

## THE FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG



EU OFFICE, BRUSSELS



COMMITTED TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



The FES team, EU Office, 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.

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.

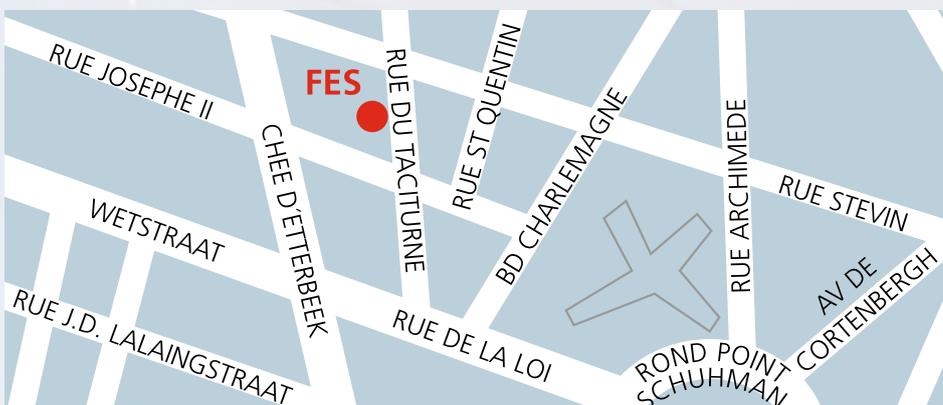
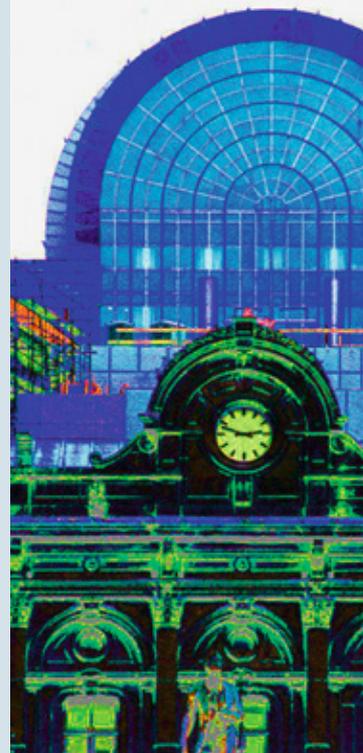
As an agency of dialogue, education and consultancy, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung thereby fulfils its distinctive role as a 'political network organisation' for and with various European institutions.

The EU Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels uses a variety of different means to achieve its objectives: ranging from informal talks to international conferences, closed expert seminars, visitor programmes and working visits for foreign guests and partners, providing advice to political decision-makers as well as producing a range of publications.

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, 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 cooperation 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.

Seminar for school journalists.



**Social integration in the EU: Good jobs for Europe**

After more than sixty years of peace, citizens in the European Union take peace, security and freedom for granted. Following the Euro crisis with its serious implications, the Economic and Monetary Union are also being viewed with increasing levels of scepticism. Europe needs a soul: a political and social union in cultural diversity and a sound environment. For this reason, the FES in Brussels would like primarily to see a strengthening of social Europe, which includes good working conditions and the promotion of job opportunities for young people.

Conference on a Social Europe in cooperation with the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung and the Otto-Brenner-Stiftung.



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

Since being founded, the EU has grown from 6 to 28 Member States. Enlargement policy continues to be the most successful EU instrument ever in terms of stabilising and increasing the democracy in the surrounding regions. Despite its internal crises, the EU still remains a highly attractive prospect for its European neighbours. Rule of Law and respect for fundamental democratic rights as well as a functioning market economy must, however, be the primary criteria for accession so that an enlarged EU can continue to function smoothly. The FES in Brussels supports the EU accession prospects of the Western Balkans and Turkey; the drive is for political, economic and social reform.

A trade union delegation from South-East Europe taking part in a dialogue programme.



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

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. Furthermore it is primarily involved in civilian affairs e.g. by offering financial support for putting in place structures founded on the rule of law, peaceful settlements between groups that were previously at war with one another, technical and logistical support for regional peacekeeping forces etc. 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.

Representatives from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Central Asia in a seminar on future scenarios.



**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.

11th EU-Russia discussion group which took place in February 2013 in Brussels.



**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 civil society representatives from West Africa.



**The EU as a global actor: global peace and security policy**

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. Old and new challenges such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime or climate change and energy security make it clear that developments at national level can have far-reaching consequences for neighbouring and more distant regions and that they can only be tackled through joint transnational action. This means, for example, sharing experiences in the area of security sector reform, alongside the strengthening of international disarmament regimes aimed at offering greater stability to the international security apparatus.

(Retired) General Ashok Mehta attending the conference "A more coherent EU Peace Policy?".

