

4. PARTY COOPERATION OF KAS: PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

At present, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung maintains 69 offices abroad¹ where 81 country representatives conduct measures of political education and consulting. All these measures aim at contributing towards the development and consolidation of democracy in our partner countries by establishing a sustainable political dialogue. Cooperation with and support for democratic parties has been a special field of activity since the beginnings of the international work of the KAS in the mid-1960s.² Almost all offices abroad operate education and consulting programmes in the field of party cooperation and support.³ According to our mission, emphasis is given to parties in countries which have experienced a transition from a non-democratic rule to democracy in the recent past (post-communist Central and Southeastern Europe, several countries in Africa) as well as to those where democracy is not yet completely established (parts of Asia and Africa). Because the KAS has well-established contacts with parties in Latin America, cooperation with political parties plays a particularly important role there, not only from the development policy perspective but also from the foreign policy point of view – even though party-related measures also include consulting on organisational and programmatic matters (see the ‘overview’ in this chapter).

¹ As in May 2007. For an overview see http://www.kas.de/international/laender/122_webseite.html or, alternatively, KAS 2007.

² For a historical overview see especially Thesing 2002. Regional activities are described in KAS 1997 and Fischer-Bollin 2006.

³ While activities for party *support* are devoted to strengthen the parties either organizationally, programmatically or strategically in order to prepare them to fulfil their functions properly, party *cooperation* means that the KAS is engaged to foster cooperation between parties. These forms of cooperation include informal talks, dialogues or – as in the case of ICAPP – all-party conferences (see Dürkop 2007) in which KAS acts primarily as mediator.

Reasons for party cooperation

Political parties and democracy are inseparable. In normative terms, democratic-minded political parties in transforming societies are confronted with the same responsibilities they would have to perform in established democracies. The first of these is to provide channels for participation and articulation citizens may use to have a say in shaping their social and political environment. Secondly, parties communicate values, something that makes them places of political socialisation and real-life democracy, assuming that their internal decision-making itself is based on democratic principles. Thirdly, parties compete for the electorate's support on the basis of their election platforms. They offer political alternatives which, depending on their electoral success, may at least in part be written into law and thus become binding for society as a whole. Finally, parties generally nominate political candidates who, if elected, will occupy key positions in the legislative, the executive and the public administration. Thus, parties form an important link between civil society and the institutions of a democratic state.

Liberal democracy is a demanding concept of political rule. To make it the "only game in town" – to quote two pioneers of modern democracy research (Linz/Stepan 1996: 5) – so that it can be regarded as consolidated and irreversibly weaved into society, it is not enough to adopt a democratic constitution and create institutions that are democratic only in formal terms. The consolidation of a democracy based on a democratic constitution requires that the behaviour of the societal elites be regulated by this democratic constitution, that the population support democracy, that societal interests be articulated freely, and that the general standard of living improve under conditions of democratic rule (Linz/Stepan 1996: 3-16, 77, 446). In all these areas of democratic consolidation parties and their representatives occupy key positions, be it as mediators or as responsible political decision-makers and leaders.

Part of our basic understanding of politics is the maxim that adequate representation of societal interests, active civic participation in decision-making processes and responsible political leadership which aims at increasing the welfare of the public instead of serving the interests of individuals, can be achieved only in a multi-party system featuring free and fair elections as well as democratic competition among parties. This is why the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung engages in promoting the fundamental elements of democratic rule, which includes the promotion of parties that embrace and support democracy.

Objectives and criteria of party cooperation

Our international engagement's goal is to effectively contribute to the consolidation of democracy in our partner and project countries.⁴ Because of their function as collective actors in aggregating and articulating interests, societal decision-making, recruiting elites, and providing political leadership, parties and their representatives are of outstanding importance for the cooperation activities of a political foundation.

It is not particularly surprising that cooperative relations should exist between a Christian democratic party or a party of the democratic centre in an established democracy, such as Chile or some of the post-communist countries of Europe, and a political foundation which, in turn, is closely linked to the Christian Democratic Party of Germany. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung established these relations because the parties in question are Christian democratic or conservative, thus sharing our fundamental political convictions and values. In a manner of speaking, they are our 'natural' political allies, the reasons or criteria for cooperating being obvious. However, the situation is different in countries where democracy is still comparatively young and/or unstable, where the general degree of institutionalisation⁵ of political parties is lower, and where Christian democratic parties or parties of the democratic centre are either weak or nonexistent, be it because they are banned or because the milieus that support them are too weak to produce 'natural allies' in the first place, as is the case, for instance, in countries with Christian minorities.

Although it is a matter of principle for the KAS to cooperate only with parties that conform to our fundamental political convictions and value concepts, they need not be Christian democratic parties in terms of their name, their programme, or their voters to meet our criteria for cooperation and, more particularly, promotion. Instead, the essential criteria for cooperation are that a party should recognise the universal code of human rights, support the fundamental values of liberal democracy and the political order principles related to them, such as free and fair elections, party diversity and competition, the separation of powers, and the rule of law. Also, its policies should be formulated on the basis of shared values. Specifically, this means understanding mankind in its individual diversity and equality as well as upholding the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and the responsibility of the

⁴ Local presence is what distinguishes partner from project countries. The KAS maintains country offices in all partner countries which, however, initiate projects in other countries as well. Thus, the 69 partner countries of KAS are complemented by about 30 project countries where democracy-promotion measures are carried out without a country office.

⁵ On the meaning and concept of institutionalised parties, see Köllner 2006.

individual vis-à-vis society and vice versa. Moreover, a partner party should endorse the principle of separation between religion and the state, particularly with regard to the legitimation of political power and legal jurisdiction. A democratic constitutional state as well as its basic elements cannot be reconciled with the legitimation of power and jurisdiction based on religious or fundamentalist values. Therefore, parties that do not recognise this separation and espouse a fundamentalist and theocratic legitimation of power and jurisdiction are not eligible as KAS partners. In internal matters, those parties with which the KAS cooperates should be distinguished by a minimum of internal democracy, i.e. democratic decision-making structures and processes featuring a party convention as the supreme decision-making body, democratic selection of candidates, internal co-determination options for grass-roots members, and democratic party funding. At the very least, they should credibly strive to meet these standards. Finally, such parties should champion the creation of market-economy institutions⁶ founded on private ownership and free entrepreneurial initiative as well as the protection of property-rights which entails an obligation to act in the interest of the common good. Parties with which the KAS engages in cooperation pursue certain minimum requirements in social policy and labour legislation (e.g. the prohibition of child labour) and aim to provide basic social services and benefits to the poorest.

Ideally, these criteria should all be present at the same time and not be exchangeable. Continuous cooperation and local observation in the countries themselves are needed to judge whether a party is merely paying lip service to these matters or actually tries to shape its politics on that basis. This duty is performed by the country representatives of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. What is more, the criteria mentioned above are not present or even realisable to the same degree in all the regions of the world. In view of the political, social, cultural and economic heterogeneity of our roughly 100 partner and project countries, as well as in view of the weakness of the democratic parties and party systems in some cases, finding suitable partners for cooperation is difficult in some regions. However, as we believe that it is our main task to support in their development and/or stabilisation *not only* democratic parties that share our value background *but also* democracy itself, its values, institutions, and processes, the KAS cooperates internationally with a wide range of partners of socio-

⁶ The existence of a market-oriented economic system that is not controlled exclusively by the state's government machine and governmental monopolies may be regarded as the socio-economic prerequisite of a successful consolidation of democracy (Linz/Stepan 1996: 11-13). As in the field of civil liberties, however, market forces must be moderated by institutions so that the universal principles of democracy, freedom, and equality, i.e. basically equal opportunities in life, may be realised.

political relevance that share our fundamental political values and can be expected to contribute effectively towards the consolidation of democracy.

The legal foundations of international party cooperation

German law does not prohibit cooperating with and/or promoting political parties. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is a non-profit organisation whose activity, like that of the other political foundations, is based on Art. 5, Art. 9 (1), and Art. 12 (1) of the German Basic Law (KAS 2004). While a certain amount of discretion is left to the political foundations in designing the measures they undertake, these must always conform with the legal foundations of their activities.

The Federal Budget Code, the guidelines of the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation for the promotion of measures in social and structural policy, and also the laws of the partner countries apply rigid standards to the work of the German political foundations. At the same time, they prohibit any direct support for political parties abroad, including an overall financial assistance, campaign funding, or public appeals to vote for a specific party (BMJ 1969, BMZ 2002, §§ I to III). Each year, the foundations disclose their activities to the public in their annual reports, which are reviewed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation as well as by the German *Bundestag*.

Party cooperation of the KAS: An overview by regions

The range of the measures to promote democracy is wide. Education and consulting programmes of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, which are normally open to the general public, address so-called societal multipliers such as journalists, judges, police officers, teachers and holders of political mandates. In addition, studies of various issues in social or economic policy are conducted or commissioned by the country representatives. They cooperate with civil-society organisations and organise the distribution of scholarships to highly-gifted students under the international student and graduate promotion programme (see Preußé 2005).

The instruments most frequently employed in local political education are dialogue forums, workshops and seminars where experts employed or contacted by KAS representatives discuss matters with and communicate their knowledge to members of the above-mentioned target groups. Beyond that, there exists a multitude of measures designed to promote political dialogue on the regional, national and international level.

In the field of party cooperation and support, the educational programmes of the KAS focus on training for party employees and mandate holders. They are intended to communicate experience-based knowledge about democratic party structures and processes, internal and public political communication, programme development and – if necessary – the basic elements of representative democracy. International and regional conferences where scientific experts and practitioners discuss basic issues of parliamentary democracy, the work of political parties and party systems constitute another format of party cooperation and support.

Another global focus of party-related measures⁷ is on strengthening the organisation of political parties. This includes trying to increase the membership of a party by, for example, providing information about how to appeal to members and involve them in the party's internal activities, improve its internal organisation or expand the scope of party-related interest groups. In this context, the KAS experts focus on the creation of partisan youth, women's, and vocational organisations to strengthen the party's roots of civil society. Party promotion also focuses on measures to develop and refine party programmes, followed by projects that aim at professionalizing mandate holders or improving a party's political-communication capabilities and international party cooperation.

This global perspective is fairly general. Regional conditions and needs may cause variations. In *Latin America*, for example, the KAS concentrates more than anywhere else on international party alliances, political communication and programme development. Projects relating to the organisation of political parties mostly aim at strengthening youth organisations, for parties in Latin America are as plagued by recruitment worries as their counterparts in the Western democracies.

A large proportion of our activities in Latin America is dedicated to refining party programmes and developing action plans to be implemented in the case of the assumption of power so as to enable a party to cope successfully with the challenges confronting it such as, for instance, persistent widespread poverty, unemployment, crime and illiteracy. For this reason, the commitment of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Latin America revolves around projects designed to equip parties and their representatives for problem- and solution-oriented governance. Such projects may target individual parties as in Mexico or

⁷ It is not always easy to draw a line that separates party-related measures from others. Some activities, such as those promoting the rule of law or the social market economy, may be interpreted as part of general democracy promotion. Party-related activities in a narrow sense are only such which name parties, party institutes and office/mandate holders explicitly as target group.

Chile, or they may be conducted within the framework of the Organización Demócrata Cristiana de América (ODCA, see Priess 2007).

Although neither in Latin America nor in the other world regions our prior goal is single-party support, the long tradition of party cooperation and special relationships with Christian democratic parties and parties of the democratic centre as well as to the ODCA has given cooperation with parties and party alliances that share our principle values in Latin America some prominence (the so-called 'sister party-cooperation'). Especially the ODCA serves as an important network in order to exchange best practice examples from Latin American countries and beyond, to promote programmatic concepts for social-economic policies, for political communication, education and research. However, 'sister party-cooperation' or 'sister-party support' means primarily that the KAS cooperates with party-related institutes and political foundations in Latin America as for example with the Instituto Chileno de Estudios Humanísticos (ICHEH) and the Fundación Rafael Preciado Hernández (FRPH) in Mexico.

For *post-communist Europe* the activities are quite in line with the global average. Due to the weak membership numbers of the most newly founded parties and their rather weakly organised party branches special attention is given to workshops and seminars which highlight the importance of ancillary party associations such as youth associations, women's and professional associations for establishing the linkage between a party and civil society. In a similar vein, the KAS runs programmes in political education for the public in order to contribute to the creation and stabilisation of the electorate's party affiliations, which tends to be rather weak at present. In Central and Eastern Europe, general political education and direct cooperation with political parties go hand in hand. What is more, parties also receive non-material support, such as advice about how to develop programmes that are value-based or about political communication, supplied by KAS experts. Because of the geographical proximity and topicality of European issues, questions about European integration, which includes accession to the EU (by now completed in most cases), as well as issues relating to the European constitutional process and to the accession to the European People's Party (EPP) play an eminent role in party-cooperation of the KAS projects.

Furthermore, party cooperation and promotion in post-communist Europe concentrates on motivating parties that belong to the same family to cooperate more closely on specific matters and issues. This applies particularly to the ethnically heterogeneous societies in ex-Yugoslavia as well as in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine. In all these countries, parties

which basically belong to the same family engage in political competition, not always to their own or their publics' advantage. Because the establishment of a cross-denominational people's party (*Volkspartei*) was one of the crucial factors in the successful development of Germany after the end of World War II, Germany's experience might provide a role model to the countries named above. For this reason, information about this success story and its prerequisites is of particular importance in the party-related projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

In both world regions, Latin America and post-communist Europe, the activities correspond with the given conditions. Latin America and post-communist Europe have by tradition, values and voter alignments quite well-structured party systems, larger proportions of Christian population and, consequently, Christian democratic and democratic centre parties. Here, the KAS runs programmes in order to promote parties of that family but at least in Europe to the same degree as the general political education and democracy promotion. Post-communist Europe is a region that experiences or has recently experienced a transition to democracy. Thus, the KAS is engaged to offer programmes for political education to the broader public and also runs such education programmes in support of 'sister parties'⁸, primarily dealing with questions related to organisation-building, development of party programmes, political communication and accession to the EPP (see Fischer-Bollin 2006). It reflects our understanding that broader political education and general democracy promotion as well as value-based support for closely related parties are no contradiction. Instead, the two approaches are both sides of the same coin.

In Africa and Asia, party cooperation confronts a different situation. In both regions, single party cooperation or promotion is the exception rather than the rule. While it is gratifying to note that cooperation with parties in Africa has been increasing in recent years, general measures to promote democracy still predominate in Africa as well as in Asia. Wherever parties are involved, projects address the establishment of local party structures, the education of mandate-holders and the public communication of research results in such fields as electoral systems and reforms.

This holds particularly true for *sub-Saharan Africa*. The KAS representatives in that region deal with the classic functions of political development cooperation, such as holding seminars and

⁸ In post-communist Europe party systems are comparatively high fragmented. This holds true also for parties of the same ideological spirit, as for example in states of former Yugoslavia, but also in Hungary, the Czech and Slovak republics, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and the Ukraine. In those countries the KAS faces more than one party that is close to us by values and principles.

workshops to prepare the population for democratic elections like those in Nigeria or the Democratic Republic of Congo, or initiating projects where information is given about electoral-legislation reforms, as recently in the Republic of South Africa. Another focus is on training and educating members of parliament, who are given fundamental information about their rights and duties by KAS experts and, in some cases, external experts. Thus, for example, such projects were recently conducted in Liberia, Namibia, DR Congo and Nigeria. Finally, party-related activities concentrate on cooperation with international party alliances. Together with the EPP-ED group in the European Parliament, the KAS is anxious to strengthen the African party alliance UPADD (Union des Partis Africains pour la Démocratie et le Développement) in political terms in a joint effort to contribute towards improving the implementation of human rights and the principles of the rule of law as well as towards local economic development. While all this does fall under the heading of party cooperation on the basis of our common values, it has nothing to do with the specific promotion of 'sister parties'.

The activities and goals pursued in *Asia* are similar. Next to its 14 country offices, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung operates a regional office in Singapore which coordinates projects in East and Southeast Asia. While the party-related projects of the country offices mainly concentrate on the improvement of local party structures, local politics and MP training and education, the regional office in Singapore focuses, among other things, on supporting international cooperation among parties in the region (Dürkop 2007).

As in Sub-Saharan Africa the vast majority of party-related projects in Asia is dedicated to create conditions for pluralist and democratic party action. Rather to give aid to one specific party, emphasis is clearly given to the formation of international party alliances and informal cooperation among democratic forces in general, although – in accordance with our tradition, our values and our mission – the basic ideas underpinning democracy, that it is based on our conception of man, the rule of law and the social market economy, are an integral part of all activities.

Summary

Cooperation with and support for democratic political parties is one topic of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's international activities. We are convinced that democracy and the rule of law can thrive only in an environment where party representatives avow to and actively pursue the principles of democracy. At the same time, we are aware that not everywhere are political parties well-enough developed to properly fulfil their duties. In our partner countries, therefore, we cooperate not

only with parties but also with many other democratic-minded forces so that, together, we can contribute to the stabilisation of democracy. Playing a major role in strengthening the environment beyond the political parties, civil-society organisations are important partners in political development cooperation.

Restricting cooperation to civil-society forces, such as democratic social movements or religious communities (assuming that they really do support democracy at all), is not regarded by the KAS as being a sufficiently promising strategy for democracy promotion – especially if it is seen as a substitute for party cooperation and promotion. If the KAS were to concentrate its international assistance exclusively on dissidents or societal movements to support them in their endeavours to advance democracy, further cooperation would soon become impossible – because democratic forces are sooner or later bound to form political parties. However, at that point in time the political foundations would be forced to withdraw their assistance if they were a priori barred from cooperating with political parties. In such a case, Germany's development and foreign policy would stand to lose the previously established contacts to democratic decision-makers. But it is just this permanence in faithful cooperation as well as the ongoing political dialogue with political decision-makers which is seen by our partners as being our crucial comparative advantage. This is why the political foundations in Germany concentrate on cooperating with as well as promoting both, civil-society groups *as well as* political parties.

Next to their local presence, their familiarity with the respective country, their access to political decision-makers, and their value-oriented education and consulting measures, political dialogue and the possibility of establishing informal contacts with democrats and their parties are among the strong points of Germany's political foundations. This is why they are regarded as effective and proven instruments to complement Germany's foreign policy (Herzog 1995).

With its global activities, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung does not strive to export one specific party model to the world. Party cooperation and promotion refers first and foremost to our endeavour to contribute to the development and stabilisation of democracy, its fundamental values, processes and institutions in our partner and project countries. Supporting parties in setting up an organisation of their own, assisting them in developing a programme or searching for political solutions capable of contributing to the welfare of the general public is not an easy task. It is even more difficult, however, to convince the citizens of countries with little democratic experience to put their trust in democratic political processes and the work of political parties, and to establish stable relations between parties and their voters. Trust and stable relations between citizens and parties

cannot be created overnight. This is why cooperating with and promoting democratic parties are standard elements in all KAS programmes dedicated to stabilising democracy as the only form of political rule. Party-related measures mainly serve to support political leaders and decision-makers in employing their democratically acquired powers towards the benefit of the people in their own countries (and beyond). Seen in that light, sustainable value-oriented international activities of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung appear more indispensable than ever.

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