



## RESERAPPORT ELDR CONGRESS BARCELONA

The 2009 ELDR Congress was organized by the Catalan member party Convergencia Democràtica and took place from 18-20 November 2009 in Barcelona. This congress was of significance for ELDR, not only because of its theme ("Kick-Starting Europe's Economy") but also because it was an electoral congress.

Myself, I had been elected as LYMEC-delegate to the ELDR congress at the organization's statutory meeting in May 2009 in Rome.

Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (Open VLD, Belgium) got re-elected as president with 84% of the vote; so did David Griffiths (Liberal Democrats, UK) as treasurer with 93%. There were eight candidates for four vice-president positions that were up for election this time. Elected were: Markus Löning (FDP, Germany), Marc Guerrero (CDC, Catalonia), Leoluca Orlando (Italia dei Valori, Italy) and Lousewies van der Laan (D66, The Netherlands). The LYMEC delegation was pleased that with Marc Guerrero a former LYMEC bureau member got elected and that the Fianna Fail candidate (Dick Roche) did not get elected as LYMEC currently sees Fianna Fail as unsuitable for ELDR membership. Unfortunately, the incumbent VP and friend of LYMEC Kristiina Ojuland (Estonian Reform Party, Estonia) and the only Nordic candidate Karin Riis-Jørgensen (Venstre, Denmark) did not get elected.

The theme resolution on "Liberal Answers for a New Prosperity" was passed with an overwhelming majority. Amongst other things, it emphasized that liberalism is not to blame for the financial crisis and that capitalism and market-oriented policies need to be the answer to the crisis in order to produce growth. The importance of SMEs for Europe was underlined in the resolution; ELDR also suggested a 25 per cent reduction in administrative burdens for businesses by 2014. Also, greater supervisory capacity instead of market intervention and better instead of more regulation is the way into the future. LYMEC contributed to the theme resolution with important amendments, especially calling for a strict observance of the criteria of the growth and stability pact.

Several other resolutions were passed as well, most notably on climate change and the COP-15, on the European integration of Serbia, on Kosova, on Iceland and on digital freedoms. LYMEC authored three resolutions ("European citizenship - from dream to reality", "Privacy: The EU is not my big brother", "The EU should bring down barriers for the use of GM crops") of which an overwhelming majority approved all. The only substantial amendment to a LYMEC resolution concerned the GM resolution, where the right of countries and regions to declare themselves as GM free growing zones had been added.

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