

EFILife

Newsletter

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Editor: Paul Claes

Layout: Thomas Jürgenschellert

Contributions: Paul Claes, Ilyana Panteleeva, Inga Menke, Thomas Jürgenschellert, Charlotte Klinting, Eliza Popper, Maria Elena Landi, Philipp Wagner, Ivana Pavlovic, Bernd Thomas

Pictures: EFIL, Anna-Maria Hass, Hanneke Boode, Bernd Thomas, Greg Csaba, www.youth-eutrio.be, AFS Russia, AFS Latvia, AFS Germany, AFS Serbia and VVS and EFIL training participants

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ZANKA

3RD EFIL VOLUNTEER SUMMER SUMMIT

About 250 enthusiastic and motivated volunteers from 33 countries gathered at Hungary's Balaton Lake in Zanka for EFIL's third Volunteer Summer Summit! It turned out to be another magnificent event, 5 days of learning and sharing under the Hungarian sun in a most inspiring environment. Participants of all ages enjoyed a wide range of high quality workshops, a community project, a Hungarian piac, local folk and Roma dancing, the 'creative tent', fun events of all kinds, and most of all: each other's company!



A big round of applause for AFS Hungary as our host, and for all teams involved (prep-team, support team, trainers – you were all great!) who helped turn this event into the unforgettable experience it was for all present. No doubt they will all crash now that the Summit is over, and sleep for the rest of the month to recover.

Following in the footsteps of the 2008 pioneering event in Vigy (France) and last year's Summit near Istanbul (Turkey), the event in Zanka have once more confirmed the EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit as a not-to-be-missed highlight of the year for the active AFS volunteers across Europe and beyond. Once again, the Summit has shown that there is an absolute need for volunteers to share their experiences and challenges, and indeed their whole AFS life, with their peers from across the network, and what better than to meet in a superb summer setting, once a year.

Next year our partner organisation in Portugal will be the host of the year's hottest event, and already now volunteers are making plans to be there. And of course we're aiming at an even higher number of participants!

These are excerpts from a letter from Maria Elena Landi from AFS Argentina, a participant in the 3rd EFIL VOLUNTEER SUMMER SUMMIT. The letter so perfectly illustrates the true essence of our Summer Summit, and in an emotional and gripping way reminds us what AFS is all about.



"I'm back in Reconquista, Argentina, after 1 month and 20 days of travelling and I'm happy to see everybody at home again. However, I am no longer the person who left Reconquista on 19 June, I am a new person now."

"For the first time I have been part of such a huge international event as the EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit. The workshops were interesting and so well prepared, providing a wealth of information and knowledge for all attending, and they gave us the

wonderful opportunity to reflect with people of all walks of life, which helped us gain new perspectives. More than ever have I learned through this "rich" Summit that I can absorb and enjoy new things every single day! More than ever did I realize that I can learn from and with people of all ages and cultures."



"I realized that much of my new learning came from mingling with the wonderful AFS volunteers at the Summit. Yes, even on the day I left, I 'discovered' new people whom I hadn't yet talked to while at the Summit, many of them coming from countries I had never met anybody from in all the years of my life. If there is one thing to be sorry about with regards to the past days, then it's not having had the chance or enough time to meet every single person attending the Summit."

"At EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit, I once again had this wonderful feeling which I remember from my first ever experience with AFS. How very special to see so many different faces each with such different stories, and of such a huge range of ages, from so many different countries, having so many different cultures, speaking so many different languages, ... And all of them taking advantage of this wonderful feast of diversity, learning together, enjoying time together, singing and dancing together, having fun together like old friends."

"Once again I was amazed how - with all our natural differences - we were so very much the same, sharing the same feelings! How come my new friends from Ghana or Russia, Czech Republic or Sweden, Hungary or Serbia, Portugal or Malaysia, ... are so fascinatingly 'different', yet share similar feelings and thoughts? The second we started talking there was this AFS magic, this invisible current flowing between us. This can only be happen to you in AFS."

"I am grateful to EFIL for renewing in us the idea that even when time passes by, and we grow old in our personal life as well as in our AFS life, we can always learn from the young as well as from the old, while at the same time we ourselves still have so much to give and share. Which makes me wonder: do 'old' people really exist, or is it rather a state of mind...? With the intercultural intergenerational learning from EFIL's Summit in mind, it all of a sudden seems easier to stay young forever."



EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP BRUSSELS CAMP WELL ON ITS WAY!

Only 2 months left until one of EFIL's biggest annual events takes off with full speed. The joint End-of-Stay Camp of our "European Citizenship Trimester Programme" will gather 155 ECTP



youngsters from 14

countries for 3 days of workshops, activities and exciting visits in Europe's capital city, Brussels.

The ECTP preparatory team is tirelessly

working to provide the best programme and great memories for all involved! The Camp will take place from 28 November to 2 December, and we can count on a committed team of 30 trainers and support volunteers who'll take on various tasks to prepare everything from workshop contents to

logistics. The team is diverse, motivated and has already started work on this great and truly European event some months ago.

Meanwhile, the ECTP participants have left for their three month AFS adventure in their new family and host country. We wish them all a great time full of intercultural

discoveries with the new friends and family, and we can't wait to welcome them in Brussels end of November!

Join us on FB here:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=153340048026517&v=photos#!/group.php?gid=153340048026517&v=wall>



At the European Commission



At the European Parliament

COUNTDOWN TO INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DAY 2010

For the third year running, September is the month of our annual European

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DAY. Thursday 30 September will be the day when all across the continent activities will take place to celebrate and



promote intercultural dialogue and diversity. From many of our member

organisations we have received recent updates on a great variety of planned activities, and it seems some very creative and original ideas are in the process of being developed. Read more about it in our October EFILife edition!



IDD2009 in Russia (photo AFS Russia)

As for ideas for activities and workshops, colourful booklets with a selection of activities that took place all across Europe on Intercultural Dialogue Day in 2008 and 2009 are available on our website. Once again this year, we will collect your pictures and activity reports to compile a similar booklet with an

overview of what happened on 30 September.

As a special challenge this year, we want to encourage our European member organisations to aim for the highest possible number of events, ultimately aiming for one event per chapter in each of the partner organisations. Wouldn't it be great to announce that 300 (400? 500?) events took place on 30 September, all across the continent...?

Remember IDD is a volunteer-driven event, and we want to encourage our member organisations to engage their volunteer network and see what they are prepared to organise

to show the world that AFS is more than an exchange organisation, it's about intercultural learning and dialogue, it's about diversity!



IDD2009 in Belgium (photo: AFS BFL)

On September 30th, AFS Intercultural Dialogue Day, AFS Latvia is inviting all AFS partners around the world to join them in the initiative "Good thoughts for you, me and the world", by following the link <http://prezi.com/leogr9lfhka6/afs-good-thoughts/>

In more than 20 AFS schools in several cities in Latvia people will join together to draw and colour circles. Drawings need to be mailed to afslat20@afs.org, and will be exhibited as a digital presentation during the 20th anniversary celebration event on 1-2 October in Riga.

EURAFRICAN PARTNERSHIP PROJECT VISITS KENYA

The third of three visits to the African partner countries in EFIL's "EurAfrican Partnership for Change" project took place between the 21st of June and the 1st of July, when a team of 10 experienced volunteers from AFS

organisations in Denmark, Finland, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya met in Kenya. They took part in a feasibility study, organized training activities for local volunteers in three chapters across Kenya and were home hosted for part of their stay by Kenyan families.

Altogether more than 50 volunteers in Nairobi, Mombasa and Narok attended the trainings. The topics varied from intercultural learning,



roles and responsibilities of volunteers, hosting and finding host families, to preparations and orientations, presentation and organisation skills, etc.



Mombasa training (photo: EFIL)

For the feasibility study, AFS Kenya had set up appointments with government institutions, private sector, religious and local organisations for participants to collect information on the current situation and further possibilities of OFIE (Organisation for Intercultural Education), the partner organisation of AFS in Kenya. The feasibility studies in the EurAfrican Partnership for Change project aim at proposing a framework to help empower the AFS organisations in the African partner countries and further support them in their organisational and volunteer development.

CLOSING SEMINAR AFRICA PROJECT IN VIENNA



In August AFS Austria hosted the closing seminar of EFIL's "EurAfrican Partnership for Change" project, a European Commission sponsored project that has put the spotlight on our Sub-Saharan African network partners over the past year, this way perfectly fitting in with the network's

increased focus on Africa as agreed in the AFS Vision 2020 and the discussions on network priorities at the World Congress in Kuala Lumpur last October.

Over the past year twenty-four experienced volunteers from 11 European and 3 African AFS organisations have been involved in feasibility studies and trainings aimed at AFS volunteers and staff in the three participating African countries Ghana, South Africa and Kenya.

In the week-long closing seminar in Vienna, participants got together for an intensive programme, including a poster gallery as a way to give feedback on the activities that have taken place, workshops including the design of follow-up



activities, etc. Guest speaker Sherifa Fayez (AFS Egypt's Partner Director) facilitated a much appreciated session about the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) programme and the growth of AFS Egypt. Issues tackled in the project and the closing seminar included

volunteering in an African context; youth programmes in Africa; intercultural learning in an African environment.

The project has put the African partners in the center of the network's attention, and the much wanted and needed visibility for our African partners will hopefully lead to a renewed/increased trust and interest of the AFS network partners in exchanges with Africa, to a continued momentum of developing AFS in Africa by AFS International and partners all around our global network as a step towards a more sustainable presence of AFS in Africa, and to the further motivation as well as professional development of the African partners themselves. For AFS to be a truly global network, there's a need for all of us to warmly embrace Africa and make things happen over there!

Next to the international exposure it provided for the African partners, this project has also built bridges between the African partners, it has established strong intra-African contacts and contributed towards the creation of an AFS African identity.

Finally, I want to extend a big thank you to all the participants in this project, to the network partners who supported us and believed in the values and objectives of the project, to the Steering Group for the energy and time put into the development of the different project phases, to the European Commission for selecting our project for European funding, and most of all to our African partners for taking up the challenge and for their commitment to make things work!



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

This year's training for trainers took place in the first week of August, when 25 participants from 15 AFS organisations gathered in Zanka, Hungary, for a seminar aimed at developing trainer competences with a special focus on intergenerational learning. Next to sessions dealing with the topic of tackling intergenerational learning in an intercultural setting, session time was set

aside for personal development as a trainer and concrete training skills. The last part of the training was



reserved for the preparation of actual training sessions to be

presented in a real-life setting for the participants of EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit, which took place at the same venue (see elsewhere in this edition of EFILife).

A big thank you goes to the diverse preparatory team that lead the group through this intense training, and

also to the participants, who managed to overcome age, language and culture barriers to become a wonderful group that created great workshops that were appreciated by the participants of the Summer Summit. A separate word of gratitude is also

addressed to AFS Hungary for organising the activity venue and all logistical aspects, next to the enormous work put into the preparation of the Summer Summit.

We will be staying in touch with the training participants as they are

the ones who constitute the key group of trainers, both in their countries and at European level. We are looking forward to applications from the training participants for the renewal of EFIL's European Pool of Trainers (EPOT) at the beginning of next year!

THE EFIL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP SEMINAR IN THE LAND OF ABBA AND IKEA

BY PHILIPP WAGNER, CHAIR OF AFS AUSTRIA AND TRAINER AT THE SEMINAR

Whereas ABBA didn't figure prominently in the seminar, IKEA did. This year's Governance Seminar was generously hosted by AFS Sweden and took place in the business park of Uppsala. The venue was integrated in the programme, and our first dinner took us to Sweden's second-biggest IKEA (shopping possibilities included).

However, time for shopping and sight-seeing was scarce. 23 participants and four facilitators gathered on a tight schedule. It was a diverse group and the biggest yet at such a seminar. Many Nordic partners made use of the relatively close venue to send many of their board members, adding "local" flavour to an international group. Other participants came from as far as South Africa; altogether, 13 partner organisations were represented.

Diversity is a challenge and provides possibilities. This 'universal' rule applied here as well. The Governance Seminar is not an Induction Training, and it was expected from participants to have knowledge of the AFS world. Such knowledge did exist in the group, although sometimes a bit unevenly distributed. The challenge therefore, was to bring everybody up to speed. Enters the 'Possibility': participants helped each other, shared a lot of insights and questions, co-operated in the best sense of the word. It proved important for the seminar to gear down content and to provide sharing possibilities. Yet at the same time there were important issues to be worked on: what is volunteer leadership—how do volunteers lead volunteers? What aspects of leadership are worth exploring, on a personal as well as organisational level? What are the responsibilities of an AFS board? And what can I personally do to bring forward my own organisation?

The group worked with real-life case studies, taken from the network. Participants analysed their own organisations' realities, sought input from the others and came up with concrete steps to bring back to their boards. We are curious as to how they are to be implemented and welcome feedback from Board Chairs on this matter!



A big thank you goes to the team of facilitators: Bert Vercamer and Eduardo Assed from AFS International, who added their professionalism and expertise. The third part of my dream team is Michael Rosák, Board Chair of AFS CZE and member of the EFIL Board, who conveyed so much enthusiasm and served as a good example for a volunteer leader. Another big thank you goes to Lisa Åhnberg from AFS Sweden who helped tirelessly in the background with all kinds of logistics—and, of course, to AFS Sweden for hosting us so well.

PARTNER NEWS

IN EACH EDITION OF EFILIFE, WE DEDICATE SOME SPACE TO PARTNER NEWS, INCLUDING PERSONNEL CHANGES AS WELL AS RELEVANT EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE PAST MONTH.



For almost two decades, Anne Sokal has been the driving force behind **AFS Belgium French**. As National Director of AFS

BFR, Anne will retire after the upcoming AFS World Congress and hand over the running of the office to Fabrice Gonet,

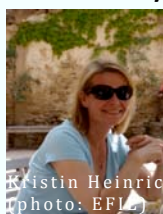
who has recently been recruited and is already installed in the office.



In another change of leadership, Kristin Heinrich, National Director of **AFS Norway**,

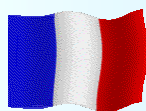
is moving out of Oslo to the South of the country, and has decided to leave the organisation.

Meanwhile the Board has finalised the recruitment process for a successor, and Rune Fimreite has accepted to



Kristin Heinrich
photo: EFILife

assume the position as of 1 October. We warmly welcome Fabrice and Rune to the EFIL and AFS network, and look forward to meeting both of them at the World Congress in Argentina in October. Also from Norway comes the news that, after 3 years at the office, Siri Bolstad has left the organisation. Hilde Hustad and Cecilie Jakobsen are now sharing the responsibilities related to AFS Norway's sending programme.



After 10 years with **AFS France**, Caroline Barjon will leave the organisation at the end of September. She will be remembered for her work in the pilot phase of the Comenius EU programme (with EFIL), the "Jump for Mobility" campaign, the celebration of 60 years AFS France and many other relevant projects. And after 7 years as a dedicated staff member of AFS Egypt, Programme Director Hoda Mahmoud, has decided to pursue new adventures and a different career. Hoda has been a pillar in AFS

Egypt's recent developments and growth. Mohag Elsadek, an active key-volunteer for the past 4 years, is taking over the Programme Director's position from Hoda.



After 10 years of dedicated service, Greg Csaba, former Programme Director and acting National Director during the ongoing



sabbatical year of Anett Miklos, has left **AFS Hungary**. Greg won a scholarship to CEIBS Shanghai, China, where he started his studies in

September. As of 1 September, Diana Rosta has taken over as acting National Director. Csilla Fodor has taken over as Organisational Development Coordinator. AFS Hungary also welcomes Viktoria Bedo as new Hosting Coordinator. Margareta Szepesi, part time Volunteer Coordinator, has started her maternity leave in September.



Recent staff changes at **AFS Switzerland** include the departure of Vero Ursprung who

has spent nearly 9 years with AFS, and of Jan Kunz. Both were in a job-sharing position. AFS Switzerland has now recruited one full-time person for Sending Admission (school programme): Petek Altinay. Barbara Spirig is in charge of the Sending Support for participants from the German speaking part of the country, while Isabella Kaufmann takes care of the French and Italian speaking regions.



Lots of happy news comes from **AFS Turkey!** No less than three staff members recently got married: Ozge Bilici, Assistant Sending Coordinator, Hazar Yildirim, Volunteer Development and

Organisational Communication Coordinator, and Baran Buyuktas, Finance Coordinator. And as is this isn't enough marvellous news, Programme Director Derya Komitoglu has become the mother of a baby boy named Kuzey. Masallah!



(photo: AFS Russia)



And we continue in the same style... **AFS Russia** happily announced that Kristina Illicheva,

Programme Director, got married in July. We wish them all a happy and long life. AFS Russia further brings the news that they hosted in the Moscow office for a month Nemanja Stancic, a volunteer from Belgrade (Serbia), and for 6 weeks they hosted Theresa Kratzer, volunteer from Tirol (Austria).



AFS Tunisia proudly announced that they featured in a programme of RTCI – Tunis International Radio. Natalie Garland, participant in AFS Tunisia's linguistic programme, spoke about her experience with the Tunisian host family and the Arabic programme she followed for 4 weeks in the Bourguiba School Tunis.



AFS Latvia shared the news that a long article (including pictures) about AFS featured in the Latvian national airline's inflight magazine "Baltic Outlook". Have a look at: http://www.afs.lv/downloads/files/LAT/Baltic_Outlook_AFS.pdf. AFS Latvia is inviting network partners to

join them in Riga from 1 to 3 October to celebrate their 20th anniversary!



(photo: AFS Latvia)



From 16 August to 3 September, the first Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience took place in Karlsruhe, Germany. **AFS Germany** worked together with Karlsruhochschule International University. 26 participants, 10 trainers and 5 faculty members came from 15 countries and 5 continents. AFS Germany is already looking forward to the 2011 edition of the Summer Academy.



(photo: AFS Germany)

On a different note, AFS Germany has informed the network about a

change regarding the FSJ programme



11th International Congress of Protocol

(Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr). Since 2003 AFS Germany has sent around 200 interns to AFS partner offices under this programme, to do their civil service abroad. The programme is controlled by the German Ministry of Youth and the Department of Civil Service. The German government has replaced the current programme by a new programme "Internationale Jugendfreiwilligendienste" (International Youth Voluntary Service). More details will soon follow.

And finally, **AFS Hungary** announces that they've been invited to hold a session and talk about intercultural learning, European citizenship and AFS at the 11th International Congress of Protocol, to be held in Budapest 18-20 November. Main focus will be on diversity in globalisation, intercultural communication in protocol and new challenges in the European Union. People interested in the event can apply through the website (www.budapestprotocolcongress2010.com). Most of the participants will be Heads of Protocol of public administrations of many countries.

SERBIA WELCOMES FIRST YEAR PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

On Friday, 27 August, AFS in Serbia welcomed its first Year Programme participants, coming from Chile, New Zealand, Turkey, Russia and Mexico. During the two-

day arrival orientation in Belgrade, the students learned about the Serbian culture, had a crash course of the Serbian language, they were treated to a

sightseeing tour, and met the local returnees. On Sunday afternoon, the host families joined the activities and the students introduced themselves one by one...

in Serbian! The press was present, and some footage was shown on the 7:30 evening news.

On the sending side, Serbian students have left for Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the USA. Meanwhile, AFS Interkultura in Serbia is already moving on to its next big event, the planning of a class

exchange with AFS Turkey later this year.



Interkultura in Serbia is the youngest AFS organisation in Europe.

The association was officially registered in Serbia in November 2008, with a branch office of AFS International established as recently as March 2010. Congratulations to the volunteers in Serbia for achieving so much in such a short period of time.

AFS PIONEERS OF INTEGRATION

BY BERND THOMAS

On 6 September the AFS EU-US Anniversary Tour initiated by pioneer alumni of 1950 and supported by BMW Group culminated in Brussels with an EU Conference discussing the "Future of European and Transatlantic Integration" with Secretary-General Paul Claes of EFIL and distinguished panellists Mr. Peter Chase, Senior Representative, US Chamber Brussels Office (retired US State Department), Prof. Antonio Missaroli, European Commission, DG Bureau of European Policy Advisors, and Mr. Marek Grela, Director, America, UN, Human Rights & Counterterrorism, General Secretariat, Council of the EU.

The Conference was opened by Mr. Claes with a report on the progress made by AFS in programmes of intercultural learning, many inter-twined with the framework of EC policy objectives, and with special recognitions for AFS alumni Paulette Pierson/Belgium, Donna Hoaglin Benda/USA, Enrico Grillo-Pasquarelli/Italy and Patrick Worms/ Germany (AFS years '48-'84).



Prof. Missaroli spoke about the "Future of European Integration" and Director Grela discussed the "Future of Transatlantic Integration". Both EU panellists largely coincided seeing current constraints and modified structural conditions on both sides as an opportunity to define new long-term visions, and to focus the political process on overcoming conventional obstacles to implementation. This could facilitate a single European voice

in external action as well as a more effective dialogue with civil society on the benefits of a larger and more level playing ground.

The AFS Alumni Anniversary Tour - crossing 4 countries from 3 to 6 September 2010 under the theme "From National History to International Community" - addressed the role of civic responsibility of the first generations of AFS returnees

in building transatlantic and intra-European integration after World War II. The trip sought to benchmark both original experiences and perceived objectives with new challenges of our time. The tour was also a pilot project intended to leverage third-age AFS volunteers and their networks for renewed and greater support to AFS and its programme innovation in intercultural learning.

The AFS Alumni Anniversary Tour began at Frankfurt University Poelzig Campus, 60 years after the departure of a large group of exchange students on 3 September 1950. The itinerary connected emblematic history and heartlands between Frankfurt, Trier, Luxemburg, Metz, Reims and Brussels. Special highlights were visits to the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament as well as encounters at Luxemburg with AFS returnee Mme Colette Flesch, former MEP and Deputy Prime Minister of her country, and at Reims Cathedral with the site of French-German reconciliation.

The Tour brought together AFS pioneer alumni from altogether 9 countries, including first US alumni coming to Europe in 1952. The final conference also drew local attendance from AFS alumni working in the European Institutions who constituted a AFS Euro/Net group in the 1990's for network mentoring and project support to AFS.

THANK YOU, LIZA!



In 2009, I was among the 200 lucky AFS volunteers who were accepted to be part of something phenomenal: the biggest annual EFIL event, the famous VSS – Volunteer Summer Summit. At that time I hardly knew what the letters E-F-I-L stood for and I was especially not aware of how I could get involved. I had a blast during those couple of days at the VSS in Polonezkoy, a little village near Istanbul, and it gave me the chance to get to know EFIL, the organisation that provides us all with the amazing opportunity of participating in events such as the Summer Summit.

On the 4th day of the Summit, during the „sharing and networking“ session, I happened to end up sitting next to Paul Claes, Secretary-General of EFIL. That short conversation has changed my life. In September I applied for an EFIL intern position. I got the great news in October: I got the job! The journey started over a year ago, and it became a journey of a lifetime.

During the 7 months I have spent at the EFIL office, I was not only surrounded by amazing people, but I have learned so much while helping to organize this year's Summer Summit in my home country Hungary. I was most sad to leave the EFIL secretariat end of August, and I'm already jealous of the two new interns who have only just started their EFIL journey.

But this is no end! One chapter has ended, and there are many more to come. My motivation and enthusiasm is higher than ever. I will be back in my beloved rainy city, Brussels, as I will be involved with EFIL again very soon, this time as a trainer at the ECTP Camp in November.

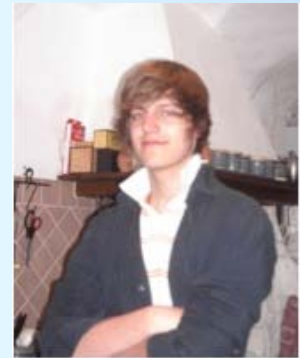
I would like to thank everyone who has been part of this wonderful journey and I am looking forward to all my future EFIL/AFS experiences.

WELCOME TO THOMAS

My name is Thomas Jürgenschellert and I am EFIL's new FSJ volunteer (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr) until July 2011. I am mainly taking over Alexander's tasks, including the editing of our monthly newsletter EFILife, updating the EFIL website and several other activities such as the ECTP end-of-stay camp in November in Brussels.

I have recently graduated from high school in Germany. My hometown is "Oldenburg" which is in northern Germany, located near Bremen and Hamburg. During my time as a student, I had the opportunity to spend a year with a host family in Boston (England) with a small German exchange organisation called "kulturlife". Getting to know the English culture and language, and my participation in the local college programmes, have made my exchange year one of the most exciting of my life so far, and I hope that my stay in Brussels will be just as great.

After my year with EFIL I am planning to study Banking and Finance in an integrated degree programme, which combines job and academic training. In my free time I enjoy playing basketball and tennis. I have played basketball for the past seven years, in a local club in Oldenburg. In the weekends I like to spend time with my friends – a good movie and a drink in a bar are fine with me, as long as I have people around!



I am very much looking forward to my year in the EFIL office and hope to get to know AFS better. I am especially looking forward to supporting my EFIL colleagues with the organisation of events and trainings, such as the upcoming ECTP Camp.

CHARLOTTE WHO...?



Hello, my name is Charlotte Klinting and I will be the EVS volunteer at the EFIL office in Brussels for the coming year. I am 19 years old and I come from Copenhagen, Denmark. I have just graduated from an international business high school, where I majored in Cultural Understanding, French and Marketing. This school has given me a lot of opportunities, including a three month stay in Australia and one month in New York with AFS International - but I still cannot get enough of travelling! However, this time it is a bit closer to home. The EFIL offer came at a very convenient time, while I was trying to make up my mind regarding my next move, so I jumped at the chance to go to Brussels for a year.

I am not unfamiliar with AFS, as I was an exchange student in France in 2006/2007. This is no coincidence, as I come from a family of active AFS volunteers, both locally, nationally and internationally. I am very excited about my tasks at the EFIL secretariat for the next year, which will include the coordination of the Volunteer Summer Summit in Portugal, and supporting the office with the development of a communication strategy for EFIL, the

preparation for the General Assembly in Vienna in June next year, and the 2011 Fundraising Seminar.

Next to volunteering with AFS, I spend my time doing yoga, going to concerts, having the occasional spa treatment and visiting my AFS friends! I am thrilled to be in Brussels and I have already started exploring the city.

EUROPE AND YOUTH

IN THIS SECTION, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO READ AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT EFIL IS OPERATING IN, VARIOUS NETWORKS AND ACTIVITIES WE ARE INVOLVED IN, AS WELL AS COMMON INITIATIVES WITH LIKE-MINDED PARTNERS FROM THE FIELD OF YOUTH WORK, MOBILITY, EXCHANGES AND INTERCULTURAL LEARNING.

EXCHANGE ORGANISATIONS MEET TO POOL RESOURCES IN EFFORTS TOWARDS VISA-FREE POLICY

On 19 August EFIL hosted several member organisations of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) for a short meeting on coordinating common priorities and actions. The meeting was attended by AEGEE (www.aegEE.org), European Students' Forum, Youth for Exchange and Understanding YEU (<http://www.yeu-international.org/>), the European umbrella of YFU organisations EEE-YFU (www.eee-yfu.org) and the Erasmus Students Network ESN (www.esn.org). EFIL nominated Michal Kadera from the YFJ Board and Maarten Coertjens – Policy Officer Education from the YFJ Secretariat – joined us partially as well.

All organisations present are active in the sphere of exchanges and provide learning mobility opportunities of different nature and duration. The visa challenge and barriers towards mobility for young and old is common for all of us. So far, mobility has been featuring on the YFJ work plan, however efforts



weren't always coordinated and objectives not concrete enough. It is common knowledge that visa regulations can be best influenced at national level, thus the YFJ at European has only limited capacities to move things. The exchange organisations however agreed to join forces and map competencies at national level in order to influence and monitor the visa issue process for participants from Russia and the Balkans. It is therefore useful to find out which organisations are a member of the National Youth Council (NYC) in each country and what the general advocacy work done on that matter is. Recently, EFIL has experienced some troubles with Schengen visas for Russian participants on the ECTP, which once again confirmed the need for more coordination, sharing and monitoring of the process.

In case you have good or bad practices and cases on visa regulations in your country to report on, please get in touch with EFIL (ilyana.panteleeva@afs.org). Stay tuned for more news on the topic!

EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING EYV2011 AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED

On 14 July EFIL attended the pre-summer break ALLIANCE meeting to get updated on recent developments in the planning of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV) and meet informally the partners in the field of volunteering. The

working groups, for which a call was previously sent out, are well on their way to be formed and we hope there will be AFS volunteers selected to represent our organisation's volunteer work in the intercultural youth exchange context.

The main EYV activity organised by the European Commission will be a series of conferences and awareness raising events that will gather volunteers, policy makers and civil society organisations to reflect on different aspects of volunteer work: recognition, promotion, quality and sustainable support. A further initiative at European level will be a mobile tent that will pass through all EU capitals and will provide the opportunity to take part in discussions and informal meetings with other volunteers and the general public. The tent will be a resource for the ones interested or active in volunteering to make contacts, present their organisations and projects and gain publicity. For more information on the Roadmap of the EC Tent, contact EFIL (ilyana.panteleeva@afs.org) or find your contact point – the National Coordinating Bodies for the EYV 2011 here: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/annexes-citizenship/doc1069_en.htm.



If you have hidden journalistic talents or interests, then the following is for you. The European Commission wants to invite one person from each Member State to volunteer and report from the field about extraordinary stories of volunteers. You can be one of them! Your passport to volunteering starts here! This unique experience will include the opportunity to spend 10 days shooting in another EU country with a professional HDV camera, plus one whole year web-reporting from your country with the pocket video camera that will be offered to you. To be one of the 27 reporters in European Year of Volunteering 2011 Campaign, apply before 27 September at www.eyvolunteering.eu and let EFIL know about it.

YOUTH WORK CONFERENCE GENT

In what happened to be the hottest week in Belgium ever, from 5 to 10 July 2010, two unique events took place in Gent: the 1st European conference on the history of youth work and the 1st European youth work convention. Behind those long titles were 5 days of discussions, reflections and brainstorming on the origins of youth work and youth activities in different regions in Europe. The events in Gent brought together more than 450 youth workers, volunteers and youth policy



makers in the historical site 'Vooruit' at the heart of one of Belgium's most thriving cities in Flanders, just several days before the huge annual city celebrations – Gentse Feesten.

Historical developments, political figures and religion, largely influenced the paths of young people, their lives and participation patterns. Mobility and exchanges have been just 2 of the countless youth work forms that strongly shaped skills and attitudes of the young people involved. They were recognised to contribute to their personal development, growing, independence and experiential learning. It's interesting to look back to the origins of youth work, seeing more and more young people voluntarily taking part in activities and organisations together with their peers next to school and other formal education

practices. The learning from the past should be taken further as a reference for the youth work policy today, as the conference promoted.

In the European Youth Work Convention 4 conference rapporteurs brought together the participants' work and outcomes from over 30 parallel workshops and sessions on various topics, including intercultural dialogue in youth work, history of youth mobility and formal recognition of volunteer youth work and achievements.

The Gent series, as the conferences are informally referred to, kicked off the Belgian EU Presidency cycle and made a clear statement about a strong youth presence in the EU sphere for the next 6 months. All in all 9 seminars, meetings and conferences will be organised within the framework of the Presidency which will pave the way towards a greater recognition and increased support for youth work and youth participation in Europe. EFIL will keep you informed. To learn more about what is planned as well as to find the final declaration please visit www.youth-eutrio.be !

YOUTH IN ACTION 2.0. – HAVE YOUR SAY & ACT NOW!

For many of our readers, "Youth in Action" rings a bell and is not just a vague funding term. The EC has been supporting EFIL and AFS activities since the very beginning of the Youth programme in the year 2000 up till the present day – Volunteer Summer Summit, Training for Trainers, EurAfrican project, the ECTP Brussels Camp, seminars and meetings and are just some of the projects that happened thanks to the support of Youth in Action (YiA).



The current YiA term is about to come to an end and will be evaluated (2007-2013). The EC is starting broader discussions on the impact of the programme and its future shape. As it seems, YiA 2.0. is not guaranteed to carry on. Unfortunately the latest economic downturn will cause significant budget cuts in many countries throughout Europe and the national

spending awarded to the YiA programme will be the most probable victim. This will have a significant impact on our work to help support volunteers to develop their skills and organise projects at international level.

You can help the EC collect strong and meaningful arguments to sustain the YiA programme for the years to come by filling in the online survey here:

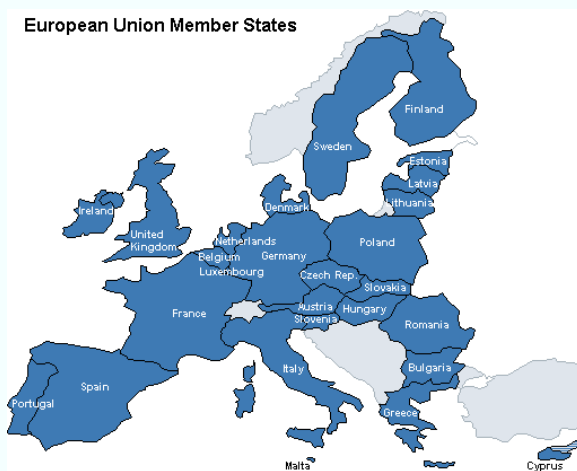
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1803_en.htm The online consultation will be the actual basis for the new planning as of 2013 and will build the backbone of the programmes and frameworks to support youth initiatives and active participation. We would like to encourage you to reflect on your experiences with YiA and take part in the survey to show policy makers that its impact is highly valued by young people across borders and that intercultural meetings shape our attitudes as active citizens! If you have any questions on the survey, contact EFIL (ilyana.panteleeva@afs.org).

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

THIS COMPILATION IS BASED ON INFORMATION COLLECTED BY EFIL FROM THE DAILY NEWSLETTER "EUROPOLITICS – THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DAILY" AND FROM THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM'S "YOUTH POLICY WATCH", A BI-WEEKLY BULLETIN. YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE TO THE YOUTH POLICY WATCH DIRECTLY FROM THE YOUTH FORUM WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.YOUTHFORUM.ORG](http://www.youthforum.org) AND PRESS@YOUTHFORUM.ORG.

EU ENLARGEMENT

On 27 July negotiations for the accession of **Iceland** to the EU were officially launched. Iceland's foreign minister Ossur Skarphedinsson showed great enthusiasm, however, both parties were aware of existing obstacles. The Icelandic minister was keen to stress the benefits that the EU can obtain through Iceland's accession: expertise in sustainable fisheries, expertise in renewable energy and a key geostrategic position as a gateway to the Arctic. However, only a few weeks after the formal start of Iceland's accession talks with the European Union, the country's parliament is preparing for a vote on a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the membership application, following a recent opinion poll showing that some 60% of the Icelanders were opposed to membership.



Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign policy chief, and Stefan Füle, the enlargement commissioner, have launched a diplomatic offensive to tighten foreign policy coordination with **Turkey** and address Ankara's growing concerns over the protracted membership talks. Ashton stressed that Turkey is an "important partner" for the EU, particularly in foreign policy. Turkey has strengthened its international position by pursuing an independent foreign policy, especially towards its Middle Eastern neighbours Iran, Iraq and Syria. In

consequence, the differences with Israel and the US, once close allies, over the Middle East policy have been growing. It has also become more critical of the EU's approach towards its membership talks, protesting against what it sees as a politically-driven blockade of the majority of the negotiating chapters.

Last-ditch efforts to harmonise **Serbia's** draft UN resolution on Kosovo with the EU's stance are still ongoing. After an inconclusive meeting on 7 September in Brussels, both sides continue an intensive dialogue which focuses, according to EU sources, on getting Belgrade and Kosovo back to one table to discuss ways of cooperation.

YOUTH



From 23 to 28 August 2010, the 5th World Youth Conference took place in León, Mexico, with more than 5.000 young people, NGOs and government representatives in attendance. The event provided the opportunity for the World's Youth to come together to

identify priorities regarding the role of young people in the international development agenda. The statement Youth representatives formulated, asks for governments to recognise the crucial capacity of young people in achieving the millennium goals. For the first time, a youth delegate from the European Youth Forum was included in the official EU Delegation and presented the European youth policy example to the conference.

Another event which is to support the “Millennium Development Goals” is the Year of Youth Dialogue and Understanding, from 12 August 2010 to 11 August 2011, kick-started by the International Day of Youth. The three main pillars of the UN’s Year of Youth have been identified as: to create awareness of youth issues, to mobilise and engage young people, and to connect and build bridges between generations. European stakeholders are encouraged to grasp the International Year of Youth as an opportunity to learn from global examples of good practice to continue to work towards such a rights based approach to meet young people's needs.



LEARNING ABOUT EUROPE

IN THIS NEW MONTHLY COLUMN WE WILL FOCUS ON EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT EUROPE, RANGING FROM EUROPE’S MISSION, HISTORIC MOMENTS, ENLARGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURING POLICY, TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, THE EURO, THE FUTURE, ETC. IN THIS ISSUE OF EFILIFE, WE FOCUS ON TEN HISTORIC STEPS.

1951: European Coal and Steel Community

Following the Schuman Declaration of 1950, the Treaty of Paris of 18 April 1951 established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), a common market in coal and steel between the six founding countries Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany.



1957: Treaty of Rome

The Six decided to build a European Economic Community (EEC) covering a whole range of goods and services. Customs duties were completely abolished on 1 July 1968.

1973: Expansion to 9 members

Denmark, Ireland and the UK joined the Community. New social and environmental policies were implemented.

1979: First elections European Parliament

Elections were to be held every five years.

1981: Mediterranean enlargement

Greece joined the Community in 1981, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1985.

1993: Completion of the single market

In 1985 President Jacques Delors published a White Paper setting a time table for completing the European single market by 1 January 1993.

1993: Treaty of Maastricht and the establishment of the European Union

The political shape of Europe was dramatically changed when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and the coming of democracy to the countries of central and eastern

Europe. Member states started negotiating the new Treaty on European Union, adopted in Maastricht in Dec. 1991, and coming into force on 1 Nov. 1993. By adding areas of intergovernmental cooperation to existing integrated Community structures, the Treaty created the European Union.

1995: Expansion to 15 members

On 1 January, three more countries joined: Austria, Finland and Sweden.

In March 2000, the EU adopted the Lisbon Strategy for modernising the European economy and enabling it to compete on the world market by encouraging innovation and investment and adapting Europe's education systems to meet the needs of the information society.

2002: Introduction of the Euro

The single currency was introduced in 12 countries (euro zone) in 2002. The Euro developed in to a major world currency for payments and reserves alongside the US dollar.

2004: Ten more countries join the Union

In the mid-1990s, 6 former Soviet-bloc countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), 3 Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), 1 of the republics of former Yugoslavia (Slovenia) and 2 Mediterranean countries (Cyprus and Malta) began knocking on the EU's door. Negotiations opened in 1997. The EU enlargement to 25 countries took place on 1 May 2004 (10 new countries joined) and 1 January 2007 (Bulgaria, Romania).

ECTP Brussels Camp students 2009 at the European Parliament



EFIL CALENDAR

30 September	Intercultural Dialogue Day
1-3 October	20th Anniversary Celebrations AFS Latvia
8-10 October	EFIL Board meeting, Leuven, Belgium
23 October	EFIL Heads of Office Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina
23 October	EFIL Regional Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina
28 Nov – 2 Dec	European Citizenship Trimester Programme Brussels Camp, Belgium
2-5 June 2011	EFIL General Assembly, Vienna, Austria

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition of EFILife.

We welcome your [comments and suggestions!](#)

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