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"The European Youth Forum is a platform of 99 youth organisations in Europe, working with the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations to promote the interests of young people."

Youth Agenda

A NEW YOUTH AGENDA FOR THE EU

The YFJ launches its main expectations of the next European Parliament and European Commission on 20 March.

At the beginning of June this year, the EU citizens will elect a new European Parliament for a five year term. In November, a new Commission should also be installed. Anticipating this changing of the guard in the EU institutions, the YFJ formulated its main expectations for the next mandate of the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The YFJ's Proposals for a new Youth Agenda for the EU: the YFJ's main expectations of the next mandate of the European Parliament & European Commission (2009-2014), adopted by the General Assembly, contain fifteen proposals in the fields of education, civil society and citizenship, participation and youth policy mainstreaming, human rights, employment and social affairs, such as, among others:

- A framework for quality assurance in Non-Formal Education;
- Ensured student representation in educational institutions;
- A legal statute for European associations;

- A period abroad for every young European through expanded and improved mobility programmes;
- Tackling youth issues across the board with a Group of Commissioners on youth and a parliament intergroup on youth mainstreaming;
- A European framework for the rights of the volunteer;
- Lowering the voting age to 16 for all elections;
- A new EU Strategy for Social and Sustainable Development as a follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy, including a renewed European Youth Pact.

These proposals will be presented to the press, European Institutions, parties and candidates running for the European Parliament in a launch event on 20 March in Brussels. At this moment, the YFJ will also launch a dedicated website www.youthagenda.eu and start its campaign to put the 15 proposals on the agenda of the EU Institutions for 2009—2014. The Youth Agenda will continue to serve as an advocacy tool throughout the next mandate of the EU Institutions and as a yardstick for the evaluation in 2014.

GET OUT AND VOTE

GETTING OUT THE YOUNG VOTE FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Youth organisations mobilise to raise awareness on the European Parliament elections.

Between 4 and 7 June 2009, the citizens of the European Union will, for the 7th time, directly elect their representatives in the European Parliament. Since the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, turnout numbers have consistently fallen, to below 50% in 2004. In many countries, even smaller percentages of young people found their way to the polling stations. It will be important to reverse this trend: a higher turnout of young people at the upcoming elections will be of crucial importance, both to strengthen the legitimacy of the European Parliament and to add force to the voice of youth in the European Union.

Many youth councils and youth organisations across the EU are therefore running campaigns or organising activities to raise awareness of the European Parliament elections in June, and to encourage young people to vote. The YFJ is supporting and

contributing to these campaigns, and is providing a common umbrella for the get-out-the-vote effort of youth organisations. At the same time, the YFJ is working with the European Parliament and the European Commission, in order to contribute to the institutional campaigns.



Logo of the campaign

If you would like to know more on what campaigns or activities youth organisations are running, on the YFJ's activities or the information campaigns of the EU institutions, you can surf to the YFJ's Get-Out-the-Vote web page www.youthvotes.eu, which will be online as of 20 March.

CAMPAIGNS FROM YFJ MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Y VOTE 2009 – EUROPEAN YOUTH CHOICE AEGEE



"Y Vote 2009" Campaign is Europe's largest youth platform, calling for young people to take stands on the most important social issues of Europe, youth participation in electoral process and representative democracy. AEGEE-Europe's campaign encourages and empowers young Europeans to make informed choices at the European Parliament Elections 2009 through series of large and small scale activities in all EU member states. Implemented solely

by volunteer work, the campaign is supported by the President and more than 60 members of the European Parliament and 4 European Commissioners.

Project activities include actions in diverse formats and through diverse media, with local, regional, national and European dimension, designed to challenge political ignorance and disinterest among young people by providing them with information, competences and motivation to become informed voters and – beyond that – active citizens in the political discourse of their communities and at the European scale.

The campaign involves several member organisations of the European Youth Forum and the events are open to all of its member organizations.

For more information check out our website at <http://yvote2009.blogactiv.eu> or contact us at y.vote.aegee@gmail.com!

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH APPOINTED

20 representatives of European Youth Forum Member Organisations were elected at the YFJ General Assembly in Rotterdam, in November 2008, as members of the new Advisory Council on Youth for the mandate period 2009-2011.

The Advisory Council on Youth (AC) is part of the Directorate of Youth and Sport's unique co-management structures, through which they implement the Council of Europe's commitment to foster greater youth participation. Within this structure, the AC is the body made up of representatives of the non-governmental youth sector. It has the task of formulating opinions and proposals on any question concerning youth that are dealt with within the Council of Europe.

The AC is composed of 30 members, 20 of which are elected by the YFJ; the 10 others are nominated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. From the 20 YFJ Member Organisations, seven represent National Youth Councils and 13 come from International Youth NGOs.

The Advisory Council works jointly with government representatives who sit on the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ). The two bodies come together in the framework of the Joint Council on Youth issues (JC), which is the body establishing the youth sector's priorities, objectives and budget envelopes, as well as in the Programming Committee of Youth (PC), which is responsible for establishing, monitoring and evaluating the programmes of the European Youth Centers and the European Youth Foundation. The Joint Council on Youth, which is in session twice a year (March and October) is chaired for half of the mandate by the CDEJ Chair and for half of the mandate by the AC Chair.

During the mandate period of the elected AC the focus will be on implementing the Agenda 2020, 'The Future of the Council of Europe Youth Policy', which was adopted at the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Kiev 2008.

For the purpose of coordinating the representatives elected by the YFJ and to ensure a coherent approach within the AC, the YFJ organises biannual coordination meetings. The representatives are given the opportunity to discuss issues that are on the agenda for the AC meetings and establish a common view, and to tackle the most pertinent issues. The first coordination meeting in 2009 will be held in connection with the first AC meeting in Mollina in March.



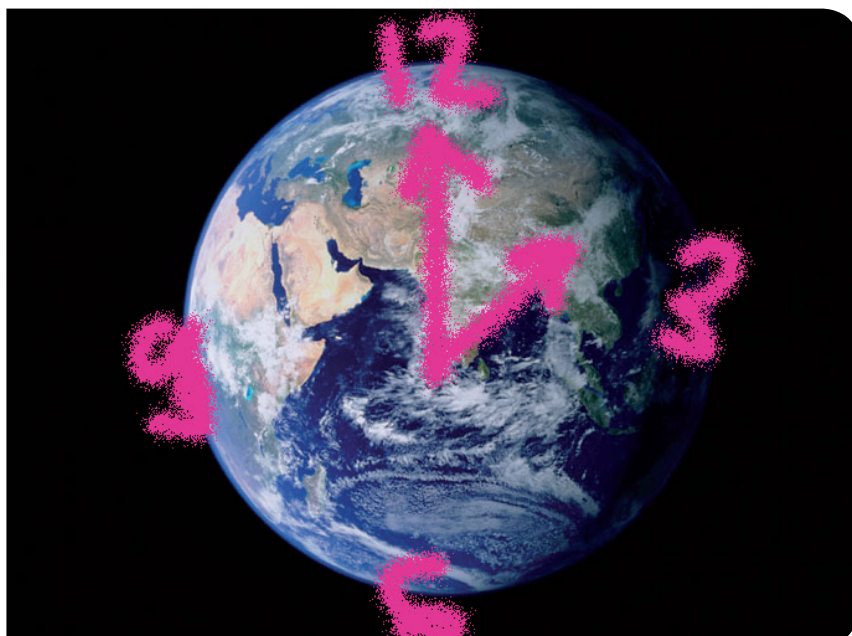
Youth Center in Strasbourg, © Council of Europe

Furthermore, the new AC will have a training session in early March, organised by the Directorate of Youth and Sport, where the members will be briefed on the co-management structures as well as on the responsibilities of the AC in their mandate period.

CLIMATE CHANGE

STEPPING UP YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

2009 is a crucial year for the planet, especially with regards to climate change, as a new global deal should be concluded in Copenhagen in December, following the 2007 Bali Action Plan. This new international agreement will address the period after 2012, succeeding the Kyoto Protocol.



The European Union plays a significant role in the adoption of the agreement and therefore it is paramount that European youth take action and make their voices heard. In December 2008, the European Parliament adopted the energy and climate package which was first presented in the beginning of 2007. It will be formally adopted by the Spring Council in March. The European Commission also issued a communication which outlines proposals for the EU position towards the Copenhagen talks in December 2009 and it will also be discussed during the March European Council. Some of the key points of the communication regard the common but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries, with their different emission reduction targets. It also outlines the need to include international

aviation and shipping emissions, and addresses the major issue of adaptation to dangerous and inevitable climate change as well. In this respect, the question of financing lies is at the core of the debate.

Ensuring a coherent input of youth organisations into the debate is a priority for the YFJ especially as young people and future generations will experience the most impact by the effect of climate change. European youth must get involved and have a say, underline the need for strong measures which would ensure social, environmental and economic sustainability and for a fair global deal for both the South and the North. The YFJ is consequently planning many activities in 2009 both at the European and the international level. It will coordinate throughout the year with other youth organisations working on climate change to make sure the efforts are not duplicated. The YFJ will lobby for an increase in the number of official youth delegates in the United Nations climate change talks, especially during the Conference of Parties (COP) in December, and it will encourage its Member Organisations to approach their governments in order to have a stronger youth voice in the European delegations.

Moreover, it will organise a round table ahead of the European Council in order to discuss the role European youth and youth organisations can and should play. Climate change is also part of the points the YFJ will raise towards the European Parliament elections in June. Later in the year, as the Copenhagen conference approaches, the YFJ will organise different activities both to raise awareness among its Member Organisations and other youth organisations, especially from the south, and to prepare youth delegates for the upcoming COP. The YFJ should therefore be able to come to the conference with a strong position and coordinated delegation which, together with other European youth groups, will do their best to push for the adoption of the new climate change agreement.

GLOBAL COOPERATION

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM AT THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSOCD):

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) participated in the 47th Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD), chaired this year by Finland and held under the priority theme of "Social Integration." Together with other International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations with ECOSOC Status at the United Nations (UN) and the youth delegates coming from the National Youth Councils, the YFJ coordinated its participation and lobby action to strengthen the youth agenda at the global level.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS

This year is particularly important regarding youth issues at the United Nations with the upcoming report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the adoption of Goals and Targets on youth participation and well being of young people. In this frame a youth resolution is being sponsored by Portugal and Senegal. The European Youth Forum, closely followed up the negotiations on the matter, thanks as well to the cooperation with the Portuguese National Youth Council (CNJ), and the other UN Youth Delegates from other European Countries.

Further, considering the impact of the current financial crisis on young people, the YFJ also followed the negotiations concerning the resolution on employment.

VOLUNTEERING AND THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

On February 6 the Finnish Permanent Mission to the United Nations, the YFJ, and the Finnish National Youth Council (Allianssi) organised a youth side-event. The event provided a space for reflection at the UN on the role of volunteering as a tool for participation, development and change. Young people and experts on youth gathered together with representatives of the Finnish government to discuss the importance of the follow-up of the UN GA Resolution on Volunteering adopted last year and its connection between youth participation and youth rights was stressed as well in the interventions of the experts of UN Youth Unit and of representatives of UNICEF. By providing opportunities for volunteering and participation, youth organisations are able to make young people committed, thus contributing to the enhancement of their social integration and full realisation as citizens.

The Finnish Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Paula Risikko, present at the meeting, outlined in particular the role of National Youth Councils in this process: "I fully agree with the Secretary General's latest report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for

Youth, in which the value of National Youth Councils is recognised. In ensuring the full of effective participation of youth in society, it is obvious that all young people must be taken into account."

CLIMATE CHANGE AND YOUTH

In preparation for the 2009 World Youth Report, a side event was organised by the United Nations Programme on Youth as well as Youth and Climate change on the 9th of February.

The YFJ participated in the event, following up a written input sent to the UN Youth Programme to feed the forthcoming report. During the event, the partners in the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO), speak up on the role of Non-governmental Youth Organisations in climate change.

UNIVERSIDAD DE PARTICIPACION CIUDADANA (UPC)



Participants at the UPC in February

The European Youth Forum was present at the 6th *Universidad de Participación Ciudadana*, taking place from February 9 to February

15, 2009 in Colonia Valdense, Uruguay. This event was prepared by several organizations including; the YMCA Latin America and Carribe, the Latin American Youth Forum (FLAJ), the Interamerican Region of the world organisation of the Scout Movement, the Spanish Youth Council (CJE), the Iberoamerican Youth Organisation and the Uruguay Youth Institute.

Included in the programme were preparatory meetings for two events that the YFJ is helping to organise. These two events are the University on Youth and Development (UYD) and the Euro-Latin American Youth Forum (FEULAT) 2009. YFJ will also be co-funding a workshop on volunteering, working to strengthen the capacity of National Youth Platforms in Latin America.

DISCRIMINATION

THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW-UP ON THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The 53rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place from March 2 to 13 in New York. The CSW was established in 1946 as a functional Commission of the UN Economic and Social Council¹ and aims at making recommendations to the Council in the field of women's rights, gender equality and advancement of the status of women worldwide.

The CSW also aims to follow up on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995 in Beijing.

To this aim, each session of the CSW takes into account a review theme in order to assess progresses made and to identify existing gaps in the achievement of equality between women and men in important areas of life. This year the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels will be tackled by the CSW, together with the issue related to the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS, which will be the main theme of the 53rd Session.

The question of equal participation of women and men in politics is addressed by the YFJ Policy Paper on Achieving quality between Women and Men, adopted by the YFJ Council of Members in

¹ Brief history of the Commission on Status of Women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/CSW60YRS/CSWbriefhistory.pdf>

November 2007. Indeed, the participation of women in politics in Europe, and all over the world, remains upsettingly low with, for example, only 19.8 percent of Europe's Members of National Parliaments being women.

Moreover, this issue is also tackled by the Beijing Platform for Action, by which governments committed to ensuring the equal representation of women and men in Parliaments and Governmental bodies, and to guaranteeing shared parental responsibilities between women and men.

Following-up on the Policy Paper on Achieving the Equality between Women and Men, the YFJ promoted last year a campaign, based upon postcards delivering

a message to governments and policy makers, aiming to raise the governments' attention on the commitments undertaken by signing the Beijing Platform for Action in the field of health, education and women's participation in politics. The YFJ will further promote this campaign, as well as its policies on achieving equality between women and men, on the occasion of the 53rd Session of the CSW.

If you are interested in getting involved in these initiatives, please do not hesitate to contact the European Youth Forum at marco.perolini@youthforum.org



The postcards from the Beijing Platform for Action campaign

EMPLOYMENT

WANT TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR? GO ON ERASMUS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS!

The big family of mobility programmes of the European Commission is growing as the Commission presents its new programme 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs,' on February 19. While the normal Life Long Learning programmes provide formal educational mobility opportunities and the Youth in Action provides non-formal education mobility chances, this programme is for young people who are, or want to become, 'entrepreneurs.'

According to the European Commission 'entrepreneurship' refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk acceptance, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. In a broad sense, entrepreneurship should be considered as a mindset that can be usefully applied in all working activities and in life. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a key competence for all.

Entrepreneurship is often seen as starting a company, therefore there is often a distinction made between social entrepreneurship and business entrepreneurship.

While business entrepreneurship is the creation of new businesses or companies, a social entrepreneur is someone who recognises a social challenge and uses entrepreneurial principles to organise, create, and manage a venture to make social change.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs focuses on business entrepreneurship, creating opportunities for new entrepreneurs to work with and learn from an experienced entrepreneur for up to 6

months in another country. This experience should be a strong learning experience for both the new and the experienced entrepreneur, and create links between Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) throughout Europe. The young entrepreneur can apply through local partners of EUROCHAMBRES and when a suitable match between a new and experienced entrepreneur is found, will receive a grant from the programme to pay for travel and living costs.

It is positive that with the new programme the European Commission increases the possibilities for young people to be mobile and learn new competences such as intercultural skills. There should be however a strong focus on the quality of the mobility experience. Mobility is a strong learning opportunity for intercultural learning only if the young person is adequately prepared and supported to cope with the 'culture shock' and to maximize the learning potential. While several youth organizations have years of experience with this, it is necessary to ensure that SMEs have the necessary know-how to ensure the quality of this experience. A further attention point is that the exchange is a learning opportunity that can be comparable to an internship and therefore it is crucial that the young entrepreneur is not used as a replacement of an employee with a lower pay or lower social security condition, which is sadly the case with many interns in Europe.

So if you are young, dreaming of setting up your company and you are keen to learn how business works in other European Union countries; *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs* might be something for you! All info can be found on www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN TIMES OF CRISIS: AN EU-YOUTH DIALOGUE IN THE ZLÍN REGION

The European Youth Forum started 2009 with a very successful event on the topic of Youth Employment!

On 20-22 January, Luhacovice, Zlín Region, Czech Republic, the European Youth Forum organised, together with the Zlín Region (in Czech Republic) organise this dialogue. In the first part of the event, which took place on 20 and 21 of January, young people from all over Europe, high level policy makers and experts got

together to discuss the topic of Youth Employment in Times of Crisis and possible solutions to it.

The second part of the event, which took place on January 22, consisted of the participation of the European Youth Forum in the Informal Council of Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs of the EU, which took also place in Luhacovice.

The President of the European Youth Forum, Tine Radinja, presented the conclusions of the event during the Opening Session of the Informal Council to the 27 Ministers of Employment of the EU but also to representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee.

For the YFJ, this was a very successful achievement as it allowed us to put forward our key messages on the topic of Youth Employment (in Times of Crisis) towards the Employment Ministers of the EU. It was a concrete sign of willingness of the Council to hear what young people have to say on a matter that strongly affects them directly.

The strong message the YFJ put forward to the Employment Council tackled the question of youth employment in times of crisis *per se*, as well as the need for to invest in youth in terms of employment, development of skills and mobility, both related to short-term measures and initiatives to deal with the current financial and economic crisis, but also the need for the investment in youth to be encompassed in the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy.

The YFJ final and key message to the EU Council of Employment Ministers was: "In times of crisis, invest in youth!"

TAILORED SUPPORT & TRAINING

STRENGTHENING YOUTH WORK

In its efforts to strengthen the youth work in different countries, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is focusing its work on two major groups of youth organisations – those which are already YFJ members, and potential ones still to be developed in different countries.

When it comes to the support of current Member Organisations of the YFJ, there are a number of factors that we are keeping in mind: all our organisations are very different both in their structures, aims, development stages, realities in the countries that they are operating, youth that is involved in them and many other differences. Hence, the support which each organisation requires is very different in nature as well and needs to be respectively tailored to each case. However, certainly a number of issues is common for all and can be addressed in a more general approach, that the YFJ is doing through supporting and advocating for greater and more reliable resources to ensure the full independence of Youth NGOs, and supporting their continuous partnership with governments in Council of Europe member states, institutions, and other stakeholders.

The YFJ approach to provision of the tailored support to Member Organisations is based on needs arising from a membership survey, which is regularly being conducted and allows YFJ to assess the current situations and foresee the following developments, and the needs expressed by Member Organisations directly. Moreover, the YFJ has recently introduced a new Member Organisations contact system which is aimed at facilitating communication within the organisation and allowing the necessary information to flow quickly

and any questions, requests and inquires from the organisations to be answered efficiently and fully.

The form in which the tailored support is provided to our Member Organisations depends on the needs and character of the challenge or issue. It could be a support visit, consultation, or provision of necessary tools to tackle the issue and differentiate other actions undertaken by the Bureau and Secretariat of the YFJ. Moreover, it could be a provision of an adequate training on the topic as well. For the latter, the Pool of Trainers (PoT) of the YFJ is used often.

YFJ Pool of Trainers is a group of up to 40 trainers coming from and active in the Member Organisations of the YFJ itself, using their expertise to cover a variety of different fields of youth work. The PoT has a mandate of two years and is involved in facilitation, moderating and different trainings of both YFJ institutional partners and Member Organisations. Any organisation can request a trainer for its events or ask for certain training expertise or advice. The YFJ PoT is well-known and the easy-to-use database is available both at the YFJ website and the SALTO page.

To sum up, the tailored support area of the YFJ work is aimed at developing and implementing optimal solutions for different situations and challenges that youth NGOs encounter, however still bearing in mind the nature, realities and specificities of each single organisation.

AGENDA

AGENDA 2009

MARCH

7-8	Financial Control Commission (FCC) meeting Brussels, Belgium
14-15	Bureau Meeting II Brussels, Belgium
20	Launch event: New Youth Agenda campaign Brussels, Belgium
20-21	YFJ get-out-the-vote coordination meeting Brussels, Belgium
21-22	Employment and Social Affairs WG meeting Brussels, Belgium
22	Advisory Council coordination meeting Mollina, Spain
27-29	Education WG meeting Brussels, Belgium
27-29	Youth Work Development WG meeting Brussels, Belgium

The e-Youth Opinion is the electronic newsletter of the European Youth Forum. It is made thanks to the effort of the following contributors:

- Ines ALVES
- Maarten COERTJENS
- Vera PASYNKOVA
- Marco PEROLINI
- Giuseppe PORCARO
- Ewoud ROES
- Julie TENG
- Sara ULFHIELM

Editing & proofreading

- Marta GOMEZ
- Lauren MADSEN
- Diogo PINTO

Graphic design:

- Marta GOMEZ
- Lauren MADSEN

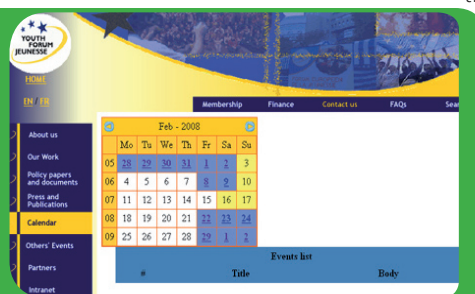
APRIL

4-5	Participation WG meeting Brussels, Belgium
4-5	Consultative Body on Membership Applications (CBMA) meeting Plovdiv, Bulgaria
17-18	Bureau Meeting III Cyprus

MAY

8-9	Council of Members tbc
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For more information on our events have a look at our calendar



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