

# EFILife

## Magazine

### Successful third edition of ECTP Brussels Camp

From Sunday 27 November to Thursday 1 December, after having spent three months abroad on an AFS trimester exchange, 169 young students, age 14 to 18, coming from 16 European countries, gathered in Brussels for the EFIL closing Camp of the **European Citizenship Trimester Programme**, before returning to their home countries.

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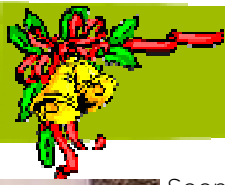


#### EFIL Advocacy

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#### EFIL Calendar

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 5-11 February  | Youth mobility for Intercultural Competence seminar, Romania  |
| February 2011  | Second Feasibility Visit to Romania and Bulgaria  |
| 11 February    | EFIL Regional Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand  |
| 24-26 February | EFIL Board meeting, Napoli, Italy   |
| 26 Feb - 3 Mar | New opportunities for young people through cooperation of youth exchanges and local school communities seminar, Switzerland |
| 16-21 July     | EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, Latvia  |
| 27 September   | Intercultural Dialogue Day  |
| 4-6 October    | Third Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchanges, Vienna, Austria  |
| 2-6 December   | EFIL European Citizenship Trimester Programme, Brussels Camp, Belgium   |



# A Christmas message



PAUL CLAES, SECRETARY GENERAL EFIL



Soon we'll be waving goodbye to 2011. The past twelve months have passed by as if they were twelve days. It was a very good year for EFIL. And an exciting one indeed. Thanks to our committed members, a determined board and a stable secretariat, EFIL has been able to meet the challenges of a well filled activity calendar.

2011 marked EFIL's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and this did not pass by unnoticed. In Vienna, during EFIL's biennial **General Assembly**, member organisations and guests not only celebrated this landmark anniversary, we also welcomed no less than 6 new member organisations into the Federation, we honoured our founding father Roberto Ruffino who was awarded Honorary Chairmanship of EFIL, we waved goodbye to Tachi Cazal and welcomed Vincenzo Morlini as the new CEO and President of AFS International, and the EFIL board launched the new EFIL logo and a new marketing and communication strategy.



EFIL's annual flagship projects have become not-to-be-missed fixed features on the activity calendar : the third edition of our **European Citizenship Trimester Programme** with the closing camp in Europe's capital city of Brussels enjoyed the participation of a record number of 170 young people from across the continent; in Zmar,



Portugal, volunteers from 30 countries gathered for the fourth edition of the **EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit**; and for the fourth year running, on the last Thursday of September, EFIL and the

member organisations reached out to the public on our European-wide **Intercultural Dialogue Day**, a celebration of culture and diversity all across Europe.

Next to these large scale annual projects, several highly appreciated EFIL **training events, seminars and meetings** took place, targeting staff of the national AFS offices (Heads of Office meetings in Vienna and Riga; Programme Directors meeting in Slovenia; meeting of Vol-



unteer Coordinators in Hamburg; Support Staff meeting in Evian; Fund-raising Seminar in Brussels) and AFS volunteers (study session in Strasbourg; task force training

in Riga; training for trainers in Krakow). Substantial funding was raised by EFIL for the majority of the training activities, mainly through successful funding applications with the European institutions.

In the field of **advocacy**, the establishment of an EFIL European Pool of Representatives (EPOR) in 2011 has already proved its use and has allowed us to gain additional visibility and be present at more networking events than before. As a member of several European platforms and working groups, EFIL has closely followed up on developments in Europe, participating in the political and lobbying processes under way in the field of

educational exchanges and citizenship building, especially with regards to the preparations and negotiations concerning the shaping of the new generation of programmes 2014-2020.

The EFIL network is expanding. We are very proud of our **new partner organisations** in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we warmly welcomed The Netherlands as a member of our Federation in 2011. Excellent progress has been made with the development of AFS in Poland, and the first, careful steps have been taken towards setting up a potential future AFS structure in Romania and Bulgaria.



Also in 2011, the **AFS EuroNet** initiative gained momentum. AFS returnees of all ages, currently based in Brussels, supported several of our activities, and they raised funds for the participation of three Balkan volunteers in EFIL's Summer Summit in Portugal. Ulrike Lunacek joined us as a speaker in Vienna at our General Assembly, and Wolfgang Pape volunteered as a trainer at the Summit in Portugal. The AFS EuroNet group now has close to 100 members.



The **EFIL board** met in Milan, Vienna and Prague. We said goodbye to long time board members Martha Eiriksdottir and Anett Deaver-Miklos, and we welcomed Philipp Wagner and Bart van Doveren as new board members. In the EFIL office in Brussels Ilyana Pantelieva (staff), Charlotte Klinting and Thomas Jürgenschellert (interns) left us, while Elisa Briga (staff), Stefania Francescon and Gizem Bayer (interns) joined the team.



Last but not least, I would like to extend a sincere word of thanks to the numerous people that have supported EFIL over the past year, sparing no time or effort to keep things moving and help us improve our services: the staff and boards of the national offices and of AFS



International, members of the EPOT, EPOR and TAB, the AFS EuroNet group, the wonderful AFS volunteers all over Europe who participated in our activities and helped us with the coordination of events as members of the preparatory

teams, support teams or trainers teams, and of course first and foremost : my very own board and my dear colleagues at the EFIL secretariat in Brussels, without whom none of the above would have happened!

**I wish you all the very best for an unforgettable 2012!**



# Successful third edition of ECTP Brussels Camp!

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



From Sunday 27 November until Thursday 1 December, after having spent three months abroad on an AFS trimester exchange, 169 young students, age 14 to 18, coming from 16 European countries, gathered in Brussels for the EFIL closing Camp of the **European Citizenship Trimester Programme**, before re-

they reflected on their stay abroad and focused on topics like European and Active Citizenship. On Wednesday afternoon, we were joined by Mrs Maria Podlasek-Ziegler from the Youth In Action Unit of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission, who talked to the participants about the opportunities for active citizenship offered to young people through the Youth in Action Programme (incl. EVS, Youth Initiatives, etc.).

A visit to Europe's capital city once again proved to be among the highlights of the Camp. A first group of participants went to visit the Europe-

influence our daily lives. For more information, have a look at [www.europarl.europa.eu/parliamentarium](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliamentarium).

Different from the previous years, the weather gods were on our side, and we continued the day's programme with a rally through Brussels' city centre to give the students an opportunity to see the royal Palace, the Grand Place and other major landmarks of Brussels.



turning to their home countries. Add to this a team of 36 volunteers (prep team, trainers and support team), and you have a wonderful multicultural mix with people from Russia, Austria, Poland, Latvia, Italy, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, The Netherlands, Belgium Flanders and Belgium French, plus one participant from Canada. Additional hosting destinations were Serbia, Turkey and Ireland.

At the Brussels Camp, the participants had the unique opportunity to share their AFS experience with their peers from all over Europe,

providing a superb climax and a substantial additional value to their trimester school exchange. In dynamic workshops and interactive sessions



an Parliament, where they learned about the Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission, their legislative and executive roles, members and presidency. The visit included the impressive hemi-circular auditorium where the Parliament holds its Brussels sessions and committee meetings. A second group of participants visited the recently opened "Parlamentarium", the European Parliament's new Visitors' centre, where the students engaged in an interactive virtual trip through Europe and learned - in a refreshing and dynamic way - how decisions are made in Europe and how they

third edition of the ECTP Camp was a tremendous success. We have already booked the venue for next year's edition!



For more information: [elisa.briga@afs.org](mailto:elisa.briga@afs.org).



# Intercultural Dialogue Day in East and Central Europe



In each edition of EFILife we are reporting on some of the events that took place across Europe on the occasion of the Intercultural Dialogue Day (IDD), 29 September 2011. This month we are focusing on East and Central Europe.

For more information: [elisa.briga@afs.org](mailto:elisa.briga@afs.org).



## CZECH REPUBLIC

AFS Czech Republic, also involved in the Freezebook, one of the most successful IDD events in 2011, held two IDD initiatives in Ceske Budejovice and involved volunteers, host families and host students from Chile, Brazil, Portugal, Italy, Germany.

Workshops were organised at schools in Ceske Budejovice on the subject of intercultural education, followed by a discussion with students on this topic. A promotional stand with information about IDD was set up and volunteers talked to people passing by about intercultural dialogue and AFS programmes (hosting, sending, volunteering).



## HUNGARY

AFS Hungary held a big all day long IDD event on 29 September in Sopron. Exchange student in the Sopron chapter, coming from Finland, Thailand, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Japan, Mexico, Chile and Hong Kong, each had their own tent, where they presented their country, language, habits and traditions, supported by their host families. Additionally, there was an AFS tent, where Hungarian volunteers promoted the AFS programmes. Special guests were the Ambassadors of the home countries, who were first welcomed by the Mayor in the Budapest City hall and then attended the opening of the event.

The programme was multi-coloured, with music, traditional food, Hungarian, Turkish and Thai dancing, a wall with messages for the world, language lessons with a humorous tone, a story-teller, and a karate demonstration! During the day, students from different schools had the opportunity to join in the activities and also share their thoughts about intercultural learning.



## SLOVAKIA

The AFS volunteers in Slovakia organised their IDD event in Nitra in the afternoon of 29 September. Volunteers, host students and people from the bilingual Spanish Gymnasium were dancing in the streets. During the dances volunteers handed AFS promotional material to people passing by, and offered them homemade cakes. Some people also joined in the dances!



## ROMANIA

Recently launched partner development efforts in Romania by EFIL have triggered initiatives in the frame of International Dialogue Day in the country. Youth For Future 2006 (YFF), one of the organisations contacted by EFIL, celebrated the IDD together with the International Day of Senior Citizens declared by UN. The event was called 'Culture and Wisdom: values over time'.

Youth for Future organised a round table where they brought together representatives of several local organisations and representatives of organisations from Bucharest as Mrs Cristina Balan, Director of the UN Information Center in Romania, Mrs Daniela Stanculescu, Adviser of the General Mayor of Bucharest, Hunedoara County School Inspectorate, the local television Kpital and the press. Among the participants there was great diversity: elderly people, minority representatives, local council representatives and Roma people!

During the events all participants presented stories about projects held during the year with the elderly. Moreover, volunteers from Germany and USA shared how the elderly are treated in their home countries and participants tried to find some similarities between the different realities presented. During the event volunteers played traditional songs and dances but also presented an international repertoire of songs. The trainers played games for group socialization and at the end each of the participants had the opportunity to tell to the others something that impressed them about the life of an elderly person. After the event, the group visited a nursing home and the volunteers performed the music show there. A special thank you goes to Nicoleta Cindea from Youth for Europe for supporting IDD through this event.





# Preparatory team for EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit 2012 in Latvia



In 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit was born, with a first edition in Vigy, hosted by our Member Organisation in France, AFS Vivre Sans Frontière. Who would have thought that five years later, the event has matured so much in size and quality, and has become the not-to-be-missed volunteer event of the year in the AFS network. The Summit's popularity has grown year after year, and the event has become the ultimate meeting and learning place for volunteers of all ages, a chance to meet with volunteers from 30+ countries, attending workshops offering a wide range of topics, sharing experiences and enjoying each other's company, the great location and the summer sun.

After the beauty of rural France in 2008, oriental Turkey in 2009, Hungary's Balaton Lake in 2010 and sunny Portugal in 2011, EFIL's 5<sup>th</sup> Volun-

teer Summer Summit is setting up camp in Latvia!

While volunteers all over Europe are waiting for the application process to start, in the Brussels office of EFIL preparations are in full swing. We're glad to announce that the Summer Summit 2012 preparatory team has been put together. After a remarkably smooth application process during this year's VSS in Zmar, Portugal, we are particularly happy that Gert Lucas from AFS Germany has agreed to be the IT manager of the team once again. With experience as trainer in the Portugal edition of VSS, Balazs Lato from AFS Hungary will be responsible for the trainers team next July. Another member of EFIL's European Pool of Trainers (EPOT), Sigrún Tinna Sveinsdóttir of AFS Iceland will be in charge of the organisation of the VSS plenary sessions. From AFS France, Joshua Fitoussi joins the prep team as PR manager.

Joshua has been involved in previous Summits as support team members and participant.

From our host organisation AFS Latvia, we are happy to welcome in the team as the AFS Latvia office liaison person Ieva Ribena, the host organisation's National Director, and Anita Tropa, AFS Latvia's Volunteer Coordinator, who will be the support team coordinator. From EFIL's office, staff member Inga Menke once again will be the main VSS coordinator, assisted by Gizem Bayer, EFIL intern from AFS Turkey with previous VSS participation and other volunteering experience.

The preparatory team is looking forward to another successful and well attended edition of EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit 2012! Stay tuned for more information.

More information:  
[gizem.bayer@afs.org](mailto:gizem.bayer@afs.org).



## Fruitful EFIL meeting of AFS Support Staff



EVIAN-LES-BAINS, FRANCE

The venue of Evian-les-Bains (France) with a spectacular view on the Geneva lake hosted a motivated group of 24 AFS support people from 19 countries, including most of EFIL Member Organisations, as well as Thailand and USA.

The packed three-day programme focused most of all on issues related to conflict management in the participant support. The content touched upon understanding conflict as a learning opportunity, different conflict styles and the intercultural context in conflict situations. Next to that several agenda points concentrated on other aspects of support work, starting from induction for

new staff, through sharing practice on different cases and the online Support Module, finishing with the topic of keeping up the motivation and balance as support coordinators. The working methods were quite diverse and interactive, giving the group lots of sharing space, practicing through role plays/case work and acquiring relevant knowledge from the input.

Huge thanks are deserved by the preparatory trainer team of the event which consisted of the true experts in the field: Christine Delattre from AFS Belgium Flanders, Eunice Neta from AFS Portugal and Katya Bagdasarova from AFS Russia, assisted by Izabela Jurczik-Arnold

from the EFIL side. They worked tirelessly both in the preparation phase and during the event itself, making it a great experience for the participants. A real woman-power team!

The big gratitude goes also to AFS Vivre Sans Frontière (AFS France) who carried the hosting responsibility in the project – communicating with the venue and co-ordinating the logistics arrangements. The group will certainly remember not only the lake view but also the personalised trip to the Ripaille castle, with the local wine and food!

For more information: [izabela.iurczik-arnold@afs.org](mailto:izabela.iurczik-arnold@afs.org)



## Upcoming Programme Directors meeting in Krakow



KRAKOW, POLAND

EFIL's annual "PD meeting", bringing together the Programme Directors of the member organisations of EFIL to discuss all kinds of programme related matters, has become an important feature on the activity calendar every year. The dates of the 2012 Programme Directors meeting have been confirmed for 12-16 March. The host

of the meeting will be the developing organisation (hopefully soon to become an AFS partner organisation – see elsewhere in this edition of EFILife) in the beautiful city of Krakow, Poland.



Traditionally, we welcome to the event not only the European partners but also all the relevant programme staff from AFS organisations around the world. The programme of the event is still in the making but it will – as always – combine a range of operational issues with some training components. Being in Krakow, we will also use this opportunity to get more acquainted with the growing partner organisation in Poland, planning further development steps together.

The call for registrations, including more information about the agenda will be published in early January. The group will be lodged in the very heart of the Krakow old town, at a hostel called "Brama" (see <http://www.bramahostel.pl/?id=&lang=uk>)

Stay tuned for further information in January!  
For more: [izabela.iurczik-arnold@afs.org](mailto:izabela.iurczik-arnold@afs.org).

## Promotional flyer for new partners in the Balkans



It is widely known by now that four new Partner Organisations in south eastern Europe – based in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia – have recently joined the AFS network. At the EFIL General Assembly in June in Vienna, Austria, all four of them were officially granted affiliate EFIL membership status.

EFIL, with the support of the new Partners in the four countries, has developed a promotional flyer, which can be down loaded from the EFIL website following the link: <http://www.efil.afs.org/new-member-development/promotional-material/>. AFS Partner Organisations worldwide are hereby invited to print and distribute the flyer to promote these attractive new destinations among their volunteers, schools, families and potential future programme participants.

For more information about the Partner Organisations, please use the mail addresses on the flyer.



For more information about the flyer: [stefania.francescon@afs.org](mailto:stefania.francescon@afs.org).





**Interkultura Serbia** is the youngest of all AFS organisations but is growing fast with a solid structure. Exchanges started in 2007 when two Serbian students received scholarships to go on a year exchange. In 2008 a group of enthusiastic returnees set up the organisation in Serbia, that became part of the AFS network in 2010.

The number and the quality of exchanges, programmes and activities have been increasing ever since. In 2010 Serbia hosted its first year programme students from Turkey, New Zealand, Russia, Chile and Mexico and in 2011 more countries were added: Italy, Germany, Finland, Thailand and Paraguay. On the sending side, 10 Serbian students have left on the year programme and many students have been involved in class exchanges with Italy, Turkey and Russia.



**UG Interkulturni susreti u Bosni i Hercegovini** (Intercultural meetings in BiH) is active since 2002 and became part of the AFS network in 2010.

It has two local chapters (in Banja Luka and Sarajevo) with more than 35 active volunteers. Since 2002, ISU has sent around 100 participants abroad in the AFS student exchange programmes mainly to Germany, Italy, France, Russia, Austria and Turkey.

AFS Hosting in BiH started in the school year 2009/10 with 3 students from Turkey, followed by hosting students from Germany, Poland and Czech Republic in 2010/11 and 2011/12.



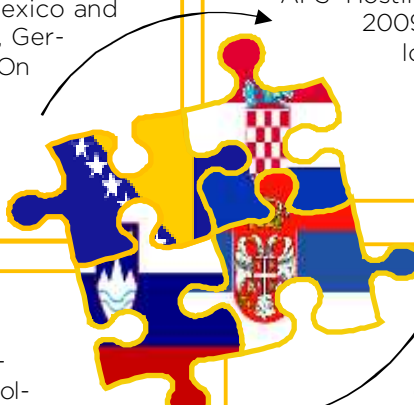
**Globus-Association for Intercultural Learning** was founded in 2000 by enthusiastic AFS participants and volunteers of the former AFS Yugoslavia.

First AFS exchanges were launched in 2003 and the organisation became part of the AFS network in 2010. The number of sending and hosting students have increased to ten and eleven in 2011. Volunteers are grouped in 4 local chapters: Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka, Split.



The story of **Interkultura Slovenia** started in 2007 when former Slovenian AFS exchange students re-launched the programme.

The first step was to send three high school students to spend a year with families in Belgium, Italy and USA. AFS Slovenia became part of the AFS network in 2010. There are two local chapters in Slovenia: one in Ljubljana and the other in Maribor, where most of the AFS activities take place.



## Good progress with partner development in Poland



The size and the quality of the intercultural exchange programmes with Poland are increasing and we are yet a few steps closer to having an official AFS presence there.

Since 2004 AFS organisations have been cooperating with an established organisation in Krakow, Poland, called the Father Siemaszko Foundation. The exchanges started first with AFS Germany, to soon

spread to other AFS organisations, both with sending and hosting operations. Today, 21 Polish participants are abroad on an AFS school programme (year and trimester) and 5 are hosted in Poland. The AFS Partners involved in this cooperation are Germany, Italy, France, Turkey, Austria, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Belgium (Flanders).

EFIL, from the European level, has been supporting this process for several years, with a particular boost of development taking place as from 2011.

In November 2011, Paul Claes (EFIL Secretary General) and Izabela Jurczik-Arnold (EFIL Training, Projects and Programmes Director), spent a few productive days in Poland, supporting the future developments there. Next to the planning meet-



With Gerardo Birritos - Ambassador of Argentina to Poland

ings with the staff and volunteers of the Polish organisation in Krakow, the visit included also a trip to Warsaw to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Polish-German Youth Cooperation organisation, and with Gerardo Birritos, the Argentinian Ambassador in Poland who is an AFS returnee.

Meeting with some of the Polish volunteers (Global Citizens)





It goes beyond the scope of this article to summarise all the positive outcomes of the visit but what counts the most for the AFS network is that we have agreed on a calendar of strategic development for the upcoming two years, with the view of announcing the establishment and official presence of AFS in Poland by the time EFIL will hold its next General Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia, in 2013. We also have a clear plan of growing the numbers of exchanges with each upcoming year, in particular on the hosting side. The plan includes the start of exchanges with non-

European AFS organisations, which hopefully will materialise already for the upcoming cycle.

The future of AFS in Poland looks very promising - there is certainly a huge potential in this country of amazing historical and cultural heritage, as well as significant size. If any Partners (particularly those outside Europe) are interested in starting a cooperation with Poland, please approach EFIL. The plans for 2012 and 2013 are in the making!

For more information: [izabela.jurczik-arnold@afs.org](mailto:izabela.jurczik-arnold@afs.org).

## Upcoming seminar in Romania Workshops contest: and the winners are...



ROMANIA

**Congratulations to Dunja Zivanović (AFS in Serbia) and Haris Buljubasić (AFS in Bosnia and Herzegovina) who won the contest for the Best Workshops!**

Both winners will have the opportunity to participate in the seminar "Youth mobility for intercultural competence" in Romania, 5-11 February 2012, and facilitate their workshops, involving the other participants. The workshops will aim at introducing AFS volunteer work and organisational structures to the new volunteers in Romania and Bulgaria. The workshops create opportunities to learn by sharing good practices with more experienced AFS volunteers from other countries.

Attached to the seminar in February, a second feasibility visit to Bulgaria and Romania is planned, involving meetings with interested people and organisations, potential future volunteers who can help with the development of AFS structures in Romania and Bulgaria.

A special thanks goes to all the volunteers who participated in the contest, your contributions were greatly appreciated.

For more information, contact Stefania at the EFIL office ([stefania.francescon@afs.org](mailto:stefania.francescon@afs.org)).

## 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.*

### AFS Hungary

In **AFS Hungary**, Anett Deaver-Miklos is passing on the National Director's seat to Rita Bangáné Jarecsni as of the 1st of January 2012. Rita has already started her work in the Budapest office in November, working together with Anett, ensuring a smooth handover. You can read more about Anett's farewell elsewhere in this edition of EFILife.

Rita has several years of working experience in the financial sector, and has lived in The Netherlands and Poland. We warmly welcome her and look forward to meeting her at the AFS World Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2012.

### AFS Denmark

From **AFS Denmark** comes the news that Ms Lis Jensen has joined the team in the office in Copenhagen as the new Programme Director. She will also be the Partner Director Deputy. Lis is not unfamiliar with AFS, as some years back she has worked as a staff member on the hosting team.

More news from AFS Denmark: Bjarke Rix Rasmussen has decided to step down from his role as Chair of the Board of AFS Denmark. At its meeting of 15 November, the Board unanimously elected Ms Amalie Ferdinand as the new Chair.



## AFS Switzerland

**AFS Switzerland** welcomes Grégoire Singer as the new French/Italian Region Support Coordinator. Grégoire has worked in the field of international cooperation and migration policies, including a year in Kosovo.

Alexandre Brunner, the Hosting Support Coordinator has left AFS Switzerland after nearly 4 years, to start a new professional challenge. Amanda Felber joins the team as the new Hosting Support Coordinator. She brings along her experience in customer care, intercultural conflicts and theoretical deepening into the sociology of communication, social anthropology and human rights.



## AFS Norway

**AFS Norway** has informed the network that Thomas Kagnes has left AFS to pursue other opportunities. Mina Norstrøm has started her work as the new Programme Assistant. She will be working closely with Hilde Hustad on recruitment and admission. Annette Wolff who will work as Support Coordinator, both sending and hosting, has now started full-time at the office in Oslo.

## AFS Italy

On 11-13 November, in Florence, the 64th General Assembly of Intercultura (**AFS Italy**) took place.

Intercultura bid farewell to Francesco Favotto as the Chair of the organisation. Three directors were elected to the Board, who met later in the day and in turn elected Marco Magnani as the Chair and Michela Mariani as the Vice-Chair.

Intercultura further announced that it will be running a new pilot programme this coming cycle in collaboration with a well known art institute of (Massa) Carrara, located on the Tuscan seaside. The focus of this pilot program is "sculpture". A total of at least 10 students (worldwide) is necessary to run this programme. Partner organisations who are interested in recruiting for this programme are asked to contact Diana Maratea, Intercultura's Hosting Coordinator.

The deadline to receive applications is 1 April 2012. Intercultura will decide on this date whether or not to proceed with the programme, basing its decision on the number of applications received. Note that Intercultura will continue to run its traditional Summer Homestay programme (same age range and programme dates, in a different area of Tuscany, the main focus being the Italian language and family life).



## Time to say goodbye

BY ANETT DEAVER-MIKLOS, NATIONAL  
DIRECTOR AFS HUNGARY

I was an AFS student, a 12 times host-sister, a local chapter president then Board member of AFS Hungary, before I became the National Director in 1999. At that time Elisabeth Hardt and Patrick Worms were leading EFIL.

AFS Hungary has benefitted enormously from its EFIL membership, right from the beginning - and EFIL could always count on us. We have been sending a high number of volunteers to EFIL training events, and we actively participated in all EFIL activities. In 2010 we hosted EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit in Hungary. Thanks to the dedicated hard work of hundreds of volunteers supported, I am leaving behind a strong, volunteer-driven organisation, with growing hosting numbers, high quality and financial stability.

Between 2007 and 2011 I was also sitting on the EFIL Board and I had the privilege to contribute to the development of EFIL together with my fellow Board Members. It has been a real pleasure to work with Secretary General Paul Claes and be supported by a capable secretariat in Brussels.

I am a proud European citizen, and it's heart-warming to see a strong EFIL playing an increasingly important role in its member organisations' life and within the global AFS network. My husband is American - so you see, I take intercultural and life-long learning very seriously. :) I will be living in the USA from January 2012 - but I don't want to say goodbye, I just want to say thank you to all the colleagues, volunteers and friends within EFIL and AFS!

Wish you a wonderful Holiday Season and a successful 2012!



# The French approach to growth with quality

BY ELSA TREMEL,  
AFS VIVRE SANS FRONTIÈRE

On 12-13 November 2011 representatives from each chapter of AFS Vivre sans Frontière gathered at the Résidence Internationale for the Conseil Fédéral to discuss French Kaléidoscope.

French Kaléidoscope, formerly the "Impact Project" is AFS VSF's strategic plan for "Growth with Quality". The project is based on the previous Conseil Fédéral where we formulated "our dreams for AFS": "In 2014, ASF VSF is a recognized stakeholder for the quality of its educational project, its programmes, and its expertise in intercultural learning for young people, families, and schools" and "AFS VSF, carried by the competences of its enlarged network of volunteers, is an innovative association, capable of adaptation, which chooses to blend lasting growth, conviviality, and social diversity."

The name "Kaleidoscope" was chosen by vote by the AFS volunteers at November's Conseil Fédéral and was the result of one of many interactive parts of this conference where AFS experimented with a new meeting method, aiming at the maximization of the participation of as many volunteers as possible.

The project has been designed with four different themes:

The first theme of Kaléidoscope, *Intercultural Learning Expertise*, will clarify, present, and lay out a plan to attain AFS's national and international educational objectives for the benefit of its volunteers, employees, and participants (including the students, their families, homestay families, and the schools). It will focus on communicating the status of ICL

Expertise through the "Cultures sans Frontières" newsletter, on creating a library of intercultural education resources, and on developing a network of researchers willing to contribute to AFS's understanding of the intercultural experience. We will also assess and revise the actual curriculum of each of our audiences.

The third theme, *Volunteer Development*, will focus on enlarging the network of volunteers and reassuring their knowledge of intercultural education. This will be done by enlarging the network of trainers as well as by offering training sessions online. The satisfaction of the volunteers will be ensured by annual evaluations and by giving them the opportunity to live an intercultural experience through an exchange with a volunteer from another country. AFS VSF will also work on developing new methods for expanding into regions currently lacking AFS volunteers. Finally, in order to maximize volunteer participation, AFS proposes a wider use of volunteer-driven workgroups on strategic topics and a congress in 2013 to evaluate the Kaléidoscope project and prepare 2015-2017's strategic plan.

The fourth theme, *Social diversity*, will open the opportunity to live an intercultural experience to more students by creating a new scholarship strategy and developing contacts with businesses interested in our objectives.

Overall, Kaléidoscope will enlarge the number of homestay families, of volunteers and of departing students, as well as increase our notoriety and intercultural expertise.

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The second theme, *School Relations*, will focus on supporting schools partaking in the AFS experience by creating guidebooks for the accompaniment of foreign students welcomed on an exchange, as well as of the French students returning from one. Moreover, the schools will be accompanied by an AFS volunteer knowledgeable of the Education Nationale system, as AFS strives for its recognition. We also plan to create a teacher's network for which



we will organise several events including a seminar about the AFS VSF partnership with schools and workshops on different aspects of intercultural education. Finally, we will develop ICL workshops for classrooms to reassure our expertise on ICL and non-formal education.



# A Serbian enjoying the Brazilian way of life!

BY NEMANJA STANCIC, INTERKULTURA  
SERBIA, INTERN AT AFS BRASIL



Brazil... the country that I had only seen in coffee commercials and football matches on television. The opportunity to go to Brazil first came up at the EFIL Programme Directors meeting last spring in Maribor,

have been here for only one month but it already feels like home. I go to the office every day, working together with the people in the programme division, and learn the Portuguese language. As I have not been on an AFS exchange myself when I was in high school, since AFS did not exist in Serbia at the time, this internship helps me to understand and grasp the great values of AFS programmes, and I also get to know more about the office perspective of AFS organisations, which will be most valuable once we will establish our own office in Belgrade, Serbia.

Slovenia, when AFS Brazil's Programme Director Marcos Felipe suggested to Interkultura Serbia to send a volunteer to their AFS office in Rio de Janeiro for an internship. So here I am, I have been in Rio for two months now and I will stay here until 1 April 2012.

Rio is an amazing city, and I find the people here very laid-back, enjoying every second of their life while dancing samba, going to Ipanema beach or simply smiling all day. A week after I arrived I travelled up north, to a city called Fortaleza, where the local chapter organised the 40th National Convention of AFS Intercultura Brazil. I was representing my own organisation, Interkultura Serbia, and showed up in the Serbian national costume. I



As the result of good communication and cooperation between the AFS organisations in Serbia and Brazil, and also thanks to the Diversity Scholarship of AFS International, Brazil and Serbia are going to exchange their first students next year. This will

be a great chance to further promote exchanges between our two countries and - hopefully - to send more students in the years to come.

I find it impressive that so many people all around the AFS world share the same ideals and goals - to offer intercultural learning opportunities to young people and provide them with the necessary support by local volunteers and host families. During my time here in Rio, I intend to learn as much as possible, meanwhile enjoying the Brazilian way of life! I'm looking forward to some exciting months ahead of me, thanks to the wonderful hospitality of the great people of AFS Brazil!

## Erasmus for all



A communication from the European Commission on the new funding programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport has been released: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/index_en.htm)

The proposal from the Commission does not envisage a separate youth programme focused on the promotion of participation and non-formal education as it has been in the past decades, but a sector- Erasmus Youth Participation- which addresses these aspects inside the broader programme, where formal education is predominant. Only one National

Agency will manage all the programmes in each EU country.

An increased budget - 7% of the total budget (19 billion Euros) - will go to the programme for youth. This adds up to 1 billion euros, as compared to the budget of 885 million euros for the current programme, Youth in Action. With **three key areas of action - learning mobility of individuals, cooperation for innovation and good practices, support for the policy reform** - the structure of the programme which so far always included several different actions, has been simplified.

There's a pan-European approach, with the programme opening to candidate countries and partners from other non-EU countries (especially neighbouring countries).

But there's a general feeling that there's no strong link to the Lisbon Treaty article 165(2) which sets the basis for the EU to support youth exchanges and participation of young people. The proposal from the Commission is based on the needs of the labour market, and the aspect of active European citizenship and participation is not strongly addressed.

Key concepts such as the role of youth organisations, youth work, volunteering and non-formal education don't get the expected attention (only non-formal learning is mentioned). The legal regulation is vague and broad compared to the communications establishing the previous programmes, although by setting only the main principles, this provides more flexibility. The fact that there is no mention of a direct financial support to youth organisations, who have always been the ones implementing the programme, worries EFIL. However, the Commission affirms that specific calls for proposals will be issued periodically to allocate something similar to the current administrative grants. Under the action 'policy support', which provides support to dialogue with stakeholders, there will be a sub-action 'partnerships with European NGOs' which will provide a 'flexible support to the multiannual work

programme proposed by a European Youth NGO, including activities conceived by it, to enable it to develop a European dimension in its activities and fitting with the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy'. This measure, being flexible, is anyway not enough because it hinders the sustainability of the activities of youth organisations. Hopefully, training for volunteers will still be financed, under the action 'learning mobility'.

We've noted that under the sector "Erasmus Schools", there's no mention of the Comenius Individual Pupil's Mobility programme. In the report accompanying the communication it is stated that individual pupil mobility will be mainstreamed and probably financed, together with class exchanges, in the frame of specific projects under the action 'cooperation for innovation and good practices', sub-action

'strategic partnerships'. Erasmus Schools will also finance staff mobility and IT-platforms. Great opportunities could come up for EFIL and its member organisations by the sub-action 'strategic partnerships' since cooperation between schools and youth organisations will be supported.

The proposal of the European Commission is on the table and important decisions will be taken during 2012 in the co-decision process. It is now up to the European Parliament and the Member States to decide if and how they will re-shape the proposal, including allocation of budget. One of the remaining questions is which budget will be allocated to each action and sub-action and what will be the implementation rules of the programme. These are expected to be developed in 2012-2013 and stakeholders will hopefully be consulted.

## ADVOCACY ACTIONS

The proposal of the European Commission somehow ignores the position of the European Parliament and the online public consultations which gathered civil society's opinion. Both underline in particular that youth-related programmes like Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action, which bear low cost per beneficiary and therefore have high efficiency, should be maintained as separate programmes in the next Multi-Financial Framework and that they deserve a stronger investment.

EFIL supports the European Youth Forum campaign for a separate youth programme focused on the non-formal education of young people, youth work and the support to the wide range of youth organisations: [www.whereareyouthgoing.eu](http://www.whereareyouthgoing.eu).

You can help us advocating for an independent youth programme supporting youth organisations: [www.facebook.com/whereareyouthgoing?](https://www.facebook.com/whereareyouthgoing?sk=app_190322544333196)

EFIL cooperates on Advocacy for the new programme with European stakeholders in the field of Education and Training in the frame of the Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL). In this arena, 30 stakeholders adopted a common message on the 'Erasmus for all' programme which welcomes the budget increase and the simplification but also addresses the main issues like the lack of recognition of civil society organisations, the focus on employability and the barriers of access to the programme by disadvantaged groups and small organisations. For the official press release, please follow the link: [www.eucis-lll.eu/pages/images/stories/LLP/30-stakeholders-messages-eramus-for-all.pdf](http://www.eucis-lll.eu/pages/images/stories/LLP/30-stakeholders-messages-eramus-for-all.pdf). Press contact: Audrey Frith, EUCIS-LLL, on behalf of the coalition, [audrey.frith@eucis-lll.eu](mailto:audrey.frith@eucis-lll.eu)

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A post-card of the European Youth Forum campaign





# EYV Closing Conference in Warsaw



WARSAW, POLAND

By *Edoardo Laurenti* (representing EFIL)

The Closing Conference of the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) has taken place in Warsaw (30 November – 2 December), on the occasion of the last month of Polish Presidency in the EU. Poland is, rightly so, quite proud of such responsibility and is happy to host celebrations of activities widely practiced in the country, such as volunteering.

The Closing Conference was the final event of the EYV, following several others which have taken place during 2011, and hosted 200 participants, mostly leaders of their respective volunteer organisations. It was not an “operational” meeting, but it mainly focused on the presentation of the final document called PAVE (Policy Agenda of Volunteering in Europe), the legacy of this EYV2011, which has been drafted as a project of the EYV Alliance Steering Group. PAVE is composed of six chapters that have been developed

by working groups of representatives of the EYV Alliance members. EFIL was present in the working group ‘Quality of Volunteering’ with Anni Siltanen (AFS Finland) and in the working group ‘Volunteering Infrastructure’ with Hanneke Boode (AFS Belgium Flanders).

EFIL endorsed PAVE and so did the European Youth Forum which also released a Resolution on the rights-based approach to volunteering during its last Council of members in November.

The Chapters of PAVE were the subject of six different panel discussions, which represented the heart of the Conference: Policy Recommendations, Quality Volunteering, Legal Frameworks, Volunteering Infrastructure, Recognition Tools, Value of Volunteering. I was able to attend 3 of these. All were interesting, but I felt that the economic value of volunteering was stressed too much, while EFIL first of all believes in its social value.

The organisation was superb. Among the guest speakers at the conference there were both members of the European Commission and important officials of the Polish and other Governments. Social entertainment too was well planned, including a ceremony awarding the most outstanding Polish volunteers of the year, in a quite amusing location: an old factory, refurbished to become a cosy music and dinner place, with stages for artists, open yards for chatting and bars for Polish beer!

A member of the EU Commission welcomed everyone to 2012, European Year of Active Ageing (I felt much involved!) and 2013, European Year of European Citizens (a topic close to EFIL’s heart). Attending the conference was a nice experience, confirming that volunteers are a significant resource for Europe to count on!

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## 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> and [press@youthforum.org](mailto:press@youthforum.org)*

### Enlargement

#### EU welcomes Croatia!

On 9 December 2011 the heads of state and government of the EU and Croatia signed the Accession Treaty at the EU summit in Brussels. The signature marks the successful end to 6 years of negotiations and launches the procedure for Croatia to become the 28th member of the European Union.

Croatia will become a full member on 1 July 2013 when all 27 current EU countries and Croatia have ratified the Accession Treaty. Also, Croatia will hold a referendum on its accession in early 2012. After joining the European Union, Croatia - with its 4.5 million inhabitants and representing 1% of the EU’s territory and population - will have 7 votes in the Council, out of a total of 352.

Until the accession, Croatia will be an observer, without speaking rights, in most of the Council and Commission working parties, committees and meetings. Thus, Croatian representatives will be already involved in the decision-making progress and get acquainted with the working methods of the EU institutions.

The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, stressed how each new member joining the Union helps reconfirming the EU founding values and its will to go on. Moreover, he emphasised the role that the EU plays in the world being “the most prosperous, socially-minded, secure and free continent on earth”.

Ivo Josipović, the President of Croatia, and Jadranka Kosor, Croatia’s Prime Minister, stated their strong belief in the need of “more Europe” to make joint efforts in a spirit of solidarity to overcome EU’s current problems.

During the ratification period, Croatia’s progress in implementing the treaty will constantly be monitored by the Commission, presenting reports every six months until 2013.

### EU Council decision on Serbia's candidacy bid postponed until March 2012

The member states' heads of state and government agreed, on 9 December, to put off their decision on Serbia's EU candidacy bid until the March 2012 EU summit. The 27 member states' leaders will take a decision following the Council's approval in February.

Serbia has to prove, in the meanwhile, the credibility of its commitment by achieving further progress in the implementation of the agreements and engaging positively with the EU's police force (EULEX) and the NATO mission (KFOR).

However, the EU Council recognised Serbia's efforts to meet the criteria set for the stabilisation and association process. Moreover, Belgrade reached a satisfactory level of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the last years and re-engaged in the dialogue with Kosovo, with the integrated borders management (IBM) agreement concluded on 2 December.

### Montenegro

After having been granted the official candidate status a year ago, Montenegro will open accession negotiations in June 2012 as approved during the EU summit.

Even though the Commission assessed on the good progress made by Montenegro, the country will still have to progress in the implementation of reforms, especially on the area of rule of law, fundamental rights, the fight against corruption and organised crime. While the Council will monitor on Montenegro's progress, the Commission was tasked to prepare a framework for the negotiations and initiate the screening of the *acquis communautaire*, the body of EU law, with Montenegro.

## Youth



### Thessaloniki European Youth Capital 2014

<http://www.thessaloniki2014.eu>

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November, the city of Thessaloniki (Greece) was awarded the title of European Youth Capital for 2014, after a hard competition with the other candidates: Heraklion (Greece) and Ivanovo (Russia). The "European Youth Capital", now at its sixth year, is a joint initiative of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the largest platform of non-governmental youth organisations in Europe, and the European Commission.

A city awarded the title of European Youth Capital, has the opportunity - during a year - to receive visibility for its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic activities.

After EYC 2011 Antwerp (Belgium), EYC 2012 Braga (Portugal) and EYC 2013 Maribor (Slovenia), Thessaloniki is now invited to invest in youth and youth organisations. The city built a strong application by and together with young people, stressing the will of establishing sustainable projects for activities that address young people's challenges by building on existing structures.

### The International Volunteer Day - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

On the European Year of Volunteering and the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, the 5<sup>th</sup> December celebrations took place for the International Volunteer Day in many countries around the world. This event is an opportunity to celebrate the millions of volunteers for their commitment for the benefit of society worldwide.

On this occasion, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme published the first State of the World's Volunteerism Report ([http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2011/SWVR/English/SWVR2011\\_full.pdf](http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2011/SWVR/English/SWVR2011_full.pdf)).

The Report is expected to promote a better understanding of volunteerism, enhance recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteerism worldwide. The State of the World's Volunteerism Report shows that, in most societies around the world, volunteers make significant contributions to economic and social development.

## Education

### Eurostat report on Trends in European education during 2000-2009

Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, has recently published a report (Statistics in Focus) on Trends in European education in the decade 2000-2009. The report presents the main characteristics of European education and training systems and underlines the major trends at each educational level concerning enrolments, education expectancy, teacher characteristics and graduates.

What appears from this interesting and brief report is that the number of children attending pre-primary education has significantly raised and 17 are the average years that student dedicate to education. The number of students in compulsory education has fallen perceptively in many countries, especially in Eastern Europe. While women are dominant in the teaching professions, particularly in the primary education, men are relatively more in vocational training. As regards students, they stay longer in tertiary education and the number of graduates has sharply increased.

The full report (12 pages) is available at: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-SF-11-054/EN/KS-SF-11-054-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-11-054/EN/KS-SF-11-054-EN.PDF)



## EUCIS-LLL public presentation of the European Institute on Lifelong Learning



On 9 November, the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) publicly presented the outcomes of the feasibility study - launched in 2010 - on the setting up of a European Lifelong Learning Institute on European level.

EUCIS-LLL promotes European-wide cooperation among civil society organisations, especially those active in education and training, and aims to give voice to citizens on lifelong learning issues and to propose concrete solutions. In this perspective, the European Institute of Lifelong Learning would be the tool to support the development of lifelong learning and give civil society the opportunity to participate in decision making processes regarding European policy in education and training.

Concretely, the Institute will consist in an online knowledge portal (good practices, research, forum) and face to face encounters (conferences, seminars, training session). It would be open to all stakeholders in the field, thus bridging the gap of dialogue between research, practitioners and policy makers.

## EUCIS-LLL Seminar on Validation

On 12 December EUCIS-LLL organised a seminar aiming at discussing recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning. In view of the upcoming European Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on this topic, beginning of 2012.

EUCIS-LLL member organisations and other stakeholders in the field of Education and Training gathered to tackle the issue of validation, a top priority on the European agenda.

The EU Commission's proposal will underline how recognition of these two types of learning (1) fosters mobility inside the EU, (2) provides benefits to the whole economy by stimulating competitiveness and growth, (3) allows savings on money and time otherwise spent to get formal education diplomas, and (4) provides to the beneficiaries educational and personal benefits.

Other tools have been developed as regards this topic, such as the European Guidelines for the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning; the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/news/18338.aspx>) and OBSERVAL ([www.observal.org](http://www.observal.org)), the online observatory on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

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