



NEF Newsletter

Editorial

We are very happy to start the year on a positive note with the inclusion of a new and promising member to our NEF core in 2009 : the Fritt Ord Institution. You will read more about this Norwegian Foundation and their leadership in this issue.

In spite of the tumultuous times ahead, NEF members are making the case of the value of partnering on European projects, going beyond insular and national focus to tackle important regional and multidimensional challenges.

By fostering “creative agility”: working effectively with stakeholders and drawing from the collective intelligence gathered on joint projects, foundations should contribute to open paths to address some of the current social challenges.

To guide new participants into its initiatives, NEF has developed a ‘vade mecum’ of its decision making processes and services that is now available on its website. As part of the recommendations drawn from its strategic review survey, NEF will also hold a joint learning session amongst partners, chairs of the NEF projects at the next EFC AGA in May 08 in Roma. The aim is to foster interactions amongst projects and exchange best practices amongst participants.

Luc Tayart de Borms—NEF Chairman

Interview with Eric Rudeng— Director Institusjonen Fritt Ord

Question: Could you tell us more on Fritt Ord and why have you joined NEF?

ER: The aim of Fritt Ord is to promote freedom of expression and engaged public debate primarily in Norway, but also in the form of international projects. The threats and limitations of free speech are often based on political events and media developments outside one’s national frontiers. Therefore the values of free and open debate should also be promoted through international exchange and cooperation. As a grantmaking foundation Fritt Ord supports important organizations like Index on Censorship and Article 19, but also Democratic Voice of Burma and the production of documentary films. I think it will be stimulating for our own organisation to receive impulses from the NEF family of foundations, and may be Fritt Ord can contribute both with ideas and resources (although we are not a big player) on the basis of a freedom of expression perspective.



*Eric Rudeng— Fritt Ord Director
Photographer: Annar Bjoergli*

Volume 4, Issue 1

NEF calendar
of meeting 09

- REF SC **22 January London**
- EFB SC **4 February Belgrade**
- YEPP SC **9-10 February London**
- ILDE SC **4 March Berlin**
- NEF Board **24 March Turin**
- NEF GA **13 May Roma**
- EPIM work-shop **10-11 June London**
- EPIM SC **1-2 July Lisbon**
- EPIM work-shop **23-24 September Brussels**

**More
information on**

Fritt Ord at

www.fritt-ord.no/

**And on
the Mercator
Fund at**

www.mercatorfund.net/

Question: On which NEF projects Fritt Ord has started to cooperate?

ER: The first NEF project to which we have contributed is the Fund for European Journalists, which will support transnational investigative journalism in Europe, strengthening networks of journalists working on cross-European themes.

Inspired by the Rowntree Trust and other foundations we are contemplating a new project about democracy, participation, and media/digital development. There are many issues involved here which would require more comparative approaches with contributors from many European institutions.

Reviving and developing democratic arenas and informed public debates is obviously a major challenge all over Europe, but it is tremendously difficult to explore concepts and practices with a more general European relevance.

Revisiting the challenges of democracy is certainly a heavy task, and it deserves much more attention. We are presently just exploring how a joint programme working on both national levels and a common European level could be conceived.



**INSTITUSJONEN
FRITT ORD**

Interview with Norine MacDonald QC, President of NEF Mercator Fund

Question:

The NEF Mercator Fund was founded in 2003. What have been the main achievements since then?

Norine MacDonald QC:

The Fund has been active in many fields, but its contribution to international security and development analysis through its action platform The Senlis Council (now the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS)) has had a significant impact in the past five years. It has helped to reshape the international discourse and debate on Afghanistan and counter-narcotics issues in general. ICOS has played a unique role as a think tank operating with permanent research platforms in warzones such as the south of Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

Question:

What have been the main developments of the Fund since its inception?

NM:

The greatest progress has been the growth from a European perspective to a truly global approach. At the moment, the Mercator Fund's biggest projects take place outside of Europe, especially in Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

Question:

What is the most interesting upcoming project in 2009?

NM:

Well, we are pleased that we have received support from the European Commission for our Rome Consensus for a Humanitarian Drug Policy project, which is an international initiative, co-chaired by the Italian Red Cross and supported by 114 Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies...

INTERVIEW WITH NORINE MAC DONALD, QC (continuation)

With the support of the European Commission, we will set up a European Chapter of the Rome Consensus, which should further promote good practices in drug prevention and information sharing among the European National Societies of Red Cross and beyond. In March this year, we will organise a symposium co-hosted by the Spanish Red Cross.

Question:

I have also heard something about the NEF Mercator Fund working more on the global media in 2009, is that correct?

NM:

Yes, indeed. We are establishing a Global Media Centre to serve the communication and advocacy needs of the international foundation and civil society communities. We will use platforms in the media hubs of London, Brussels, Paris, New York, Dubai, and Sao Paulo to assist foundations, institutes, think tanks and NGOs to develop strategic communications and policy advocacy campaigns.

I think this will increase the impact of these institutions when it comes to what it is all about: better policies around the world that respect the people affected by them.



*Norine Mac Donald
President of NEF Mercator Fund*

Question:

You are not only active as the Managing Director of The NEF Mercator Fund. You are also involved as the Lead Field Researcher of ICOS in conflict zones. How do you combine these two functions?

NM:

For me it is crucial to keep in touch with what is happening on the ground and to experience firsthand what the local population thinks in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

A lot of new ideas for projects and reports stem from this grassroots perspective. Besides that, it has been a true privilege to have lived for so many years in Afghanistan and to work and live with the Afghan people on a daily basis.

Question:

What would you like to see happen by 2020?

NM:

In 2020, European philanthropy should be taking more leadership on critical and neglected policy issues. To do this, we must develop new philanthropic instruments.

I think philanthropy has a greater ability to set the agenda for the policy debate. There is significant added value in the foundation sector, but this can only be fully utilised if foundations take risks and also tackle difficult issues such as conflict and security situations, and all their underlying causes.

**More information
on events and
activities mentioned
in this newsletter at
www.nefic.org**

THE MERCATOR FUND



**NETWORK OF EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS
FOR INNOVATIVE COOPERATION**

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List of current projects

Alliance magazine
European HIV/AIDS Funders Group
Cultural Cooperation
Initiative for Learning Democracy in Europe (ILDE)
European Citizens Consultations
The European Mercator Fund
The European Fund for the Balkans
The European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM)
Religion and Democracy
Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme
The Roma Education Fund
Strategies for Impact in Philantropy

Opportunities to collaborate:

Foundations and partners interested in collaborating on one of the initiatives listed above or in initiating others, are invited to contact the NEF office :

Peggy. saïller@nefic.org

The Network of European Foundations (NEF) is a flexible not-for-profit international organisation. Its headquarters are located in Brussels (Belgium).

Consisting of 13 foundations as its core, NEF acts as an operational platform to promote the development of joint initiatives by foundations and other types of organised philanthropy as well as other giving programmes related to Europe and the role of Europe on the global stage.

NEF was created so as to strengthen the potential for cooperation between foundations at European level. NEF provides its members with the ability to identify common goals and, as an open structure, to join forces with other foundations in Europe which may share similar concerns and objectives.

Covering a broad spectrum of social and cultural initiatives, more than 60 foundations from all over Europe are now partnering through NEF.

NEF General Assembly 2009

<i>The Netherlands</i>	European Cultural Foudation
<i>Belgium</i>	King Baudouin Foundation
<i>USA</i>	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
<i>Portugal</i>	Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian
<i>Norway</i>	Institusjonen Fritt Ord
<i>France</i>	Fondation de France
<i>France</i>	Gabriel Foundation
<i>Sweden</i>	Riksbankens Jubileumsfond
<i>Germany</i>	Robert Bosch Stiftung
<i>The Netherlands</i>	Bernard Van Leer Foundation
<i>Italy</i>	Compagnia di San Paolo
<i>Austria</i>	Erste Stiftung
<i>UK</i>	Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

Board of Directors

Chair	Luc Tayart de Borms <i>Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation</i>
Vice-Chair	Piero Gastaldo <i>Secretary General, Compagnia di San Paolo</i>
Treasurer	Rien van Gendt <i>Executive Director, Van Leer Group Foundation</i>
Secretary	Francis Charhon <i>Managing Director, Fondation de France</i>
Member	Dieter Berg <i>Chairman, The Robert Bosch Stiftung</i>
Member	Goran Blomqvist <i>Managing Director, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond</i>
Director	Peggy Saïller <i>NEF</i>
European Policy Advisor	Hywel Ceri Jones <i>NEF</i>