going to be responsible.

Four pillar committees are going to be created, with the responsible BMs in brackets:

- Political committee (Bart, Tafsir)
- Communication committee (Marc, Frederik)
- Fundraising committee (Bart, Tafsir)
- Seminar committee (Paola, Frosina)

It is being stressed that the tasks of these committees should be clearly defined and comprehensibly communicated to the MOs.

As well, small 'cabinets' of a few people can assist BM's in more particular work.

### **3. Responsibilities Bureau Members**

The thematic responsibilities have already been divided, now the division of geographical responsibilities has to be decided upon.

JR: let's see what we have in store as a bureau and what is logical taking into consideration geographical convenience and practical experience.

BW: can somebody explain or define what does a geographical responsibility actually embody?

JR: I'll write a small document about this and send it to you as soon as possible .

The following division is made:

MG & JR: shared responsibility over United States and Asia

MG: Canada and Haiti

JR: Scandinavia and Baltic countries

PS: Latin-America

TT: Africa (excl. Egypt)

FF: Middle-East (incl. Egypt), Caucasus, Germany, Austria, Switzerland

FK: South-Eastern Europe, Visegrad countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary), European Mediterranean area

BW: North-West Europe (France, Germany, Benelux, UK, Ireland), former-USSR countries (excl. Caucasus).

Concerning the responsibilities for contact with the regional liberal youth platforms, the following responsibilities have been attributed to BMs:

PS: JULIA

BW: LYMEC

MG/JR: YLDA

TT: OALY

### **4. Plan of Action 2006/2007**

JR proposes to write the Plan of Action 2006/2007 according to the results of this bureau meeting and in the framework of the Programme of Action 2006/2007 which was adopted at the GA 2005. Everybody agrees.

Every BM will have to write a personal Plan of Action as soon as possible. This Plan of Action has to include responsibilities, deadlines for planned projects, criteria for success and it has to outline how it fits in the general Plan of Action of the bureau.

Every bureau meeting BMs have to report on their work.

### **5. Agenda 2006**

#### **5.1 Projects**

MG: I believe that in principle we need to have an activity in Africa in 2006

JR: we are going to have to find funding for that though, which makes it more feasible in 2007

FF: it is not very sure whether we are going to be able to finance the project in Israel by FNF

BW: if not, let's try to write an application for the European Commission Youth Program.

TT: internally in Senegal we have discussed to propose to host the GA 2006 in Senegal

BW: I think we should set up a framework from IFLRY side incl. what we expect an hosting MO to deliver when it comes to finances, accommodation, etc. We can then make a call and ask every MO which is interested to send in a proposal and which fits inside the framework.

JR: I'm afraid that this procedure is going to take too long for the GA 2006, so we'd better use that procedure for 2007.

The preliminary agenda for 2006 looks like this, with the responsible BMs in brackets:

March

- Taiwan Fact Finding Mission (Marc)
- Ukraine/Belarus Election Observer Mission (Bart)

April

- Israel seminar (Frederik)

May

- Seminar (Paola/Bart)

June

- Canada seminar & Executive Committee(Marc)

July

- Portugal seminar (Frosina)

August

- Summer school (?)

September

- Budapest seminar (?)

October

- Latin America seminar (Paola)

November

- Seminar
- General Assembly

December

## 5.2 Bureau meetings

JR: we have received an offer to have our next bureau meeting in Slovenia

BW: yes, and they are willing to cover quite a lot of our costs, but they want us to stay for quite a few days extra as well

Nobody of the group can actually stay longer than 4/5 days, so BW will get in touch with the Slovenian organisation to see whether this is still feasible or not.

Proposed bureau meetings for 2006:

March - Slovenia

May - ?

June - Canada

September - Budapest

October – Latin America

## 6. Communication

### 6.1. Website

MG presents the current plan for the new website.

A few financially related decisions have been made:

- Agreed on the use of PayPal for private donations on the website.
- Participation fees by internet by credit cards (feature costs about 35 euros per month).
- MG proposes to have a world map with different MO information. Costs 300 euros. Agreed.
- DPP-Youth contacted MG to create some kind of Flash introduction for the website. Costs will be around 400 euros extra.

Discussion on advertisement on the IFLRY site. Concerns are expressed about our image when using Google Ads, since we are not sure what kind of ads we can actually get. The agreement is that we are not going to implement advertisement spaces for the moment.

MG proposes to proceed with integrating YLDA/OALY/JULIA forum on the IFLRY forum. He will elaborate on the technicalities later on.

MG will first launch the website (in March) and later on work with the forum (maybe launch at the EC).

MG asks BMs to write certain parts for the website:

- Mission statement elaboration (Jacob/Paola)
- Personal information of the BMs (every BM)
- The information about publishing personal expenses is rejected
- BM-blogs (every BM)
- What is IFLRY, bureau, office, etc. ? (Bart)
- History of IFLRY, incl pictures (Marc, Frosina, Bart)
- Partners (Paola)
- Regional organizations (every regional responsible)
- Links to different liberal sources/sites (Jacob)

MG asks JR and PS to transfer all the necessary documents from the yahogroup to a newly created group.

## 6.2 E-news

In the future this is going to consist of a summary of the newly updated content of the website, edited by two people from the communication group, and maybe eventually an intern can take control over it.

## 6.3 Mailing

MG: why do we send out all these hard-copy mailings to organizations who prefer to get it digitally?

FF: let's request MO's what they prefer, digitally or hardcopy or both. Preferable digitally, because that's cheaper for us.

Agreed.

## 6.4 Internal Communication

48 hours response time for normal voting proposals.

4/7 majority needed for approval in case of time-sensitive issues, 5/7 majority preferable!

## 6.5 External communication

BW: a press database has to be set up! Only then we can try to f.e. write articles and try to get them published in newspapers.

MG will make a piece of software in order for the press database to be properly structured.

## 7. Politics

BW: change our manifesto by writing a roadmap for the manifesto revisal. This roadmap could encompass a little less than two years of work (Bart)

A proposal will be written before the next BM meeting.

## 8. Organisational/statutory issues

FF: having the proceedings of the last GA in mind, combined with previous experiences, we might have to change and improve our rules of procedure and possibly our statutes. In any case, it's good to once in a while reflect on our statutory documents to see whether they need to be adapted to new organizational circumstances.

BW: we should try to follow the example of LYMEC here, and see whether we can improve the political discussion at our General Assemblies by moving more of the formal agenda items from the GA to the EC's.

FF & BW agree with writing a proposal for the next bureau meeting

#### **10. A.O.B.**

BW: I have been in contact with a few people about the issue of Belarus and the involvement of liberal youth organizations in that country. It stems me negatively that there's so much fragmentation in our efforts to help democracy, not the least because of the mutual distrust which exists between our two liberal contacts, Civil Forum and Liberal Generation. I'd like to see Belarus on our agenda for 2006.

JR: This should be a priority for LYMEC mainly, so try to see whether we can be of help by involving non-European MOs in this project.

BW: I have been in touch with LYMEC about Belarus. I do doubt though which MOs from outside of Europe could be involved.

The meeting ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, around 17.00 o'clock.