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PREPARING FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MOSCOW

Two years ago in Lisbon, EFIL members have approved the Federation's Strategic Directions.

Thanks to a stable secretariat, a strong and determined board and committed members, we have been able to meet the challenges of those strategic directions, including major successes such as the Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility pilot



EFIL's Secretary General Paul Claes (photo: EFIL)

project, the International Educational Conference "Moving beyond Mobility" in Berlin, the European-wide Day of Intercultural Dialogue, the Volunteer Summer Summit in France, the successful Worldscope project, the production of the DVD "When Cultures Interact", the launching of the new European Citizenship Trimester Programme, the openings in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Serbia and Poland, and a wide range of highly appreciated trainings and seminars, not to forget the substantial amount of money raised through successful funding applications for trainings and projects. We gained a lot of visibility and credibility from the European institutions, ultimate evidence of which was the presence of Commissioner Jan Figel' at the opening of our conference in Berlin last October.

Over the past decades, EFIL has played a role beyond expectations in fighting a battle to keep the topic of intercultural exchanges afloat and to influence the decisions that were taken by the European institutions over the years. Today, internal and external circumstances advise us all to take a fresh new look at our Federation. New challenges lie ahead of us. Europe has changed. Over the years AFS too has changed. EFIL cannot remain the same.

Looking at the political situation in Europe, with the treaty of Maastricht,

the Bologna process and the Lisbon Agenda, education now appears in the budget of the Union with large investments for educational exchanges, as a result of which more and more individuals, students, teachers, schools and universities meet and work together through different cultures and nations. Mobility for mobility's sake will not be enough. The pedagogical aims and content of exchanges will receive more attention.

We have to concentrate more on focusing outwardly and thinking European and internationally. Our national organisations need to adapt their strategies and agendas to the constraints and possibilities offered by our European environment, and participate in the political process under way in Europe in each of our countries in the field of educational exchanges and citizenship building. We must address the growing interest for educational exchanges in Europe with cohesive and harmonious strategies, and we need to invest in effective cooperation among EFIL members in volunteer development, in staff stability in our national offices, in the enlargement of EFIL, in intra-European programmes with elements of citizenship education, in high quality performance, and in visibility as an established and reliable player on the European educational scene.



Diversity is the blessing of Europe, but it can also be a curse, if it leads us away from breathing the air of our time, from grasping the opportunities

that are at hand, and from building a stronger Federation.

I'm looking forward to our biennial General Assembly end of May in Moscow. I want to extend a sincere word of thanks to the numerous people that have supported EFIL over the past two years, sparing no time or effort to keep things moving and help us think of directions for the future: volunteers, staff, boards, trainers, representatives and others.

BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP

EFIL is happy to announce that no less than eight candidates have been nominated by their respective boards for the four vacant positions on the EFIL Board of



Directors. Iceland, Hungary, France, Russia, Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, Norway have put forward nominees for the elections that will take place on Saturday 23 May in Moscow, during the biennial General Assembly.

SHAPING THE FUTURE – TRAINING ON ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Participants during a session in Zagreb (photo:EFIL)

In April participants from 14 European countries gathered in a beautiful and remote venue in the mountains surrounding Croatia's capital Zagreb, for the EFIL training „Youth Participation through

Organisational Development“.

EFIL's activities in new Partner development over the past two years

have concentrated on four Balkan countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as Poland. Registered non-profit organisations are in place in each of these countries and have started exchanges with AFS organisations. The concept of the training in Zagreb was to support the organisational development of these young organisations, as well as to strengthen the growth of existing AFS organisations which currently struggle with organisational challenges. In order to reach these ambitious goals the preparatory team consisting of Diana Rosta, Michela Bortoli, Hannes Wacker, Johannes Schirrmeister, Benjamin Ledwon and Izabela Jurczik, had compiled an agenda that struck a balance between content input sessions and actual work on the organisational development plan.



Participants visiting Zagreb (photo:EFIL)

A well appreciated, major role at the training was taken up by some well established EFIL member organisations (“Mentors”) to guide the countries with developing programmes (“Mentees”) and help them with the creation of their organisational development plans. Each of the Mentees was linked to one established partner to share experiences, suggestions and advice. After seven days of intense and concentrated work every organisation managed to come up with an ambitious and detailed OD plan.

In some years, when the partners involved in the training will have succeeded in setting up sustainable AFS organisations in their respective

countries, we will look back at the Zagreb training as a major step in the process towards the development of those organisations.

VOLUNTEER SUMMER SUMMIT CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS 2ND ROUND



The early deadline for the Summer Summit 2009 has passed. So far, the database contains names from over 200 interested volunteers with 27 nationalities, including volunteers from non-European AFS partners in South Africa, India, Indonesia and China! We are very happy to note the immense popularity of the event and the preparatory team will keep on working hard to make this second edition of our Summer Summit an unforgettable event.

We are also very happy to announce that the event will be supported by Youth in Action Turkey with a 10.000 Euros grant. This is not only great news for the whole team but also means that we can finally confirm the registration fees for the Summer Summit: a double room in the early deadline adds up to 150 € (170 € for late applications), a single room goes for 200 € (220 € for late applications). For all information about the fees and applications, please visit our fabulous website on www.efilsummersummit.org. The second deadline for applications has been set for 25 May. Everybody interested is welcome to join!



Vigy, Summit 2008 (photo: AFS VSF)

Volunteers and staff of AFS Turkey have been working hard on local fundraising and sponsorship agreements. Our President Tachi

**INTERCULTURAL EUROPE IN 5 SENSES
PREPARING FOR 24 SEPTEMBER 2009**

EFIL is proud to present you the title of our 2009 Dialogue Day: "Intercultural Europe in 5 Senses"!

With 2009 labelled as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, the creative side of citizens throughout Europe will be under the spotlight on 24 September 2009. Innovative workshops in schools, cultural centres, clubs and youth cafes, markets of ideas in various town and city centres and/or challenging competitions are to attract not only young people but also involve the wider public, including families, teachers and art practitioners.



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D-Day 2008 in Russia (photo: EFIL)

One of the key goals of this project is to make each participant (re)discover its own culture and other cultures which are apparently very different from his/her one while making use of all five senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch) and acknowledge at the end that the similarities and reciprocal influences of a foreign culture enrich their own culture.

In order to facilitate the sharing of useful experiences and innovative techniques a website will be created to connect the organisers and

participants to the project. Feedback and major outcomes (exemplified by pictures) will be either posted or uploaded by the organisers on the website.

EFIL is currently preparing a funding application with the Anna Lindh Foundation.

FRESH AND ENERGETIC: EPOT 2009-2011

Every other year, EFIL is welcoming the spring time with the full replenishment of the European Pool of Trainers. The new EPOT looks very promising with as many as 57 people, half of whom are new in the Pool. For the information of all our member organisations, here's the full list:

AUSTRIA: Christina Unterberger, Markus Wilthaner, John Adler, Lucia Metzbauer, Philipp Wagner;
BELGIUM Flanders: Vincent Willekens, Barbara Jansen;
BELGIUM French: Christophe Luyten, Ronan Healy, Yves Gheysen;
CZECH REP.: Barbora Vodičková, Eva Vítková, Jana Belohlavkova, Kristýna Žáková, Jitka Cerna;
DENMARK: Lars Føhrby Overgaard;
EGYPT: Jana Holla;
FINLAND: Hanne Salo, Kirsi Karttunen;
FRANCE: Clara Bourgeois, Yonathan Darmon;
GERMANY: Max Reichel; Hannes Wacker, Martin Haberstroh, Inga Menke, Anne Hitzegrad, Florin Feldmann, Anna-Maria Hass;
HUNGARY: Csilla Fodor, Diana Rosta, Aniko Kubatov, Balazs Lato, Gabriella Mandy;
ITALY: Tiziana Savasta, Genny Tordini, Anna Rita Marini Fasser, Edoardo Laurenti, Michela Bortoli ;
PORTUGAL : Rita Velho da Palma, Filipa Santos, Nuno Guerreiro, Nuno Ferreira, João Rino, Jose Manuel Moura, Celia Aboim, André Galvão;
RUSSIA: Ekatarina Bagdasarova, Anastasia Arsentyeva;
SWEDEN: Jenny Eriksson;
SWITZERLAND: Marianne Knechtli, Stephan Winiker, Karin Bitterli;
TURKEY: Ali Yavuz, Efsane Cigdem Mirrikhi, Cem Çemçi, Mehmet Hazar Yildirim, Cemre Akin.

Congratulations to all of them for expressing commitment to share their skills and knowledge not only inside their national organisations but also with other AFS partners. The “Travelling Trainers” scheme, as well as numerous EFIL international trainings will give them many opportunities to get actively involved. Next to the usual training events, the EPOT members will also be invited to join task forces and short-term working groups focused on specific issues of international interest.

Some facts about the refreshed EPOT: the members represent 16 EFIL Member Organisations; the youngest trainer is 21, the oldest 65 years old; there are 23 men and 34 women; the group includes all levels of experience: volunteers only starting the training adventure, very advanced volunteer trainers and a few AFS staff members.

For those organisations that didn't manage to meet the deadline but still have potentially interested trainers, there will be more chances to nominate EPOT members coming up. In about 6 months EFIL will announce an opportunity to nominate additional candidates so don't miss the next chance!

EFIL'S VOICE IN THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM



For EFIL to stay well informed and connected to the European institutional environment, AFS volunteers are our strongest assets. Thanks to their involvement and interest in representing EFIL externally, the priorities and values of AFS are more present and heard by the outside world. The volunteer representation work is particularly relevant in the European Youth Forum (YFJ), where the voice of young people is most awaited:

Michal Kadera (AFS Czech Republic) is a member of the YFJ Bureau, the highest governing body of the Forum, which consists of 11 people representing different organisations. Michal's



Michal Kadera

official portfolio includes Non-Formal Education and Volunteering – two fields of the highest interest for AFS and EFIL.

Hannes Wacker (AFS Germany) has recently been selected as a member of the YFJ Working Group on Education. The



Hannes Wacker

Education WG, next to a further four working groups focusing on other topics, consists of 8 people, again covering a range of organisations and countries. The role of this WG is to assist the Bureau in steering the Youth Forum work on issues such as formal and non-formal education, mobility, exchange and lifelong learning.



Eva Vitkova

Eva Vitkova (AFS Czech Republic) and Florin Feldmann (AFS Germany) are EFIL representatives

in the YFJ Pool of Trainers – the group of 40 educators from all over Europe, with diverse backgrounds and training methodologies. Next to their engagements within AFS and EFIL, Florin and Eva will have a chance to get in touch with other youth trainers in Europe, broadening the AFS horizon and contributing with our own approaches.



Florin Feldmann

The European Youth Forum is a platform made up of over 100 international youth NGOs and National Youth Councils from across Europe. The YFJ works to empower young people and youth organisations to participate actively in society and in decision making, by representing their interests towards the European Institutions, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and other organisations active in the youth field. In practical terms, it is the only youth platform in Europe which is officially recognised and listened to by all relevant institutional partners.

APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

We are pleased to announce that EFIL submitted two new funding applications for training activities:

- “Intercultural Learning and Exchanges – where do we stand and what is the way ahead?”

This seminar aims at getting a better overview on the latest developments in the ICL field in Europe and on the position and role of AFS. Through the presence of external speakers and of key volunteers and staff from the AFS world, the seminar will explore our own educational frameworks and the possible synergies with external players.

The event is tentatively planned to take place in May 2010, with the venue still to be defined. The funding was requested from the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe.

- “Responsible citizens of intercultural Europe – exploring the link between intercultural competence and citizenship”

This Study Session, planned to take place in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in March 2010, will gather volunteers interested in stronger emphasis on citizenship and global education in the AFS programmes. Special attention will be given to the educational content of

the European Citizenship Trimester Programme. The Study Session is planned to be fully managed by volunteers: a volunteer Course Director, Anne Hitzegrad from AFS GER, contributed to the application writing and will take the lead in the project.

For both applications the results are expected in the second half of June, so stay tuned for further news!

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 of 4 April, Patricia Greene is no longer the National Director of **AFS Spain**. EFIL will remember Patricia as a strong supporter of our trainings, projects and programmes. She was the face of AFS Spain over the past years, and under her leadership AFS Spain gained a lot of visibility and played a much appreciated role in several of EFIL coordinated activities, including the Worldscope project, the Volunteer Summer Summit and our Intercultural Dialogue Day. AFS Spain hosted the 2007 ODC-meeting in Guaderrama. We wish Patricia good luck in her new endeavours.

To guarantee a smooth transition until the Board recruits a new National Director, Marcel Krause, Programme Manager, has been appointed as interim National Director of AFS Intercultural Espana.



Patricia Greene (center) at EDS2009, Buenos Aires (photo: EFIL)

AFS Switzerland has announced some recent staff changes. Corine Gugg was welcomed as a new staff member, responsible for Customer Service, Administration and Travel. Claudia Strinweiss moves from the position of Director Volunteer Development to the Programme Director post, with Alexandre Brunner as Deputy Programme Director. Lea Moliterni will move to the position of Director of Resources and Partnership Development.

AFS Czech Republic waved Barbora Vodickova goodbye, and introduced Hana Strafeldova as the new Organisational Development Coordinator (ODC).

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

"TRAINERS, JOIN US IN CENTRAL EUROPE"

By Kristýna Žáková, AFS Czech Republic

An international training for trainers called „Trainers' JUICE – Trainers, Join Us in Central Europe!“ will take place between 6th and 10th May near Brno in the Czech Republic.

The training is organised by AFS volunteers from Austria, Czech Republic, and Hungary and it is the first activity of a long-term cooperation between the Pools of Trainers of these countries. The idea of a Central European PoTs cooperation emerged gradually during the EFIL seminars “Stop underEASTimation” in Nectiny, Czech Republic, and “Pools of Trainers and Ideas” in Dworp, Belgium. The first planning meeting took place in January 2009 in Vienna and it was also a starting point of the Trainers' JUICE project.

The training will focus on the target group of AFS volunteers who want to

become multipliers – trainers – themselves. Its aim is to educate new trainers who would be active within the youth field and promote diverse topics through the methods of intercultural learning. There will be one main trainer, Sarah Rathbauer from Austria, and three assisting trainers – Balázs Lato from Hungary, Karoline Kehrer from Austria, and Kristýna Žáková from the Czech Republic.

The participants will come from the countries involved in the PoT cooperation – Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary, as well as from Slovakia and Russia. Hopefully they will all gain lots of new skills and experience and use them within their local AFS organisations and in developing the established international cooperation in the future.

CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION



The European Youth Foundation (EYF) of the Council of Europe is one of the most important sources of support for youth activities at European level and an important ally for EFIL. The EYF provides funding for youth meetings (for example: EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, both in 2008 and 2009), for other youth activities (such as the production of the EFIL short intercultural movies “Snapshots”) and for the functioning of European secretariats through administrative grants. Although the Foundation disposes of much more limited resources than the European Union, its flexible and co-operative approach makes the EYF a crucial and unique partner for the youth sector.

On April 16-17, the Secretariat of the EYF organised an evaluation meeting in Strasbourg with representatives of youth organisations which benefit from the fund, focused on defining its future evolution. Izabela Jurczik, EFIL's Training Co-ordinator attended the meeting to contribute with the AFS/EFIL perspective and recommendations.

The main outcomes of the meeting included a range of practical suggestions to improve the user-friendliness and transparency of the fund, but most importantly pointed at increasing co-operation and synergies of the EYF with other bodies and sectors, both within the Council of Europe and outside. Moreover, issues close to AFS and EFIL work were mentioned among future priorities of the Foundation: intercultural and intergenerational dialogue, co-operation with countries outside Europe, increasing interactions between formal and non-formal educators.

The strong message from the meeting participants and the EYF Secretariat itself is that all of us should join forces to increase the visibility of the fund and to convince our national governments that it is a worthwhile investment which needs to increase in the future.

For more information about the European Youth Foundation, please visit www.eyf.coe.int/fej/.

2ND BRUSSELS DEBATE EYCI CREATIVITY IN THE CLASS ROOM



The European Policy Council and the European Commission (EC) jointly organised the 2nd Brussels Debate on the topic "Beyond chalk and talk: creativity in the classroom" on 30 March 2009, within the framework of the

European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

EFIL attended the debate, which voiced the opinion of different keynote speakers on the future role of creative and innovative thinking in our increasingly "knowledge-based" society.



Panel Debate during the Brussels Debate

Ms. Odile Quintin, Director-General for Education and Culture at the EC, emphasized the need to better equip young people with the knowledge and competences which will allow them to deal with the current crisis in Europe. Investing in non-formal learning through active "involvement in volunteering" was pointed out as a way to acquire those required skills.

Mr. Eduardo Marçal Grilo, Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal, stressed the importance of developing a culture of excellence in the education field where schools are given greater autonomy and learning is regarded as a lifelong process that is not strictly limited to schools.

Mr. Lluís Martínez-Ribes, ESADE Business School, Barcelona, pointed out that students should interact with each other and become the "protagonists of the learning experience".

Mr. Dirk Van Damme, Head of the Centre for Education Research and Innovation at the OECD, said that schools should encourage the harmonious development of the individual rather than rely solely on outcomes and leave out creativity and innovation.

We will keep you updated on the next Brussels Debates in the months to come!

CALENDAR 2009

10-16 May	Seminar on improving re-entry orientations, Roskilde, Denmark
20 May	Heads of Office meeting, Moscow, Russia
21-24 May	EFIL's General Assembly, Moscow, Russia
17-20 June	EFIL Board meeting, Zürich, Switzerland
26 July-02 Aug	EPOT Training Course, 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
17-20 September	EFIL Board meeting, Colle di Val d'Elsa, Italy
24 September	Intercultural Dialogue Day 2009
22-26 Nov	European Citizenship Trimester Programme-End of Stay Camp, Brussels, 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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