

# EFILife Magazine

## EFIL trainings and projects

- VSS - To be or not to be ...
- Maribor hosts EFIL's Programme Directors meeting
- Seminar on Fundraising to increase inclusiveness of AFS exchanges
- ECTP Brussels Camp video is now out



PD meeting in Slovenia



AFS BiH

## Partner news

- Partner News
- AFS Portugal invited to Presidential ceremonies
- Focus on UG Interkulturni susreti u Bosni i Hercegovini
- Successful teachers seminar in Serbia



AFS Serbia

## Europe

- Policy developments in Europe

## EFIL

- 40 years of EFIL: EFIL before EFIL
- AFS EuroNet fundraising dinner
- New EPOT - more numerous than ever
- Launching of European Pool of Representatives



EFIL Colloquium 1978

## EFIL Calendar

5 May 2011	AFS EuroNet dinner, Brussels, Belgium
1-2 June 2011	EFIL Heads of Office (HOO) meeting, Vienna, Austria
2-5 June 2011	EFIL General Assembly, Vienna, Austria
5-6 June 2011	EFIL Board meeting, Vienna, Austria
20-25 July 2011	EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit, Portugal
29 September 2011	Intercultural Dialogue Day 2011
27 Nov – 1 Dec	EFIL European Citizenship Trimester Programme Brussels Camp, Belgium
December	EFIL Support Staff meeting



EFIL - The European Federation for Intercultural Learning is the umbrella organisation of AFS offices in Europe

# EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit - To be or not to be...

ZAMBUJEIRA DO MAR - PORTUGAL



Having any doubts? Cannot make the final decision? Intercultural learning, networking, sharing, entertainment activities, meeting friends and getting to know new people, international atmosphere, interesting

and creative workshops, great venue with lots of modern facilities by the ocean, ... It's all about these three letters - VSS!

Over 170 volunteers from 25 countries have already applied for the VSS during the first weeks since the application period started. There are now four weeks left until the final registration deadline. The volunteers who applied in the first round will soon get the confirmation to start the registration procedure. Remember we apply the 'first come, first served' principle. The earlier you apply and register, the wider your choice of workshops and lodgings.

This event aims at the greatest possible diversity in terms of countries of origin as well as age. The Summer Summit is for everyone and its programme is designed to cater for everyone's taste. Last year's Summer Summit showed us that age diversity creates a unique space for learning. Not only young people learn from the experienced volunteers but also 'young

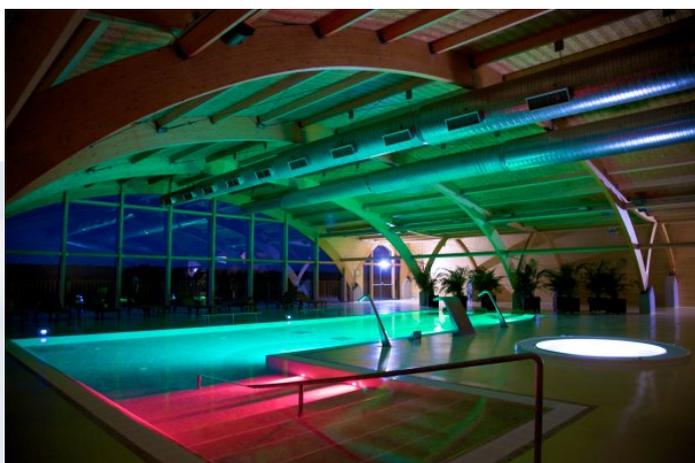


This year's prep team and our famous VSS sunflower

-at-heart' people learn from the youth.

To cut down on overall costs and to create opportunities for participants from financially weaker areas to participate too, we are constantly looking out for sponsorship. If you have any ideas or contacts that could help in this way, do not hesitate to contact Charlotte at EFIL ([charlotte.klinting@afs.org](mailto:charlotte.klinting@afs.org)). There is a sponsor kit available and we would really appreciate your help!

We are happy to notice that several partner organisations strongly support the participation of their volunteers, as they believe in the impact the Summit has on the motivation and development of competences of the volunteers. For some partners the Summit is a worthwhile investment and opportunity to train volunteers, others support participation as a reward for outstanding volunteers. The EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit is indeed a great opportunity for volunteers to meet their peers from other AFS partner organisations and increase cooperation and communication in the AFS network at the level of the volunteers.



Leisure time activities: The very nice indoor pool with waves

This year, we have introduced a new system of training tracks, and this way we hope to make the event more efficient in helping AFS organisations to structure the learning process of their volunteers. Track themes will be: basic workshops, expert workshops, intercultural learning, solidarity with new partners, multicultural Europe, being an inclusive volunteer. There will also be a number of workshops available without following a track.

Meanwhile, join our active discussion in the VSS Facebook group (search for "EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit 2011 in Portugal"). Don't miss the chance to experience the greatest adventure of this summer and join us in Portugal!

## Maribor hosts EFIL's Programme Directors meeting

MARIBOR - SLOVENIA



From 21 to 25 March, 21 Programme Directors and Programme staff met in Maribor, Slovenia, for EFIL's annual

meeting. Three days of workshops, update sessions and discussions helped to understand each other's reality, share best practices and improve programme quality overall.

The meeting enjoyed the participation of staff from AFS organisations in Belgium French, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Turkey as well as full representation of the new partners in South Eastern Europe - Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. We were very honoured to have also 4 non-EFIL participants from AFS USA, Thailand and Brazil present which added an appreciated international touch to the event. A full agenda provided a variety of topics for discussion and sharing. An update was given on EFIL's activity calendar, and among the central topics discussed was the 2nd cycle of the European Citizenship Trimester Programme and the closing Brussels Camp in 2010. The PD

meeting also brought Intercultural Learning (ICL) back on the agenda through a special session "Where are we at ICL?" which reflected on the AFS role and stake in the wider



intercultural field. In a market setting, participants could furthermore exhibit and promote the new programmes and initiatives running in their organisations. The last day of the PD meeting was reserved to address the "new themes in the AFS context": the group dealt with the topic of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and



SEE representatives: Tosja Kobler-Jovanovic, Marija Bevanda, Ivana Pavlovic, Mirela Hnrjic

Transgender (LGBT) and Mental health in youth.

Special attention was given to the work and tremendous progress by the new AFS partners in Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, with growing numbers and increasing quality and services. In a lively session, representatives of the four South Eastern European countries shared successes from the past, support received from established partners in the network and presented their plans and needs for the future.

During the meeting, participants had the opportunity to learn more about the regulatory environment in the US and how the newly introduced compliance requirements impact and complicate the operations of AFS USA as a hosting partner. The group got an update on the recent proceedings of the Programme Policy Working Group (PPWG), now called Programme Standards Group, and topics of interest were collected by Annette Domhan.

EFIL would like to thank EPOT member Jana Holla who was part of the facilitators team and took care of the much appreciated ICL workshop! A big thank you goes to our partners from AFS in Slovenia who made sure the participants were very well taken care of and who revealed to us one of Slovenia's best kept secrets - wine tasting in a freezing cold wine cellar! We are looking forward to continue the tradition of the annual EFIL Programme Directors meeting.



Organising team: Jana Holla, Ilyana Panteleeva, Tosja Kobler-Jovanovic

## Seminar on Fundraising to increase inclusiveness of AFS exchanges

ITTRE - BELGIUM

Participants from AFS organisations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia attended an EFIL seminar on fund-raising skills 21-26 March 2011 in Ittre, near Brussels, Belgium.

The seminar programme embraced a range of possible funding partnerships, from individual donors, through foundations, private corporations, finishing with European Union support programmes. An important part of the agenda was devoted

to practicing proposal writing and creating national fund-raising plans. The group also enjoyed the privilege of meeting a key person from one of the important AFS sponsors, Intesa San Paolo Group - Dr Fiorenzo Mariani who joined the seminar as a guest speaker.

The preparation and facilitation of the event was taken care of by a group of excellent trainers: Barbara Bretschneider from AFS Germany, Susie Eibenstein from AFS Italy and Carlos Porro



from AFS International. There are only few fund-raising experts in the AFS network and we were lucky to have them on board!

In the closing session of the seminar the group expressed their satisfaction with the learning outcomes and their strong motivation to put them into practice. At the same

time the participants would have wished to have more organisations present, including those from outside Europe. The hope was articulated that fund-raising will be more recognised in the future as a key competence area, in line with the strategic goals set by AFS for the years to come.

## ECTP Brussels Camp Video is now out!

BRUSSELS - BELGIUM



The long-awaited ECTP video is now finally ready for you to watch and to download! It captures all the great moments from 2010's end-of-stay camp informing about what ECTP is all about.

AFS organisations are invited to use it as an orientation tool at their pre-departure camps - it sure gives future participants a good insight in the programme.

You can find it either at our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=153340048026517>) for a stream - the download version is available on the EFIL website ([www.efil.afs.org](http://www.efil.afs.org)). Enjoy the show!

Meanwhile preparations are ongoing for this year's European Citizenship Trimester Programme and the closing camp in Brussels at the end of November. Read more about it in the next editions of EFILife.



## 40th Anniversary of EFIL - EFIL before EFIL



In 2011 EFIL is celebrating its 40th anniversary. In June, EFIL Member Organisations will gather in Vienna for the biennial General Assembly, where EFIL's anniversary will be celebrated at the closing Gala Dinner on Saturday 4 June.

*"In 1964 AFS celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first ambulance service (1914) with a reunion in New York and lots of events around the world. The AFS chapter of Torino (Turin)*

*had the idea of inviting three delegates from every AFS organisation in Europe to an informal meeting in Italy, with the purpose of sharing experiences and discussing how AFS could develop common activities in Europe (...)*

*The meeting was highly successful and led to the establishment of a "European Information Committee" of volunteers that began to publish a European newsletter - the first one ever to spread the word about what AFS was doing in the different European countries (...)*

*It was the joint effort of this new office and of the European Information Committee that led to the establishment of a permanent European Federation in 1971."*



As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EFIL is coming up, we are looking for information on EFIL's early years and development, and we were lucky to find a wealth of information in the archives of Fondazione Intercultura in Colle Val d'Elsa, where Charlotte Klinting, intern at the EFIL office, had a long talk with Roberto Ruffino, Chairman of EFIL and EFIL's long term memory, about the very beginning of the Federation when it was still called "AFSEuropa", and about the stories behind the many pictures from the first colloquiums, general assemblies, seminars in the Strasbourg Youth Centre, etc.

After a long walk down memory lane and many photocopies later, Charlotte returned with ancient newsletters, board meeting minutes, pictures, annual reports, faxes and lots of information to digest. Some of all this will be displayed at the General Assembly in Vienna, where we want to take everyone on an amazing journey through EFIL's development and achievements and remember everyone who was involved.



# AFS EuroNet fundraising dinner

BRUSSELS - BELGIUM

Late 2010, EFIL sent out a call to reach AFS Alumni based in Brussels, in the European institutions and other organisations, with the intention to create an "AFS EuroNet" network. The call was distributed in various ways, including an article in the European Commission's newsletter "Commission en Direct", while contacts at the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Europe enthusiastically helped spreading the word.

The search for AFS alumni in Brussels has been very successful so far and the list is closing in on 100 names, all of them AFS alumni currently residing in Brussels, with AFS experiences nicely spread between 1964 and 2007! Along the way, even former EFIL Board members have turned up. Thank you to all the people who have helped putting us in contact with returnees and who have forward-

ed the call to others or distributed it within their networks. As the search continues, we urge everyone to keep spreading the word - please contact [charlotte.klinting@afs.org](mailto:charlotte.klinting@afs.org) at the EFIL secretariat if you are a



EuroNet Steering Group

former AFS'er in Brussels or if you know of more AFS'ers in or around the EU institutions. The contact list has also recently been shared with the group.

What's next? At the steering group meeting in March, it was decided to plan a dinner in Brussels for the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, as a

first opportunity for the group to meet and reconnect with AFS, be updated on the growth of AFS and EFIL over the years and of course, share AFS experiences and involvement.

Next to the social aspect, the dinner serves another purpose as the first "project" of the newly launched AFS EuroNet initiative. The money raised from the dinner will be used entirely to support the participation to EFIL's annual Volunteer Summer Summit (Portugal 20-25 July) of key-volunteers from one of the youngest AFS network partners : AFS Bosnia-Herzegovina. For an update on our partner in Bosnia-Herzegovina, please see elsewhere in this edition of EFILife. With the support of the AFS EuroNet, we hope to raise enough funds to sponsor the attendance of minimal two Bosnian volunteers. We very much count on your participation!

## New EPOT - more numerous than ever

As every two years, EFIL is welcoming the spring time with the full replenishment of the European Pool of Trainers. The EPOT 2011-2012 looks really impressive: we have as many as 85 people, out of which about 40% are new in the Pool.

The short presentations of each EPOT members will soon be available also on the EFIL website.

Congratulations to all of them for expressing commitment to share their skills and knowledge not only inside their national organisations but also for other AFS partners. The Travelling Trainers scheme, as well as the EFIL international trainings will give them many opportunities to get active. Some facts about the refreshed EPOT: the members represent 20 EFIL Member Organisations; the youngest trainer is 17, the oldest 67 years old; there are 35 men and 50 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 volunteer trainers who didn't manage to meet the deadline but are still potentially interested, there will be more chances to join the EPOT in the future. In about 6 months EFIL will announce an opportunity to nominate additional candidates so don't miss the next chance!

## Launching of European Pool of Representatives

Together with the organisation of training, projects and programmes, and the development of new partners in Europe, one of the main fields of activities of EFIL is Networking & Lobbying, aiming to improve the environment for youth exchanges in Europe and to profile EFIL as a respected and expert actor in the area of intercultural learning, global education, youth mobility and volunteerism.

The European landscape is rich and diverse in terms of

BFL	Hanneke Boode, Lieven Bauwens, Stephanie Langerock
BFR	Yves Gheysen
CZE	Eva Vitkova
FIN	Liisa Vitikkala, Anni Siltanen
FRA	Michel Antoine
GER	Wolf-Christian Frey, Anna-Maria Haas, Anne Hitzegrad, Julia Jürgens, Paul Steiner, Ole Oberste Berghaus, Alexandra Singpiel
HUN	András Ede, Balazs Lato, Eliza Popper
ITA	Edoardo Laurenti
RUS	Edwin Kovalchuck
SLO	Tana Debeljak
SUI	Stéphanie Oneyser, Karin Bitterli
TUR	Mehmet Hazar Yıldırım

events, processes and structures to participate in. In order to be able to grasp them fully and represent the views and experience of our AFS members in the best way, and to reach out to external partners and developments, EFIL has formed a new structure: European Pool of Representatives, gathering 24 volunteers from different countries:

Their main task will be representing EFIL externally in different areas

AUT	Lucia Metzbauer, Markus Wilthaner, Philipp Wagner
BFL	Dorien Paridaens, Nele Dayers, Pieter Verstuyf, Hanneke Boode
BFR	Christophe Luyten, Viviana Galli, Yves Gheysen
CRO	Doris Ilic
CZE	Barbora Vodičková, Eva Vítková, Jana Belohlavkova, Alena Novosadová, Jitka Cerna, Kristyna Zakova
DEN	Lars Føhrby Overgaard, Urd Korno Rasmussen, Kasper Jepsen, Anne Kristine Gadeberg, Charlotte Klinting, Marie Louise Jacobs, Anders Belling
EGY	Jana Holla, Dalia Sherif, Ahmed Latif, Youssef Atwan
ESP	Danny Martinez Aller
FIN	Riikka Uljas, Anni Siltanen
FRA	Clara Bourgeois, Yonathan Darmon, Zoé Duplessis-Kergomard, Adrien Fernandez
GER	Max Reichel, Martin Haberstroh, Anne Hitzegrad, Florin Feldmann, Anna-Maria Hass, David Bartsch, Ole Oberste Berghaus, Silvia Riehl, Yannick Flechtner, Kai Böttner, Teena Ihmels, Hannah Weck, Annika Menke
HUN	Csilla Fodor, Eliza Popper, Balazs Lato
ITA	Edoardo Laurenti, Marianna Fumagalli, Gillo Baldazzi, Rosa Pastena, Silvia Rosati, Alberto Pagani
LAT	Karlina Anna Viksna
NOR	Anne Martine Toennesen, Liv-Heidi Pedersen, Tora Snorradottir, Camilla Soullère, Pernille Robinson, Karina Fossmark Pedersen
POR	Nuno Guerreiro, João Rino, Celia Aboim, André Galvão, Dulio Santos, Carina Rino
RUS	Ekatarina Bagdasarova, Anastasia Arsenteyeva
SRB	Dunja Zivanovic, Nemanja Stancic, Milena Miladinovic, Ivana Gazikalovic-Pavlovic
SUI	Stephan Winiker, Karin Bitterli, Charles Bourrier
TUR	Cem Çemçi, Mehmet Hazar Yildirim, Cemre Akin, Mehmed Auf, Hakan Karaoglu, Ömer Ongun

and contributing to advocacy efforts. The new Pool is meant to bring benefits to AFS/EFIL but also to provide space for learning, exchange and networking among members. They have very diverse profiles, ranging from simple interest to professional experience in the lobby field, from 20 to 67 years of age, from grassroots volunteers to trainers and board members.

EFIL is looking forward to the increased presence in different external environments through the EPoR members. Congratulations to all of them for taking the initiative to join and good luck in their future engagements!

# 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.



**AFS Germany** has received an excellence award from the rating agency PHINEO. The agency evaluated various integration programs in Germany in multi-level analysis (“Integrating young migrants through education”) and concluded that AFS has the potential to influence society in a lasting way.



Mick Petersmann (AFS GER)

A number of Member Organisations recently held their annual General Assembly over the past weeks. The GA of **AFS Finland** took place in Turku and elected two new Board members. Niko Myller has been elected Chair of the Board. In Prague **AFS Czech Republic** celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organisation at the General Assembly where a new Board was elected. Guest speaker was Zora Loviskova, Chair of Intercultura Slovakia. **AFS Austria** elected its Executive Board Members at the General Assembly in Vienna. Philipp Wagner, who has served as Chair since 2007, stepped down. Philipp was praised for his long term commitment and enthusiasm, dedication and valuable contributions to AFS AUT and the AFS network at large. Doris Strauß has been elected as new Partner Chair.



Board AFS Austria



And last but not least, AFS International has made the following announcement about **AFS Egypt**: “Despite the

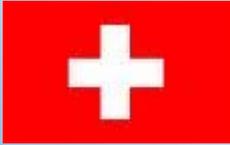
uncertainty of how the security situation in Egypt will evolve over the coming months, the way that AFS Egypt handled the evacuation of the hosted participants in February and the emergency plans they have designed for future hosted participants give us faith that their staff is well prepared to handle crisis situations and that their risk management methods are sound. On this basis we feel confident that we can re-open hosting in Egypt for NH11, with the provision that the natural parents and participants agree specifically in writing to follow exactly the directions of AFS Egypt regarding what precautions to take while hosted there, including honouring all curfew hours and avoiding public demonstrations, plus anything else AFS EGY feels is necessary to help ensure their safety.”



Michèle Stauber-Suter has left **AFS Switzerland**, after having worked with AFS SUI and AFS INT in several programme and IT related fields for more than a decade. Marianne Knechtel has taken over the IT Support function. Marianne is already working with AFS SUI as Volunteer Support Coordinator.



Jürg Rüttimann and Sabine Siegrist (AFS SUJ)



In **AFS Switzerland**, after serving 6 years as the Chair, Jürg Rüttimann has stepped down. Matti Straub got elected as the new Chair. Next to the formal business there were two guest speakers who provided interesting food for thought: Don Mohanlal from the Board of Trustees and Dr. Philippe Mahler from the University of Zurich. Following the GA, an Innovation Forum was offered to the key volunteers of AFS SUJ in order to move forward the Volunteer Strategy.



From **AFS The Netherlands** comes the news that Jill van

Vliet, Programme Assistant for the past 5 years, has decided to leave. For any questions regarding sending and hosting, contact Koen Wijnhoven (Programme Manager) or Astrid Kroese (Secretary). Friedhelm Janzen is joining the team of AFS NED as a part time Organizational Development Coordinator, focussing mainly on volunteers and schools. Friedhelm has worked as a staff member for AFS Germany from 2001-2006.

## AFS Portugal invited to Presidential ceremonies

*By Filipa Almeida Santos (Chair of AFS Portugal)*

On 9 March 2011 Intercultura-AFS POR was present, by invitation of the President of the Republic, at the ceremonies of his Empowerment which were held at the Parliament and at the President's official residence. Intercultura-AFS POR also attended a personal and restricted lunch held by the President aboard the emblematic vessel "Navio-Escola Sagres" that counted with the presence of about 40 young leaders, representatives of numerous college-based academic organisations and only 12 volunteer youth organisations. As he addressed the leaders, the President made clear that with this gesture he wanted to reaffirm his profound conviction in the youth of Portugal and his commitment towards their empowerment.

During a personal conversation with Intercultura's Chair, Filipa Almeida Santos, the President congratulated Intercultura-AFS POR for its good work in changing minds, raising awareness of intercultural issues and promoting tolerance. He conveyed his confidence that Intercultura-AFS POR's work with youth is able and decisive to help build a more developed, more just and more credible country by giving youth the opportunity to become citizens of the world.

Intercultura-AFS POR is absolutely delighted to have been invited and present at these events, both because of the public recognition made of the organization itself, but also because of the inherent recognition of the importance of our mission, which is upheld and developed also by the whole AFS network.

The organisation is proud to share, with confidence, the President's words when he says "We should bet on the creative energy, the audacity and the talent of our youth. (...) Young people are a factor of hope for Portugal".



# Focus on UG Interkulturni susreti u Bosni I Hercegovini



*By Mirela Hrnjić, President of UG ISU BiH and Representative of Office of AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc. in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Ten years after the closure of AFS activities in Yugoslavia, in 2001 the initiative to restart AFS programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was launched by AFS Germany. Six students from BiH had the opportunity to experience an one-year exchange in Germany in 2002/03, which would not have been possible without tremendous efforts by AFS Germany (especially Mrs. Inge Rauschnig and Mr.

Christian Steiner) by obtaining scholarships and through students' preparations. These first exchange students founded UG ISU BiH in 2004 and continued the work on AFS programmes.



Today, almost ten years after the first initiative, there are more than 35 active volunteers in two local chapters working on promotion of intercultural learning and AFS programmes. Altogether, 79 students from BiH have experienced an AFS one-year exchange and 9 have been on a trimester exchange. Meanwhile, hosting programmes have been set up again and in 2009 3 students from Turkey spent a year in BiH. In 2010/11 UG ISU BiH hosted one student from the Czech Republic on a trimester programme and one student from Germany on a year programme.

There are 20 students selected for participation in AFS programmes in 2011/12: 7 students for the ECTP programme in Germany, Austria, Turkey and Belgium Flanders and 13 students for a year programme in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark and France. Not only has the number of participants from BiH increased, but this year they are coming from 9 different cities from all parts of the country. We are still hoping to receive host students' applications for BiH for the upcoming exchange cycle.



Our biggest needs are: 1) how to promote BiH as destination and increase the number of host students; 2) basic and advanced trainings for volunteers; 3) fundraising hints and ideas. All advice from AFS partners, EFIL and AFS INT is very welcome.

Beside AFS programme activities, UG ISU BiH is working on the topics of ICL, active citizenship and youth policy in BiH, with governmental institutions and other local and international organisations. Last year the MoU was signed with the Directive for European integrations by the Council of Ministers of BiH, making the cooperation for the promotion of active citizenship and EU integrations official. In May this year UG ISU BiH is going to host a Youth exchange on ICL in Sarajevo with 30 participants from BiH, Italy and Serbia, sponsored by the Italian and Serbian governments. Seven volunteers of UG ISU BiH are going to participate in a Youth in Action training on active citizenship in Italy during this summer.



UG ISU BiH is expressing gratitude to AFS partners in Germany, Italy and Switzerland which have provided great support in scholarships without which it would have been difficult to sustain the increased number of sending participants. Words of gratitude go also to all AFS partners which have supported UG ISU BiH with donations for participation in EFIL meetings or through inviting volunteers to participate in their trainings and programme activities. UG ISU BiH is looking forward to be accepted as a new EFIL member organisation at the upcoming EFIL General Assembly and is very thankful for the tremendous support EFIL has given in the past years. A

big thanks goes to AFS International which is providing support on development, IT, branding and ICL.

Last but not least, UG ISU BiH would like to thank all volunteers in BiH for their commitment to the AFS idea and their hard work on programme activities while sharing the common dream on the development of mutual understanding and erasing the stereotypes and prejudices in our country and beyond.

# Successful teacher seminar in Serbia

VMJACKA BANJA - SERBIA



By *Ivana Gazikalović-Pavlović, President of Interkultura Serbia*

Eighteen high school teachers from all over Serbia gathered in Vrnjacka Banja from 8-10 April 2011 to attend Interkultura's seminar entitled "Intercultural learning - the encounters that change the world".

Two days of workshops, lectures and presentations were spent with the aim to inform high school teachers about ICL, particularly in the context of AFS student exchange programmes. The agenda included presentations on the history, programmes and structure of AFS and Interkultura Serbia, lectures and presentations on culture, intercultural learning, youth mobility in Europe, Interkultura Serbia's realities, experiences of volunteers and exchange students, as well as workshops on teachers' active participation in student exchange programmes and the development of an action plan for their own involvement.

The participants were very enthusiastic and we believe and hope that many of them will join Interkultura's volunteer force. Due to our limited budget -

the event was funded from Interkultura's own sources - we were not able to invite another 52 teachers that had applied to attend. A very special thank you goes to Dunja Zivanovic and Nemanja Stancic, our two young but experienced volunteers who impressed the participants with their knowledge, enthusiasm and attitude. The seminar was a huge success and we look forward to working more in this field.



## 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> and [press@youthforum.org](mailto:press@youthforum.org)*

### EU Enlargement

Against the back drop of massive anti-government demonstrations in Zagreb, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso has praised the efforts of **Croatian** Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor and her cabinet to bring the country closer to the European Union. He expressed his confidence that the conclusion of the accession talks with Croatia is within reach. The Commission listed, at the beginning of March, the remaining reforms Zagreb has to successfully implement in the areas of the judiciary and fundamental rights to be able to complete its accession talks by the end of June. The Croatian government is currently working on the adoption, by mid-May, of an action plan on the implementation of all remaining laws in order to meet the Commission's benchmarks.

The negative result of the **Icelandic** referendum on the new Icesave bill would not have an impact on the ongoing accession negotiations, the European Commission has said, underlining that at the end of the process Reykjavik would need to comply with all its obligations stemming from its membership of the European Economic Area (EEA), including from the Directive on deposit guarantee schemes.



## Youth



On 14-16 March, the Council of Europe (CoE) hosted new meetings of the Joint Council on Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth in Strasbourg. The meetings saw representatives from youth NGOs meet with government officials to decide upon youth sector priorities, as well as make recommendations for future budgets and programmes. Up for discussion were recent reforms to the CoE, youth participation and the rights of young people in Europe. Proposals made will now be adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the CoE's decision-making body. The meetings were held within the Council of Europe's Co-Management structure, which aims to foster greater youth participation in decision-making.

The UN General Assembly decided to hold a two-day high-level meeting on youth on 25-26 July at its headquarters in New York. The event will be based on the overarching theme of dialogue and mutual understanding, and will aim to result in a concise action-orientated outcome document. Plenary meetings and roundtables will focus on strengthening youth cooperation on issues such as social integration, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The Assembly also recognised that the International Year of Youth, which began in August, represented an important opportunity to bolster government investment in youth and the international community's commitment to address youth-related challenges.

## Education



The Bologna Follow Up Group, which met on 17-18 March in Godollo in Hungary, failed to re-invigorate the Bologna Process, according to the European Student's Union (ESU). The group is composed of representatives of the forty-seven countries belonging to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and international organisations such as the European Commission, Council of Europe and ESU. "Although progress in implementing the Bologna reforms continues to be slow, the meeting showed little appetite for proposing concrete initiatives which could lead to a change in this lingering situation", said ESU President Bert Vandenkendelaere. The ESU thinks that one of the clearest symptoms of this lack of interest in the implementation of the Bologna Process is the fact that national student unions are less often consulted than in the early years of Bologna. It fears the process will fall apart if there is no increase in interest at the next ministerial conference in 2012.

**Editor:** Paul Claes      **Layout:** Thomas Jürgenschellert

**Contributions by:** Paul Claes, Izabela Jurczik, Charlotte Klinting, Ilyana Panteleeva, Thomas Jürgenschellert, Filipa Almeida Santos, Eva Vitkova, Ivana Gazikalovic-Pavlovic, Mirela Hrnjic

**Pictures by:** EFIL, AFS Serbia, AFS Bosnia and Herzegovina, AFS Germany, AFS Switzerland, AFS Austria, AFS Portugal

*We welcome your contributions! If you would like to subscribe to (or unsubscribe from) this newsletter, please contact the EFIL Secretariat at: [thomas.juergenschellert@afs.org](mailto:thomas.juergenschellert@afs.org).*

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