

## Press review: 20<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010

The European Union warns of permanent water scarcity in some regions. Furthermore, the Reflection Group calls for firm commitment of the Western Balkans' EU accession. Elsewhere, Albanian activists are on hunger strike to struggle for more transparency of the electoral progress.

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### ENoP – EUROPEAN NETWORK OF POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

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## **EU Affairs**

### **EU warns of permanent water scarcity in some regions**

Greater efforts on pricing and efficiency are needed to reverse the over-exploitation of Europe's limited water resources, argues a European Commission report on the EU's strategy to tackle water scarcity and drought.

An effective water pricing policy and water-saving measures are essential to ensure that Europe has enough quality water to meet societal needs and face the challenge of climate change, notes the second follow-up report on the EU's 2007 Communication on Water Scarcity and Drought. The report shows that some member states have begun to suffer "permanent scarcity across the whole country". While the pressure point is currently in the south, with Cyprus experiencing the severest water shortages, the Commission expects water stress to spread to South-East and Central Europe. According to the progress paper, the problem is not limited to Mediterranean countries. The Czech Republic has reported areas with frequent water scarcity, and France and Belgium have reported over-exploited aquifers, it notes.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/sustainability/EU-warns-about-permanent-water-scarcity-in-some-regions-news-494300>

## **Enlargement**

### **EU advisor calls for firm commitment on Western Balkans**

The Reflection Group which recently published a report about the challenges facing Europe between now and 2030 would like 2014 to be the benchmark date by which Western Balkan countries should be given firm assurances on their EU accession, said a member of the group, Kalypso Nicolaïdis.

2014 is a symbolic date as it marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I. "Indeed, we discussed the idea of making 2014 a benchmark date whereby the countries in the region would be given an absolute, firm commitment on accession and a clear road map laying out the last part of the journey," she said. The group "didn't have the room to be more specific" on enlargement. However, she said all the group's members were extremely committed to EU membership for the Western Balkans.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-advisor-calls-for-firm-commitment-on-western-balkans-news-494181>

### **Austerity measures spark mass protests in Romania**

One of the largest mass protests since the fall of Communism in 1989 hit Bucharest yesterday (19 May) after the government announced deep spending cuts, casting doubt over Romania's ability to meet its IMF loan commitments. According to EurActiv Romania, between 30,000 and 50,000 protesters took to the centre of Bucharest, while the trade unions said a general strike would be called on 31 May.

Protesters called on the government to apply austerity measures in a differentiated manner, rather than spreading the burden across the entire population - including retired people - without taking account of low incomes. Under pressure from the IMF, the government promised to slash state wages by 25% and pensions by 15% as part of efforts to secure the release of the next tranche of loans. The leaders of the protests demanded the resignations of President Traian Basescu and Prime Minister Emil Boc.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/euro/austerity-measures-spark-mass-protests-romania-news-494361>

## **Development**

### **Albanians Press Democracy with Hunger Strike**

Since May 1 over 200 people have been on hunger strike in a tent in the centre of the Albanian capital of Tirana supported by rallies of 200,000 protestors and road blocks across the country to press for a recount of last year's parliamentary vote.

Of the hunger strikers 22 are parliamentarians from the Socialist Party (SP), the rest are supporters from across the country. So far 54 people have been forced to give up the strike because of deteriorating health. The strikers struggle for more transparency of the electoral process.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51490>

### **Kazakhstan to Establish Council of Elders**

The Kazakh government says it is planning to establish a Council of Elders. Kazakh Culture Minister Mukhtar Kul-Mukhammed told journalists on May 18 that the council will be created in accordance with the "National Unity Doctrine," the final version of which was approved by President Nursultan Nazarbaev on May 17. Kul-Mukhammed did not specify what responsibilities and functions the new council would have or who would belong to it.

A Council of Elders has existed in Turkmenistan since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and plays the role of an alternative parliament. In Kazakhstan, such a role is currently held by the Assembly of Kazakhstan's Peoples, where members of all the country's ethnic groups are represented.

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Kazakhstan\\_To\\_Establish\\_Council\\_Of\\_Elders/2046102.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Kazakhstan_To_Establish_Council_Of_Elders/2046102.html)

### **Senegal: 'Femmes Africa Solidarite' hails Senegalese bill on parity**

The African women networks and the members of "Campagne, Genre, mon Agenda", coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), on Monday hailed the amendment by Senegalese Parliament of the bill governing absolute parity between men and women in the country's elective bodies.

In a statement made available to PANA on Monday, FAS said the amendment of the bill, which had been announced by Senegalese president, Mr Abdoulaye Wade, on 3 April this year in Dakar, has been welcomed as great step made in favour of Senegalese women's organizations, across all persuasions and party lines. During a panel of African heads of State and governments attending the festivities marking the 50th anniversary of Senegal, President Wade had broadly mentioned the issue of men-women parity in Senegal, wondering why a country would drop half of its population.

<http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/senegal:-'femmes-africa-solidarite'-hails-senegalese-bill-on-parity-2010051849510.html>