

24 March 2016

Christian Scharling, IFLRY President

Copenhagen (DK)

Dear Liberal Friends and Colleagues,

It feels 'special' to be filing my last Bureau Report as a member of the IFLRY Bureau and indeed even more so as President. Hopefully my 'IFLRY-ride' is not over, though it will not anymore be behind the steering wheel that I will make my contributions to our Federation.

I am proud of what we as a Federation have accomplished together in the past years. We have given our almost 70-years-young organization an overhaul. Just a few years ago, our financial and organisational capacities was at a dangerous low – we have made great progress in securing this organisation for the future. As such, we have; doubled our funding available for administration and statutory events, reviewed and cleaned out our membership list(s), got even more global, kept a high educational level, strengthened our advocacy efforts. The list is long.

When I first met IFLRY back in 2009, I saw so much potential. Despite everyone's cultural and liberal differences, we somehow all unite and believe in this international movement and network. Anyone who have been active in IFLRY knows what special 'bond', I'm talking about. I finally believe we have been able to realize a lot of this potential, although IFLRY can still do more. That's the beauty of IFLRY, as we grow better, we can do even better.

Since our Executive Committee in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, we had a joint Bureau and Programme Managers Meeting in Paris, France. The joint meeting took place following the COP21, which finally saw an international agreement happen on combatting climate change. I'm very happy with these yearly joint meetings, as they truly are able to 'kick-start' both the Bureau and the Programme Managers ahead of the following year. I hope in the future, also Regional Bureau Members will be able to attend these meetings.

On the advocacy side, I attended the ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York in beginning of February. The Youth Forum looked at how youth organisations can help implement the newly adopted worldwide Sustainable Development Goals. We were invited to speak at one panel on youth participation and helped co-organize another joint ICMYO panel. Both underlining our increased importance in the international youth advocacy field.

Our Programmes continues to impress me. From LIBEL's steady post-flow with in-depth analysis and need-to-read liberal perspectives, to the Belarus & Ukraine Programmes continued achievements in the region. As well, our Human Rights Programme outdid itself with a key role in the Geneva Summit for Human Rights & Democracy and obviously once again our Climate Change Programme exceeded all expectations for COP21 and is looking to once again make a great impact on the liberal say at COP22. Our Gender Equality Programme saw progress, with the Gender Equality Paper being presented at our coming General Assembly and our Latin America Programme will most likely reapply for another project with the European Commission and FNF. Finally, also our Free Trade Programme, our Caucasus Programme as well as our Pool of Trainers was able to start work and is looking to uphold their respective great potential.

For every Programme Manager, I thank you. I truly believe IFLRY is much stronger without the Bureau having to oversee all the tasks of the Programmes and instead let the Member Organisations cooperate and create direct results. I can only recommend that IFLRY does not choose the path of structures for

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the sake of structures, but let the results of the Programmes speak for themselves and as such choose the path of trust and delegating responsibilities.

Before finishing my last report, I'll "cliché it up". Cause' there is no final words without thanks. Thank you to everyone who made my IFLRY journey as crazy and adventurous as it was and still is(!). You know who you are. Special shout out to the following is in order:

Thomas Leys. IFLRY's immediate past President. Serving on the Bureau as a Vice-President with Thomas as President, I got to learn and observe a great leader. With Thomas IFLRY was steered steadily in very difficult times. To a mentor and friend, thank you.

Pauline Kastermans. IFLRY's Human Rights Programme Manager and only candidate for President at our 39th General Assembly. Very unorthodoxly, I want to thank the most likely (since there are no other candidates) incoming IFLRY President. Having worked with Pauline for several years, I have seen how dedicated and passionate she is about IFLRY. She is a person I look to for inspiration and if elected, I can't wait to see which new adventures she will take IFLRY to.

The IFLRY Bureau 2014-2015. It is something special to be leading the work of an IFLRY Bureau. I am thankful to each one of the gentlemen in the Bureau and although we surely needed women in our mandate, we did a good job. Frerik, for his fresh take and hard work to globalize the Federation. Daniel, for his massive competences and continuous dedication throughout the mandate. Bobby, for his strong principles, great know-how and vision for IFLRY. Danylo, for making some of the best IFLRY conferences in IFLRY history and much needed view-points in Bureau discussions. Ahmad, for his always positive work ethic, making everyone smile and high ambitions for the Federation. Stanislav, for staying on board in times of assuming high national office and for his continued dedication to IFLRY. We should be thankful to each of these gentlemen – all in all, they have made a positive difference for our Federation.

Last, but not least. I want to thank IFLRY's Office. Each of IFLRY's interns and assistants, with James and Dali being the latest to assume the responsibility. It is for sure not easy to assist an Office that relies heavily on volunteers. I couldn't be more pleased with your achievements and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

And the grand-young(!) lady - Mane Manukyan. Mane is almost the synonym for IFLRY, having served as Executive Director at the Office for over six years. Mane assumed the position only a few months after I became active in the Federation. As such, Mane and I have followed each other in IFLRY's recent years. I am astonished how Mane have fully committed herself to the Federation. Day, night, weekend, Summer, Winter. It didn't matter – Mane has always been there. There will be some big shoes to fill, when Mane leaves Office. Thanks doesn't do you justice, Mane. However, for a lack of better appreciation. Thank you.

To all IFLRY partners. Without you, there wouldn't be a successful IFLRY. I am grateful for each contribution and partnership.

Dear Liberal Friends and Colleagues. I look forward to seeing you all in Istanbul, Turkey. I am grateful to have been President of IFLRY in the past years. It has been a fantastic experience and privilege.

All the best, Christian