

irenews



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Powerful or powerless?

The process of decentralisation and regionalisation – especially in eastern and south-eastern Europe – shall be continued even without the EU-Reform Treaty. The strengthening of the regions and communes is part of the transformation process of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. The question in how far this process of regionalisation has advanced, how powerful regions and cities have actually become by now, shall be topic of a scientific symposium, which the Institute of the Regions of Europe is going to hold in Salzburg on 26 August 2008. Are city halls and regional seats of government centres of power or of powerlessness?

(1) Seat of government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Novi Sad, (2) seat of the regional government of Varaždin, (3) city hall of Lviv, (4) city hall of Wroclaw, (5) city hall of the Romanian city of Iasi, (6) premises of the South Moravian Region in Brno



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Opportunities for making contacts



With the 2nd Conference on the future of regional airports the Institute of the Regions of Europe has again taken up a red hot topic for the regions and cities. Numerous regions and cities, especially in eastern and south-eastern Europe, have to take urgent decisions on investments in their airports and are in many cases searching for financially strong partners for that. Well operating, safe airports are the base for the connection of regions to the world, which fulfils an important precondition for investors, for the settling of enterprises and for the creation of jobs.

As member of the supervisory board of the prosperous regional airport of Salzburg "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" I compliment the IRE on this very successful conference. It featured not only highly interesting reports but it also gave ample opportunities for making contacts between airport managers and interested investors.

General Roland Ertl
Member of the IRE Advisory Board

„We want to be a S

Interview with the President of the Region of South Bohemia, Jan Zahradnik

The Region of South Bohemia became a member of the Institute of European regions last year. What was your biggest motivation?

Zahradnik: The Region of South Bohemia is the second largest region in Czech Republic and wants to be seen together with it's neighbours as a strong European region. Therefore our foreign partners are for us very important, above all Upper and Lower Austria and Lower Bavaria. It's not only our history, that joins us but also close economic and political interrelationships and a huge number of cultural, touristic, and even educational, traffic or public health projects. Together with Upper Austria we prepare e.g. project Healthacross with the aim to connect health care in neighbour regions and to find possibilities for the Czech and Austrian health care institutions to cooperate in the most effective and flexible way mainly for the wealth of the people in the boarder regions. In the area of education we support e. g. inception of cross-border educational branches and at the same time cooperation with South Bohemia University and Linz University, eventually Passov University.

We acceded to IRE because we have an interest in support of the growing significance of regions in the European Union. The regions can in the best way care about their citizens and favourably conditions by infrastructure for enterprise that leads to a growing number of work places or by social services and education. Regions are also important creators of sustainable cultural heritage. We would like to acquaint activities of member regions, participate their knowledge, to learn and to couch and instill in different levels for our joined interests.

Which of your projects do you think has the most importance?

Zahradnik: One of the most significant projects in the Region of South Bohemia with the largest added value is improvement of trans-european infrastructure. We are the initi-

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www.institut-ire.eu

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Insofar as this publication features only personal designations in their gender-specific forms, they relate – insofar as this can be considered with regard to the content – to men and women on equal terms.

Strong European Region“

ators of developing the concept Eurocorridor North –South, aiming improvement of motorways and railways between Baltic and Adriatic see across middle Europe. Its route covers thirteen European regions – and that is a significant number. The project gained an assistance of European Parliament and European Commission, when in 2004 its railway offset was chosen among other thirty most important projects of transeuropean infrastructure net. We are trying to transit the experience with implementation of this concept from Brussels to common infrastructure politics. As a member of the Committee of the Regions I can gain from the cooperation with European Parliament and European Commission, or more precisely with Jacques Barrot, who was until recently responsible for infrastructure. A very significant project of the Region of South Bohemia is as well the usage of the former army airport in the centre of the region close to the town České Budějovice for civil purposes and also ship transport on the river Vltava in direction to Praha. Already now we have a license for international service airport and suppose that together with investors we will succeed in building a modern regional airport in the south of Czech, that will be serving to further development of tourist trade.

You indicated activities in Brussels. Do you have sufficient number of capacity – e.g. an own office in Brussels?

Zahradnik: Four years ago the Region of South Bohemia opened its Permanent office in Brussels, which provides the region apart from representation and foul territory for politic and business activities, above all direct contact with European institutions and a possibility of monitoring of European politics and legislation and it also helps to develop projects. At the same time as a member of the Committee of the Regions, I actively work for the section Commission for Territorial Cohesion (COTER). I achieved a real success when I prepared, as correspondent, a standpoint for notification to European Commission for interim evaluation so-called White book

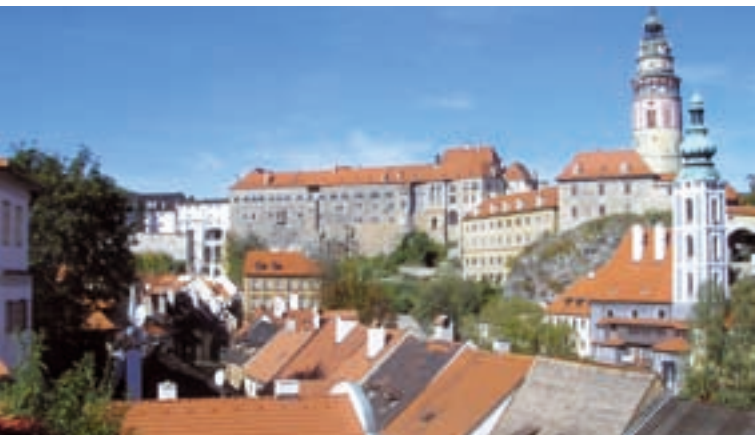


The President of the Region of South Bohemia, Jan Zahradnik

about European infrastructure politics. At present I am involved in the theme concerning cohesion politics, above all in the field cross-border territorial cohesion. As a border region we appreciate the idea of „Europe without borders“ and I can see here an interesting area for more expressive engagement in Brussels. Now we actively prepare ourselves for Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. In the Region of South Bohemia will take place an informal conference of ministers of foreign affairs and we also make an effort to organise a meeting of the Committee of the Regions and a conference about surmounting borders 20 years after the fall of the iron curtain and 5 years after our entry in the EU. We prepare also other surprises not only here but also in Brussels. Our goal is to show during our presidency, that as newcomers in the EU our country has played a big dignified role in longer and more important European history.

What can the Region of South Bohemia offer to its visitors?

Zahradnik: The Region of South Bohemia is known for its well preserved nature and whole range of historic sights. It offers during the whole year to its visitors sightseeing and active holiday. We have a good class of cyclo-path net and easy traffic connections so-called „cyclo-bus“, which will bring visitors from larger towns in the summer season directly into beautiful south Czech nature. Cyclist can chose e.g. between demanding routes in Šumava or Novohradské Hory, or mild routes around Třeboň ponds. With no barrier and cross boarder Czech Republic offers, after it's entry to Schengen, cyclo-routes and these are extending. Very popular are trips in canoe or raft on Vltava. Summer residence in „south see“ as we call Lipno lake, offers many occasions and sport adventures and in winter Lipno surroundings represent a paradise for skiers. Nowadays we concentrate on new activities and offer new routes suitable for in-line skates or nordic walking. In our area there are also two UNESCO sights – Holešovice and Český Krumlov. Not only these two places but a whole range of South Bohemian towns trot out with historic sights and invite to lovely traditional celebrations with crafts and folkish music. The Tourist Authority of South Bohemia can offer information for tourist on www.jiznicechy.cz



Český Krumlov is one of the most beautiful historic cities in the Region of South Bohemia.

Expansion and increasing Importance



F. I.: Mr. Toepel and Mr. Růžička



General (ret.) Roland Ertl; Mr. Kutschi, UFIS, and Mr. Schmalwieser, UFIS



Mr. DiClaudio; Expresso GmbH; Mr. Fabián; Union for Development of the Moravian-Silesian Region; Ms. Hajadová, Alpine

Due to the success of the 1st conference on regional airports in 2005 the Institute of the Regions of Europe decided to conduct such a conference anew in Ostrava in proven cooperation with the Moravian-Silesian region. The point now is to analyse how regional airports – especially in eastern and south-eastern Europe – have developed over the last three years, which effect EU policies and to use positive experience of successful regional airports for development prospects of upcoming regional airports. Above all, however, this conference is meant to be a meeting place again for airport managers and operators, investors, service providers, airlines and experts.

by Johanna Jakob

Held on 16 May 2008 in Ostrava (CZ), the IRE-expert conference dealt with the increasing importance of regional airports in Europe and expansion of regional airports. The conference was run in cooperation with the Moravian-Silesian Region.

IRE-Chairman, Dr. Franz Schausberger, and the President of the Moravian-Silesian Region, Evžen Tošenovský, welcomed the participants and speakers of various central European countries.

Among the referees was Czech Minister for Transport, Mr. Aleš Řebíček, for the EU-Commission Mr. Zoltan Kazatsay, Deputy-Director General for Transport, Ms. Alessia di Domenico, Senior Banker EBRD, Mr. Eric Miart from Eurocontrol, Mr. Gunnar Heinemann of Gebrüder Heinemann (a duty free commercial company) as well as representatives of different European regional airports such as Mr. Bubits representing Vienna International Airport, Mr. Lipold from Salzburg Airport Amadeus Mozart, Mr. Ondrich from České Budějovice Airport and Mr. Peović, Director of Dubrovnik Airport.



Mr. Peović, General Manager Dubrovnik Airport and Mr. Beyer, Managing Director Uniconsult Universal Transport Consulting



Mr. Čermák, Headmaster of the Technical University of Ostrava and Mr. Ůlehla, Member of the Parliament of Czech Republic



Mr. Řebíček, Minister for Transport of Czech Republic



Mr. Lukša, Deputy President of the Moravian-Silesian Region



Mr. Smrž, Director of the Institute of Transport, Technical University of Ostrava



Mr. Vaněk, General Manager of Public Relations, Hyundai Czech Republic



Mr. Miart, Programme Manager Eurocontrol

e of Regional Airports in Europe

Minister Řebíček pointed out, that air traffic control, airlines and users benefited much from the liberalisation of the market, which was facilitated by EU. He mentioned also that high fees and taxes handicap civil aviation in penetrating the market.

The representative of European Commission, Deputy-Director General Kazatsay, stated that EU's main issues in air traffic are 1st safety and 2nd security. Concerning regional airports he explained that they have profited considerably from low-cost carriers and help to reduce congestion of hub-airports. He also emphasised that there is a need for enhanced regulatory framework, otherwise there will be a gap between demand and offer since air traffic is expected to double till 2020. Further he argued that airports operate and have to operate as networks! States have to coordinate their transport networks in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Finally, Mr. Kazatsay mentioned a proposal directive on airport charges, a

report on ground handling as well as a comprehensive action plan, which promotes better use of existing and optimised planning of new infrastructure.

Mr. Lukša, the Vice-president of Moravian-Silesian Region, explained that since the beginning of this year the Moravian-Silesian Region is the owner of Ostrava airport. A railway connexion to the airport is planned, however, to leave attractive areas in front of the airport free to better use this link shall be conducted under ground. The idea is an urban gate to the region. For this project an investor is still being searched for.

The representative of Eurocontrol, Mr. Miart, pointed out that main challenges in the future will be delays due to lack of capacity and non optimum use of infrastructure resulting in excess fuel burn and queuing costs. Eurocontrol has so far 83 member states and there is a strong interest in bringing everybody in

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Mr. Kazatsay, Deputy Director General of European Commission; Mr. Řebíček, Minister for Transport of Czech Republic; Mr. Schausberger, Chairman of the IRE; Mr. Tošenovský, President of the Moravian-Silesian Region



Mr. Lempl, Advisor for Transport and Communication, Primorsko-Goranska County; Mr. Schmalwieser, UFIS; Mr. Čermák, Headmaster of the Technical University of Ostrava



Mr. Vykydal, Deputy Minister of Transport of Czech Republic; Mr. Niemeier, Gebrüder Heinemann; Mr. Heinemann, Gebrüder Heinemann; Mr. Peović, General Manager Dubrovnik Airport



Mr. Tošenovský, President of the Moravian-Silesian Region



Mr. Heinemann, Gebrüder Heinemann



Mr. Bubits, Vienna Airport



Mr. Freund, Partner DLA Piper Weiss-Tessbach



Ms. Di Domenico, Senior Banker EBRD



Mr. Kanduth, Deputy Head of Financing Department, Kommunalkredit



Mr. Lipold, CEO Airport Salzburg



Mr. Ondřich, Head of European Projects Dept., Moravian-Silesian Region



Mr. Peović, General Manager Dubrovnik Airport



Mr. Kus, President of Wroclaw Airport



Mr. Toepel, Expert in Regional Airports



There was also ample time to exchange expert-views and experiences on the topic of airport business.

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Europe on board in order to solve problems together.

If air taxes should be low to attract low-cost airlines, airports have to find alternatives to gain money, explains Mr. Heinemann, owner of the duty free commercial company Heinemann. A suitable solution is a sophisticated shopping offer since on average every second customer buys. Walk-through shops attract even more buyers, Mr. Heinemann said. This is also valid for smaller airports, which should make

more use of this source of revenue.

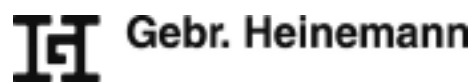
Finally, representatives of various central-European regional airports shared their experiences and made an important contribution to this meeting.

Overall this 2nd IRE-expert conference on regional airports was a great success and got a lot of excellent feedback. Participants as well as speakers were very happy with the exchange of ideas and especially with the contacts they made. A 3rd such conference was requested for the future.

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National Minorities – Challenges for Regional and Local Authorities

On 3 June 2008, a seminar of the Committee of the Regions took place in Slovenska Bistrica where Franz Schausberger, President of the IRE-Board of Directors, pointed out that recognising and protecting the national minorities in the Western Balkans was the key issue in order to secure peace in this region and thus in all of Europe.

In many cases, a national minority in one country is the national majority in the neighbouring country, and vice versa. Each state in South Eastern Europe has a bilateral minority problem with at least two other states; a fact which often creates a considerable potential for conflict. Nationalistic radicalism, which mostly develops on the political level of a state, can be successfully cushioned or avoided by joint, cross border activities in the regions and municipalities. The “European Regions” are a good example for such activities.

The President of Istria, Ivan Jakovčić, reported on the Statute of Istria, which is based on the efficient Croatian Minority Laws and therefore allows all national groups in the region of Istria to coexist in harmony and on an equal footing. The example of Istria clearly demonstrates that the leading politicians have a high responsibility when it comes to national minority issues: Their decisions have the power to either fuel national radicalism or to positively contribute to a peaceful



Franz Schausberger chaired the working group „National Minorities in the Western Balkans Countries – Political, Social and Cultural challenges for Local and Regional Authorities“. Left: Jure Zmauc, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

coexistence of different national majorities and minorities.

The participants of the seminar, which was chaired by the RELEX-President, István Sértő-Radics, pointed out that the recognition and the protection of national minorities is part of the Copenhagen Criteria, which the Western Balkans have to meet in order to join the EU. Making this possible is the joint responsibility of the EU, the states and the regional and local authorities. Therefore it was suggested to define standards for the rights of national minorities, to determine a definition of “national minority”, to provide municipalities and regions with EU-guidelines for the treatment of national

minorities and to establish an EU-award for model initiatives which tackle this issue.



F. l.: Franz Schausberger, Jovan Slavković, mayor of the city of Sombor (Vojvodina), Josip Jurišić, Deputy Mayor of the City of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Frantisek Knapik, Mayor of Kosiče (Slovakia).



Rolf Harlinghausen, Chairman of the Commission for European Affairs, city parliament Hamburg, Franz Schausberger, Andreas Kiefer, head of department for European Affairs, Land Salzburg.



Irena Majcen, Mayor of the city of Slovenska Bistrica and Franz Schausberger.



The castle of Slovenska Bistrica, first mentioned 1311.

IRE Member Region Vukovar-Srijem

On 4 April, IRE-representatives Franz Schausberger, Bernd Petrisch and Joachim Fritz met the President of the Croatian region Vukovar-Srijem, Bozo Galić. They spoke intensively about strengthening the cooperation between the region, which has been member of IRE since January 2008, and the Institute of the Regions.



Franz Schausberger presented Bozo Galić, President of the Region of Vukovar-Srijem, with the official IRE-membership document.

Visit to the Region of Zagreb



On 3 April 2008, the representatives of the IRE, Franz Schausberger, Bernd Petrisch and Joachim Fritz and Anamaria Skopać met the representatives of the region of Zagreb. The meeting took place in Zagreb and was chaired by President Stjepan Kožić (HSS). The Županija Zagreb encompasses the surrounding areas of the Croatian capital Zagreb (which as a city also forms a Županija) with an area of more than 3,000 square kilometres and approximately 300,000 inhabitants. Its administrative centre is Zagreb. Since a great number of people who live in the region work in the capital, Zagreb, daily thousands of commuters give rise to traffic problems and general infrastructural problems, which are to be solved in the future.



The Chair of Župans of Vukovar-Srijem County

IRE-Chairman became Professor



By 1 July, chairman of the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE), former President of Land Salzburg, Univ.-Doz. Dr. Franz Schausberger, was appointed Honorary University Professor of the College of Economics at the University of West Hungary in Sopron. The letter of appointment was handed over to Dr. Schausberger by the vice chancellor of the University, Prof. Dr. Sándor Faragó and by the dean of the college, Prof. Dr. Szekely Csaba in the frame of the graduation ceremony.

In the decision of the academic senate of the University of West Hungary reference was made to Schausberger's teaching activity in the field of EU-History, EU-Institutions and EU-policy at the School of Humanities of the University of Salzburg; further it was referred to his publications as well as to his support of excursions and exchange programmes for students. Franz Schausberger has been lecturer of newer Austrian history at the University of Salzburg since 1992.

The University of West Hungary is one of Hungary's best established universities, which was founded in 1735 and has nowadays 7 faculties and 17,000 students. It is a public university with its main campus in the west Hungarian city of Sopron and further campuses in Győr, Mosonmagyaróvár and Székesfehérvár.

Foto: (from left) Prof. Dr. Szekely Csaba, Rector Prof. Dr. Faragó Sándor, Dr. Franz Schausberger, Vice-Dean Prof. Dr. Fabian Attila

Cooperation with the University of Novi Sad

On 4 April 2008, the President of the IRE-Board of Directors, Franz Schausberger, and the Rector of the University of Novi



Franz Schausberger and the Rector of the University of Novi Sad, Prof. Radmila Marinković-Nedučin

Sad, Prof. Radmila Marinković-Nedučin, signed a cooperation agreement. The cooperation aims at joint scientific research projects in the field of regionalisation, decentralisation, multi-ethnicity of regional and local psephology and in the field of common history during the Habsburg Monarchy. Furthermore, the IRE will offer students of the University of Novi Sad one month internships.

Mr. Schausberger emphasised that not only universities in major European capitals but also those in the regions played an important role in the field of science and research as well as in university teaching. "Situating in the multi-ethnic and autonomous province of Vojvodina with 2 million inhabitants, the University of Novi Sad with its 42,000 students is predestined for a scientific approach to the issue of regionalism", explained Rector Prof. Radmila Marinković-Nedučin. The CENTER FOR ADVANCED EUROPEAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH at the University of Novi Sad will take on the responsibility of proactively maintaining the cooperation with the IRE.

Meeting with the Lord Mayor of Bratislava



On 8 April 2008, the President of the IRE-Board of Directors, Franz Schausberger, and the Secretary General, Joachim Fritz, held a meeting with the Lord Mayor of Bratislava, Andrej Ďurkovský, in the Bratislava town hall. The Lord Mayor, who represents his city in the Committee of the Regions of the EU, informed his guests about the major projects of the city of Bratislava and said that these offered various opportunities to cooperate with the IRE.

Cooperation with the South Moravian Region



On 15 May 2008, IRE-chairman Franz Schausberger and member of the IRE Advisory Board General Roland Ertl met the president of the Czech Region South Moravia (Jihomoravský kraj), Ing. Stanislav Juránek, in the city of Brno. In particular they discussed the possibilities of cooperations between the regional administration of South Moravia and the Institute of the Regions of Europe.

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Cafe d'Europe Regional in Bjelovar and Novi Sad



F. I.: Thomas Glück, Deputy Trade Commissioner, Austrian Chamber of Commerce in Zagreb, Deputy Minister for Tourism, Franz Schausberger, Miroslav Čačija, President of Bjelovarsko-Bilogorska Region, Oskar Benedikt, Counsellor of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Croatia, and Antun Korušec, Mayor of the City of Bjelovar



More than 120 young people participated in the event.



Antun Korušec, Mayor of the City of Bjelovar and Bernd Petrisch, Member of the IRE Advisory Board

On 4 April, 2008 IRE organized a Cafe d'Europe Regional in the town of Bjelovar in cooperation with the Croatian region Bjelovar-Bilogora (Bjelovarsko-bilogorska županija). An audience of approx. 120 interested people, especially young people, came to the event to discuss, which took place in the Café „Zagorje“ and which was perfectly organized thanks to the helping hands of Ms. Iva Vatrov of the region. The participants in the discussions were the Vice Minister of Tourism of Croatia, Miroslav Cacija, the President of the region Bjelovar-Bilogora, Antun Korusec, the Mayor of Bjelovar, Thomas Glück, the Austrian Deputy Trade Commissioner, as a representative of the European Commission, as well as Bernd Petrisch, Member of the regional Parliament and of IRE Advisory Board. The animated discussions reflected the fact that Croatia is willing to do anything in order to become a member state of the EU as soon as possible.

Another Cafe d'Europe Regional took place one day later, on 5 April, in the main



Young People are enthusiastic about Europe



town of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Serbia), in Novi Sad. All rooms of Radio Cafe were filled with approx. 250 participants, mainly young people. Among the participants in the public discussion lead by Predrag Novikov, regarding all the questions on the European Integration were the Speaker of the Assembly of Vojvodina, Bojan Kostres, the Director of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Belgrade, the Member of the German Bundestag Claudia Nolte, the Austrian Trade Commissioner Herbert Preclik, sponsor, IRE-Chairman Franz Schausberger and Bernd Petrisch as well as Vojo Miladić, Managing Director of Porsche Leasing. The event took place deliberately in the sensible period of time following the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo and preceding the important parliamentary and regional elections in Serbia. The lively discussion showed that the attendants are deeply interested in the European direction of their home country. This European friendly behaviour was also reflected later on in the above mentioned elections.



F. I.: Franz Schausberger, Bojan Kostres, President of the Parliament of AP Vojvodina, Herbert Preclik, Austrian Trade Commissioner, and Bernd Petrisch



(l.) Vojo Miladić, Managing Director, Porsche Leasing, (3rd f. r. Claudia NOLTE, Former Federal Minister in Germany, Head of Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, 2nd f. r. Predrag Novikov, Office for European Affairs, Novi Sad and Franz Schausberger



With great interest about 250 people followed the panel discussion.



Several Regional and Local Election

by Franz Schausberger

Since April this year regional and municipal elections have been held in several countries.

The Swiss Peoples Party (SVP) wins the elections in the cantons Schwyz and St. Gallen

On 16 March 2008, elections to the Council of the Cantons and to the Federal Council took place in the Swiss canton of Schwyz. The Council of the Cantons with its 100 members is the legislative body which is elected by the people for a four-year-term according to the principle of the proportional representation.

The Federal Council is the executive body which consists of seven members who are directly elected by the people also for a four-year-term according to the principle of the proportional representation. The president of the council is called Landammann; his substitute is the Statthalter.

In elections to the Council of the Cantons the Swiss Peoples Party (SVP) won 36.7 percent (+7.7) and 41 seats (+14). The Christian Democrats (CVP) were the second strongest party with 29.1 percent of the votes (-2.8) and 29 seats (-5). The Free Democrats (FDP) achieved 19.5 percent (-3.7) and 21 mandates (-3). The Social Democrats (SP) obtained 11.6 percent (-3.5) and 9 seats (-6).



Kanton Schwyz, „Brunnen Mändl“

In the National Council the Christian Democrats gained three seats, the Swiss Peoples Party two, the Free Democrats one seat and the Social Democrats one seat.

On 16 March 2008, elections to the Council of the Cantons and to the Federal Council also took place in the Swiss canton of St. Gallen. The distribution of seats in the Council of the Cantons, which consists of 120 members, is as follows: SVP 42, CVP 32, FDP 23, SP 16, the Green Party (GP)/the Autonomous Party 4, the Evangelical People's Party of Switzerland (EVP)/the Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland (EDU) 2, the Green Liberal Democrats (GLP) 1.

The seven members of the Federal Council are composed of two Christian Democrats, two Free Democrats, two Socialists and one of Swiss Peoples Party's member.

Regional elections in Friuli, Sicily, and the Aosta Valley

On 13 and 14 April 2008, the candidate of the Right Centre (Centro Destra), Renzo Tondo, won the regional elections in Friuli-Venezia Giulia surprisingly clear with a 53.8 percent majority. As a consequence, former regional president, Riccardo Illy, who only achieved 46.2 percent, lost his position which he had been holding since 2003. His left-green party coalition Intesa Democratica also lost its majority in the regional parliament and reached only 46.4 percent and 23 seats. The coalition of the Right Centre (Centro Destra) got 53.5 percent



Renzo Tondo won the Regional elections in Friuli Julia Venetia



Raffaele Lombardo (Movimento per l'Autonomia) won the regional elections in Sicily. With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (l.)

and 34 seats. Silvio Berlusconi's party "Il Popolo della Libertà" (PdL) became the strongest party with 33 percent and 21 seats. The new president of the Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Renzo Tondo, was born in Tolmezzo in 1956. He is married and father of three children. In 1975 he became a member of the municipal council and in 1990 mayor of Tolmezzo. In 1998 he became a member of the regional council of the Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Between 2001 and 2003 he was president of the Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia and later member of the parliament in Rome.

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New regional elections in Sicily were also held on 13 and 14 April 2008, since the former regional president, Salvatore Cuffaro, had been convicted for corruption. The centre-right-coalition supported the leader of the party "Movimento per L'Autonomia" (MpA), Raffaele Lombardo. He won unchallenged with 65.4 percent. The candidate of the centre-left-coalition, Anna Finocchiaro, achieved 30.4 percent. Lombardo was born in 1950, studied medicine, became psychiatrist and began his political career in the Municipal Council of Catania in 1986. He was a member of the Regional Parliament of Sicily, since 1999 he has been member of the European Parliament and from 2003 to 2008 he was president of the Province of Catania.

ns with Different Results



In Aosta Luciano Caveri was reelected President of the region

In the Regional Parliament of Sicily the centre-right-coalition achieved 68 percent and 61 seats and the centre-left coalition obtained 28.6 percent and 19 seats.



Also in the Aosta Valley, an autonomous, multilingual region in Italy, the regional parliament was elected on 13 and 14 April 2008. The official languages in the Aosta Valley are Italian and French and have coequal status.

The Region of Aosta Valley became autonomous on the basis of the special statute it was granted in 1948. The regional council has extensive legislative power and consists of 35 members. There is also a regional commission (regional government), which is headed by the president of the Region.

As regards financial issues, the Aosta

Vally is entitled to 90 percent of the tax income, which means that the Region has annually 12,000 € per inhabitant at its disposal.

As expected, the regional party Union Valdôtaine again won the elections. The coalition of the autonomists with Stella Alpina and the Fédération Autonomiste reached a clear majority of 62 percent and 23 seats. The progressive autonomous coalition obtained 27.4 percent and 8 seats, the centre-right parties achieved 10.7 percent and 4 seats. The 49 year old political scientist, journalist and former member of the EU-Parliament, Luciano Caveri, who has been President of the regional government since 2005, remains in office.

Right-wing mayor in Rome

The Italian local elections, which were also held in April lead to a great deal of changes. 434 mayors and nine regional presidents and regional bodies have been elected. The fact that the right wing mayoral candidate Giovanni Alemanno, who has never denied his past involvement with the neo-fascistic movement, won the runoff election on 28 April 2008 was the most striking result. Currently, Alemanno is a member of the right wing of the former neo-fascistic party Alleanza Nazionale, which is right-conservative oriented. He won 53.7 percent of the votes. The former left-liberal mayor, Walter Veltroni, who two times clearly won the elections, resigned from



The right-wing Candidate Giovanni Alemanno is the new Mayor of the City of Rome.

his office as mayor on 13 February 2008, because of his candidature at the parliamentary elections. Until the day of the elections the left wingers and liberals were hoping that Alemanno's left-liberal opponent, Francesco Rutelli, would win the elections.

The centre-right alliance has now 37 seats in the municipal council of Rome; the centre-left alliance disposes of 22 seats and the Unione di Centro has one seat.

Local elections in England and in Wales: a historical defeat for the Labour Party

The British Labour Party suffered a devastating defeat during the local elections on 1 May 2008 in Wales and in England. Approx. 13.000 candidates struggled for more than 4.000 seats in 159 local councils. The Labour Party lost 331 mandates in the 159 local councils that were nominated for election. The Conservatives, on the other hand, won 256 more seats. With a participation of votes of 24 percent the Labour National Party only remained third strongest political party in the country. The Conservatives were ahead with 44 percent. The Liberal Democrats achieved 25 percent. Labour still has a majority in only 18 local councils compared to the earlier 27, the Conservatives, on the contrary, now control 65 local councils instead of twelve. Altogether, the local elections results of the Labour Party were the worst in 40 years. The Liberal Democrats are the leaders in 34 local councils, in Wales the Nationalists in 33 local councils.

The Labour Party suffered a debacle also in the City of London. The candidate of



Regional Elections 2008 in the Region of Aostatal				
Parties	voters	(%)	seats	difference
Union Valdôtaine (UV)	32.614	44,39%	17	-1
Stella Alpina (SA)	8.370	11,39%	4	-1
Fédération Autonomiste (FA)	4.536	6,17%	2	=
Coalizione autonomista	44.520	61,95%	23	-2
Vallée d'Aoste Vive-Renouveau Valdôtain (VdAV-RV)	9.170	12,48%	5	+5
Partito Democratico (PD)	6.841	9,31%	3	-1
Arcobaleno Vallée d'Aoste (ARC)	4.120	5,61%	0	-3
Coalizione autonomista-progressista	20.131	27,40%	8	+1
Il Popolo delle Libertà (PdL)	7.826	10,65%	4	+1
Centro-destra	7.826	10,65%	4	+1
Total			35	=



Boris Johnson managed to turn around the traditional Labour-Stronghold for the Conservatives.

▷▷▷

the Conservatives, Boris Johnson, won against the Labour officeholder Ken Livingstone. Johnson is Mayor of London. Johnson achieved 53 percent of the votes, Livingstone only 47 percent.

Schleswig-Holstein: Success of free voters

At communal elections within the German federal state Schleswig-Holstein on 25 May 2008, citizens decided on new municipal councils and parliaments in about 1,100 communes, eleven districts and four cities enjoying county status. District administrators and several Mayors stood for elections.

During communal elections Christian Democrats lost countrywide 12.2 points and reached 38.6 percent. Social Democrats got 26.6 percent of votes. This is a minus of 2.8 percent compared to communal elections in 2003. For SPD this is the worst countrywide result ever in communal elections in Schleswig-Hol-



Bernd Saxe (SPD) now is Mayor of the City of Lübeck

stein. The left reached 6.9 percent. The Green party got 10.3 percent (+1.9) and FPD reached 9.0 (+3.3). The „Südschleswigsche Wählerverband SSW“ (alliance of voters in southern Schleswig) achieved 3.0 percent (+0.5). Also „Wählergemeinschaften“ (voters' alliance) gained weight and obtained 5.1 percent (+ 2.5). With 49.5 percent turnout of voters was even lower than it was five years ago.

In Kiel the Christian Democrats Union (CDU) only achieved 28.6 percent of the votes (minus 16.1 percent). The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) is now the strongest political party in the capital city with 31.3 percent (-1.4). All other parties could gain votes. The Greens obtained 16.6 percent (+2.5), the Left 11.1 (+ 10.1/the Left Party. PDS), the Free Democratic Party (FDP) achieved 8.1 (+ 4.5), the South Schleswig Voter Federation (SSW) 1.7 (+0.9) and the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), which ran for election for the first time, 1.7 percent. Thus a representative of this right wing party will also be represented in the County Council of Kiel.

In Lübeck the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) gained 2.7 percent and one seat in the municipal council. It now has 18 seats. The Christian Democrats Union (CDU) fell from 50 percent to 25.5 percent and from 27 to 15 seats. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) rose from 5.2 to 9.4 percent, the number of its seats increased from two to five. The Greens gained some votes as well and increased the number of their seats from four to six. The Greens achieved 11.7 percent and seven seats at first go, the citizens' party "Citizens for Lübeck" (Die Bürger für Lübeck) 11.3 percent and six seats. Another citizens' party achieved one mandate.

About 1,300 free groups of voters run for office during communal elections. Most of them have emerged from action groups and represent most different interests. They benefited from the fact that for the first time there was no five-percent-clause. Free groups of voters are represented in five out of seven district councils. In the City of Flensburg the group „Wir für Flensburg (WiF)“ (We for Flensburg), which emerged from a fight against new hotel building, reached 22.3 percent right from the start and became strongest fraction. The action group „Bürger für Lübeck (BfL)“ (Citizens for Lübeck), a secession from CDU, obtained in the City of Lübeck 13.9 percent right from the beginning.

Vojvodina: the Pro-European Parties won the elections

Parliamentary elections were held for the unicameral Parliament of Serbia's northern Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (member of IRE) on 11 May 2008, with a second round on 25 May 2008.

Lists approved by Provincial Electoral Commission

First round

There were 1,720,818 eligible voters in the first round of the elections, by proportional system:

- For a European Vojvodina, Democratic Party - G17 Plus, Boris Tadić: 33.7 %, 23 seats, +8
- Serbian Radical Party - Tomislav Nikolić: 29.6 %, 20 seats, -1
- Together for Vojvodina - Nenad Čanak: 8.3 %, 5 seats, -1
- Hungarian Coalition - Istvan Pastor: 7.4 %, 5 seats, -1
- Democratic Party of Serbia - New Serbia - Vojislav Koštunica: 5.6 %, 4 seats, +/- 0
- Socialist Party of Serbia - Party of United Pensioners of Serbia: 5.4 %, 3 seats, -1
- Liberal Democratic Party - Čedomir Jovanović: 4.3 %, -
- Civic Group „Maja Gojković“: 2.0 %, -
- Vojvodina is the Strength of Serbia - Mr Igor Kurjački: 0.7 %, -

Second round

There were 1,720,818 registered eligible voters, voting by majority system.

- For a European Vojvodina: 41 seats,

▷▷▷

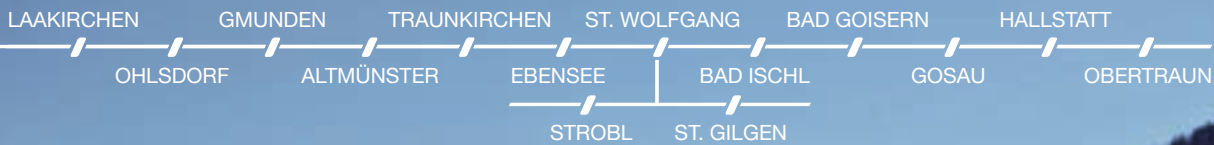


Boris Pajtić with Austrian Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik

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- +20
- Serbian Radical Party: 4 seats, -11
- Hungarian Coalition: 4 seats, -1
- Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia: 2 seats, -1
- Together for Vojvodina: 1 seat, +/-0
- Liberal Democratic Party: 1 seat, +1
- Socialist Party of Serbia: 2 seats, -1
- Civic Groups: 5 seats, +1

**Combined results from both rounds
Number of seats in the assembly:**

- For a European Vojvodina: 64 seats, +28
- Serbian Radical Party: 24 seats, -12
- Hungarian Coalition: 9 seats, -2
- Together for Vojvodina: 6 seats, -1
- Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia: 6 seats, -1
- Socialist Party of Serbia-Party of United Pensioners of Serbia: 5 seats, -3
- Liberal Democratic Party: 1 seat, +1
- Civic Groups: 5 seat, +1

The Coalition „For a European Vojvodina“ led by Democratic Party won the 2008 election and gained absolute majority of seats in the assembly (64 of 120).

Unexpected results in Tyrol

In the election of the regional parliament in Tyrol, which was held on 8 June 2008, the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP) and the Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), which are the major parties, as well as the Greens (Die Grünen) suffered major losses while the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) gained votes. The “Liste FRITZ” which participated for the first time, a group lead by the former ÖVP

Results of the Regional Elections in Tyrol 8 June 2008							
Parties	Year	Voters	+/-	%	+/-	Seats	+/-
ÖVP	2008	128470	-14986	40,44%	-9,46%	16	-4
		2003	143456		49,90%		20
SPÖ	2008	49721	-24859	15,65%	-10,29%	5	-4
		2003	74580		25,94%		9
GRÜNE	2008	33024	-11400	10,40%	-5,05%	4	-1
		2003	44424		15,45%		5
FPÖ	2008	40214	+17233	12,66%	+4,67%	4	+2
		2003	22981		7,99%		2
KPÖ	2008	3739	+1715	1,18%	+0,48%	0	0
		2003	2024		0,70%		
DC	2008	4391			1,38%		0
FRITZ	2008	58113		18,29%		7	



President Herwig van Staa (ÖVP) lost the Tyrolean elections but remained strongest party by far. He was elected President of the regional parliament (Landtag).

President of the *Arbeiterkammer* (the official representation of employees), Fritz Dinkhauser, won 18.3 percent and 7 seats in the regional parliament (Tiroler Landtag). The Austrian Peoples Party lost 9.5 percent and 4 seats, the Social

Democrats lost 10.3 percent and also four seats. The Greens lost one seat, the Freedom Party won two seats. These major changes were mainly triggered by the candidature of the “protest party” FRITZ and by the constantly bad performance of the SPÖ/ÖVP-coalition in Austria which has been going on for quite a long time. The turnout at the election grew from 60.3 percent in 2003 to 62.1 percent in 2008.

**Local elections in Saxony:
victory of the Christian
Democratic Union (CDU)**

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) clearly won the local elections in Saxony on 8 June 2008. The Union dominated the election of the ten new county councils as well as of the ten chief administrative officers of the rural districts and of the mayors. The participation in the elections equalled 46 percent. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) pulled through its candidates for the position of chief administrative officers at first go in six out of ten county councils and it achieved a total of 39.5 percent of votes. Furthermore, it pulled through 123 out of 282 elected mayors after the first round. All in all, 323 mayors were to be elected. In 41 municipalities, where none of the candidates to the mayor position achieved the absolute majority, elections were held again on 14 June. In nine out of ten county councils the left achieved the second-best result during the elections to the chief administrative officer. The left obtained 18.7 percent of the votes thus becoming the



New President of Tyrol

As a result of the elections in Tyrol Günther Platter, who had been Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior, assumed the office of President (Landeshauptmann) of the Region Tyrol. He formed a coalition with the Socialdemokrates.



Helma Orosz (CDU), Mayor of the City of Dresden

second strongest party.

Voters associations achieved 12.1 percent and came in third. The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) came fourth with 11.6 percent. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) obtained 8.3 percent.

Compared to the 2004 elections, the far right wing party of the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) was able to gain votes with now 5.1 percent. The far right wing party of the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) and the Left competed with each other; there was a substantial change of voters between the extreme parties.

The election to Lordmayor was awaited with great tension in the capital city of Dresden where the Christian Democrats Union's Minister for Social Affairs, Helma Orosz, obtained 47.6 percent of the votes and left her seven rivals far behind. Thus the Christian Democrats Union's politician has a good chance to reconquer Dresden for the Union within the second ballot in 14 days.

Local elections had become necessary after the reform of the county councils and of the administration and they acted as a barometer of public mood for the new Christian Democrats Union's Premier Stanislaw Tillich approx. 15 months preceding the elections to the Landtag. After the administrative reform the number of the county councils sinks from 22 to 10, the number of the cities which were so far without county council is reduced from seven to three. The local authorities gain at the same time more competences.

We are going to report on the local elections in Romania from 8 to 17 June 2008 in our next edition.

New Župan of Varaždin

On 20 June 2008, Zvonimir Sabati (HSS) was elected new Župan of Varaždin region by the regional assembly. He has already been Župan of Varaždin county from 1993 to 1995 and from 2001 to 2005. The IRE thanks the former Župan Radminir Čačić (HNS) for his support and for the excellent cooperation.



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Visit to Brussels-Office of new IRE-Member Region Valencia



The delegation of the Spanish region Valencia in Brussels is extremely active in promoting the interests of the region towards the EU-institutions. About 25 people are employed in the Valencia office.

On June 17 Franz Schausberger and Andreas Kiefer met the head of the delegation, Juan Manuel Revuelta Pérez (2nd from left) and his assistant in Brussels.

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