

Report on the fifth ELF training for coalition managers in Western Balkans

The fifth event of the ELF's „Train the Coalition Managers“ serial, a workshop titled „Keeping a Coalition intact and profiting from it, ex-post evaluation of the Coalition, making a stay-or-go decision“, was held in Novi Sad, Serbia, on 22-24.06.2018, facilitated by the FNF Western Balkans Office.

Participants included high-ranking members of the liberal political parties IDS, GLAS and Pametno from Croatia, which have lately functioned as a political block-in-making and prepared to run as electoral fusion ticket alliance at several future ballots at various tiers.

The lecturer and resource person Manfred Richter from Germany presented FDP's and a few other FNF's partners' experience in coalition maintenance. Focus was on balancing the often opposing needs - to keep the coalition acted as one and at the same time maintain the identity and visibility of coalition partners (especially junior ones). Importance and practical ways of division of roles between the government ministers, parliamentary clubs and party bodies were elaborated into detail. Various ways of communication, within the coalition or coalition member-parties, or towards general public, was also dealt with. Experience in leaving dysfunctional coalitions - German or Croatian - was also analyzed.

Igor Kolman from the GLAS presented a role-model coalition agreement from Germany, with his own analysis of its applicability in Croatia. Participants from the three parties discussed ways on how to use FDP's experience in drafting their own agreement and how to handle their programmatic differences (especially regarding regionalization issue). These were done both in plenary and in a small multi-party working group.

Finally, participants entered a roll play, simulating a discussion on an important yet controversial national-politics' issue to do at the same time with health care, rule of law and human and property rights. They practiced advocating their own views and getting to a common ground through various compromises.

This workshop was the last of the three events envisaged for this group of parties, where after their further coalescing endeavor shall be implemented trilaterally, while in occasional additional consultation with FNF experts.