



EFIL Board and guests meet with delegates of the European Commission (photo: EFIL) various articles in this edition of EFILife.

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EFIL BOARD MEETS IN BRUSSELS

Brussels was the venue of EFIL's first Board meeting in 2009. Items on the agenda included the EFIL Business Plan 2009-2010 and the draft budgets for those years, preparation of the General Assembly in Moscow in May, new member development in the Balkans and Poland, the new European Citizenship Trimester Programme and the Commission's Comenius programme. You can read more about some of these topics in

On Friday, the EFIL Board had the opportunity to meet at dinner with some of our main contacts at the Directorate-General Education and Culture of the European Commission: Adam Pokorny and Piia Heinämäki from the division School Education "Comenius" (Lifelong Learning Programme), and Monica Urian de Sousa, Policy Officer Unit Culture Policy and Intercultural Dialogue. Also joining the Board as dinner guests were Jan Honinx, Internal Auditor, and Anne Mees, National Director of AFS Belgium Flanders.

FINAL COMENIUS REPORT PUBLISHED

The European Commission has now published on their website, the complete final report by EFIL of the Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility project 2006-2008.

You can find it on:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/pupilmobility_en.pdf.

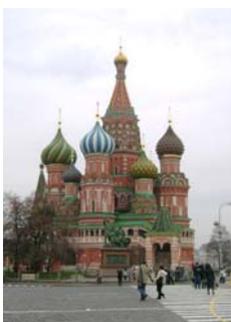
If you want to read more about the Comenius programme, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc990_en.htm

REGISTRATION GENERAL ASSEMBLY MOSCOW NOW OPEN

In May, AFS Russia will be our host for the EFIL General Assembly 2009. Making learning mobility across borders an opportunity for all and a natural feature for young Europeans is the main message in the report from the Commission-appointed High

Level Expert Forum on Mobility, published in 2008. We support this vision by making it the theme of our General Assembly.

We are currently putting together the programme for the GA in Moscow. At the GA, we aim to create a common understanding of the challenges ahead in the ever changing environment in Europe, particularly in the field of mobility, at the backdrop of the current financial and economic global crisis. We want to profile EFIL as a professional organisation, committed to the Strategic Directions as endorsed by the Members in 2007, and with a wide range of achievements. Also, we want to increase the visibility of AFS Russia and EFIL/AFS in Russia, and give a boost to intra-European exchanges with AFS Russia.



(photo:EFIL)

Activities will take place at 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. For more info, visit www.atlas-hotel.ru. Registration forms have been distributed. Please give special attention to the request regarding the visa you will need to enter Russia.

The GA officially opens with the dinner on Thursday 21 May and ends on Sunday morning 24 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 24 May, plus a great opportunity to experience a home stay with a Russian host family for two nights. You may also want to register for

activities planned by AFS International prior to the GA.

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

EFIL BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP

On Saturday 23 May, during EFIL's extraordinary General Assembly, part of the EFIL Board will be elected. The elected Board Members will serve a term of 2 years.

In this month of February, the Election Committee will call on full Members to submit candidates for the number of mandates that will be up for election. Candidacies are to be sent to the seat of the Federation in Brussels by e-mail, addressed at the Chair of the Election Committee, no later than two months before the date of the meeting of the General Assembly.

At least 6 weeks before the election is to take place, the Election Committee will inform the Members of all candidacies received, and will forward all documentation received from the candidates or the Members that have appointed them.

YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE WHAT'S NEXT?

"The end of this Year's campaign is by no means the end of our commitment to intercultural dialogue", promised Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, at the closing conference of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

The conference in Paris, organised by the French Presidency of the European Union and the European Commission on 17-19 November 2008, welcomed more than 600 participants from across Europe and beyond. Under the title "New Perspectives for Intercultural

Dialogue in Europe”, top-level speakers, including Jean-Pierre Jouyet, French Secretary of State for European Affairs, Christine Albanel, French Minister of Culture and Communication, and Odile Quintin, General Director of DG Education and Culture of the European Commission, reflected on the projects undertaken during the year, and on the lessons for stimulating intercultural dialogue over the long term.

“Imagine. Create. Innovate.”

2009 has been designated the “European Year of Creativity and Innovation”. The European

Commission launched the communication campaign on 5th December 2008, with the slogan “Imagine.



“Create. Innovate.”. Commissioner Jan Figel The aim is to promote creative and innovative approaches in different sectors of human activity, to better equip the European Union for the challenges ahead in a globalised world.

“The European Year of Innovation and Creativity 2009 will help unlock Europe's creative and innovative potential, a task that has become even more important in times of economic crisis”, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Training and Youth Ján Figel’ said during the launch ceremony. “What I would like to see at the end of the Year is that the citizens of Europe understand better that by promoting human talents and the human capacity to innovate, we can actively shape Europe for the better, to help it fully develop its potential, both economically and socially”, Figel’ said.

To read more, please visit the official website of the Year 2009 at <http://create2009.europa.eu>.

ON THE ROAD TO EFIL SUMMER SUMMIT 2009

The EFIL Summer Summit 2009 will take place in Istanbul, Turkey from July, 30th to August 4th 2009. Since a couple of months the motivated preparatory team of 2009, supported by AFS Turkey, has been working hard to make the summit an unforgettable experience for all the participants. The 2009 team is made up of Hazar Yildirim (coordinator, AFS TUR), Eva Vitkova (AFS CZE), Anna-Maria Hass (AFS GER), Rasmus Poulsen (AFS DEN) and Karin Bitterli (AFS SUI), completed by Cemre Akin (AFS TUR office representative), Markus Wilthaner (AFS AUT, IT/website responsible) and Izabela Jurczik (EFIL Training Co-ordinator).

A Facebook group has already been created and exploded immediately to over 400 members! The website is currently under construction to appear in new shape after an overall update. On the new website you will not only find all kind of practical information about the event itself, the venue and Turkish culture, but also pictures from last year’s Summer Summit and an online application form for all future participants. Also planned is an interactive forum to share and discuss ideas among the Summer Summit 2009.

The fundraising process is already in full progress. The event can so far count on a much welcomed grant from the European Youth Foundation and we are applying for another European grant through the Turkish National Agency. Thanks to the work from the Turkish office there are also a lot of negotiations with private sponsors going on to get particular fundraising for the event. Stay tuned for further updates!

**SHAPING THE FUTURE
TRAINING ADVISORY BODY MEETS IN ESTORIL**



TAB members: Manuel Schwinn (AFS GER), Diana Rosta (AFS HUN), Michela Bortoli (AFS ITA), Izabela Jurczik (EFL), Stephan Winiker (AFS SUI) and Lisa Cohen (AFS IP) (photo: EFIL)

The newly refreshed EFIL Training Advisory Body (TAB) met on 1-2 February 2009 in Estoril, Portugal. TAB had been created as a working structure at European level, supporting the training department of EFIL in terms of both strategic and operational issues. With its composition including two national Organisational Development Co-ordinators, two experienced volunteers and an AFS INT representative, the TAB helps EFIL to keep an overview of AFS training needs in Europe.

Issues discussed at the Meeting included the revision of the EFIL Training Strategy, including the roles of the TAB; evaluation of past training activities; EFIL long-term training calendar; refreshment and shape of the new European Pool of Trainers (EPOT); new training activities for 2010-2011; TAB links and communication with relevant AFS stakeholders; TAB work plan for 2009.

The new TAB consists of:

- **Michela Bortoli**, long time volunteer and active in the past as staff for the EFIL Secretariat and Intercultura. Since 2005 she is active as trainer at European level. She is currently member of the Italian Pool of Trainers.
- **Diana Rosta** is Organisational Development Co-ordinator of AFS Hungary. Before she has been an

active volunteer and she served on the board of AFS Hungary. Since 2007 she has been an active member of the EFIL European Pool of Trainers.

- **Stephan Winiker** has been a volunteer in different functions for AFS Switzerland and during the last 4 years a member of the EPOT. He has worked in the office of AFS Switzerland in various positions from 2001-2008.

- **Manuel Schwinn** is the Director of the Human Resource and Organisational Development department at AFS Germany. He can look back on more than 10 years of volunteer involvement at AFS Germany and was an intern at AFS INT and AFS RSA in 2004 and 2005.

- **Lisa Cohen** is a Senior International Consultant for AFS-INT based in New York. After 6 years working for AFS USA, first in Participant Support and then in Volunteer Development, she started at AFS INT in 1999.

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. The two years of the upcoming TAB mandate definitely look promising on the horizon!

ODC MEETING ON THE PORTUGUESE COAST

We are proud to share with the network that a successful meeting of 16 Organisational Development Co-ordinators from AFS organisations took place in Estoril, Portugal, 27 January - 1 February 2009.

The meeting enjoyed the extraordinary hospitality of AFS Portugal and equally amazing commitment of the preparatory team: Diana Rosta (HUN), Florin Feldmann (GER), Bert Vercamer (AFS IP), Manuel Schwinn (GER) and IZABELA JURCZIK (EFL).

The programme included vital issues as the assessment of the level of volunteer participation in my organisation; exchange of best practices related to increasing volunteer involvement; chapter health monitoring; induction topics for new ODCs; personal reflection on the role and style of an ODC; action planning for future improvements in AFS organisations.



Organisation Development Coordinators
(photo:EFIL)

Together with all the participants of the meeting we are eager to continue the tradition of recurring ODC Meetings, hoping at the same time for involvement of non-European OD Coordinators in the future.

Next edition coming up in late 2010, don't miss it!

CONTINUED FOCUS ON THE BALKANS

At the Brussels meeting in January, the EFIL Board assessed and discussed the current situation with the newly developed organisations in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia/Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as the way forward, including the upcoming training in Zagreb (April), the General Assembly in Moscow, and EFIL's further role in developing the new organisations.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the strong commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteers in the Balkans, and for the development of activities and ongoing preparations to build up an exchange programme with

partners in Europe (and beyond). At the upcoming training in Zagreb (Croatia) in April, sponsored by the European Commission (Youth in Action), the short and medium term expectations and realistic developments will be discussed.

Meanwhile EFIL aims at facilitating the twinning/mentoring support between the Balkan organisations and established members of the EFIL network in Europe (Italy with Slovenia, Hungary with Serbia, Austria with Croatia, Egypt with Serbia). We very much appreciate the efforts put in by partners in helping the new organisations grow. This currently happens on a fairly loose basis, and we would like to develop this kind of partnership further in Zagreb in April.



Ivana Gazikalovic-Pavlovic (Serbia), Petra Ranilovic (Croatia), Tosja Kobler-Jovanovic (Slovenia), Mirela Hrnjic (Bosnia/Herzegovina)
(photo: EFIL)

AFS HUNGARY SUPPORTS INTERKULTURA SERBIA

In the framework of the mentorship programme between the Balkan organisations and established EFIL members (see article above), AFS Hungary has been very active lately in sharing its experiences and passing on its knowledge, by supporting Interkultura Serbia in their commitment and hard work to expand AFS activities and volunteerism in Serbia.

National Director Anett Miklos and Johannes Schirrmeister, German FSJ volunteer in the Hungarian office) were present in Belgrade on the 8th of October last year when the Serbian Organisation was officially

launched. Diana Rosta (Organisational Development Coordinator) and Johannes Schirrmeister conducted a training in Belgrade just before the Programme Directors Meeting in November 2008. The training was attended by 15 enthusiastic volunteers, and focused on programme implementation and content, volunteering, selection procedures, etc. AFS Hungary will continue working together with the Serbian volunteers. A volunteer exchange is next on the agenda.

In January, Ivana Pavlovic – head of the Serbian Interkultura Association, took out some time to visit the Hungarian office. She met with the current and former Chairperson of AFS Hungary, sat down with colleagues and gained insight into the different areas of operation, with emphasis on experiences and best practices which could be of particular relevance to a new partner in a small country.

To boost exchanges with the new organisations, AFS Hungary has decided to offer a special hosting price to the new partners in the region for the first couple of years.

**INVITATION EFIL TRAINING
FOCUSED ON NEW AFS ORGANISATIONS**

Another interesting EFIL activity is waiting for your application! The Training Course “Intercultural Learning through Organisational Development” aims at the development of sustainable volunteer groups and enhanced AFS exchange activities in the developing AFS countries (Poland and the Balkans). Based on a mentorship system provided by experienced AFS Partners, the call for participants aims at both new organisations and the established AFS Partners involved in supporting them. In addition, the project welcomes volunteers from any AFS organisation in the process of developing new chapters. Through

content input on the most important “AFS know-how” and through the involvement of more experienced volunteers from AFS organisations, we hope to achieve a strong long-term multiplying effect, leading to a long-lasting international cooperation.

The event will take place 4-11 April 2009, just outside Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. The project is funded by the EU Youth in Action programme, which reduces the participation costs and secures partial travel reimbursements.

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 Ben Ledwon, are gathering for a meeting 22-24 February to design the details of the event programme.

Participants of the training course will be recruited through a call sent to national AFS offices and to the contact persons in the 5 developing organisations. Please approach them to receive more information and the application form. All candidates are expected to apply before the deadline of the 10th March – be in time!

GRANT APPLICATIONS

For the 1st February deadline, EFIL applied for funding from the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission for a number of projects:

- *End-of-stay Camp of the European Citizenship Trimester Programme* (Brussels 22-26 Nov 2009), a unique experience for AFS trimester students on their way back home.
- *The Group European Voluntary Service project*, a scheme coordinated by EFIL which includes the Partners in Belgium, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Iceland, Hungary, Russia and Denmark.

-Seminar *Cross-cultural conflicts: origins and innovative ways for resolution* (Russia, Oct 2009), a training for volunteers to solve and prevent conflicts and problems arising from differences.

- *EVS volunteer in the EFIL Secretariat*, for a volunteer to work for 12 months in the EFIL office in Brussels.

We keep our fingers crossed for all these applications to be successful!

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. Please do let us know what's happening out there!



(photo: AFS Egypt)

AFS Egypt recently organised their third successful National Volunteer Meeting. The annual event is an opportunity for the volunteers from all over the country to meet, along with the Board members and staff, and to evaluate the work of the preceding year and plan for the coming year. More than 200 volunteers attended the event, representing 14 of Egypt's 16 chapters. At an AFS Market, volunteers could share their success stories and accomplishments. There were workshops and a successful fundraising initiative was organised. Highlight of the event was the guest speaker Mohamed El Sawy, Chairman of El Sawy Culture Wheel, a pioneer culture center in the heart of Cairo.

In **Switzerland**, on one of the coldest days of December, 50 SH08 students came to Bern by train. They were treated to a guided tour through the "Bundeshaus", after which they were invited by the mayor of Bern - Alexander Tschäppät - into the wonderful city palace "Erlacherhof" for a reception. An event they won't easily forget.



(photo: AFS Switzerland)

AFS Tunisia has opened for registration its 19th International Archaeology Work Camp, scheduled for the period of July 12th to August 2nd 2009. Activities will take place at a prestigious archaeological site in the "Cap bon Area" (North East of Tunisia), the tip of the Peninsula facing Sicily, some 100 km away from the capital city, Tunis. The main age group targeted is from 18 to 30. Deadline for sending applications is by the end of April 2009.

Time to focus on some staff changes. In **Switzerland**, Didier Joris, Sending and Hosting Coordinator for the French Region, has left to follow his dream and move abroad. Isabella Kaufmann, who started an internship at AFS SUI last year, has taken over his responsibilities from mid January.

After almost 8 years, IT specialist Inge Langer left **AFS Austria** to focus on new challenges. Maria Sappert has joined the AFS AUT team to cover most of Inge's tasks. **AFS Germany** bid farewell to Sebastian May Grosser, intern from Costa Rica who helped the 18+ team over the past

year. Philipp Heintze joined the team last December.



Sebastian (middle front) and Philipp (top right) with the team (photo: AFS Germany)

That's it for this month. A very warm welcome to all the new ones!

NEW YEAR RECEPTION

Following last year's successful first attempt to bring together the AFS organisations based in Belgium for a new year's reception, this year EFIL played the host and brought together 34 AFS staff from Belgium Flanders, Belgium French, the Belgian AFS Foundation and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) to celebrate the start of a new year with a drink and a bite.



Anne Sokal (BFR), Paul Claes (EFIL), Anne Mees (BFL) and Renée Coen (Belgian AFS Foundation) (photo: EFIL)

In spite of the heavy challenges ahead, worldwide with the global financial and economical crisis, and within the AFS network with the current crisis about the future of AFS USA, we dare to look forward with a

positive mindset. Keeping in mind that 2009 has been declared the European Year of Creativity and Innovation by the European Commission, we are challenged to use our very own creativity to overcome whatever crisis may loom around the corner.

A most enjoyable time was spent together, prompting everyone to start planning for the next joint event, when AFS BFR will host the event in their new office premises in Brussels.

WELCOME ILYANA, NATALIE!
WELCOME BACK LARA!

We are happy to announce that we have started the year, welcoming two new interns in our team in Brussels. **Ilyana Panteleeva** (Bulgaria) and **Natalie Rulloda** (Portugal) will support the team in preparing for upcoming trainings, projects and programmes, including work on funding applications with the European institutions, follow-up, communication, etc.

Ilyana (23) grew up in Sofia. She studied at the Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg, Germany, and in February she will obtain her Bachelor of European Studies. During her studies she has spent time in Prague and Trento too, exploring new places, languages and cultures.



For the past three months she did an internship in the Brussels office of EEE-YFU – the umbrella organisation of the European YFU organisations – which has made her well acquainted with the European youth policy and landscape. Previously, she has been assisting in several youth exchange meetings and she was volunteering for various urban development

projects promoting young artists and young people's active citizenship.



Natalie, 23 and born in Venezuela, comes from Viana do Castelo, Portugal. She acquired a Bachelor Degree in International Relations at University of Minho in Braga. Apart from volunteer work at a local Immigrant Support Centre in Portugal, she also did internships at different international organisations in Brussels.

Natalie has benefited from youth exchange programmes at European level such as the Erasmus/Socrates Programme and the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Programme.

Joining the EFIL team in Brussels for one month (February), is **Lara Svoboda**, well known in the network for her year long work at EFIL as an EVS volunteer in 2007/2008. Lara spends a month in Brussels, and decided to dedicate a fair part of her time to work in the EFIL office. Thanks, Lara, much appreciated! We all wish you could stay longer...



22-24 Feb Prep. Meeting: Training for developing AFS organisations, Brussels, Belgium

27 Feb-01 March Prep. Meeting: Volunteer Summer Summit, Istanbul, Turkey

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

INTERNET LINKS

- ❖ http://efil.afs.org/efi_en/home
- ❖ <http://create2009.europa.eu/>

CALENDAR 2009

15-22 Feb Study Session Intercultural Learning through active participation of young people on their school communities, Strasbourg, France

Budapest,
Hungary

17-20 September EFIL Board
meeting, Colle di
Val d'Elsa, Italy

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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