



FEPS

Rue Montoyer 40 | 1000 Brussels (Belgium)

RENEWING SOCIAL DEMOCRACY
CONTRIBUTIONS TO A EUROPEAN-WIDE DEBATE

← **NEXT LEFT** →

“Viability of progressive policies in
Europe and Baltic States”

Round Table

Organized with the support of BSF

Riga, Latvia | 11th March 2011

Any further information may be obtained through the Secretary General of FEPS,
Dr. Ernst STETTER (ernst.stetter@feps-europe.eu)
Or through Dr. Ania SKRZYPEK, FEPS Policy Advisor (ania.skrzypek@feps-europe.eu)

The project “Next Left” is organized with the support of Renner Institute.

The Round Table “Next Left – Viability of progressive policies in Europe and Baltic States” organized by FEPS – Foundation for European Progressive Studies with the support of BSF – Freedom and Solidarity Foundation on 11th March 2011.

The event is organized within the framework of the FEPS “Next Left” Project, accordingly to the project outline and regulations, as stated in:

- The Call for Projects by National Foundations
- FEPS Activity Plan 2011

The Round Table is organized in three sessions: opening and two discussions round.

FEPS will be represented by: Ania Skrzypek and Matthieu Meaulle.

Dominated by the policies of Conservatives, European Union is currently experiencing major revision of socio-economic model of welfare state in the light of on-going financial and economic crisis. Being one of the most important achievements of progressive - social-democratic, socialist – parties, it is seen by them now as the critical stronghold, which should not be dismantled. While in Western European countries such dramatic shifts in political agenda may seem quite shocking, there has been a different dominating view on such policies in the Baltic States, which, with few exceptions, were governed by right-wing parties since restoration of independence. People of Latvia, already one of the poorest countries in EU, in particular, are facing the most drastic austerity measures in the Union. Since 2004, when Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia joined EU, and during years of legislation harmonization prior that, some common European policies, developed and inspired by members of Party of European Socialists and Social Democrats, had to be adopted, thus, counter-balancing purely right-wing dominated approach in many areas. Probably, the fact that right-wing politicians used social democratic language (which obviously was hard-coded in various documents) while explaining new adopted policies, was one of the reasons why it was hard for politically inexperienced societies in the Baltic States to clearly distinguish who was who on local political landscape and led to perception that there where no true alternative to social, economical and political agenda proposed by right-wing elites. But what exactly was the historical operational context and reasons why social-democratic ideas in general never gained substantial popular support in Baltic States? How can social democracy appear as distinctive and modern? Is it a credible project after 20 years of liberalization and transition? Is there a process of detachment and demobilization in the society and undermining the democracy as such? Can Baltic States provide a perspective framework for the new socio-economic paradigm for Europe? Are the key values such as “universalism” still possible to implement at all? Those are some of the key questions to be answered by the participants of The Round Table.

Despite its devastating effects on quality of life of citizens all over Europe, current crisis provides an opportunity for local progressive politicians to provide progressive alternatives to enforces austerity measures. Welfare state in its broadest meaning has long been a paramount concept, encompassing framework for policies of any progressive political force. One of the most efficient progressive welfare state models is *flexicurity*, as it was coined by former Prime Minister of Denmark Poul Nyrup Rasmussen in early 1990s. The European Commission considers it as an integrated strategy to simultaneously and pro-actively enhance flexibility and security in the labor market. The European Council of June 2009 concluded that “in the current situation [of crisis], *flexicurity* is an important means by which to modernize and foster the adaptability of labor markets.” Could it be the most appropriate model for small but dynamic nations on the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, and how it could be implemented there?

Foundation for European Progressive Studies, supported by its member organization Freedom and Solidarity Foundation, intends to provide a discussion platform for participants and guests from all three Baltic States in order to shape the progressive opinion on important issues, which currently bother the minds of progressive intellectuals everywhere across the Europe.

1. Programme:

10.00 – 10.30 Registration (*Riga, 29/31, Bruninieku street, conference hall*)

10.30 – 10.50 Opening

- **Ervins Labanovskis** – Vice Chairman of the Freedom and Solidarity Foundation
- **Ania SKRZYPEK** – Policy Adviser at FEPS, responsible for the ‘Next Left’ Project.

PART A: Reality and future of “welfare state” concept in Baltic States. Theory and practice.

10.50 – 11.10 Professor **Henning Jørgensen Carma**, Aalborg University. *“Flexicurity” – theory and experience in Denmark*

11.10 – 11.30 Dr **Ania SKRZYPEK**, FEPS. *“Flexicurity” as integrated strategy of European Commission to simultaneously enhance flexibility and security in the labor market*

12.00 – 12.20 **Matthieu Meulle**, Policy adviser at FEPS. *“Flexicurity”: a critical view”*

12.20 – 13.00 Discussion. Representatives of LV/LT/EE – analysis of situation in Baltic countries regarding implementation of progressive policies

13.00 – 13.45 Lunch

PART B: New socio-economic paradigm in post-transition countries - designing successful strategy for progressive political parties to win in a popular vote.

13.45 – 14.00 Representative from Latvia - **Veiko Spolitis**, Doctor of political science. Riga P. Stradins University.

14.00 – 14.15 Representative from Lithuania - **Dobilas Kirvelis**, politologist. Steponas Kairys Foundation

14.15 – 14.30 Representative from Estonia - **Toomas Alatalu**, politologist. Faculty of International Relations, Euroakadeemia.

14.30 – 15.00 Discussion, summary and conclusions.

2. List of Participants

1. Justas Pankauskas,	LSDP, Vice-President
2. Birute Vėsaitė,	LSDP, Member of Parliament, Lithuanian Social Democratic Women's Union
3. Dobilas Kirvelis	Steponas Kairys Foundation, politologist
4. Ervins Labanovskis	Freedom And Solidarity Foundation, Vice-Chairman
5. Atis Lejins	Freedom And Solidarity Foundation, Chairman
6. Veiko Spolitis	Riga P. Stradins University, Lecturer. Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Latvia, Parliamentary Secretary
7. Māris Grīnvalds	Freedom And Solidarity Foundation, Member of the Board
8. Pēteris Krīgers	Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Latvia, Chairman
9. Hanno Matto	SDE Tallinn branch, Member of the Board
10. Heiki Järveveer	Johannes Mihkelson Centre, Project Manager
11. Henning Jørgensen Carma	Aalborg University, Professor
12. Matthieu Meulle	FEPS, Economic Advisor
13. Ania Skrzypek	FEPS, Policy Advisor
14. Toomas Alatalu	Euroakadeemia, Faculty of International Relations, politologist