



*Participants EFIL General Assembly, Moscow (photo: Lieven Bauwens, AFS BFL)*

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of Directors on Saturday 23 May in Moscow, the closing day of EFIL's General Assembly. Martha Eiriksdottir (Iceland) and Anett Miklos (Hungary) were re-elected on the Board. EFIL further welcomes as new Board members Mari Pajunen (Finland) and Michael Rosak (Czech Republic). Three other Board members continue their two-year mandate: Roberto Ruffino (Italy), Christine Leimgruber (Switzerland) and Mete Fanuscu (Turkey).



*Newly elected EFIL Board (photo EFIL)*

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**NEW EFIL BOARD**

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EFIL Member Organisations elected four new members for the EFIL Board

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**MOSCOW HOSTS EFIL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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About 65 participants attended EFIL's General Assembly 2009, hosted by AFS Russia in Moscow. Among the participants were the leadership of EFIL's Member Organisations, as well

as guests from AFS International (including AFS President Tachi Cazal), from the Board of Trustees, other AFS organisations and representatives of the new organisations in the Balkans.



The opening session included well presented short testimonies on highlights of the past two years by representatives of some of the EFIL member organisations, as summarized in the Biennial Report 2007-2008. The presentation included an extract of the key-note speech by European Commissioner Jan Figel at the Berlin Conference "Moving beyond Mobility" of October 2008.

For a panel discussion focusing on intercultural education in Russia and youth mobility between Russia and the rest of Europe, prominent Russian guests joined the group. Among them were Roman Aleksandrov from the Russian Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy, and Sergey Filonovich from the State University of Higher Economics and former Chair of AFS Russia.

Participants appreciated the presentation by the representatives of the Balkan countries, focusing on the efforts done in the field of new member development over the past two years, and the current state of affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.



*Roberto Ruffino and Nonna Kovrizhnykh  
(photo: EFIL)*

EFIL's Business Plan 2009-2010 and the budgets for both years were presented and were approved by the General Assembly during the statutory session, which also included the announcement of the results of the elections for the EFIL Board of Directors (see opening article of this newsletter).

After the official closure of the General Assembly, in an interactive session participants reflected on the challenging times AFS partners are going through, and in a last session they had the opportunity to share their views, hopes and concerns on future developments within the global AFS network.



*Tachi Cazal, Roman Aleksandrov, Paul Claes,  
Elena Sherysheva (photo: Marit Gronskoi, AFS  
SWE)*

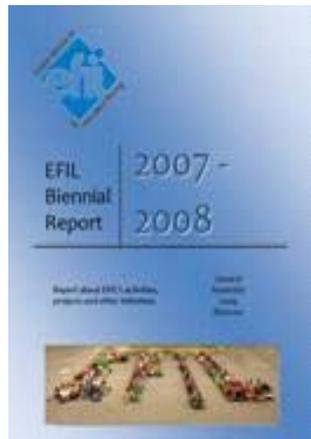
The sightseeing tour on Sunday and the home hosting in three provincial Russian towns some hours away from the bustling city of Moscow, marked the perfect ending of a successful General Assembly. A big thank you goes to the team of AFS Russia who did a wonderful job taking great care of the GA delegates!

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### EFIL'S BIENNIAL REPORT 2007/2008

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At the General Assembly in Moscow (21-24 May), EFIL presented its Biennial Report 2007-2008. The report gives an overview of EFIL's main activities of the past two years in the fields of trainings, projects and programmes, new member development, networking and lobbying. You can download the report from the EFIL website [www.efil.afs.org](http://www.efil.afs.org).




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### HEADS OF OFFICES MEET IN MOSCOW

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Prior to the EFIL General Assembly, the National Directors of the EFIL Member Organisations met in Moscow for their first of two Heads of Office meetings of 2009. Special guests were Mirela Hrnjic and Petra Ranilovic, representing the four Balkan countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, where new AFS activities are being developed (see further in this edition of EFILife). From AFS International, Vice-President Urs-Rainer von Arx and Senior Consultant Eduardo Assed, had joined the group to give input and deal with questions about global network issues.

In a session "developments in Europe and EFIL", EFIL's Secretary General gave an update on several topics of

interest to Member Organisations, including the Comenius Programme of the European Commission, Community Code on Visas, EFIL's training calendar, the European Citizenship Trimester Programme, Intercultural Dialogue Day 2009, the Volunteer Summer Summit 2009, etc.

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### CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE MEETING

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*Representatives at the CEE Meeting (photo: EFIL)*

In the month of May, Moscow was the venue for a string of AFS meetings. Following the Strategic Pricing Training by AFS International, and prior to the EFIL Heads of Office meeting and General Assembly, the CEE meeting brought together partners from Central and Eastern Europe, discussing matters of common interest.

The meeting largely focused on the situation in the Balkan countries, including a debriefing of EFIL's training in Zagreb/Croatia (see previous edition of EFILife), a discussion on the potential status of the Balkan organisations in the AFS network (legal set-up and concrete actions), and the way forward with the mentorship programme as illustrated by a good practice example (cooperation AFS Hungary with Interkultura Serbia).

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### BRANCH OFFICES OF AFS IN THE BALKANS

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Organisations

At the EFIL General Assembly in Lisbon 2007 the Member Organisations endorsed EFIL's

Strategic Directions 2007-2012, which include implementing initiatives to enlarge the Federation which will result in larger and healthier programmes, and thus build up overall network health.

In 2007 and 2008, partner development in the Western Balkan first focused on Slovenia and Croatia, later Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia followed. Relevant progress was made, resulting in the establishment of contacts with groups of local volunteers, increased interest in exchanges with the new organisations by Member Organisations, and the identification of potential sources for scholarships and support. By the end of 2008, officially registered non-profit organisations in all four the Western Balkan countries, run by committed volunteers, had been established as network contacts.



*Representatives from the Balkan countries  
Ivana Pavlovic (Serbia), Petra Ranilovic  
(Croatia), Tosja Kobler-Jovanovic (Slovenia),  
Mirela Hrnjic (Bosnia-Herzegovina) (photo:  
EFIL)*

Over the past months EFIL, AFS International and the representatives of the Balkan organisations further discussed the organisational setup and legal issues for the AFS activities in the Balkans. It became clear that the best way forward is to establish "BRANCH OFFICES" in each of the four countries, allowing the organisations to develop towards provisional partnership over the coming years. Meanwhile the AFS Board of Trustees has expressed its support for the proposal to establish a legal presence in the four Balkan



countries, and the legal process has been started up to officially register AFS International in each of these countries.

All parties agree that we are approaching this process with the same goals in mind: to develop the four countries to partnership in AFS as quickly and effectively as possible, and to regularize the legal and organisational situation.

For 2009-2010 EFIL's focus will be on the further organisational and volunteer development of the



organisations in the Balkans through a mentorship programme involving established network partners, on the increased involvement of the new organisations in EFIL activities in Europe, on continued fundraising efforts, and on the increase of the number of exchanges on short and long-term programmes.

#### SUMMER SUMMIT – ONLY SIX WEEKS TO GO



The Summer Summit 2009 is getting closer by the day. It's only six weeks before some 230 people from EFIL Member Organisations, but also from AFS in countries as far as Argentina, India, South Africa and USA, will meet near the beautiful city of Istanbul, Turkey.

Online registration for workshops, leisure activities and food preferences will soon start. The preparatory team and the local support team are giving their best and work together to achieve one ultimate goal: make it an unforgettable Volunteer Summer Summit for everyone!



*Local support team from Turkey (photo: AFS Turkey)*

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### SUPPORT STAFF TRAINING IN OCTOBER

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We are happy to announce that the registrations for the upcoming Meeting of Support Staff are now open! The Meeting will take place in Mnichovice (close to Prague), Czech Republic, on 6-10 October 2009, including travel days. Registrations are due by the latest 24 June.

Programme Support and Risk Management undoubtedly belong to the core issues of every AFS office. The 2009 Support Staff Meeting may well become a recurring feature on the EFIL training calendar - most likely to take place every second year.



We hope very much that the Meeting will attract all European Support Co-ordinators, but also non-European staff is more than welcome. The target group of

the event will include all staff dealing with risk management and programme support, without limiting participation to those who officially hold the title of "Support Co-ordinator".

At the meeting, we aim at addressing the widest possible range of needs and expectations of Support Staff: AFS Risk Management standards and procedures, intercultural mediation skills, virtual and intercultural office-to-office communication, stress management, sharing experience on

concrete AFS cases. The Meeting will combine the elements of seminar, training course and a networking activity. It will include theoretical input, experiential learning exercises, exchange of practices and interactive workshops.

The preparatory team includes trainers covering a diversity of experience and approaches: Dario Radi (AFS ITA), Jana Holla (European Pool of Trainers, AFS EGY), David Blythe (AFS IP), Izabela Jurczik (EFIL).

Hoping for your high interest - see you in the beautiful Czech autumn!

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### PREPARATORY MEETING "AIM FOR BETTER TRAINING"

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In the busy period of EFIL training events and statutory meetings, the preparatory team of the upcoming Training for Trainers "AIM (Applying Innovative Methods) for Better Training" met in Brussels on the 17-19 May 2009.

The event is planned to take place in Turkey this summer, in synergy with the EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit. The participants of the project are mostly members of the European Pool of Trainers, therefore the level and importance of the training are particular. With this background, the preparatory team has been selected not only among most experienced AFS trainers but also includes two trainers from youth organisations outside AFS.



*From the left: Stephan Winiker (AFS SUI), Tina Unterberger (AFS AUT), Izabela Jurczik (EFL), Zara Lavchyan (European Confederation of Youth Clubs), Nuno da Silva (freelance trainer) (photo:EFIL)*

The preparatory team worked hard during the 3-day meeting, to design a programme challenging both for trainers and for participants. In addition to direct participants, the large number of the Summer Summit volunteers will also benefit from the project, as recipients of the “practice sessions” of the training. Having innovation as a theme, the training will attempt to apply innovative approaches nearly in every project aspect!

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#### PARTNER NEWS

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*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.*

It's been a quiet month, with only few staff changes in the AFS offices in Europe. **AFS Hungary** has a new Sending Coordinator. As of 18 May, Katalin Kiss is responsible for all sending matters in the office. Lara Hauser and Kristien Knieper have joined the team of **AFS Switzerland** in the Zürich office, taking up the positions of Coordinator Hosting Admission and Coordinator 18+ Programmes respectively. They are taking over from Adamo Antoniadis and Steffi Lund. And in Italy, Programme Director Barbara Fantoni has announced she is leaving **AFS Intercultura** after two and a half years at the office in Colle.

That's it for this month. Do let us know what's happening in your offices!

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#### 2011 - EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING

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On 3 June, the European Commission has adopted the official proposal for a decision on the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011.

The objectives of the year will be to work towards an enabling environment for volunteers in the EU,

to empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering, to reward and recognise volunteer activities and to raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering. These objectives will be achieved through activities conducted on European, national, regional and local level including exchange of experiences and good practices, dissemination of results of studies, conferences, events and information and promotion campaigns supported by an overall budget of 8 millions Euro.

This decision is a result of a civil society initiative and intensive two and a half year of campaigning by the “European Year of Volunteering 2011 alliance”, a group of twenty-two NGOs. The European Youth Forum was represented in this alliance, and now calls on its Member Organisations (which include EFIL) to mobilise their resources, engage in the preparations for 2011 and continue efforts to cooperate with our institutional and civil society partners in order to ensure that the European Year of Volunteering 2011 leads to a sustainable success.

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#### FIRST EU YOUTH REPORT

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There are 96 million young people aged 15-29 in the European Union, constituting almost 20 % of the total population. This Youth Report is a compilation of data, statistics and brief analyses on the situation of young people in Europe. It provides an overview of the situation in the EU Member States in a range of different areas and outlines the differences between countries.

The Youth Report is available online at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new\\_strategy/youth\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new_strategy/youth_report_final.pdf)

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### PLATFORM FOR INTERCULTURAL EUROPE

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On 8 June EFIL participated in the European Forum and General Assembly of the Platform for Intercultural Europe, both of which were held in Brussels. The Platform for Intercultural Europe is a civil society initiative developed in response to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008 (EYID). EFIL has been an active member of this Platform since the start of its activities in late 2006.



The Forum “The distinctive contribution of the arts to intercultural dialogue – A view from and on the arts” enabled a wider debate among Platform Member Organisations and other relevant stakeholders on a potential greater role of the arts in fostering intercultural dialogue. European Commission representatives also attended this event and recognized the Platform’s active engagement throughout the EYID and welcomed this new stage of its life which will make it an important interlocutor beyond 2008.

There was a fruitful discussion between a number of organisations working in the arts sector and organisations from other sectors gathered in small groups, where each one expressed its views on the ways in which the arts can help promote intercultural dialogue, and on the limitations of the arts in intercultural dialogue. Among the

recommendations made, EFIL advocated a stronger role for non-formal and informal education, especially the participation in youth exchange programmes as a means of building intercultural competences which are essential to intercultural dialogue.

The European Forum was soon followed by the First General Assembly of the Platform for Intercultural Europe at the same venue. The Platform Members voted for their preferred candidates at the elections for the Steering Group. The EFIL candidate for the Steering Group, Ilyana Panteleeva, was unfortunately not elected.

The Platform’s budget for 2009 was approved by the Members, as well as the general framework of the work programme of the Steering Group and the Secretary General and the membership fees. EFIL will carry on to contribute actively to the work of the Platform for Intercultural Europe especially in the view of this year’s work focus: the Rainbow Paper Chapter on Capacity-building for Intercultural Dialogue.

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### LEARNOVATION OPEN FORUM

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On 27 May EFIL took part in an event in the frame of the LEARNOVATION project, supported by the European Commission (EC) as a contribution to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 (EYCI). The LEARNOVATION Open Forum took place in Brussels and gathered around 100 representatives of organisations and institutions active in the field of innovation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for education and training. The aim of

the meeting was to open up a stakeholders dialogue in order to contribute to the European policy making in the years to come.

Building upon the principle laid down in the Lisbon treaty that Lifelong Learning (LLL) is central to innovation, the Open Forum promoted the idea that Learning and Change go together. In this view, the event was a platform for all actors with a share in the European learning process (from education and training institutions to students organisations and innovation networks) to express their views on how to improve the environment in which individuals can get better access to the so called "atypical forms of education" (informal and corporate learning) and thus be more adequately prepared for their working life and citizenship agenda.

The main outcome of the event was the adoption of 10 statements named "Imperative for Change" that the stakeholders held central to make European education and LLL a lever for innovation. Among them, the first rated was the call to "Rescue research on education and LLL from a marginal position." Here, the urgent need for change and re-thinking of education was implied. Further down the list of policy recommendations the participants agreed that a proper teachers training and support should be provided so that they can integrate non-traditional approaches into their work and promote the use of non-institutional learning methods for the learners.

The LEARNOVATION Open Forum offered an opportunity to participate in a stakeholders platform and it showed that informal and non-formal learning have a lot in common when it comes to innovation in education and LLL. As a European partner of the EYCI 2009, we'll keep following up on the LEARNOVATION stakeholder initiative and will be updating you on all relevant developments.

During the meeting, representatives of the EC welcomed the 10 policy proposals and confirmed they will be their main point of reference for the European education policy and LLL beyond 2010.

Find out more about the LEARNOVATION project and its engagement [here](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/learnovation):  
<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/learnovation>.

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### GOODBYE TO NATALIE

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Mid January, Natalie Martins Rulloda joined the EFIL team in the Brussels secretariat as an intern. It's hard to believe that almost six months have passed since then, and it's now time to say goodbye to Natalie.



*Natalie (left) and some of EFIL's staff and volunteers at Ben's birthday (photo EFIL)*

Natalie has been involved in the preparation and writing of project proposals and funding applications with various potential funders (European institutions, Anna Lindh Foundation).

Natalie will be missed in the EFIL office, and we wish her all the best of luck and happiness in her future endeavours!

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### INTERNET LINKS

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- ♦ [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new\\_strategy/youth\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new_strategy/youth_report_final.pdf)

♦ [www.efil.afs.org](http://www.efil.afs.org)


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**CALENDAR 2009**


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19-20 June	EFIL Board meeting, Zürich, Switzerland
20-22 July	ECTP preparatory meeting, Brussels, Belgium
26 July-02 Aug	EPOT Training Course, Istanbul, Turkey
30 July-04 Aug	EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit on Innovation and Creativity in Youth Exchange, Istanbul, Turkey
13-14 Sep	Training Advisory Body Meeting in Budapest, Hungary
24 September	Intercultural Dialogue Day 2009
06-10 October	EFIL Meeting for Support Staff
20-25 October	EFIL Heads of Office meeting / AFS World Congress, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
22-26 Nov	European Citizenship Trimester Programme, Brussels Camp, Belgium
3-6 December	EVS Coordinators Meeting, Leuven, Belgium

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

**Please do not hesitate to share with us your comments and suggestions.**

**We welcome your contributions!**

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