

Panel discussion
European Shades of Green
Green Ideas and Political Power in Europe

27 January 2009, 6.30 p.m. till 8.30 p.m.
Zielna Conference Centre, ul. Zielna 37, Warsaw

In Western Europe Green political parties have been present in politics for a few decades now and they shape the politics on both, a national and European level. The turning point that led to the establishment and the development of the West European Green Parties was the 1968 student revolt and the wave of new social movements that resulted from it. In the former Soviet bloc, however, the protest movements lacked this dimension - only after 1989 was it possible to create the first ever Green parties that have become politically more visible and active in recent years.

Common historical experience is ascribed to the “new” member states of the European Union. The weakness of Green political forces in these countries is often explained by the means of the “post-socialist syndrome”. In spite of the fact that the acceptance of “green” values such as ecology, equal rights or democratic freedom is growing in the post-socialist societies, most of the Greens in the new EU member states have not managed to enter politics. In this context, the weakening Green representation on the European level can also be seen as a consequence of EU enlargement.

At the same time, it is not easy to find a clear common denominator for the development of the Greens in the former socialist countries. Most of the parties, among them the Polish Greens (Zieloni 2004) exist only as an extra-parliamentary opposition having a marginal influence on political processes. However, some of them, for example the Greens in the Czech Republic (Strana zelených) and Estonia (Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised) have managed to enter parliaments or even government (as in the Czech Republic).

Shortly before the oncoming elections to the European Parliament the future of Green political movements seems rather unclear. In this context, the discussion with representatives of Green parties from Poland, the Czech Republic and other member states of the EU will be focused on the following questions:

- What common ground exists between the Western European Green parties and the post-socialist ones in the new EU member states, despite the differing history and historical experiences? Can the Greens from the former Soviet bloc use the recipe of success of the Western Greens in order to strengthen their position? What are the reasons for the differences in the development of the Green parties from the new member states of the EU?
- What was decisive for the success of the Greens in the Czech Republic? Is the success of the Czech Greens an “accident” or a signal of a need for Green politics in the developing democracies in Central and Eastern Europe?
- Do the Green parties from the post-socialist countries have a chance to establish themselves stronger in European politics? Will the oncoming elections to the European Parliament change the disadvantageous for the Greens balance of political power on the EU level or will it confirm the current status quo?

Speakers:

- **Ulrike Lunacek** - Member of Parliament of Austria (National Council), member of Austrian Green Party Die Grünen, co-chairwoman of the European Green Party, board member of the Green European Foundation
- **Ladislav Vrchovský** – Board member of the Czech Green Party Strana zelených
- **Dariusz Szwed** – Co-chairman of the Polish Greens, Zieloni 2004
- **Dr Przemysław Sadura** - Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

Chairman: Jacek Żakowski - journalist and feature writer, “Polityka”, Poland

The conference will be held in **English and Polish** with simultaneous translation. We invite you to join us for a glass of wine after the event.

Please **confirm your participation** in the event and, if necessary, the need for childcare, either by e-mail hbs@boell.pl or by telephone (022 594 23 33).