

## THE FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG



EU OFFICE, BRUSSELS



COMMITTED TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.



The FES team in front of the EU Office in the European Quarter of Brussels

The EU Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), with its headquarters in Brussels and activities in Brussels and Strasbourg, was opened in 1973.

The EU Office participates in the European integration process, supports the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany in Europe and contributes to shaping external relations of the European Union.

As an agency of dialogue, education and consultancy, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung thereby fulfils its distinctive role as a 'political network organisation' for and with various European institutions.

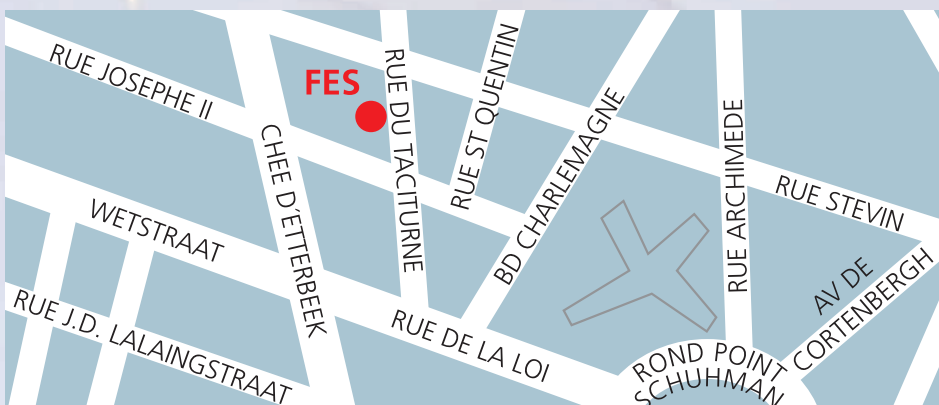
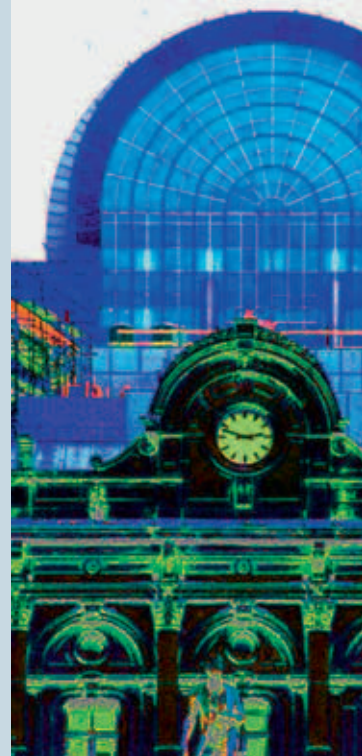
The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's European and worldwide network facilitates political, economic, social and environmental dialogue not only between Germany and Europe and within Europe, but also between Europe and the rest of the world and at global scale.

The EU Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels uses a variety of different means to achieve its objectives: public conferences, closed expert seminars, visitor programmes and working visits for foreign guests, along with various publications such as the "Brussels Focus".

The EU Office works with a large number of partners. First and foremost, these include the European Parliament, the services of the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council, the Office of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. Of course, it also has working contact with the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the representations of other Member States, representations of third countries, representations of the German Bundesländer and representatives of German, other European and international non-governmental organisations and companies in Brussels. NATO is also among its partners. Recent additions to the EU Office's partners include the liaison office of the German Bundestag, the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS).

As key actors in promoting democracy and social justice, trade unions are among the most important partners of the FES in Brussels. Trade union activities, like gender mainstreaming, are also a fundamental concern and cross-cutting issue. The EU Office's trade union-related activities focus on measures with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the European and international Global Union Federations, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung and the liaison office of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB) and other national worker and employee representations in Brussels. The EU Office also acts as a conduit through which the 100 or so German regional trade union projects supported by the FES can contact the Brussels-based representations of the international trade union movement.

The European Parliament in Brussels.



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**Political integration in the EU: political education activities in Strasbourg**

For many of its citizens, Europe is still too distant, abstract and incomprehensible. In order to improve knowledge and understanding of the European integration process, the EU Office of the FES, in co-operation with German MEPs, organises political education programmes at the European Parliament in Strasbourg for trade unions, schools, universities, pensioners' and women's groups and local politicians. This programme reaches thousands of citizens every year, many of whom get to see "Europe in action" for the first time.

The European Parliament in Strasbourg.

**Political integration in the EU: seminars for school journalists**

Fewer and fewer people – particularly young people – feel motivated to participate in European elections and generally to help shape Europe. The press has an important role to play in reducing widespread euroscepticism and bringing European citizens closer to Europe. In this respect, the FES in Brussels organises regular seminars for school journalists presenting the basics of European press work.

School journalists in a simulation about the European Cosmetics Directive.



**Social integration in the EU: European housing policy**

After more than sixty years of peace, citizens in the European Union take peace, security and freedom for granted. The economic and monetary union with the euro as mainstay of European identity is also no longer enough to fuel enthusiasm for Europe. Europe needs a soul: a political and social union in cultural diversity and a sound environment. For this reason, the FES in Brussels primarily promotes strengthening social Europe, which includes decent, affordable and suitable housing.

Conference on social housing in the EU, organised by the FES Brussels and the International Union of Tenants.



**EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy: enlargement policy**

Within just a few decades, the EU has grown from 6 to 27 Member States. The enlargement policy has been the most successful EU instrument ever in terms of stabilising its surrounding regions. However, in the meantime 'enlargement fatigue' has set in particularly with regard to the applicant countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. The prospect of accession nonetheless remains the major incentive for political, social and economic reform in these countries. The FES in Brussels therefore supports these endeavours for change, and regularly offers forums on further development of the EU enlargement strategy.

Arta Dade (former Albanian foreign minister) at the international conference "Are the EU and the Western Balkans Drifting Apart? Bridging the Gaps" in Brussels.



**EU bilateral relations as a force for peace: Sudan**

In the framework of its Common Security and Defence Policy, the EU increasingly takes part in peace missions contributing to crisis prevention and conflict management in third countries. The FES in Brussels complements this commitment by offering forums for political and civil society actors from the disputing parties and representatives of the EU to develop conflict management strategies.

Salva Kiir, President of Southern Sudan, at an FES Brussels event on future political scenarios in Sudan.



**EU strategic bilateral relations: EU-Russia**

The EU maintains a network of bilateral strategic partnerships with global actors such as the USA, Russia, China, India, South Africa and Brazil in order to form alliances to tackle global challenges such as climate change. The FES in Brussels supports the substance and framework of these partnerships.

The opening of the 8th EU-Russia Round Table held by the FES in Brussels Town Hall, the first held in the EU capital.



**EU interregional relations: EU-ACP**

The EU cooperates worldwide with regional organisations such as MERCOSUR and ASEAN. Since 2002, the EU has also negotiated Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the ACP countries in six regional groups, based on the Cotonou Agreement. The negotiation process takes place primarily at intergovernmental level. The FES in Brussels therefore promotes the involvement of non-state actors in the dialogue between the negotiating parties.

A delegation of trade union, parliamentary and private sector representatives from Ghana, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia learn about the EPA negotiation process.



**The EU as a global actor: the global financial architecture**

As the largest contributor of development aid and the most important trade bloc, the EU is already a global actor and advocate of effective multilateralism. With the exception of the WTO, EU Member States are over-represented in all other multilateral organisations – particularly the Bretton Woods institutions – resulting in a cacophony of European voices. Faced with the global financial crisis, the need for the EU to speak with one voice and act on behalf of all Member States has considerably risen. The FES in Brussels supports such reform efforts.

Chinese expert Yu Yongding at a joint FES Brussels/EURODAD event on overcoming the global financial crisis.

