

*Creativity is a driver for innovation
and a key factor for the development
of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial
and social competences and the well-being
of all individuals in society.*



Creativity
and Innovation
European Year 2009

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VOLUNTEER SUMMER SUMMIT 2009 INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY IN YOUTH EXCHANGES

The preparatory team for this year's Volunteer Summer Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, came together for the first time between 26th February

and 1st March. Several Skype meetings had already taken place before and the team members have been communicating via e-mail, but nothing beats a face to face meeting! Division and delegation of the main tasks for the Summit were high on the agenda of the meeting, as were the actual objectives as well as the topics to be addressed at the Summit.



VSS prep team (photo: EFIL)

All of this took place at the venue for the Volunteer Summer Summit, about an hour's drive outside of Istanbul. Staying at the venue gave the team a nice opportunity to take a closer look at the many available facilities, such as an amphitheatre, a swimming pool and a restaurant with plenty of room for a large group of participants.

The first deadline for the submission of applications has been set for 14th April. The call for participants was sent out recently and the website is up and running. For the 2nd deadline, 25th May has been fixed.

After working for three days, a Turkish Hamam provided the much needed relaxing time for the prep team, knowing that a lot of work still needs to be done by everyone involved, so that the Volunteer Summer Summit 2009 becomes another great success to be enjoyed by all participants.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DAY
24 SEPTEMBER 2009



After the huge success of the Dialogue Day 2008 – over 300 events all across Europe on 26th September 2008 which received broad media coverage – there is a growing enthusiasm among our partners to repeat or even exceed the success of last year! As such we would like to invite you all to make Thursday 24th September 2009 our AFS Intercultural Dialogue Day!

We at EFIL are very motivated to work with you! The basic approach would be similar to last year's, with various kinds of activities set up by your volunteers and chapters all over the place.

In 2009 – the European Year of Creativity and Innovation - we believe our volunteers can add to the spirit of the year by using their creativity in designing D-Day 2009 in your country. From our part we have already submitted an application for funding of the Dialogue Day 2009 project to the European Commission and will look into further possibilities of applying for additional funds to support some of your activities.

In many partner countries, General Assemblies are coming up at this time of the year. It is then the perfect occasion to launch the idea and

spread the news of the Dialogue Day 2009 among your volunteers. Remember that 2009 is the European Year of Creativity and Innovation so “Imagine. Create. Innovate”!

HUGE INTEREST FOR ECTP PROGRAMME

More than 150 students have registered for the new European Citizenship Trimester Programme (ECTP), which will be launched for the first time this year.

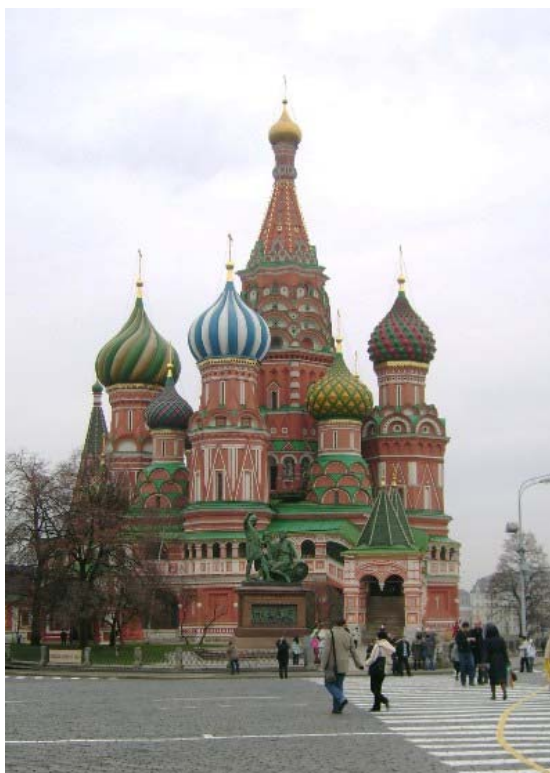
At the end of the trimester exchange, participants from Italy, Russia, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Latvia, Belgium Flanders, Belgium French, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Portugal, Hungary, Bosnia and Germany, will gather in Brussels for the climax of the programme: the EFIL End-of-Stay camp from 22nd to 26th November 2009. In workshops and sessions they will reflect on their experience as well as issues like European citizenship and integration, diversity in Europe, volunteering and active participation, intercultural learning. Communication with the European Union is ongoing to secure a visit to the European Parliament and/or the European Commission for all the camp participants. Not an obvious every day request for a group of over 150...

This idea of bringing all participants together in the capital of Europe, will be a substantial added value to the trimester stay for all students involved, and will emphasize the European dimension of their exchange term. Preparation modules focusing on European integration and identity are being developed by EFIL for use by volunteers in the partner countries for orientations before and during the stay.

Meanwhile, EFIL has made a booking reservation at a very suitable place near Brussels that can easily accommodate the large group of participating youngsters.

TWO MONTHS TO EFIL'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It's only two more months before the EFIL member organisations will get together in Moscow for the Federation's biennial General Assembly, kindly hosted by AFS Russia. Good progress has been made in preparing for what promises to be an interesting programme.



(photo: EFIL)

Making learning mobility across borders an opportunity for all and a natural feature for young Europeans, is the theme of our General Assembly. Being faced with the pressing challenge of how to best equip Europeans with the skills and competences they need in their future in a competitive, globalised and knowledge-based Europe, we all agree that a period spent abroad is a most valuable experience for the individuals involved.

The venue will be the Atlas Park Hotel, a modern hotel, located in a picturesque place of Domodedovsky District of Moscow region, some 29 km from the Moscow ring road, and a mere 15 minutes drive from

Domodedovo Airport. The hotel area covers 50 hectares of mixed forest. For more info, visit www.atlas-hotel.ru.

The GA officially opens with the dinner on Thursday 21st May and ends on Sunday morning 24th May. Prior to the GA, on Thursday, there will be our first Heads of Office meeting of the year. Following the GA, AFS Russia offers two more optional activities for participants: a Moscow sightseeing tour on Sunday 24th May, plus a great opportunity to experience a home stay with a Russian host family for two nights.

EFIL and AFS Russia look forward to welcoming you at our General Assembly in Moscow in May!

BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP

This is just a reminder that the deadline is approaching for submission of candidacies for the EFIL Board elections. Nominations need to arrive by e-mail at the EFIL Secretariat in Brussels no later than 22nd March, addressed to the Chair of the Election Committee. On Saturday 23rd May, during EFIL's extraordinary General Assembly, the vote counting will take place for three two-year mandates and one one-year mandate on the EFIL Board of Directors. Soon afterwards, through the EFIL office, the Election Committee will inform the Member Organisations of all candidacies received.

TRAINING ON ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA COMING UP SOON

A tough, competitive recruitment of participants for the upcoming EFIL training course "Youth Participation through Organisational Development" has been concluded, defining a group of 27 volunteers from 14 countries.

The main focus of the event is the development of new organisations in

the AFS exchange world, in particular those in the Balkans. A mentorship system has been put into place allowing the new organisations to learn from experienced AFS Partners. The recruited participants include most of all these new organisations and the existing AFS countries involved in supporting them.

The event will take place from 4-11 April 2009, just outside Zagreb, Croatia, hosted by the growing exchange organisation in that country, called Globus – Association for Intercultural Learning.

The preparatory team of the project: Diana Rosta (HUN), Michela Bortoli (ITA), Hannes Wacker (GER), Johannes Schirrmeister (HUN/GER) and the EFIL representatives Izabela Jurczik and Benjamin Ledwon, gathered for a meeting from 22-24 February to design the details of the event programme – see the team picture!



(photo: EFIL)

EFIL and the Preparatory Team hope that the training will have an important impact on the development of both new and existing countries, with an important role to be played by the cross-border co-operation between current and future AFS organisations!

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR AN EFIL SEMINAR IN DENMARK FOCUSED ON RE-ENTRY ORIENTATIONS

Another interesting EFIL training is opening the application procedure for participants!

The seminar “The challenge of returning home – putting intercultural competences into practice after long-term educational exchanges” will aim to analyse the existing practices of returnee processes in the AFS world and look for ways to improve them. Starting from the current practices in different National Organisations, the seminar will focus on reflecting about the role of re-orientation in the AFS context and in lifelong learning processes. The training will take place in the Viking city of Roskilde, Denmark, about 30 km from Copenhagen, from May 10th to May 16th 2009. The event is funded by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe.

The preparatory team of the seminar, consisting of Yves Gheysen (AFS BFR), Inga Menke (AFS GER), Yonathan Darmon (AFS FRA), Karin Bitterli (AFS SUI/ EFIL) and EFIL Training Co-ordinator Izabela Jurczik, met last weekend in Brussels to discuss the program and plan the details of the event.

Participants of the seminar will be recruited through a call, which has been sent to national AFS offices. All candidates are expected to apply before the deadline on **April 14th** – be in time!

REFRESHMENT OF THE EPOT

The European Pool of Trainers (EPOT), established in 2002, is the common training resource for all EFIL members. For European training EPOT is a source of relevant and diverse competences, ensuring smooth and fair recruitment of

trainers' teams. For Member Organisations it is not only a guarantee of higher quality EFIL training events but also a good way of improving local and national activities (new skills acquired by EPOT trainers, Travelling Trainers opportunity...). Finally, for trainers themselves EPOT gives a unique chance to gain new skills, travel, get to know different training contexts (also outside AFS) and have an impact on the European training reality. In the past EPOT membership allowed many experienced volunteer trainers to keep up their development, motivation and involvement in AFS.

The EPOT is now being renewed for the next two-year period. The EFIL Member Organisations are therefore invited to nominate trainers (there is no limit for a number of trainers) for EPOT by **March 26th 2009**. The call for nominations has been sent to all EFIL Member Organisations with a detailed explanation of the EPOT members' roles and of the recruitment procedure – please contact your office for further information.

For those organisations that do not manage to nominate candidates in this refreshment round but might have potentially interested trainers in the near future, there will be more chances to nominate EPOT members coming up every 6 months.

Look into the next edition of EFILife to see the refreshment results!

EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES GRUNDTVIG APPLICATION

For the 27th February deadline EFIL submitted a funding application for a project under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Commission. The Grundtvig project entitled "Intercultural Learning in Family Life" will open new horizons for AFS to establish strategic relations with institutions and

organisations with similar fields of activity – intercultural learning, volunteering and non-formal education.

In particular, this new undertaking will focus on educational support for families involved in the intercultural long-term exchange programmes. The project will collect and exchange existing educational tools from the project partners' networks and will promote their use within the own organisation to provide better and more diverse trainings for host families.

If the application will get the Commission's approval and the activities all develop as planned, the AFS network will end up having access to an online database of educational methods to be used for activities with families which will support the work of hosting coordinators in particular.

EFIL will keep you posted on how the selection process goes and hopefully we'll be able to turn this endeavor into a successful experience for the wider AFS community!

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.

After 20 years in the offices along Boulevard Brand Whitlock in Brussels, **AFS Belgium French** has now moved to their new premises at Place de l'Alma 3 boîte 11, 1200 Brussels, in an attractive environment, close to a university and several colleges. In the spring school holidays in March, **AFS Tunisia** is organising a 3-day trip to Kairouan, the city of 50 mosques and the "2009 Capital of Islamic Culture", an enriching component of the year programme which enables you to learn more about the Tunisian culture.



(photo: AFS Tunisia)

Time to focus on some staff updates now. **AFS Belgium Flanders** has sent their Support Coordinator, Christine Delattre, to Johannesburg for the month of March, to help out AFS South Africa whose support coordinator is still on sick leave. Meanwhile, **AFS Austria** welcomes their new Sending Support and Admission person, Clara Treberspurg, who will deal with applications, visas, waivers and flights, in support of the programmes team. Staff changes also with **AFS France**, where long time staff member Sébastien Havouis has left, and has passed on his tasks to the new Sending Coordinator Simon Papet, assisted by Laetitia Dugueyt.

At the **AFS Finland** General Assembly, Heikki Pihlajamäki stepped down as Chair of the Board, after having completed the mandatory maximum of four years. His successor, Marten Aspelin, brings both legal and economic expertise to the Finnish Board.

The sending department of the Intercultural office at **AFS Italy** has hired two new Sending Assistants for the months to come, Paolo Murru and Loris Usai. Rita Bazzani, former Sending Assistant, has moved to the Participant Support office, to replace Davide Ravagli, who left the team to follow his dream and open a bar in Malta! If you happen to pass by, don't forget to stop for a drink.

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

EUROPEAN YEAR OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION – THE LOGO



Source: Corporate Design Manual European Year of Creativity and Innovation

The logo can be read both as sparks and synapses, elements that are considered powerful symbols of innovation and creativity. While sparks evoke an unpredictable event or changing situation, synapses stand for links between different elements, they connect ideas, or even universes. The shape resembles a star, which helps identify the Year as an EU initiative. The logo of the previous European Year is similar in that it combines a simple coloured shape with a claim in black and white.

The 8 visual elements represent the 8 key competences to improve:

1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in foreign languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Social and civic competences;
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and
8. Cultural awareness and expression.

For more information, visit:

http://create2009.europa.eu/communication_toolbox/information_material.html

**BOOKLET INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DAY
2008 OUT!**



The booklet of our Intercultural Dialogue Day 2008 is out! It serves as a testimony to last September's AFS Intercultural Dialogue Day, which turned out to be a hugely successful event, with the majority of EFIL Member Organisations putting a lot of effort in mobilizing their volunteer force.

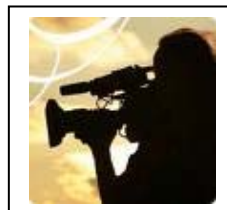
26th September 2008 was more than just another day on the calendar of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, it was the celebration of culture itself that came to the streets and reached out to participants and unaware passers-by inviting them to surrender to the spirit and join in the reflections, activities and festivities. On that day, AFS volunteers in 18 countries made a joint effort to set up simultaneous activities, including school and creativity workshops, youth debates, high-level panel discussions, concerts, movie screenings, street entertainment, etc. The booklet looks back on a selection of the many events that took place in the participating countries on the Dialogue Day 2008.

EFIL wants to extend a sincere word of thanks to the numerous people who have helped to make Intercultural Dialogue Day 2008 a success: AFS volunteers, staff, boards, returnees, host families, teachers and schools and all those who helped organise the activities in over 300 locations across Europe, the public taking part in the events, and last but not least the sponsors.

Let's start preparing for 24th September 2009, this year's

Intercultural Dialogue Day, and turn it into an equally successful event, involving even more locations all across Europe!

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU WANT MORE COPIES OF
THE DVD "SNAPSHOTS – WHEN CULTURES
INTERACT"**



EFIL is getting a lot of requests from partner organisations for extra copies of the DVD "Snapshots - When Cultures Interact". As you recall, producing the DVD was a project in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The 'snapshot movies', three short five-minute videos, filmed in Belgium, Germany and Portugal, demonstrate the impact of intercultural experiences, with the intention to generate discussions leading to more extended intercultural awareness. Additionally, there's a 25-minute documentary which looks into the concept of culture, through interviews with prominent practitioners in the field of intercultural learning: Professor Geert Hofstede, Dr. Milton Bennett and Dr. Roberto Ruffino. The movies are to be used for intercultural education in schools for secondary school students and during workshops for pupils leaving for an intercultural exchange.



Recording in Berlin (photo: EFIL)

We're very pleased with the success of the project, and with the good

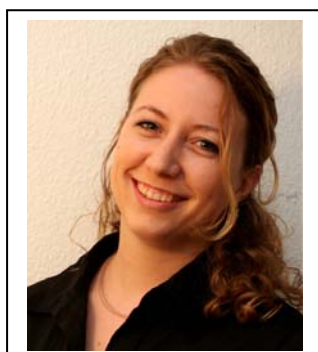
comments we have received from many of you. Last year, each of the EFIL member organisations was sent two copies. Non-EFIL members were given a copy during the World Congress in Berlin in October last year. Taking into account the remaining stock of DVDs at the EFIL office, we suggest the following for the further distribution of the DVDs. If EFIL Member Organisations request more copies, we can send you up to 7 extra copies each, at no charge, provided you are willing to pay for the postage. Should you want more than 7 extra copies, we will sell them at 7 Euro a copy (plus postage), for as long as we have copies in store. Non-EFIL members too can buy copies of the DVD at 7 Euro each, plus postage.

CORRECTION

Please note that in our February edition of EFILife, we mistakenly omitted **AFS Austria** in the list of member organisations that will participate in the *Group European Voluntary Service project*, a scheme coordinated by EFIL which besides AFS Austria will also include the partners in Belgium, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Iceland, Hungary, Russia and Denmark.

Our sincere apologies to AFS Austria for this oversight.

WELCOME TO KARIN!



My name is Karin Bitterli and I just started as an Intern at the EFIL office. I am originally from Switzerland and started my own AFS

experience 2002/2003 in Paraguay. Since then I volunteer for AFS Switzerland and EFIL. Since 2006 I am a member of the EPOT (EFIL's European Pool of Trainers), so some of you may already know my name.

The internship at the EFIL office is the 3rd station in a year between my Bachelor and Master Studies. I finished my Bachelor Degree in Social Anthropology and Law last summer at the University of Basel. Since then I've been in Senegal for four months (GLEN internship for sustainable development) and in Paris for six weeks (internship at the Goethe Institute Paris). I will return to Switzerland in September for a Masters Degree in European Integration.

During the next six months in Brussels, I will mainly work on the preparation of the 2009 Volunteer Summer Summit in Istanbul, but I will also be helping out in other projects and participate in some training activities.

I am looking forward to my time in Brussels and to work together with all of you!

CALENDAR 2009

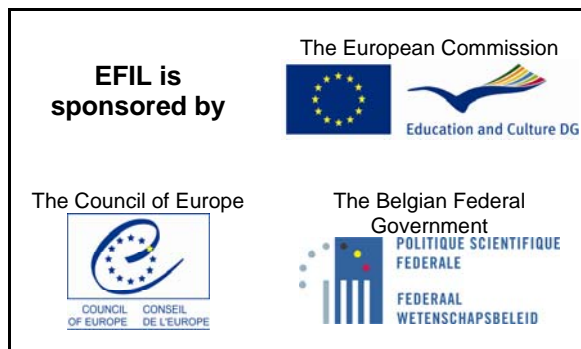
13-15 March	Prep. Meeting: Seminar on improving re- entry orientations, Brussels, Belgium
04-11 April	Training for developing AFS organisations, Zagreb, Croatia
10-16 May	Seminar on improving re- entry orientations, Roskilde, Denmark

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!**