

**YEE!**

**YOUTH AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
EUROPE**



# **NEWSLETTER**

**January/February 2010**



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Editorial team: Gosia Zubowicz, Gjoko Zoroski, Candice Sly

Dear YEE friends,  
Youth and Environment Europe team  
wishes you a wonderful and more  
environmental 2010.

Thank you for your support and for being  
a part of YEE family.  
Hope to see you during our actions  
in 2010!

# KNOWING YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Hello, my dear readers!

This time I have decided to write about neighbours. Let's get to know each other better...

During our lives we come across many people. There are many people that can be considered our neighbours. When someone thinks of the word 'neighbour', the first thing that will almost always come to mind would be the people next door. But we can have many different types of neighbours, such as neighbours down the block, neighbours in an organisation or even neighbours on the Earth. When I think of neighbours, I think of anyone who I have ever met or I will ever meet, anyone who will have any sort of affect on my life.

Can we say our society is caring about neighbours? "If you can learn a simple trick you'll get along better with all kinds of people. You never really know a person until you consider things from their point of view. Until you climb into their skin and walk around in it." We should be able to look beyond race, religion, sex, colour, moral values, and disability.

Our neighbours sometimes do antagonise us. But when it comes down to the

hard facts, our neighbours are very much needed. If we only see only ourselves in this world, it's going to be a very lonely place. We could perhaps learn much from Epictetus, one of the great teachers of Stoicism and arguably the person who issued the world's first cosmopolitanism. Once asked where he was from, he gave a reply that all of us might just as well repeat: "I am a citizen of the world."

A good neighbour should take part in community projects. A community project can be something simple such as raking the leaves of your street on a planned date, or taking part in some ecological action. All of us in YEE are neighbours. How? We know each other, communicate very often and work in joint projects. We simply feel like a big family in which there is enough space for new ones who care for the environment. A good neighbour is always willing to do something to improve his/her community and take part whenever he/she can.

So...do not hesitate, be part of us! We can all become involved. Your youth neighbours from YEE are all around you.

Gjoko Zoroski  
(DEM, Macedonia)  
YEE Publications Officer

## STOP FEAR - START ACTION! European Training Course Against Climate Change

**Dates:** 6th December - 13th of December 2009

**Place:** Fehmarn, North of Germany

**Participants:** 20 participants from: Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Greece, Belarus, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia

Using the creative potential of the CoP 15 UNFCCC in Copenhagen 2009, NAJU and YEE invited young participants involved in the topic of climate change for the training course. The main goal of this TC was to improve the participants' skills in getting in action, to improve participant's knowledge of the effects of climate change, as well as to develop their skills to live their lives more future oriented. They didn't just focus on participants as single actors - they want-

ed to train them how to get in interaction with their environment and become multipliers against climate change. Through the discussion of the complex topic the participants were inspired to change their everyday lifestyle as well as to start action on climate change in their local communities.

**STOP FEAR!** – the TC provided knowledge on the background of climate change and the associated political incidents as well as to impart decision-making and responsibility - therefore workshops trained participants how to improve their argumentation and presentation skills.

**START ACTION!** - our participants were encouraged to get in contact with other people and create effective projects together! This training course offered a platform for experiences' exchange, an open space for new projects and a place to plan a first action together in Copenhagen at the "Global Day of Action" (12th of December 2009) during the CoP 15 UNFCCC.



### Methods

- interactive workshops, games and guests from climate change effected areas of the world to improve knowledge on climate change and the UN conference (including a trip to Copenhagen)
- interactive workshops with experts as well as self organized workshops to improve skills to live a sustainable life with daily alternatives to reduce climate change.
- ideas marked: big time table in which each participant writes down his/ her normal lifestyle and over the time alter-

natives will be added and through this a change visibly appears in a normal day structure.

### Topics

- General information: already happened changes, effects on the people, ecosystem; get real experience; Information about personal and local effects
- Theoretical alternatives: personal change of perspective; Nukes for climate?; climate change and public space (urban gardening); showing latest ideas and successful stories; alternative economies; personal influence on politics
- Local work: support of groups at home (new projects and ideas); responsibility for youth groups; collecting tools for sharing ideas/ resources/ social ecological movement
- Personal life: main contributors to green house gases, what do they do against it; change personal behavior and take positive influence on others; personal mobility; change energy.



### NAJU (Youth Association for the Protection of Nature)

is one of Europe's biggest environmental youth organisation with approximately 80.000 members from 1 to 27 years. These members are distributed across Germany and are mostly active on local or regional level. They are organised in about 1.600 local youth groups. Through the work and commitment they contribute to the conservation of remaining valuable nature and to change society into a more sustainable and less destructive one. The activities vary from political actions and alternative projects to nationwide campaigns on ecology, since they believe that environmental destruction has its roots in very different reasons.



## Participant's comments



“What do we want? CLIMATE JUSTICE! When do we want it? NOW!” Was screamed by thousands people during Copenhagen demonstration, COP 15. We were there too! 22 young, open-minded people from mostly Central and Eastern Europe who participated in the training course on climate change “Stop fear! Start action!”. We met on Fehrman, German’s island and had heated discussion about climate change, losses in biodiversity, alternative source of energy and possible solutions of current global ecological problems. One of the most useful part of this workshop was European Parliament simulation which made us aware of most important procedures and structures. Finally, like always, great international company renders this workshop unforgettable!”

„For me the SFSA training course was a perfect assemblage of a good organisation and a there was vivid group of participants dealing with challenging topics concerning the whole of humanity. Climate change is a challenging issue with a wide range of factors that have to be taken into account, but now it is much closer to me and my friends, and I believe we are now more ready to face the public in convincing them what’s right and what’s wrong. During this seminar I met so many people who, without hesitation, I can now call lifelong friends. The trip to Copenhagen was an experience of a lifetime. In one place there were so many people, so many cultures, and so many reasons...the joining together of demonstrators, NGOs, press, politicians etc. in the beautiful and freezing Copenhagen. Words are too simple to describe the vibe and joy of that day. I left enriched with knowledge, lifelong experiences and new friendships which are the base for changing the world and for a better future.”

Iza,  
(OA PTTK, Poland)



Viktorija,  
Environmental Association “Izgrev”, Republic of Macedonia



“The SFSA training course was a very powerful stimulus for me to start planning an international project. I gained a lot of useful information and many experiences in the field of nature protection, campaigning, rallying, and many useful contacts for our organisation and, of course, many good friends from all over Europe.”

Dima,  
(Go Minsk, Belarus)

“I found the camp worthwhile. The main intention was fulfilled: participants of ‘Stop Fear Start Action’ were motivated to act in their countries and at the international level as well. I appreciated the practical forms of activities, e.g. gaining experience in the process of campaigning and the procedure of negotiations in statutory agencies of the EU. I am thankful that we have stayed in touch with the participants.”

Vladimira,  
(Hnutí Brontosaurus, Czech Republic)



## WATER AND YOUTH

**Dates:** 15th and 22nd of January 2010

**Place:** Stepanavan, Armenia

**Participants:** 37 participants from: Armenia, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic



“Water and Youth” was an international youth exchange organised by Stepanavan Youth Center (SYC) in collaboration with Youth and Environment Europe (the Czech Republic) between 15th and 22nd of January in Stepanavan, Armenia. The event brought together 37 young people from six different countries and organisations: SYC - Armenia, SAEM - Georgia, Young Partners for Civil Society Development Association - Romania, Luga Environmental Organisation - Russia, Gminny Zespól Kultury i Bibliotek - Poland and YEE - Czech Republic to share and exchange knowledge on various topics related to the world’s most important natural resource - WATER.

### Water issues

The main theme of the visit in Armenia was: problems with water in the world, in the countries the participants of the exchange came from and how they want to prevent them from appearing in the future. People from Armenia, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Poland, Russia and Romania presented their projects depicting situations in their countries.

During the project participants learnt

about water resource situation in various parts of Europe, sharing experience, developing knowledge and skills on environment, water and sustainable development issues. Videos on peculiarities of water qualities and on Lake Vostok initiated interest and strong discussions among participants. The participants had a chance to exchange their experience and knowledge also through workshops they facilitated. The Romanian, Russian and Georgian groups lead discussions on climate change, water energy and usage of water. During the project, there was a visit to the environmental impact monitoring center in Vanadzor and the participants had a chance to see how the professionals monitor the atmosphere and water in the Northern Armenia. Prac-



tical water monitoring tests were done in river Dzoraget and the lake Sevan as well. The enthusiasm and creativity of participants was on the peak during the community project, which was about creating handmade posters with environmental messages for local community. Over 60 posters were spread all over Stepanavan, the host city, spreading the thoughts, concerns and ideas of people from all over Europe to local inhabitants.

### Intercultural exchange

Equally important aim of the meeting of the people from 6 countries was to encounter other cultures, meeting the people with different historical and cultural backgrounds and mastering the skill of intercultural communication. Methods known to the world from centuries happened to be very helpful: music, dance, and eating together. It occurred to us very quickly that the basic language of the exchange is English, equally enti-

tled would be Russian, since for people from Georgia, Russia and Armenia it is common and for Czechs and Poles it is more less comprehensible. The Armenian participant Harut was singing songs of the Russian bard Wladimir Wysocki, Cosmin and Daniel from Romania were teaching Russian, Armenian, Czech and Polish girls their national dances. And everybody was speaking together as if they knew each other for years. The recent war between Russia and Georgia did not matter, they found an explanation very easily that bad politicians who made such decisions were to blame, but people in both nations still remain friends.

Friendly, joyful and creative atmosphere which was during the days of the exchange was surely the result of the engagement and common understanding.

Lilit Simonyan,  
(Stepanavan Youth Center, Armenia)  
Zbigniew Drzewiecki,  
(Gminny Zespól Kultury i Bibliotek,  
Poland)





## GREENER FESTIVALS ARE ON THE WAY

The Campaign for Greener Festivals is an international project run as part of the Sunny Campaign. Six partner organisations from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary are organising a series of demonstrative events to make cultural festivals greener through the use of biodegradable dishes, renewable energies, compostable toilets, water recuperation and the sale of local foods.

The project aims to decrease the negative impact of cultural events on the environment by transferring knowledge and good practice and showing visitors that "another world is possible". For that reason a round table including cultural event organisers, environmentally oriented enterprises and NGO representatives is being organised. The guidebook for Greener festivals, that includes experiences from the UK, France, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovak, will be presented and

distributed among the participants.

We hope to inspire cultural event organisers and initiate fruitful partnerships in the cultural, business and non-profit sectors. We can see good attempts and examples across our countries even among big music festivals, including the Czech examples of the Trutnov Open Air festival and Rock for People. We are keen to capture the potential and show people more ways to protect nature and its resources while at the same time having fun and being comfortable. From the experiences in Great Britain, Belgium, France and other countries we know that it's possible. Now it is time to search for a way to replicate this in our own countries.

Michal Ruman  
(Konopa, Czech Republic)  
YEE Coordination Officer

In the next month the following events are being organised by partners where you can get a better understanding of greener festivals:

- Pozdní zimní Pestrovečer (Late Winter Fanciful Evening), 12th-13th March, Mikulčice (CZ)
- Meat Jelly Festival, 19th – 21st March, Miskolc (HU)
- St. Georges Day, 24th April, Turkeve (HU)
- Day of opened gardens, 15th May, Družstevná pri Hornádě (SK)
- Reggae Meeting, 28th – 30th May, Točník (CZ)



For more information about the project and more examples of greener festivals visit [www.sunnycampaign.net](http://www.sunnycampaign.net) (in the section Cases you can find examples).

For cooperation please contact Michal Ruman: [ruman@konopa.cz](mailto:ruman@konopa.cz)

## TRAINING COURSE on Peace-Building and Sustainable Development

Youth Section of "Association for Sustainable Human Development" in cooperation with "European Integration" NGO and Analytical and Information Agency "Armedia", with financial co-assistance from European Youth Foundation, organised a training course "Transformation from Intolerance to Peace-Building and Sustainable Development through Youth Dialogue" in Agveran, Armenia from November 26 - December 1, 2009.

### Topics

Despite the fact that the topic of the training course was the elimination of intolerance among youth and the promotion of sustainable development, the topics turned out to be much broader and more meaningful.

During the five days of the seminar we had lectures, discussions/debates, presentations of participants' opinions and points of view.

The present and the possible developments in Armenian - Turkish and Armenian - Azeri relations were introduced in the framework of lectures. Intolerance was defined, with its possible manifestations, and environmental issues threatening the world were introduced with solutions. The Republic of Arme-



nia - EU Action Plan was touched upon, along with Armenia's economic policies as a precondition to EU integration in the economic sphere. The lectures were accompanied by a variety of opinions and hot discussion.

One of the speakers of the program was Mr Karen Bekaryan, head of the NGO "European Integration", with the topic "Intolerance, its internal and external manifestations, our perception of European values". After a discussion on issues such as human rights, freedom of speech, etc., Mr Bekaryan shared his opinion on the resolution of Karabakh conflict with the audience. European examples and experiences of conflict resolution were introduced.

The speaker touched upon issues such as negotiations' process in conflict resolution directly and indirectly the sides concerned, the factors, their possible dy-



namic changes and influences, as well as possible scenarios of conflict settlement, trying to show the possible challenges and optimistic scenarios.

### Environmental issues

Head of Association for Sustainable Human Development Prof. Karine Danielyan held lectures mainly on environmental issues. By touching upon environmental issues facing planet Earth, Prof. Danielyan stated that anxiety nowadays is visible in almost all the countries, and it leads to certain steps aimed at the struggle with environmental problems. Prof. Danielyan drew parallels between environmental, economic and political core issues. Connection between Environment and Security was discussed and the transformation from risks to cooperation. In all the lectures environmental issues stood out as a platform for resolution of economic and political problems.

The program of Sustainable Development of Republic of Armenia was introduced, its international commitments, realization processes and society's participation in the process.

Prof. Karine Danielyan stressed that society must be made aware of ecological issues and participate in their resolution.

The trainers prepared a number of activities and exercises that contributed to the formation of an informal atmosphere. Criteria and methods of non-formal education developed by EU in youth program implementation were used. The exercises were different, starting from political role-plays up to caricature drawing.

The participants had a chance to "publish" their newsletters and magazines in which they had to include the issues important to youth. Some published issues related to politics, some included Armenian showbusiness, some created environmental newsletters.

Liana Nersisyan  
Gaya Sargsyan

(Association for Sustainable Human Development's youth section)



## Walk on the Wild Side

### Capacity building and cooperation strengthening for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the South Eastern European Green Belt.

DEM will again this year host the training sessions. It will be held in the National Park Mavrovo, where all of the highest mountain peaks in Macedonia can be found.

### Background

The European Green Belt initiative ([www.europeangreenbelt.org](http://www.europeangreenbelt.org)) has the vision to create an ecological network backbone running from the Barents to the Black Sea. It is a global symbol for transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development. Remembering the historic course of the Iron Curtain in Europe, the former "death strip" shall be converted into a network of transboundary protected areas. Moreover, the initiative shall serve to better harmonise human activities with the natural environment, and to increase opportunities for the socio-economic development of local communities. The need to protect the shared natural values and the unique biodiversity of the area offers a possibility to facilitate such an involvement.

The project Civil-military Cooperation for the Promotion of Transboundary Nature Conservation along the European Green Belt (South Eastern Europe) carried out during 2008 was aimed at combining nature conservation and peace-securing activities in the border region between Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. It was implemented by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), with financial support from the German inter-ministerial Body for Civil Conflict Prevention. Project activities were carried out jointly with local organisations the Ecologists Movement of Macedonia (DEM), REC Albania and Eco-99 Prizren - Kosovo and were supported by ENVSEC - the Environment and Security Initiative.

The project brought together stakeholders in nature conservation, the border police and local communities to identify common fields of interest in nature conservation and to agree on potential grounds for cooperation. Training sessions on the natural values of the border region were held for representatives of the border police and other stakeholders. Trainings and excursions took place in Mavrovo National Park in Macedonia, Sharr National Park in Kosovo and around Kukes in Albania, within the trilateral border region. As an output of these trainings, field guide materials for

border police and all other actors in the region have been compiled and published as a tool for experiencing and protecting the valuable nature of the shared border region of a part of the South Eastern European Green Belt.



### Objectives

The overall objective of the new project is Strengthened transboundary cooperation on nature conservation along the border zone between Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia.

The immediate objectives of this project proposal are:

- To increase the capacities of stakeholders to get involved in activities relating to biodiversity management along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia;
- To strengthen cross-sectoral and international cooperation on the conservation of biodiversity;
- To increase awareness of key stakeholders and civil society on the conservation of valuable natural heritage.
- To mitigate the project's carbon footprint.

### Description of the project

The project is of a clear international scope involving target groups from Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. It will focus its activities on the trilateral border zone which is characterised by outstanding biodiversity and landscape. The area in the high mountains has an outstanding high species diversity. With more than 6,500 plant species, the Balkan region represents a major region for European plant diversity. Illyric and Mediterranean flora meet in the project area of the Sharr/Sara and Korab Mountains in the Southwestern Balkan region. With respect to flora, these mountains are among the richest biodiversity areas in the Balkan Peninsula. The highly diverse relief of the mountains, partly shaped during glaciation, and the extensive hydrological network, have created many different habitats, thus giving rise to very diverse and endemic flora. The region is characterised by many rare, relict, endemic or endangered species of flora and fauna, with more than 2,000 plant species alone. In terms of fauna, the area is one of the last remaining retreats for European carnivores such as lynx, wolf and brown bear. Meanwhile, tourism potential and the value of the area have grown due to its natural beauty, historical sites and traditional local products. In the trilateral border region of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia the border areas have been left out of use due to the long-term trespassing



ban. As a consequence, linear structures of biotopes and habitats without anthropogenic influence were able to emerge. In many countries, such border areas represent the last intact nature sites. Here, the natural heritage preserved is a shared one, as nature knows no national borders.

### Implemented activities

The following training and presentations have already taken place:

- CITES - basic information for CITES and current situation with implementation in Macedonia
- Training session: "Fauna in protected areas in Macedonia"
- Training session: "Status on brown bear in R. of Macedonia and R. of Albania"
- Organised study tour and training

workshop: to visit places of special interest within the National Park Mavrovo

- Brochure on best practices in transboundary nature conservation

### Planned Activities

The project partners will carry out trainings for representatives of the border police and the local population. Those trainings will focus on information on the project area's natural values, on guidance how to observe, experience and protect nature, and on providing tools for better surveillance of the border areas in civil-military cooperation. During and after the trainings, partners will develop excursion modules about the "Green Belt" for the school education sector to be implemented with the help of qualified border police staff and other stake holders trained in the Kukes, Mavrovo and Kosovo meetings.

Ruska Miceva  
(DEM, Macedonia)

### The Green Belt Initiative

The European Green Belt initiative has the vision to create the backbone of an ecological network that runs from the Barents to the Black sea, spanning some of the most important habitats for biodiversity and almost all distinct biogeographical regions in Europe. By following a course that was in large sections part of the former east-western border - one of the most divisive barriers in history - it symbolizes the global effort for joint, cross border activities in nature conservation and sustainable development. Moreover, the initiative shall serve to better harmonise human activities with the natural environment, and to increase opportunities for the socio-economic development of local communities.

[www.europeangreenbelt.org](http://www.europeangreenbelt.org)



## Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture as an Alternative for the Protection of Ohrid and Prespa Lakes

### Sustainable agriculture

Sustainability rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, stewardship of both natural and human resources is of prime importance. Health and environment protection



are becoming main priorities at the global and local level. People living in urban communities are especially concerned about how to obtain healthy food and protect their health. The media informs the public about the consequences of diseases but does not inform them about locally available healthy food. Use of pesticides in conventional agriculture negatively influences the health of consumers and the biodiversity of the lakes.

Sustainable agriculture is one that produces abundant food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting its environment. It is agriculture that follows

the principles of nature to develop systems for raising crops and livestock that are, like nature, self-sustaining.

The main pillars on which sustainable agriculture is based are:

- Know your markets, protect your profits, and add value to your products;
- Build soil structure and fertility;
- Protect water quality on and beyond the farm (our lake is divided between Macedonia and Albania);
- Manage pests ecologically; Use minimal pesticides;
- Maximize biodiversity on the farm

### About the project

The main goal of this project is to promote a change of behaviour and to stimulate consumption and production of organic food in urban areas in the Ohrid and Prespa Cross Border Regions (Macedonia and Albania). Main activities are awareness raising campaigns, assessments of public opinion, workshops and cross border meetings with farmers, experts and municipality authorities. The target groups are farmers and consumers from the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Debarca - Macedonia and Pogradec - Albania. This project helps create and expand local food markets that will preserve our agricultural heritage, give everyone access to fresh, healthy food, and

keep our farmers farming. Our mission is to collaboratively create and expand regional community based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable, and health-promoting. We will start with placing eco-stands at the green markets in Struga and Ohrid. They will also serve as eco-spots to raise consumers' awareness about how their food is grown and processed - how plants, animals, the soil, and the water are treated.

The bearer of the project activities is the Local Development Agency from Struga - Macedonia and partners are: Civil Society Organization PEF from Pogradec - Albania and Ecological Society "Grashnica" from Ohrid - Macedonia.

The project activities take place from September 2008 - December 2010.



### Results

- The establishment of four Citizens' Advisory Boards (one in each municipality) comprised of farmers, the Agency for Agricultural Support, local branches of the Ministry for Agriculture and repre-

sentatives from the Municipalities.

- The creation of a logo and Motto for the Project: Take care of yourself. Take care of nature. Organic food.
- The design and production of posters, fliers, t-shirts, hats, paper and cloth bags.
- The organisation of two joint visits to organic farms in Pogradec, Albania and Valandovo, Macedonia. Participants were farmers from two countries and they used the opportunity to share good farming practices.
- The organisation of two joint seminars for the Citizens' Advisory Boards in both countries and 30 field workshops for the farmers included in the project.
- The selection of local farmers that produce healthy food and promoted their work in the local media.
- The drafting and publishing of an assessment of public opinion about organic food.
- The setting up of free stands for the promotion and sale of organic food. From this will spring two stands that will be placed at the city's green markets in Ohrid and Struga. They will offer the citizens and tourists healthy locally grown food.

This initiative is supported by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe's SECTOR Programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Katerina Vasileska and Gjoko Zoroski  
(DEM-Youth, Macedonia)

## KONOPA celebrates 10 years

Konopa, an associated member of YEE, has celebrated its 10th anniversary and 10 years of industrial hemp re-cultivation in the Czech Republic. For that occasion we have measured hemp development in our country.

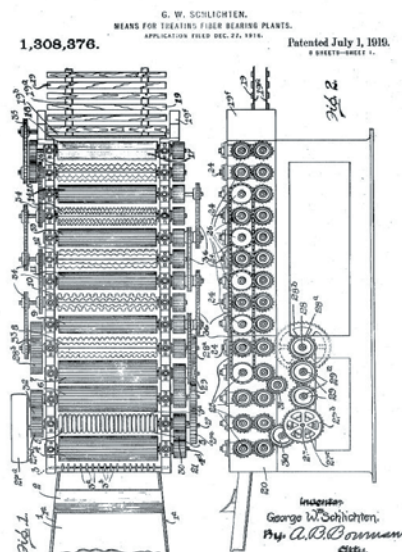


It wasn't a positive result. There is nowadays less than 400 ha of industrial hemp on the fields (same as in 2000). There is no real hemp stalk processing line in function. Konopa works on a small-scale machine development known as Schlichten decorticator. The decorticator allows small (groups of) farmers to process hemp stalks to fibre and shiver in qualitatively, energetically and economically unrivalled ways. We hope to finish the working model this year and make it available to the public for the next improvement and adaptation.

Konopa also deals with medicinal hemp. In this field the situation remains unsatisfactory in the Czech Republic. Medically-used hemp is not accepted by mainstream pharmacists and doctors. There is slight advance among scientists, politicians and jurists but people grow-

ing marihuana for personal treatment are still under threat from prosecution. After 10 years of active work on the topic of "hemp as a utility plant", after hundreds of phone calls and direct questions 'how to get marihuana to cure myself or my relatives' we have to say STOP.

The hemp plant is not poisonous; it is not invasive or genetically modified. There is no substance in the plant that is able to kill anybody (compared with alcohol, tobacco...). Yes, there is psychoactive THC that makes you feel "high" but it is a very effective treatment, especially with the hundreds of other substances found in hemp. The newest tests and thousands of years of experience have



Vítez



shown that hemp drugs are able to cure various illnesses, including cancer, with very low risks and side effects. In fact, we all have our own cannabinoids in our body that help to keep a balance between our organs and protect us against stressful substances and situations. An equivalent to THC is found in breast milk where it helps to develop (among other things) the eating capacity of a baby.

We are sure that there is no plant on Earth that is in itself dangerous. There are

Vítez



thousands of natural drugs derived from plants and animals that have helped people to open their minds, cure themselves or just relax. Of course, we can misuse them, as we do with many other treasures of our world in the name of "consumerism". Our position is that we can't fight drug abuse while there are consumerist mentalities. There must be a shift, a transformation of society that gives more responsibility to



Pino (Konopa)

people and freedom. Criminalisation of the medical use of marijuana is a crime against humanity. We call for the acceptance of hemp as a plant (herb), for its free growing and use. There is nothing better for helping to develop an economy based on renewable, biodegradable and healthy resources and to feed and cure people all around the world. There is no reason and no force to restrain people's right to grow any seed given to us by mother Earth. After ten years we still hope for a better future. And we know that we have to fight for it!

Michal Ruman  
(Konopa, Czech Republic)  
YEE Coordination Officer



## My workcamp summer experience

Last summer I spent two weeks in a workcamp in the Czech Republic organised by Duha. Duha is a Czech non - governmental child and youth association focused on leisure activities, nature and fun and aimed at promoting non - formal education on matters such as democracy, sustainable living and personal development. I spent a year at Duha as a European Voluntary Service (EVS) volunteer.

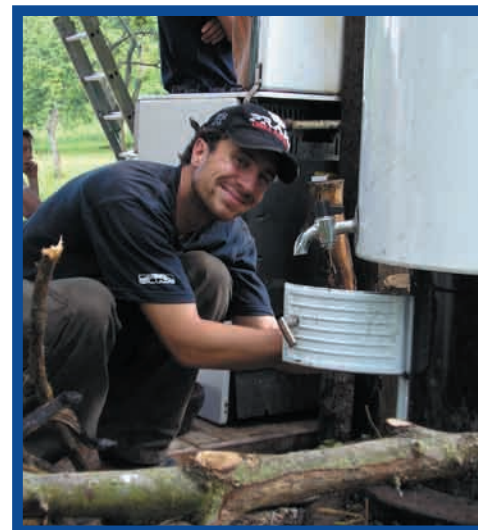


For those of you who do not know what a workcamp is, it is usually a two week project where a group of volunteers from all over the world work together to help a non-governmental organisation, association, youth centre, or any institution with a good aim. You just pay travel costs and a participation fee to your sending organisation and in exchange for working six days a week for around six hours a day you are provided with food and accommodation and you gain many immaterial things like friendships, skills

and life experiences!

The workcamp that I joined was an environmental workcamp. It took place on an organic farm called Donitra situated in the west of the Czech Republic. There were 20 volunteers, the farmer Vojta (the coordinator from local community) and myself as a workcamp leader (a person who organises the camp). The workcamp took place in a huge orchard in the middle of an area filled with sheep and lambs, just between a nice castle and a pond. The area was surrounded by a stream with drinkable water.

It was my first experience as a coordinator of such a big group. The days were long and full of activities. But the place and the way of living in the camp was great. Our activities included cutting wood to boil water for a shower or cooking; cooking using basic equipment in an outdoor kitchen, using vegetables from



the best solution to make things work well. It was a really enriching experience. I learnt how to listen to the people and to be more diplomatic.

I remember how happy I felt when I realised how the workcamp was slowly getting better day after day because we learnt how to exchange and share, be less individualistic and work as one strong group.

That was a short description of my experience and I hope you can have your own such experience next summer.

the permaculture garden, swimming in the pond after a hard day's work or learning how to build a compost toilet.

During these two weeks I learnt how to deal with different people and to find

Fabien Marais,  
(EVS in DUHA, Czech Republic)  
[www.duha.cz](http://www.duha.cz) [www.trochujinak.cz](http://www.trochujinak.cz)

### Workcamps

Participating in an international short term volunteer project (so called Workcamp) can be an exciting prospect. It is an interesting and meaningful way to travel with purpose and spend 2-3 weeks in a foreign environment. Working and living together with other young people from around the world provides an excellent opportunity to make many new friends, learn about unknown places and culture, gain new skills and experience. Your time, energy, and enthusiasm can make a difference in areas where help is really needed. There are as well many workcamps with environmental focus that can be interesting for you.

If you are interested in joining a workcamp (including on environmental topics) have a look at the web page of **Service Civil International** (the main international organisation organising workcamps) <http://www.sciint.org/> where you'll find a search engine. You will no doubt find a workcamp that suits your interests and the country that you want to discover.



## My Brazilian Year. My Year in NAPRA

I wish everyone could see the beauty of the rainforest. I wish everyone could feel the peace that reigns there. If so, I am sure that we would all understand better and think differently about the importance of the protection of the environment.



In the next few lines I'd like to talk about NAPRA (NAPRA - Núcleo de Apoio à População Ribeirinha da Amazônia; Organization for the Support and Development of Riverside Communities in the Amazon Rainforest) - a non-profit organisation where I interned last year.

After I graduated from university I wanted to travel and do something meaningful. That is why I decided to go for an AIESEC development traineeship. I never thought of going to Brazil but suddenly - as a matter of coincidence or maybe destiny, who knows - this colourful country was to become the destination of my trip.

The reason why I travelled to Brazil was NAPRA, a volunteer youth environmental NGO in the state of São Paulo. Thanks to NAPRA and the wonderful

people I worked with, I learnt a lot about the socio-environmental and economic problems there and also about Brazilian day-to-day life and the many different realities that exist within this huge country. Thanks to NAPRA I found another piece of myself and became more interested in environmental issues and a passion for the rainforest.

NAPRA is a Brazilian NGO dating back to 1993. Since that time the major goal of their activities has been promoting sustainable development and the improvement of the livelihoods of the riverside communities situated in the isolated areas of the Amazon Rainforest. NAPRA supports them in their efforts to protect the environment and their rights. In order to do so, the organisation mobilizes two strategic target groups it works with: the university students and the riverside people. In 2003 it became an independent non-profit organisation.

The significance of NAPRA's work is twofold. Firstly, NAPRA works in a region considered strategic for the conservation of the rainforest. The communities are situated at the Lower Madeira River, the longest tributary of the Amazon, in the state of Rondônia in the north-western part of Brazil. The state is located in an area known as the Arc of fire where over 75% of all Brazilian deforestation is concentrated. Moreover, one of the ma-

jor hydroelectric generation and physical integration projects in South America is being implemented in the region by the Brazilian Government. Therefore, the communities need a strong organisation able to effectively protect their rights.

Secondly, NAPRA is not only strengthening the lives of the riverside people, but the university students as well, as it is creating their increased awareness about socio-environmental issues. Consequently, several members decided to get professionally engaged in other projects directly connected to the Amazon, others got involved in similar causes somewhere else, always carrying with them the experience they had in NAPRA.

During 2009, while I was doing my internship, NAPRA was going through an important period of transition. After evaluating 15 years of their active work they recognised that becoming a partly professionalized NGO would be the only way forward. After long discussions, the majority of the changes have been decided and started to be implemented since September 2009: the first selection process of new volunteers have been organised, the better planned and more focused

educational activities started to be carried out, and more experienced professionals have accepted the responsibilities resulting from their new positions in the coordination team. Though, it is still a volun-



teer organisation and therefore there is so much work to do!

I am happy that I had the opportunity to participate in such an important phase for NAPRA. Taking part in all the discussions that were being held there during this year was very enriching for me. I became familiar with the functioning of NGOs and started to understand the joys and difficulties of the work in the third sector. I learnt lot and it made my year such a special one!

Adriána Harnúšková  
(Slovak Republic)  
[www.napra.org.br](http://www.napra.org.br)

### AIESEC Traineeships

An AIESEC traineeship is an intense learning experience that connects members through AIESEC's global network. Each year more than 5,500 members go abroad to take up the challenging opportunity to live and work in a foreign country. It is possible to work within the areas of management, technology, education, etc.

[www.aiesec.org](http://www.aiesec.org)

## World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD)

World Water Monitoring Day is a perfect opportunity for environmental and youth organisations to learn more about water quality in their surrounding and to contribute to an international research.

### How it works

The activity is run by Water Environment Federation (WEF) and the International Water Association (IWA). After the registration on

[www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org) you need to get special water monitoring kits with a short manual and you can start sampling water bodies (rivers, ponds, lakes...) around you.

### When

You can measure any time from **March 22** (World Water Day) and **December 31**. You can also celebrate the WWMD on **September 18**.

### Who

It is a perfect activity for kids and youth because the Test-kits are very user friendly so even children can handle them easily.

### What

You will have to test the water for temperature, pH, turbidity and dissolved oxygen.

What is important about the measurement is, that it reveals many other factors related with the quality in water and clearly shows the connection with the rest of the environment.

Firstly, **the turbidity** (for non-experts let's say clarity) of water reflects the soil erosion or the stirring up of bottom sediment (often caused by boats or too many bottom feeding fish).

Secondly, the level of **dissolved oxygen** is fundamental for living organisms and only the high level of DO saturation signify the healthy and stable environments for aquatic organisms.

Thirdly, **the pH** shows the relation to acid rain, wastewater discharges, drainage from mines, and the type of rock naturally found in the area.

And last but not least, all aquatic organisms (e.g. stream insects, fish, plants, etc.) need a certain **temperature** range to survive and thrive, therefore it is impor-

### World Water Monitoring Day

WWMD is an international education and outreach program that builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world by engaging citizens to conduct basic monitoring of their local water bodies.

If your organisation wants to join the action you can check all details at:

[www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org)



tant to measure the temperature and learn about its impact on the animals.

### Step by step

What you need to do to become a part of the project:

**1)** Register on [www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/)

**2)** Choose a place which you want to monitor and register it as well. You can choose one river and measure it in different places (kilometers) or you can choose many different water surfaces (lake, pond, river, stream,...) and measure them all.

**3)** Get the equipment - you can either use your own equipment (if you have any) or you can buy special test-kits by filling in this form:

[www.wefnet.org/onlineform/EUkit/kit\\_form\\_EU.asp](http://www.wefnet.org/onlineform/EUkit/kit_form_EU.asp)

**The price for each test-kit is around 5 euro + shipping expenses.**

You can use 1 test-kit for about 50 tests. You can usually share 1 test-kit among 5 people.

**4)** Plan and promote your event - think about how you want to do the event, when you want to go for measuring, who will participate. If you choose many places, you need to plan how you will move from one place to another.

**5)** Do the measuring itself

**6)** Enter the data to your profile on the website. You do not have to do it immediately after the measuring; you will have time till the end of the year. In this way, all the data will be shared and you can see the results in the Year in Review report.

### YEE and WWMD

In the last years, YEE took an active part in the water monitoring. Our strategy for the future is to spread the idea of WWMD and encourage more youth organisations to join the project.

This year, we inspired a Czech NGO Nase Kamenka. Its volunteers prepared an exciting day for children from a local primary school and they want to continue in their monitoring in the future. Beside that, we have also passed the idea of WWMD to the European NGO network of the ecocitizens.eu.



## Ukrainian Biosafety

### A struggle against the national producer and not a struggle against GMOs

According to telephone research carried out by the Gorshenin Institute in 2009, 85.6 % of those questioned were fully aware of genetically modified organisms and objects (GMOs), 93,4% considered the labeling of GMO products to be necessary and 61,2% said they refuse to purchase such products.



It would be reasonable to suppose that I would be satisfied with such results since I have been informing society of the potential threat posed by the uncontrolled expansion of GMOs for more than 10 years. In fact, most Ukrainians are distrustful of genetically engineered products. The Ukrainian government seems to agree with public opinion regarding GMOs. There is now the law on State system of safety in manufacturing, testing, transporting and using genetically modified objects (dated 31.05.2007) as well as a number of decrees of the Cabinet of

Ministers to regulate the norms of GMO use. The process of introducing biological safety should have started long ago. But apart from all the professional drawbacks of such documents, I can point out perfect conditions designed specially for dishonest officials.

I have criticised many times both the law and some of the decrees. I would like to enumerate some of the flaws of the law on the state system:

- Terms and definitions are formulated improperly. This can lead to ambiguities when applying such laws. For instance, the word combination “biological safety” is too general in meaning and does not correspond to the aim of the law in full;
- The single competent authority that would be responsible for safety norms in manufacturing, testing, transporting, using and the disposal of genetically modified objects does not exist. As a result, situations may arise where different bodies will share responsibility and it will be impossible to control the situation and tell whether the norms have been violated in this field or not;
- The full regulation on risk classes of GMOs is also absent;
- There is no regulation as to how to label products containing GMOs;
- The area of the necessary genetic safety

for protected territories as well as for nature reserves has not been determined.

The Cabinet of Minister’s decree “On the approval of the order to register GMOs in foodstuffs, beauty products and medicine that can contain such objects or made with the help of such objects” (dated 18.02.2009) also turned out to be a weak regulatory document.

This document not only infringes the Ukrainian constitution but is also at odds with “Cartagena Protocol on biosafety to the Convention on biological diversity” and „Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters”. Moreover, on some points the document contradicts these treaties.

The decree contradicts Article 50 of the Constitution of Ukraine according to which “everybody has the right to access information on an environment, on the quality of foodstuffs and life subjects that are guaranteed by law, and also the right to the distribution thereof. Such information is in limited circulation.

In particular, this suggested state registration fails to demand important information regarding the safety of the GMO, namely:

- an estimation of the influence and risk to people’s health and/or environment caused by genetically modified organisms or combinations of such organisms entering into the environment;

- on the methods and planning to monitor the GMO;

- on the measures to eliminate extreme situations connected with occurrence of the possible threats provoked by the GMO.

The procedure offered in the decree does not provide for public participation in the decision-making process regarding the registration of a GMO.

On the official site Ministry of Health [www.moz.gov.ua](http://www.moz.gov.ua) it was not possible to find any information on the Register of genetically modified organisms of sources of foodstuff, and also foodstuffs, cosmetics and medicine containing such organisms or having been received with their use.



It was on July 1st 2009 that the struggle for GMO-free products in the Ukrainian market began. But this struggle began with some peculiarities. Manufacturers and suppliers of food products received requests by the representatives of the State Consumer Standardization Office to inspect products on the contents of the



GMO in their production. At first sight this seemed a logical step. But I will remind you now what a GMO - already present in the global market - in fact is.

Having studied the experience of other countries where GMO products are made and have already been consumed for over 10 years, we can see that the overwhelming majority of genetically changed cultures are concentrated in four things: soybeans, corn, cotton and canola, with herbicide and insect-resistant traits. In 2005, 71% of the area covered by genetically modified cultures contained the four aforementioned herbicide-tolerant crops, 18% contained insect-resistant cotton and corn (Bt crops); the remaining 11% - cotton and corn that is both insect and herbicide-resistant.



According to the official register of GMOs allowed in the European Union ([http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm\\_register/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm_register/index_en.cfm)) to the above-named cultures sugar beet is also added. In the Ukrainian „risk group” it is necessary to

also include potato. It is connected with the presence of the genetically modified potato in Ukraine since the times of unsuccessful attempts by Monsanto to introduce potato types resistant to potato beetle. Different strains of yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) and bacteria (*Brevibacterium lactofermentum*) can also be named GMO.

The above microorganisms are also included in the EU register.

Thus there is a suspicion that the limited quantity of agricultural crops and microorganisms that are defined in such ways were genetically modified for industrial purposes.

So, how have the supervising bodies started to introduce biosafety measures in Ukraine? The State Customer Standardization Office already demands the labeling of products by all manufacturers and suppliers of food production irrespective of whether the raw materials contain GMO or not. The qualitative analysis costs from 500 UAH. And the quantitative one costs from 800 UAH. The checking of each consignment of goods will lead to considerable expense that will mean an increase in the cost price and, accordingly, an increase in price for the consumer.

No one is eager to quickly create such a national Register in Ukraine. I will remind you that the procedure for registering a GMO, unlike testing, is free of charge. It is clear that having given the

information to the Register and letting it be opened up to the public, a businessman can incur substantial damages in view of the attitudes by Ukrainians to GMOs.

But, it becomes a personal risk if a manufacturer selects genetically modified raw materials. Nowadays, additional losses are born by all manufacturers, despite the attitude towards GMOs in production.

The thing that worries me most is that the risk to the consumer if policy is not adequately implemented and the additional pressures on small national agricultural businesses that will be aggra-

vated by the actions of unfair officials.

It is necessary to begin the inspection at biotechnological corporations such as Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer ...

In the end, I will repeat the ideas that have been postulated many times. An effective system of biosafety requires well thought out state policy, a professional approach and expert public control.

Olexiy Angurets

Coordinator of the campaign  
Biosafety and biotechnology's monitoring  
(MELP, Ukraine)

## Climate Change Wars

Last December in Copenhagen the COP15 ended as a terrible failure. No consensus was reached, no specific goals were set, no binding agreement developed – as a result of the attitude of the most polluting countries, China and the United States.

In the last hours of the event, there was a last minute agreement prepared which acknowledges the view of majority of the scientific world that it is necessary to keep the increase of global average temperature below two degrees Celsius. However, the document does not clearly indicate that the goal will be fulfilled.



Regarding the financing fund that was established with 10 billion dollars annually between 2010 and 2012 to assist the less “developed” in their strategies for mitigation and adaptation, nobody knows



who will be responsible for managing it and how these funds will be distributed.

The next step of the conference will take place this year in Mexico. Some governments will try to solve the disaster of Copenhagen. But without the agreement of all countries the treaty will not be approved. Meanwhile, poor countries will see how the climate change affects them more and more, while politicians just speak.

The potential consequences of the climate change are the main concerns in recent years. Scientists, politicians, people in general - climate change does not leave anyone indifferent.

The Inter-Governmental Group of Experts on Climate Change (IPCC), a body created by the United Nations to establish a scientific consensus on this subject, says that in the late XXI century the temperature could rise between 1.1 - 6.4 °C.

However, while the figure of 1.1 °C will be hardly noticeable, a figure about 6 °C could have dramatic consequences, as the extinction of many forms of life, completely new climate, rise of oceans, migrations...

Yes, the temperature is rising... But what about the doubts about climate change and fake pieces of information that were in some cases manipulations?

For me personally it is curious to notice that in this confusion of facts and figures, the CIA has launched the Centre on Climate Change and National Security. The Centre aims to monitor, coordinate and interrelation between climate and security issues. This work will be performed by a group of specialized intelligence officers in international security and climate change. Why was the centre established? The main tasks of this Centre is to study the impact of climate change on the USA national security, investigating phenomena, such as desertification, rising sea levels, demographic changes, migration or increased competition for natural resources. The Centre gathers information about important issues for national security, such as the effects of environmental factors as triggers of political instability, economic and social development globally. The Centre has the mission to include researchers and scholars, aiming to be a powerful and renowned Centre on this topic.

'Undoubtedly, the project appears to be an example for other countries how to use the intelligence linking climate change and national security', said U.S. intelligence officer.

The Pentagon will include climate change as one of 'security threats' in the four-year report sent to Congress in February. The CIA already stepped forward with the creation of its own Centre for Climate Change and National Security. The National Intelligence Council (NIC) prevents from the geopolitical impacts of environmental degradation, famine, poverty and the destabilization of governments in the coming decades.

Despite the fact that some people don't believe in climate change, the centre makes research and studies to answer the question: "What will happen with the world if the average temperature rises above two degrees Celsius?"

The Security Council of the UN, thanks to the proposal of Great Britain, decides to link climate change to peace and world security, and the European Un-

ion and NATO are also considering the likely direct impact of desertification and possible waves of climate refugees on the Mediterranean region.

"We can't be called alarmists when governments themselves, after making their calculations, have decided to take action on the matter" says Canadian journalist Gwynne Dyer, who explores the climate in future conflicts - 'Climate Wars'.

Many governments and armies are preparing themselves to fight against climate immigration, fights for resources, riots started due to the climate change.

It seems to me that many of the main polluters and responsible for the climate change are not willing to stop climate change - they are just starting to be ready to defending their borders.

Alberto Mogio Perez

Sources:  
[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
[www.cop15.dk](http://www.cop15.dk)



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