

Meco zur EU-Verfassung

Am Dienstag hatte der Mouvement écologique seine Mitglieder zu einem Diskussionsabend über den Lissabon-Prozess und den EU-Verfassungsentwurf eingeladen. Der Generalsekretär des Europäischen Umweltbüros, John Hontelez, führte in die Lissabon-Problematik ein, wobei er vor allem die Stoßrichtung des Kokberichts lobte. Martin Rocholl, Direktor von Friends of the Earth (FOE), skizzierte den Entstehungsprozess des EU-Verfassungsentwurfs aus der Sicht der UmweltschützerInnen. Aus einem katastrophalen Entwurf Giscard d'Estaings sei ein zumindest in den beiden ersten Teilen akzeptables Dokument geworden. Es gab aber auch Kritik: Die Einstimmigkeit im Steuerbereich etwa, mache europaweit geltende Ökosteuern unmöglich. Vor allem die Integration des dritten Teiles in den Entwurf - im Wesentlichen handelt es sich hier um die Vorgängerverträge der Union - sei aus umweltpolitischer Sicht ein Rückschlag, der trotz heftiger Lobbyarbeit nicht mehr verhindert werden konnte. FOE, zu dessen Mitgliedern der Meco gehört, wird keine Aussage zum Wahlverhalten anlässlich der einzelnen nationalen Referenden zum Verfassungsentwurf machen, sondern beschränkt sich auf eine Bewertung der umweltrelevanten Passagen im Text. Rocholl, der als deutscher Staatsbürger selber nicht abstimmen darf, befürwortete persönlich eher ein strategisches Ja, da der Text die Möglichkeit biete, nachhaltige Entwicklung europaweit weiter fortzuschreiben. Der Meco will seinen Mitgliedern anlässlich seiner Jahresversammlung am 18. März eine Resolution vorlegen, die sich ebenfalls nur mit den Umweltaspekten befassen wird. Eine ähnliche Aussage kommt auch von Greenpeace-Luxemburg: Der Text enthalte Positives, doch stellten sich in Sachen Atomenergie und Friedenspolitik eine Reihe von Fragen. Damit setzt sich die Luxemburger Sektion von Greenpeace übrigens von ihrem europäischen Büro ab: Das befürwortet den Verfassungstext.

Konservatives Konservatorium

Gleichberechtigung, Emanzipation und Selbstbestimmung - diese Begriffe haben rund um den 8. März, den internationalen Frauentag, alljährlich Hochkonjunktur. Wie inhaltslos diese Wörter indes für viele immer noch sind, zeigt ein Vorfall, der sich vor kurzem am Konservatorium ereignete. Da hatte eine Studentin eine Prüfung in der Diktion, also in der Aussprache ausländischer Texte, abzulegen. Und siehe da: Ihrer Prüferin fiel nichts Besseres ein, als sie darauf hinzuweisen, dass der Text von Voltaire mit Stöckelschuhen sicher viel schöner geklungen hätte. Dessen nicht genug: Einer anderen (Leid-)Geprüften gab dieselbe Madame die Empfehlung, sich doch bitte zu schminken. Ganz abgesehen davon, dass Voltaire (1694-1778) die neuzeitliche Schuhmode kaum gekannt haben dürfte - was haben Stöckelschuhe und Wimpertusche mit der richtigen Aussprache französischer Texte zu tun?, fragen wir uns. Und: Stöckeln auch Männer im Konservatorium auf High-Heels in die Diktions-Prüfung? Da outet sich besagte Lehrerin doch als ziemlich konservativ.

Krecké pusht Softwarepatente

Große Empörung herrscht im Europaparlament und bei NGOs nach dem EU-Wettbewerbsrat vom vergangenen Montag. Unter dem Vorsitz von Luxemburgs Wirtschaftsminister Jeannot Krecké hat der Rat überraschend eine Position zu Gunsten der Patentierbarkeit von Software abgesegnet. Die von mehreren Ministern geforderte vorhergehende Diskussion wurde abgeblockt. Es geht um die umstrittene Richtlinie zu Softwarepatenten, die eine Gefahr für das Überleben kleiner Unternehmen und der "freien Software" darstellt. Anfang Februar hatte das Europaparlament deshalb eine vollständige Überarbeitung des Richtlinien-Entwurfs gefordert. Innerhalb der Kommission gab es Uneinigkeit, ob man hierauf eingehen sollte. Der Ratsbeschluss stärkt die AnhängerInnen der harten Linie. Der Richtlinien-Entwurf soll nun ein zweites Mal dem Parlament vorgelegt werden - das möglicherweise wieder dagegen stimmen wird. Als Erstes wird der Rechtsausschuss prüfen, ob der unter zweifelhaften Bedingungen zustande gekommene Ratsbeschluss überhaupt rechtskräftig ist.

"I am not very political but in Israel it is almost impossible not to be political", says Elena Canetti, a lesbian amateur film maker, who visited Luxembourg's gay and lesbian film festival last weekend.

(photo: private)



GAY & LESBIAN

Vision: coexistence and tolerance

woxx: *You're a lesbian and you live in Jerusalem, the holy city of the three monotheistic religions, which is said to be very conservative. That doesn't sound too comfortable.*

Elena Canetti: Jerusalem is a special city; a third of the population are orthodox Jews, who live a very strict and traditional way of life. Like the orthodox members of the other two religions they of course consider homosexuality a terrible sin, which should be punished with death. On the other hand, there have been a lot of developments in the past years in terms of gay rights, especially in the secular parts of the country. To be gay in Tel Aviv is almost as normal as in New York, but to be gay in Jerusalem is seen as somehow blasphemous.

What is it like to be lesbian or gay in Israel in general?

I am personally out of the closet at work. I don't have any problems and my girlfriend enjoys the same rights as any other spouse. On the political level it was in the middle of the 1990s that a lesbian woman and a gay man entered the Israeli parliament for the first time. They spoke openly about their orientation and demanded equal rights. This was a major breakthrough. Since then many things have happened. A law from 1995 forbids discrimination because of sexual orientation. Israel is a very traditional society with a huge orthodox religious community, but from the legal point of view our situation is not bad at all.

You even have a centre for gays and lesbians, the Open House, right in the middle of Jerusalem.

Yes. Before the opening of the Open House in 1999 there was no such place in Jerusalem where gays and lesbians could meet. Marches like the ones we had in the past few years were unthinkable. We wanted to have all that in Jerusalem because it is a public statement; we are gay in a very religious city and it is possible to be gay and Jewish, gay and Muslim.

The Jerusalem Open House

is really an open place with Jews, Christians, Arabs, religious and secular people. But politically speaking aren't those groups strongly opposed, or even enemies?

Of course it is a delicate situation. When I came to Israel I lived in Tel Aviv, which is very secular. So when I moved to Jerusalem I was pretty scared of all those religious people. When I came to the Open House for the first time and met religious lesbians there I almost fainted. I thought, 'this is a contradiction'. I then discovered that they are people just like me. Religious is a broad term; you don't have to dress in black and practice the orthodox way of life. We have many religious people at the Open House and we get along very well together. There is a lot of tolerance.

What about political discussions, do you avoid them?

The Open House is apolitical. Since we respect each other's ways of life there is no tension. Nevertheless, it is true that when you talk about politics secular people tend to be identified more with left-wing parties and religious people more with right-wing parties, although that is not always the case. Religious people very often support the idea of Israel as one big state including all the occupied territories, also those from before 1967. We decided that, as this is our major problem and the one which is dividing Israel's soci-

ety, we must keep it out of the House. Of course there can be political lectures and debates, but the Open House itself has no party affiliation. Otherwise we might lose a lot of the gay people.

So what do you do, concentrate on gay topics instead?

Our house is not a bar or a party place. There are movies and lectures about art and literature, relating to gay culture. We have a group of Russians as a result of the huge wave of Russian immigration to Israel. We also have a more activist area, which is related to gay rights. If somebody is harassed by the police or discriminated against at work or by government officials they can always call the Open House. We have a team of gay lawyers who give legal advice for free. We also have a health program. With the help of a hospital in Jerusalem we provide anonymous and free of charge HIV-testing.

In August you will also host the World Pride 2005 - against the will of your city mayor Uri Lupolianski. Or has he changed his mind?

No. Lupolianski is ultra-orthodox and the religious party puts pressure on him to act against this "abomination" as they call it. He is trying to build up a front of all three religions against us. But from a legal point of view there is not much he can do. The only institution

that can ban marches or demonstrations by any organization is the police. They may only do so for security reasons, not for political ones.

You already had pride marches, in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

Yes, reality shows that they did not succeed in stopping this. To tell you the truth, the police have been very cooperative. We had wonderful security measures. Absolutely nothing happened, and those were the worst years of the Intifada. I know this may sound strange, but the situation in Israel and in Jerusalem is that you just can't have a mass event without massive police forces guarding you.

That does sound scary.

For people in Europe it probably is terrible to turn on the TV and to see bombs exploding in discos and buses. It certainly is very scary. But people in Israel are living almost normal lives. Everything is open, cinemas, theatres and restaurants. Tourists are starting to come again, mainly from the United States and Germany. I was told that there is also a Luxembourg group of gays planning to come to our pride march.

One of the coordinators of the Jerusalem pride march in 2002 died in a bomb attack. Doesn't that affect you and your work in the Open House a lot?

Every time a bomb explodes in Jerusalem it is not only Jews who die. Usually Arabs get killed too. The bomb doesn't discriminate according to religion. So I don't feel any anger towards my Arab friends from the Open House. They would never try to achieve freedom through violence. And we must not forget the horrible things happening in the occupied territories every time our army kills innocent people. We all understand that it is a terrible situation we are living in. What we must never do is to start hating each other or to stop saying 'hello' which in Hebrew is very significant because the Hebrew word for 'hello' is 'shalom', which means 'peace'. We, especially Jews and Arabs, have a message to bring to the people: The most important vision is tolerance, coexistence and pluralism.

That vision sometimes seems to be very much out of sight.

It is true that Palestinians and Jews like me understand that we have to have two different countries with two separate governments and capitals. Still that doesn't mean we have to be behind a huge wall not seeing each other.

But the wall exists.

Yes, but I am confident, and I hope that I won't be proved wrong, that with the new Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas even a conservative right-wing prime minister Ariel Sharon understands that today he has a partner for peace. In fact, Sharon is already starting to act; he is releasing prisoners, he is pulling out from Gaza. I am sure that it will take some years, but Palestinians will then be able to come to Israel again.

And the Israelis?

Whether Israelis will go to the Palestinian side, well, that I don't know. That might take a long time.

Interview: Ines Kurschat

Elena Canetti:

Elena Canetti (42) was born in Montevideo/Uruguay. She moved to Israel at the age of 20. Canetti studied film and television at Tel Aviv University. She started making films herself. Today she is vice-president of a marketing company at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem - and an amateur-film maker. Her films - she showed two of them in Luxembourg during the "Transculturelles gays et lesbiennes" - are mostly autobiographical ... and in a certain way very political. In 2000 Canetti joined the Open House, which is a meeting place for gay, lesbian, transsexual and bisexual Israelis and Arabs. She is also co-organizing the second World Pride 2005 that will take place in Jerusalem in August. Under the motto "love without borders" gays, lesbians and their friends from all over the world will gather in Jerusalem for activities such as a big parade, a film-festival, theatre, concerts, the New York Theatre Ballet, parties, etc.