

YEE!



KNOWING YOUR NEIGHBOURS



This newsletter is the third issue of 'Knowing your neighbours' - the project financed by European Youth Foundation. The main aim of this project is to increase the interconnection of youth organizations from different countries and to facilitate the communication among them.

We want to encourage you to treat YEE publications as a place where your organisations can post information about their activities, their aims, actions, calls for partners, etc. The potential readers are youth people working in organizations, youth workers, trainers, facilitators, as well as every individual that is interested. So it is worth sharing with them your knowledge and experience. We hope that our newsletter will enable the youth to have more information, documentation and that it will increase the strengthening of youth organizations and youth participation in different activities. We want to help to interconnect the network and facilitate the transmission among the organizations and particulars. We hope that thanks to these publications more organisations and individuals will be involved in the activities of the youth organizations and in the federation and will be willing to share information, experience and ideas.

Although it is the last issue from the project, we want to continue with the concept of 'Knowing your neighbours' publication and continue to describe activities of many organisations and help you to get to know them. So remember that YEE publications are for you to publish all the campaigns, actions and other activities that your organisations are doing. The aim of this publication is to increase the communication among the public interested in environmental youth activities, as well to serve like an environmental information source. So use this chance and send us reports from activities you made, pictures from them, plans for future actions, calls for partners, articles about environmental topics, about issues that your organisations are dealing with, presentation of your organisation. Let the people know what you are doing, others already are doing it!

Start to get to know your neighbours with the issue you are holding in your hands and help us with continuing our project by writing articles for next issues.

So write us at:
info@yeenet.eu

YEE is a big international youth organization. We have member organizations in 28 countries. These are not just words but it means that in every country there is a group of motivated young people who understand the value of nature and voluntarily work together to reach the common aim. One group of young people works in one country, another somewhere else but their actions are very similar – they are all directed on nature preservation and keeping our world green for future generations. YEE as a network helps youth to overcome the differences, to feel united and responsible for the humans' activities at our planet.

YEE has a long history. We faced good and bad times but we stayed together. The amount of projects is the indicator of the work of the organization. We have a lot nowadays. This Newsletter will describe just some of them that took place during the last 2 months - Youth Exchange in Armenia, Training Course in Czech Republic, some local actions of our member organizations, as well as projects of many other youth organisations. YEE always tries to organize projects in different countries to involve as many new participants as possible. Young people who have already participated in one of YEE's projects, fell in love with YEE, people, nature and the majority wants to join the network with their organizations. This is one more important thing that YEE is proud of. YEE has as well representation in Advisory Council. That is a great achievement of the organization and a big honour.

So let's move on with our big and small achievements and results in the future. We work well and the work is granted but there is always a horizon to improve. Everything depends on us!

Enjoy reading!

Elena Raspertova
(EYC, Russia)



Young Researches of Serbia (YRS)

Young Researches of Serbia (YRS) is a non-profit, non-political NGO that gathers young people around common interests, ideas and goals. Young Researches of Serbia has more than 3000 members, mostly young people aged 15-30.

THINK BIG - do little: start an avalanche!
– this is our motto.

Our vision is to be the driving force for all those whose aim is to make our planet a more peaceful, just and healthy place. Driven by science and education, our mission is to contribute:

- to scientific creativity and active participation of the youth,
- to development of voluntarism and its values,
- to environmental protection and nature conservation.

Our main aims are environmental protection, environmental education, youth exchange and work with young people, as well as the promotion of sustainable development, scientific creativity and voluntarism.

We have organized hundreds of research projects and educative programmes for young people in various areas of natural and social sciences.



Nature protection and conservation sector

We organize activities in the field of nature protection and conservation through biodiversity protection programmes, as well as sustainable development promotion. The range of the activities is wide:

- we work on biodiversity protection in nature protected areas all along Serbia
- with the scope of promotion of sustainable production and consumption we organize a number of campaigns; we organize promotional activities of clearing trash dumps; we cooperate with numerous institutions and organizations in that field;
- we take part in implementation of international conventions in relations to the

environment (Ramsar convention, Carpathian convention, CITES, CBD, etc.);

- we work on NGO sector's capacity building related to NATURA 2000;
- we are included in decision making processes related to sustainable development (as representatives of NGOs in National Council for sustainable development of Republic of Serbia).

Inclusion of great number of young people in activities regarding nature protection is one of our priorities.

Youth sector

We plan and organize youth programmes in cooperation with sister organizations and educational institutions in Serbia and South-East European region by participating in Youth in Action European Commission programme, as well as in vast partnerships with



youth organizations all over the world.

Every year we prepare and lead around 6 groups of young people aged 16 to 25 on youth exchanges, two-weeks thematic programmes in partnership with organizations from EU member countries.

Through the programme of South East European Youth Network we lobby for development of youth policies and voluntarism in the region, we conduct researches; organize projects and educational workshops in the field of volunteer management, leadership, intercultural cooperation and good relationship with neighbouring countries.

Voluntary Service of Serbia

Voluntary Service of Serbia (VSS) is a volunteer exchange service centre founded in 1990 as one of the sectors of Young Researches of Serbia (YRS).

Since its founding, we at VSS offer short, medium and long term volunteer

programmes. Every year we exchange approximately 900 volunteers on programmes in Serbia and abroad. In the last 18 years through VSS passed more than 4500 Serbian volunteers who went abroad and 2000 of foreign ones who came to more than 150 camps in Serbia.

Every year we organise around 20 international voluntary workcamps in Serbia opened for foreign volunteers and we offer more than 2500 workcamps around the world. Thanks to sending volunteers to workcamps and especially thanks to the specific form of voluntary work they represent, we help youth mobility, encourage dialogue with other people and cultures and we encourage positive attitude towards nature protection and local development.

Membership in the international institutions

YRS is a member of: CCIYS – Coordinative Committee of International Voluntary Service, YEE - Youth and Environment Europe, ANPED – Northern Alliance for Sustainability, CEEWEB - Central and East European web for Biodiversity, Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations, and a partner of the networks YAP and SCI in Serbia. YRS is one of the founding members of the following networks: SEEYN – South East European Youth Network and Youth CAN - Youth Culture in Action Network.

Milka Gvozdenovic
Ivan Svetozarevic
(YRS, Serbia)



For more information check:
www.mis.org.rs



Ecoclubinos is an Ecoclub composed of 15 children and young people. It is a part of the Organization for the Promotion of Ecoclubes in Portugal (OPE), which consists of over 100 young people responsible for promotion of Ecoclubes in Portugal.

Ecoclubes are, since 1992, gathered in an international network of young people who, in partnership with several other organizations, work voluntarily with the local community in solving social and ecological problems. They use the particular methodology, especially non-formal and socially participatory interactions that allows the citizens to be involved in social life and encourages them to be active in the community. There are 30 countries in the world that involve around 15000 young volunteers. In Europe there are now present in 6 countries (www.ecoclubes.org).



Ecoclubinos

Ecoclubes organize different kinds of actions, such as information sessions, awareness and information campaigns, publication of materials, workshops, exhibitions, environmental marches and manifestations, training courses, youth exchanges, etc. The aim is to help young people and other social groups to acquire social values, feelings of friendship and interest in the environment that is serving as a tool in promoting active participation in its protection and improvement.

Ecoclubinos were born in Alheira, small town in the parish of Pedroso, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal. The idea of creating an ecoclub emerged from a group of young people after a session of dissemination/promotion performed by 3 young people with higher education in the area of environment and natural sciences, as well as environmental education. On 27th of May 2007, the group started its activities, involving since then 15 people (youth and facilitators) in the age between 10 and 27 years old.

As a group of young active parishioners, they saw in the ecoclubes the chance to work on an extremely important and essential issue: environmental protection.

Thus, they adjusted their experience and commitment from previous years to the creation, organization and implementation of activities for and with the community. First, it was needed to choose action guidelines and the theme so, taking into account the diverse needs of intervention related to the natural characteristics of the local environment, the biodiversity was chosen. Then, the group structure was created – the way of electing the positions and the means of dissemination.

For more information you can check: <http://ecoclubinos.blogspot.com>
ecoclubinos@gmail.com

One of the main project of this eco-club since its beginning is “Hands on Earth”, which focuses on the creation of an organic garden and community awareness about the implementation of daily practices more sustainably. In order to implement these values, they organise actions that improve the skills and artistic creativity (for example the concept of



Land Art) of all young people involved in the project. The project started with harvesting a field for creating the garden. It was followed by theoretical and practical training on home composting and subsequent process of sowing and planting some species.

The other project is “River Project”. Originally it was invented in Catalonia and Galicia and it was launched in Portugal for the Portuguese Association for Environmental Education (ASPEA) and the Association of Professors of Geography (APG). In this project a section of a river or a smaller line of water is adopted. To help to deal with this task there are educational materials and various information provided.

You can get to know the value of a river and also implement a national network through observation, monitoring, surveillance, targeting the conservation and adopting different sections of rivers.



It also tries to develop a series of experimental activities of environmental education and public participation to assist the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. The project is helping in the implementation of plans for rehabilitation of rivers and streams with the involvement and accountability of the entire community calendar for the sustainable development.

To raise the awareness about Ecoclubinos in the community, there were organised sessions for scouts, universities and other entities. In one of them the founder of this movement, Ricardo Bertolino from Argentina took part. The Ecoclubinos also collect paper and cardboard waste to recycle it. So far we managed to send 3 tons of waste.

In the national and international field, Ecoclubinos participated in environmental manifestations (for example on recycled rafts in the River Douro), in national and European meetings, courses of Ecoclubes



multipliers, exchanges and different training courses.

The Ecoclubinos are now, as well as other national ecoclubes, partners in the project “Youth, Environment and Citizenship in the North”, promoted by Intervir+, Escola Superior de Biotecnologia da Universidade Católica. In this project organisations collaborate on the promotion of environmental awareness campaigns. Since the beginning of the project (October 2008) around 20 different kinds of actions have reached 650 people. You can check for more information at: <http://jovensambienteecidadania.wordpress.com>

The Ecoclubinos believe that the experience and energy it has acquired over several years, associated with its values, with present needs in today’s society in which they act, give rise to a mission that cannot be ignored and should serve as a living example to many other people, especially young people of their community.

Ana Lopes
 (Ecoclubinos, Portugal)





Official names of organisations can sometimes confuse other members of international groups. They are usually difficult to pronounce and most of them tell nothing about the activities and methods that are used. Let's be honest: what does OA PTTK tell you?

In fact we are a group of young people – students of Kraków universities and academies or their graduates. We are all gathered by Kraków Academic Section of one of the biggest organisations in Poland – PTTK – which promotes tourism and sightseeing, outdoor sports and all the active forms of spending free time, as well as popularizes the knowledge about the past, tradition and ecology. The organization has many smaller clubs, sections and



OA PTTK in Kraków... who are we ???

various offices all around Poland – one of them is our Academic Section.

Our group consists of about 200 people spread at Kraków university clubs. We all make mountain trips, courses, trainings and other actions and activities that unite us and give a pleasure of working together. The board of Academic Section consists of 11 people coming from those clubs. The aim of the board is to promote the whole Section among the clubs and provide a space in which members of different clubs (therefore also different universities) know more about each other and cooperate together. Apart from this, the board takes care of a shelter and 3 student campsites – all situated in the Polish mountains.

Our office is located in the very centre of Kraków (drop by when visiting the city!) in a beautiful tenement house. In one of the rooms we hold a library – the majority of the books are connected with tourism, sightseeing and getting to know the culture. In the same room we meet every two weeks for official (but still open to outsiders) meetings during which we discuss the most important issues, vote on things to be decided or simply spend the time together updating each other on



what is going on in a given field of our organisation.

Couple years ago we developed co-operation with 3 international organisations. These are CEEWEB and YEE - we are the members of these two only as the Academic Section in Kraków, as well as the IYNF (www.iynf.org) – that whole PTTK is a member of. Now we also organise projects, take part in them, send participants and of course learn a lot!

Although 200 people does not seem to be a lot – there is a lot of things happening in the organisation. The projects are open also to non-members of our section



(that are usually only missing an ID with their photo but are just as much contributing as all the others). Recently we decided to form a kind of working groups that would help the board to deal with all the issues that need to be taken care of. We also believe that this is the way to involve the others in doing things that one is interested in.

So... are we attractive? We certainly try to be. We have been changing a lot in our organisation for couple of recent years. We work with different methods than years ago, we make our meetings as informal as they can be and try to attract more and more youth to our projects. What is the condition of success? Strong motivation. But we surely have it.

Barbara Świąch
Academic Section of Polish Tourist
Society (PTTK) in Kraków, Poland

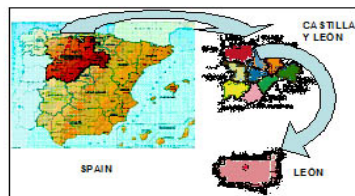
For more information check:
<http://oakrakow.pttk.pl>





ORO VERDE

GEOGRAPHIC SITUATION



We are a Spanish environmental organization, whose aim is to stimulate an economic sustainable development. We promote activities such as rural tourism, environmental education, knowledge of the nature, renewable energies, energy saving, as well as implantation of management and environmental technology tools in the heart of those town councils, local councils, companies or individuals that ask for our help, preferably in the rural areas of Province León.

There are many Bachelors and future Bachelors in Environmental and Biological Sciences, with a need for an opportunity to face real projects and studies on the subject of environment. As a matter of fact, we keep in touch with the Faculty of Biological and Environ-

mental Sciences of the University of León, and the Omaña's Town Council.

Oro Verde is a non-profit association, whose activities pursue to achieve clear and steady objectives, trying to improve some aspects related to the environment and the quality of life of the people surrounding us.

Following this introduction, a summary of the activities developed by the association:

Studies of the Natural Environment

- Elaboration of maps with a local scale (from 2004 and still working on it)
- Elaboration of an interpretative trekking route - it is called "Among Castles" (Summer 2004) but it has not been signed yet.
- Programme "Omaña's River Queen" and voluntary work - the idea was to develop a project including 3 different parts or stages: a project to study quality parameters of the Omaña river (2005); divulgation of the present state of the Omaña River to the local population and anyone interested in the matter (Summer 2005); organization



of a voluntary work to restore a part of the riversides using willow and alder pegs (13th of May 2006). We did another Voluntary work last year and apart from the riversides restoration we also cleaned the river collecting all the garbage we found.

Environmental Education Programmes

Dealing with environmental issues, we organised some courses where the trainers were bachelors coming from the University of León, so that the students could learn from young people and also check the working possibilities that their studies can provide in the future.

We participated as well in some Environmental Congresses:

- Summer course (from 15th to 17th of July 2005) about "Interpretation of the Natural Environment".
- Course about "New Conservation Strategies: Environmental Management Strategies" (November 2005).
- Attendance and speakers at the "Congress paying homage to the river Duero" which took place in Zamora (27th -29th of April 2006).

- Course about "Water Management"

Lately we did workshops in some high schools of León using a table game we made up to show young people (our target group were students from 13 to 16 years old) what kind of flora grow in their surroundings, the reason why they have some species but not others as well as the negative effect human activities can have over nature.

This summer 2009 we are hosting the **Annual Meeting of YEE** so we will be pleased to have you here in León.

We are creating a new website now so if you want to contact us meanwhile you can write us an email:

info_oroverde@yahoo.es

Marta Callejo
(Oro Verde, Spain)



Hunger for Armenia "Last heroes and heroines" Youth Exchange Tshakhadzor (Armenia), March 2009



Imagine few people from different countries, everyone is coming slowly, looking on the tree and trying to call a cat in their own language. But there is no cat! Are they crazy? No, they are participants of the youth exchange "Last heroes and heroines" during one of the sessions.

"Last heroes and heroines" was the project organized by Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) and hosted by AYCI (Active Young Citizenship Initiative) from Armenia. In March 2009 in Tshakhadzor, small village in Tavush region, young people from different youth organizations connected in YEE met. There were 30 participants from Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Serbia, Georgia and Armenia.

The idea of the exchange was to meet people from different countries and to provide the possibility to explore similarities and differences between cultures. Also to explore a need in valuing our own cultural identity. The way to do this was 9-days-agenda, full of activities and games connected with this topic. Sessions included



games helping to know each other and exercises helping to realize intercultural differences. We also tried to break stereotypes and we had sessions on theory of intercultural learning.

Very interesting point of programme was the intercultural evening, on which we presented food and drinks from our countries and after it we had great party. In our opinion it was important because sometimes we know a little bit about a country but we have not got a possibility to visit it. By trying their food and listening to the national music we came across foreign culture.

Another interesting activity was making social advertisements. We were divided into few groups and each of them had a topic: environment, breaking stereotypes and intercultural differences. We prepared main ideas and after it we discussed them with



specialists. When scenario was ready, we made short movies. One of the clips was the one about calling a cat that we mentioned at the beginning. It had to realize us that despite differences in language, culture and character, we are all the same, we have the same aims and dreams. Now we are waiting for effects of our work, which we will get on the CDs soon.

Even though the idea of the program was really great, we have same suggestions for the future. In the agenda organizers promised some outdoor activities but in real it was not enough. Few of us wanted to spend more time outside the hotel, exploring neighbourhood. Polish team was really expected about it because we all love mountains and Armenia is a fascinating place for us. We were disappointed because there was only one trip which we spent mostly on the barbeque in the forest and in the bus going there. Cultural heritage and environment of Armenia are

different from our European culture and that is why during this intercultural exchange we would like not only to meet the people but also to visit places where they were born and where they live today. In our opinion the best way to know and understand different cultures is to explore their country together with them. Not only by learning theory and playing games. Thanks to organizers, who changed a little bit the agenda, we could spend some time in the mountains, having great time and enjoying the views. We hope that next exchanges will fit our expectations.

Anna Kaliszewska
Monika Kotulak
(PTTK, Poland)



Training Course: Teamwork and Communication

One year ago, during Easter 2008, YEE started its series of training courses devoted to improvement of communication skills and problem solving within the network of YEE. Whilst the first training course aimed to develop one's presenta-



tion and communication skills in general, the second one was already focused on a specific topic: Teamwork and Communication.

During Easter 2009, 28 participants from 11 countries came to the town of Kamenice nad Lipou (situated in the south of the Czech Republic) in order to improve not only their facilitating and communication skills but the way of work in their organisations and among the YEE network members as well. During almost 5 days participants had the opportunity to learn

more about team roles and teamwork, facilitation, giving and accepting feedback, reflection, presentation and others. They also tackled the topic of intercultural learning and enjoyed for example the "proxemic dance" while learning about the personal space of others. In several working groups participants created (in very limited time) inspiring photo-stories on different topics which you will soon be able to see at www.yeenet.eu.

As the TC was held during the Easter, participants also invented and performed some exotic Easter rituals... Many interesting performances were created and we hope that the participants enjoyed the opportunity of practising the teamwork, splitting tasks and cooperating in this way.

We hope that participants gained useful knowledge and new skills during the TC and that they will encourage their team mates or colleagues to share a better working atmosphere and support their working teams back home in better communication and cooperation.

For the organising team of YEE,
Katka Lejckova

If you are interested in YEE training courses and have already experience with training people, you can apply for the next TC for trainers which will focus on Conflict management and Conflict resolution. For more information please contact us at:

katka@yeenet.eu

Comments of participants

"This training course was a really great experience for me. With active participants, interesting topics and very good trainers, everything was going slightly. I will use gained knowledge and experiences in my work and in my everyday life as well. I also made a lot of contacts and I'm sure I will have great cooperation with a lot of them in the future."

Vladimir
(Young Researchers of Serbia)



"First of all, the TC was well organized! Trainers were very flexible in their work, they were changing daily programme according to our needs and level of knowledge! Our big group was nice but not as a team! Next time it will be better to choose really motivated and experienced participants. I wish all of us successes in the future trainings!"

Tatevik
Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia (FYCA)



"I didn't spend Easter at home for the first time. But I had the possibility to meet many nice people from different parts of the world, gain new knowledge about cooperation with people and special techniques, which we can use to improve it. Moreover, I could visit one pretty small town in my country.

We were about thirty people divided in various international groups. We worked together, did some projects and led diverse discussions. I think everybody felt comfortable and wanted to take as much as possible from this training. I liked it also.

There were just few things which I was not too satisfied with. Above all, almost everybody wanted to keep the time line of our program but hardly anybody was able to come on time so we always started late. But this depends on people and it is not a mistake of the organising team. Our 'bosses' were namely great and endeavoured for doing all activities interesting. We could enjoy perfect spring weather as well. We had to leave after five days but we still keep in our minds not only friends we met there, but also experiences that we shared and things that we learnt.

Katerina
(Konopa, Czech Republic)



International Week(end) of the Forest (17th–19th of April)

Every year YEE organizes various actions in the frame of Day of the Earth and Week of the Forest. We have done a lot of things on the topic - presentations concerning environment and, more particularly, the forest, tree planting, walks in the nature, photo exhibition, concerts, and environmentally educating activities for children.

This was already the third year in a row when Tamdjem ("There we go" in Czech) – a voluntary weekend to help, improve and promote NGOs with noble aims, was organized, with a cooperation of DUHA, an NGO which develops activities for a quality free time for youngsters.

Probably many readers have heard and some of you maybe have even visited the beautiful "green" oasis in the middle of Prague where the main office of YEE is



located - Toulcuv Dvur. For many years the complex of Toulcuv Dvur has served as a fortress but nowadays the center runs a big number of environmental non-formal educational programs for schools and nursery school groups and carries out free time activities for wide public on regular basis. We decided to help in contributing for the growth and improvement for this area and so on the weekend of 17th-19th of April fifteen young and motivated volunteers came together for a refreshing work in a direct contact with nature. Some of the participants renovated a wooden path over the wetland in the area of the ecological center, getting a serious muscle strains, while some of them helped to clean the orchard close to Toulcuv Dvur to make both of these places more attractive and comfortable for leisure time.



There were also a couple of other, smaller tasks, for example composting and wood-peeling, not to mention an unforgettable experience in passing, throwing and even naming stones.

It was very nice to realize the curiosity of local people about the action, there were people asking questions, who were we, why were we there and what are we doing. For sure we raised the local awareness on the importance of this place as well as the ecology issue.

On Saturday evening we all gathered around a fire and it was amazing to see how such a diverse group could



just naturally mingle. We continued the work on Sunday but after it was done, we lied down on the grass, not wanting to leave, just enjoying the sun, people around and, yes, enjoying even the muscle pain and pleasant tiredness.

Beatrise Trope
(EVS in YEE)



Deutscher Jugendbund für Naturbeobachtung (DJN) – German Youth Organization for Nature Observation



Dear YEEers,

Celebrating the DJN's General Assembly at the Annual Easter Congress a new board was elected. "The DJN is a rather small organisation, therefore national and international co-operations gain more and more importance", assesses Maria Boness, the new chairwoman, "since they provide the possibility to offer a wider variety in our program."

A first step towards that direction was taken by participating in this year's international Congress McPlanet.com which took place in Berlin. Entitled "Game Over. Neustart!" (New start) issues related to the financial, economic, food and ecological crisis were debated. The DJN contributed to the wide range of the program by offering a workshop on biodiversity and climate change where knowledge was compiled and exchanged. In the "Café Activist@" and in several cultural offers

action was taken. Information desks created a platform to connect organisations and individuals.

In prevision of the Elections to the European Parliament and as an initiative to promote European awareness Jan Philipp Albrecht, one of the nominees of the Green Party for the European Parliament, was invited to the DJN's Easter Congress. Following the explanation of the Green New Deal, Albrecht discussed related issues such as nuclear energy with the participants.

The members of the DJN looks forward to participate in this year's World Water Monitoring Day and to attend YEE's training course in preparation of the UNFCCC Conferences in Copenhagen. Moreover a Summer Camp in France and a Bird Watching Seminar in Sweden will be organised. Hosting the YEE Annual Meeting in 2010 is considered.

Deutscher Jugendbund für
Naturbeobachtung
djn@naturbeobachtung.de

Offices DJN
Geiststraße 237073
Göttingen, Germany

Chairwoman
Maria Boness
buvo@naturbeobachtung.de



The DJN is the only German youth association that is exclusively managed by volunteers aged between 12 and 25 and therefore independent from any parental organisation. This structure strengthens the personality and self-confidence of young people because it enables them to contribute and take on responsibility at a young age.

According to the motto "Know what you want to protect" the DJN offers weekend seminars and camps all across Germany to impart knowledge on the multifaceted ecological correlations and to encourage respect towards nature's gifts and sustainability in everyday life.

The Annual Events are especially commendable for foreigners to visit since they last at least one week and members from all over Germany can be met. Accommodation is usually found in schools. Here two examples:

- Winter Seminar: every year from December 27th to January 2nd

Excursions, workshops, discussions and, of course, celebration of New Year's Eve grooming traditions like "Rummelpott laufen", "Labskaus essen", "Hüpsen tanzen", enjoying hot chocolate and Chai tea while listening and singing to guitar music.

- Easter Congress

Camp similar to winter seminar combined with General Assembly. In 2010 the DJN will be celebrating its 60th anniversary and expects many former members to join also.

If you are curious, please visit:

www.naturbeobachtung.de

You can find the topical program as well as our publications and reviews on excursions.

A new homepage including a more elaborated English section is in construction.

Feel free to contact us personally if you are interested in further information.

Anne Kollien
International Secretary of the DJN
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Silke Bern
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Resistance is fertile. City gardening for an edible future

One of GAIA's most successful ongoing projects is the "Horta Popular". This communal urban garden project started about one and a half year ago on a waste land chosen by the city council to become a parking. Currently it gathers around 20 students, professionals, retired people, young workers, foreigners and locals with their kids who constructively occupy and work on the permaculture. Some people work at plots individually, some share a plot, others plant openly and there is also some space left for the wilderness to do its wild thing. Decisions are made horizontally at weekly meetings where relevant information is shared and problems are discussed. This initiative acts on many issues simultaneously, bringing benefits



that appeal more or less universally, such as spending time outdoors in nature, recovering that community, saving money and a trip to the grocery store. These are all reasons leading to the exponentially increasing popularity of "Horta Popular". An important point is visibility - this phenomenon was featured in television programs and newspaper reports, it has attracted researchers. We received invitations from schools and other associations that wanted us to help them to become engaged with their gardens. Local governments have no choice but to accept the phenomenon as valid and some are starting to rent spaces for people to grow food on.

It is interesting to note that urban gardens at the beginning were the trademark of poor marginalized communities forced

by their circumstances to grow their food in guerrilla style by the side of the road. Now we can see middle class families following that example. So everything seems to indicate that we are very likely to see urban gardens expanding in one shape or another, even though there are some conflicts to solve. The issue of water, for example, is hotly contested at the moment. The city council excessively and wastefully irrigates all the parks to keep green grass growing. So in our point of view they should also provide this important and useful space for the community with some water to keep food growing. But they



think that if we want to run the space autonomously we should be autonomous in sourcing water, too. A clearer agreement of compromise still needs to be found so we can stop this mad circus act of juggling water buckets from people's houses. It got to the point where the local fire brigade had to pull a stunt to do an emergency refill of the water tanks.

A direct relationship with food is also important because if 'we are what we eat', we are what we sow as well. Since the control of food production changed hands from farmers to big industries, it is difficult to trust the products offered in shops. Let's remember that we are living in a time when genetic manipulation allows to grow plants with altered genes. Contrary to what you might expect, urban environments can be very healthy growing mediums, they can even have more biodiversity than rural areas, due to the increasing homogenisation of our countryside into monocultured landscapes. In fact bees are known to have an easier time gathering pollen near the city because there are many different flowering times making pollen more available during the whole year. The act of working the land at a time when most consumers are very distanced from the means of production of the goods essential to their life also a time when most consumers are city dwellers, is symbolic. Urban gardening is less about complete self-sufficiency and more about respecting the webs of connections between living things, in nature and with each other.

Another way we would like the 'Horta' to expand is the development of a cooperation of consumers that would join efforts and buy products from local producers they would want to trust and support. We



want to ensure a direct relationship between the city and the country and make these connections more equitable.

Let's leave plans aside for a minute and look at how this garden makes the community stronger. At weekends it is common to find children playing amongst adults working side by side with students and sharing tools, skills, ideas and knowledge. Such cross generational dialogue is very unique, this camaraderie hard to find. Old ideas that were tried and tested in the microcosm of the garden, meet new approaches in order to create something better adapted to these days. This is work that truly reconnects. The building of communities is pivotal for the health and well being of any society. In your community you can seek support when facing problems and celebrate in times of victory. Food plays a central role in the act of creating and sustaining communities, and GAIA's work reflects this importance. Our most popular projects have food at their core. The "Jantar Popular" once a week gathers a volunteer cooking team of on average 5

people. They shop and prepare a meal for around 150 people that will sit at tables together like a family. The Horta Popular, has hosted and organized lively events like samba band rehearsals, skillshare days, a seed bombing workshop, a local history walk, planting seeds and making compost and picnics. These events are open to any-one that may drop by. What we propose at the Horta Popular is the revolutionary act of planting. Planting ugly trash strewn spaces, nurturing strong seeds, watering neighbourhood relationships, growing connections. We bring such new elements into the life of city dwellers and put a certain ethic lifestyle in place, and that's why this work is revolutionary. It is making a visible transition to a culture which is rooted in core values of permanence and interdependence, so we can grow a future worth eating.

The "Horta Popular" is growing near by Calçada do Monte, at Graça neighbourhood, in Lisbon, Portugal.

Arianna Jordao
(GAIA, Lisbon)



Sustainable Tourism Working Group

CEEweb for Biodiversity was founded in 1994 (under the name of Central and Eastern European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity), with the support of the European Union and two Hungarian NGOs. One primary aim of the organization is to help the implementation of international tasks under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Presently CEEweb is the only network in operation which has been set up and run by nature conservation NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe.

Today CEEweb represents the network of 76 non-governmental nature conservation organizations from Central and East European countries, working together to protect the biological heritage of the region. The rich natural heritage, which is vital to the rejuvenation of these countries, is threatened by intensive agriculture, forestry and resource exploitation, as well as infrastructure developments.

Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development. Pursuing its mission CEEweb aims to:

- identify and change drivers behind biodiversity loss;
- form common policies and actions for

the enhancement of biodiversity in the Central and East European region;

- promote the enforcement of international conventions for nature and biodiversity conservation, with special regards to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- promote the concept and strategies of sustainable development and contribute to their implementation;
- raise public awareness about the importance of biodiversity and its protection.

We focus on addressing the root-causes behind biodiversity loss (including cultural, social and economic drivers); we aim at changes on policy level; we aspire at systematic changes that would holistically solve both environmental and social problems.

The network has five Working Groups that are mission-oriented task forces of the organization. The WGs operate on the following fields: CITES, Natura 2000, Policy, Rural Development and Sustainable Tourism.



Sustainable Tourism Working Group

Biodiversity seriously suffers from unsustainable exploitation, pollution and land-use changes throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Sustainable forms of tourism could provide opportunities, as well as challenges for the sustainable use of biodiversity. To contribute to the safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage of the CEE region, alternatives have to be found. Taking into consideration the enlargement of the European Union and the increased consumer demands for tourism and recreation in the region, it is now needed to establish the necessary capacities for managing tourism successfully in the region.

Having identified the need to improve the capacity and enhance the knowledge of NGOs working on tourism and biodiversity, the goal of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group is to make tourism

in Central and Eastern European countries sustainable through joint activities, such as information exchange, promoting good practices, training and education, policy-making, pilot projects and lobbying. The Working Group complements and supports the efforts under the European Agenda 21 for Tourism and the International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Hence the Working Group contributes to the work of nature conservation NGOs, ministries and other institutions.

The primary focus of the Working Group is the internal information exchange and the education of the members of the Working Group, then targeting and involving all other stakeholders.

Prepared by Ivan Svetožarević
(YRS, Serbia)



Advisory Council on Youth Council of the Council of Europe

Within the Directorate of Youth and Sport, the Advisory Council on Youth (AC) is the body made of representatives of the non-governmental youth sector which has the task of formulating opinions and proposals on any question concerning youth, dealt with within the Council of Europe (CoE). It is made in the co-management system that brings together youth NGOs and representative of ministries to develop and propose together questions and proposals concerning youth issues in the CoE. The AC is composed of 30 members, in order to ensure the largest possible pluralism within the AC and reflect as much as possible the reality of youth and youth work in Europe. The AC works jointly with government representatives who sit on the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ). The two bodies come together in the framework of the Joint Council on Youth issues (JC), which is the body establishing the youth sector's priorities, objectives and budget envelopes, as well in the Programming Committee of Youth, which is responsible for establishing, monitoring and evaluating the programmes of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation. The JC is chaired for half of the mandate by the CDEJ Chair and for half of the mandate by the AC Chair.

What the AC can do?

They formulate opinions and proposals on any question concerning youth, dealt with within the CoE; may: address to the Committee of Ministers and the CDEJ opinions and proposals on youth policy matters and on the objectives, priorities and budget allocations for the youth sector; be invited by the Committee of Ministers to formulate opinions on general or specific questions concerning youth policy; address to other bodies of the CoE opinions and proposals on any questions concerning youth.

How NGOs can be involved in the AC?

Every 3 years there are NGOs designated from among the previous structures mentioned and under the recommendation of the Youthforum, or applying directly to the CoE in case the organisation is not a member of the youthforum. The actual mandate is from 2009 till 2011.

YEE has a representative elected in the AC for the actual period. So now the federation will have chances to promote and raise questions in issues that tackle youth issues and environment, but like was said in the AC, the representatives of the AC are not elected to represent just their organisations but to represent the youth of the council of Europe.

The Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+)

The new Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+) has entered into force in 2007. It replaces LIFE III (DG Environment's funding instrument for the environment for 2000-2006), FOREST FOCUS, URBAN and the support to European Environmental NGOs. It has thus become the EU's single financial instrument that targets exclusively the environment. LIFE+ has a total budget of 2.1 billion EUR for the period 2007-2013.

The overall objective of LIFE+ is "to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community environmental policy and legislation". It supports the implementation of the 6th Community Environmental Action Programme (6th EAP) and its thematic strategies: combating climate change, stopping the decline in biodiversity, minimising negative environmental effects on human health, dealing with natural resources and waste in sustainable ways.

The LIFE+ Programme consists of three components:

- Nature and Biodiversity (which will receive at least 50 % of the funds available)
- Environmental Policy and Governance
- Information and Communication

Projects funded under LIFE+ must bring added value on the European level

and must be focused on innovative and demonstrative initiatives. Day-to-day operations will not be funded under these components. There is a separate call for proposals to provide financial support to European Environmental NGO's (see afterwards).

Currently, LIFE+ funds may only be used for expenditure in EU27 countries although it is possible that in the future certain third countries may also participate. This would apply to European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members, candidate countries for accession to the European Union and Western Balkans countries including the ones in the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Eligible beneficiaries for LIFE+ funds are:

1. Local and Regional authorities
2. Administrations, States
3. Research centres, Universities
4. Agencies, Chambers
5. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
6. Associations, Federations, Unions

The first call for proposals was issued in the autumn of 2007 for projects to start in 2009. However, the EC will continue to issue annual calls for proposals and provide funding for projects under the LIFE+ programme until the end of 2013.

Project proposals have to be submitted to the national contact points in each participating country, designated by the EC as responsible for coordination, programme promotion and project preselection.

Financial Support for European Environmental Organizations

Under the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+), there is a separate call for proposals for financial support to European Environmental NGOs. Through this support, the European Commission aims to strengthen the input of civil society in environmental policy-making and its implementation.

Support may be provided to NGOs that contribute to the implementation of Community environmental policy and the priority areas of the LIFE+ programme: limiting climate change, nature and biodiversity, health and environment, sustainable management of natural resources and waste, horizontal or cross-cutting issues.

Additional areas of interest are initiatives on environmental education, enlargement and third countries. NGOs wishing to apply need to be: independent, non-profit making, legally established in one of the 27 EU Member States and active at European level in at least three European countries.

The grant amounts covers up to 70% of the eligible annual budget of the NGO.

For more information have a look at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment>

Development Cooperation Instruments

The Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)

One of the new programmes from the commission is the Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP).

The ENRTP replaces several former environmental programmes: Tropical Forests and Environment in Developing Countries; LIFE Third Countries and Intelligence Energy Europe – Cooperation on Energy in Developing Countries IEE – COOPENER. The new thematic programme for 2007-2013 is based on the Development Cooperation Instrument.

Recognising that a healthy environment and sound management of natural resources are crucial for lasting poverty reduction, the ENRTP's priority areas are: integrating environmental sustainability in decision making, promoting implementation of Community initiatives and agreed commitments on environment and sustainable management of natural resources, improving environmental integration and promoting coherence in EU policies affecting third countries, promot-

ing EU energy policies and cooperation and development. The aims of the EN RTP are: "To integrate environmental protection requirements into the Community's development and other external policies and to help promote the Community's environmental and energy policies abroad."

The EN RTP is open to participants coming from: EU Member States, Candidate countries, ACP countries, New Independent States and developing countries. For global issues, participation by normally ineligible third country partners is allowed, particularly candidate and pre-candidate countries, as well as industrialised countries. A broad range of beneficiaries are eligible: research centres, local & regional authorities, administrations, states,

agencies, chambers, development NGOs, universities, associations.

Contrary to other financial instruments of the European Commission, EN RTP provides the possibility to address issues that are common to groups of countries. Moreover, it addresses the external dimension of EU environmental and energy policies.

For more information have a look at: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/environment/EuropeanCiviProtection>

More information at:

<http://www.cordis.europa.eu/fp7>

<http://www.ec.europa.eu/research>

<http://www.ec.europa.eu/research/fp7>

Our lifestyle and its environmental footprint

The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in the industrialized countries. Developed countries must take the lead in achieving sustainable consumption.

United Nations Agenda 21

How to live more environmentally friendly? There are many things people are doing in their own lives to contribute in their own way. So, how far does one go? What would I have to change? Does it cost something? You know the old saying, that every little bit helps.

Sustainable living focuses on individu-

al and community responsibilities for sustainability and focuses on choices, values, ethics and the way in which human beings interact with the natural world. Sustainable living is a lifestyle choice that considers a person's relationship within the community and the natural environment and seeks harmony with both. Sustain-

able living has become the new trend in lifestyle choices that involves a person's relationship to the Earth and the natural resources used by that person. Sustainable living has a different definition for each of its adherents but the basic concept is living in a way that leaves natural resources for future generations. To accomplish this goal, people must not demand to consume more resources than are available and, in some cases, even have a positive effect on natural resources by helping to replenish them. By not overusing resources, they are given the opportunity to naturally replenish themselves.

Supporters of sustainable living often refer to a person's "carbon footprint", as the effect that their lifestyle has on Earth. A carbon footprint is a representation of the effect human activities have on the climate in terms of the total amount of greenhouse gases produced (measured in

units of carbon dioxide). So, it is a measure of the impact we make individually on the earth by the choices we make regarding our lifestyles. Practicing sustainable agriculture, choosing to use public transportation, driving a vehicle that gets good gas mileage, bringing cloth bags to the grocery store, instead of using paper or plastic bags, and showering, instead of taking a bath, are all ways to reduce someone's carbon footprint. By measuring the carbon footprint through such tools as carbon calculators, we can get a better sense of what the individual impact is and which parts of our lifestyle deserve the greatest attention.

What exactly does sustainability mean to us as individuals? What can we do to become more responsible? Do we all need to do the same thing? What should we do first, save the environment or eradicate poverty? What comes first, our health or the Earth's? Difficult questions never have easy answers - so the ancients say! Sustainable consumption is not just an environmental issue but one that promotes a dignified standard of living for everyone. It is also an issue in a continuing state of evolution in which the answers are rarely straightforward. Nevertheless, there are a number of basic elements that make up the whole picture. What follows is an overview of the topics and challenges. The more we damage the environment,



the more we put ourselves and future generations at risk. The planet's health is our health. Everyday 50 plant species become extinct. How many is that per week, per month, per year? Scientists believe that plants hold the key to finding cures for many diseases. So each lost species not only causes irreparable damage to the



ecosystem, but is also a lost opportunity for our future development.

So, are we all equally responsible then? No, not really. Disparities between countries are huge. A North American on average consumes 9.4 ha of rainforest per year, a European 4.8 ha, an African 1.1 ha and an Indian 0.8 ha. These figures are an average only and there are also big differences between wealthier and poorer people in a same country. The world's 20% richest people consume nearly 75% of the planet's natural resources. The wealth of the world's 225 richest individuals equals the annual income of the bottom 47% of

the world's population, or 2.5 billion people. This also tells us that the distribution of consumption is seriously out of balance.

In cruel contrast, food wastage is a common problem in affluent societies. In the United Kingdom, a shocking 30-40% of all food is never eaten; in the United States 40-50% of all food ready for harvest never gets eaten. The impact of this waste is not just financial. Environmentally this leads to: wasteful use of chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides; more fuel used for transportation; more rotting food, creating more methane - one of the most harmful greenhouse gases contributing to climate change.

Energy is essential for almost all our activities, including cooking our food, heating our houses or providing power for our industries. However, the planet's energy use, generation and waste have its consequences. After cars, power is the biggest source of pollution on earth. Energy saving is a big issue that calls for both global and individual solutions. There are many things we can do every day to cut down on the energy we use. Saving energy also can save you money! Even small changes are worthwhile. Get started today by using some of these tips:

- Cut down on car/motor vehicle use. Cars are the single biggest source of excess CO2 and also produce other greenhouse

gases. Ride your bicycle instead of driving!

- Ensure that any new fridge contains reduced levels of CFCs or even better, none. Don't just dump your old fridge. Call the manufacturer and ask them to remove the old CFCs from it. These can (and should) be recycled!

- Buy local and seasonal wherever possible. Producing crops out of season means either growing them in greenhouses or importing them, sometimes by air.

- At home: does it need to be so hot? Turning the thermostat down by just one degree can save you up to € 44 a year on your heating bill and make a real dent in your household's emissions.

- Turn down the thermostat by a few degrees. If you feel cold put on another layer instead of turning up the central heating. Turn lights off! For comparison, lighting an empty office overnight can waste the energy required to heat water for 1,000 cups of coffee.

- Buy energy-efficient, compact fluorescent light-bulbs.

- Unplug equipment once fully charged. Mobile phones, shavers and electric toothbrush. Turn it off! A TV set on standby can still use 1/4 of the energy it uses when it's on. In some countries, TV sets don't even have the turn off push anymore: so, in this case, simply unplug your TV set!

- Take showers rather than baths and don't use more hot water than you need: cool



showers keep you young!

- Connect appliances to the mains whenever possible. Discarded batteries are highly polluting. If you need to use batteries, make sure they are rechargeable ones.

- Draught-proof doors and windows.

- Make sure old household appliances are replaced by energy efficient ones.

- Take the stairs, not the lift; it's a great way to get fit!

Improving our environment has to start with us. As members of the global community it is our duty to be more environmentally responsible. We cannot wait for the lawmakers to fix the problems with our environment. Each of us has to take some responsibility and change our lifestyle.

Gjoko Zoroski
Ecologists' Movement of Macedonia (DEM)

World Environment Day

5 June 2009

Sustainable Development in Policy Assessment – Methods, Challenges and Policy Impacts

15-16 June 2009

Brussels, Belgium

Homepage: <http://www.ecologic.eu/soef/epos/conference.html>

Email: frieder.rubik@ioew.de

Sustainable Consumption, Production and Communication

Conference which will take place in Budapest, Hungary

24 September 2009

The deadline for abstracts is 15 June 2009

Further information can be obtained from the conference website at:

<http://www.sustainable.consumption.uni-corvinus.hu>

Alternatively, you can also write to Szilvia Luda at:

suscon2009@uni-corvinus.hu

Conference on EU and world-wide rules for classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals

EU Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP)
of substances and mixtures based on the UN Globally Harmonised
System (GHS)

17 June 2009

Brussels, Belgium

Organised by the European Commission

Contact: ENTR-ENV-CLP-GHS-CONF2009@ec.europa.eu

Green Week 2009

23-26 June 2009

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/home.html>

Jangadas no Douro (Boats in the Douro)

Environmental demonstration

27-28 June 2009

ope.portugal@gmail.com

Conference on health of young people:

Be healthy, be yourself

8-10 July 2009

Brussels, Belgium

<http://ev.youthhealthinitiative.evenium.com/>

Tunza International Youth Conference on the Environment

21-25 August 2009

Daejeon, Korea

http://www.unep.org/tunza/youth/conferences_events/TIYC2009/

YEE Annual Meeting

11-20 August 2009

Villamanin, Leon, Spain

yeen@yeenet.eu

**The calendar for next months of 2009 you will find in
the next issue of 'Knowing your neighbours'**

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