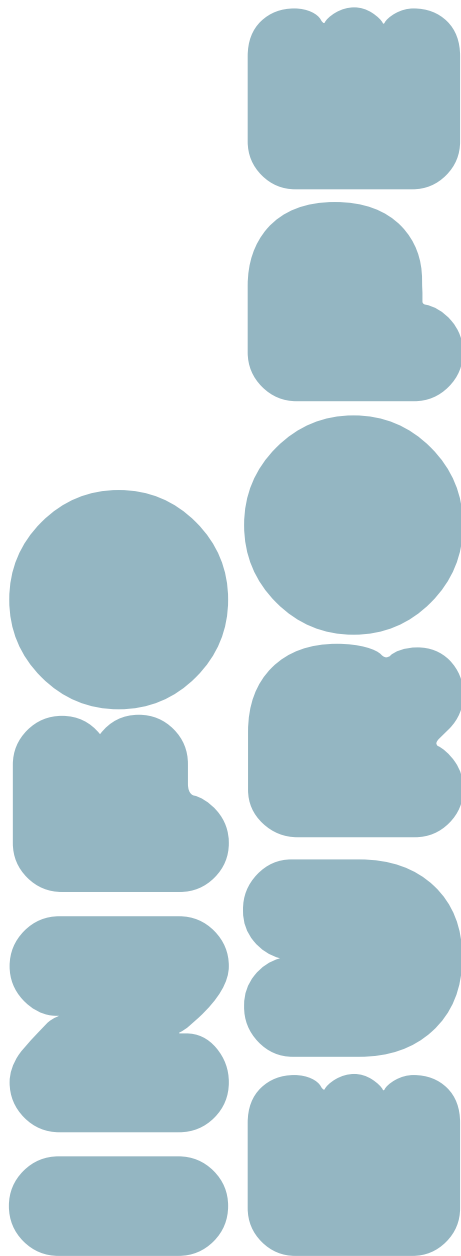




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EDITORIAL

MIJARC Europe is thrilled to announce that the third edition of our quarterly magazine Info Europe is now available. This issue is focusing on the topic of youth policy and highlights the results and outcomes of our seminar "Rural Youth Leading the Change in Society!" Here you will find news from Europe, MIJARC Europe and best practices of its member movements - YMDRAB Bulgaria, KLJB Germany and KLJ Belgium. In this issue we offer you a short interview with our two member movements: YMDRAB Bulgaria and KLJ Belgium.

Enjoy the reading!



Youth
in Action

This publication is supported by the European Youth Foundation - Council of Europe. The content here presented is from the exclusive responsibility of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

The best youth policy

Youth policy is in general focussing on youth participation and citizenship, social inclusion, and non-formal education. These topics are broad and encompass many of the challenges young people are faced in societies. To fully achieve the inclusion of young people into society and to give them a fair share of responsibility and chances, young people must be enabled to take an active role by themselves.

To a big part, however, youth policy was established by others than young people. Even sometimes youth NGOs are led by grown-ups. Albeit best intentions, the key

to achieve the development of an individual personality of each and every youth and to create structures in society, economy and politics that ensure a good participation of young people lies in the hands of the young people themselves.

Youth organisations provide highest levels of education when they offer young people executive functions in their structures. Anyway, these organisations have to rely on its members. On one hand this is a great chance that can not be outweighed by money - but of course a movement's effectiveness and efficiency can also be lim-

ited by the capacity of its leaders. Especially youth movements have another great opportunity to change society: all that young people learn will affect decisions they take in their latter life even it is not visible at the first place. So besides all doubts and hesitations, trust in them and give them the chance to live up to the confidence they have been placed in them.

Florian Aurbacher

Treasurer of MIJARC Europe

NEWS FROM EUROPE

European Parliament launches information campaign towards 2014 elections

The official run-up to the 2014 European elections starts on 10 September, when the European Parliament launches its awareness and information campaign. This campaign will continue beyond the elections themselves, until the newly-elected Parliament in turn elects the next European Commission President.

The campaign will have four phases. Phase one starts now, with the presentation of the baseline ACT.REACT.IMPACT. This phase aims to explain the European Parliament's new powers and their implications for people living in the EU.

Phase two, from October to February 2014, will highlight five key topics - the economy, jobs, quality of life, money and the EU in the world - at a series of interactive events in European cities.

Phase three, the election campaign proper, starts in February. It will focus on the 22-25 May election dates. These dates will be added to the logo as the elections draw near.

After the elections, the final phase will focus on the newly-elected European Parliament,



its election of the next European Commission President and the inauguration of the new Commission.

Info source:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20130906IPR18827/html/European-Parliament-launches-information-campaign-towards-2014-elections>

Fresh calls to lower the voting age in France

The political organisation 'Generation 6th May' has called on the French government to put plans in place to allow 16 and 17 year old citizens to vote in elections. During his 2012 election campaign, Francois Hollande pledged he would make young people one of his top priorities if he became president. It is argued that extending the franchise could help Hollande partially fulfill this commitment.

Over the past year the French government has introduced many new measures aimed at young people, such as the piloting of the Youth Guarantee and rebuilding schools. It is argued that lowering the voting age would allow for young people to play a greater role within French society and thus feel more valued by decision makers.

Lowering the voting age, combined with effective education will empower young people to take an active role in the democratic process.

Info source: Youth Policy Watch/Issue 85 (<http://intranet.youthforum.org/newsletters/node/75624>)

NEWS FROM MIJARC

"Rural Youth Leading the Change in Society!"



Team building

From 9th to 15th of August the seminar "Rural Youth Leading the Change in Society" took place in Nowy Gieraltow, Poland. Thanks to the support of the Youth in Action Programme (European Commission) and Renovabis Foundation, 37 rural young people from 8 European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Romania, Spain, Poland, Portugal) got the opportunity to get together for analyzing and exchanging the realities about politics, economy and diverse societies in Europe in order to create a vision of the future of rural areas. During the 5-days seminar the participants engaged in many different non-formal educational activities such as energizers, ice-breakers, team-building games, debates, brainstorming, pedagogical games, workshops, field visits and plenary sessions, to See, Judge and Act on the society we live in.

But the learning moments were also present in the many informal moments during breaks and thematic evenings (international evening, movements' evening, Polish evening, etc). The seminar was led/facilitated by the so called "Think Tank", made of two coordinators from the European Team and 5 volunteers from the different member organisations that engaged themselves in getting expertise on the different topics of the seminar and preparing both, content and methodology for every session. This was a several month work and also a great learning opportunity for them, to autonomously get into their topics and experiencing in a safe environment how to facilitate such international activities.

The seminar started with a morning full

of games and exercises so the participants could get to know each other and break the ice, before getting into more "serious" work in the different working groups. The very greenish landscape of this small village in the Polish mountains in the border with the Czech Republic was

the perfect scenario to motivate participants for some outdoors activities intercalated by some indoors work too. But what were the groups discussing about anyway?

The group about **economy** was aiming to explore ideas to build a sustainable, solidarity rural economy by getting to know and evaluate alternative economic projects and systems, such as LETS (Local Exchange Trade System). This group went to visit a fishery in Trzebieszowice, a museum and ceramic workshop in Katy Bystrzyckie and had the chance to be interviewed by the regional TV from Kłodzko (you can see it here: <http://www.tvklozka.pl/site/telewizja/1/1/9/1121/n.html>).

But they also had the chance to interview by themselves some inhabitants of the surrounded villages in order to ask about their vision on the current economic situation and perspectives for the future generations.

The group about **politics** was focusing on the active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional levels. They got to know more about the European structures that support youth participation, what are the strengths and weaknesses of youth organizations and strategies to motivate young people to become active citizens. They met a special guest, a local young politician who was mainly in charge of the agricultural thematic and they went to Wroclaw to visit the "Human Library" project (a library where the books are people from different cultures) and know more about the history of Europe and political realities of the region.

This group also prepared a flash mob that was performed to the other participants during lunch time. It surprised everyone and it was much applauded.

The group dealing with the topic of **diverse societies** had a broader spectrum of discussions, starting with the definition of society and what creates problems with diversity (discrimination). Then the focus was in two main topics: gender and religion. Participants got to know more about the concepts of gender and sex and tried to imagine how the society with perfect gender equality would look like. Then they passed to the reflection about the role of religion in modern societies and the place of church within MIJARC. This group also visited the Human Library in Wroclaw, and saw a district with churches from different religions (mosque, cathedral, synagogue,...).

On the last day of the seminar the participants from the three working groups had the chance to present with creativity the most important conclusions from the few days of work, in a final plenary session. To make it more interesting groups have prepared movies and plays. But to keep it in a registered record, the different groups contributed to create a Newspaper, which describes more in detail the experiences and conclusions of each thematic group.

Pictures, videos and more descriptions can be found in our webpage dedicated to this event: <http://mijarc.net/en/node/9318>

Ana Silva
European Secretary



Having fun during the Polish evening

We leave you with the testimonials of 3 personal experiences from the different working groups.

Rural youth leading the change in... politics

From « burning French cars » to « writing position paper »

I barely had time to disembark the plane before I got rain-soaked. In this regard, I felt quite at home... After a few hours spent in good company in a train and a bus, it was one o'clock in the morning on Saturday 10th August when we got to Nowy Gierattów, deep in the Polish countryside. The rain stopped. We barely had time to greet those who were not sleeping yet before we found ourselves with a glass in our hands and something to eat. My first experience with MIJARC as a MRJC delegate was starting under the best auspices.

"Youth leading the change in society", I arrived hoping to learn new ways to advocate and act on society for my movement. What do rural young people do throughout Europe? The 4-day seminar was fruitful, alternating debates, field visits and role plays. My group dealt with youth and

politics. What space is given to young people in politics, but also how interested are young people in politics? We took the young people's point of view as well as the politicians' point of view in order to understand better what we saw in each of

our countries and at European level. See, Judge, and when the moment came to ACT, this was the opportunity to provide some ideas we could bring back home.

I am coming back to France with the willingness to put forward our political positions to the other European movements in order to have common positions on European policies. We are also going to take advantage of the European elections (which will take place at the same time as the local elections in France) to raise awareness among

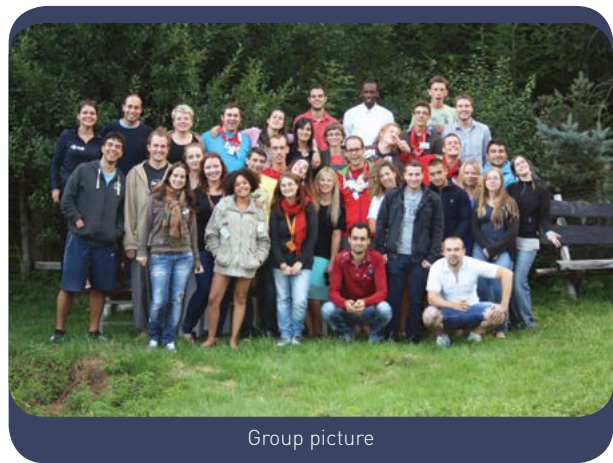


Morning energizer

candidates about youth issues. At regional level we will organize training sessions on politics for young people in order to raise their awareness and help them to decrypt the programs. Lastly, also in the context of the European elections, we have planned to organize a video contest on the topic of "Politics, a taboo subject?". But after due consideration, we will not set fire to cars, it is not very ecological...

François Bausson
MRJC France

Rural youth leading the change in... the rural economy



Group picture

After 20 hours travelling by car, bus, plane and train, we arrived in Nowy Gieraltow, a small city near Klodzko. Again a city with a beautiful yellow sun and good MIJARC memories. Our group on rural economy learned about money and economy. It seems all so easy, but when we played the international food trade game with rich and poor countries, it was again difficult to develop a good economical trading strategy.

After, we introduced our village to each other and discovered the big differences very

quickly. Somebody said: "My village no longer exist, it was destroyed by a mudslide," or "There are almost only houses, the rest can be found in the big city, with a million citizens, 50 km away, even the schools for children of 3 years.

The field visits were very interesting to gain an idea how things are in the region and also the questionnaire we made gave us the opinion of the

"people in the street". Preparing the questions beforehand was a good input to gather the necessary information quickly and correctly. We also invited the local Television TV Klodzko which gave us the opportunity to ask more sensitive questions while there was filming.

It was difficult to put all the conclusions together and to find good solutions but with the accumulated experience of the past few days, we had enough to organize a "press conference" for the final plenary.

I learned that it's important to join forces, work together, share ideas and give also poorer people the chance to join your group, even if it costs more. The cooperation of different groups gives a better value to the activity, but also a better voice to the community.

The structure of KLJ (my organisation in Belgium) is built on this way that local groups are collective so they can work together, share ideas, etc. Even for the groups with +16 years olds, on Saturday evening, they visit each other's party, so they support each other financially. You see, there is already a little economy between the groups.

But there are more and more voices speaking up to establish contacts on international level in order to exchange ideas and experience across borders I hope the partnership between Portugal and Belgium can become reality, as this idea came up during the seminar. We already have one thing in common: the yellow colour in the flag ;-). The Belgian MIJARC commission gives support.

Koen Desmedt
KLJ Belgium

Rural youth leading the change in ... diverse societies

Always when I pack to leave the comfort of my home and venture myself in that place called "Europe", I do it with a double feeling: in one side is the fear and incertitude that language causes me (and I think: "will I be able to make myself understand?"), but in other side is the conviction that I'm going to meet with other people and, language aside, we are going to share one same idea about how is our surrounding reality and plan which steps we can/should make to be able to transform that reality in order to achieve what we wish for.

And so it was...When we arrived in Nowy Gieraltów we realised that we were capable to make ourselves understand to share our "dissatisfaction" about the kind of person that our society is creating: a person deeply hurt by the spear of inequality, because (despite what others want to make us believe),

we are still living divided by gender questions, sexual orientation, etc. and this is specially lived in those places that we love: our villages. Nevertheless, the most interesting of all it was not sharing "dissatisfactions" but shaping hopes between everyone, being sure that following the role model that Jesus of Nazareth offers us we can and should overcome barriers that set us apart from each other to heal the wounds we bleed from and that way build God's Kingdom in the rural world. Many conclusions were taken...nevertheless, due to the plurality of cultures, I believe that the best is to "immerse" in the essential idea so that later on, each movement, can make it reality in their own contexts and according to their own possibilities.



Our rural twitter wall

Now, when I unpack, I find out that I bring much more than what I took with me, because if I took with me "fear" and "incertitude", now I bring back concrete faces of people with who I exchanged experiences and with who I've shared ideas and smiles, and I think: "I hope all militants of MIJARC can come, at least once, to a meeting of this kind!"

Carmen González
M.J.R.C. España

NEWS FROM MOVEMENTS

"The Voice of Youth - The Voice of Change"



Getting to know each other

From 20th until 27th August 2013, 27 young people from Botevgrad participated in the project "The Voice of Youth - The Voice of Change", which took place on the territory of our beautiful Black Sea resort "St. St. Constantine and Elena" in Varna municipality. The main objective of the project was to encourage young people from small towns to be active citizens and participate fully in the social life of their communities.

Through a variety of funny activities for non-formal learning as role play games, simulations, workshops, discussions and presentations we tried to stimulate the belonging of participants to the society. Young

people understand the importance of their role in democratic life and in the processes of decision-making at all levels. They exchanged views and experiences on the challenges they face in their daily lives and that are related to their rights (human, social and political). Furthermore, the participants met and discussed with representatives of local authorities and youth organizations at various levels - local, national and European.

As a result of their work the participants created a general statement that reflects their views on three key themes of Bulgarian youths, namely: "Youth in diverse societies", "Democracy and youth participation" and "Social inclusion of young people." On each of these topics participants highlighted the most important according to them as well as existing problems and outlined proposals and measures to improve the adverse situation. Despite the hard work young people took the time for a lot of funny

activities like different thematic evenings, energizers, a flash mob on the beach and seaside entertainment.

You can find the video with all daily activities here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8XQs0kzHmk>

This project is being implemented with financial support from Council of Europe by the European Youth Foundation.

Yonko Dodev
Vice-President of YMDRAB Bulgaria



Role play game

Believe in You(th) - Create the Europe of tomorrow!

In the "European Year of Citizens", YMDRAB's friends from informal group of young people "Support for youth ideas" implemented successfully their first international project within the "Youth in Action" Programme. This was a multilateral youth exchange called "Believe in You(th) - Create the Europe of tomorrow!" Its main aim was to increase awareness of young people from the rural areas of Europe on their rights as European citizens and to encourage their active and well-grounded participation in the democratic life of their local communities.



Sightseeing in Sofia

The Exchange was held from 2nd to 11th of September in Pravets municipality in Bulgaria. It brought together 56 youngsters from

five different European countries. The participants were young people in aged between 15 and 20 years, who are living in the rural areas of Germany, France, Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria.

The Non-Bulgarian youngsters were accommodated in the families of the Bulgarian participants. During 9 days all people participated together in a joint programme of various activities for non-formal education: presentations, role plays, simulations, working groups, creative workshops, discussions with politicians and others. By these activities they discovered and became aware of realities in the rural areas of Europe and learned about EU Citizenship and the rights and pos-



Flash mob



Interview for local media

sibilities that go with it. They organized a flash mob in order to promote active youth participation in the social life and in the democratic decision-making processes at all levels. The participants visited the wonderful Kroshuna waterfalls and the amazing cave "Saeva dupka". During all activities the accent was placed on the intercultural exchange, opening the minds of young people and their ability to accept and appreciate the differences of all countries and cultures.

For all youngsters this exchange was an unforgettable experience which we will remember for a lifetime!

Mariyana Charakchieva
YMDRAB Bulgaria

"MITMISCHEN 2013" - INTERFERING 2013 KLJB - campaign previous to the elections to the German Bundestag

Political topics obviously are relevant to young people. But young people also realize that politics often is quite ambiguous - especially when elections are close. This was one of the reasons why we developed a card game. The different cards contain the position of nine German parties towards different political topics which are important for the KLJB. Also cards with the position of KLJB are included.

Some of the topics were:

Eco-fair Supply; Green Genetic Engineering; Sustainable Agriculture; Development of Rural Areas; Energy Supply; Development Policy.

We received a very positive feedback about our campaign. This shows us that young people are interested in the election process and in politics in general. What lacks is a youth-friendly way to approach them - like "MITMISCHEN 2013".

A complete description of the KLJB campaign you can find here: <http://kljb.org/mitmischen2013>.



KLJB management board

Ute Ackermann, KLJB Germany



KLJ Landjuweel

Every two years KLJ organizes the national sport competition Landjuweel. On this event more than 60 local KLJ groups compete to win one or more cups. In KLJ we have five official sports: vendelen, wimpelen, rope pulling, dancing and pyramid building. It's hard to translate vendelen and wimpelen but in brief you can say that vendelen is waving a throwing with very big and heavy flags. Wimpelen is waving with smaller flags.

The local groups work very hard during the year to become champion in one or several sports.

In KLJ we have 170 local groups that practice one or more KLJ sports. Every year there are a lot of regional KLJ sport events during the summer but every two years there is a Landjuweel. I don't have to tell you how important this event is for our local KLJ - groups.

Do YOU want to come to one of our Sport events? You're welcome! For information you can mail to karel.billiet@klj.be

Karel Billiet, KLJ Belgium

INTERVIEW

Name of organization and country: YMDRAB - Youth movement for development of the rural areas is Bulgaria, Bulgaria

Names, positions and emails of members of national board:

- Yordanka Petrova, president (petrova_yordanka@abv.bg)
- Yonko Dodev, vice-president (ionkododev@abv.bg)
- Daniela Checheva, treasurer (daniel4etomi@gmail.com)

Name and email of your European Coordinator: Marina Grigorova (mmg12@student.le.ac.uk)

Main topics of work: YMDRAB was founded in 2009 and since then has been implement projects and initiatives like seminars and training sessions related to the topics of youth participation, rural development, youth (un)employment, migration, human rights, environment protection and climate change, support the social inclusion and employability of the young people with communication disorders.

What does MIJARC Europe bring to you (your organization): MIJARC Europe brings a lot to our movement as it gives a lot of opportunities for young people from rural areas. Being a part of MIJARC Europe our members have the chance to explore the diversity of Europe - culturally, socially, economically and religiously - to develop a sense of tolerance, to learn a lot of new things and develop new skills by non-formal methods, to find new friends and visit so many new places. Taking part in MIJARC Europe activities, participants come back more motivated and believe that they can take an active role in rural development and decision-making process at all levels. Thanks to MIJARC Europe!



YMDRAB national board



KLJ national board

Name of organization and country: KLJ, Belgium

Names, positions and emails of members of national board:

The national board

- Bram De sutter, national vice-president, volunteer
- Gregg Lansu, national vice-president, volunteer
- Marc Torfs, regional President Limburg, volunteer
- Gino Van Moer, regional president Oost-Vlaanderen, volunteer
- Ronald Van Crombrugge, regional president Vlaams-Brabant, volunteer
- Maarten Van Rompa, regional president Antwerpen, volunteer
- Wim Wyseur, regional president West-Vlaanderen, volunteer
- Kim Celen, National President (kim.celen@klj.be)

Personnel

- Karel Billiet, national staff member (karel.billiet@klj.be) - main topics: religion, international, diversity, solidarity, yeartheme, relational subjects, recruitment, binding
- Lies Schraepen, national staff member (lies.schraepen@klj.be) - main topics: training of volunteers, policy of the local groups, policy of the volunteers, policy of local leaders
- Silke Cools, national staff member (silke.cools@klj.be) - main topic: communication, editor of our magazines, rural development, social opinions
- Dirk Decuyper, national chaplain (dirk@klj.be)

Name and email of your European Coordinator: Karel Billiet (karel.billiet@klj.be)

Main topics of work: amusement; sports; training of volunteers; christian movement; rural topics; solidarity; diversity; playing a part in the society; the connection with the village

What does MIJARC Europe bring to you (your organization): MIJARC is a way to bring KLJ - volunteers in contact with other Christian rural movements in Europe. This opens their view on the world and on the way things are organized. Via MIJARC young people can think about important issues in the rural areas on a fun way. Through this process they can see the interesting differences between the countries. Because all these young rural people through Europe get to know and understand each other. You can see that MIJARC opens Europe for our volunteers and local groups. They visit each other and stay in touch via Facebook, post, mail, ... «MIJARC opens Europe for our KLJ Volunteer on a fun way!»



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