



# EYE ON EUROPE

STOCKHOLM NETWORK – LINKING EUROPE'S LEADING POLICYMAKERS AND THINKERS

ISSUE FIVE

SUMMER 2005

## EASTERN MEDICINE

What do the European public think about their healthcare systems? What are their hopes and expectations for the future? Do politicians grasp what their constituents really want from healthcare?

In order to find out, the Stockholm Network commissioned Populus, a London-based polling firm, to conduct a survey of eight European Union countries in 2004. The resulting report, *Impatient for Change*, showed that the European public were not only anxious about the sustainability of their healthcare systems, but believed that change was urgent and necessary.

The accession of ten new member states (NMS) to the European Union on 1 May 2004 has now prompted an extension of the survey, and the Stockholm Network has once again teamed up with Populus to investigate attitudes to healthcare reform in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia (which together with the Czech Republic form the NMS4). *Poles Apart* provides a unique insight into these countries' perceptions

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## OH, HOW TO CHOOSE?



*The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz (Harper Collins, £7.99)

Barry Schwartz's latest book, *The Paradox of Choice – Why More is Less* was hailed as last year's 'must-read' book by *The Guardian*. Phillip G. Zimbardo, a well-known self-help book author, has called it 'a simple yet profoundly life-altering message for all Americans'.

The question is whether this is just another self-help book or if it can be seen as a critical analysis of modern capitalism and consumerism? A glance at the cover, with its promises of a better life for frustrated consumers trapped in a world of choice overload suggests the former. And in the introduction, Schwartz even suggests that

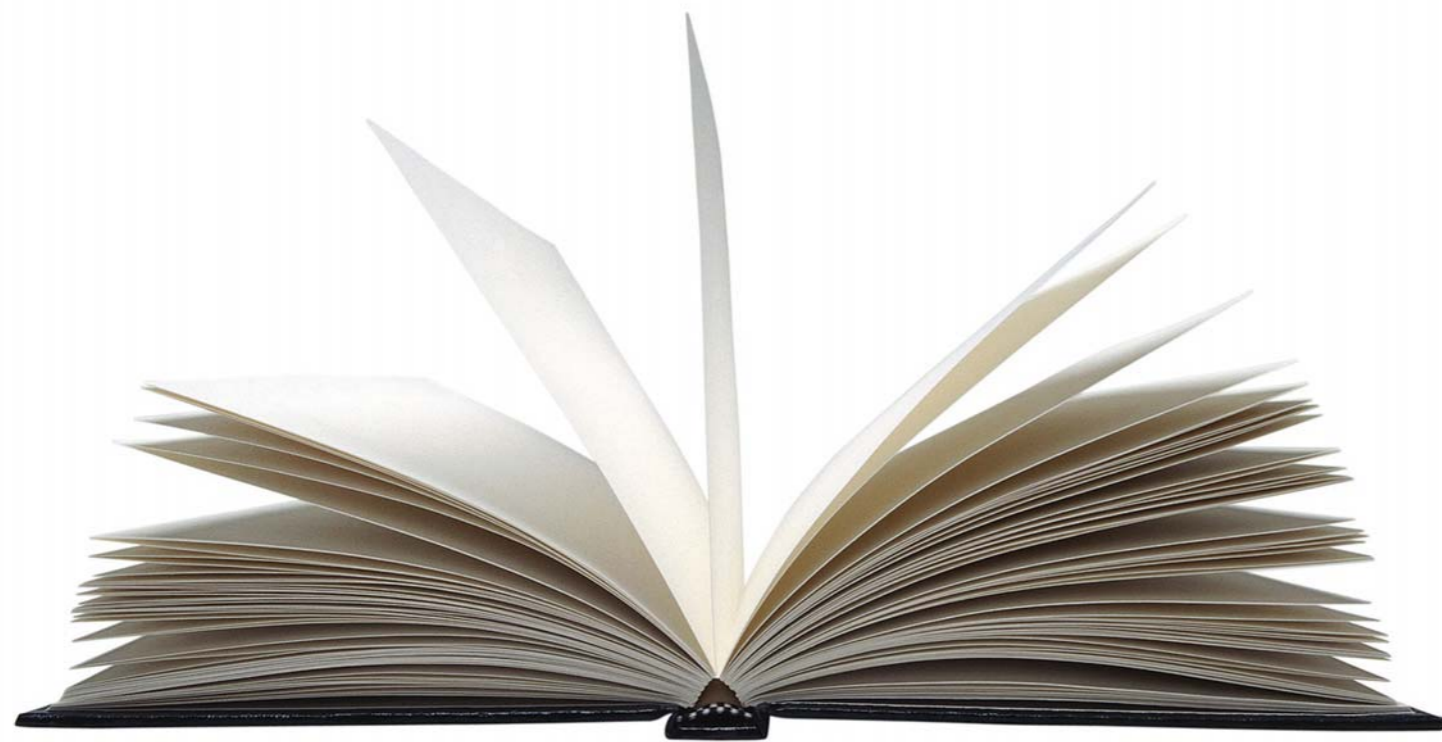
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'increased choice may actually contribute to the recent epidemic of clinical depression affecting much of the Western world'.

Yet a closer reading of opening pages of *The Paradox of Choice* reveals the extent of the author's intended scope. Schwartz goes far beyond the average self-help book and enters a much bigger debate about the value of personal liberty and people's inherent right to make their own choices. He positions himself in this debate early on in the book by claiming that 'we would be better off if we embraced certain voluntary constraints on our freedom of choice, instead of rebelling against them'.

The aim of this book can be seen as two-fold: firstly to identify the problems related to the increasing number of choices available to

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT



One of the most important roles for think tanks is stimulating argument and new thinking among the next generation of policymakers and opinion formers. The Stockholm Network is making its own efforts to do this through the creation of our Book Club, which meets every 6 weeks over drinks and snacks in a Soho bar to dissect books which we believe are having an important impact on the policy debate.

In this issue of *Eye on Europe*, Anne Jensen reviews the latest book to be debated at the book club, *The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz, while Terence O'Dwyer profiles the Stockholm Network's most recent publication, *Poles Apart? Eastern European attitudes to healthcare*, which was launched in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary in early June and attracted substantial media coverage.

Looking forward to the autumn, the Stockholm Network-Economist Westminster Fringe series

will be examining at the fate of various tax-funded institutions with debates on the future of public service broadcasting in the digital age and the need for reform of the United Nations. The Amigo society will also reconvene in Brussels looking at issues as diverse as the flexibility of the Belgian labour market and the state of transport policy.



Summer may be a quiet time in most of Europe but the cogs of the think tank machine will still be whirring, putting together plans,

ideas and arguments for the autumn. With a new British Opposition leader due to be chosen and with the UK holding the EU presidency, politics here will be no less dull than they will be in the rest of Europe, where the whole future of the European project is back up for debate in the aftermath of the French and Dutch rejections of the Constitutional Treaty. If ever Europe were at a turning point it is now. The SN and our member think tanks hope to steer it back onto the right path.

## ↔ EASTERN MEDICINE CONTINUED

about their healthcare, as well as a useful comparative tool: how do attitudes in these countries compare with the West? Is there anything to be learned from their differing approaches to reform? In particular, are the new member states poles apart from the original EU-15?

The new member states polled clearly differ from 'old' Europe on many performance indicators. For example, they occupy the three highest rankings in delivery deficit, the difference between what people want from healthcare and what they get. Their inhabitants also have a more negative view of their healthcare systems on average than those living in the EU7. When comparing themselves to the EU states in Western Europe, the new member states demonstrate a clear inferiority complex, with 76% believing that other European healthcare systems perform far better than their own.

Under-funding is also an issue in the new member states. 73% of those polled believe their healthcare systems are under funded – the second highest (after Sweden) of all the EU countries polled.

The poll reveals therefore, that there is both a significant delivery gap and a funding gap in the NMS4. This has translated into a readiness

for reform that is unrivalled in Europe: 74% of respondents view reform as being urgent and 59% of them are persuaded that without any reform their health systems will get worse, even with the extra cash from economic growth. The survey shows that citizens are itching for reform and that this is a hot political issue across the NMS4. Slovakia, for example, has led the way by introducing of user charges, as well as a defined basic benefit package and for-profit status of health insurers and providers.

However, while there are differences in performance indicators and readiness for reform, there are also similarities. For example, with respect to willingness to travel for treatment, the new survey shows that citizens in the new member states are not so different from their western counterparts: 69% of people in the NMS4 would travel abroad if their healthcare system paid for it, versus 64% of those people surveyed in the EU-7. With respect to values-related indicators, such as prioritising equality of treatment for all over the quality of treatment received by individuals and their families, there is no clear difference between 'old' and 'new' Europe.

Overall, the current systems of the NMS4 received very poor performance rankings while the polls showed a readiness for change. Politicians in these states should therefore be

in a strong position to enact major changes to their healthcare systems. The reforms that people believed should top the agenda include giving patients more health information – a concern shared by those polled in 'old' Europe as well.

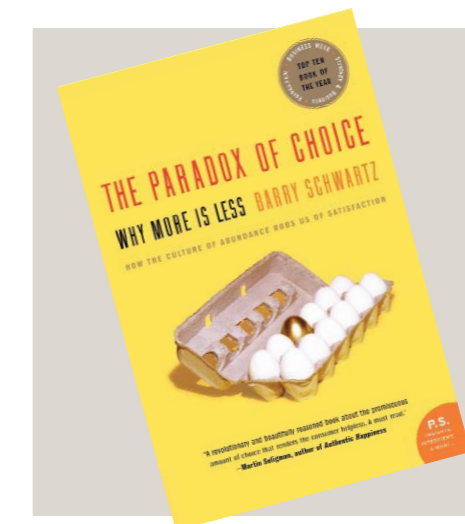
The main differences in opinion between the 'new' and 'old' Europe are caused by differences in access, due to significantly lower levels of funding, and by a sometimes unfounded admiration of western Europe. The challenges facing healthcare and the way people view them, however, are similar across the board. The conclusion? NMS4 states are not 'poles apart' from their western neighbours. However, their readiness for reform and their leaders' boldness in implementing reform bodes well for the future of Europe, where hopefully they may serve as a catalyst for much needed reform in the West.

Terry O'Dwyer

N.B. See page 12 for information on how to order this publication.

## ↔ OH, HOW TO CHOOSE? CONTINUED

people in our modern society, and secondly to provide the reader with a guide on how to cope with the situation. Schwartz succeeds in the latter aim and does provide the reader with some sound advice on how to choose between, for example, one hundred and twenty types of pasta sauces or one hundred and seventy-five different types of salad dressing. He also makes an interesting distinction between 'maximizers' and 'satisficers', according to how people respond to choice. The former group are characterised by an inclination (of varying strength) to seek and accept only the best, and to expend a considerable amount of time and energy in achieving this goal. The latter group are people who will settle for something they perceive to be 'good enough', and are unwilling to worry too greatly about possibility that a better alternative may exist somewhere. The goal of maximising is, according to Schwartz a source of great dissatisfaction and can make people truly miserable. The best way for us all to deal with choices is therefore to be less of a maximizer and settle for something that is good enough. This is sound advice.



What Schwartz fails to do in his book is to successfully argue the case for his main hypothesis that increased choice causes stress for most people and contributes to depression, anxiety and unhappiness in general. Moreover, he fails to explain why this justifies certain constraints on our personal freedom. The main flaw in Schwartz's reasoning is that he believes choices should be valued only if they make us happier. This is an extremely consequentialist

view of freedom, which inherently denigrates autonomy and self-determination.

The logical conclusion of Schwartz's own reasoning is that people should leave difficult and uncomfortable choices to someone else. His prescription would, in theory, allow people to live their lives blissfully ignorant of complicated issues such as alternative health care insurances or even different educational options for their children. Yet Schwartz never discusses how society would organise itself if people decided to voluntarily constrain their personal freedom, nor who would make these difficult decisions for us. And his nostalgia for 'the good old days' when state monopolies took care of health care and utilities suggests he wishes to see a return to nanny-statism. One hopes, however, that people value their freedom and enfranchisement sufficiently to put up with the tyranny of the one hundred and twenty different pasta sauces now available in the supermarket.

Anne Jensen



## PROFILE: INSTITUT ECONOMIQUE MOLINARI

THE INSTITUT ECONOMIQUE MOLINARI, a French-speaking free-market think tank based in Brussels, was founded by Cecile Philippe in July 2003.

### WHAT THEY DO

The mission of the IEM is to develop and propose alternative and innovative ideas that will allow individuals and societies to prosper. It is named after Gustave de Molinari, a prolific economist noted for his ability to convey complex ideas in simple terms. The Institut is so named because its own aim – to communicate ideas clearly and concisely and thereby shape public opinion – is to emulate Molinari's eloquent simplicity.

A public research organisation, the IEM examines issues of taxation, healthcare and the environment and argues for the benefits of lower taxes and against the costs of ever-greater regulation. It is also committed to environmental preservation, which IEM believes is compatible with raising human living standards and wealth-creation. The IEM aims to achieve these goals through the publication and dissemination of its economic analyses.

### WHAT HAVE THEY DONE

One of the IEM's most successful mechanisms are its 'Economic Notes', which aim to combat prevailing myths around certain issues, such as global warming, healthcare taxation and Anti-trust legislation. They are typically only four pages long – an easy fifteen minute read – and are written for the layman. Often, they are the results of an extended scientific study that has been condensed for wider public consumption. The most recent Economic Note was entitled 'Precaution with the precautionary principle', after the reactionary mechanism which was added into the French Constitution's environmental charter in February. Since the Rio Summit in 1992, the precautionary principle has been a central demand of radical environmentalist groups, and in its name, governments now intervene in the food, farm products, toy and chemicals markets, to mention just a few. As the Economic Note argues, the precautionary principle is presented as a way of making our lives safer, a kind of



comprehensive insurance provided by the state for free. However, it is necessary to reassess this notion, as the Note demonstrates that the application of this principle is not an effective way to reduce risk. Like its predecessors, the Note was extremely well-received in the media and amongst members of the French and European parliaments.

For the last two years, the IEM have also organised weekly economic seminars in Paris. The seminar promotes sound perspectives on economics and politics.

### FORTHCOMING PLANS AND PUBLICATIONS

The IEM is planning to organise an event in Paris on the precautionary principle before the end of the year, and will host a debate on antitrust (competition) issues in 2006 that will examine different aspects of European law, and particularly as it pertains to the Microsoft antitrust case. The IEM is also currently re-designing its 'human action seminars' in time for next year's opening of the forum to students of France's top universities and business schools.

Two new Economic Notes will shortly be published on EU Competition policies and the

burden of the French state. The former will analyse the history of antitrust policies in order to contest the belief that these policies enhance consumer sovereignty. On the contrary, it can be observed that these policies have always been pushed by individuals who are constitutionally opposed to competition and free markets. The latter note on the French state burden will argue that, contrary to prevailing domestic opinion, France is not an economically liberal nation, and that too much capitalism is certainly not the cause of the country's current malaise. The authors will instead begin their examination of France's sluggish economy by noting that the French state consumes over 53% of GDP.

Finally, we are building a network of free-market francophone Africans who will be able to promote free-market ideas in their own countries and abroad. This network will make it possible to bring over to Europe sound speakers from Africa, generate press and media coverage from a free-market perspective and help to target publications at key European and African audiences.

[www.institutmolinari.org](http://www.institutmolinari.org)



## PROFILE: WALTER EUCKEN INSTITUTE

THE WALTER EUCKEN INSTITUTE (WEI) was founded in 1954 by friends and students of Walter Eucken, a major intellectual mentor of the free social order in post-war Germany. The Institute is a politically independent, non-profit research centre that seeks to advance classical-liberal ideas of personal freedom, individual responsibility and competition in a market order protected by government under the law.

### WHAT THEY DO

The Freiburg-based Walter Eucken Institute carries on and develops the unique tradition of 'Ordo-liberalism' as established by Walter Eucken and other members of the so-called 'Freiburg School' of economists and legal scholars who, already in the early 1940s, worked out (together with several anti-fascist circles) plans for a post-war constitution of liberty in Germany. The WEI's creation was strongly supported by Ludwig Erhard, then Secretary of Economic Affairs and creator of the so-called 'economic miracle' of post-war Germany. From 1964 to 1992, Friedrich A. Hayek was member of the Institute's Board and later its Honorary President. At present, James M. Buchanan is the Honorary President of the Institute.

The WEI's primary concern is with basic research in *Ordnungsökonomik* (constitutional economics) and *Ordnungspolitik* (constitutional economic policy). Its focus is on the collective choice of rules for markets and politics and their impact on the ways the 'market game' and the 'game of politics' is played. Current research concentrates on the following issues: the redefinition or renaissance of the German 'model' of a 'social market economy'; alternatives to centralisation and harmonisation as forms of integration within the European Union; the classical-liberal case for competition among jurisdictions; ways to increase individual sovereignty in both markets and democracies; the political economy of policy reform; the ethics of the market order. In addition, scholars at the WEI conduct research into the history of



### FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

A collection of papers given in the above-mentioned lecture series will soon be published in a volume 'Spielregeln für eine bessere Politik' (with chapters on reforms of the German federal system, corporatism, EU constitution, representative democracy, etc.). A first comprehensive collection of classical texts in the Ordo-liberal tradition will also be published this year. One of our forthcoming conferences this year will deal with intergenerational justice with presentations of economists, legal scholars, theologians and moral philosophers, followed by a round-table discussion with journalists. The list of invited speakers for the coming months includes Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein, Georg Milbradt (governor of the state of Saxony), Peer Steinbrück (former governor of the state of Northrhine-Westfalia), Hans Tietmeyer (former president of the Bundesbank), Hans-Olaf Henkel (former president of the German Employers' Confederation), Hermann Otto Solms (leading liberal member of the Bundestag), Wladimir Gutnik (social scientist, Moscow), Wolfgang Kersting (social philosopher, Hamburg).

ideas and are able to provide those interested in the intellectual roots of the Freiburg school with expertise and in some cases with archive-material that is otherwise inaccessible.

The WEI publishes two prestigious book series (together some 220 titles thus far, with such authors as Hayek, Buchanan, North, and Kirzner) and supports the German edition of the collected works of F.A. Hayek. It hosts a variety of conferences and workshops for eminent scholars from all over the world, but also for PhD. students (of economics, law, and other social sciences) who work in related fields. In addition, the WEI constantly invites prestigious scholars and leaders in politics and business to present their ideas to a wider public. Currently, a series of lectures is devoted to the theme of how the rules of political competition in Germany may be changed in order to provide better incentives for politicians to invest in, and sustain, long-term economic reforms that are badly needed to overcome the institutional sclerosis in Germany.



## ABOUT THE NETWORK



"The Stockholm Network is very good as an idea and even better in reality. There are so many forces for freedom now in Europe and the Stockholm Network brings us together. The publications and events by the Stockholm Network have been of great use to me and the conferences have led to many important contacts."

Johnny Munkhammar, Author of *The Collapse of Big Government*



### WHAT IS THE STOCKHOLM NETWORK?

The Stockholm Network is a one-stop shop for organisations seeking to work with Europe's brightest policymakers and thinkers. Our unique network of over 130 market-oriented think tanks in Europe and further afield, gives us the capacity to deliver local messages and locally-tailored global messages across the EU and beyond. Joining the Stockholm Network gives you unparalleled access to the best European policy thinking, the opportunity to lead debates and change the climate of ideas in Europe and the chance to meet the key players in shaping the policy debates of tomorrow.

### WHAT POLICY ISSUES DO WE DISCUSS?

The Network is interested in ideas which stimulate economic growth and help people to help themselves. We promote policies which create the social and economic conditions for a free society. These include:

- Reforming European welfare states and creating a more flexible labour market
- Creating competition and choice in healthcare, through reform of European health systems and markets
- Creating a market in which world-class education can flourish
- Taking a practical, market-oriented look at environmental affairs
- Emphasising the benefits of globalisation and creating an understanding of free market ideas and institutions

### WHAT DO WE DO?

The Stockholm Network maintains a website ([www.stockholm-network.org](http://www.stockholm-network.org)) which contains a comprehensive directory of European free market think tanks and thinkers. We advertise forthcoming events (our own and those of partner organisations) and facilitate publication exchange and translation between think tanks. We also post regular news flashes and updates on European think tank activities.

Our events provide an excellent opportunity for networking with high-profile European policy makers and opinion formers.

Previous attendees have included: Charlotte Cederschiold, Vice President of the European Parliament; Clive Crook, Deputy Director,

*The Economist*; Vince Cable MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor; Frits Bolkestein, EU Commissioner for the Internal Market; Conor Cruise O'Brien, author and historian; Hans Hoogervorst, then Dutch Social Security Minister, now Health Minister; Jason Turner, architect of Wisconsin and New York's welfare to work schemes; Philippe Legrain, author of *Open World: The Truth about Globalisation*; Johan Norberg, author of *In Defence of Global Capitalism*.

Our events and books have received media coverage across Europe, including BBC TV and BBC Radio 4, the *Financial Times*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *La Repubblica*, *Le Point*, *The Economist*, *The Times*, *The Business*, the *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *The Sun*, the *Daily Express*, the *News of the World*, *Public Finance* magazine, *The Sprout*, *The New Statesman* magazine, *Dagens Nyheter* of Sweden, *Pravo* of the Czech Republic and *Hospodárské Noviny* of the Czech Republic. Topics have ranged from labour market flexibility and tax harmonisation to health system reform, welfare to work and immigration.

### HOW COULD YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION BENEFIT FROM SN MEMBERSHIP?

- Expand your database by meeting new contacts from across Europe
- Expose your own expert voices to a wider audience
- Receive weekly Stockholm Network email updates and quarterly newsletters
- Receive Stockholm Network Books & Publications
- Get invitations to Stockholm Network Events & Activities

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE STOCKHOLM NETWORK?

Please contact us on +44 20 7354 8888 or email our Director of Programmes, Sacha Kumaria [sacha@stockholm-network.org](mailto:sacha@stockholm-network.org).

## MEET THE TEAM



**HELEN DISNEY** is Director of the Stockholm Network. Her background is in public policy and the media. She also undertakes consultancy work on public policy issues for corporate clients.

Formerly an editorial writer for *The Times* and an editorial writer and commentator for the *Daily Express*, Helen continues to write regularly on a range of public policy topics for such publications as the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, *Public Finance*, *Public Service Magazine*, and *The Sprout*, a satirical Brussels-based magazine, as well as regular weekly entries for the Centre for the New Europe's health weblog, CNE Health.

Helen has been the Director of the Stockholm Network since 1997, and is a founding member of the organisation. She holds a degree in French and Italian from Bristol University and speaks conversational Spanish.

**ANNE KRISTINE JENSEN** is the Stockholm Network's Project Manager for Trade, I.P. and Competition. She joined the Network in October following a period as an intern, and is responsible for managing the office, organising events and frequently contributes to Stockholm Network publications.

Anne recently completed her studies at the London School of Economics, where she obtained a Masters Degree in Political Economy with a focus on International Trade. Previously, she had studied for her undergraduate degree at the Universities of Oslo (Norway) and Gothenburg (Sweden). Anne has also worked in the political department of the Norwegian embassy in Berlin and for the Norwegian Liberal-Conservative party.

**SACHA KUMARIA** is the Stockholm Network's Director of Programmes. He is responsible for liaising with the member think-tanks, and co-ordinating research projects and events. He also compiles the weekly e-newsletter.

Sacha joined the Stockholm Network following a successful research internship at Civitas, a civil society think-tank and Stockholm Network member in London. He previously worked part-time as a student caller during his postgraduate studies, raising money for the University of Warwick Alumni Fund. After growing up in Hong Kong, Sacha returned to the UK to continue his studies, and holds a Degree in English and American Literature and a Masters in Ancient History from the University of Warwick.

**DAN LEWIS** is the Stockholm Network's Director of Environmental Affairs. As a pro-growth environmentalist, he has contributed articles and letters to numerous publications including *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Refocus and Sustain Magazine*.

His pamphlet for the Economic Research Council, *Recharging The Nation*, an economics-based assessment of existing, renewable technologies and their prospects for expansion, put the case for Green Energy in the UK at the right price if combined with market-driven policies. He has since advised policymakers and institutional investors about renewables and the environment. Following his latest publication, *"The Essential Guide to British Quangos 2005"*, he has become the media's first choice of expert for this poorly understood – yet burgeoning – area of UK Government.

**TERENCE O'DWYER** is Research Officer at the Stockholm Network. He is responsible for coordinating the Amigo Society meetings and liaising with our Spanish and Portuguese think-tank members. Terry joined the Stockholm Network in July 2004. He started his career as an intern, but was brought on board as a permanent member of staff in October.

After growing up in Brazil, Mexico and the USA, Terry returned to the UK to study History at the University of Durham. He then moved on to Oxford University, and holds a Masters in Latin American Studies.

**MEIR PUGATCH** heads the intellectual property and competition programme at the Stockholm Network and edits its monthly e-newsletter, *Know IP*. He is based at the School of Public Health, University of Haifa in Israel, where he is a lecturer on intellectual property policy, management and the exploitation of knowledge assets and entrepreneurship.

Meir is also a guest lecturer at the Department of International Relations, Hebrew University Jerusalem, where he lectures on the international political economy of trade policy.

# MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



The Stockholm Network is Europe's only dedicated service organisation for market-oriented think tanks and thinkers. Spanning almost 40 countries and over 130 think tanks, our unique organisation has the capacity to deliver local messages and locally-tailored global messages across the EU and beyond.

Through our publications, weekly newsletter, and special events, members are able to exchange ideas and make an impact on a wide range of public policy topics and ideas.

If you know of a new organisation you think would benefit from Stockholm Network membership, please contact our office at [info@stockholm-network.org](mailto:info@stockholm-network.org) and let us know.

*"The Stockholm Network does an invaluable job in linking Europe's free market think tanks, at a time when new thinking is urgently needed to end the region's economic and cultural stagnation."*

*John Willman, Associate Editor, Financial Times*

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- 2 Adam Smith Society  
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Italy
- 3 Adriatic Institute for Public Policy  
[www.adriaticinstitute.org](http://www.adriaticinstitute.org)  
Croatia
- 4 Albanian Center for Economic Research  
[www.balkanetwork.org/albania.htm](http://www.balkanetwork.org/albania.htm)  
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France
- 41 European Ideas Network  
[www.epp-ed.europarl.eu.int](http://www.epp-ed.europarl.eu.int)  
Belgium
- 42 European Policy Centre  
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- 43 EVA  
[www.eva.fi/eng/index.php](http://www.eva.fi/eng/index.php)  
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- 44 F.A. v. Hayek Institute  
[www.hayek-institut.at](http://www.hayek-institut.at)  
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- 45 Fondazione Luigi Einaudi  
[www.fondeinaudiroma.it](http://www.fondeinaudiroma.it)  
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### Does the West Know Best?

A collection of essays looking in detail at why countries in Central and Eastern Europe have been more radical in adopting market-based reforms, from introducing flat rates of taxation to privatising social security and reforming healthcare systems. The authors outline some examples of best practice and ask what impact this radicalism may have on the traditional social welfare models now under pressure in the West.



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### UPCOMING DEBATES:

20th October

**Democracies should bypass the U.N. rather than wait for its reform**

N.B. This debate will be held at Church House, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3NZ

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