

EFILife

Magazine

Edition 87, February 2011

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



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Volunteer Summer Summit Preparatory Team Meeting

Even though summer and the VSS 2011 seem far away, for the preparatory team the event is already a reality. After a successful meeting at the Zmar venue in Portugal, things are starting to take shape; the website, the programme, the logo, On location in Portugal, the team was able to check out and test the amazing facilities and the great food, enjoy the nice weather and the eco friendly lodgings, while really coming together as a team.

The Facebook page is now up and running, and you can find pictures from the venue and become friends with the Sunflower of the VSS 2011! Note that information will not be posted on Facebook, but only on the official website (www.efilsummersummit.org) which will be online on 21 February 2011. There you will find all you want to know about fees, the venue, the team and deadlines.

All information will also be published in our regular VSS Herald, which will come out every month until the event.

Remember the dates for the volunteer event of the year, EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit: 20-25 July. Save the dates in your calendars and come with your best AFS spirit!

Look out for the call for participants - applications will start on 28 February 2011!



European Volunteer coordinators meeting in Hamburg



From 31 January to 5 February, EFIL's biennial Organisational Development Coordinators meeting (ODC) took place in Germany. For the first and last day, participants gathered in Hamburg, and for the time in between the group moved to an estate close to the Baltic Sea. Altogether 18 participants and 5 members of the preparatory team from 15 AFS organisations came together to reflect on their role as an ODC, learn more about the reality of different AFS organisations and their volunteer structures, differentiate between button and zipper volunteers, and learned how to detect possible problems that chapters face, how to (re)act to them as an ODC and how to interact with the volunteers.



Other topics tackled included volunteer empowerment, school relations and links between ODCs and EFIL. Personal action plans were created at the end and will hopefully soon be implemented.

The remote venue contributed very well to the positive group atmosphere. The only sad thing to report is that our Egyptian participant didn't make it to the meeting because of the ongoing unrest in Egypt. We very much hope to welcome her at

the next event.

A special word of thanks goes to AFS Germany for taking care of all the logistical aspects of the event, and of the well being of the participants. The preparatory team also earns a special thank you, as they were well organised and still flexible in adjusting to the needs of participants. Maybe this resulted from the team's unfortunate experience to get stuck in an elevator for 40 long minutes on the way to their team meeting. ☺ The time in the elevator was used efficiently for team building and brought the team members (literally) close together.

Overall the ODC meeting was a very fruitful event with lots of wonderful moments to share. If you are interested in getting a little insight into our work, please have a look at this video: <http://animoto.com/play/1GGImzFfKyXS0sOdMEc88w>

We are very much looking forward to the next edition of this event, the latest in two years' time!



EFIL's new Training Advisory Body 2011-2012 meets in Hamburg

The newly refreshed EFIL Training Advisory Body (TAB) met on 5-7 February 2011 in Hamburg, Germany. The TAB had been created as a working structure at European level, supporting the training field in EFIL in terms of both strategic and operational issues.

Thanks to its composition including two national Organisational Development Coordinators (ODC), two experienced volunteers and an AFS International representative, the TAB helps EFIL to keep an overview of AFS training needs in Europe.

The most important issues discussed at the meeting in Hamburg were:

- the roles and functioning of the TAB;
- evaluation of the past and looking into the upcoming EFIL training activities;
- synergy between EFIL and AFS International, in particular in the recent ICL competence development efforts;
- refreshment and functioning of the European Pool of Trainers;
- new training activities for 2012 and beyond;
- TAB work plan for 2011.

Next to the newly formed team, the meeting enjoyed also partial participation of the outgoing TAB members (Diana Deszti-Rosta from Hungary, Michela Bortoli from Italy, Manuel Schwinn from

Germany and Stephan Winiker from Switzerland), who helped us to look back at the previous term and to ensure continuity in the TAB transition time.

The current TAB consists of:

- **Jana Holla** – a volunteer and former staff member of AFS Egypt, active member of the EFIL Pool of Trainers since 2008,
- **Eva Vitkova** – a volunteer and Board member of AFS Czech Republic, active member of the EFIL Pool of Trainers since 2008 and of the European Youth Forum Pool of Trainers since 2009,
- **Monika Bühler** – Organisational Development and Services Director of AFS Switzerland since 2009, AFS programme returnee,
- **Andrea Franzoi** – Volunteer Development Coordinator of AFS Intercultura Italy since 2009, former volunteer and AFS programme returnee,
- **Lisa Cohen** - Senior International Consultant for AFS International working in the International office since 1999, AFS programme returnee.

Together with all the TAB members we very much hope to remain connected with training-related AFS people and we would wish to receive their continuous input and feedback. You can contact the whole TAB group by using the email address tab@afs.org.

Brussels seminar focuses on linking national and European advocacy work

During three intensive days 16-18 December 2010, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) and the European Educational Exchanges - Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU) held a joint seminar "**Linking national and European advocacy work**" in Brussels.

The seminar enjoyed participation of staff and board members from AFS organisations in Belgium Flanders, Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Portugal Russia and Turkey, as well as from YFU organisations in Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Sweden.



AFS and YFU operate in a dynamic environment where changing external policies and programmes have both positive and negative impacts on our programmes. Be it visa regulations, laws concerning package travel, the academic recognition of the exchange year or challenges and opportunities presented by the Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility programme, the ability of AFS and YFU to successfully organise high quality youth exchanges is linked not only to strong internal organisational standards, but also to the framework provided by our common external environment.

Internally, EEE-YFU and EFIL are unique within the AFS and YFU networks as part of their core work involves advocacy and representation. The joint work of the two organisations has been essential in the lobbying efforts at European level. Finding mechanisms to efficiently coordinate work between European and national levels has remained a challenge for both networks. The

seminar in Brussels looked at meeting the challenge of linking national and European level advocacy work.

During the seminar, participants learned more about the steps an organisation can take to develop in the field of advocacy and also learned about other organisations such as the German umbrella organisation AJA, the European Youth Forum and the Erasmus Student Network.

EFIL would like to thank in particular: Kirsi Uusitalo from AFS Finland (member of the preparatory team), Elisabeth Hardt from AFS Germany (important contribution to the seminar content) and AFS Belgium French (whose premises hosted the seminar). The thanks go also to all the participants who brought a major contribution to the seminar.

We are looking forward to the long-term results encouraged by the seminar - many ambitious plans were made by the participants!

Preparing for EFIL 2011 General Assembly in Vienna



In the first week of June, EFIL member organisations will get together in Vienna, for the Federation's biennial General Assembly, kindly hosted this time by AFS Austria. The venue will be the Europahaus Convention Center, where we will have exclusive use of the magnificent Miller-Aichholz Palace, which offers a unique historical ambience and is perfectly suitable for the plenaries and workshops of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly officially opens with the welcome dinner on Thursday 2 June, in the lovingly renovated restaurant of the historic Orangery, overlooking the beautiful scenery of the park, and ends on Saturday

night with a gala dinner, celebrating EFIL's 40th anniversary. Theme of the event will be "40 years of intercultural learning".

Prior to the GA, on Wednesday and Thursday morning, there will be a Heads of Office meeting, which brings together the Directors of all of EFIL's member organisations. Elections for the Board of EFIL will take place during the General Assembly, and EFIL's newly elected Board of Directors will hold its first meeting at the same venue on Sunday and Monday, after the General Assembly is over.

EFIL and AFS Austria are looking forward to welcome the network partners at the General Assembly in Vienna, 2-5 June 2011!



EFIL 1971 – 2011: 40 years of intercultural leaning

▪ How it all began...

Three cheers for EFIL: this year, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning is celebrating its 40th anniversary! Between now and the EFIL General Assembly in June in Vienna, with short flash backs, EFILife will look back at 40 years of intercultural learning.

The founding assembly of EFIL (called then AFS Europa) took place in Lake Mohonk, New York, on 24-25 September 1971 and approved the following resolution: "The official delegates of the European AFS organisations approve the by-laws of the European Federation of the AFS organisations as discussed and amended at the Lake Mohonk World Congress '71, with the understanding that these by-laws shall be sent by the Euro-

pean Coordinator to the national AFS organisations of Europe to be ratified within 9 months from now, and that the countries that have ratified it shall send official delegates to the first General Assembly to be held within one year from now".



Of the 19 countries present 17 voted in favour, two countries abstained. The first General Assembly took place in Birgitz, Austria, on 11-15 September 1972. Sitting on the first ever AFS

Europa board were Fritz Otti (Austria) as Chair, Michel Daspét (France), Francois Meysman (Belgium), Niels Mikkelsen (Denmark), Ezio Vergani (Italy) and Ayse Yarsuvat (Turkey).

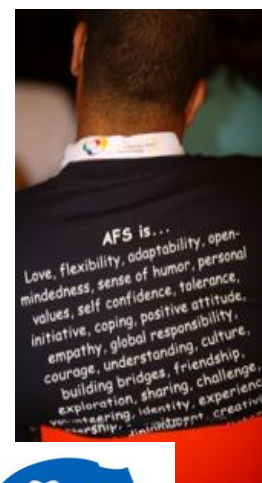
Massive response to AFS EuroNet call

Late 2010, EFIL sent out a call to reach AFS Alumni based in Brussels, in the European institutions and other organisations, with the intention to create an "AFS EuroNet" network. This call was distributed in various ways, including an article within the European Commission's newsletter "Commission en Direct", and contacts at the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Europe enthusiastically helped spreading the word. □

□

WANTED

If you know of other AFS Alumni working in Brussels, and who would be interested in joining AFS EuroNet, please send their names and e-mail addresses to Charlotte at the EFIL secretariat (charlotte.klinting@afs.org).



number of responses so far has been overwhelming. More than 70 confirmed contacts have personally replied and approved their participation in the AFS EuroNet group, with more names added to the list every day. Returnees from recent years as well as those who were on an AFS exchange way back in the 1960s have been found, and also host families, former EFIL board members and staff have shown up.

The steering group will soon meet again to discuss further actions and to explore the possibilities to initiate projects with this group to help promote EFIL and AFS in Europe.

Thank you to the AFS offices and individuals who have put us in contact with returnees and who have forwarded the call to others or distributed it within their networks.

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.

As an interim solution for the vacant position of Programme Director, AFS **Switzerland** is happy to announce that Martina Schall will take over the responsibilities starting 1 February. Mails to her predecessor will be forwarded to Martina automatically. Our partner organisation in **Italy** has informed the network that Violetta Pinna is on maternity leave since 13 Januar. Sara Frattale, who was working as Hosting Assistant, has now moved to the Support Staff. And there's more happy news from **Germany**, where Henni Weiser has started her maternity leave. Barbara Bretschneider will act as interim Director of Strategic Cooperations until Henni's return around July. Please direct all questions regarding AFS Germany's fundraising and partnership activities to Barbara.

Since it's becoming ever more difficult to place exchange students in schools due to the lack of German language knowledge, it has become important for any exchange student coming to **Switzerland** to deal with German prior to the departure. Therefore students are requested to complete the beginner's course of the online programme *Babbel* before they leave for their new country. On arrival in Switzerland, students will attend an intensive German language course for the first four weeks. On the first day of this course, they will have to take an entry test.

In **Belgium**, for National Director of AFS Belgium French, Anne Sokal, at the end of December the time had come to say goodbye after 17 years of dedicated service in the network. In the November edition of our newsletter we have already welcomed the new Director, Fabrice Gonet. Thank you, Anne! And welcome, Fabrice!

To welcome participants on their hosting programme, AFS **Latvia** has updated promotion materials for a variety of programmes (incl. IP Russian language programme with a high quality culture programme with two optional dates – one in summer and one in winter; IP Latvian language programme especially for partner countries with significant Latvian descent communities). Volunteers in Latvia have also made a new English language promotional video.

"Latvia - a country to discover!",

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCeByVLUCIE>

Network partners are invited to use them in their recruitment process.

From AFS **Switzerland** comes the news that, with the help of an Alumni who has excellent contacts with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 100 students were treated to a private visit to the Federal Palace and were invited afterwards by the charismatic major of the capital, Alexander Tschäppätt. The students and some of the staff of AFS SUI enjoyed a wonderful morning with lots of laughter and learning.



AFS **Turkey** has announced that it will be repeating last year's successful Class Exchange Programme on 16-22 May 2011. AFS Turkey is are planning to diversify the group and enhance the intercultural experience by placing groups from the same school in different cities. Application deadline is 1 April 2011. For further questions please contact Cemre Akin or Duygu Kutluay.



Second "Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience" in Germany
Apply now – 30 scholarships available!

For the second year running, the "Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience" will take place in Karlsruhe and will be co-organised by Karlsruhochschule International University and AFS Germany. Relevant topics in the field of intercultural management and communication will be tackled. The Summer Academy is intended to foster the intercultural perspective within the field of management theory as well as to develop applied solutions for the problems in society.

The event will last two weeks (1-12 August 2011) and students can enrol for either one or two weeks. Classes will be organized in three different tracks: Intercultural Communication; Intercultural Management; Culture and Society. All courses will include workshop sessions with complementary theoretical and practical content offered by academic staff and AFS-trainers which are experts with large experience in international environments. The Academy's main target group are undergraduate students. After successfully completing the classes, up to 6 European Credit Points (ECTS) can be earned. Last year participants and faculty from 15 countries and 5 continents participated in the Summer Academy.

For the AFS network, the Summer Academy offers several unique opportunities: next to the educational aspects and the international exposure from which AFS volunteers and staff can benefit, the Summer Academy offers AFS a platform to demonstrate its broad competencies on a university level, and an opportunity to confirm its ongoing commitment to be one of the leaders in intercultural education. Experienced AFS trainers have the chance to multiply their knowledge at the Summer Academy, in a team with a faculty member they will teach one of the five-day courses.

For more information and registration please visit the webpage <http://summeracademy-karlsruhe.org>

There will be a number of (partial) scholarships available especially for participants from the AFS network. These scholarships are granted through AFS International's Diversity Fund, in support of the AFS Core ICL Competency Development Program that is currently being developed to support the AFS Network's ICL strategy: "Ensuring our Expertise".

Also, a large number of (full and partial) tuition scholarships are available for all Summer Academy participants. For tuition scholarship applications, please visit: <http://summeracademy-karlsruhe.org/index.php/registration/scholarships/>

For more questions about the Academy please contact: contact@summeracademy-karlsruhe.org



Interkultura SLOVENIA – Organic growth to strong AFS Partner

The story of AFS Slovenia started in 2007 with a group of former AFS students who decided to revive their experience of being exchange students in the USA during the times of Yugoslavia. The first big step was made a year later through Interkultura Italy which helped us to send three high school students to spend a year with families in Belgium, Italy and the

USA. Three years later, as an independent AFS Branch Office, we have sent nine students on the year programme to six different countries - Denmark, Belgium, France, USA and Germany. We have also hosted three students for three months- two from Italy and one from Belgium French.

There are two AFS local chapters – one in the capital city of Ljubljana, and the other in Maribor, the second largest city. Most of the AFS activity is still centered in Maribor in the north-east of the country. Every new exchange season we manage to cover more regions of the country and include more high schools into the programme, so we are expanding successfully.



representatives of SEE countries and Danish staff at the EVS seminar in Copenhagen, Denmark, November 2010

Since April 2010 we are part of the global AFS family with the official status of »Branch Office AFS Intercultural Programs«. In September 2010 the new board was formed, recruiting as members some younger exchange returnees and also establishing our first staff member. We decided to start sending students on the trimester programme (EFIL's ECTP) in 2011, since a lot of potential AFS exchange students are rather afraid to miss an entire school year, because a student exchange programme of similar duration has never been practised in Slovenian high schools before. In addition we have introduced an option

of getting a scholarship for the year exchange programme.

We consider it important to train our volunteers to facilitate their work with exchange students and therefore we encourage them to participate in various EFIL trainings, meetings and seminars. This way we improve our organisation and are able to offer the hosted students a meaningful experience of good quality. We have had the pleasure of participating in EFIL's Programme Directors meetings in Belgrade (Serbia) in 2008, and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 2010, in EFIL's Organisational Development Coordinators Meeting in Hamburg (Germany) in 2011, in EFIL's Training for Developing Organisations in Zagreb (Croatia) in 2009, the ECTP Brussels Camp in 2010, and in EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summits in Hungary 2010. We also took part in EFIL's European-wide Intercultural Dialogue Day in 2009. We work together with other new AFS organisations in the region - in July 2010 we organised a pre-departure camp together with Croatian AFS volunteers.

Last year we responded to the kind invitation of AFS Denmark and together with representatives of the AFS organisations in our neighbours Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we attended a preparatory seminar on EVS (European Voluntary Service), where we were briefed on how to start the EVS programme in Slovenia. Right now we are in the process of obtaining the accreditation, with foreign volunteers eager to come to Slovenia standing in line.



Poster of Interkultura Slovenia from EFIL ODC Meeting in Hamburg, February 2011

Keeping in mind that we are a young and small organisation, we are proud to be at the point where we are. We have lot of positive energy and devotion to help us spread AFS programmes all over the country and entering every high school possible to cooperate in intercultural exchange programmes.

Right now, we are very much looking forward and are excited to host EFIL's Programme Directors Meeting in Maribor this year in March. We are eager to show our guests from all over Europe and beyond the Slovenian culture and hospitality in the best possible way. Nasvidenje!

AFS in Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to AFS

The board of AFS Tunisia met on Friday 21 January to evaluate the current situation of AFS programmes in Tunisia in light of the recent events and share ideas about strategic choices for the near future. The board unanimously reaffirmed its commitment to the ideals of AFS programmes and was on the whole cautiously optimistic about the future of AFS programmes in Tunisia for 2011-2012. While recognizing the difficulty of projecting with certainty the developments of the political situation in Tunisia in the immediate future, the board has nevertheless decided to keep the AFS office in Tunisia open and maintain the scheduled activities and pro-

grammes for 2011-2012. The board has also decided to hold a second evaluation of the situation in February and update its conclusions and



Paul Claes (EFIL) and Bochra Malki (Board Chair of AFS Tunisia) in Brussels, June 2008

In addition, the board of AFS Tunisia wishes to express its pride in the Tunisian people and its revolution. It wants to express its deepest gratitude to host families in Tunisia for

their commitment, courage, and cooperation. The board also extends its heartfelt thanks to the Risk Management Group of AFS International, to those AFS Partners who had participants in Tunisia, and to all AFS partners who have sent messages of sympathy and support. To the returned participants and their families, AFS Tunisia conveys the message that they will always have friends in Tunisia.

AFS Tunisia more than ever counts on the support of the AFS network partners, in keeping the AFS spirit alive in Tunisia, by supporting Tunisian students to take part in future AFS programmes.

Belgian AFS organisations and EFIL unite to celebrate the new year

For the fourth year running, the AFS organisations based in Belgium came together for a new year's lunch and reception. AFS Belgium Flanders played the perfect host and brought together the AFS staff and interns from Belgium Flanders, Belgium French and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) to celebrate the start of a new year with a drink and a bite in their home city, Mechelen. A most enjoyable time was spent together.



Pauline Kennes (BFR) and Sarie Pieraerts (BFL), who both participated in the recent AFS International training in India, treated all present with an interesting and entertaining presentation, including the outcomes of a little exercise about Hofstede's cultural dimensions they had asked everyone to take part in. Thanks, Sarie and Pauline, for the excellent presentation!



EYV 2011 has been kicked off!



After the media launch of the European Year of Volunteering in Brussels last December, the Year was officially kicked-off on 8 January 2011 in Budapest, Hungary! The ceremony was opened by representatives of the European Commission and the Hungarian Presidency of the EU, among whom Ms Viviane Reding and Mr **Pál Schmitt**. Present were also close to 100 members of the Alliance Working Groups – nominated by Alliance member organisations. In this group there are 3 AFS volunteers nominated by EFIL.

The Working groups members – many of them volunteers with solid experience on topics such as quality, value and recognition of volunteering, legal framework and em-

ployee volunteering – will be working together to create a framework for Volunteering in Europe. The final document "EYV 2011 Alliance European Policy Agenda on Volunteering" will be presented at the closing conference of the EYV in Poland (December 2011).

A series of conferences is just one of the EYV activities planned in 2011. EFIL will keep you updated on the EYV Tour as a very good opportunity to get involved with AFS and give visibility to the volunteering reality of your organisation. The upcoming dates for the Tour can be found here: <http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/tour>

- Madrid, Spain: 28 Feb – 5 Mar
- Paris, France: 14 – 20 Apr

We hope our AFS partners in Spain and France will take part and share their experiences with the rest of the network – good luck!

Share your ideas with the world!

"Progress is..."

As part of its 50th Anniversary celebrations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has started a video competition among young people. The topic? Progress!

If you have a talent for film making and if you are **between 18 and 25 years old**, then you can enter the race and **submit your short video before midnight on 1 March (Paris time)**. The attractive first prize: 5 days in Paris in May 2011 ☺

Check out all the rest here:

http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_46513044_1_1_1_1,00.html

European Policy Summit on Western Balkans

Source: Executive summary , Beating the Balkans Blues (Friends of Europe)

A high-level European Policy Summit focusing upon issues surrounding the accession of Western Balkans countries to European Union membership took place in Brussels in December 2010. Prime Ministers, cabinet ministers and policy-makers from Balkan countries joined members of the European Parliament, European Union officials, and institutional and business chiefs to discuss progress towards EU membership and remaining obstacles.

Opening the conference, Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa, Director of the Multinational Development Policy Dialogue in the European Office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, noted that the Summit appeared to coincide with a slowdown in the accession process, an 'accession fatigue' both among existing EU members and candidate states. Ms there's a need to underline the positive effects of enlargement for the further stabilisation of the region. Important steps have been taken in regional cooperation, but there is much more room for further improvement.

Tim Judah, Western Balkans Correspondent for The Economist and co-moderator of the summit, set an upbeat tone with a metaphor that recurred throughout the day: "My glass is half full, it is not half-empty". He set out a list of positives: Croatia is on-track for EU accession, Serbia's application for candidacy has been unblocked, Montenegro is about to win candidate status. And even Bosnia is benefiting from "good atmospheric" after its election. The Prime Ministers of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece have recently met frequently about the 19-year dispute over Macedonia's name, and Albania isn't "too far" behind. Perhaps elections in Kosovo will unblock its isolation, he pondered. "There are plenty of difficulties that lie ahead, but there is some good news too." During the course of the discussions, it was clear that many participants share his optimism that progress of Western Balkan states toward EU membership is once again gathering pace.

Countries in the Western Balkans have achieved remarkable advances, and for some progress toward long-awaited EU membership appears to be accelerating. But far greater regional integration is imperative, with or without the benefits of EU membership.

Friends of Europe's, an independent think tank for EU policy analysis and debate, and co-organisers of the Summit in Brussels, has issued two recent publications on the Balkans:



BEATING THE BALKANS BLUES



**COUNTER-MEASURES IN THE BALKANS
AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION**

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

Croatia will move another step closer to finalising its EU accession negotiations in 2011 when the EU rubber-stamped the closure of three further negotiating chapters. At the accession conference on 22 December, Croatia wrapped up talks on justice, freedom and security, environment; and foreign security and defence policy. Zagreb hopes to iron out all remaining problems concerning the above chapters in the

first half of 2011, paving the way for the signing of the accession treaty in the autumn and holding shortly afterwards a national referendum on accession. Hungary, which has taken over the EU's helm from Belgium on 1 January 2011, pledged to facilitate Croatia's talks in order to wrap them up in the first half of the year.

Youth



On 25 January, the European Parliament Youth Intergroup welcomed Commissioner Androula Vassiliou to discuss aspects of the European Commission's flagship initiative "Youth on the Move", that was launched last year in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. All members of the inter-group welcomed the opportunity for dialogue and said that they

would be sure to take into account the opinions expressed during the discussion. One of the issues addressed during the following question and answer session were plans for increased mobility for apprentices. Whilst the Erasmus programme for university students already enjoys wide-spread visibility and participation, students in vocational training do not enjoy the same opportunities for mobility.

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth have published a new working paper on the recognition of non-formal education and youth work in Europe. Pathways 2.0 comes six years after the first Pathways paper which first raised awareness towards non-formal education in youth activities in Europe. The paper in particular argued that, because of its strong contribution to the preparation of young people for a knowledge-based and healthy civil society, non-formal education in the youth field is more than a sub-category of education and training. The initiative goes back to the European workshop "Continue the pathways towards recognition...." held in Prague in June 2008 under the Czech EU Presidency, where the participants invited and encouraged the EU-CoE youth partnership to take the lead in updating the strategy. Concrete propositions of Pathways 2.0 include making the role of youth organisations more visible, involving stakeholders of the employment and social sector, and reinforcing the political process at European level.

A survey conducted by the German Welfare Service has found that German students are among the world's most mobile, with only China, India and South Korea sending more students abroad. According to the survey, the number of German students studying abroad

doubled between 2000 (52,200 students) and 2008 (102,000 students). The number of foreign students in Germany also increased by a huge 250% in 11 years, making Germany the third most popular destination for foreign students after the United States and the UK.



The 2011 EU-China Year of Youth was officially launched at the European commission in Brussels on 11 January in the presence of European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, the President of the All-China Youth Federation, Wang Xio, 200 youth representatives from the EU and China, among other guests. Both EU and Chinese leaders signed a joint declaration

pledging to promote and deepen their partnership by strengthening cooperation and people to people links in the youth field. M. Wang said the year will provide an “interactive platform for European and Chinese young people to enhance mutual understanding and friendship through creativity, tolerance and openness”, whilst Commissioner Vassiliou said she hoped the year would inspire concrete ideas for cooperation and establish long-lasting partnerships, particularly in the field of volunteering.

EFIL Calendar

13-20 February 2011 | Study Session on family support, Strasbourg, France

18-20 February 2011 | EFIL Board meeting, Milan, Italy

21-25 March 2011 | EFIL Programme Directors meeting, Maribor, Slovenia

20-26 March 2011 | Fundraising Seminar, Brussels, Belgium

1-2 June 2011 | EFIL Heads of Office (HOO) meeting, Vienna, Austria

2-5 June 2011 | EFIL General Assembly, Vienna, Austria

5-6 June 2011 | EFIL Board meeting, Vienna, Austria

15-21 July 2011 | EFIL Training for Trainers, Zmar, Portugal

20-25 July 2011 | EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, Portugal

29 September 2011 | Intercultural Dialogue Day 2011

27 Nov – 1 Dec | EFIL European Citizenship Trimester Programme Brussels Camp, Belgium



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