



Newsletter September 2007

FACT FINDING MISSION:

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA IN TURKEY

During 1-10 July a number of representatives of the London-based non-governmental organisation, the Kurdish Human Rights Project, travelled to Turkey to engage in a fact-finding mission on the situation of freedom of the media in Turkey. The group included Louise Christian, solicitor; Pranjali Acharya of the Kurdish Human Rights Project; and Edel Hughes of the Centre for European Studies who spent ten days speaking with lawyers, journalists and human rights activists in an effort to understand whether the recent EU reform process has bolstered protections for freedom of expression within Turkey.

The fact-finding mission began its work in Istanbul where it met with representatives of both mainstream media and so-called 'opposition' media, i.e. those who report on what are still considered to be taboo subjects such as the Kurdish conflict and the place of the military within Turkish society. The relevance of the mission's investigation was compounded by the fact that the work in Istanbul coincided with the beginning of the trial of Hrant Dink's killer. Dink, editor-in-chief for the Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos*, was shot and killed outside the newspaper's offices in January 2006 by a Turkish ultra nationalist. Dink had been prosecuted for denigrating Turkishness under the now infamous Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for reports in which he criticised Turkey's denial of the Armenian genocide and had therefore been a controversial figure within the country. The group also travelled to the mainly Kurdish Southeast of the country, visiting Diyarbakır and Batman where we met with journalists from various organisations, including *Azadiya Welat*, the only daily Kurdish language newspaper; *Evrensel*, a daily socialist newspaper; *Özgür Radio*; the Southeast Journalist Society and various others.

Although each organisation highlighted continuing problems such as the distribution of newspapers and actual or threatened forced closures, there was general agreement that the situation of freedom of the media had greatly improved since the 1990s, when imprisonment of journalists, imposition of large fines and closures of publications were commonplace. Nonetheless, all of the people we met agreed that in the past two-three years there has been a regression in terms of some of the previous gains made for freedom of the media in the EU reform process. This was highlighted on our return when we learned that one of the newspapers we had visited, *Güncel*, had been prohibited from publishing for twelve days on charges of spreading separatist

propaganda as a result of an article it had published on pre-election opinions in the province of Batman entitled 'Batman's message: Look after the guerrillas'.

In its most recent progress report on Turkey, the European Commission was critical of the evident regression in terms of freedom of expression protections, outlining that Article 301 as well as "other provisions of the Penal code which have been used to prosecute the non-violent expression of opinions and may limit freedom of expression" need to be brought into line with the relevant European standards. It was clear to the fact-finding mission that for Turkey not to fall foul of the political criteria for EU accession, the inroads made into freedom of expression as documented by all of the people we spoke with, must be quickly and effectively reversed through changes to the existing legislation and application thereof. A complete report of the mission's findings will be available in September.

Edel Hughes

CEUROS REPRESENTED AT 40th ESSEX SUMMER SCHOOL

Essex Summer School in Data Analysis and Collection, which takes place at the campus of Essex University, is an annual summer school in quantitative data analysis and Discourse theory. Having built up a reputation as one of the best summer schools for postgraduate students and staff in the field, ESSDA offers one- or two-week courses on a broad range of subjects over three sessions, ranging from beginners' survey data analysis to more advanced courses as multi-level modelling. The instructors come from various academic institutions in Europe, North America and Asia, and are all experts in their respective fields. The summer school celebrated its 40th Anniversary this year, which was marked with a wine reception.

Three representatives from CEUROS were present at the summer school this year; Dr Heiko Walkenhorst attended the first session where he followed an introductory course in STATA, a statistical analysis program which is frequently being used by scientists in various fields. Helen Young and Annelin Andersen attended the second session. Helen followed a course in Social Network analysis, a method which studies the formation and dynamics of social networks, and in addition to theoretical approaches uses quantitative applications in the computer program UCINET. Annelin studied logit and probit models, models for analysing survey data using maximum likelihood estimation through STATA.

As usual, the summer school was fully booked, and participants come from all over the world. Even if the courses are very intense, the social program is very good, attendees are being invited for pub crawls, cinema and barbeques, among other activities, which allows the participants to get to know each other and relax in a less formal setting. We were also lucky to have nice weather too this year, which allowed for more outdoor activities as the traditional football tournament.

There are many reasons that the summer school is so popular; the courses offer intensive teaching in a very broad range of subjects which suit all levels. There are students who attend every year for three sessions, despite the high costs of the courses, and it is also possible to sit exams and acquire a Diploma for those who have attended several courses. The most ambitious can submit a range of assignments and sit several exams and compose a Masters' Degree in Data Analysis and Collection, which is an invaluable qualification for those who wish to pursue a career in quantitative research. Unfortunately, three representatives this year are more than usual from UL, but the summer school will surely run next year as well.

Annelin Andersen

BRUSSELS SUMMER SCHOOL ON EUROPEAN LAW, IMMIGRATION, AND ASYLUM POLICY JULY 2007.

The Summer School for the study of European Law Immigration and Asylum policy was held over the course of two weeks at the Université Libre de Bruxelles in Belgium.

The summer school is an initiative of the Odysseus Network which is based at the University and which focuses on the legal aspects of the movement of Europeans and third country nationals within Europe. It was initially created in 1998, with the financial support of the European Commission and is currently engaged in the monitoring of 10 new directives in the area of immigration and asylum policy.

The summer course this year was assisted by an eclectic and multinational group of some 120 students and professionals who are engaged in this area. On the first day of the course, we had an inaugural lecture given Mr Franco Frattini, Vice President of the European Commission, responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice, in which he elaborated his hopes and plans for the future of immigration policy within the EU, and highlighted the growing sensitivity and relevance of the issue. Unfortunately we were unable to pose questions, but his ideas were certainly interesting, and seemed potentially very promising under the Portuguese presidency.

The course consisted of approximately 45 hours of lectures, covering an extremely broad number of sub-topics. The attendants were divided into an English-speaking and Francophone group, and the lectures ran parallel on the same topics, with some only available in English. The orators included lawyers, commissioners, professionals, politicians and university lecturers, each an expert in the area. In general, this were very productive. However, as many of the orators themselves observed, the topic is very broad, so perhaps too much was attempted in a very brief time, and therefore it was difficult to really address certain issues in depth. Also, the course was entirely based upon lectures, with no opportunity to form working groups or to engage with the issues on a practical level.

The course also included a screening of the film “Refugee All Stars”, which is an excellent documentary of the progress of a group of asylum seekers who form a band and travel from one refugee camp to another trying to raise spirits and encourage repatriation.

The course was concluded by a visit to the European Parliament, including a talk on the workings of the EU and in particular on the development of immigration policy.

Overall, I felt that although this course had some flaws, such as those mentioned above, overall it was very informative and interesting.

Clare Langford

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN BRUSSELS AND VIENNA:SUMMER SCHOOL

In July, the Institute for European Studies, affiliated to the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and the Diplomatiese Akademie Wien and Universitat Wien, organised their fourth summer school on European decision making. The first week at the IES covered visits to the European and the Belgian Parliaments and the Council of the European Union, as well as seminars from experts of the European Union. The program was quite exhaustive with seminars on decision making in the Common Foreign and Security Policy framework by Sven Biscop from the Royal Institute for International Relations, Egmont, Brussels. Pascal Lefebvre, Legal Officer on Institutional Issues in the European Commission, gave a talk on the role of the Secretariat General of the European Commission. Conflict theory and negotiation practices were also presented at the end of the first week in preparation for the main event of the second week, in Vienna. The interlude was an overnight train trip from Brussels to Vienna, during which students could socialise with one another and discuss forthcoming challenges.

The last week of July in Vienna went very fast. A series of seminars on the European Union and European Commission Constitutional documents and on economics of EU integration, was followed by a simulation of the negotiations of the European Council based on a fictitious case of an ethnic conflict in Africa. It was the most realistic pedagogical exercise one could perform, but very exhausting. It nevertheless gave a good insight into how negotiations between twenty seven member countries of the European Union, are really prepared. Surprisingly enough, the challenge was to get to a general understanding, mainly in the antechamber of the Council itself. So, there were thirty students from eighteen different countries, trying to defend their national positions, and yet still arrive at a common European one, to be presented on the international scene. The case itself appealed not only to students from UNMIK Kosovo, FYROM and Cyprus who might have experienced similar conflicts in their countries, but also others who might have followed this type of negotiation through the media. The interest of the exercise, for both types of students, consisted

in being personally involved in dealing with institutional representation of hypothetical national positions and get through it with others doing the same.

The simulation's main difficulty was to get to an agreement between several countries. Nonetheless, some problematic situations were engendered by students having to understand their roles and to play them, at the same time. The information contained in the seminars of the first week had to be assimilated and applied to a real case exercise. One very busy day of negotiations showed how difficult it can be to take a common decision in third pillar cases. The last part of the exercise was a press conference held by the President of the Council, the national representatives of the presiding country and the Commission. It needed to encompass all the abilities of patience and politeness but also simulation in order not to reflect internal tensions that might have come up during the negotiations. Very tired, and having received the Certificate of Participation, the students could enjoy some Austrian champagne. Around the bubbling glasses they gained the best lesson to be learnt from the summer school: behind the institutional roles, there are people. A common understanding of the fundamental idea of the decision making process in the European Union, the so important consensus, emerged in its mostly apparent way at this last event of the summer school.

Esmerelda Gassi