



www.EuropeanYouthVoice.eu

On a Way to a cosmopolitan Europe – a Challenge for Generations

An international online Newspaper for young Europeans by young people

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Content

About us	4	Women	
		• Opinion	22
Society		• Women and society	23
• Economical crisis = human crisis?	6	• Women Building Europe: Report from the conference	23
• Estonia is adopting the Euro tomorrow!	7		
• Planet Earth 2010 – a review	7	Media	
• Sunny Sunny	9	• Creative Commons – A Step Into A Shared Culture	25
		• Media Violence	26
Europe			
• 13 colonies in European style?	10	History	
• Being a tourist in Germany: Ruhr area	11	• Edna Brocker: “Facebook just gets you nervous”	27
• Csango	11	• Tolerance Congress successful!	28
• Culture In Cologne	12	• What does 17th November mean for the Czech Republic?	28
• Language – an important part of integration in the Baltic States	13		
• Presidential elections in Germany and Poland	14	Sport	
• Retailing dreams: Or why I'm not moving yet to Germany	14	• Snowboarding – Sport or lifestyle?	30
• What did European Youth Voice 2010 give to me?	15		
Identity		Funny Stuff	
• Generation abroad	16	• German food: The Differences	31
• Impossible Integration – psychological perspective	17	• German Wursts	31
• Nationality today and Personal identity	18		
• Student - be active!	19	Studies	
		• To be Bologna or not to be Bologna?	33
Religion			
• Hindu Temple seen through the eyes of a christian	20	Participants	35
• Islam in Germany	20	How to join!	36
		Impressum	38

About Us

European Youth Voice – An international online Newspaper for young Europeans by young people aktuelles forum nrw e.V., Germany

The EuropeanYouthVoice project was initiated by aktuelles forum nrw e.V. in Germany. The institution is a recognized management agency for further political education and training. Aktuelles forum was founded in 1968 to offer a forum for political discussion that is not party-politically oriented and open for all.

Aktuelles forum is a registered non-profit-making organisation with a board of directors. The organisation is based in Gelsenkirchen and consequently the main focus of its operations is North Rhine-Westfalia. Beside this focus area aktuelles forum takes pleasure in carrying out international projects.

The Project

The idea to create this internet newspaper was one of them, and this was launched in 2006. The main aim of this project was to create a 'Young European Public' and to promote peaceful living in a Democratic Europe.

Your words, your opinions, your text online

This was one of the first slogans of EYV. Subscribers could write their own texts for this European internet newspaper/magazine about young people and for young people in Europe. Every month there used to be a main topic of interest. This method did not deem satisfactory after a short while and was discarded.

Instead, contributors are left creative to write what they desire. Topics include recent events in Europe, articles about home and also about oneself.

Beside the website, where many authors contribute articles, photos and videos throughout the year EuropeanYouthVoice's writers could meet once a year. Thanks to sponsorship of different institutions, the young people could come together 2007 in Berlin, 2008 in Prague and 2009 in Duisburg. The largest editorial staff meeting with more than 40 participants from eight countries including an advance planning visit took place in Duisburg 2010.

Supporters

The EuropeanYouthVoice is financed by the German Federal Agency of Civic Education, the land headquarters for Civic Education in North Rhine-Westphalia and promoted by honorary assistants.

European Youth Voice Re-Launch in 2010

This is part of a collaboration between Fachhochschule Gelsenkirchen's Journalism and Public Relations Institute and aktuelles forum. A group made up of four students had to critically analyze the EuropeanYouthVoice Project and work on it for improvement.

Contact: aktuelles forum nrw e.V.
Hohenstaufenallee 1
D – 45888 Gelsenkirchen
Germany
Tel: +49 209 155 10-19
Mail: info@aktuelles-forum.de





Society

Economical crisis = human crisis?

The bankruptcy in the United States in 2008 evoked the economical crisis which spread in the world, hit a huge amount of the states and obviously changed the level of living in the whole world. The unemployment rate, which used to stand on its average of 5%, grew to 9 or 10%. Millions of people have been unemployed and a lot of youth had to change their plans for the future; either by finding a job in order to support financially their families or moving abroad.

The second possibility seems to be the most frequented. Why not? Moving abroad means speaking languages, meeting different cultures and being economically active in such interesting fields as business, travel movement or the above-mentioned languages. Canada and Northern Europe are the two places which regularly welcome students from various countries and offer them job occasions and accommodation.

These movements and consequences of the crisis lead to changes in the human's relations. A few years before, nearly everything was possible. Our

mothers and fathers were working, youth could start some good job just after finishing their studies, travel agencies and business enterprises prospered thanks to the large number of customers, coming to satisfy their needs. Nowadays, the standard of living felt and economists can only hope for the better future.

The economical crisis was caused by the irrational money lent to people who were not able to remund them. But what about the today's inability? Money became very valuable at these times and many indebted people are not able to handle with

money so as to decrease the debt. And this is the neverending roundabout which the politicians try to stop by the fiscal changes and development politics of entertainment and independent work possibilities. Despite the doubts of the inhabitants, let's believe in the massive changes which our countries will experience.

Katerina Vojtechova, Czech Republic 2010

Estonia is adopting the Euro tomorrow!

Tomorrow on 1 January 2011 the Eurozone is going to have its 17th member – Estonia. The Baltic Tiger, as the country was known before the economic crisis as being one of the world's fastest growing economies, aimed to adopt the Euro in 2007. Due to not meeting the inflation criterion, the date was postponed several times. Replacing the current currency, the kroon, has brought very different opinions out to the public.

Estonian government has been criticised a lot for deciding to join the Eurozone now, when the monetary union has brought to test by several members who are facing very difficult economical situations, comparing it to boarding a sinking ship. Others are being more positive and bringing Estonia as an example for countries who are experiencing difficulties with managing the economical crisis. The Northern European country was second worst hit of all 27 EU members, which forced the government to do very painful budgetary cuts. Government's decisions are believed to be successful as according to Eurostat Estonia has the lowest ratio of government debt to GDP among all EU countries and the GDP is expected by the OECD to grow by 3,4% in 2011.

Though, most of Estonian people don't care about the government debt or the growth of GDP. The kroon means more than just a currency for Estonian people. It was reintroduced only ten months after Estonia regained independence from the Soviet Union and instantly became a symbol of independence. Therefore many people see adopting another shared currency (the first one being Soviet ruble) as giving away big part of Estonian independence. There are a lot of people against the euro because of considering kroon banknotes to be more 'beautiful' or for not being used to use coins daily.

On the other hand, many people see adopting the Euro as a positive thing to Estonian economy, stating that Estonia is too small to have a strong competitive economy while having its own currency. It is also believed that using the euro

would bring more foreign investors to Estonia because many risks as devaluing the kroon are being removed. People also see adopting the EU single currency positive because it makes travelling in Europe much easier. Many different polls have been made about Estonians being for or against adopting the Euro. But as all the polls have had very different results, we don't know the overall opinion.

Tomorrow Estonia will celebrate the New Year, adopting the Euro and Tallinn getting the title of the European Capital of Culture 2011. The main event will be held in the National Opera "Estonia" and in front of it, on the Theatre Square. An organisation of eurosceptics have bought most of the advertisement places in the theatre square and put up anti-euro posters. A short gallery of the posters is below together with the official poster by the Estonian Ministry of Finance.

Andry Silla from snowy Tallinn, Estonia, 31. December 2010

Planet Earth 2010 – a review

2010 was one of the most difficult periods for the Greek people and we could say we are entering a new era full of changes for our society in all levels, financial, social, institutional etc. However, international changes have strong effect to national, so let us remember the most important events that happened around the world during this year.

January – February

- One of the deadliest on record earthquakes occurs in Haiti with over than 230.000 dead and homeless people. An 8.8 earthquake occurs in Chile, triggering a tsunami over the Pacific and killing hundreds of people. The earthquake is one of the largest in recorded history.

March – April

• An explosion at BP's oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico, killing eleven workers and causing the biggest environmental disaster in history. The resulting oil spill, damaged the waters and the United States coastline, and prompted international debate and doubt about the practice and procedures of offshore drilling.

• Volcanic ash from several eruptions beneath Irelands volcano “Eyjafjallajoeull” paralyses air traffic in Europe for days causing lot's of transportation problems to the majority of the European countries.

• The President of Poland, Lech Kaczy?ski, is among 96 killed when their airplane crashes in western Russia.

• A 6.9 earthquake occurs in China, killing at least 2,000 and injuring more than 10,000.

• Standard & Poor's downgrades Greece's sovereign credit rating to junk four days after the activation of a 45-billion EU–IMF bailout, triggering the decline of stock markets worldwide and of the Euro's value, and furthering a European sovereign debt crisis.

May

• The Euro zone and the International Monetary Fund agree to a 110 billion bailout package for Greece. The package involves sharp Greek austerity measures.

• Nine activists are killed in a clash with soldiers when Israeli Navy forces raid and capture a flotilla of ships attempting to break the Gaza blockade.

June – July – August

• The 2010 FIFA World Cup is held in South Africa, and is won by Spain for the first time in the teams history, beating 0-1 the national team of the Nederland's in the Finals.

• The US troops leave Iraq

• 33 Chilean mine workers are being trapped 700 metres below the surface of Earth due to an accident.

September – October – November

• France forces out the Roma – gypsy people setting itself under international outcry.

• The 33 trapped miners of Chile are brought back to the surface after surviving for a record 69 days

• Cholera sprawls the island of Haiti after months of misery that followed the earthquake of January

Vivi Zapantiotou, Greece 2010

Sunny Sunny

Bye bye Germany, sob sob.

Hello Malta, sob sob.

But: Hello Sun!

Bored of your life situation? Tired of sitting in the same table, in the same coffee shop, drinking your coffee in the same mug, opening the same sugar sachet (and asking yourself when you stop to sweeten your beverage)?

Just fly or drive away! Do it! Life is short and whatever comes out of a new adventure, good and bad, it is always an experience.

I'm guessing you heard all this all ready. No?

The one thing that I could never havecome to terms with a moth ago, as I was closing my book 'The International Student's Dream', was that I would come back in Malta, be sad and actually think that someday I will get over it!

What happens is that, no matter how small or blank your monotonous life in your mother country is, once you come back you learn to appreciate the uniqueness of your community, the scenery and the traditions.

In my case its the sea, the sun, the tourists and the language (which we are, unfortunately – me being a major contributor – killing).

So instead of killing your culture, just like you enjoy the rest of the world, work hard to make your country a place your international brothers and sisters would find worth visiting.

Europe is so unique, so beautiful. I would not suggest transforming it into any other place on this world.

Diversity is always beautiful, but, in my opinion, mostly beautiful when we can travel and actually feel the different 'atmosphere'. Paris is Paris, Berlin is Berlin and London is London. All cities characterized by diversity, but all so different from each other.

Is there any characteristic in you country that just went missing?

Can you sense some aspects to come extinct sooner or later?

Is there a place or tradition which you wanted to show to your children, but cannot even see it yourself anymore?

We must keep in mind that progress, does not always have to mean change. In the same way, change does not always signify progress.

Misha Grech, Malta 2011



Europe

13 colonies in European style?

Currently, there are lots of questions about how should EU develop itself. I am going to react on the idea of so called “United states of Europe”.

General idea

First of all, I want to make the idea of United states of Europe (USE) clear. This concept is based on the belief that European Union will be as strong as (or even stronger than) the USA according to its large population, economic power, low inflation rates, favourable climate and the unpopularity of the recent American foreign policy.¹ It also says that to achieve this EU must first reach the condition the USA is now being at.

Integration issues

I think it is necessary to mention the integration development of the USA and EU. The USA first integrated politically – well known struggle for independence and forming of the constitution – then economically. EU went the other way around – first economically, then politically. This is the first thing why I think that the concept of USE cannot be successful.

Patriotism issues

Patriotism is about how we understand belonging to some nation. For example, I feel as a Czech citizen, European citizen and an inhabitant of the world, while my strongest feeling is being Czech. In my opinion, most of European nation members feel the same way. This is a big problem for integrating into such a form of state as USE. When you feel as a French, Portuguese, Romanian, Czech etc. you will never be able to accept the idea of integrated Europe as a whole. That is the other reason why I think that USE would not be successful.

Author`s opinion about future development

Trying to say in which direction EU should develop, needs to answer the question of a deeper integration. Because of earlier indicated problems, I believe that EU should function as purely economic organization. It should work on improving the business relations and removing trade barriers as well as on equal market (labor, capital and factors of production) access for all its members; therefore I think that further political integration is not as important.

Ladislav Kolar, Czech Republic 2010

Being a tourist in Germany: Ruhr area

Do you know that feeling when you visit a new country? All the emotions, the expectations and the plans that you make for spending a great time there? Oh well, this is the same old story... or not.

Why is it different? Because Germany is different, because it is a country where everything is happening different from a region to another. As an example, even the education system is different in each area. The country is different even though each tourist knows some general things about it and wants to experience them: the trains are always coming on time, the Germans are very serious, the German laws are always being respected, their traditional food is represented by sausages and so on. So, being a tourist in Germany is quite an adventure. And being a tourist in Ruhr Area is quite the same.

Ruhr Area is cultural capital this year and it offers to all the tourists all that it has best. All the towns are dressed in traditional holiday clothes and give a special air to this old area. Lots of unused factories were transformed into museums or parks, lots of cathedrals, synagogues and churches offer elegance and illustrate the history of this region, sad and happy stories of all kinds of nationalities bring a drop of life, colors and noncolours mixed in a specific way make a dreamland for photographers, trains, trams and buses coming and leaving all the time show the real life of the Germans living here. Ruhr area becomes more and more a specific area with specific characteristics. So, we can really say that Ruhr area brings a special part in the so different Germany.

In other words, it was a pleasure to visit this area and to discover it. Thank you, Germany, for surprising me!

Georgiana Sandu, Romania 2010

Csango

Romania's Csángó population is defined depending on the context and who makes that definition. A politically correct definition could be “the population (the Romanian and Hungarian speech with some variations) mainly from Moldova (Bacău County – North-East), of Catholic religion, with disputed origins: People who define themselves as living Csángós and other regions.”

The Csángós are studied, not only for the analytical aspects of their identity in the context of Romanian society, but because they are a perfect illustration of nation-building in the 21st century whose legitimacy still raise questions for fellow citizens.

The academic debate, may it be constructive or destructive, or formal or informal has serious impact on the population. Regardless of who is right, who manages to develop convincing arguments to handle the entire Catholic population, whether or not they are of Hungarian origin, they are subject to a “collective process that can lead to stigmatization of rejection reactions or internalization of stigma as Erving Goffman argues in the 1963's “Stigma”.

Discrimination is centered around the rights of national minorities (the law on language use in administration and justice, the right to education in mother tongue language and the right to use in practicing religion). The Recommendation 1201 is the document cited in this regard. Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 of the Recommendation refers to the rights and freedoms that are covered by other documents, such as document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (1990) or the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UN, 1992). Of special importance for Romania is the Paragraph 3 of Article 7 regarding the use of language in administration and justice. The public debate relates to the delimitation of the ethnic group, Csángó. The thesis debated for over 100 years is whether Csángós, understood as the majority of Catholic population of Moldova is of Romanian or Hungarian origin.

The public discourse and its implications

The implications of the existence of public debate takes place primarily in the political arena. Tri-polarized, the speech is as follows: First, the status assumed by the Romanian context Csángó is a reminder of the heterogeneity of a nation, built on the principle of diversity, not that of a “unitary state” of Daco-Roman descent. Ethnic impurity, based on grounds of religion or nationalism translates into being high or sometimes moderate. The second part of the public discourse, occurs on the AXIS Budapest (capital of Hungary) – St. George (capital of the Hungarian minority in Romania) and over the mountains to Bacau (where the majority of Csángós reside). The main issues involve territorial claims and the conversion of a community into an ethnic community, citing the linguist and religious criteria for membership. A third participant in the discourse is Italy, Csángós making contact with them through the Catholic Church (mainly during the process of the Romanian migration to Italy).

Depending on the “external” interests the social structures are defined in one way or another. But the same can be done at the individual level, depending on the “domestic” interests. Assuming the social status of a role in the society brings personal benefits and it is limited to a single choice, but with strong social and political implications, especially in a society with very little tolerance.

“Labels” are created by different actors and they come with different benefits attached. Whether they are built on an ethnic Hungarian descent OR they consider themselves as being Romanian OR the point of difference is considered to be the religious one, Csángós are as real as possible. Although much research work on the subject supports research for the benefit of the people, this desire is clouded by the historical, political, or personal interest of researchers/institutions.

Alex Gotca, Romania 2010

Culture In Cologne

It has been 5 years ago when I arrived to Cologne with Aktuelles forum for the last time. Cologne is my favourite place because it is a beautiful city full of interesting monuments and places which are worth seeing by the tourists. My most favourite place is Dom, the cathedral which dominates the whole city.

The history of Cologne has been there since the 1st century when there was built a residence of a roman governor. The rests of this residence were found under the today´s Rathaus, the Cologne City Hall situated just next to the Cologne´s Gothic Cathedral. The other piece of architecture is the Roman Tower which was built in the 1st century and formed the typical element of the Roman fortifications in the north-west corner of Cologne.

The worst time, which Cologne had to suffer, was the time of the 2nd World War. During this, Cologne underwent 262 air raids and the war caused the 95% decrease of its population. After the 2nd World War Cologne was proclaimed as the capital of the Federal State Of The North-Rhine Westphalia and later as one of the 2 biggest centers of the region.

The above-mentioned Cologne´s gothic Cathedral Dom has been being constructed since 1248 until 1880 and, obviously, it is the largest Gothic Church In The Northern Europe. Nowadays, it is the seat of the Archbishop of Cologne and it comes under the administration of the Archdiocese Of Cologne. One thing which is really interesting is that its towers are around 157 metres tall and it is visited by 20 thousands people every day.

Anciently, there was a seat of the Jewish community in the center of the city and what I like the most about Cologne is that you can find there small communities of the immigrants who establish small markets all around the town. I mean by this the oriental restaurants and Turkish markets where you can taste the very special food for

a good price. Let's say that Cologne is dominated by its main street Hohe Strasse which I visited the most because of its markets, cafés and shopping centers. The bridges in Cologne remind me of the famous bridges in the United States and the most beautiful view on them are in the night.

Katerina Vojtechova, Czech Republic 2010

Language – an important part of integration in the Baltic States

Having a national minority is something which every European country has to face today. What makes integrating difficult is different religions, culture and most importantly different languages.

The biggest minority of Estonia is Russians with 25% of the whole population. Language barrier is getting worse year by year. The younger generation of Estonians don't speak Russian and the younger generation of Russians doesn't speak Estonian language well. This is the main reason, why the communication between Estonian and Russian youngsters is very little. If necessary to communicate, often English language is used. To increase the knowledge of Estonian language among Russian youth and to decrease the difference between the number of highly educated Russians and Estonians, the government has decided to introduce Estonian language in Russian high schools in Estonia. At least 60% of the subjects has to be taught in Estonian for year 2012. The situation is even worse in North Eastern cities like Narva, where more than 90% of the population are Russians, Estonian is never used, even not while communicating with Estonians.

Latvia has also a very large Russian minority with nearly 28% of the population. Latvia has all the same problems, but even in larger scale. In the capital, Riga, Russian is even more used than Latvian. Both in Estonia and Latvia, the reason of language

barrier is the lack of interest in learning the official language of the country. Instead of that, having Russian as an official language is preferred.

Knowledge of the official language is needed for getting an Estonian or Latvian passport. After the collapse of the Soviet Union only these people got automatically the citizenship of Estonia who had it before June 1940 and their descendants. People who came to the Baltic States during the occupation have the possibility to obtain the citizenship through naturalisation. Which means that knowledge of the official language and the constitution is tested. Because of that, both in Estonia and Latvia, there is a large group of people who does not have a citizenship. An important reason why many non-citizens of Estonia and Latvia do not apply for the citizenship is the possibility to work or visit Russia without visa.

Although the language barrier between Estonian/Latvian and Russian youngsters is the biggest ever, especially in Estonia. The official languages are getting ever more popular among the Russian youth because it enables better education, to be competitive on the job market and free movement inside the European Union. The future looks bright, because the possibility to integrate people who have born after the collapse of the Soviet Union is bigger.

Andry Silla, Estonia 2010

Presidential elections in Germany and Poland

Germany and Poland were seeking for new presidents. Both elections became necessary because of special circumstances. So, the fact that the Polish citizens and the German population got a new president in these days is equal. Beside this there are some remarkable differences in the election process and in the power of the presidents.

The Polish president Lech Kaczynski – in power since 2005 – died in an air crash on the 10th April 2010 together with 96 people on his way to Smolensk. The president and his delegation wanted to take part in the memorial event in Katyn where Soviets had done a massacre on polish soldiers in 1940.

The German president Horst Köhler resigned – as first president in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany – from office with immediate effect on 31st May 2010. Köhler was on his second presidential term and was re-elected for this in May 2009. Köhler explained his resignation with criticism of his statements about the need for German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) missions.

The Polish head of state is the president, elected by universal suffrage for a term of five years. In Poland every polish citizen above 18 years is called upon to elect the president. Bronisław Komorowski won the election and will from August on hold this position. He was the governing Civic Platform party's candidate in the resulting 2010 presidential election. The twin brother of Lech Kaczyński, Jarosław, was defeated in the second round of voting on 4th July 2010. Jarosław Kaczyński was the candidate from “Prawo i Sprawiedliwość” (Law and Justice) a national conservative Polish political party. Unlike in recent years, head of state and head of government now belong to the same political camp, which posed difficulties in the last years when president Kaczyński made use of his constitutional veto right and blocked legislation.

According to the German constitution (Grundgesetz) was it necessary to find a new president within 30 days. Not every citizen is asked to vote for the president, but the so called “Bundesversammlung” which consists of the Members of Parliament and the same number of delegates who are sent by the regional parliaments according to the parliamentary group strength.

On Tuesday, the 30th June Christian Wulff (CDU) was elected and became the 10th federal president of Germany. Wulff – up to this day minister-president of the German federal state of Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen) – was the candidate of the liberal-con-

servative coalition. With over nine hours, the longest presidential election took three rounds of voting and not all the voters within the ruling coalition voted for him. Joachim Gauck (independent) was the candidate of the social democrats and the green party. The left party send Lukrezia Jochimsen (Die Linke) to field. Christian Wulff is the youngest president in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Nadja Kemper, Germany 2010

Retailing dreams: Or why I'm not moving yet to Germany.

5nd of Nov, 2010 (food for thought): The closer you are of achieving smth, the stressed you are you're not doing it right, and because of that, I think I'm just trying too hard to find the perfect country to move to. It's not like I'm going to find a serious, hard-working, not buzzing in your business nation that will adopt me. Or will I?

I'd like a country where I can be financially secure. I'm not afraid of working hard for that. I just want to have the chance to afford more than ONE travel experience per year. I'm traveling to Germany tomorrow and I really have high expectations from their culture. I'm using this chance to experience the possibility of moving to this country in the future.

6th of Nov, 2010 (reflection): Ioana told me today that there are several differences between different Bundeslands (German states), ex: the South is very different from the Ruhr Area and from Berlin. My first impression 'bout Germany was... not so impressive. It seems to be raining every day here but at least the crew's OK. 8th of Nov, 2010 (personal introspection): I found out there are a LOT of migrants in Germany and of course, a lot of conflicts between them (Turks) and the “natives”. But the German way of handling the situation is very institutional and rigid. They didn't admit for instance that they're an immigration country for over 20 years. Funkhaus

Europa (very cool intercultural radio station) first aired, because the working Turks paid taxes for the radio/TV and the German responsible way of thinking could not imagine not inventing smth for them. But I ask the middle class German: What do you think about that Turkish guy living 2 floors under you? He'll probably answer: I respect him as much as I respect any of my neighbors. And I'll add to that “I don't know either of them that well to make a statement”

9th of Nov, 2010 (feedback from Köln and Essen): Did I just stumble upon Köln and Essen in a bad time, or the stereotype of the German nation is true. Where are all the German people? Why did they make a park out of an old coal factory? They close their shops at 8 PM, on Sunday's almost everything is paralyzed, they don't go out (at least I didn't find them) and they're shy? Who says that? How can you be shy in today's world? There is a lot of life out there! Go and catch everything you can from it!

11th of Nov, 2010 (disappointment): Comparing the other German guys that I've met here, I'm kind of disappointed at the rest of the Germans. Why aren't you full of life? Are you always like this? Where's your youth at? Does it shine only during the summer? You have so much to show to the world! You're smart and hard-working and achieved so much by now. I'm upset and angry but that's my business! What's yours?

I thank you, Bundesland no.1! I'll try out the rest 15 too.

Alex Gotca, Romania 2010

What did European Youth Voice 2010 give to me?

The project called European Youth Voice was held in November 2010 in Duisburg, fifteenth largest city of Germany with nearly half million inhabitants. Aim of the project was to spread knowledge about cosmopolitan Europe between young people all over

from Europe. Participants came from 8 countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovak Republic. Most of the young people were somehow into the journalism, as the result of one week in Duisburg was an article for this web site.

What did we do?

First day, when we arrived, was mostly getting to know our room-mates and second day was full of energizers and games focusing on names of participants, as this was the basic thing to learn for the next days. I've learned many things about Ruhr area, its importance for the people in the past. I also noticed cultural diversity which is especially in Duisburg very colourful.

What did I gain?

But the main thing I am taking back with me to Slovakia are memories and experiences with many young, intelligent, funny and interesting people. Their opinions on European topics, but also opinions in “normal” life are something I will really think about. It was really nice range of different cultures and traditions and if we stay in touch also after this meeting, I would be very glad. I made many friends here, as I stood up late each night until early morning, discussing themes from favourite music, movies and classic fairy tales in our home countries. Meeting other people from the Europe and getting another view on some problems is something what I gained here in Duisburg for next years and I hope relationships we made here will last for a very long period.

Therefore I would like to thank all the participants, organizers and sponsors for this beautiful week. Therefore we thank you, danke schön, tănan, obrigado, multumesc, d_kujeme, blagodarya, dzi_kujemy, _akujeme ...!¶

Rudolf Dong, Slovak Republic 2010



Identity

Generation abroad

What is the reason for so many young people all around Europe, to leave their country for a certain time? Some reasons are obvious. Explore different cultures; improve your second language; get international friends and contacts; be independent or just upgrade your resume.

No questions, if you study or do volunteer work abroad, it will be definitely good for these topics. But another reason for a lot of young Europeans is self-discovery. Many people I know told me that they want to go abroad because they are bored of Germany or their environment. These people pretend that they are not who they want to be and that experiences abroad could help finding themselves. An interesting point and I guess that the bad weather in Germany is not the reason for that decision. I don't want to say that it's not possible to find oneself in another country. I just know that there have been times in my life when I felt the same issue.

But I think that this is more than normal when you grow up and it doesn't have something to do with your home country. My experiences with being abroad are wonderful. In 2007, I did a journalism internship in India and right now, I'm on a

college in Pennsylvania for one semester. When I think about my days in India, I guess I learned a lot. I saw children playing with garbage, having the same fun, that kids in Germany have while playing with toys. So I realized, that you don't need a lot of expensive things to be happy. But did that help me to discover myself? Just the knowledge that I got in India didn't change me in my western world behaviours.

When I was back home I didn't played with garbage, I bought a PlayStation 3! Here in the US, everything is quiet similar to Germany, everything is just "Super Size" and the Americans are much more proud about their country than the Germans are. The only thing I really miss is food. No question, the Burgers and fries you can get here are very tasty but if you want to have vegetables, I think you have to travel to Canada. Whatever, I love to travel, be abroad and explore different cultures, but I just don't get the point how that could help to discover my self?

Looking forward to read your comments. Maybe you have different experiences or discovered your self abroad.

Philipp Dohmen, Germany 2010

Impossible Integration – psychological perspective

A lot of people are broad-minded. A lot of people are tolerant. A lot of people also try to treat members of different nations and ethnic groups as their own. So why is the integration still a topic in European countries? Psychologists have done exhaustive research into this problem and the results may provide some interesting insights.

Implicit Association Test(IAT) is a tool for measuring unconscious prejudice. The logic behind it is quite complicated, but the main principle is that when people have to pin a positive adjective to an object of prejudice, it takes them longer. I won't explain it here, but you can try a demo on this link <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/> . The interesting thing about IAT is, that it reveals prejudice you might not even know about. A lot of people are surprised when they receive the results. I was actually perplexed, thinking: „I really am not racist, I don't even behave that way – so why did I score as one?“ And the real answer is that the prejudice is unconscious. Although I might make deliberate effort against it, it is still hidden deep inside of me and lurks out unannounced.

So, where do these feelings come from?

During my studies of psychology in Brno I have encountered a few interesting concepts that might help with the answer. We humans have some deeply engrained mechanisms created by evolutionary selection, which make us perceive foreigners in a different way. How does that happen? The logic here is quite simple – foreigners have always been a danger in human history. Therefore people who were naturally suspicious against strangers and acted cautiously, had a better chance of survival. Sticking to your own group was usually very advantageous too.

The social identity theory gives us a unique opportunity to see this matter more clearly. It works with two concepts – in-group bias and out-group homogeneity

effect. The latter means that we judge people from different groups than ours as more similar, whereas we take people from our group as distinctly different. Applied to the topic of nationalities it results in stereotypes. Spanish are romantic and passionate, Germans noisy and punctual, British are snobs...although these stereotypes might have a certain statistical significance, they hardly can be applied to an individual person. But the tendency to see strangers as having the same traits remains.

The good consequence of in-group may be a boost of our confidence. We tend to favorize our own group before others – seeing our fellows as more skillful, more intelligent, funnier(or whatever other positive adjective you choose). It helps us preserve a good feeling about ourselves. And the bad consequence is seeing foreign people as stupid, crazy, impolite...

But this happens only when we already belong to a certain group. To explore the topic thoroughly we also need to look at how we get into one. The minimal group paradigm was invented by social psychologists to study minimal conditions needed for creating the perception of groups. Experiments have shown, that even random selection of people into two teams for a game activates the in-group bias and out-group homogeneity effect which I explained before. Knowing this, think about what a strong trigger of these biases nationality can be. This means I shouldn't have been ashamed of my IAT results. It's really hard to get rid of this way of thinking. It has been programmed into our brains by evolution as a survival trait – and survival traits are very hard to give up. Actually it would have been very surprising if they were different.

In this we can see how our engrained psychological mechanisms create an obstacle to successful integration. We can never really see foreigners as similar to us. The differentiation is too deeply chiselled inside our mind to be controlled. But this doesn't mean there is no hope. What we can control is our behaviour. We humans are the only species that isn't bound by instincts. Our gift of thinking gives us a

tool for filtering the evolutionary programming. We do not have to act on impulse. The key here is getting to know others. When we consciously try to understand their customs, culture and way of thinking, the stereotype slowly dissolves. We might never get rid of it completely, but when we make conscious effort to be broad-minded, it pays off. Like Michael Jackson said: „Let`s start with the man in the mirror.“

PS: How did you do in IAT?

Martin Machác, Czech Republic 2010

Nationality today and Personal identity

From the lessons we were taught at school it would seem, that European nations have lived side by side with each other for the whole history of mankind. Sometimes peacefully, sometimes fighting, but always as strictly distinct groups divided by a clear line. But this view of the world is quiet flawed. Surprisingly, the concept of nationality as a salient and widespread characteristic of a person doesn`t actually go further than the 17th century. Till then, you would hardly hear anyone say „I`m French“ or „I`m Romanian“. The real statement would probably be „I`m from Toulouse“ or in the second case „I`m from the village near the castle where the vampire lives“.

Romanian myths aside, the idea of nations wasn`t always as natural, as we take it today. To understand it we have to ask – What actually does really define a nation? It`s not common language – Switzerland has more than one. It`s not common land – Jews have taken themselves as a nation even before they established Israel. And it is certainly not common genetics(in Europe we are a mix of every possible gene flow). Basically the only connection between people from the same

nation is the idea in their minds, that they somehow belong together. Like Benedict Anderson says, nation is an „imaginary community“.

What could get on our mind? Is nationality really needed nowadays? When we see a face, we can`t recognize whether it`s French or Romanian at first sight. Also an average European can speak more than one language. Very often our parents come from different cultural backgrounds. Travelling around the whole world is allowed. So, is there really a reason to be so artificially separated? No more. Nowadays the need is to be united and it is anticipated all around us.

On the other hand, national habits are a thing which should be preserved. It is important and enriching to share our cultures. Different traditions, different cuisines, different style of clothing and different languages, different songs, films and history and whole national cultures. Diversity of nations brings us many experiences and ordeals. From a psychological point of view, each one of us craves to have an identity. Craves to belong somewhere. It is a natural ambition to achieve an identity, to get boundaries and become really human. And nationality helps building this. It provides us with a background we can stand on. According to Tajfel & Turner`s social identity theory, one of the main reasons for this is self-presentation. Personal identity is presented by characteristics as „I am good, proud, bad person and so on...and social identity is implicated to special categories like a „I am a citizen of...“

In conclusion I would say that it is necessary to have one`s own nationality for each person in context of his personal identity. But that`s the border I wouldn`t like to cross, because behind it, conflicts start. We should look at everyone as an individual person, not through the lens of their nationality. Because everyone is, and always will be, unique.

Dagmar Mistikova, Slovakia 2010

Student – be active!

In 6-9 of May I was on some international exchange – “Student be active”. There were people from 6 different countries (from Poland, Latvia, Romania, Greece, Italy and Turkey) After two days of workshops we had a debate with experts. I was a moderator of group -ACTIVE STUDENT IN XXI century

There are our statments:

We noticed that the situation is pretty similar in every country. The main motivations to take up some activity are: self-development and self-satisfaction, the other quite popular are: meet people from different cultures, improve language skills, desire of an adventure and testing yourself in challenging situations. Quite small percentage of examined people as a motivation pointed at material benefits. The Greece was an exception,where receive material benefits was the main reason for taking up some activities.

Towards the end of our workshops, we compared the most popular form of activity before and during the studies. We observed that young people in secondary schools activate much more in sport clubs, dance classes etc., part-time work and volunteering. The art workshops and international exchanges were the less popular. The tendency is changing over time. Students at universities prefer sequentially: trainings, work, volunteering and international exchange rather than sports clubs, academic circle, art workshops etc. We've notice that the art is not popular field of activity in both age groups, and we consider it to be a noteworthy fact.

The next day we started with discussion on “reactivity and proactiveness”. We played some scenes to compare those behaviors to see that being proactive is better for us We came to conclusion that if you want to be proactive it is neccessary to follow 4 steps: Firstly, you have to show, you're responsible. Secondly, determine your purposes – just figure what you really want and decide on goals that get you there. Thirdly, you have to learn how to manage your priorities – means decide what is important now and base your actions on that. The last and the most difficult step is to continue your personal development, in other words you should keep up with former three steps.

The last workshop was about the influence on our activity on our future job. We made a simulation on TV show, where the sides were arguing about what is more helpful in finding future job: part-time job or volunteering. Conclusion: any form of activity we discussed (so part-time job, volunteering, being active in the field of science, art and sport) helps us to be a worthful and desired worker. Confirmation of our motion is that we were managed to find only one disadvantage of being active. It could be harmful to someone who can not keep a balance his/her form of activity and family life/private life. It is important to know where the border/boundary is.

At the final end we talked about ourselves, we answered what being active means for each of us. We claim that it means: be in motion, make our life more colorful, gaining some energy and opportunities. Be active helps us to feel that noting is impossible and also prepare us for future challenges.

IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD, START WITH YOURSELF.

Agnieszka Siegnieda, Poland 2011



Religion

Hindu Temple seen through the eyes of a christian

Imagine you are visiting Germany, that land where everything has it's own place, everything is sober and calculated (especially the grandious chatedrals belonging to catholics).

Accidentally, you find out that near by it's situated the biggest hindu temple in Central Europe. You decide you really need something different, and you try to find the place, and try, and try...maybe due to the fact that it's situated outside the European culture, is also put at the outskirts of Hamm. I guess you need some sort of space in order to understand this completly different place. First, you get surprised when you are announced that you must get your shoes off and also the objects made of leather. First thought: 'My god is not so rigid and he is not allergic to leather either'

My saints have golden painting, their gods receive enourmeous chancels decorated with statues in powerfull colors and different shapes. Another thing about gods relates to the priests: my priests read prays, the hindu ones gives them food. But all in all, they relay to the same thing. Now it is obvoius that you stepped into a completly different culture. Until your guide askes you to sit on the floor and to hear a story. A story

about a world where every little thing has a pure spirit (hmm...sounds like the holy spirit), a world where each god has a due (exactly like christian saints), a world that bring 25.000 in the same place, on the same day simply to pray (you can't think of something else besides Easter day in Vatican).

I consider that for a christian, the experience of visiting a hindu temple is a must and you have to see thing in comparison: resemblaces and differences.

Alexandra Maier, Romania 2010

Islam in Germany

Nowadays students at school have seldom a discussion about life and religion of Muslims. They gain a knowledge about Islamic culture via Internet, TV and radio. Mass media give us rather a negative view of this culture or system of beliefs and values, show it in a bad light. This tendency has increased since 11 September 2001.

Is Islam a problematic question in Europe nowadays? In the EU live 14 million Muslims. There are above 3 million Islam confessors in German-speaking area and 2/3 of them have Turkish roots. Generally, Muslims from above 20 countries are living there: Egypt,

Pakistan, Ex / former -Yugoslavia and Morocco and others. They have many civic rights and treat Germany as their motherland. And German people... What do they mean about drastic influx of Muslims, why are they ready to make concession towards Muslims, why do they treat this people preferentially? There are three causes to mention. First of all is a fear. The anxiety caused by terror, troubles and demonstrations. The second one has an economic character. Germany has become a power in export , starting with selling cars and ending with industrial goods and it doesn't want to lose this position. Above all it is afraid of boycott of commodities by Islam countries. Finally, it the Nazi-past is important. Germany doesn't want to be accused of racism and accept and respect Islam habits, duties and traditions.

What is so typical for Islam? What are 5 pillars? The first is profession of faith which sounds: "I testify that there is none worthy of worship except God and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God" The second is prayer. This ritual – called ?al?h or ?al?t, must be performed five times a day. Only children and sick people are partly exhausted from this duty and they are obligated to pray 3 times a day with face turned towards Mecca. The next is fasting, called Sawm. In tenth month – Ramadan Muslims shouldn't eat and drink, smoke and have sex from dawn to dust. Fasting has a deep sense, it reminds people of God's mercy and means forgiveness. As fourth to mention is alms-giving – Zak?t. It is giving a fixed portion of accumulated wealth and should cleanse from greed, hate and injustice. And the last is a pilgrimage – the Hajj. Every healthy Muslim should at least once in his lifetime go to Mecca. Rituals of the Hajj include walking seven times around the Kaaba, touching the black stone if possible and walking or running seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah. All these pillars are essential in life of every Muslim and all Muslims are obligated to fulfill them. In Islam are also very fundamental main assumption, which are enclosed in the Koran and tradition (sunna). The fundamental assumptions of Islam are also enclosed in the Koran and tradition. In this religiWhat money can't buy. At least once a week you go to the supermarket and buy some food. Then you pay the price printed on the receipt. When you have your car repaired or your hair cut, you pay according to the price list. The world has become a market place these days – we only give as much

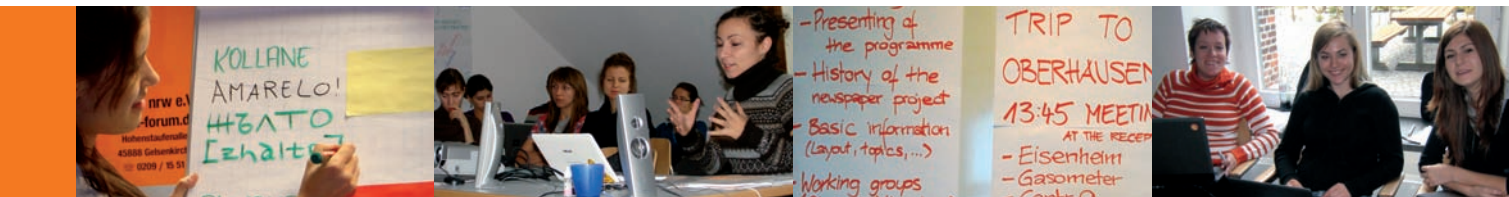
as we take. That is how the system works, that is how our world is built and we assume this is correct and fair.

Can you imagine a world functioning by other principles? Yes, maybe in a parallel universe this could be possible. But could it work now and here, in the civilised world where consumption is everything? Yes. The Buddhist centre in Essen, Germany is situated in the heart of a city which is home to 13 of the 100 largest German corporations, and yet, there is nothing corporate about it. There you can attend various courses, seminars and meditation practices. But do you know what the prices of these activities are? There is no such thing. No price list, no strict requirements. You pay as much as you would like to. Unbelievable as it may seem, this is actually working. An enterprise without sustained income is financially sustainable. At first it was hard to establish this system of payment but it has been functioning for 2 years now.

The explanation is to be found in buddhists' philosophy. Although you cannot sum up all these teachings, beliefs and traditions with one word, it all comes down to freedom. Freedom of choice, freedom of existence, unconditional freedom, aspiration to be free of suffering, hatred, delusions, freedom in its pure essence. The freedom to give without expecting anything in return.

Does one have to be insane to afford this freedom? No, and you don't really have to be a buddhist, either. There are many people of different religions all over the world who do voluntary work. Yet, those who work in the Buddhist Centre are not like any other volunteers that take part in a project for a year or so. For example, Vidyagita – a woman from Germany who I talked to in the centre, has been there for 16 years. And she says this is not her job, this is her life. You don't really have to get onto the plane to Tibet or lead an asthetic life in a cabin in order to get enlightened. But it is comforting to know that in the heart of the urban jungle you can feel what it is like to live in a world free of wanting and full of giving.

Liliana Chernin, Bulgaria 2010



Women

Opinion: The need for a women's quota

Angela Merkel from the Christian Democrats (CDU) is the German chancellor since 2005. Therefore she appears on Forbes' list of the ten most powerful women in the world. Thanks to this, Germany seems to have very good opportunities for women to reach a good and powerful position. But this impression is deceptive.

Since a few month there is in Germany a new debate on a women's quota in management positions. The debate is ongoing and an end is nowhere in sight. The fact is that of the 30 DAX (German stock index) companies the proportion of women on the boards is at 2.16 %. In the 200 largest German companies it was 8.6 % in 2010.

The Social Democrats and the Green Party invented ten years before a volunteer quota for companies, but this commitment did not work out. Now they demand a quota where there should be at least 40 % women applying to the supervisory boards and boards of public companies and participation in all subject companies. Previously Ursula von der Leyen (CDU), the Federal Minister for Labour, declared

herself in favour for legally regulation for a women's quota in the management boards of companies. But Angela Merkel stopped this debate immediately. "There will be no legally binding quota", was her reaction on von der Leyen's plans.

Merkel's favourite is Kristina Schröder's (CDU, Federal Minister for Family Affairs) idea to expand the volunteer commitment for another ten years. The answer from von der Leyen: "I also see that a quota is currently unenforceable, but that the problem is not gone, that supervisory board members and board members in Germany are virtually woman-free zone".

In other situations, we can observe that Merkel is not strictly against women's quotas. The Christian Social Union (CSU) – the Bavarian sister party of the CDU – decided last October on a women's quota in their party: At the state and district level, 40 percent of the offices shall be held by women. And Angela Merkel was supporting these plans.

Why is Angela Merkel in favour for a quota in her sister party, but is not for a quota in management boards? Why should we wait another ten or twenty years for that? Are there similar situations in other European countries? How is the situation in your country and what do you think about quotas?

Nadja Kemper, Germany 2011

Women and society

For a long time women were something less than men. The men always ruled the world and women had to obey their husbands. It was really hard for them. But the problem of discrimination of women is still present.

Since the Roman times up until recently it was only the men that had suffrage. The woman had to give a birth to their children, take care of the household and their husbands. When they didn't obey, the husbands would beat them. When they cheated on their husbands, the punishment could be as cruel as an execution.

First suffrage for women in the world was approved in New Zealand in 1893. Then in the USA women won their fight for suffrage in 1920. The women, which were fighting for the suffrage, were called "suffragettes". After the First World War the suffragettes in Great Britain achieved their right to vote in 1926. The last countries to accept women's right to vote were Switzerland in 1971 and Liechtenstein in 1984.

Anyway, the question is what is the position of women in today's society? I think that in Europe women are equal to men. They can vote, work, live single, etc. They can do everything they want, unlike in some Muslim countries. For example, the women in Saudi Arabia and in the United Arab Emirates can't vote yet. The life there is strictly subordinated to Islam. The women have to wear "abaja". It is a special Islamic dress. Their heads must be covered at all time and the women are isolated from the men in public. In the streets there are moral patrols called Mutawa. They control women's dress code and others Muslim rules. The women are not allowed to drive, but they are allowed to take a taxi. The people there pray five times a day and the shops are closed prior to the prayers.

The woman can't uncover their head to any another man, except for the husband. A woman has to obey her husband and he even has the right to physically

punish his wife. The woman are not allowed to use the birth-control. I think that in Muslim world there are great barriers for the women and these should be demolished. Nowadays, in the time of respect of human rights, it's backward and immoral. It's very important to listen to the voices of these women.

The western world should try to help these women. We can close our eyes or we can help. We can change everything, it's just up to us.

Michaela Lennerová, Slovakia 2011

Women Building Europe: Report from the conference

Between 4.11. and 7.11., a conference took place in Essen; its title was Women Building Europe: The international influences of the Essen Women's Abbey. Although we weren't among participants, we had an opportunity to interview three of them: Professor Thomas Schilp and Mr. Hartwig Kersken from University Duisburg-Essen, and Ms. Katrinette Bodarwé from University Regensburg. We talked about women living in the abbey, abbey's importance and treasury, and last but not least, about women role in current Europe.

Essen women abbey was one of the most important abbeys in Europe. It was founded in 845 and had an important influence on Christianisation in German area. A part of the abbey was so called Frauenstift, which was a community of women, who lived in abbey without being nuns. At the early period they were probably just common women, who came to the abbey, received Christian education and then returned to their families. At home they spread Christian religion and sometimes even founded new abbeys. However, the social origin of the women living in the Frauenstift changed during years, it was higher and higher and finally daughters of high nobility, for example dukes' and kings' daughters came to live here.

Another situation was with position of the abbess. As the Essen abbey was very rich (it ruled a great part of Essen area, more than 30 000 farmers' families), the abbess was from the very beginning from the emperor's family. In the 13th century, tradition of empire's princesses in this post began. Their position as both an abbess of the important abbey and a princess from emperor's family gave them considerable influence, which they used in service of both the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman empire.

The abbey's wealth enable creation of a rich treasury. The most famous plastic Golden Madonna became a symbol of Essen. An important topic of discussion at the conference were precious clothes in which individual holy relics were wrapped. They are an inestimable source of information for scientists. They are able to find out where are these clothes from, when were they made and how did they get to the abbey. For example, some of them were made in 13th century in Constantinople as Byzantine princess Theophanu's dowry. She became wife of Otto II., emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and Essen abbess Sophia's mother. These clothes cost more than their weight in gold and were so precious that not even the emperor could buy it – you could only get it as a gift.

The last question, which we had to ask, was whether women build Europe in our time. The abbey was closed in 1803 because of the secularization of Germany; therefore we can't speak about continuity of its tradition. However, a short view at current situation shows, that there is no need to worry: German Prime Minister is Angela Merkel, women are also in charge of many cities and states; more girls than boys finish their high school education and even at the conference itself there were more female lecturers than male ones.

Kludia Teichmanova, Czech Republic 2010



Media

Creative Commons – A Step Into A Shared Culture

Everyday, more and more young people download contents from the internet. Most of us do it even though we think it is crime. But the truth is content downloading is not forbidden. It all depends on what you download. For those who like free access to information and culture, here's an invitation to discover the wonderful world of Creative Commons Licenses.

Created in December 2002 by Lawrence Lessig, a university teacher at Harvard, these licenses allow the author of every single work to share it freely without restrictions, according to his/her own will. This means that if you download a Creative Commons licensed item, such as a music, a picture, a text or even a movie, you're not committing a crime, you're just enjoying the greatest part of Internet: freedom. Yes, you will have to follow some rules such as attribution (you're using something that was created by another person, so it is better that you tell that to other people), but if you do that, not only you have the right of download, you also get the right of sharing that work with who ever you like. Enough talking for now. Let's go to what matters, you are probably asking yourself "So, how do I find those free items?". Well, you can always search on Creative Commons website,

but there are some websites that will probably be more interesting than that. If you like photos, I'm pretty sure that you already know Flickr. It is a social network based on the possibility of sharing pictures. And most of the pictures are licensed by Creative Commons.

If you're music geek, welcome to Jamendo, a social network of free music distributed on the internet (aka netaudio). The Luxembourg based website is available in several different languages (such as english, french, spanish, german, italian, polish and portuguese) and by the time this article was written it had 268.350 tracks of every music genre available for you to listen and download in a completely legal and free way. You won't find Lady Gaga there, but artists like Kanye West, Beastie Boys, Moby or Massive Attack have released CC licensed tracks – why don't you check RCRD LBL website out and see it for yourself?

If you're into reading, there's something for you as well. Despite its commercial oriented policy, Google Books is a good place for you to find CC licensed books. Books that you're obviously allowed to save and keep in your hard drive. If you were still wondering about the movies, let's get this straight: most of CC licensed movies are short-length videos that you can easily find on YouTube for instance. But there are also full-length movies and documentaries available.

Rute Correia, Portugal 2010

Media Violence

The News, movies, computer games and music that we consume every day, affect us in our behavior. How much violence can we suffer?

Shootings in schools or public places are no typical American issues. Cases like that increased in Europe during the last years. The only difference is that it is much harder to get weapons in Europe. But the frustration of young people and their deadness is probably similar. After such horrible shootings, the question is always who or what is to blame. The surrounding or the mental age of the shooter? Things like that are probably always important clues of the given case. But is the media violence another reason for the deadness of these persons? A lot of people and experts think so, with good reasons.

But beside of shootings, media violence has an affect to all of us. I think the question is how much can we suffer and how much violence is even necessary.

When it comes about news, it's a difficult case. When I have a look into a daily newspaper and I see a picture of a destroyed car with the headline: 3 young people died in a horrible accident, I ask myself if it's really necessary that I have to see the picture. In other cases, a sad or violent picture can maybe open my eyes. This picture here is still the best example I guess:

What about movies? We see so many different kinds of movies and not many of them get away with at least one kill or dead. I think that movies are art. No matter if it is a bad Hollywood production ore a beautiful movie from France, nobody should censor art. But still there is a difference between the kinds of violence a moviemaker can choose. When I think about anti war movies like „Full Metal Jacket“, these kinds of movies can show you how cruel a war is. But in other movies I don't really understand why they have to be so violent. The best examples are the „SAW“ movies. I don't think that the story of these movies is so good

like a lot of people say. Every scene try's to be a bit more disgusting then the one before. I would even term this genre as „Violent Pornography“. But I said before that movies are art and nobody should censor it!?

Media Violence is a topic whit many questions that nobody can answer. What do you think? How much blood and violence is too much or how much is necessary in the news, movies, video games or music?

Philipp Dohmen, Germany 2010



History

Edna Bocker: “Facebook just gets you nervous”

Edna Bocker believes that facebook just gets you nervous. The war in Israel has no solution. Giving two or three years of youth to the army is not only a matter of need, but also surviving. As Essen's Synagogue Museum Director she knows how it feels to be a Jew.

Born in Tel Aviv, Bocker studied in Jerusalem and moved to Germany for one year of studies. The years passed and Germany became her second home. Edna Bocker and European Youth Voice talked after a visit to the museum that she rules for the last 23 years.

European Youth Voice (EYV): The concept of presence does not exist to Jews?
Edna Bocker (EB): What is presence? presence is only one second while past and future meet. In the moment I say a word it's already past. The presence is always moving with us. So we have presence: you were presence when you were dancing, but in the moment you stopped, it was past. So, in the philosophical point of view, there is no presence.

EYV: For most of the young people the time is “now”. It's all about the presence. So do the young Jews have a different way of seeing things?

EB: Young Jews are just like any other young people. They are not so fixed to things like facebook, because the existence in Israel is much more difficult than in any European country. But concerning those terms [past, present and future] they think just like you. But I think there are no real benefits [in facebook], I prefer meeting my friends in person. It just makes you nervous. Internet is important to get information, but it's dangerous too.

EYV: When we discuss integration issues, is it common to hear the argument that religion is the problem.

EB: The matter is not religion. Religions that are based on missionary activity have to be aggressive, because they think that they have found the highest level of belief – Christianity and Islam are two missionary religions so they fight for life or death. Judaism never acted missionary activities, ever. The problem is not religion, it's politics.

EYV: About the war in Israel, is the dialogue possible? Is there a solution?
EB: No. We have already lost the war, it's just a matter of time. Of how long we can resist. The young people know they have to be prepared, because we know there will be a war, the only question is when and where.

Ladislav Kolar, Czech Republic 2010

Philipp Dohmen, Germany 2010

Tolerance Congress successful!

September 2010, Banska Bystrica(Slovakia): 13 Nations signed a proclamation at the Tolerance congress of the European martyr cities and villages. Ioana Dinu and Danny Piel took part.

Be tolerant and remember the National Socialism and their victims. This should be our aim in the whole life and longer. That's why the Network of martyr cities and villages is important. The proclamation for extending, organizing and the way to go on with the Network of European martyrs cities and villages was an important goal of this congress. The congress was organized by the Museum of Slovak National Uprising in Banska Bystrica.

The delegations of 13 European countries arrived at the 20th of September in Banska Bystrica for the Tolerance congress. The Germans were represented by the group of aktuelles Forum with Sven Borsche, Klaus Amonet, Hellmut Walz and Hellmut Hellwig and also Ioana Dinu and Danny Piel as part of the student conference.

The congress day was the 21st of September. It was parted in the main congress and the student conference. Everybody was able to change between the two parts. At the end of the congress day all 13 nations signed a proclamation for extending, organizing and the way to go on with the Network of European martyrs cities and villages.

The 13 nations were: Belarus, Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands and Ukraine.

In the other two days we were visiting the culture landmark in Kaliste and heard the story of a surviving girl of the burned city and we also visited Banska Stianica. Kaliste was burned down by national socialists. After that nobody lived in that vil-

lage anytime. It is now step by step rebuilt as a national culture landmark of Slovakia. Banska Stianica was a coal mine city.

The congress ended with the big ceremony of handing out the proclamations to the different country representatives. So we thank the Museum of Slovak National Uprising for a great organized congress. The next congress is going to be in Minsk Belarus in 2012. Good luck and see you in Minsk.

Danny Piel, Germany 2010

What does 17th November mean for the Czech Republic?

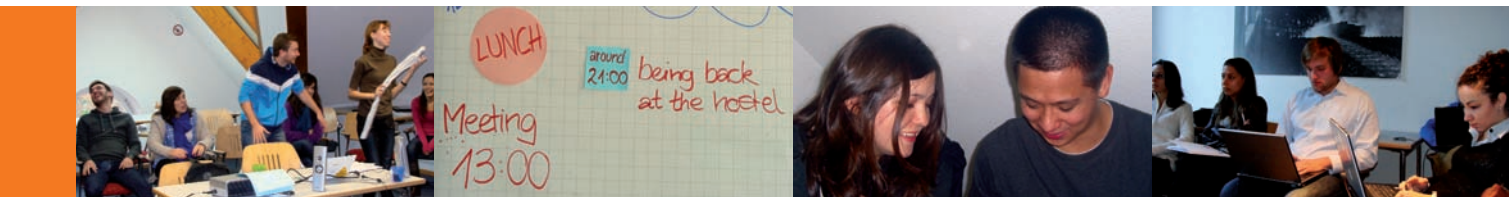
On 25th February 1948 the Communist Party received more than 40% of votes at the elections in the Czech countries. The communists took hold of the governance and a huge overturn happened in The Czech Republic for a period of 40 years. That's why is this point of February's break called „the putch“ and the Communists call this often as their revolution.

The putch meant a huge debacle for the intelligence, social and economical development of the country and caused the so-called brain- drain because a majority of the very clever playwrights, actors, authors and great thinkers went into exile. It is well-known that in the exile originated the very top literary arts and after the drop of the Iron Curtain a lot of written documents of these authors were found. For example Ferdinand Peroutka was a very important Czech prose-writer who was living partly in England and in The USA. On the contemporary internet sites you can find the letters from exile whose author is John Vlasák. The well-known author of these letters is Bohuslav Brouk who tried to refigure to a man who is writing the letters to his mistresses. Another important point in the period of these 40 years of the totalitarian regime was the year 1968 which is called the Prague's spring.

This year is known for the invasion of the soliders of Varsovian agreement to the Czech countries, so for the Occupation. The general secretary Antonín Novotný was called back from his function and this meant a complete changement of the leadership which was followed by the occupation in August.

The 70's in the Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic were known by its normalization, that meant that everything was under control of the communists and the president Gustav Husák. During the 80's, there began to spread a flow of objection from the part of students which culminated on 17th November 1989 by a march of the crowds of people from the Albertov part in Prague to Václavské náměstí where they openly expressed their opinion about the whole communists systém. A lot of actors and singers had there speeches and in the end of this action everyone took some keys and ringed by them as a sign of the end of the ancient government. The first new democratic president was elected (Václav Havel) and in 1993, the Czech and Slovak Republic became 2 independent states. The date of 17th November is celebrated in the Czech Republic as a very important jubilee of the fall of „government of one party“ and as the anniversary of democracy.

Katerina Vojtechova, Czech Republic 2010



Sport

Snowboarding – Sport or lifestyle?

Snowboarding became famous as a sports in 1980s when American snurfer (surfer on a snow) Jake Burton put a pair of bindings on his snurfboard and attended to a competition, there were many protests given in put Jake still managed to compete.

This competition is also considered the first snowboarding competition. The first World Championships were held in 1983.

Nowday snobboarding is one of the most popular extereme sports and is becoming more and more famous every year. Since 1998 it is a Winter Olympic Sport. There are about 8 million snowboarders all over the world and by the way, females constitute 25% of participants.

Snowboarders like to call themselves a one big family. It's the sports where you don't have coaches, it's a sport you do with your friends just for fun. When there is no fun, it's not snowboarding. In this sport there are no winners or losers. When we participate we are happy even when we don't win, we are happy when our

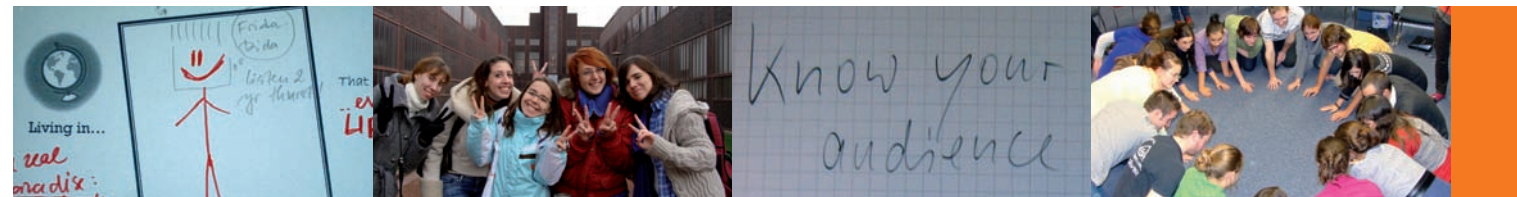
rivals win. For the people who haven't done it it is quite har to believe it, but that's the way it is.

For the pople who would like to become a member of the family I wish a lot of luck and enthusiasm to go on a hill even after the first failings. I know how hard it is to learn riding well, but it's all worth of it.

Here is a little inspiring snowboarding video made by me and my friends. I hope you enjoy it. The music is in Estonian an Finnish. Songs are about winter.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdtQxAiOAe0>

Anti Haugas, Estonia 2011



Funny Stuff

German food: The Differences

It was my first day in Germany, the trip went well and everything was working as it supposed to be..apart from a little detail: it was also the first time I found myself shaking like a maniac the bubbly bottle. No I wasn't drank and I guarantee it wasn't a beer... After shaking it for like 5 minutes I started opening the bottle, quite slow, so the gas couldn't get out and cause any damaged.

In the next days it became my new early morning ritual. I need to do it just to be able to drink a glass of water. I found out that in Germany it is usual to drink this type of water – the bubbly one. Share with us the major differences between your traditional dishes and German food.

Watch the «Vox pop: www.EuropeanYouthVoice – The major differences between German food and other countries»

Sofia Trindade, Eduardo Féteira, Portugal 2010

German Wursts

Besides bread, “Wurst” is the second essential of German staples. Wurst is sold at the butcher – in the south called “Metzger”, in the north “Fleischer” or “Schlachter” – and in any supermarket.

Wurst does not only mean sausage but also stands for the hundreds of different types of processed meat that Germans eat as slices or spread on top of their bread. This kind of Wurst is also called “Aufschnitt”. The most common types of Wurst-Aufschnitt are: Fleischwurst, Mettwurst or Teewurst, Leberwurst, Nuss-Schinken, Lachsschinken and so on. But we are going to look at one special kind of wurst witch I ate at the beautiful town of Duisburg this wurst is very well spread in this part of the country and it is one of the best fast foods I have ate in my life. So now you want to understand what is the name of this amazing meal right...

And exactly Bratwurst is the name that you wont forget once you try it!

This is the main species of German sausages is the world-renowned “Bratwurst”. It is, indeed, very popular in the country and made from a blend of finely-ground pork and veal and then precooked. The Bratwurst can come in a lot of variations. Most common are the spicy “Thüringer Bratwurst”, the small “Nürnberger Bratwurst” with Marjoram, the hearty “Schinkenwurst” or the white bavarian

“Weisswurst”. All sausages are served with “Senf” (mustard) and make a great lunch or snack, especially when served with “Kartoffelsalat” (potato salad), “Bratkartoffeln”, a side of hot sauerkraut and a slice of heart bread. A Bratwurst can also be ordered as “Curry Wurst”. It is then cut in small chunks, covered in tomato sauce with a teaspoon of curry powder on top.

I want from you to take a special attention at so called “Curry Wurst” because this is the thing that capture my soul for the rest of my life. This is it a fast-food dish of German origin consisting of hot pork sausages cut into slices and seasoned with curry sauce (regularly consisting of ketchup or tomato paste blended with curry) and generous amounts of curry powder, or a ready-made ketchup-based sauce seasoned with curry and other spices. It is frequently served at German ‘Imbissbuden’ and from food trucks.

The invention of currywurst is attributed to Herta Heuwer in Berlin in 1949 after she obtained ketchup, Worcestershire sauce and curry powder from British soldiers. She mixed these ingredients with other spices and poured it over grilled pork sausage. Heuwer started selling the cheap but filling snack at a street stand in the Charlottenburg district where it became popular with construction workers rebuilding the devastated city. She patented her sauce, called Chillup, in 1951. At its height the stand was selling 10,000 servings per week. She later opened a small restaurant which operated until 1974.

And now this delicious food can be found all over the areas of Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr Area. So if you want to visit Germany now you knew were you should go because this is something that you must taste or you life is waste.

So god blessed frau Heuwer and of course the Queen.

Petar Dyakov, Bulgaria 2010



Studies

To be Bologna or not to be Bologna?

In the last months a hot topic has been debated over and over again not only between students but also between the academic bodies. It seems that in Germany this reform has not been taken so easily mainly by students and companies, who are making hard differences between people studying in the new system. I give below the word to one active member of the academic bodies here in Germany and I thank him this way for expressing his view upon the subject.

With the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the EU did what it does for convergence in products, services, or quality standards. This has worked more or less well for the areas mentioned but what can be said about this higher education venture? The ten-page document signed by the European Ministers of Education defines more or less the cornerstones of the two-cycle higher education scheme: transparent and comparable degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate study duration, and the third pivotal issue, the credit scheme called ECTS. Transparency of degrees is important for the EU Commission because it supports the fundamental policy of the free movement of labour. For that purpose, universities had to create Diploma supplements that explain the courses, their content, purpose, and outcome. The issue is, however, that one can hardly compare degrees within the same country. Academic

standards are vastly different within the EU. For the purpose of illustration, the level of generalisation in the examples below is quite high and the author is well aware of that. So we find a largely receptive audience at universities in southern Europe (including France), the involved but in the end regurgitative students in Germany (at least during their junior studies), the script-based teaching in some countries, and the expectation of UK universities that their final year Bachelor and postgraduate students have understood the process of self-learning. Moreover, there is the Thesis at the end – vital in Germany but non-existent in many UK Bachelor programmes – blessed with many credits in some, given very few in other countries. The Accord document then states that the undergraduate studies should be at least three years. So we have countries that run a three year undergraduate system and countries that have a four-year one. Oh, yes, and a country that runs both, three- and four-year programmes (the UK). So the second cycle – (post)graduate studies – can be one or two years depending on the length of the first cycle, in keeping with the defined maximum duration of five years. In this puzzle, students can profit very much. They can do a fast, three-year Bachelor in one place and finish with a one-year Master in another. Someone doing a four-year Bachelor and a two-year Master looks a bit dumb in comparison. Blaming Bologna may be a little too easy but it is definitely one of the reasons. German Bachelor students effectively lose time when they study abroad on their own accord. The packed three years do not allow for any visits over the hedge. The only way-out is dual-degree schemes that credit the year abroad without asking too many questions. The question is not “Are we ready for Europe?” – it is “Is Europe ready for us?”

Ioana Dinu, Romania with Edward F. Sodmann, Germany 2010



Participants of the Project – Editorial Staff Team

Bulgaria

Katya Gogova
Antoaneta Gyurova
Yanitsa Stoyanova
Lilyana Chernin
Petar Dyakov

Estonia

Annika Urbel
Ksenia Krassilnikova
Anti Haugas
Andry Silla

Portugal

Rute Correia
Sofia Trindade
Eduardo Feteira
Sofia Almeida

Slovakia

Livia Bernatova
Michaela Lennerova
Rudolf Dong
Dagmar Misticova
Martina Masnicova

Germany

Danny Piel
Kristina Schönbrunn
Philipp Dohmen
Vanessa Biermann
Misha Grech
Nadja Kemper
Norbert Tillmann

Poland

Annetta Byczynska
Ewelina Skroka
Urszula Bajko
Agnieszka Siegieda
Sylvia Zdrada

Romania

Ioana Dinu
Georgiana Sandu
Alexandru Gotca
Raisa Beicu
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Czech Republic

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The password can be changed when logging into your profil page (see right side-bar, under Welcome! sign).

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In order to post an article one has to:

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3. Click on posts (left side-bar)
4. Add new
5. Write text, embed video, pictures etc.
6. Publish (left side-bar)

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Before you publish click on 'Set Featured Image' (Bottom left side-bar)

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The website is open to everybody. Everybody can write independently articles, share photos, produce small films or upload audio files. You can put contributions on the side yourself.

To do that you only need a login: E-mail: info@aktuelles-forum.de



Editorial staff team of the aktuelles forum:

Iona Dinu, Ulrika Engler, Nadja Kemper, Danny Piel, Norbert Tillmann

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aktuelles forum nrw
Hohenstaufenallee 1
D-45888 Gelsenkirchen
Tel: +49 (0) 209/155 10 -19
Mail: info@aktuelles-forum.de
Web: www.aktuelles-forum.de



www.EuropeanYouthVoice.eu

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