



ICL seminar 2010 participants (photo: EFIL)

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SEMINAR ON INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN AFS

The friendly venue of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France, was the place to meet for a deeper reflection on intercultural learning. A group of 25 people from 17 AFS organisations, who deal with the educational impact of our programmes, gathered from the 10th till the 16th of May, to discuss our standing and ambitions in intercultural learning in Europe.

The seminar “Intercultural Learning and Exchanges – where do we stand?” was a chance not only to get a glimpse of what is going on in the AFS external environment (most of all in the European institutional world) but most importantly to look critically at ourselves and to reflect on ways to keep improving as an educational organisation.



ICL seminar Strasbourg (photo: EFIL)

A great mix of backgrounds and experiences, with a balance of volunteers and staff members, made the event rich in perspectives and ideas. The group enjoyed also the presence of non-AFS people among facilitators and guests. Finally, the support of both the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union contributed to the smooth and inclusive shape of the project.

A big appreciation goes to the preparatory team of the event: Florin Feldmann (Germany), Hazar Yildirim (Turkey), Elisabeth Hardt (Belgium/Germany), Mark Taylor (France/UK - external), Izabela Jurczik (Belgium/Poland - EFIL) and Alexander Müller (Germany – EFIL) as the rapporteur, who have put a lot of work in preparation and implementation of the seminar. But the thank you is also well deserved by all the participants of the project, with their sending organisations, since their expertise was the most important basis for the seminar discussions and outcomes. There is definitely a wealth of initiatives and ideas in this field to be shared, and the 5 days of the meeting made all present realise that not enough of it is known across the network yet!

The seminar report is already under preparation and should be ready within the coming month. It will be distributed around the Network to make the results known to all those who could not join us in Strasbourg. And the next event of the “EFIL ICL series” is planned for spring 2011, to focus on the intercultural learning processes in the work of our volunteers – don’t miss it!

**EFIL VOLUNTEER SUMMER SUMMIT
ALL ROADS LEAD TO ZANKA**

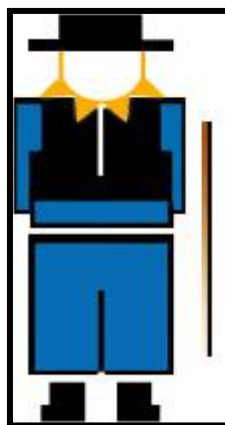


In August all roads will lead to Zanka, the meeting point for AFS volunteers coming from all over Europe and beyond for EFIL’s third Volunteer Summer Summit, the ultimate summer event to meet your fellow volunteers from other countries, to finally meet in person those Facebook friends you’ve been communicating with for ages, or to even re-unite with your AFS host family.



*Summer Summit France 2008
(photo: EFIL)*

The following trainers team has been put together for the Summer Summit: Anastasia Arsenyeva (Russia), Anne Hitzegrad (Germany), Christina Unterberger (Austria), Christophe Luyten (Belgium), Csilla Fodor (Hungary), Hanne Salo (Finland), Hazar Yildirim (Turkey), Lars Overgaard (Denmark), Stephan Winiker (Switzerland) are all committed members of the European Pool of Trainers (EPOT). As an external trainer, Pablo Castineiras from Portugal will attend the VSS in Zanka.



Did you know that...
*...already 140
enthusiastic
participants have paid
their deposits and
booked their travels
to ensure their spots
at the VSS?*

*...Lake Balaton is
known as the Hungarian Sea and is
the biggest lake in Central Europe?
...the trainers are already
working on the workshop outlines?
...you can get a Summit T-shirt for
free? Find out more here:*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1v69hGVRlc>

*...the final application deadline was
prolonged until 25th May? If you don't
want to miss the biggest volunteer
event in Europe, apply online at*
<http://www.efilsummersummit.org>



Summer Summit Turkey 2009 (photo: EFIL)

EURAFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE PROJECT

The second of three visits to the African partner countries in EFIL's "EurAfrican Partnership for Change" project took place between the 19th and the 29th of April, when a team of 10 experienced volunteers from AFS organisations in Portugal, Iceland, Belgium (Flanders), Spain, Austria, Ghana and Kenya were in South Africa for several project activities. During part of their stay they were home hosted by South African families in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town.



Four of the trainers arrived a couple of days later than planned because of the disruptions with flights over Europe following the volcano eruption in Iceland, but the team was able to cover the programme without too many alterations. Thank you to the trainers and to AFS South Africa for being so flexible!

A training for volunteers took place in three regions in South Africa, this way reaching as many local volunteers as possible. Altogether, in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg, some 100 South African volunteers attended the trainings, which covered a wide range of topics including volunteer

motivation, roles and responsibilities of volunteers, promotion of AFS, intercultural learning, hosting and finding host families, recruitment and selection of participants, preparations and orientations, etc.



EurAfrica-Team South Africa (Photo: EFIL)

As part of the programme, AFS South Africa had set up appointments with government institutions, private sector, NGOs and local organisations for participants to collect information in the framework of a feasibility study. The feasibility studies in the EurAfrican Partnership for Change project aim at proposing a framework to help empower the AFS organisations in the African partner countries and further support them in their organisational and volunteer development.



Training in Cape Town (Photo: Andreas Lutz)

The next country visit is planned to take place from the 21st of June until the 1st of July in Kenya. All project participants will gather for the

closing international seminar, which will take place in Vienna in August.

Following the activities in South Africa, the project Steering Committee met for its second of three meetings. The meeting partly overlapped with the activities of the trainers, allowing the steering group members to take part in the debriefing and evaluation session at the end of the stay of the trainers in South Africa.



Steering Committee: Paul Claes, Kathy Otto, Frini Ezunkpe, Bert Vercamer, Tiziana Savasta, Luis Arnaut (photo: EFIL)

The agenda of the Steering Committee meeting included an evaluation of the project so far, a discussion on the expected content of the guide "Facilitating a Sustainable Partnership for Change" which will be one of the major project outcomes, and a brain storming on the seminar in Vienna (August). A challenging but most interesting programme has been put together for the closing seminar in Austria.



To all the partners in this project: thank you for supporting EFIL in this relevant project and for giving your volunteers this unique opportunity to be part of a team that makes things happen! We'll keep you updated.

**PREPARING FOR
30 SEPTEMBER 2010**



Volunteers across Europe have started preparations for the 3rd Intercultural Dialogue Day, to take place on 30 September. From AFS in Czech Republic came the news that a successful IDD workshop named "PR in action" recently took place in Prague, spreading enthusiasm for the big day among motivated volunteers, and launching action plans for each chapter to get ready for the events in late September.

Pisek in South Bohemia will set up three stations with information on AFS and various interactive exercises for the public. Bilovice in Moravia intends to design a path with various tasks on different cultures along the way. Jicin in North Bohemia will focus on a lecture and discussions about Thailand and Asian cultures. A general project to be implemented in several chapters and cities involves creating an intercultural carpet, made up of pieces of clothes sewn together, each depicting an intercultural experience.



IDD 2009 in Czech Republic (photo: AFS CZE)

Here's just a reminder that the EFIL Secretariat in Brussels has compiled a

selection of activities in two attractive, colourful 24 pages booklets, reflecting on the IDD events of 2008 and 2009. Please have a look on the EFIL website: <http://efil.afs.org/>. Following the success of the first two editions the ultimate goal of IDD2010 is to include as many chapters and locations across Europe as possible. Wouldn't it be great if volunteers in every chapter in 25 countries in Europe were to be involved somehow in the celebration of intercultural dialogue on 30 September 2010?



IDD 2009 in Russia (photo: AFS RUS)

BOARD MEMBERS INVITED FOR GOVERNANCE SEMINAR IN AUGUST

This year's Governance and Leadership seminar will take place from 26-29 August in the beautiful old university town of Uppsala.



The seminar will focus on leadership in the specific AFS board context and on the skills needed to lead a volunteer network. Special attention will be paid to different leadership styles and adjusting them flexibly to the changing environment and needs. Concrete challenges faced

by AFS boards will be addressed, as well as analysis of case studies and sharing of best practices.



The event aims to attract board members from both EFIL and non-European AFS organisations. With parallel sessions and interactive approaches, the seminar will attempt to provide tailor-made service and address the expectations of both newly elected and experienced board members, including board chairs and those who attended induction and governance seminars in the past. Space for networking and peer learning between board members from different countries will be provided. More details on the parallel sessions to choose from will be provided as the seminar date approaches. The registration deadline is 4 June 2010.

A YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING IN CROATIA

Just over a year ago, Adrian Lehne, a young German volunteer, applied for an EVS (European Voluntary Service) position with Globus, our AFS partner in Croatia. When the funding didn't come through, Adrian decided to move to Croatia anyway and work as a volunteer in one of our network's youngest partner organisations. At the end of June, he will be returning to Germany. EFIL asked Adrian to write some lines about his experience, as we believe he deserves to be put in the spotlight

for his year of volunteering in Croatia. Thank you, Adrian!

By Adrian Lehne, volunteer

It has been nearly 8.5 months since I first arrived in Zagreb. Why did I choose to go to Croatia? I was asked this question many times. Croatia is a country that emerged not even fifteen years ago, of which the national average income is considerably lower than in most western European countries. Globus is the name of the organisation I started volunteering for, an organisation with exchange numbers comparable to a normal sized German chapter, without an office nor employees, and with no funding scheme to back me up.

But maybe the combination of all of this was exactly my motivation to go to Croatia. As a former socialist country, ready to make its way into the European Union, I was eager to observe a society in this important phase of change. Not to mention the wonderful people and the incredible beauty of the landscape in the Balkan region. The main reason for my move to Zagreb however was the possibility to work for a small organisation with the ambition of becoming a full AFS network partner, which gave me the opportunity to help change things, contribute my ideas and work closely with the volunteers and participants.

Since over the past year I was the only person working full-time for Globus, I had the chance to get involved in every aspect of the work of the organisation. In the beginning of my year in Zagreb, I put a lot of effort in communication with other network partners, trying to negotiate spots for the upcoming cycle. At the same time I was translating concepts for post-orientation trainings while preparing the layout for promotional materials.

With the aim of strengthening the volunteer base out of Zagreb, I

traveled to Osijek and Rijeka to visit the volunteers, support them and prepare them for tasks to come, and help them to get organised as teams. I had the chance to participate in several camps, events and trainings (including EFIL's training in organisational development in Zagreb, April 2009), and I traveled through the region, visiting volunteers in neighbouring countries.



*Petra Ranilovic (Board AFS Croatia),
Luisa (host student), Adrian
(photo: Adrian Lehne)*

EFIL's Intercultural Dialogue Day 2009 will keep a special place in my memory. With permission of the city of Zagreb, we got our little information stand right in front of the central rail station. It was a lot of fun to speak to people walking by about AFS/Globus.

Throughout my year in Croatia, the local volunteers have impressed me a lot. They did not seem to know the phrase "this is not possible". Over twenty schools were approached and over a dozen of them allowed them to talk directly to the students in the class rooms. They approached radio and TV stations resulting in 2 TV and 5 radio interviews.



*Adrian Lehne and Marija Bevanda
(Programme Director AFS Croatia)
(photo: Adrian Lehne)*

I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of this worth while experience, and can recommend it to everyone with an interest in active involvement and development of a growing, inspiring organisation like Globus. Until June 23rd I will still be available for more information at adrian.lehne@afs.org.

AUSTRIAN VOLUNTEERS SET UP TRAINING IN SERBIA BELGRADE 1-3 MAY 2010

On the first weekend in May Belgrade was the venue of a training on chapter development held by AFS Austria volunteers from the Styria Chapter. The training was attended by twelve volunteers of Interkultura Serbia, two from ISU Bosnia and Herzegovina and two from Globus Croatia. The event was sponsored by AFS Austria, the Styria chapter of AFS Austria and EFIL.

All present were impressed by the attention the young Styrian volunteers paid to every detail in the planning and preparation of the training. The carefully selected topics were interesting and extremely useful for the volunteers from the new organisations in South Eastern Europe. The activities were enjoyable and there was a good balance of serious talk and fun activities and energizers, which contributed to a good working atmosphere. There was

ample time for self reflection and also for sharing with others and giving feedback - both in each individual workshop and at the end of the training. The attending volunteers now feel a lot more knowledgeable and confident and have a much better perspective of what an AFS chapter does and how it works. It is up to them now to apply what they have learnt.

Interkultura Serbia was the perfect host for the training. They were glad the volunteers from neighbouring Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina accepted their invitation to attend this training because the cooperation in the region is very important and it was a great opportunity for some new friendships to be made. The trainers from Austria and the guests from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina also enjoyed the walking tour of Belgrade and managed to get at least a glimpse of the Serbian culture.

Thank you, Philipp Konrad, Kilian Lienhart and Verena Mandl, for an excellent training!



*Volunteer training in Belgrade
(photo: Djordje Pavlović)*

AFS CONTACTS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

At the EFIL General Assembly in Lisbon 2007 the Member Organisations endorsed EFIL's Strategic Directions, which include implementing initiatives to enlarge

the Federation. Feasibility studies were conducted by EFIL in 2007, leading to the decision by the Board to work on the potential opening of programmes in the South Eastern European countries Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.



Three years later, in the first months of 2010, branch offices of AFS International have been registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. The non-profit organisations that over the past years have been established in the four South Eastern European countries, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with AFS International, and have now been officially welcomed in the AFS global network. The Chairs of the respective boards have been included in the AFS international directory.

Below please find the official names of the organisations, and the contact details of the leading volunteers.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Ms. Mirela Hrnjic

President of UG Interkulturni susreti u Bosni i Hercegovini - UG ISU BIH / Intercultural meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Volunteer National Director of AFS Intercultural Programs Inc. in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Representative of the AFS Branch Office)

Contact: mirela.hrnjic@afs.org or info.isubih@gmail.com

Serbia:

Mrs. Ivana Gazikalovic-Pavlovic
President of Interkultura Serbia
Representative of the AFS Branch Office in Serbia

Contact: ivana.pavlovic@afs.org or interkultura.serbia@gmail.com

Slovenia:

Ms. Tosja Kobler Jovanovic

President of Izobrazevalno drustvo Interkultura / Educational Association Interkultura

Representative of the AFS Branch Office (Izobrazevalno drustvo AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc.) in Slovenia

Contact: tosja.jovanovic@afs.org or info@interkultura.si

Croatia:

Ms. Sanja Bertovic

President of Globus - Association for Intercultural Learning

Representative of the AFS Branch Office in Croatia

Ms. Marija Bevanda

Programme Director

Contact: maria.bevanda@afs.org



Mirela Hrnjic, Ivana Pavlovic, Marija Bevanda, Janez Damien (photo: EFIL)

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.



During the weekend of 8-9 May, **AFS Germany's** national training event –

Constantze – took place in Berlin, addressing some 350 experienced volunteers and staff as well as interested partners. A wide range of over 60 trainings and workshops was offered, referring to this year's guiding theme "(Inter-)Acting in Global Networks" as well as to other topics such as Intercultural Learning. The weekend started with a key note speech by Prof. Dr. Michael Zerr (Karlshochschule International University) on Saturday morning. Afterwards, the participants will had the opportunity to take part in three consecutive training slots - each lasting 3,5 hours - on Saturday and Sunday.



The French national TV channel France 3 has made a report about one of the **AFS France** participants currently spending a year in Italy. The report features not only the student herself but also her host family, local volunteers and a teacher. You can watch it online on the TV channel's website by following this link : <http://jt.france3.fr/1920/>. Once on the homepage, select "Mardi 27" and move the cursor until 21 minutes 07 seconds.



AFS France's volunteers and staff wearing their brand new "Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures" T-shirts (photo: AFS France)

And there's more about **AFS France**. Some 100 members gathered for the General Assembly in Satillieu in the south east of the country, a two day event which also saw the launching of the "Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures campaign". AFS France further welcomed Carlo Fusaro, a member of the AFS Board of Trustees, who delivered the Galatti Award to Robert Kaminker for his 27 years of commitment with AFS.

During the General Assembly Anne Collignon was re-elected as Chair of the Board.



Carlo Fusaro delivering the Galatti Award to Robert Kaminker (photo: AFS France)




AFS Czech Republic too enjoyed a good General Assembly and especially thanked departing board members Katerina Dudkova (former Chair) and Pavel Nikodem who have contributed immensely to the development of the organisation. Although no longer on the board, they will continue supporting AFS as EFIL liaison (Pavel) and as the chair of our newly established Alumni Club (Katka). Special thanks also goes to Financial Manager Ivana Krystova who celebrated 15 years with AFS and received a certificate from the President, Tachi Casal, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Christian Kurten.



AFS Czech Republic General Assembly (photo: AFS Czech Rep.)

 At **AFS Denmark's** annual general assembly, Bjarke Rix Rasmussen was reconfirmed as the Chair. The new board consists of a healthy mix of age, gender and background experiences. After six years as a Board member of **AFS Sweden** of which four as the Chair, Anders Fernlund has stepped down from the Board at the General Assembly in Stockholm.

 And finally, **AFS Austria** has announced the departure of Hosting Coordinator Sophie Ehrlich. She is replaced by Maria Sappert, formerly Programme Support in Hosting. Maria will receive help and support from Lena Vogelmann who re-joined the team of AFS Austria, after an absence of five years!

AFS FRANCE PRODUCES FILM FOR COMENIUS AGENCY

During the spring of 2010, AFS France was subcontracted by its Comenius national Agency for the production of a film about the pilot phase of the European Commission's new Comenius individual pupil mobility programme.

Interviews with four French pilot phase participants and one teacher were conducted by a professional film maker. These interviews were edited for a DVD made of thematical sequences about preparation, fears, language, integration in the host country, re-integration back, etc. A shorter version of this film with English subtitles is currently being produced.



FOCUS ON AFS FRANCE READY FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD !

The office of AFS Vivre Sans Frontière was recently re-organized to achieve the strategic objectives set for 2010 by the Board, within the framework of the AFS Vision 2020. Two new positions were created, one was removed, and others were modified.

As its objectives for 2010, AFS Vivre Sans Frontière aims at: (1) improving the development of the volunteer network; (2) increasing the number of new participants and diversifying the applicant pool via a true marketing strategy and a more ambitious scholarship programme; and (3) increasing visibility and improving brand recognition by adopting a coherent and global concept *Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures*.

The elaboration of these objectives is the result of the "Démarche Qualité" project, begun in 2008, which consisted of polling our employees and a sample of volunteers on resource management, on the functioning of the association and on the interaction between all parties. The survey demonstrated the gaps in volunteer development, problems of

brand recognition and a need to renew our tools.



*Staff and trainees of AFS France
(photo: AFS France)*

To address the needs of volunteer network development, it was decided to create the full-time position of Volunteer Development Coordinator. For budgetary reasons – and to facilitate the creation of another position – the position of Programme Director was eliminated, as the Sending and Hosting Coordinators were handling enough of management to render the position superfluous. Additionally, the National Director can assume the role of coordinating between the two branches.

Next, to address the second objective – increasing the number of new participants – two measures were taken. First, the position of Partnership and Fundraising Manager, created in 2008, evolved. A marketing dimension was added to more efficiently target potential participants. In parallel, the Sending Department, which already had to face up to an increase in activity during the last campaign, was reinforced by a full-time employee working on recruitment.

Despite these strategic changes - which did not require any dismissals - AFS Vivre Sans Frontière team has been stable and was subjected to only minimal staff turnover. What proves to be a successful approach, is the effort to reward employees through involving them in interesting projects, through

internal movements and through offering training options. At AFS France, the working atmosphere is positive and favourable towards the development of new projects!

EYV 2011

VOLUNTEER! MAKE A DIFFERENCE

With the European Year of Volunteering 2011 approaching, EFIL has taken a step towards a more active engagement in the planning of the year. We are happy to announce that our application for membership of the Alliance – the steering platform of European networks for 2011 – has been approved! The platform will give the EFIL/AFS network the chance to interact with like-minded volunteer networks such as the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO), the Scouts (WAGGS and WOSM) and the Center for European Volunteering (CEV) to make a valuable contribution to 2011.

How is the platform functioning? Within Alliance, several working groups will be formed on different topics around volunteering and improving the environment for it. The main focus will be put on developing papers and opinions to influence policy makers when designing their strategies towards volunteering. For AFS this is an excellent chance to take action and participate in the Alliance activities. Your contact person at EFIL is Ilyana (ilyana.panteleeva@afs.org) so do get in touch with us if you need more information and to let us know of any steps you are planning for EYV 2011! In the joint spirit of volunteering, we'll be glad to put you and your AFS volunteers in contact with partners at the local/national level and come up with great ideas!

For more information and to see the logo please go to www.eyv2011.eu

RECOGNISING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING – A PUBLICATION

EFIL wants to draw your attention to an interesting publication that came out recently. The report is published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).



Many OECD and other countries have developed approaches to provide recognition of non-formal and informal learning and this report reviews countries' experience with policies and practices for such recognition. It seeks to identify the key steps in a recognition process and analyses the personal, economic and social benefits that recognition can generate.

However, country experience has been quite mixed. Recognition processes are often marginal, small-scale and not yet sustainable, and the report points to areas where there is room for improvement. The report also acknowledges that recognition has benefits but also costs. The challenge for policy makers is to find the right balance.

The report is based on the country background reports prepared by individual countries and the country notes prepared by teams of OECD experts following visits to 16 of these countries. The participating countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland,

Ireland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

This compilation is based on information collected by EFIL from the daily newsletter "Europolitics – the European affairs daily" and from the European Youth Forum's "Youth Policy Watch", a bi-weekly bulletin. You can subscribe to the Youth Policy Watch directly from the Youth Forum website:
<http://www.youthforum.org>
press@youthforum.org

★ EU enlargement

In April, **Croatia** concluded negotiations with the EU on the free movement of goods. Zagreb hopes that the remaining 15 chapters subject to accession talks will be closed at the latest by the end of this year. Meanwhile, the fate of Croatia's EU integration bid is in the hands of Slovenian citizens, following a unanimous decision by the parliament in Ljubljana, to put a border arbitration agreement with Zagreb to a national referendum on 6 June. A negative answer by the majority would mean the reopening of bilateral negotiations on the tiny piece of land and sea disputed by the two former Yugoslav countries for the past 18 years.

Montenegro has achieved associate status with the EU following the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on 1 May. The SAA is seen as a formal gateway to EU membership. It foresees gradual creation of a free trade area and the implementation of reforms designed to achieve the adoption of EU standards. Alongside Montenegro, SAAs are also in force in Macedonia, Croatia and Albania.

The European Commission describes **Kosovo** as a "potential candidate

country,” but adds “under UN Security Council Resolution 1244,” an instrument that did not determine Kosovo’s final status. Each EU member state decides whether or not it will recognise Kosovo’s independence. Twenty-two have, five have not.

Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha submitted to the European Commission a set of responses to the pre-accession questionnaire, paving the way for the EU executive to start drafting its opinion on the country’s preparedness for accession. **Albania** formally applied for EU membership on 28 April 2009. Unlike Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia, Albania was not granted a liberalised visa regime with the EU in December.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

In April the Turkish Cypriots elected a new president, Dervis Eroglu, in a vote that is expected to determine the fate of the ongoing talks on the reunification of the island and will also likely affect Turkey’s EU accession talks.

★ Education

The EU’s education ministers held an informal session in Madrid on 13-14 April. Some of the more important issues included the role of education in the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy, subsequent to the conclusions of the European Council and the new generation of EU educational programmes, notably the ‘Youth on the Move’ initiative. The new programme is aimed at meeting the educational targets set in the ‘Europe 2020’ programme. There should be four lines of action for the initiative: attractiveness of higher education; high quality lifelong learning; transnational learning mobility; and young people’s participation in society.

At the Euro-Mediterranean education and research conference in Brdo, Slovenia on 26 April, the Union for

the Mediterranean promoted its aim to ensure better knowledge and mutual understanding among peoples across the Mediterranean, hence the focus on education and research. The draft action plan focuses on a series of actions, such as cooperation of higher education institutions and researchers, networking, creation of new study programmes, promoting exchanges of students, academics and researchers, developing institutional capacity, and cooperation in developing lifelong learning policies.

The European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) adopted, on 27 April, a non-legislative report calling for greater computer literacy, more education business links, fostering mobility, easing lifelong learning and tackling social exclusion in education. “Giving increasing importance to global education, students’ rights and the recognition of non-formal education as a complementary educational field in policy making is key to ensure that young people are best equipped to respond to the challenges of a globalised world,” said Tine Radinja, EYF president.

★ Youth

A New Energy for Europe

On 23-24 April, over 120 delegates of youth



organisations from all over Europe gathered in Brussels for the European Youth Forum Council of

Members (COMEM).

On the agenda was a debate on “A New Energy for Europe: Youth Recipes Out of the Crisis”, held in the European Parliament. With Maroš Šefèoviè, Vice-President of the Commission, and young European political leaders, young people’s ideas

were discussed on how to get youth out of the crisis.

Two European Youth Forum Policy Papers were adopted, on "Democracy and Youth Organisations" and "Vocational Education and Training", together with resolutions addressing the issue of the situation of the "Youth Sector in the Council of Europe" and the opportunities of the International Youth Year.

The April CoMem saw also the adoption of important document outlining crucial statutory changes for the YFJ. They include hiring rather than electing the Secretary General and some adjustments that will assure more transparent and lean platform.

During the closing party, Braga (Portugal) was awarded the title of European Youth Capital 2012. In its application, Braga offered many promising projects, aiming to enhance the dialogue between generations, youth employment policies, youth entrepreneurship and interreligious dialogue. These include the establishment of a "Youth Parliament", which will promote the structured dialogue and active citizenship. This was certainly great news for EFIL's official delegate – Diogo Casal from AFS POR! We herewith thank him again for his commitment and hopping from meeting to meeting in the days even before the CoMem.

2011 EU-China Year of Youth

On May 5-11 the European Youth Forum and the All-China Youth Federation representatives met in Shanghai (China) on the occasion of the 1st EU-China Youth Leaders Summit. The Summit, held with the support of the European Commission and in the framework of the Shanghai Expo, brought together 60 young people from the EU and Chinese Youth Organisations. They adopted a Joint Statement strongly welcoming the decision of EU and China leaders to celebrate the EU-China Year on Youth in 2011. The Year should aim

to enhance the mutual understanding and friendship between the young people of EU and China; encourage young people to actively engage and support the development of EU-China relations.



Commission sets youth priorities for 2010

Recognising the heavy impact of the economic crisis on young people, the Commission formulated several initiatives directly aimed at youth issues. The new initiative named 'Youth on the move' aims to specify measures to improve the quality and reinforce the attractiveness of Europe's higher education. This is a positive update from the reports that education targets had been dropped from the agenda of the meeting of EU Heads of State end of March. More mobility programmes, such as "ERASMUS for young entrepreneurs", and their accessibility to young Europeans are the main priorities. The existing 'Lifelong Learning' and 'Youth in Action' programmes will be drawn together in support. The Commission also plans proposals to guide Member States to better recognition of informal and non-formal learning.

WELCOME TO INGA



Hello everyone!

My name is Inga and I have joined the EFIL team in the Brussels office since Monday 17 May. I'm 28 years old and grew up in Germany. I have just finished my university studies in political science,

peace and conflict studies and geography. During my studies I had the possibility to explore different countries and cultures through university exchanges and internships. My love for traveling started with my AFS exchange year in the USA. Ever since, I could not stop going abroad again and again, including a year in Venezuela and Erasmus exchanges in Rome and Granada, always looking for new friendships, different cultures and upcoming challenges.

One of my latest experiences abroad was an internship at the GTZ (a German development cooperation agency) in Kenya. It was my first time in sub-Saharan Africa and I enjoyed the hospitality and kindness of the people very much. Building on to this experience, I'm happy to be a participant in EFIL's EurAfrican Partnership for Change project which will take me back to Kenya in June for a feasibility study and training sessions.

At the EFIL office, I will be working as training coordinator during the months of Izabela Jurczik's maternity leave. I have an extensive AFS volunteer background in Germany as well as in EFIL and I'm very much looking forward to my new responsibilities. I will be in charge of trainings and seminars throughout Europe, including the Summer Summit where I hope to meet lots of old and new faces again. ☺

CALENDER

4-6 June	EFIL Board meeting, Nice, France
6-9 June	HOO Retreat and EFIL Extra-ordinary General Assembly, Sernhac, France
31 July-7 Aug.	Training for trainers, Hungary

4-9 August	EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, Hungary
23-27 August	Closing Seminar EurAfrican Partnership for Change project, Vienna, Austria
30 September	Intercultural Dialogue Day
8-10 October	EFIL Board meeting, Belgium
28 Nov – 2 Dec	European Citizenship Trimester Programme Brussels Camp

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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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