

## ***Democracy Actions 2014***

*Season's Greetings! We hope you have had a merry Christmas and an enjoyable festive season.*

*For a change, this overview of the year 2014 starts with the end by saying a BIG "Thank you!"...*

*→ to the many young people who campaigned for a Democratic Europe Now! and put pressure on the European Parliament to push for EU democratic reform*

*→ to those who helped organise our democracy journeys along the Danube and the Mississippi and those who joined us on our travels*

*→ to those who attended our Summer Academy 2014 and work on setting up new group initiatives*

*→ to those who translated the main parts of our website into other languages and who further developed our website and database so that other democracy groups can benefit from them*

*→ to all those who follow our activities by reading our newsletter and who contribute to our discussions on democracy by making comments, writing articles and sharing our Tweets and Facebook-Posts*

*Many hands make light work. We cordially thank you for your support! On the next pages you can read what together we achieved in 2014.*

## Campaign “Democratic Europe Now!”

First up for praise are the many volunteers from all over Europe who participated in many highly creative events throughout the EU as part of our



campaign team Democratic Europe Now. Also, as part of the “EU Candidate Check”, they phoned up all of the 6000 people who were running for a seat in the European Parliament ahead of the May EU elections, asking them to pledge for implementing democratic reform within the EU. 118 of the 1200 people who made this commitment have now joined the European Parliament as

MEPs . We will hold accountable those deputies when working towards a more democratic EU next year.

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## “Danube Democracy Rally” and “Big River Democracy Tour”

From 1 – 9 April 2014, more than 90 democracy activists came together in Central Europe with the aim of learning from each other, expanding their knowledge of direct democracy and having fun together.

Travelling along the Danube, Europe’s longest river, we stopped over in Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest for



interesting and dynamic discussions concerning the state of direct democracy as it stands today, and what we can do to shape its future. At our general assembly in Bratislava the members of Democracy International elected a new board, which was

expanded from six to ten members. It now boasts dedicated democracy experts from all over the world.

We extend a warm welcome to Jung-Ok Lee (South Korea), Bruno Kaufmann (Switzerland/ Sweden), Arjen Nijeboer (Netherlands), Rafael Pineiro (Uruguay), Daniel Schily (Germany). They join Daniela Bozhinova (Bulgaria), Gerald Häfner (Germany), Joe Mathews (USA), Erwin Mayer (Austria) and Suresh Nautiyal (India) who were re-elected during our assembly in the Slovakian capital.

Our other study trip this year, the **“Big River Democracy Tour”** of the United States (3 – 9 November 2014), took us from Kansas via Missouri and Arkansas all the way to Louisiana. Scheduled around US Election Day 2014, we met with politicians, journalists and democracy

activists to learn how citizens can influence decision-making in the United States. We were impressed by the well-

coordinated system of direct democracy in place at local and state level. Organised by our board members Joe Mathews from Los Angeles and Bruno Kaufmann who lives in Falun, Sweden, this revelatory study trip primarily took us along the Mississippi, North America’s biggest river.



## Summer Academy 2014 - Seeds planted!

From 8 to 12 September democracy activists from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Scotland and the Netherlands gathered in the German city of Wittenberg, near Berlin, to learn how to set up a democracy organisation in a professional and sustainable way.

During the 5-day-seminar, participants learned from Democracy



International about communications and public relations as well as the basics of fundraising and office management. Also, the groups were tasked with developing a business and governance plan to

establish their democracy initiative. Witnessing the enthusiasm and hands-on mentality of everybody making a presentation of this plan, it became clear that the week in Wittenberg had helped to plant the first seeds of democracy activism. We hope that these seeds will have yielded their first harvest by the time our next summer academy opens its doors in 2015. Also in Wittenberg, we held our annual meeting of the Council.

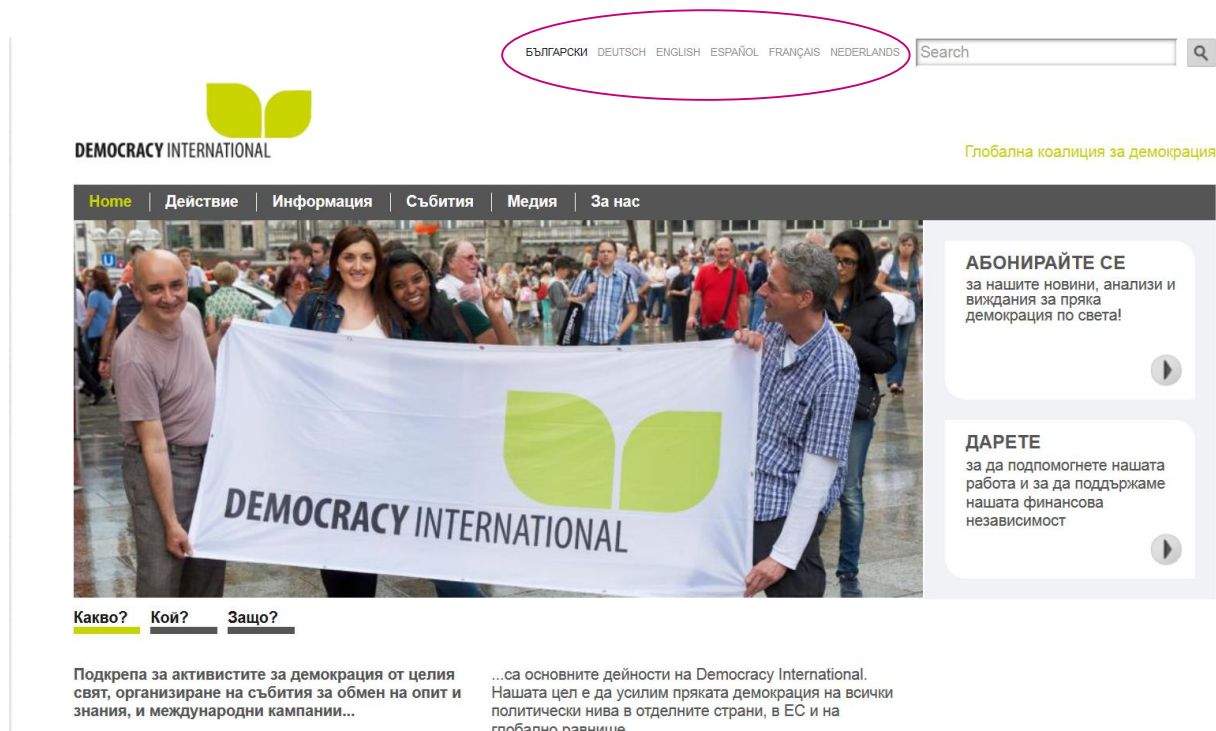




## IT development: “Whitelabel” and multilanguage website

One core element of Democracy International’s work is to provide the IT infrastructure necessary to run campaigns in the digital age, so that individual democracy groups do not have to expend undue energies on these arduous (and expensive) technicalities.

With this in mind, we developed our IT products to “whitelabel” level, meaning all democracy groups can now share a pre-programmed website in the form of a template. This master copy can be customised to meet users’ specific needs in terms of style and individual content. Furthermore, these new websites can be connected to the customer relationship database CiviCRM that allows users to manage huge amounts of contacts efficiently. Both the website and database are now available to democracy groups. Contact us, if interested.



Moreover, we have developed the multilanguage-feature of our website. Beyond English, our website [www.democracy-international.org](http://www.democracy-international.org) is now also available in Bulgarian, Dutch, French, German and Spanish thanks to the tremendous translation work by several volunteers.

## ***Democracy Visions 2015***

While 2014 is drawing to a close, we would like to offer you a preview of our plans for 2015:

→ To move a step closer to our goal of shaping a more democratic European Union, we will dedicate the first few months to **campaigning for a more user-friendly European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)**. The campaign comes at the right time, given the fact that the legislation of the ECI is up for revision by the European Commission next year.

→ The next **Global Forum on Modern Democracy will take place in Tunis, Tunisia from 15 to 17 May 2015**. We very much hope you will join us to discuss the latest trends and findings regarding Active Citizenship and Participative Democracy with people from all over the world. Also on this occasion we will hold our **next general assembly**.

→ "Global democracy development – between dream and trauma" will be the subject of a conference with our German partner organisation Mehr Demokratie to take place in Fulda, Germany, **from 26 to 28 June 2015**.

→ Our next **summer academy** will take place in autumn 2015.

***As you can see, we cannot wait to continue our work for more democracy. Also, and once again we're counting on your support!***

*We – the board members and staff of Democracy International – cordially wish you a good holiday season and a very happy New Year!*