



**ECUMENICAL YOUTH COUNCIL  
IN EUROPE**

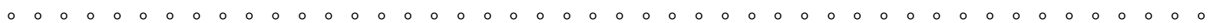


Dear National Correspondents and Members of EYCE!

Greetings from Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe on this beautiful time, time of waiting for the Light, time, when the Message of Hope, Salvation and Freedom is given to the whole humanity! I hope this finds you well! During the year 2009 EYCE has gone through many events and many changes. To many of those you have been witnesses, and of many you have heard from some one. At the end of this year EYCE would like to summarise the events of 2009, and give you a short insight into the year 2010, which we hope to spend in such a warm brotherhood and sisterhood, and cooperation as this year, which is almost behind us.

**In this Circular Letter you will find:**

- Christmas Greeting from EYCE Vice-Chairperson Catharina Covolo..... 1
- Report on EYCE's activities in 2009..... 3
- Updates from EYCE member organisations..... 6
- EYCE Office updates..... 9
- Call for Steering Committee on EYCE Future Development..... 11
- List of EYCE events and Activities in 2010..... 13



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

(John 1: 1-5)

Dear members and friends, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christmas greetings from the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe!

As Christmas is only a few days away and the year 2009 is coming to an end, we are rushing and hasting from shop to shop, meeting to meeting, or are desperately trying to finish the work that we need to finish before the end of the year. But let us take a moment to stop thinking about gifts, work, or conflicts to think about what these lines from the gospel of John mean to us and how they can encourage us.

Let us concentrate on the last lines: "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." We have experienced many times a darkness, sometimes in our personal lives, sometimes in our professions, and sometimes also in our relationship with God. Certain times we experience darkness as a group, being a minority, or as individuals, being excluded from society. During the course of this year, many people would regard the financial and economic crisis as darkness that casts shadows over their lives because they lost all their savings, their jobs or live in constant fear of losing their jobs and thus, not being able to provide the necessary financial resources to live. Although the crisis hit many regions in Europe differently and some countries are concerned more than others, people have to suffer from its effects in the whole of Europe.

As it happens at this time to many of us, in moments that challenge us to find answers, to adjust our lives to new circumstances, or to speak up amidst of silence, let us always be aware of the gift Our Lord gives us at this time of Advent - a gift of Hope, His Endless Love towards us and the certainty of Faith, that the darkness cannot overcome the Light that shines in the darkness and is for all people gives us strength and hope in our respective situations and guides through moments of darkness into the Light.

May the Light of Christ be with you this Christmas and in the year to come!

Yours in Christ,



Catharina Covolo

EYCE Vice-Chairperson

## **EYCE's ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2009**

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### ***Study session "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue", European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, from 1st to 8th of March 2009***



The study session brought together 37 young people representing 16 different nationalities at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 1-8 March 2009.

The theme of the study session aimed to explore issues to do with human rights education and how it is related to economic justice.

The study session was organised in conjunction with the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) and the

Federation of European Muslim Youth Organisations (FEMYSO).

Economic justice is one of the priority issues for EYCE at the present time, following a study session on MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY in 2006 and the subsequent establishment of a Steering Committee on economic justice and resolutions at EYCE's recent General Meeting.

The study session sought to explore the links between human rights and economic justice. This meant not only learning about those human rights which have an explicit reference to social or employment protection, but also sought looking at the whole field of human rights and how they can support human flourishing and full enjoyment of life for all people. EYCE and FEMYSO are faith-based organisations, therefore a consideration of the theological or spiritual aspects of justice, globalisation and human rights were also part of the study session.

The structure of the study session was varied, employing a wide range of educational methods and different activities to stimulate, engage and enthuse participants with a passion for the theme.

The participants were a diverse group, coming not only from different countries and cultures, but also from different religious traditions. Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians as well as Muslims took part in the study session. The group also included a Filipino, who greatly enriched the week with personal stories of human rights issues and globalisation.

Outside the structured sessions, the social and friendship-building opportunities turned out to be a

highlight of the week for many participants. The friendly and positive attitude of the group in turn assisted the work of the session in exchanging views, working through ideas and helping all to a better understanding of other people. Members of the International Planning Committee, all of whom had been involved in similar events in the past, thought that this study session was remarkable for the easy-going and respectful nature of the participants. If all study sessions were like this one then people would be wanting to do them again and again!

Participants were also grateful for the unique opportunity to visit the European Court of human rights and to speak with one of the lawyers working there. This helped to root the work of the Council of Europe at the centre of our theme, as well as providing an unforgettable insight into the institution.

As far as conclusions go, the study session did not set out to answer the question 'how are human rights and economic justice linked', but rather intended to facilitate learning and equip the participants to take some of the ideas and practical activities back to their own communities and to undertake small-scale projects to further the work around the theme.

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***Training course "Democracy and Migration - enhancing the participation of young people from minority background", Prague, Czech Republic, from 21st - 28th of June, 2009***

The training course brought together more than 20 young people from Europe and beyond. It aimed at raising the questions, which many countries in Europe are facing today - such as, how to address and understand the issues of migration?, what measures need to be taken to fully include youth from migrant and minority background into participatory structures?, which tools and structures are needed to enable active participation in democratic decision making processes?, which innovative tools can young people create that would support and sustain democratic participation of youth and in particular migrant youth? Thus the main themes of the training course were: theoretical overview on policies facilitating integration and democratic citizenship with respect for diversity; personal sharing of migrant youth on participation in democracy and understanding of democratic citizenship; participation of migrants in civic and political life; democratic citizenship: concepts for inclusion and active participation; democratic



citizenship: practical training in promoting inclusion of minority youth in democratic decision making processes.

The main aims of this training course were to strengthen the participation of young people from minority background in democratic decision making and to strengthen democratic citizenship.

The objectives were: 1) to analyse migration trends in Europe; 2) to analyse the obstacles people with migrant background are facing with regards to their equal participation in society; 3) to provide space for discussing and practising democratic decision making and agenda setting; 4) to empower youth to actively promote participation and inclusion of minority youth in democratic decision making processes, in particularly through joint lobbying and advocacy projects; 5) to train migrant and minority youth leaders to act as multipliers by developing projects on democratic citizenship; and 6) to equip these multipliers with tools to contribute to youth participation and democratic citizenship. The TC used a wide variety of methods: lectures, case studies, creative presentations, individual reflections and concrete training on project planning and further work in small regional groups aimed at developing concrete and sustainable programmes to be implemented at home.

The main target group of the training course were young people, aged 18-30, coming from minority background or involved in work with migrants. There were two main aspects of migration tackled during the training course - the migration from the perspective of the hosting countries and perspectives of migration in countries, such as Latvia, Bulgaria, Albania etc., where emigration is one of the main trends. The participants of the training course, were coming not only from Europe, but also beyond - such as India, Africa and Australia, currently residing in Europe, which brought a wider scope to the issues discussed and brought in the personal experiences of migration. Most of the participants coming from the youth organisations and gained a valuable experience in project planning and implementation. There were new learning experiences gained, friendships and partnerships established and creative and good-quality projects developed during the training course.

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***Training course "Human Rights vs. Fundamentalism -  
Inter-religious Co-operation to Overcome Discrimination and Prejudice in Europe",  
Skopje, FYROMacedonia, from 15th -22nd November 2009***

EYCE Training course brought together around 30 young people from different cultural and faith backgrounds to share their views and experiences on human rights issues, as well as to discuss the role of religious communities in contributing to open societies.



-Also (as usual) the Education Program for International and Ecumenical Affairs was prepared during the summer in co-operation with other associations. The program aims to educate young people to act in ecumenism introducing them with useful knowledge of different denominations and providing an opportunity to take part in worship with Christians from different denominational backgrounds. The first of four weekends took place in October.

-Also,(not exactly relevant, but still) yours truly took part in the CEC 13th Assembly in Lyon as a steward, networking and meeting a lot of awesome people from all over Europe :)

Maija Orsila

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### **Ökumenischer Jugendrat in Österreich, Austria**

In 2009, the Ecumenical Youth Council in Austria has launched a few new projects. Early this year, the denominations joined to participate in Stations of the Cross in Vienna. This event took place for the first time and while naturally some challenges remain, the experience gained provides the ground for next year's planning, which is well on the way. What was brought to our attention because of the Stations of the Cross was the lack of a common hymnal or collection of hymns that can be used for such events, and now the Council meets regularly to sing hymns and collect them in a resource for future events.

The Council is also starting to run funding programs for ecumenical events throughout Austria. Application forms will be available for download on the webpage, and we hope that this will lead to involvement of the Council in more events as well as more general presence and awareness that the Council is there.

Work on other projects, including the World Day of Prayer for Children, continues.

Katherine Jolly

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### **Evangelische Kirche A.B. in Rumänien - Jugend, Romania**

#### **Report on Summer activities – Romania 2009**

For the "Church Organization for youth and children" of the Evangelic Church C.A. in Romania, summer of 2009 was – like usually – filled with activities. I name two of them on a countrywide basis: the children camp and youth camp in Rosenau/ Rasnov. Besides these events many happenings took place on a local basis of youth groups, like workcamps, international meetings, youth staff trainings and study sessions and so on. But for now I would like to let one of our youth member report on how he experienced this summer.

Following article appeared in the parish newsletter "Lebensräume" of the evangelic community in Kronstadt/ Brasov and was written under the title: "Summer...work...holidays...meeting people" by Norbert Illyes (18 years old):

"Also during this summer took place at the end of June the traditional camp for children. We, the youth from Kronstadt, were also there! Not as participants but as staff for the aprox. 90 children. After a lot of preparation, which started already in April, now it was the moment to begin with the camp. Together with other staff-people from Hermannstadt, Schässburg etc. we took care of the enthusiastic children.

The camp took place in a valley next to Rosenau. We were surrounded by beautiful mountains and could experience the nature. Everything was green and seemed to be refreshing. The tents were already built up one next to the other. Together they formed a broad rectangle. [...] The theme of this year's camp was 'Travelling to Egypt` and it was mostly about Josef from the Old Testament. We had different activities regarding this theme: Bible studies, discussions, sketches and of course many, many games, which were a lot of fun. The children participated with a lot of joy and of course they behaved themselves. For us, as staff, it was a lot of fun, to participate and organize, although at some points it was tough[...], because we had to organize many games and themes from one day to the other. But the children were great. As soon as they laughed and were happy about what we prepared overnight, we forgot the whole labour and were happy along with the kids. [...].

During the second week of August we had again an encounter and this time with a youth group from Berlin, Germany. Our former intern Martin Meyer organized a journey through Romania together with his German youth group and also visited us. They were around 25 young people from Germany and we were around 10 people. On Thursday we travelled to Hermannstadt and on Friday we gave them a guided tour through Kronstadt. [...] In the afternoon we grilled in the home for the elderly `Blumenau`. We had games, fun and a good atmosphere and of course good food. As it got night we moved with our guests to the community room, where we played games until 1 o'clock at night. Besides the games we also had the opportunity to present the activities of our youth group and the youth from Berlin also reported how youth works functions in their place. There were of course many differences but also common things. We had fun, to spend time with our guests and we would like to meet again. Meeting people is always awesome."

Hannelore Agnethler



me the openness is not as much as necessity, but a natural state of being as I find it extremely interesting to discover new cultures, places, people, situations and challenges. Also optimism and looking at things from a positive perspective is a crucial element in this work.

The faith and my Christian belief play central role for me, because it lies under the philosophy of life I have – being kind, helpful, trustful and trustworthy. I hope that I will be able to serve EYCE for the years of my term with applying this rule at my best!

Yours in Christ,

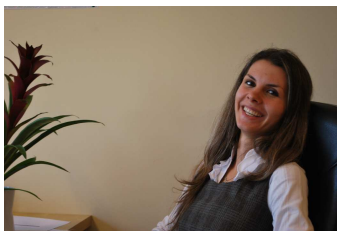
Kristine Jansone

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Starting from September 2009, EYCE office hosts two interns - Ms. Alina Marinescu from Romania and Mr. Felix Beck from Germany. Alina is taking part in European Voluntary Service project, whereas Felix comes from EYCE member organisation in Germany.

Please read their self-introductions below!

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Hey to everyone!

My name is Alina Marinescu and I'm coming from Bucharest, Romania. As you already guessed I'm the new intern. Last year I graduated from the University of Bucharest in Political Sciences and for the future I also plan to continue my studies with a masters degree.

In 2006 I had the opportunity to participate in one of EYCE's training courses, called "Make poverty History" which took place in Bankya, Bulgaria, I was very interested in the theme and really enjoyed the atmosphere.

Subsequently, when I found out about the possibility to work as an intern for EYCE, I thought that it would be a very good opportunity to improve my skills, to gain experience and to learn news things.

Hoping to work efficiently together and looking forward to meeting you,

Alina Marinescu

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our partners, members, as well as organisations and institutions, which support us with funding.

In order to meet these challenges, the General Meeting of EYCE, which took place in May 2009, has decided to establish a Steering Committee on EYCE's Future Development that shall work out guidelines, ideas, and recommendations for EYCE's future work. This steering committee will work until the next General Meeting in October 2011 in order to present the outcomes of its work to the General Meeting. The General Meeting in 2011 will then decide on further steps to be undertaken in this regard.

The Steering Committee will have to address the following issues concerning the future of EYCE:

- the overall image/ identity of the organisation
- relationships to external partners
- contacts and cooperation with member organisations
- acquisition of funding
- themes EYCE will work on in future years
- the types of organised activities
- "marketing" strategies

A first meeting of the committee will take place in the first half of 2010. Before and after this meeting, the committee is required to use e-mails and a googlegroup for its work and communication.

The members of this committee should have knowledge about the structures and work of their sending organisation as well as knowledge about EYCE, its work and its structures. In addition, it is helpful for the committee if its members are open toward new ideas, but nevertheless value structures or other elements of EYCE, which have proven to be successful for its work.

The committee should consist of no more than six persons from EYCE's member organisations. This committee will also include a member of the Executive Committee of EYCE in order to support the work of the committee and guarantee the link between the committee and the Executive Committee. The support from EYCE's office shall be provided to the committee in matters necessary.

The member organisations are invited to nominate suitable young people no later than

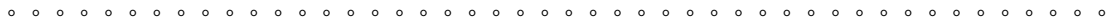
**January 15th, 2010**

**16:00 (CET)**

If you have any questions regarding the committee or nominations, as well as to obtain the APPLICATION FORM please do not hesitate to contact EYCE's office: [general.secretary@eyce.org](mailto:general.secretary@eyce.org)

Yours in Christ,

Catharina Covolo



**LIST OF EYCE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN 2010**

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11th - 25th of April: "Democracy for All! A training course for youth leaders fostering inter-generational dialogue.", Estonia

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12th - 16th of May: Workshops in 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag in Munich, Germany

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18th - 25th of July: " Facing the Economic Crisis - role and possibilities of youth organisations. a training for ecumenical trainers in field of economic justice", Lithuania

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12th - 19th of September or 27th September - 3rd October: "Climate Justice now!" A double study session in cooperation with WSCF-E, Strasbourg, France

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**22nd - 28th October: EYCE National Correspondent's meeting, Belfast, Northern Ireland**

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28th November - 5th December: "Fundamentalist or Responsible Citizen? Contribution of religious communities to formation of European citizens", Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina