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"The European Youth Forum is a platform of 97 youth organisations in Europe, working with the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations to promote the interests of young people."

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM OPEN DOORS

120 representatives from Institutional and Social Partners, YFJ Member Organisation and former YFJ Presidents, Bureau members and Secretariat Members, gathered at the annual YFJ Open Doors.



Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum, and Diogo Pinto, YFJ Secretary General, welcoming guests at the YFJ Open Doors.

Welcomed by Bettina Schwarzmayr, president of the European Youth Forum, and Diogo Pinto, YFJ Secretary General, the attendants had a nice evening at the YFJ premises.



433 MEPS ASK FOR MORE YOUTHFUL EU POLICIES

An example of what youth organisations working together can achieve

As a result of an active three-month lobby campaign by the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and its Member Organisations, 433 Members of the European Parliament signed a written declaration on youth empowerment in EU policies. This great success represents a first step in promoting youth policy and underlining its transversal nature within the European Parliament (EP).

EP President, Hans-Gert Pöttering, will present the written declaration for adoption at the forthcoming Brussels EP plenary session, in the first week of September – following which it will become an official demand of the European Parliament.



In order for a written declaration to be adopted, over half of all the 785 MEPs have to sign it, within a period of three months.

The declaration calls on the European Commission and the EU Member States to take into account the

WRITTEN DECLARATION

needs of young people when developing policies that affect them. It also calls on the European Commission to commit to developing a more horizontal youth policy; something endorsed by the Council of Ministers but has not yet been translated into concrete action. Furthermore, the declaration asks EU Member States to focus on youth when implementing the Lisbon National Reform Programmes.

The MEPs supporting the declaration include Graham Watson, Chair of the ALDE Group, Joseph Daul, Chair of the EPP-ED Group, Francis Wurtz, Chair of the GUE/NGL Group, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Monica Frassoni, co-Presidents of the Greens/EFA Group, and Poul-Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the Party of European Socialists. If you wish to know which other MEPs have signed, please visit the campaign's website <http://www.youthforum.org/declaration.htm>.

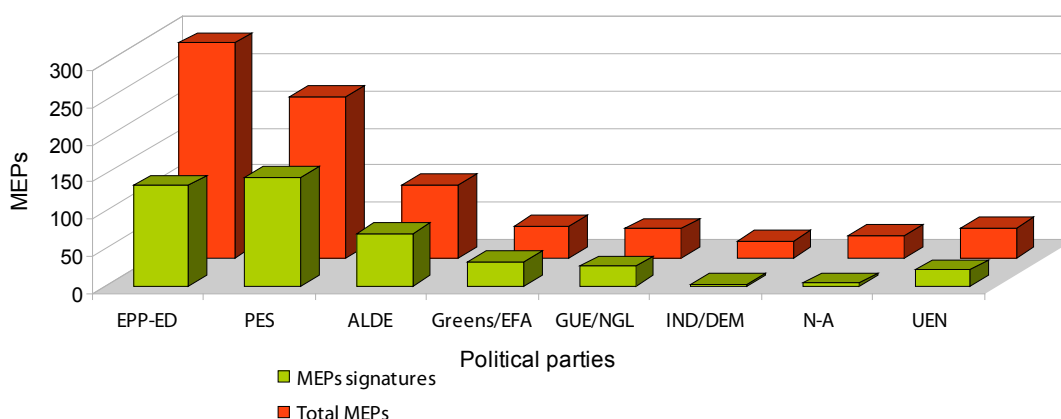
Undoubtedly, the success of the campaign has resulted from the joint work carried out by the five MEPs sponsoring the declaration (Marie-Hélène Descamps, Christa Prets, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Ramona Nicole Manescu and Bart Staes) and the YFJ and its Member Organisations.

The European Youth Forum is now starting to follow up the campaign by convening a meeting in September with those MEPs that have shown interest to work more on youth issues in a transversal manner and plan the first steps to take forward this work.

SIGNATURE PER COUNTRY

Countries	Percentage
Austria	77,78%
Belgium	66,67%
Bulgaria	66,67%
Cyprus	100,00%
Czech Republic	45,83%
Denmark	78,57%
Estonia	100,00%
Finland	71,43%
France	60,25%
Germany	26,26%
Greece	66,67%
Hungary	37,50%
Ireland	76,92%
Italy	52,00%
Latvia	55,56%
Lithuania	69,23%
Luxembourg	33,33%
Malta	100,00%
The Netherlands	66,67%
Poland	46,30%
Portugal	100,00%
Romania	71,43%
Slovakia	71,43%
Slovenia	85,71%
Spain	57,41%
Sweden	57,89%
United Kingdom	37,18%

Number of signatures per political party



YOUTH EVENT

FRENCH EU PRESIDENCY YOUTH EVENT

Diving into intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean context

For the first time ever, the EU Presidency Youth Event brought together young people from both sides of the Mediterranean.



Participants at the French Youth Event

With 2008 heralded as the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the French EU Presidency, with the support of the European Commission, gathered around 100 participants, on 5-9 July in Marseille, from the EU and EFTA Member States, EU Candidate Countries as well as countries from South-East Europe and around the Mediterranean to explore possibilities of strengthening ties between both regions.

The participants emphasised the need to promote intercultural dialogue on an equal footing; as one participant from Jordan pointed out, "the problem of intercultural dialogue between both regions is that just the EU is speaking to others, and the countries from the other side of the Mediterranean do not speak back". "It is hard to change mindsets and to ensure proper structures that foster intercultural dialogue; youth organisations play a key role in

this regard," added Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum.

From an institutional point of view, Jan Figel, EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, explained that "intercultural dialogue can only succeed if it leads to a process, in which youth organisations should be involved." He highlighted that the further engagement of young people in society is needed, "many young people remain at home without being active players in their society," he noted.

Intercultural dialogue is interrelated with education, cultural identity, religion, family, friendship, media, legislation, labour, mobility, cultural associations and informal time. The participants came up with a set of conclusions, including policy recommendations, on how to address intercultural dialogue in everyday life, ways to promote youth participation and volunteering, counselling, mobility and tools and means for communicating. Young people presented and discussed this document with the Directors for Youth of the EU-27.

One of the hot topics raised during these discussions was mobility. "While sport and business people get easy and quick visas, why," expressed some participants "does this not happen to well intended young people who are contributors to society?"



Jan Figel, EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth and Bettina Schwarzmayr, president of the European Youth Forum, surrounded by participants at the French EU presidency Youth Event

[Please click here to read the conclusions.](#)

YOUTH AUTONOMY

INFORMATION AND NETWORKING DAYS ON YOUTH AUTONOMY

The Information and Networking Days on Youth Autonomy that took place in Brussels on 28 and 29 June, gathered YFJ participants from both National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations from all over Europe.

The aims of the event were to exchange ideas on the concept of Youth Autonomy with YFJ Member Organisations and experts; to share best practice on projects concerning Youth Autonomy developed by YFJ members; and to promote a debate on how the subject can be best tackled at the policy level.

The common conclusion was that Youth Autonomy is a broad concept that encompasses different YFJ advocacy areas, mainly:



Participants during the meeting

employment and social cohesion, health, education, equality and anti-discrimination, and active citizenship.

The YFJ adopted its definition of Youth Autonomy in 2004 (see [YFJ Policy Paper on Youth Autonomy](#)): "Autonomy is the situation where young people have the necessary support, resources and opportunities to choose to live independently, to run their own lives and have full social and political participation in all sectors of everyday life, and be able to take independent decisions". From the Information and Networking Days, it became clear that the definition adopted four years ago is still considered up-to-date.

In this context, all the participants agreed that the most efficient way for the YFJ to advocate for Youth Autonomy is to do so at sector

level rather than lobbying in an abstract manner for "young people to be autonomous". In practice, this means that the YFJ must lobby for better employment and social protection for young people; that it must lobby for young people to have access to quality affordable services such as housing, health and transport; and that it must also lobby for the creation and/or maintenance of the conditions that allow young people to be active citizens who, free from discrimination within society.

The event was a great opportunity to learn about projects related to Youth Autonomy per se in which YFJ Member Organisations have been involved, withing, and projects aimed at securing the necessary conditions for young people to be autonomous. Participants learned that CJE (Spanish National Youth Council, YFJ full member) has been very active at the national level in fighting for young people's accessibility to affordable housing. Similarly, that FNG (Italian National Youth Council, YFJ full member) has been active in advocating for young people's access to micro credit, and that CNJ (Portuguese National Youth Council, YFJ full member) together with CJE are organising an event on Youth Emancipation, which will take place in October 2008 and will tackle the issues related to youth employment and precariousness of jobs faced by young people as well as the issue of access to affordable housing.

The Information and Networking Days were a great moment to debate Youth Autonomy in theory, to discuss the best ways in which to advocate for it, and to learn at the same time from projects that are happening on the ground. With this momentum, the YFJ will move on in its advocacy work and follow-up is already in sight: a Symposium on Youth Employment will take place in France on 17-19 October!



IN SHORT: EU NEWS

EMPLOYMENT WEEK 2008

On 11-12 June the 15th European Employment Week took place in Brussels.

Over 700 employment stakeholders from across Europe and beyond gathered in Brussels to exchange views and hear what European officials, trade unions, NGOs, business leaders and other experts are saying about today's employment trends, challenges and opportunities in the EU.

The **Employment Week 2008's main theme was "Adapting to Change, Making Europe a Prosperous Labour Market"**, focusing on how Europe's businesses, economies and society are coping within the context of globalisation and demographic change.

Several topics related to employment were tackled throughout these two days: life-long learning and employability, youth and employment, flexicurity, mobility and migration, competitiveness and the quality of jobs, enterprise and job creation, active ageing as well as active inclusion and diversity.

It was the third consecutive year that the European Youth Forum participated as a speaker in this major event – this year in a workshop on "Youth and Employment" -, highlighting the paradox that today's youth is the most educated generation ever and yet today's young people are facing the biggest difficulties when entering the labour market and the most likely to be working on short-term contracts, with low pay, with little or no social protection, and with no voice in the workplace.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR 2011 EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING

On 9 July, the European Parliament adopted a written declaration calling on the European Commission, supported by all European Institutions, to announce 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering: another step towards recognising, valuing and supporting volunteers. The European Parliament wants to add value to this issue at the European level and if the Commission act on this proposal it will give itself time to focus on bringing forward concrete proposals at the European level to facilitate volunteering, and support voluntary action.

The Member Organisations of the European Youth Forum were very active in ensuring that the written declaration was signed by more than half of members of the European Parliament (451 signed in total), having mobilised MEPs both in their constituencies, and in Strasbourg.

The Alliance of organisations, committed to making the European Year of Volunteering a reality, hopes that the European Commission will answer this call favourably and take the necessary actions in order to make it happen.

WHICH CITY WILL BE THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CAPITAL IN 2010?

In 2009 Rotterdam will be the first European Youth Capital (EYC)! The EYC concept is aimed at putting youth at the heart of city life for one year, while promoting exchanges and links with young people from all over Europe. The aim is also to bring Europe closer to the local level. The European Youth Forum has now launched a call for tenders for the European Youth Capital 2010, and a selection process ensuring the quality, 'youth-friendliness' and involvement of young people in the EYC project will shortly begin.

The EYC 2010 Call was launched on 30 July, and municipalities from

all across Europe are invited to submit their applications by 20 September. A selection jury composed of youth representatives and other representatives from a cross-section of relevant organisations will convene in October, and the European Youth Capital 2010 will be officially announced during the General Assembly of the European Youth Forum on 13-15 November 2008.

The European Youth Forum will be ensuring the implementation of the EYC concept and from early next year will embark upon the first evaluation process for the European Youth Capital 2009.

IN SHORT: EU NEWS

SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER!

In previous editions of e-Youth Opinion readers were informed that the European Commission had launched a big consultation on 'Schools for the 21st Century'. The European Youth Forum contributed with an extensive document proposing a genuine holistic view on education. The main idea of the YFJ's contribution is to approach education holistically rather than as in a piecemeal fashion, as given that the way in which schools should work is related to the work being done by other educational providers.

The European Commission finally launched the communication: 'Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools' at the end of June as part of the EU Social Agenda. The European Youth Forum is disappointed by a communication that does not offer a vision but rather a patchwork of facts, some ideas and some proposals. The main weakness is the lack of a sufficiently comprehensive framework that encompasses the breadth of education experienced by young people in Europe. Rather, education is approached with a

narrow 'competitiveness and growth' vision. The communication does not address vital issues such as the complementary natures of formal and non-formal education, and does not consider the values embodied in education. The most positive aspect of the communication is that it moves in the direction of a more flexible learning environment based on learning to learn, with pupils involved in designing their own learning. There is also further attention given to diversity, to young people with fewer opportunities, to inclusive education, and to the opening of schools to local communities.

The Communication will now be discussed in the European Council and the European Parliament. The YFJ will again advocate within these institutions for a serious vision on schools. The discussion will not, however, happen only on a European level; the communication is a good opportunity for national youth councils and other organisations at the national level, to start a debate with their ministries of education.

MORE AND BETTER MOBILITY FOR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS IN EUROPE?

At the beginning of July, the European Commission, in its Renewed Social Agenda, proposed a Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across Europe. However, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is disappointed with regards to this proposal, as it fails to mention the role of youth organisations. The proposal focuses only on the needs of national administrations, rather than on the needs of young people. The YFJ, nevertheless, is pleased to acknowledge the progressive items contained within the proposal, such as better social security services for young volunteers. The European Youth Forum looks forwards to working alongside Member States to find a way to make the recommendation fit the needs of all young volunteers in Europe.

Throughout the process, the YFJ expressed its views and proposals for such a recommendation. It put an emphasis on the needs and the rights of volunteers – as well as the support needed by volunteer-hosting organisations. If a better and safer environment is offered and guaranteed to young volunteers, they will be more willing to volunteer abroad, participate in exchanges, and gain from those experiences. Young volunteers, as all volunteers, are a cornerstone in building Europe and are key actors in social cohesion in Europe. Therefore, this recommendation needs to address the diversity of

voluntary activities and not narrow it simply to voluntary services. Voluntary services offer great experiences to young people but cannot be considered as the only form of volunteering in need of enhancement.

The proposal is now with the Member States who are supposed to adopt the recommendation in November 2008 during the Council of Ministers meeting. Youth organisations still need to be heard and to ensure that all volunteers will actually benefit from this new recommendation.

Useful documents:

The proposal of the European Commission: http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/Courier/2008/july/doc1108_en.pdf

The YFJ statement on the proposal: <http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/Courier/2008/july/0651-08YFJstatementECproposalJuly2008.pdf>

The previous YFJ contributions: April 2008 (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/Courier/2008/july/0383-08_EuropeanYouthForum_contributionDGs_April2008.pdf) and May 2008 (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/Courier/2008/july/0522-08_InputYFJ_ECconceptMay2008.pdf)

IN SHORT: EU NEWS

CIVIL SOCIETY ASKS THE EUROPEAN UNION TO TAKE STRONG ACTION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

The European Parliament organised its second Citizens' Agora on the topic of Climate Change on 12-13 June 2008. European civil society organisations were invited to contribute to the work of the European Parliament's temporary committee on climate change, which is preparing its final report for this autumn.

The European Youth Forum and more than 20 representatives of its Member Organisations actively participated in the event which gathered hundreds of civil society organisations, as well as MEPs and high level representatives of governments, European institutions and international organisations. The Agora alternated between inspiring speeches by key experts and workshops on the five pre-defined topics: resources, techniques, solidarity, economies and governance. The organisation reflected the spirit and aim of the Agora to give space to civil society, and all the plenary sessions and workshops were co-moderated by a representative of the European institutions and a representative of civil society. The YFJ had the opportunity to gain visibility by co-moderating the "Techniques" workshop with MEPs Robert Musacchio and Silvia Adriana Ticau.

The outcomes of the Agora were five conclusion papers which are

the result of the workshops, and represent a consensus by various civil society stakeholders on the different topics. They present what the civil society representatives, assembled in the Agora, are asking the European Parliament to do with regards to climate change, and demonstrate the serious concern of civil society regarding the impact of climate change on our societies, be it environmental, health- security- and peace-, or economy- related. The participants clearly asked the European Union to take the lead on the issue and ensure a new climate agreement is reached by the end of 2009 and that emissions are cut by 2020, therefore limiting the negative impact of climate change. The Agora will now be reviewed and the EP will hopefully decide to organise it regularly. To see the final texts, <http://forum.agora.europarl.europa.eu/jiveforums/category.jspa?categoryID=9>

The significant attendance of youth organisations to the event shows that they are also starting to realise how critical it is to take action. The coming months and, especially the COP 14¹ taking place in Poznan at the beginning of December, will be a great opportunity for youth to get involved and voice their concerns. For more information, please check http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/ngo/items/3667.php

¹ *United Nations Climate Change Conference.*

REVISION OF THE EU FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD

In 2010, a new, revised EU framework for European cooperation in the youth field will be in place. The YFJ wants the voice of youth to be heard throughout the entire revision process, in order to ensure that this new framework will answer the real needs of young people and youth organisations in Europe.

The YFJ has designed a draft road map from May until the end of 2008 to prepare its position to participate in the revision process in 2009. This road map should give better overview of the whole process, highlighting the key moments at which to contribute given that it includes the work of both the Member States and the European Commission.

Moreover, the YFJ plans to produce a shadow report, following the two published on the implementation of the common objectives of priorities of the Open Method of Coordination. Two main phases are foreseen for this shadow report: a first overview for summer 2008 of the results of the implementation of the framework since 2002; and

a second at the end of the year, after the consultation process in the Member States.

The YFJ will also adopt its key principles for the future of EU youth policy during its General Assembly in Rotterdam, November 2008. Those principles should draw together the vision of youth organisations, encompassing the structure and interactions between policy fields at the EU level, the structured dialogue but also the content that such a framework should address. This framework should also point to the tools necessary for the implementation of EU youth policy at the national level, and also those needed for the monitoring and evaluation of this implementation.

The YFJ has already started the work that will continue until November. The next phase will be focused on cooperation with the European Commission prior to the release of its proposal in March 2009 and then on the Member States.

TRAINING

YOUTH PARTNERSHIP TRAINING FOR TRAINERS 2008-2010

The need for a more coordinated strategy in regards to Training for Trainers at the European level has been voiced by many stakeholders in the training field. Last year, at the Stakeholders Meeting on Training for Trainers, organised by the Youth-Partnership¹ and the SALTO² Training & Cooperation Resource Centre, participants decided to develop a "Training Course for Trainers" to be implemented in 2008/2010.

This future Training Course will be a generic Training for Trainers and it will not focus on a specific theme or priority. The main aim of the course will be to enable participant trainers to competently design, implement and evaluate quality European training activities, putting forward the values which underlie European youth work. However, the training course is designed for trainers who already have relevant experience in the youth field. The overall number of participants to the course is expected to be up to 30 people.



This Training for Trainers is being developed as a Partnership activity run together by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and its partners (NAs and SALTO networks), in co-operation with the European Youth Forum.

The European Youth Forum, as one of the stakeholders in the field, pointed out the importance of putting forward core youth values and taking into account youth organisations' perspectives and needs in the designing process, as well as the importance of ensuring the multiplier effect of Training for Trainers, especially in the light of the past [ATTE \(Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe\)](#) experience, so that youth organisations can actually benefit from this Training for Trainers Course.

The preparation for the Partnership Training for Trainers is already going on. The call for participants is

expected to be launched by the end of 2008.

¹ Youth Partnership – a partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth

² SALTO-YOUTH - is a network of **8 Resource Centres** working on **European priority areas** within the **youth field**. It provides **youth work and training resources** and organises **training and contact-making activities** to **support organisations and National Agencies** within the frame of the European Commission's [YOUTH programme](#) and beyond

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND ITS 47 MEMBER STATES

The European Union is not the only intergovernmental organisation that practices six-month presidencies. The Council of Europe, with Member States all over the continent, does so too, although in a different manner and scope. Its decision-making body is called the Committee of Ministers. Despite its high-level name, the Ministers themselves meet only once a year but in order to ensure continuous functioning of the body, the so-called “Ministers’ Deputies” hold weekly meetings in Strasbourg. Similarly to the European Union, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe also has a rotating 6-month Chairmanship, but the difference is that here the Member States rotate in alphabetical order, regardless of their size, geographical location or other attributes.



Members of the Council of Europe. Picture from the Council of Europe website.

What does the Committee of Ministers do? Concretely, it engages in political dialogue with governments, other international organisations and stakeholders; it cooperates with Council of Europe bodies, notably the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress

of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe; it admits new states to the Council of Europe; and monitors the respect of commitments by the Member States. In addition, being the highest body of the organisation, it concludes conventions and agreements that, upon ratification, become binding for Member States, and adopts recommendations to Member States, as well as the budget of the organisation, and the programme of activities. Importantly, the Committee of Ministers also has the power to supervise the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

These powers have relevance for young people and youth organisations too. In recent years, the Committee of Ministers has adopted several documents related to youth, children, gender equality, and on combating violence and other human rights issues, which, if implemented by governments, could significantly improve the situation of young people in Europe. Thus, being aware of such developments is important because civil society can hold a mirror to a government and remind it of its obligations. Furthermore, Chairmanships are also something not to neglect: ahead of its six-month seat, each government prepares a priority programme outlining the issues to which it will give most importance. This is the time to lobby and get youth issues on the agenda, and National Youth Councils are well suited to do so.

You can find a list of Chairmanships until November 2011 [here](#). Currently, between May and November 2008, Sweden is at the helm of the Committee. Its priorities, work programme, calendar of events and other interesting information can be found at their [website](#). Sweden has succeeded Slovakia and, as an exception to the alphabetical order rule, “swapped places” with Slovenia. If they had not done so, both of them would have found themselves at the forefront of both the EU and the Council of Europe at the same time. This, even for committed European governments, might have been a bit too much to handle after all.

HEALTH

I&N DAYS ON HIV/AIDS AND THE RIGHT OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO SEXUAL HEALTH

Following the work the YFJ had previously undertaken on HIV & AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), the Youth Forum held Information and Networking days on the topic on 12 and 13 July 2008 at the UN House in Brussels. This was also an opportunity for the Forum to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as they co-organised the activity. The event was a significant step forward for the YFJ, its Member Organisations and its partners, as it brought together youth organisations, European and international institutions and NGOs working on the issue. It allowed the work that the YFJ and its MOs do in the field, especially at the local level, to be highlighted, while MOs were also informed on ongoing projects and processes at the European and international



Participants at the meeting

levels and to which they could contribute. After an introductory session by Sietske Steeneker, Director of the UNFPA Brussels Office, and Jovana Bazerlovska, Bureau Member of the YFJ, the I&N Days started with a speakers' session to gather input from institutional and non-governmental partners. Robert Madelin, Director General for Health and Consumers (SANCO), as well as MEP Anne van Lancker and Irene

Donadio from the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) gave inspiring presentations of their work in the field. Mr Madelin presented the EU Sexual Health Strategy, Ms van Lancker the role of the European Parliament and the state of play at EU level, while Ms Donadio introduced the SAFE project as well as other work IPPF EN has been doing and is planning.

Marina Davidashvili from the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) and Jennifer Hollings and Göze Ozdemir from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also joined the participants to present best practices and projects in the field of HIV & AIDS and SRHR. The IOM introduced the RHYME project on young migrants and HIV & AIDS, which the YFJ will partner, once the project is confirmed. Member Organisations presented an impressive scope of projects showing the strong and diverse part that youth organisations and non-formal education can play in addressing the issue.

The remaining sessions of the I&N Days were made up of two workshops on projects and on advocacy. For both themes, the participants were split into two groups to discuss the EU level on the one hand, and global issues on the other. The groups enjoyed interesting and fruitful discussions and developed suggestions for actions by the YFJ and its MOs in the near future.

The event will feed into the policy paper on health and the well being of young people currently under development by the YFJ, and will provide a strong basis for further cooperation with the key actors in the field of HIV & AIDS and SRHR.

TOBACCO PROJECT

NATIONAL PROJECTS

In May, the YFJ launched a second call for national tobacco-related projects to be run by YFJ Member Organisations / "members of members". In total, 21 projects, involving young people from 15 EU countries, have been awarded European Commission grants in the framework of the EU HELP campaign for 2008."

HELP CAMPAIGN EVENT

On 28 May 2008, the HELP campaign organised a kick-off event in Brussels to launch the new features of the campaign on the occasion

of the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) –itself taking place on 31 May. As youth was the main theme of the WNTD, the EU Commissioner for Health, Ms Androulla Vassiliou, met Gabriele Tervidyte, representing the YFJ Contact Group on Tobacco, which helps developing the Youth Tobacco Project and supports YFJ Member Organisations interested in the project, at the event. In addition, the Fédération des Centres de Jeunes en Milieu Populaire (FCJMP), a member organisation of CRIJ (Comité pour les Relations Internationales de Jeunesse, YFJ Full Member Organisation) was present, with a stand dedicated to the tobacco project they are running in 2008."

BAN KI-MOON MUST TAKE YOUTH SERIOUSLY!

From 14 - 17 June 2008, high-level representatives from youth organisations from across the world met with several UN agencies and other intergovernmental institutions in Cairo for the 5th International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO). One of the main conclusions reached at the meeting was that the UN must put youth back on the agenda and stick to its promises towards youth.

During the mandate of the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, youth had higher visibility within the UN system - said Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), during the 5th ICMYO.

UPCOMING UN YOUTH RESOLUTION

In 2009 the UN General Assembly will adopt a new resolution on youth, and the Member States have already started the preparation. At the same time the UN Agencies are working together with youth organisations and other experts to develop goals and targets for the UN World Program of Action for Youth. But before making yet another ambitious resolution, the UN should stick to some of its previous resolutions:

- strengthening the UN Youth Programme
- promoting the goals and targets presented to the UNGA in 2007 to the Member States
- ensuring funding for Youth Delegates to the UN from developing countries through the UN Youth Fund

LACK OF COORDINATION

More and more UN agencies work with youth but there is an obvious lack of coordination. The body one could expect to coordinate the work, the UN Youth Programme, is weak both in terms of resources and coordination. Despite several UN General Assembly resolutions calling upon a strengthening of the Youth Programme, there are few resources within this division to ensure sufficient consultations with young people, sufficient coordination of UN Agencies or sufficient

outreach to developing countries: knowing that young people constitute the majority of the population in many developing countries these should be UN priorities.

ONE UN REFORM

With the implementation of the One UN Reform, the UN must also ensure mechanisms for youth participation at the national level. The UNFPA is taking the lead on establishing joint Youth Advisory Boards for different country offices of the UN Agencies, and UNFPA was also one of the UN institutions present at the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO).

INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Moreover, an important output from the ICMYO is that UN Agencies must take the democratic principles of the UN into account when establishing mechanisms for youth participation. They have to realise that it is important that the UN works with democratic and representative organisations and not individuals. This will both ensure the sustainability of the processes and outreach to far more young people.

LETTER TO BAN KI-MOON

All these demands will reach the person in charge of making the necessary changes, as the organisations gathering in the ICMYO have raised several of these concerns in a letter to Ban ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General.

The ICMYO is an informal network of membership-based, democratic, representative and accountable International Youth NGOs (INGYOs) and Regional Youth Platforms (RYPs). The main objectives of ICMYO are the strengthening of the cooperation among youth organisations at the regional and global levels and the coordination of political inputs to global youth policy processes.

GLOBAL COOPERATION

AFRICA-EUROPE COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD GROWING AFTER THE LISBON SUMMIT!

European and African Youth Organisations went through a very challenging process last year, with the organisation of the first Africa-Europe Youth Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 and with the several related consultations which took place regionally in both Europe and Africa.

The conclusions of this summit, included in the Youth Summit Declaration and submitted to the Heads of States and Government of the two continents, committed to pursue the capacity building of youth leaders and their organisations as one of the main priorities for the follow up. The European Youth Forum reinforced this commitment by adopting at its last Council of Members a Resolution on Development Co-operation with Africa. While pursuing continuous lobby and advocacy work with the EU to strengthen civil society participation in the process of implementing the EU-Africa Strategy, the Youth Forum also continued to work closely with the North South Centre. The main tangible result of this effort was the joint organisation of the 5th Africa-Europe Training Course for Youth Organisations, which was held in Coimbra, Portugal, from 1-7 June 2008.

The course brought together 30 young leaders both from Member Organisations of the European Youth Forum, from the Panafrican Youth Union and from the INGYOs active in Africa that participate in the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO). These organisations together cover most of Africa's regions (North, West, East and South) and most Council of Europe Member States.

The activity helped to increase the level of cooperation among the participating organisations and sought to link the institutional processes between Europe and Africa with youth work development. It was also a personal endeavour for each of the participants who were able to draft a personal plan of action in order to multiply their training experience once back in their own organisation.

The course was also successfully integrated into the local hosting community of Coimbra, thanks to the support of the Bissaya Barreto Foundation who hosted the training in its premises, and to the support of the National Youth Council of Portugal, who actively participated to the course.

2008 UNIVERSITY ON YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS APPROACHING

The village of Molina and the Euro-Latin American Youth Centre might seem very quiet in the sunny days of summer, but from 14-21 September around 250 young people from all over the world will contribute together to the programme of the annual University on Youth and Development (UYD), creating a space for exchange, training and debate. The equal partnership between the institutions (the Spanish Youth Institute – Injuve-, the North South Centre) and the youth organisations involved (the European Youth Forum – YFJ - the Spanish Youth Council – CJE - and several Members Organisations of the YFJ), make this event even more relevant and unique.

This year the theme will be 'Intercultural Dialogue', linked to the European Year on Intercultural Dialogue 2008, and each activity will focus on a different aspect. In particular, the European Youth Forum will have several events:

- The Euro-Latin American Youth Forum (FEULAT), in co-operation with the Latin American Youth Forum (FLAJ), the Spanish Youth Council, the Spanish Youth Institute and the Ibero American Youth Organisation (OIJ);
- A seminar on the role of youth exchanges in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
- A seminar on Youth and the Alliance of Civilisations, in cooperation with the North South Centre of the Council of Europe and the Islamic Conference Youth Forum;
- A training Course for Korean Youth Leaders, in cooperation with the Korean National Youth Commission and the Korean National Youth Council;
- A sub Group meeting of the YFJ Pool of Trainers on Global Education.

Furthermore, the Forum will actively participate in the joint programme.

EDUCATION

3RD DIALOGUE ON THE RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

United for the quality of Non-Formal Education.

The dialogue on the recognition of Non-Formal Education (NFE) is becoming a household name in the European discussion on recognition of NFE. After the success of the first two dialogues, in 2006 and 2007, the 3rd Dialogue continued the tradition of bringing together decision-makers and youth organisations to discuss for two days. New this year was the 3rd Day in which the participants took part in the Recognition of Learning Outcomes (ROLO) conference in Antwerp, organised by ECYC and their Flemish Member Organisation Formaet.

The first day of the Dialogue focussed on discussion between YFJ MO's and on mutual learning about their practice and realities. A specific focus was on the European Qualification Framework and how the learning within youth organisations can fit into national qualification frameworks. To frame NFE in a holistic education concept, Non-Formal

one of them, the association for teacher education in Europe (ATEE), to present their work and to learn from YFJ MO's about a different educational reality.

The second day focused on Quality and the implementation of the proposed Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). In the morning the participants discussed the implementation of the NFE QAF and the challenges and opportunities for working with the concept of quality.

The afternoon was dedicated to discussion with Institutional partners: the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Both institutions were represented by their experts on NFE who gave an overview of the new developments in the field. Both Manfred von Hebel of the Commission and Rui Gomes of the Council of Europe reacted very positively to the presentation of the Policy Paper and the QAF expressed their support for the implementation of the policy paper. Mr Gomes mentioned that 'quality' might form the focus of the NFE symposium, which the Council of Europe is planning to organise at the end of 2009. The YFJ will, after the Dialogue, actively work on the implementation of the Policy Paper together with both institutions.

The ROLO conference, organised by ECYC, formed an interesting epilogue to the Dialogue. The conference gathered various speakers from the academic, practical and political fields among which was keynote speaker Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum. The conference report can be found on www.rolo-youthwork.be. The combination of the Dialogue and the ROLO conference was very good as it gave both conferences a lot more input and provided additional opportunities for discussion.

The next Dialogue will take place in autumn 2009 and will focus, in all likelihood, on the complementary features of NFE and Formal Education. The full report of the 2008 dialogue, including the presentations given, can be found on the YFJ website.



Institutional partners at the Discussion panel, Manfred von Hebel of the European Commission and Rui Gomes of the Council of Europe; together with Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum and Monika Novosadova, YFJ Bureau Member.

Education has to be promoted towards institutions and decision makers, but also to other educational providers. To do this the YFJ has established links with other educational providers and invited

BEIJING PLATFORM

“ARE YOU AWARE OF SOMETHING CALLED THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION?”

A YFJ Campaign to follow up on the 4th World Women’s Conference

In 1995, 189 Heads of States, Government, women’s organisations and other civil society organisations gathered in Beijing at the 4th World Women’s Conference. This event marked a milestone in the history of the women’s movement, together with the World Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo one year before (1994), as they established and legitimised notions of reproductive rights, sexual health and sexual rights.

More than ten years later, the European Youth Forum believes that more pressure needs to be put on National governments to remind them of the commitments they undertook in Beijing and that they often seem to have forgotten.

Indeed, the “Declaration and Platform for Actions” adopted at the end of the Conference in Beijing, established the principle according to which the human rights of women include their freedom to take control and freely decide over their sexuality, and stated once again that women have the right to decide when to have children, and how many.

Furthermore, governments decided upon a number of actions to be taken in key areas in the lives of young women and men - such as education, health and political representation.

It is of the utmost importance to ensuring equality between young women and men is reached that these commitments are followed and implemented. Actions in the field of health will for example contribute to the fight against the feminisation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to reduce deaths linked to unsafe and illegal abortions. Similarly, it is necessary to undertake actions in the field of education to tackle widespread discrimination on the ground of gender and stereotypes included in textbooks and curricula. Commitments aimed at ensuring the equal participation of women and men in politics are crucial to put an end to the low percentages of women represented in Governments and Parliaments.

The YFJ has designed the postcards below calling on every government to implement the Beijing Platform, as they promised to do so in 1995. By sending these postcards to your government, you can also actively participate in the achievement of equality between women and men.



YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT – FURTHER STEPS

The Youth Work Development (YWD) policy area in the European Youth Forum was a very busy and dynamic one this spring. After a meeting in March, the Youth Work Development Working Group (YWDWG) had a meeting in Varna, Bulgaria at the end of May. The YWDWG, together with the YFJ Bureau and the Secretariat members present, discussed the issues of cross-pillar cooperation, YFJ

membership development and support to Member Organisations. A big focus was put on the situation in different countries of Europe when it comes to youth work and youth policy. The YWD strategy, adopted by the Bureau is now ready to be implemented, and the meeting looked at ways in which to undertake the implementation, contributing to the process.

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM PRESENCE IN MEETINGS

During May and June, the YFJ attended several conferences and meetings organised by its partners;

WORKSHOP ON FUTURE YOUTH COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA, COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On 15-16 May, the YFJ attended the second joint workshop on the cooperation between the youth sector in the Russian federation, the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The workshop took place in Strasbourg and dealt with the future cooperation between the mentioned actors, its extent and legal framework. The topics discussed touched upon youth policy, non formal education, training and research. The increase in knowledge and information flow was judged crucial by both sides and therefore much time was dedicated to the translation of different documents into Russian or from Russian. The main conclusion was a document that the three actors will produce together in the form of guidelines for cooperation and which will represent a basis for future arrangements for cooperation in this tripartite system.

WORKSHOP ON THE HISTORY OF YOUTH WORK IN EUROPE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE YOUTH WORK AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT OF TODAY

This workshop took place in Blankenberge, Belgium and tackled the modalities and circumstances in which youth work developed in different European countries (Belgium, UK, France, Germany, Poland, Malta), and also the importance and direction of the youth work for society building and ensuring a status of young people in Europe today. The workshop was very useful as it gave a scientific and historical dimension to an area that is usually either very content-oriented or political. The workshop enabled the participants to enter deep into the matter of youth work throughout the whole time of its genesis and understand more the facts of today.

NETWORKING VISIT OF THE SOCIAL PLATFORM TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In mid-June, the YFJ attended this visit as one of the members of the Platform, as it proved very useful to visit the country again just one month after the YFJ had held its own study visit. The aims of the visit were to bring the Czech Social NGOs closer to the European

dimension, raise awareness about the benefits of the networking of NGOs on both the national and international level, and to explore the domain of activities, problems and obstacles that the social NGOs in this country face. The meeting, co-organised by the NNO association (Czech national NGO platform) and SKOK (the Czech branch of EAPN), provided field visits to Czech NGOs such as Caritas and their shelter for homeless people and refugees and ZIVOT ("Life") - an organisation supporting and helping people in the third age. In contrast to previous visits of this kind, the Social Platform dedicated two full days to the networking visit and so made it more content-focused and opened more space for discussion between the European guests and the Czech NGOs but also between Czech NGOs themselves.

"BALKAN YOUTH GOES IN ACTION" CONFERENCE

This conference was organised by the Hellenic National Agency – "Nea Genia", and held in Athens. The event gathered over 100 participants - youth policy makers from the European and national levels, representatives from institutions, National Youth Councils, and other NGOs and young people from all South Eastern European countries, and from EU member states and the other Youth in Action Programme countries, to discuss the possibilities for intercultural learning as the basis for starting a fruitful intercultural dialogue among young European citizens and policy makers at the European and national levels.

In this context, the aim of the conference was to provide participants with the opportunity to initiate a dialogue among neighbouring European cultures and to discuss a number of key youth issues: enhancing the cooperation among European organisations and the youth related National Authorities, state bodies and NGOs in the region; the development of viable youth strategies and policies; and the coordination of all relevant stakeholders for the promotion of a structured dialogue among youth and policy makers at the European level.

Three main topics were tackled at the event; youth participation, social inclusion and religious and cultural dialogue. The conference connected topics of great importance for the SEE region to the universal issues of youth participation and youth empowerment.

YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT

It was a very useful way of starting dialogue between the different actors and of realising the importance of the interconnectedness of different content elements that make up the European youth scene of today. It was, of course one more chance for youth workers from the SEE to get together, network and learn even more about each other and further deepen their understanding and cooperation.

The European Youth Forum took note of all the results from each meeting attended in order to use them to assist with the further development of its work in the Youth Work Development policy area.

“YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CAUCASUS”

The topic of youth policy development in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus was addressed at a workshop organised by the Youth Partnership¹ and the SALTO EECA in the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Hungary in June 2008.

Eastern Europe and the Caucasus is one of the priority regions for the European Youth Forum. This region still offers many possibilities for the development of youth policies, youth work and youth organisations. It is remarkable that all seven² countries of the region have national youth platforms that are members of the YFJ. However, a lot yet needs to be done to further youth work and youth policy development, capacity building and increase the sustainability of youth organisations in each country.

The organisers of the workshop aimed at ensuring the participation of the three main youth policy actors: representatives of youth organisations, youth researchers and authorities in charge of youth. Unfortunately, due to certain organisational difficulties, this triangle was

not fully represented for each of the seven countries. The research perspective was only delivered for the Russian Federation, the state for Azerbaijan, while national youth councils from Russia, Moldova and Georgia were present at the workshop.

The main aims of the workshop were to increase knowledge on the needs and future perspectives of youth policy development in the respective countries; to provide a space for sharing, comparing and learning from developments in the fields of youth policy, youth work and youth research; to offer and encourage dialogue between governmental representatives, youth workers and youth researchers; and to support and empower existing youth structures.

The outcomes and the conclusions of the workshop show clearly that Eastern Europe and the Caucasus should be more involved in European processes and that the triangle of NGOs-researchers-government should be enhanced. It was also mentioned by both the participants and along with organisers that there is a need for further development and capacity building of civil society in the region, and that there is a need to define more concretely ‘Youth Policy’ and to duly work on its implementation.

¹ Youth Partnership – a partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth
² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Republic of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine.

YFJ YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT STUDY VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

On 21-23 May 2008, the YFJ conducted a Youth Work Development study visit to the Czech Republic, organised as part of the YFJ country-by-country approach to the priority region of Central Europe. Such study visits are usually undertaken by the YFJ Bureau and Secretariat members to meet youth NGOs, the local and national authorities in charge of youth, and other actors involved in or responsible for youth work and youth policy development in the country.

During the three days of the study visit, the YFJ delegation were able to meet the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the regional authorities of South Moravia and South Bohemia, as well the respective regional youth council, the national youth council CRDM,

local branches of YFJ Member Organisations, the National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme, the National Institute for Children and Youth, UNHCR and the Council of Europe Information Office, along with among other organisations.

The study visit provided an opportunity to learn about the level/state of youth work and youth policy in the country both at the national and regional level, to refresh existing and establish new contacts, to exchange views and opinions with the organisations and institutions met, and identify possible ways in which the YFJ can support the efforts of youth NGOs in the country to improve and develop the status of youth work, youth policy and young people in general.

AGENDA

AGENDA 2008

SEPTEMBER

06-07	IV Bureau Meeting Brussels, Belgium
11-12	YFJ Press and Communications meeting Madrid, Spain
14-21	University on Youth and Development Mollina, Spain
23	Consultation day on the Work Plan 2009-2010 Brussels, Belgium
27-28	Financial Control Committee meeting Brussels, Belgium

OCTOBER

04-05	V Bureau Meeting tbc
08-09	Youth event prior to the ministerial conference Kiev, Ukraine
14-15	PoT Sub-Group meeting Munich, Germany
24	Information & Networking Day on Funding for INGyOs Brussels, Belgium
26-30	Thematic event on Cross-pillar cooperation tbc, Germany

For more information
on our events have a
look at our calendar



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