SHORT REPORT

Regional Expert Networks – Policy Development and Manifesto Writing

Place & Date: Hotel Astra Garni, Sarajevo/ April 6-8 2018

Organizers: *Regional Expert Networks* project is implemented by the European Liberal Forum with the support of the International Educational Center, the Haya van Someren Stichting/ VVD International, IDI/ D66 International, Centre Party International Foundation, Novum Institute and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

The Boris Divković Foundation contributed to the programme and facilitated the organization of the event.

Objective: Regional Expert Networks programme builds on outputs of the Regional Academy in Southeast Europe that created a regional framework for best practices exchange in party organization, campaigning and communications in 2016. In 2017, Regional Academy focused on developing a pool of local trainers, which will be engaged as moderators of regional seminars and workshops this year.

The first in the series of Regional Expert Networks events brought together policy advisors, legal affairs associates and other experts on policy development from liberal parties from Southeast Europe. They were joined by experts from partner organizations who shared their experiences in developing party programs, creating policies and communicating them to the public.

Summary of contributions:

First event of the Regional Expert Networks was moderated by **Maša Kociper**, vice-president of the Social Liberal Alliance (Slovenia) who participated and graduated from the Regional Academy for Liberalism ToT programme in 2017. She was joined by policy development experts **Nanda Kelly** from VVD and **Robert Farla** representing D66.

On Friday, the event began with a round of introductions and energizer games. Afterwards, the trainers led the participants in an exercise in which they discussed their goals and expectations for the weekend.

On Saturday, the programme covered 3 sessions: *Organization of manifesto writing process (Nanda Kelly)*, *Defining and communicating the political party's priorities (Robert Farla)*, *Pitching your party programme to your members exercise (Maša Kociper)*

The first session required the participants to present the policy cycle in their party after which Nanda explained the theory behind the cycle and how manifesto writing is organized in the party. Following

this, there was a practical exercise in which participants needed to formulate a task for the drafting team of their party. In defining and communicating the political party's priorities session, Robert presented the case study of D66 and how its political restart involved clearly defining and positioning the party in terms of policy priorities (radically progressive, focus on education, staunchly pro-EU).

In the conclusion of the day, participants had a writing exercise in which they developed and presented a program, including its structure, topical priorities and detailed paragraph on one primary topic.

On Sunday, participants were involved in the final session on communication of policy proposals and concluded on the session of evaluation and feedback.

Participants: 20 representatives of liberal parties in SEE region joined by policy experts from VVD and D66 and one local trainer trained in the Regional Academy programme 2017.