

EFILife

Magazine

Roberto Ruffino Honorary President of EFIL

For the closing event of the EFIL General Assembly in Vienna, delegates and guests met at the prestigious Cobenzl Restaurant for a formal Gala Dinner, celebrating EFIL's 40th anniversary. A spectacular hail storm cleared the sky, making the hillside view over the city of Vienna even more stunning. The food was exquisite, the spirit was high. But the best was yet to come...

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EFIL Calendar

7 July	AFS EuroNet drink, Brussels, Belgium
20-25 July	EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, Portugal
4-8 September	ECTP strategic meeting, Brussels, Belgium
11-19 September	EFIL Training for Trainers, Krakow, Poland
29 September	Intercultural Dialogue Day 2011
29 September	AFS EuroNet meeting and dinner, Brussels, Belgium
21-23 October	EFIL Board meeting, Prague, Czech Republic
27 Nov - 1 Dec	EFIL ECTP Brussels Camp, Belgium
December	EFIL Support Staff meeting



european
federation for
intercultural
learning aisbl

EFIL - The European Federation for Intercultural Learning
is the umbrella organisation of AFS offices in Europe

Vienna welcomes EFIL network

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



than 90 delegates and guests at EFIL's biennial General Assembly, where we all celebrated EFIL's 40th anniversary and witnessed the inauguration of 6 new EFIL member organisations. The newly elected EFIL Board of Directors met the day after the closing



In the first week of June, the leadership of the entire European network of AFS gathered in Vienna for a string of EFIL events, hosted by our member organisation AFS Austria. First, the Hotel Regina was the venue for the Heads of Office meeting (HOO), attended by the Directors of the national offices of our members. Following the HOO meeting, at the Europahaus we welcomed more

than 90 delegates and guests at EFIL's biennial General Assembly, where we all celebrated EFIL's 40th anniversary and witnessed the inauguration of 6 new EFIL member organisations. The newly elected EFIL Board of Directors met the day after the closing of the General Assembly. Further highlights of the General Assembly included Roberto Ruffino's nomination and election to become the first Honorary President of the EFIL Board, the European farewell to the President of AFS International, Tachi Cazal, after almost six years of dedicated service, and the warm welcome to the incoming President, Vincenzo Morlini. It's been a great week of celebrations

and emotions, of meetings and discussions, of EFIL's past, present and future, and most of all of AFS friendship and spirit. Vienna will be fondly remembered for a long time.

Celebrating 40 years of EFIL

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



2011 is a special year in the history of EFIL. Forty years ago, at the AFS World Congress in Lake Mohonk (USA) in 1971, the by-laws of a new European federation were approved and AFS Europa was created. Its first General Assembly took place a year later in Birgitz, Austria. In 1975, our organisation officially changed its name into the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL).

Last week, in Vienna, at our 2011 General Assembly, attended by delegates of all 27 member organisations of EFIL, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of our Federation. It was a very special moment, when for the official opening of the General Assembly, the first ever Chair of the EFIL Board, Fritz Otti, took the stage. Then Roberto Ruffino took all present on a walk down memory lane, starting on 4 November 1964 in Torino, Italy, when at an informal meeting a group of young and very idealistic AFS volunteers for the first time talked about AFS cooperation in Europe. The walk through 40 years of history took us to the 1970s when AFS Europa became EFIL and intercultural learning was put on the

table. In the 1980s there were a widening focus and expanded tasks of the Federation, followed by a decade of challenges in the 1990s, to today's EFIL with a strong membership and stable secretariat and board, enjoying increased visibility and credibility.

Roberto's talk was spiced with live and video-taped testimonials from several prominent people, including some who have helped shape the Federation and have played a role of high relevance in the life of EFIL. We like to thank Heinz Kröll, Fritz Otti, Inge Van Gaal, Urs-Rainer von Arx, Gabriella Battaini, Elisabeth Hardt and Ulrike Lunacek for their much appreciated contributions to Roberto's walk down memory lane.



Roberto Ruffino



Ulrike Lunacek, Fritz Otti, Heinz Kröll and Roberto Ruffino



Ulrike Lunacek



Heinz Kröll

Roberto Ruffino Honorary President of EFIL

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



Continues from cover-page For the closing event of the EFIL General Assembly in Vienna, delegates and guests met at the prestigious Cobenzl Restaurant for a formal Gala Dinner, celebrating EFIL's 40th anniversary. A spectacular hail storm cleared the sky, making the hillside view over the city of Vienna even more stunning. The food was exquisite, the spirit was high. But the best was yet to come...

Lights were dimmed when Christine Leimgruber of the EFIL Board took the floor to announce a decision

taken by the General Assembly to nominate and elect Roberto Ruffino to become the first ever Honorary President of the European Federation for Intercultural Learning. Christine honoured Roberto for his life-time dedication for EFIL, and the emotional highlight of the announcement was to come when a video message was shown from Arthur Howe, AFS International Trustee for Life and Ambulance Driver.

Roberto was taken by surprise, as all of this was planned secretly by the EFIL Board and the Chairs of the member organisations. It hardly ever happens, but it's fair to say that this night, for once, Roberto was speechless...

Congratulations, Roberto!

Officially, Roberto will become Honorary President the moment he retires from the EFIL Board. He is currently in the middle of a two-year term as member of the EFIL Board.



Introducing the new Board of EFIL

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



Board elections took place in Vienna and the following nominees were voted on the EFIL Board by the General Assembly: Mari Pajunen from Finland (for a second term), Bart van Doveren from Belgium Flanders, and Philipp Wagner from Austria. Two Board members stepped down: Martha Eiriks-



dottir from Iceland, and Anett Deaver-Miklos from Hungary. Martha and Anett have served respectively three and two terms on the EFIL Board, and their contributions have been very highly valued by the other Board members and by the EFIL network at large.

The EFIL Board consists of seven members, serving two-year terms (renewable). Mandates of the new EFIL Board are as follows: Christine Leimgruber from Switzerland will be Chair, Jörn Lehmann from Germany takes up the Vice-Chair position, Bart van Doveren from Belgium Flanders will be Treasurer, and Mari Pajunen from Finland will act as the Board's Secretary. Other Board members are Roberto Ruffino, Michael Rosak and Philipp Wagner.

The next in-person meeting of the EFIL Board will be in the autumn, and will take place in Prague, Czech Republic.



EFIL expands to 27 member organisations

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the events in Vienna, was the inauguration of no less than six organisations as new members of the European Federation for Intercultural Learning. All six the candidate member organisations received full votes and a deafening, long applause when their names were called out by Christian Werle, Board of Trustee member and chair of the statutory session of the EFIL General Assembly. A memorable and emotional moment...

AFS The Netherlands joins the EFIL network as a full member. Affiliate membership status has been granted to Intercultura Slovakia, Educa-

tional Association Interkultura (Slovenia), Globus Association for Intercultural Learning (Croatia), Interkultura Serbia, and UG Interkulturni Susreti u Bosni i Hercegovina (Bosnia and Herzegovina). This was the moment many of us have been waiting for since the decision was taken at the 2007 EFIL General Assembly in Lisbon, Portugal, to expand the Federation by introducing new partners, with focus on South Eastern Europe. After several years of hard work by all involved, our partners in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Slovenia have now joined us as members of the European AFS family. Welcome!

EFIL now has 27 member organisations, all of Europe's registered AFS organisations. Never before did the Federation have a larger membership.



New members with Vincenzo Morlini, incoming President of AFS INT, and Paul Claes, Secretary-General of EFIL

EFIL thanks Tachi Cazal and congratulates Vincenzo Morlini

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



After almost 6 years of dedicated service, at the end of August, Tachi Cazal will step down as President

and CEO of AFS International. EFIL would hereby like to give a standing ovation to Tachi for his many years of AFS leadership. The cooperation with EFIL has been excellent, and there probably has not been a time in the 40 years of history of our European Federation when the cooperation with the international office has been better than it is today. Thank you, Tachi!

At the end of May, the Board of Trustees of AFS Intercultural Pro-

grams announced the appointment of our new President and CEO, Dr. Vincenzo Morlini. We are very proud that the new President of the international network, for the first time in the history of AFS, is a European. For the past almost six years, Vincenzo was "one of us" as the National Director of Intercultura, our Italian member organisation, where he has built up an excellent record of performance. It is the first time that an AFS National Director will serve in the capacity of President of the organisation.

Vincenzo brings a strong background in business and in AFS operations to the presidency. Prior to his role as Partner Director, Vincenzo had established himself as a successful businessman, holding management positions of increasing responsibility at Apple and a variety

of companies in the industrial, technology and financial sectors. Vincenzo is also an AFS Returnee, having lived for a year in Ohio, USA, as an AFS exchange student during his teen years.

EFIL warmly welcomes our new President and is looking forward to an excellent cooperation with him and his team, as he begins his work in his new capacity as President and CEO on 1 August.



European Directors meet in Vienna

VIENNA - AUSTRIA



In the days prior to the EFIL General Assembly, the Directors of the national AFS offices in Europe, held their first of two annual "Heads of Office" meetings (HOO). The Hotel Regina provided the ideal setting for what turned out to be a very well attended HOO meeting, with 30 participants, including guests from AFS Brazil and from the AFS International office in New York, as well as representatives of the new partner organisations in Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovakia and The Netherlands.

The agenda included a variety of topics of interest to the network Directors. An overview with statistics about AFS in Europe, fol-

lowed by a discussion about the current performance of AFS organisations in Europe, was followed by a session highlighting the "Ensuring our ICL Expertise" strategy plus key ICL AFS network initiatives that are underway. A

good part of the meeting focused on advanced AFS brand initiatives (the AFS Messaging Map), including an update on current and future international branding and marketing projects. On the second day, in a very practically oriented session, several partners presented new programme formats and initiatives they are developing and shared experiences with their colleagues. The next Heads of Office meeting will take place in the autumn of this year.



EFIL publications available

At the General Assembly in Vienna, the report of EFIL's activities in 2009-2010 was presented, including an overview of EFIL's projects and programmes (Volunteer Summer Summit, Intercultural Dialogue Day, EurAfrica project, European Citizenship Trimester Programme), training events, successes in new partner development, networking and lobbying activities, governance meetings, and human resources of the past two years. The "**EFIL Biennial Report 2009-2010**" is a colourful 24-page booklet, which can be downloaded from our website, following the link below.



For EFIL's 40th anniversary, a booklet has been published, walking you through 40 years of history, from the early beginnings and informal meetings in the 1960s, over the 1970s when AFS Europa became EFIL and intercultural learning was put on the table, the widening focus and expanded tasks of the Federation in the 1980s, a decade of challenges in the 1990s, to today's EFIL with a strong membership and stable secretariat and board, enjoying increased visibility and credibility. The 16-page booklet "**40 years of EFIL - 1971-2011**" can be downloaded using the link below.

Link: http://www.efil.afs.org/news-and-events/article/?article_id=884

For our subscribers to the EFILife monthly newsletter, a **Special Edition of EFILife** has been issued, with the same information as what is available in the anniversary booklet. The Special Edition of EFILife can be downloaded following the link: http://www.efil.afs.org/efil_publications/efilife/efilife-editions-2011/

For those interested in printed copies of the "Biennial Report 2009-2010" or "40 years of EFIL - 1971-2011", orders can be placed with the EFIL secretariat, at 3,- Euro per copy (plus postage). Please note that stocks are limited.



AFS EuroNet – upcoming events

BRUSSELS - BELGIUM

Over the past months a group of enthusiastic AFS Alumni in Brussels, many of them with positions at the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council of the Europe, together with EFIL, successfully managed to revive the network of AFS people with international activities in Brussels (AFS EuroNet). Close to a hundred names have been listed so far, and we are appealing to

all our readers to spread the word and trace more Brussels-based AFS alumni!

In the previous edition of EFILife, we have reported on the successful dinner which raised funding for the participation of three key-volunteers of EFIL's new member organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Volunteer

Summer Summit in Portugal in July.

your calendars already now!

Next on the agenda of the AFS EuroNet group is a drink on Thursday 7 July 2011 (from 18:00) at Wild Geese where we have reserved a space to meet, have a drink, socialize and exchange ideas. Another event is planned for September. On 29 September 2011 we will be having our annual Intercultural Dialogue Day, a day which is dedicated to the promotion of intercultural dialogue across Europe. In the spirit of this day, we are planning a meeting of the EuroNet followed by a reception or dinner, where we will discuss determine the future of our alumni group in terms of activities, governance, etc. More information will follow, but you can put this date in

Note that AFS EuroNet now has a Facebook page, which you can 'like' and where you can see pictures from the dinner on the 5 May! Search for "AFS EuroNet"!

Maybe you know of Brussels-based AFS Alumni, who would be interested in joining AFS EuroNet? Please send their names and e-mail addresses to Charlotte at the EFIL office (charlotte.klinting@afs.org), so that we can add them to the growing list of enthusiastic AFS EuroNet members! Let's WALK TOGETHER, TALK TOGETHER.



Welcome to Elisa

Ciao everybody!

My name is Elisa Briga and I am the new Programme, Projects and Advocacy Coordinator at EFIL.

I'm 25 years old and I come from Friuli Venezia Giulia, in the very North East of Italy: 1h from Austria, 30 minutes to Slovenia and 15 minutes to the seaside. I've always loved travelling and since 2007 I started living mostly abroad: Erasmus in Munich, internship and work in Strasbourg and now Brussels where I've just started this exciting job at the EFIL Secretariat.

I will be in charge of Advocacy towards the European Institutions and the platforms where EFIL is a member and I will try my best to keep mobility for intercultural learning in the agenda of policy makers.

And for achieving this, the help of the network will be essential. Therefore, I can't wait to start working with you on this!



But policy won't be my only task. I will have the great chance to witness the impact of AFS on par-

ticipants, since I will be responsible for ECTP and the end of stay Camp in Brussels. I am really looking forward to the camp in

November and to the further development of this exciting programme in the future!

I cannot answer the typical AFS question 'where did you go in your exchange year', since I don't have an AFS background. However, I had a great number of exchanges with different cultures through the international organisation CISV for which I have been volunteering for 15 years. Apart from youth work and trainings at local, national and international level I studied international relations focusing on European youth policy and this year I attended the first edition of the Short course of the MA in European Youth Studies. My most relevant work experience was as trainee and then staff member at the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth.

Goodbye message Thomas



Soon, my time as an intern at the EFIL office will come to an end. I will leave Brussels and EFIL with great memories of an exciting year in which I have met many wonderful people and gotten to know the AFS world.

I started at EFIL in August 2010 under the German AFS volunteer programme.

I very much enjoyed working at the secretariat and consider the highlights of my year being part of the ECTP camp preparatory team as well as taking part in various training and study sessions. These were the occasions where I met numerous AFS volunteers from all over the world. I am still in contact with many of them now and I'm sure that our ways will cross again.

Besides assisting EFIL's training staff I enjoyed being responsible for EFIL's communication channels – the EFILife newsletter and our website. I could gain a lot of

knowledge on how NGOs work and got my first long-term experience of the “9 to 5” working day... J

Besides working in the office, my life was very much influenced by the community residence I lived in: The Institute of Cultural Affairs Belgium – a place in Brussels that accommodates roughly 50 interns with mostly European backgrounds. I very much appreciate having lived in this “Euro-Bubble”. I have definitely met a great bunch of people during this year – of whom I consider quite a few being more than Facebook friends!

In August I will start my dual studies at Raiffeisenbank in Germany, which combine university classes and vocational training. I am very much looking forward to this challenging opportunity, but I am sure I will find time for AFS in my future life!



Packing for Portugal!



ZAMBUJEIRA DO MAR - PORTUGAL



In a little more than one month 200 AFS volunteers from all across Europe will meet in Zambujeira do Mar, Portugal, for the event of the year: EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit. You can follow the countdown on our website: www.efilsummersummit.org. The preparatory team and EFIL are happy to notice that Member Organisations have been very cooperative during the planning process, the majority of them supporting their volunteer participants financially. There's an increased awareness with AFS organisations about the positive impact this event has on the volunteers' motivation and competencies.

What's new?

The full programme can now be found online. Seven trainers of the European Pool of Trainers (EPOT) plus five additional trainers will take care of 30 workshops and other activities. This year we are introducing a new system of training tracks to make the event more efficient by helping AFS organisations to structure the learning process of their volunteers. Track themes will be: basic workshops, expert workshops,

intercultural learning, solidarity with new partners, multicultural Europe, being an inclusive volunteer. There will also be a number of workshops available without following a track. By signing up for three workshops within the same track, you will receive a certificate after the VSS indicating the training you have attended.

The Support Team has also been fixed and the names can also be found on the VSS website.

What to do before and after the Summit? The preparatory team has created a space on the website for just this! Cosmopolitan Lisbon, Algarve's amazing beaches, the wine of Porto and the perfect get-away trip, festivals – read all about this and get inspired!

Other information:

- *Be sure to check the requirements about arrival and departure times!* On 20 July the last bus leaves from Lisbon Airport to the venue between 17:00 and 18:00, but be there at 15:00 to be sure to make it to the welcome evening!
- When you plan your departure, do not plan a flight that leaves before 14:00 on 25 July!
- *The deadline has passed* for payments, but for those that are missing it is still possible to pay until 25 July! Remember that for cancellations between now and 1 July, a 50% cancellation fee applies.
- *The hostel option* as accommodation can no longer be chosen!
- Last payment deadline: 25 June
- Final confirmation: 1 July

EFIL and AFS Portugal are looking forward to welcoming you all in Portugal!



Record number of participants for ECTP 2011

BRUSSELS - BELGIUM



We are happy to announce that we will welcome no less 200 participants in Brussels in November for the third edition of the Brussels Camp of the European Citizenship Trimester Programme! Numbers have gone up from 107 in 2009 and 154 in 2010, showing the increasing interest of partners in this innovative camp with a focus on the European dimension of the student's trimester exchange.

Participants are coming from 17 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland.

The Call for Trainers and Support Team have just been sent out to partners and also an exciting Logo



Hunt for ECTP 2011 has been launched. The deadline for submission of all applications is the 8th July!

Meanwhile the preparatory team is

moving things one gear up, with an in-person meeting planned for July, at the actual venue of the Camp.

Later, in September, a meeting will take place with partners to evaluate and discuss the programme's format, aiming at formulating recommendations for the potential re-designing and improvement of the future programme in a way to further increase its uniqueness and importance for the participating youngsters. A call for partners to join us for this meeting will come

out soon.

Follow the ECTP 2011 on Facebook!
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/EFIL-ECTP-2011/164282516968599>

Countdown to Intercultural Dialogue Day

29 September 2011



The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, and more than 60 years of AFS intercultural experiences, prompted EFIL to declare 26 December 2008 its first Intercultural Dialogue Day. Since then, building upon the same tradition and promoting the same values, EFIL and its member organisations across Europe celebrate what has now become an annual event on each last Thursday of September: Intercultural Dialogue Day, or the celebration of culture itself that comes to the streets and reaches out to participants and unaware passers-by inviting them to the surrender to the spirit and join in the activities, reflections, festivities,...

Following the success of the previous three editions, on 29 September 2011, volunteers all over the continent will once again make a joint effort to set up activities, including creativity workshops,

school activities, youth debates, panel discussion, concerts, movie screenings, street entertainment, markets, flashmobs, etc. AFS volunteers will set up exhibitions, public presentations and speeches, international web events, seminars and conferences, photo/song/poster/movie competitions and quizzes, petitions, dance and sports events, creative meals and picnics, getting a lot of media coverage celebrating and promoting intercultural dialogue and diversity.

The events will give AFS and intercultural exchanges in general a lot of much wanted visibility and publicity, reaching out to youngsters in Europe to convince them of the benefits of intercultural learning through studying and living abroad with a host family. As our Intercultural Dialogue Day is a volunteer-driven event, it fits perfectly in the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

Please send pictures and materials of your events in September to the EFIL office. We will collect all information and prepare an overview and a colourful booklet, featuring



your volunteers and your activities promoting what we all strongly believe in: that people who build lasting friendships across cultures within and outside their home countries, are a major pillar of society to ensure future dialogue and understanding between peoples and nations.



Let's make **29 September 2011** a day to remember!

Training for Trainers in Poland taking shape



PIEKARY/KRAKOW - POLAND

"Needs-based training design for partner development" is the title of this year's training targeting mainly the members of the EFIL European Pool of Trainers (EPOT). It will take place 11-19 September 2011 in Piekary/Krakow, Poland. In the absence of the traditional summer training for trainers which partly benefitted the Volunteer Summer Summit, the planned event will address another group of indirect recipients: the local volunteers in Poland and Slovakia.

The training course will consist of two general parts: the

"learning" phase when participants will explore trainer skills, and the "practice/implementation" phase when they will prepare their own training modules. The idea is to tackle training needs assessment with a real concrete target group (Polish and Slovak volunteers) and develop a 1,5-day training on that basis. The different modules prepared by sub-teams of training participants should create together a coherent training course flow.

The preparatory team of the project has now taken shape and will consist of very experienced trainers: Jana

Holla (AFS Egypt), Andre Galvao (AFS Portugal), Mehmet Hazar Yildirim (AFS Turkey) and Agnieszka Tatera (an external trainer from Poland), with coordination of Izabela Jurczik (EFIL Secretariat). While scheduling the preparatory meeting, the team will soon issue the call for participants, addressed first of all to the European Pool of Trainers members.

The project is self-funded (no external grant has been obtained) so it will only be possible with a lot of commitment of all the sides involved. The big thank you goes already to the Father Siemaszko Foundation in Krakow – the organisation running AFS exchanges in Poland which will host the event, providing exceptionally welcoming conditions for the logistics.

Stay tuned for the call for participants planned for sending out still in June!



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 Sweden

AFS Sweden bid farewell to Margareta Löfgren, Support and Quality Manager, who decided to retire from AFS. The office in Stockholm is happy to welcome a new Sending Coordinator, Johan Fohlström. Johan will fill in for Jenny Eriksson who has gone on maternity leave.

AFS Norway

From AFS Norway comes the sad news that the Norwegian Gallati award winner Ester Amdam passed away, 89 years old. Esther was one of the grand old ladies of AFS Norway and was committed to the organisation for over 60 years. She was the founder of the local chapter AFS Molde and received the Galatti award in 1995. Esther was until recently an active AFSer, participating in local chapter meetings and activities.

AFS Austria

AFS Austria has changed its office structure. Ingeborg Suppin-Fabisch who has served as the Programme Director for the last 13 years, has been appointed as Director of Marketing and Communications, focusing on volunteer development linked to the acquisition of intercultural competencies for all programme participants, establishing strategies to improve school relationships, increasing 18+ programme numbers and promoting the AFS mission to audiences outside the usual AFS target groups. Margarita Hatzioannu, the Organisational Development Coordinator, will mainly continue with her assigned duties but she will also assist Ingeborg in achieving the new tasks. Patrick Hamatschek, Sending Coordinator for the past four years, becomes the new Programme Director. AFS Austria welcomes Martina Wolfgang as the new Sending Coordinator.



Volunteers of AFS in Serbia visiting the EFIL office in Brussels

AFS Weekend in western Serbia



BY IVANA GAZIKALOVIC-PAVLOVIC

From 12-15 May 2011, the exchange students in Serbia visited Ivanjica, a small town in western Serbia. The visit was organized by a local teacher who had attended Interkultura's training for high school teachers in April. The students were hosted by their peers from the local high school. On Friday, the students had a presentation at the high school about AFS, their own countries and their exchange experiences. On Saturday, the school organized a cultural visit to Studenica, a famous 12th century Serbian Orthodox monastery, which is one of the best examples of Serbian medieval architec-

ture and art. Saturday evening was reserved for Eurosong, but in spite of all the support from the exchange students and their hosts, the Serbian song did not do too well! Sunday morning was free with the hosts.

The visit to Ivanjica was covered by the local radio and the national TV and the students had a chance to talk about their year in Serbia. They definitely enjoyed all the attention. This was the fourth AFS weekend Interkultura organized for the exchange students this year, in addition to the usual orientation camps and the mini stay. Seeing how much

fun the students had, but also how great these events are for the local high school students, we are certain-



ly going to do more similar activities next year.

New Website

If you want to learn more about AFS in Serbia, visit the new web site at www.afs.org.rs or www.afs.org.rs/en. You will find all the information you are looking for, both in Serbian and in English. Note that the page « Welcome to Serbia » has brochures about Serbia in 24 languages, this way covering a very wide range of AFS partner world-wide. The new web site will contribute to the promotion of Serbia in the global AFS network. Congratulations to the volunteers of Interkultura Serbia.

Teacher training in Croatia



BY MARIJA BEVANDA



AFS Intercultural Programs Croatia decided to organise a project focusing on high school teachers because for some teachers exchange programmes are still a controversial subject and the concept of intercultural learning

in Croatian high school is not well known or it is not understood correctly. Although the majority of teachers believe in the value of exchange programmes and the benefits for their students, there still are many teachers who view exchange programmes as a setback in formal education because of the perception of a student 'losing' a year. Therefore exchange programmes are sometimes looked at as a touristic trip, as a result of which AFS volunteers sometimes have a hard time promoting AFS exchange programmes in schools.

With this training we aimed at giving teachers the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the concept of intercultural learning through student exchanges so they will become ambassadors of mobility for students in their schools. Next to this, the initiative proved to be a great way for AFS in Croatia to improve its school relations.

On 21 and 22 May, nine high school teachers and head-

masters attended the training in Zagreb. Teachers attended lectures and workshops on ICL held by Mr. Edoardo Laurenti, an experienced volunteer of Intercultura Italia and a member of EFIL's European Pool of Trainers (EPOT). We thank EFIL for all the help and assistance that made our project a success!

Teachers evaluated the event as very interesting and

useful, and they returned to their schools with new ideas for projects. As concrete and immediate results of the meeting, some teachers are now included in our host family recruitment, while others are organising AFS class exchanges.

Provided we find the necessary funding, AFS Croatia is determined to run similar events in the future.

EVA programme in Slovakia

BY ZOHRA LOVISOVA



The recent Eva programme activities took place from 7 to 12 April 2011 in Slovakia and we successfully managed to create a mosaic of activities for our Turkish guests to get acquainted with life in our families, our values, the variety of Slovak culture and its people, and of course, our history.



Slovak volunteers are present mainly in two regions of Slovakia: the capital Bratislava, and Nitra, a town closely tied with Slovak history. Six

hosting mothers from both regions had prepared a programme, which included a sightseeing tour of both cities. In Nitra we had a chance to visit the most dominant landmark of the town, the castle with its cathedral, a place offering a splendid view of the wide surrounding area. The Diocesan library, another historical sight worth visiting, has a rich collection which refers to the spreading of education in ancient times.

Visiting Slovak families enriched with drinking traditional Turkish coffee, prepared and served according to a local tradition by our Turkish guests, created a very pleasant atmosphere and initiated debates about attitudes, opinions and ideas, and generally touched upon a lot of personal, social and professional matters. A guitar concert in the old synagogue as well as chatting in a tea-room made our time together very pleasant.

The picturesque, tiny cottage in the mountainous center of Slovakia, traditionally equipped and with its own simplicity, presented an image of Slovakia from the beginning of the 20th century. In order to make our Turkish friends more familiar with our excellent ski resorts, we managed to organize a trip to the Low Tatras, where by cable car we got to the higher mountains covered with snow (and a snowstorm during our stay!). As our Turkish guests came to Slovakia at the time of preparation for

Easter we were able to show our Easter decorations with typical meals of Slovak cuisine – pasta with sheep cheese.

A “Turkish Night” with typical Turkish cuisine was prepared by our guests. Tables were full of Turkish specialties, Turkish drinks and



meals prepared according to Turkish recipes. A representative of the Turkish Embassy, Mr Yüksel Yücekall, participated in the event. The night ended with a quiz about Turkey and we, Slovaks, managed to show our guests that we know a lot about their country.

The Turkish Ambassador, Mrs. Fatma Dicle Kopuz, herself an AFS student (USA 1972) welcomed all of us and prepared a “diplomatic” session in Bratislava, where we learned more about Turkey and its hospitable people.

We are looking forward to our visit to Turkey in 2012.



EFIL's involvement in the European Youth Forum



The European Youth Forum (YFJ), of which EFIL is a Member Organisation, is an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, representing national youth councils and international youth organisations from across Europe. For EFIL and AFS it is the key channel for advocating our views, since the YFJ is recognised by European institutions as the voice of young people in Europe.



In May EFIL was engaged in several meetings in the YFJ context. A member of the European Pool of Representatives (EPOR), Eliza Popper from AFS HUN, represented EFIL at the statutory event – the Council of Members (COMEM) – which took place 5-8 May in Antwerp, Belgium. During the meeting, attended by 130 participants from over 90 organisations, several issues of importance to EFIL/AFS were discussed. Among others, there were workshops focused on the future of youth funding and on events linked to the European Year of Volunteering. The Policy Paper on the Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Education was also adopted.

In preparation of the COMEM, EFIL representatives attended also a meeting of the informal group of exchange organisations which are a part of the European Youth Forum. The exchange group gathers all the youth organisations dealing with mobility programmes of different length and target groups: university students (Erasmus Student Network), volunteers (Service Civil International, Alliance), short-term programmes (Youth for Exchange and Understanding, International Young Nature Friends, European Students' Forum) and finally long-term ones (the umbrella structures of AFS and Youth for Understanding). Speaking with one voice, in particular within the European Youth Forum, helps us promote the common issues for exchange organisations: erasing mobility obstacles, intercultural learning, volunteering or non-formal education.

A large number of activities and structures of the European Youth Forum gives many opportunities for AFS volunteers to get engaged at European level, so we encourage the European Pool of Representatives and beyond to consider this involvement in the future!

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

EU Enlargement

After six arduous years of talks on its bid for European Union membership, **Croatia** was told that it should be able to join in 2013, but that its efforts to combat corruption and reform its judiciary will be monitored in the meantime.

The European Union has welcomed the transfer of Ratko Mladic, the former **Bosnian Serb** general accused of genocide and war crimes during the 1992-1995 Bosnian

war, to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. General Mladic's appeal against extradition was earlier rejected by Serbia's war crimes court. Bringing Mladic to justice has been one of the key conditions for Serbia's progress towards membership of the EU. The arrest is expected to prompt the Union to give the green light this year to Belgrade's application for candidate status – the gateway to opening accession talks. A decision to this end has until now been blocked by the Netherlands, which said that Mladic should first be arrested and transferred to The Hague.

VISA regulations

After prolonged deliberation and debate, the European Parliament gave the green light, on 8 June, to **Bulgaria**

and **Romania's** accession to the EU's Schengen borderless area. The European Commission's progress reports, released earlier this year, concluded that both countries meet all the technical and legal criteria for

joining the Schengen area, including visa issuance policy, police cooperation, readiness to connect to and use the Schengen Information System, data protection and control of land, sea and air borders. The two countries'

Schengen application has elicited criticism from some member states, such as France, Italy and Germany, for their failure to address corruption issues and implement judicial reforms.

Youth & Education



On 20th May 2011, all EU education ministers apart from the United Kingdom agreed on a Council recommendation to put in place integrated policies to reduce early school leaving by 2012. The recommendation invites Member States to identify the different factors leading to early school leaving and to study the characteristics of the phenomenon at national, regional and local levels. Early school leaving stands among the education priorities of the 'Europe 2020 strategy', which set out a target of reducing early school leavers to less than 10% by 2020, from 14.4% in 2009.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has unveiled plans for new European targets on the employability and mobility of students. The two new benchmarks, which still need to be formally adopted by the council, will complete the set of joint targets EU countries have pledged to achieve by 2020. A new benchmark on the mobility of students would measure the share of young people with learning experiences abroad, while another on employability would monitor the success rate of young people with different education levels in the labour market in the years following graduation.

of governance issues as a rapidly evolving worldwide web takes up an increasing role in people's lives.

The young people present grabbed the opportunity to have their say on the many questions and dichotomies of today's web. How will the increasing interconnectivity and personalisation encroach upon users right to privacy? Or how can a balance be struck between freedom of expression and hate speech? The New Media Summer School, a partnership of youth organisations eager to make their voices heard on internet issues, underlined that no other group in society is living with the web as naturally and symbiotically as young people today. Having lived with the technology all their lives, they are "digital natives".



From 15th - 21st May, Europe celebrated the fifth edition of the European Youth Week, with hundreds of activities for young people taking place in 33 European countries. In Brussels, young people from across the European Union gathered for a series of workshops and open forums with EU policy-makers, giving them a chance to have their say on the future of EU Youth Policy. The discussions, which took place within the context of the Structured Dialogue, attached particular importance to the subject of youth unemployment - a major concern for the young people present.

One of the week's flagship events was held in Antwerpen, European Youth Capital 2011, where young people were able to meet and debate with President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso and Education Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou. Answering the questions of the young people present, Mr Barroso acknowledged that youth had been hit hardest by the economic crisis, underlining that youth unemployment rates currently stand at more than double the European average. He argued that youth policy has never been higher on the European agenda.



The fourth European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) took place in Belgrade on 30-31st May, with a

number of youth representatives actively contributing to the debate. Gathering over 400 participants from civil society, business and European institutions, the event aimed to create an inclusive and interactive environment in which stakeholders can discuss and find common ground on issues related to internet governance. More widely, it aims to raise awareness towards the relevance

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