

Young People at the Heart of Europe

A Decade of the European Youth Centre Budapest



EYC ★ EIK ★ CEJ
B U D A P E S T

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"Many people have provided support and invested a great deal of energy into making the Centre what it is today: a widely respected place for intercultural dialogue, human rights and citizenship education. I should like to express my gratitude to you for what you have done so far and for what you will help us to do in the future. I want to pay special tribute to the Hungarian authorities for their unwavering political and financial support for the Centre, over four consecutive governments and spanning more than a decade"

Terry Davis
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

➤ Thank you to Hungary

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- The Office of the Prime Minister
- The Hungarian Parliament and, in particular, its Sub-committee on Youth
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Ministry for Culture and Education (1994 - 1998)
- The Ministry for Youth and Sports (1998 - 2002)
- The Ministry for Children, Youth and Sports (2002 - 2004)
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- Mobilitás, the Hungarian National Youth Service
- The Hungarian youth organisations and NGOs.



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introduction

ANTJE ROTHEMUND, Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest

This book contains the contributions of numerous Europeans. They represent different age groups and a wide spectrum of political, cultural and social life in Europe. All the personalities, who have kindly offered us their memories and experience, have at least one thing in common. In their political or professional functions, in their work or in their voluntary commitment to civil society, present or past, they have come into contact with the European Youth Centre Budapest of the Council of Europe. These are young and not-so-young people who have participated in one or more of the hundreds of activities that have taken place in the Centre since it opened in 1995. They are or were decision-makers essential to the establishment, development and consolidation of a 'Second European Youth Centre', in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Antje Rothemund has been the Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest since 1999. She started her career at the Council of Europe in 1991 as Tutor at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg and joined the staff of the EYCB in 1997 as Administrator in charge of Training and Programme. Prior, Antje Rothemund worked as Programme Executive for the European Region of an international youth organisation and for the municipal youth service of the City of Munich, Germany.

They are active and committed members of civil society, politicians, youth workers and youth leaders, trainers, educators, civil servants, researchers and staff members of the Council of Europe, many of whom have been several of these in different phases of their lives. Their individual memories, wishes and experiences present the numerous parts of a complex puzzle, which together give a colourful and vivid picture of what made and makes the European Youth Centre Budapest. I hope that you will enjoy the wealth of never before published and extremely rich material that is brought together in this book, exceeding even the editors' expectations at the outset of the project.

One could be forgiven for thinking that a European Youth Centre is a matter of merely bricks and mortar. However, its name can be considered a label of quality and stands for much more. The objectives, mission of, and expectations towards the European Youth Centre are first and foremost described in its statutes¹, which state: "*The European Youth Centre (...) shall be an educational establishment of the Council of Europe and a knowledge base on youth affairs, in particular youth policy and youth work, as well as emerging youth phenomena. As an instrument for the participation of European youth in the building of Europe, it shall contribute to implementing the youth activities programme of the Council of Europe.*"² The Council of Europe's values, mission and ethical standards are the backbone of the European Youth Centre's work. Since 1949, the Council of Europe has represented reconciliation through the promotion of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. With, at time of writing, its 46 member states, it covers virtually the entire European continent and stands for the larger Europe by embracing its diversity.

One of the unique features of a European Youth Centre is the extent to which it is embedded in a philosophy of youth: work in this field is done with, for and about young people. The Centre is the symbol of lively, interdisciplinary and pan-European co-operation taking place within the triangle of youth work, youth policy and youth research. This permanent exchange, mutual enrichment and reciprocal learning has made the youth sector of the Council of Europe the leading agency in the

¹ The Statute of the European Youth Centre refers equally to both the European Youth Centre Strasbourg and the European Youth Centre Budapest. Please refer to page 11 for the text of this document.

² *ibid*

development of standards for non-formal education, youth policy and international youth work for almost 40 years. These standards have contributed to the development of the youth programmes of the European Union, as well as those of other international and national bodies.

The European Youth Centre complements youth related training, information, knowledge and networks established on the national and local levels with a European perspective. It gives young people access to the world of institutions, direct insight into space for encounters and experience and the creation of personal affiliations with the values of the Council of Europe. This unique instrument is without equivalent or comparison in the global landscape of international organisations, marking as it does biographies, as well as creating commitment and ownership for European values, and establishing lasting links between people through personal encounters. The current Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, well describes this special relationship on the basis of his own experiences as a young person: *"For over twenty years the European Union has been my daily business. (...) I have always, however, had a special relationship with the Council of Europe - a relationship, which is personal and even irrational. The link goes all the way back to my student days in Strasbourg".*³

Education is eternal. While it is taken for granted that every child has to learn to read, write and count, the learning involved in becoming a 'citizen' is less obvious to pin down. The philosophy of the Centre's multilateral educational programmes is about opening-up eyes, hearts and minds for discovering the different realities of Europe, for developing critical thinking, solidarity and social responsibility. It is about assisting young people in the development of their competencies, skills and motivation to act as the 'democratic conscience of Europe'. It is not always easy or comfortable for the institution to deal with the results of this work, however much desired. To accept young people as equal



partners, to take into account their proposals and their impatience to see results, to be ready to change and to provide concrete answers when questioned ... these are just a few of the competencies and attitudes required of educators, trainers and civil servants alike, if they want to be taken seriously by young people and remain credible in the youth field. There are no 'ignorant' to convert or 'converted' to preach to here. The dividing lines disappear as dynamic exchange creates situations in which it is not always so clear who is being educated and who is the educator. Everybody involved can find themselves in the role of learner and sharer, at one and the same time. Knowledge is created, not so as to build monopolies or win, but with the aim of it being shared, multiplied and made widely available to everyone wishing to promote the same values.

* * *

³ "Council of Europe - European Union: A sole ambition for the European continent", Report of Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the attention of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe, April 2006.



The European Youth Centre Budapest opened its doors in 1995. Since then it has welcomed thousands of participants in many hundreds of activities promoting the spirit of learning and sharing that is the hallmark of the Council of Europe's youth sector. The history of the Centre, the organic growth of its programmes and consequently the contents of its work are well described in this publication.

The hospitality and permanent support of Hungary, the EYCB's host, are exemplary and deserve special tribute. The co-operation between the Hungarian authorities and the EYCB is established and has matured over a full decade. The special relationship between Hungary and the EYCB may also be seen as a successful example of intercultural and interdisciplinary co-operation in itself, and has been and will continue to be essential for the EYCB's ongoing success.

One of the concrete and visible results of the co-operation with the Hungarian authorities is the Mobilitás Information Service, which has operated on the Centre's premises for more than five years and is a fine model of trilateral co-operation between a national youth service, the European Commission's youth programmes and the Council of Europe's youth sector. In addition to a majority of Council of Europe youth programmes, the EYCB also welcomes the activities of other Council of Europe services, a variety of international and national non-governmental organisations, agencies of the United Nations and the European Union, Hungarian governmental institutions and diplomatic representations. The co-habitation of sometimes very diverse people and working cultures that this varied programme produces is both a pool of opportunity and a market of networking.



The intensity and success of non-formal education depends on the clear definition of the values it wishes to promote and the objectives it wishes to achieve. Of essential importance is that these values and objectives are engraved in the atmosphere and methodology of the activities as well as in the physical setting and social environment. The European Youth Centre Budapest offers, on protected diplomatic territory, an international training and conference infrastructure focusing its services and facilities on the learning and communication needs of the groups using it, rather than on individual comfort. The architecture, the mobile character of the working room settings, the space for formal and informal encounters and the provision of assistance to people with special needs are all part and parcel of the EYCB's approach to its

work. Nothing in this respect was or is left to coincidence: thorough planning, ongoing evaluation of the facilities and services by the Centre's users and the consequent implementation of improvements have given the EYCB the reputation of "an ideal intercultural training centre".

What is true for the programmes held in the Centre is equally true for its staff. Intercultural learning and development of good co-operation does not only take place in the training activities, but equally among the staff. Nearly fifty people work full-time on the premises: the internationally composed staff of the Council of

Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, the Hungarian staff of four service companies ensuring catering, cleaning, reception, security and technical maintenance, as well as the staff of the Mobilitás Information Service. The contribution of every single staff member is essential to the success of each activity taking place in the house. Over a decade the staff of the EYCB has developed its 'corporate identity'. This includes using the most creative ways of communication, including the non-verbal, open-minded hospitality and empathy for every individual participant attending what might be the first or the most important international event of their lives. The message of the programme of activities, including respect for diversity, inclusion instead of exclusion, interpersonal communication and peaceful co-existence, is shared and put into practice by all staff working in the Centre on a day to day basis. "All different - all equal" is the motto. At the EYCB, a 16 year-old youngster gets the same welcome and has the same duties, rights and privileges as a 60 year-old Member of Parliament. The competence and commitment of the staff are one of the EYCB's strongest assets and the friendly recognition and feedback staff receive from guests from all over Europe and beyond are the best motivation to keep going and further develop quality standards.

Within the Council of Europe's fleet, the EYCB is a small, yet sturdy and well-appointed ship. It is exposed to the general weather conditions of the European seas. It is used to waves, winds, sunny periods as well as chilly spells. This book documents the complex dynamic of creating, implementing and consolidating the first-ever permanent service of the Council of Europe in a country of Central and Eastern Europe. In the 10 years of its existence, the EYCB has travelled far. Its 10th anniversary is an occasion for the large variety of people, driven by strong political will, commitment to European ideals, professional ethics and the belief in the capacity of young people, to look back and be proud of the common achievement that the EYCB undoubtedly is. In so doing, they might also gain a healthy pinch of courage and readiness to take even more risks.

I trust that the second decade of the EYCB will be as productive, vivid and intense as the first. Increased regional and interdisciplinary co-operation, the further mainstreaming of Human Rights Education in youth work and beyond, further developing the quality standards for non-formal education, European citizenship and identity, intensified co-operation between the national level and the European and international institutions, will undoubtedly be some of the challenging subjects for the years to come. I am confident that the European Youth Centre Budapest will continue to contribute soundly to the development of the capacity of civil society in our Europe and beyond.






The constructive development of the continent must continue



MIGUEL MARTINEZ

"...As a young Spanish exile living in Vienna in the early 1960s, I was involved in the socialist youth movements and was part of the struggle to establish the first European Youth Centre. As President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe at the time when the proposal to establish a second European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe was tabled, I was very much in favour. I felt it was important that the opportunity presented by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the enlargement of the Council of Europe to Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s would not be wasted, and that young people from both sides of the newly-reunited continent should benefit equally from the possibilities offered by the youth programmes of the Council of Europe.



In the early days of the experimental youth centre in Strasbourg, acceptance by the member states of the principle of co-management, in which equal numbers of youth organisation and governmental representatives make decisions about policy orientation and budget allocation for the youth programmes of the Council of Europe, was hard won. Nevertheless, by the time the revolutions of 1989 came about many of us were concerned with how to extend its currency to other regions of Europe because it had proved an effective means of youth representation and participation and had already become a mainstay of the Council of Europe's unusual approach to young people.

Miguel Martinez was the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1992-1996) when the proposal for the 2nd European Youth Centre was first discussed. He was also a youth representative involved in the socialist youth movement and trade union movements at the time when the proposal to create an experimental Youth Centre in Strasbourg was tabled at the Council of Europe in the early 1960s. He was a strong supporter of the original project. Today Miguel Martinez is a member of European Parliament for the Socialist Group.

Today it is relatively easy for young people from different parts of our continent to meet and discuss openly, freely and in consideration of their worth as players contributing constructively to the development of Europe in comparison to back then. But in the early 1990s the division of the continent was a reality. The establishment of the EYCB was supposed to help break down the barriers that existed between young people, and bring

them together in discussion and dialogue, with the aim of developing a common European project under new political and social conditions. Its importance was its very physical presence. Young people from Western Europe could for the first time learn about the realities of Central and Eastern Europe in person and the process of breaking down stereotypes and creating a sense of common belonging to the continent could begin, through the experience of working and living together even if only for a short time. We wanted to show that Europe had become itself again and what better way to do that than through the active involvement of young people.

The work of the first European Youth Centre in Strasbourg as a platform for the representation of young people's needs and concerns in Europe and as a location where they can gain the capacity to do so has always been of paramount importance. The EYCB, as an extension of the Council of Europe's capacity to engage with young people all over the continent, has managed to establish itself as a place where youth organisations and movements can coordinate their action for the constructive development of the continent and must continue to do so..."



The mission of the Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg is as important as ever



CATHERINE LALUMIÈRE

"... The creation of a second European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe was proposed during my term as Secretary General of the Council of Europe. At that time Europe was just beginning to take on board the implications of the historic changes that had taken place in 1989. It was clear to my colleagues and I that the Council of Europe had a crucial role to play in the process of reunifying the once divided continent.

One of the key elements of the mission of the Council of Europe is to create the conditions for the people of Europe to live on a unified, stable and peaceful continent. The 20th century has been a century of war and atrocities. European co-operation and integration were supposed to ensure that the terrible cycle of violence would finally be broken. But in recent years, the European integration project has become too directed by material concerns. Economic imperatives have overshadowed the cultural, spiritual, philosophical and political dimensions.

The Council of Europe has consistently promoted this humanist approach to the European project, putting at the centre of concern the citizen and their sense of being part of a wider European value community that is committed to peace and human rights. We understood the creation of a 2nd European Youth Centre as an important contribution to that mission. Young people prepare the future, but they need to be prepared for their task. The role of the European Youth Centres has always been to develop the capacity of young people to defend and promote the core values of the Council of Europe and to contribute to the peaceful development of their societies, to contribute to the development of the humanist European project. So we were very committed to the creation of a second centre.



But the process was not without its obstacles, some of which were more problematic than others. While most of those involved in it were in principle in favour, the project was expensive and not everyone agreed that the Council of Europe could afford to undertake it from a budgetary perspective. There were also political issues to be resolved, such as which country should be the host, as several new member states demonstrated interest and willingness.

Catherine Lalumière was Secretary General of the Council of Europe from 1989 to 1994, prior to which she was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Secretary of State for European Affairs in the French Government from 1984 to 1986. Since 1994 Catherine Lalumière has been a member of and later Vice President of the European Parliament. Today she is the President of the Europe House in Paris, President of 'Relais Culture Europe' and Vice-President of the European Movement.

Ten years on a lot has changed in Europe. But the mission of the Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg is as important as ever. My hope is that they can contribute to offsetting the obvious and worrying tendency of the European project towards unpopularity among the peoples of Europe. This has again been demonstrated by the recent rejection of the proposed EU constitution. And, while I certainly agree that young people need to find jobs and gain financial independence, their concerns also go beyond the basic and material. They are interested in peace and human rights. I believe young people are well placed to ensure that the humanist project of European co-operation and integration does not flounder. The work of the Centres can help them to get involved, be active and do just that..."



Living proof of our common European project

PÉTER WOOTSCH

"... I had the privilege of being the first Hungarian civil servant to represent the newly independent and democratic Republic of Hungary at the meetings of the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ) at the time when the first debates on spreading the unique Council of Europe approach to non-formal education with young people through the creation of decentralized centres around Europe took place in 1991.

The debate focused on the potential benefits for the integration of young people from former state-socialist countries, and whether a European Youth Centre would be established in a country of Central and Eastern Europe. Why were we so convinced by this project? Because we believed that it would be an opportunity for Hungary to become more actively integrated into the European and international community, because Hungarian youth policy development and the youth work reality had been devastated by the end of state-socialist rule and it needed impetus and support to re-establish itself, and finally because we hoped that the European values we believed in could be more effectively promoted in Hungary through the presence of a European Institution.

Péter Wootsch was the first government official to represent Hungary in the intergovernmental committee forming part of the co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe's youth sector (CDEJ) in 1991, during which time the proposal for the creation of a 2nd European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe was tabled. From 1992 to 1998 Péter Wootsch worked as an advisor to the parliamentary fraction of FIDESZ and as a freelance trainer and advisor in the youth field. Later he became Secretary of State to the first Minister of Youth of the Hungarian Republic and was instrumental in establishing permanent co-operation between the Hungarian authorities and the EYCB. Today, Péter Wootsch is a freelance consultant on youth policy and in the NGO capacity building sector in Hungary and internationally.

Today the EYCB has been with us for 10 years and the Hungarian reality has changed quite considerably – Hungary is now a member of the European Union, is considered a consolidated democracy and is no longer a 'transition' economy. In the youth field, a legislative framework and ministerial responsibilities have been established for the development of youth policy, of which youth work and non-formal education are just two elements. Successive governments, including the one in which I served as state secretary for youth, have progressively institutionalised support for the EYCB. Through the

establishment of the Mobilitás Information Centre and the progressive opening of the EYCB to the wider Hungarian public through its open days and participation in the 'Sziget' Music Festival, many more Hungarian young people are getting to know about European values in a very tangible manner.

The EYCB is living proof of our common European project..."



A European Youth Centre in Budapest – Challenges, Obstacles, innovations



PETER LAURITZEN

Budapest? What comes to mind? My first trip in 1966, for instance. At the time I was a student and with a friend we were on a six-week car tour through the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania: all the visas that were needed, the bureaucracy, the border controls and the constant packing and unpacking of the car for the benefit of suspicious border guards. It was all pretty grotty, to be honest. But we forgot all that when we compared the beautiful landscapes we crossed, the wonderful people we met and the impressive capitals we visited. Budapest, at the time and on a hot summer's day, was a revelation. I felt as if I had arrived in the heart of Europe, unusual during the Cold War. The town had resisted: it was still visibly battered from the 1956 resistance to Soviet tanks and it showed its scars. I was full of ambiguous impressions and thoughts – would I only have this one short impression of the town during our limited stay? Would I ever come back as a tourist or in some other capacity? All I remember is that I tried to hold on to the time to be sure that none of my impressions would get lost, and that all would be treasured.

Had anybody told me that one day I would be able to travel freely in and out of Hungary and that I would even work in Budapest, I would have openly declared that person insane. In 1966 I was 24 years of age and like so many others, I had my certainties: that the division of Germany was, in a way, deserved – the price to pay for the crimes of the Nazi regime and that it would last for ever; that the Soviet occupation of Central and Eastern Europe was, no matter how contested by the populations and no matter how unfair or unjustified, a fact which could not be removed and that borders, fair or unfair, must not be touched; that there was a real balance of power in the world, between East and West (even if there were also the non-aligned countries) and that this power was in possession of a military destruction capability which was able to blow up the planet several times. This 'balance of horror' was accompanied by a period of full employment, material satisfaction and a kind of calm life, in comfort zones like Western and Northern Europe. At the time Spain and Portugal were dictatorships. Soon after the Colonels would take over Greece and the 1968 student uprisings were still to come. How could anybody have imagined today's Europe? I did not come across a single text, which described a reality anywhere near to that of Europe today, even if Sci-Fi literature and truly futuristic policy projections did exist, a dozen a dime.



Working for the Council of Europe from 1972, then an organisation with 17 member states, I witnessed the incredible transformations Europe has gone through over the last 30 years. The Western European dictatorships in Spain and Portugal fell and the Council of Europe was called upon to assist in transition and democratisation. In the youth field of the Council of Europe, this meant we were called upon to develop political education programmes. Beginning as a party political process, it soon came to mean the development of strong social movements. This was a time when the term 'civil society' was not yet in circulation. The Helsinki process started and Solidarnosc stirred up established Communism in Poland. What had looked



unmoveable for so long showed first signs of openness and revolt. At the same time there was fear: if any of this goes too far too quickly, how will it influence the war and peace agenda? The youth field of the Council of Europe, through establishments such as the European Youth Foundation and the European Youth Centre, became a pillar in this ongoing process of gaining space for freedom and democracy, access to Human Rights and exchange between political systems, which remained enemies.

The creation of the European Youth Centre Budapest belongs to this context. Hungary was the first country of Central Europe to join the Council of Europe and showed from the outset a great openness to European co-operation in the areas of education, culture and youth (c.f. the 'U-rope' Seminar of 1991). At the beginning of the 1990s, a broad debate had begun on how to re-orient the work priorities of the youth field in a way that could assist the new states in Central and Eastern Europe to become fully fledged members of the community of Council of Europe member states as quickly as possible. Documents such as the Final Text of the European



Youth Ministers Conference that took place in Lisbon in 1990, the conferences of Utrecht, Berlin and Kiev, all between 1992 and 1994, and the Final Text of the European Youth Ministers Conference in Vienna of 1993 bear witness to this new, pan-European and integration oriented policy in the field of youth. Within the larger Council of Europe context the Final Declaration of the 1st Summit of the Heads of State and Government (Vienna 1993), which endorsed the European Youth Campaign against Racism, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance and the Demosthenes programme (a wide assistance programme aimed at promoting the core values of the Council of Europe) lent impetus to the transition process of the Council of Europe itself, from a Western European organisation to a truly pan-European one.

The project of a '2nd European Youth Centre' was part of these debates from the Lisbon Conference in 1990. The various steps of the process of creating the Centre from an ambitious idea to its present state are described elsewhere in this publication. The result is known. Budapest was chosen as the location and the old *Hotel Ifjúság*, on Zivatar utca in the 2nd district and just opposite the beautiful Hungarian Parliament building with its magic view over the whole inner city area of Budapest, was reconstructed according to the needs of young people, youth experts and other users such as local groups, international organisations and Council of Europe committees and expert groups.

Sent for a three-year assignment as Executive Director, when I arrived at the building which was still to become the European Youth Centre Budapest one night in October 1995, the mini-bus driver who had picked me up at the airport did not want me to leave the bus. He could not imagine that this inaccessible building site was to be my new home. Indeed, this was the place. We had already scheduled activities in the building and were not pleased with the fact that the building work had dragged on. So we forced ourselves into an unfinished building, starting with my arrival, and soon followed by the arrival of a whole training course for youth leaders. Risks were minimised through the active co-operation of the architect and his team and within 10 days the building was fully operational as planned and ready for inauguration on December 15, 1995.

We had finally arrived in Budapest. What was there to do? What was different from our work in Strasbourg? Or, was this not exactly what we were supposed to be – a kind of European spaceship of co-operation, without any preference for one particular culture, country or political system, which had landed in Budapest, but might as well have landed in Bratislava, Vilnius, Krakow or Bucharest? Now that we had the European Youth Centre Budapest, we asked ourselves why on earth the Hungarian authorities would have gone through all the trouble of rebuilding the *Hotel Ifjúság* and of accepting the cost of its maintenance for an indefinite period, if there was no added value to the country. But is a European organisation entitled and able to provide added value to one member country alone? Convincing answer had to be found to these questions and answers could not consist of empty words. An example of co-operation which was also of practical value and which could set standards of co-operation in the areas of learning, cultural life, youth policy development, research and youth and community work had to be developed.

This is what the youth field in the Council of Europe is about and this is what the European Youth Centre Budapest had to be about. The youth field of the Council of Europe, one of the last remaining socio-topes of co-management⁴ in Europe and probably the only example of such within a European or international organisation, had widely discussed these questions, and support for the 'EYCB project' was not unanimous at all times. Only success would convince doubters and provide the necessary majorities for staff and budget decisions to be pushed through for the benefit of the Centre. Among those to be convinced, there were countries who were quite convinced of the concept of a '2nd European Youth Centre', but who did not agree with its being located in Budapest. Why not in any other town one could care to mention? Other countries, NGOs and European civil servants opposed the idea of the establishment of a fixed building with high running costs. What about an itinerant structure, a kind of internationally mobile training and meeting system, a 'decentralised centre', they asked? Was this not much more economic, a modern approach corresponding to networking and the latest new information and communication technologies? But then, did we not already have a European Youth Foundation as a well-functioning decentralised system of youth co-operation? Some felt, that a new centre would mean enlarged administration and that was not what they wanted: they wanted the bulk of the money for activities and projects and this required downsizing the administration.

At times the front of the sceptics was quite strong. What did the defenders of the project have to say? They argued with the importance of visibility and symbolic policy, with the need to create a collective memory of youth and community work co-operation, the value of professional support through in-residence staff, the need for institution building and the multi-functionality of the planned building which would not only host activities, but be a living organism, a small world of the Council of Europe in Budapest. Many of the pro-arguments overlap with the reasoning given for the creation of the North-South Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity in Lisbon, the Centre for Modern Languages in Graz and the Council of Europe offices in new member countries. Young people were an ever-growing group of learners and social players in Europe – one home was not enough for them. They needed Budapest and Strasbourg. It was only logical that the Council of Europe would not operate in a Euro-centric manner and concentrate everything in Strasbourg. It was time to accept to work and live within Central Europe.

⁴ The youth sector of the Council of Europe is today known as the Directorate of Youth and Sport. It is jointly managed and overseen by representatives of governments and non-governmental youth organisations in a system known as co-management.



But there were further confusions. This Centre in Budapest – was it a regional centre? Or was this just an attempt to lower costs, particularly travel costs? This did not meet the approval of the statutory organs⁵ at all – both Budapest and Strasbourg had to be open to participants from all signatory parties to the Cultural Convention; there was no question of allowing 'Eastern' or 'Western' exclusivity. A more complex way of situating the Centre had to be found.

Firstly, the building, so generously given over to the Council of Europe by the Hungarian authorities, had to serve the neighbourhood, the local community and Hungarian young people at large. This was to be achieved by creating a 'Youth Information Centre' on the premises of the EYCB. The project took some years to come to fruition, but today the Mobilitás Information Service is successfully running, housed in the building and working in close co-operation with the overall programme. Secondly, for the Centre to be economically viable, a considerable percentage of its income had to be earned by letting out the Centre for use by NGOs, agencies and international organisations with their seat in Budapest. Similarly, public authorities were encouraged to use the Centre. For a while the idea that the Centre could be used by Hungarian organisations at a preferential rate was even considered, but it was something that did not come about in the end due to Council of Europe financial rules. However, this was a European Centre and it was only logical that the Council of Europe would make wide use of it. Hence the Centre also developed co-operation schemes with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which now regularly organise committee meetings in the EYCB. The same logic applied to other Council of Europe services and European conferences and meetings of political significance.

But all these activities were to stand back when it came to the priority use of the Centre: the running of international study sessions and training courses for young people. This was the '*raison d'être*' of the place and all other activity formats were to be run in parallel. For the management of the EYCB it is, however, frustrating to run a kind of programme mosaic around the ordinary programme of the youth field. It is interesting to see how in the last years the programme has become a unit and how much the various activities fit together, both in terms of content and methodology, regardless of who is the owner of the activity. It was only a question of time until this approach would generate the Human Rights Education Programme and the COMPASS process, today the trade mark of the house and, indeed, of the Directorate of Youth and Sport.

In administrative terms, the running of the Centre was not always a joyride. Of course, a structural problem with all organisations, the centre will not trust the periphery. So I found myself confronted with the unforgettable statement of one high official in the finance department: "We will watch you like an insect in a jam jar". I had not expected otherwise. Much water went under the Chain Bridge before the Centre had appropriate staff resources, integrated financial procedures, full access to the intranet, working computers, control and evaluation mechanisms, the right kind of service companies, operational interpretation equipment and up-to date conference technology, a well developed infrastructure, a pleasant restaurant and, in summer, a nice garden. After the recent refurbishment of the facades and the substantial reconstruction work ordered by the Hungarian authorities, the EYCB looks to me like a real gem: a fantastic work facility very well managed by the present Executive Director and her staff.

⁵ Statutory organs refer to the elements of the co-management system.

Which leads us back to one of the questions at the beginning: What is the added value of the EYCB to the Council of Europe and to the Hungarian authorities, the two bosses of the place? To tell you the truth, I do not think that the interests of both bosses are different from each other. Hungary has, with this Centre, shown altruism and generosity, but it has also shown that a modern nation needs networks and agencies, places and spaces where the European dimension of citizenship can be negotiated, learned and be seen as a living practice. Modern nations need to work on non-formal education, civil society, evidence-based childhood and youth policies, they need to handle intercultural societal developments, dialogue and learning schemes, they need to create access for minorities and to demonstrate and celebrate diversity. This can be done in many ways: the 33-year history of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg has certainly been a very successful one. It is only logical to have given this approach a second incarnation in Budapest.



Peter Lauritzen was the first Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest (from 1995 to 1999) and the Council of Europe civil servant charged with the preparation and implementation of the project to establish a 2nd European Youth Centre. Peter Lauritzen began his career in the Council of Europe youth sector in 1972, when he became the first in-residence member of educational staff (tutor). Today he is Head of the Youth Department at the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

It will have to be seen how the EYCB develops with the times. The Human Rights Education Programme is now a cornerstone, and the ordinary youth programme of the Council of Europe is running practice, as are the self-financed activities. Will there be a regional component, particularly in view of South East Europe? Will the debate on the changing learning habits of young people, the Life Long Learning Process and the items related to a knowledge-based society win broader space? The EYCB has done a lot of work on violence prevention and created large visibility for its 'Living Library' concept – will this be extended? And items such as unemployment and a new concept of work, leisure and family – will they be looked into more? The EYCB has its hands full. But to me it is also like a bicycle, which will fall over when not in motion. I trust in its capacity to face the future and wish it all the best for the next decade.

To come back to my visit to Budapest in 1966 – I never thought that one day I would have a home in this place. I had one, for almost four years. But even having been back in my second hometown Strasbourg for quite some time now and enjoying my life here – to say it in the words of a song by Marlene Dietrich " ...I still have a suitcase in Budapest ".



A window onto a reunited Europe

DANIEL MENSCHAERT

" ... In the early nineties I was the chairperson of the joint governmental and non-governmental Steering Committee, which was responsible for the management of the European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundation on behalf of the government of Belgium. In that function I was a member of the group that was asked to assess the offers of Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic to host the 2nd European Youth Centre.

The discussion at the time was much marked by the momentous changes that had taken place in Europe at the end of the eighties. One of our main concerns was how to ensure the active participation and integration of young people from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which had recently joined the Council of Europe, and we developed a multi-faceted approach, including the proposition of the establishment of a 2nd European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe.

As governmental representatives, several things motivated us to push for a 2nd Centre. In the first place, there was great symbolism in the idea of establishing a physical place in which the development of the active participation of young people and the promotion of Council of Europe core values would have a home in a former state socialist country, and we were convinced of the importance of the youth sector being involved in the redefinition of the social and political development of the continent in the light of the end of the Cold War. But our expectations were also pragmatic. We were aware that the enlargement of the Council of Europe would necessitate the enlargement of Council of Europe programmes for young people. We hoped that a 2nd Centre could be a window onto the reunited Europe, a Europe in which young people would be active carriers of a value-based message. And for that we realised early on

that the political message would not be credible without a commensurate operational commitment, including resources and especially budgets. We were nevertheless faced with serious dilemmas, including whether bricks and mortar were the best investment the Council of Europe could make in young people, and the extent to which a 2nd Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe would put into question the pan-European vocation of the youth policy of the Council of Europe.

Daniel Menschaert was the representative of the government of the French speaking community of Belgium in the inter-governmental committee that forms part of the co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe's youth sector (CDEJ) from the mid 1980s until the late 1990s. In this capacity he was a member of the audit commission that assessed the offers of the cities that had applied to host the 2nd European Youth Centre. He was also the Chairman of the Evaluation Group of the Governing Board assessing the EYCB after its three-year pilot phase in 1998. Today Daniel Menschaert is Delegate General of the French Community of Belgium and of the region of Wallonia to Poland.

The creation of the Centre has had several positive and important results: young people from those regions previously excluded from the international community have gained access to European programmes, and the Centre's existence has increased the capacity of the Council of Europe youth programmes. The Centre functions on a special financial basis, which has also proved an effective approach. If initially it was a necessity for the Centre to earn its keep through the full occupancy option, it has proved an excellent impetus for partnership building with institutions and organisations promoting similar aims and values.

But the pan-European vocation and mission of the EYCB are still faced with many challenges, not least the promotion of a sense of European citizenship and a sense of responsibility for the European project in the countries of the region who have recently joined the European Union, and in which young people are remarkably absent from elections..."

We learned the true meaning of co-operation



PHILIPPE DE ROMÉMONT

"... The project to create a second European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe landed on my desk almost by accident, although, and egotistical as it might sound, I like to believe it was fate. No one else had time to deal with it.

It was quite an involved business: we had to visit the sites offered by the different member states, at that time in the midst of transition to both democracy and the market. This was my first experience of the realities in Central and Eastern Europe, and the occasion on which I discovered the way in which policy and practical or technical implementation interact when one has to make choices such as where to put a European Youth Centre. Together with the rest of the team, we had to develop a method of assessment for the sites, which meant we had to be clear about the educational and practical functions of the new Centre.

But at the time I knew little or nothing about the youth field of the Council of Europe, let alone about the difference between a European Youth Centre and any random youth hostel or conference centre. Through the various field trips and ongoing consultations with the prospective users of the Centre, and in particular with the educational staff of the existing European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, I began to get the picture. Once Hungary and the building at *Zivatar utca* had been chosen, we had to co-operate with the architects appointed to the project by the Hungarian Authorities, the first of whom often had very different ideas and plans for the *Hotel Ifjúság* than we did, probably because they came from something of a different professional tradition than us. Sometimes, as was the case with the wavy design of the wall on the 4th floor of the EYCB, we simply did not see eye to eye. On all accounts it was a real and intensive intercultural experience. And in that sense it was a truly architectural project – one of the most rewarding I have ever had the opportunity to be involved in.



It was all about finding the best compromise between ideals and reality, means and desires. We did not start with *carte blanche*: the building existed, and had a certain form and structure; most things could be changed, but others could not. A good project is enriched by the constraints it encounters, because they force the people involved to question their approach and the assumptions they make. We were forced to make some difficult decisions along the way, including whether or not to cancel the very first experimental activity that took place in the house in November 1995, because the building was not really ready and because of all the risks and problems that that might entail. We went ahead, but we knew we would have to take responsibility for that decision, especially when things went wrong, as was the case when the 4th floor of the house flooded and the training course found itself under water.

Philippe de Romémont was the architect responsible for the European Youth Centre Budapest on behalf of the Council of Europe from 1994 - 2002. This responsibility included the establishment of the programme and the supervision of the conceptualisation and the implementation of the transformation of the *Hotel Ifjúság* into a European Youth Centre. Today he holds the position of Head of Department for Real Estate Studies and Security in the Directorate for Logistics of the Council of Europe. He is presently responsible for the project to build two new Council of Europe buildings in Strasbourg as well as for the planning of the forthcoming refurbishment of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg.

But from each such experience, we learned how to do things better the next time. It was to my great personal satisfaction when we finally had the opportunity to evaluate the project with our Hungarian partners (the Ministry, the various construction firms, et al) and all the colleagues involved. We had achieved something very real, under conditions that were not always very favourable, and we were all able to say that we had learned the true meaning of real intercultural co-operation..."



A significant opportunity for Hungary

GÁBOR FODOR

"...I saw the project to establish a 2nd European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe as a significant opportunity for Hungary. Only a few European institutions have been placed outside Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, and I considered it an opportunity for Hungary to become a strong partner and to gain position in the field of European co-operation. The Centre's establishment was also symbolic for the region of Central and Eastern Europe – it was the very first European institutional presence in the region. As Minister of Education and Culture, I was also interested in the opportunity represented by the mission of the EYCB.

At that time, in the aftermath of the change of regime, the notion of youth activism had been largely discredited. Young people did not really trust youth organisations because they continued to associate them with state control and political infiltration. They also had difficulty finding expression for their interests and concerns as Hungary lacked the diversity of youth organisations most of the older democracies had, due to the monopoly of the Communist youth movement before the change of regime. One of the key targets of the work of the EYCB and of the Council of Europe in the youth field is the development of democratic citizenship amongst young people. The EYCB's approach, method and philosophy represented an opportunity to promote an alternative form of youth activism and organising one, which adapted to the conditions of life in a democratic society, governed by the rule of law.

However, the process of establishing the Centre was not an easy one. At a certain point, it became clear that without significant action, the project would simply not come about. There was a lot of political disagreement surrounding the Centre's establishment and many divergent interests, not all of which could be fulfilled. I, therefore, established a special office for the implementation of the project and created a mandate for a strong and effective person to run that office. The questioned ownership of the building, *Hotel Ifjúság*, was seriously problematic. My ministry had to negotiate the clarification of the question. The establishment of the Centre from the very outset involved a large financial investment on the part of the Hungarian state and this had to be justified to the left, right and centre parties, and in particular to the coalition partners, not all of which supported the project. Some saw it as a potential threat to the position of influence still held by the former Communist youth structures on youth associative life in Hungary.

Gábor Fodor was Minister of Culture and Public Education from 1994 to 1996, which at the time also held responsibility for youth-related issues. As Minister, Gábor Fodor established a special office to finalise the establishment process of the 2nd European Youth Centre in Budapest. Today, Gábor Fodor is a member of the Hungarian Parliament holding the vice-chairmanship of the Committee on Constitutional and Judicial affairs. He is also a member of the committee on Human Rights, Minorities and Religious Affairs.

However, I found some important allies in the government and they helped me to convince the others of the importance of the project for this new phase of Hungary's development. By now the Centre exists and has developed in a very encouraging and successful manner. Nevertheless, until very recently the connection between

the Centre and local youth political life was relatively weak. The EYCB is of course a European structure and has a pan-European mission. Even so, I feel it is important that it becomes as involved as possible in supporting the development of youth civil society activity and political participation amongst young people in Hungary..."

The EYCB and Hungary – A Special Relationship and a Little Hungarian Transition Story



ZITA NÉMETH AND ZSUZSANNA SZELÉNYI

A country's perspectives for development greatly depend on the opportunities its young people have to develop their skills. Accordingly, the youth policy of a country provides insights into the vision of the political elite, and the means that are used to realise those ideals. The Hungarian youth sector experienced significant changes after 1990 but reached stability by the early years of the new century. While the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) is a service of the Council of Europe with a pan-European mission and is independent from the Hungarian state, it also plays an important role in Hungary. The Centre implements the Council of Europe's objectives in the field of youth, providing educational support and guidance for youth activities and serving as a resource centre for European young people and professionals. The EYCB's development over the last decade has advanced in parallel with the evolution of the Hungarian youth sector, offering possibilities to establish constructive co-operation.

The experimental and innovative establishment process of the EYCB was led by the progressive vision of a new Europe on the part of both the decision-makers in the Council of Europe and its Hungarian partners. This period could be characterised as demonstrating all the features of the transition process in Europe. The generous gesture of the Hungarian Government to host the EYCB in Budapest⁶ demonstrated the fundamental changes that had taken place in Hungarian politics and the Hungarian youth sector in the early 1990s. Instead of a centralised and paternalistic approach, the government aimed to inspire and support young people to self-organisation in line with their own ideas and to become active citizens in a democratic society. The establishment of a European Youth Centre in Hungary was, thus, a symbolic act, demonstrating this change of paradigm and proffering legitimacy on the development of Hungary's new concept of youth policy. From 1990 to 1995 several important steps were taken to establish modern youth services in Hungary. *Mobilitás* was established as the Hungarian National Agency for the European Commission's Youth for Europe Programme and the authorities started consultations with emergent and new youth organisations. The support of the Hungarian government also made it possible for the EYCB to be opened on 15 December 1995.

The EYCB started its activities in early 1996 with dozens of study sessions and training courses. It soon became a popular meeting place among European youth organisations and a variety of other bodies of the Council of Europe and other international organisations that chose it as the venue for their programmes. The management of the Centre aimed to create a characteristic institutional profile, focusing on the education for democratic citizenship in the spirit of human rights.

In addition, however, to fulfil the expectations of the host country it was clear that the EYCB had to build up valuable contacts with the players of the Hungarian youth sector and enable Hungarian young people to get involved in the European civil network. For institutional co-operation, the EYCB needed the Hungarian government's assistance and partnership, as the pan-European mandate of the Council of Europe does not allow the EYCB to finance exclusively Hungarian projects⁷.

⁶ The Hungarian Government provides the EYCB's premises free of charge and contributes to its maintenance on annual basis.

⁷ The EYCB, as part of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, is subject to policy and financial decisions of co-managed decision-making bodies and is entitled to run multinational youth activities.



At the same time it was not possible for the Hungarian authorities to invest additional large amounts into another international project. Meaningful co-operation for both parties had to be planned carefully. Already in 1994 an idea had emerged that a public youth information office should be opened on the premises of the EYCB, and therefore an information space was formed in the 'Nordic room'⁸ on the ground floor of the building. However, after the long process of getting the Centre open, there were neither the human nor financial resources for this idea to be realised at that point in time.

In the early years the EYCB sought contacts with the Hungarian non-governmental sector. Several newly formed youth associations found their way to the Centre and ad-hoc advisory activities emerged, with the Centre's staff helping in the development of the organisational strategy of NGOs, in finding them international partners and financial resources, and, as a result, enabling them to participate in the international youth field. Successful joint programmes were established with some training organisations. At the same time, Hungarian youth researchers got in touch with the Council of Europe's youth research network through the EYCB.



In 1998 the Hungarian Government founded a Ministry of Youth and Sports (ISM), which anticipated systematic and ambitious youth policy development. These changes also gave impetus to the co-operation between the EYCB and the new Ministry. Negotiations started on different subjects and joint programmes were developed. In 1999 the Ministry and the EYCB organised a month of action with the title 'Europe – Youth – Human Rights', celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe. Training activities were organised, especially for Hungarian trainers and teachers, introducing the EYCB's methodological materials in non-formal education. The Human Rights Forum, the Open Day and the Street Festival organised at *Mechwart liget* created the possibility for the wider Budapest public, and specifically

for dozens of NGOs, to experience directly the Council of Europe's objectives and to participate in joint projects. Negotiations on the establishment of the planned information centre also accelerated. The *Mobilitás* Youth Service, the Hungarian service provider in youth worker training and co-ordinator of international youth programmes, seemed to be the most appropriate partner with which the concept of a joint, public European information centre could be realised.

After exciting discussions between the EYCB, the Ministry and *Mobilitás* on the function of the new joint project, the *Mobilitás* Information Service (MIS)⁹ was opened on 1st March 2000. MIS became a triangle of co-operation between the Hungarian Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Council of Europe and Eurodesk¹⁰ (a youth information network

⁸ The 'Nordic room' was a multi-functional space on the ground floor of the EYCB. It was named 'Nordic room' as it was furnished with financial support provided by the governments of Sweden, Norway and Finland.

⁹ The founding document of MIS is the memorandum of understanding, which was signed on 12th October 1999 by the Council of Europe's Youth Directorate and the Hungarian Ministry of Youth and Sports.

¹⁰ For further information concerning Eurodesk please consult: www.eurodesk.org.

supported by the European Union). Young people, professionals in the youth field, researchers and international participants of the Centre's programmes can now benefit from the mutual flow of information as a result of this three-way co-operation. MIS, as the seat of the Hungarian network of Eurodesk, coordinates the work of more than 50 local partners working with the Eurodesk database of information on relevant youth programmes. With its regular information days, MIS provides not only information but also counselling for youth programme organisers. Based on their network, the staff of MIS can easily assist international participants of the Centre's programmes to find local partners in different specific areas. With its two-fold activity, MIS opens a door from Hungary to Europe and from Europe to Hungary.

In addition, a joint library of the EYCB and MIS was established with the objective of collecting up-to-date training tools and methodological materials on non-formal education. Youth research documents, selected publications of the European Institutions and periodicals on international youth work are also available there. There is also a specific collection on Human Rights Education. As the library is only available on the premises, MIS developed a monthly newsletter, *Ugródeszka*¹¹, which began in 2000, to inform local partners about methodological and pedagogical resources and to provide them with current international news, book reviews and useful Internet tools. With its conceptual interpretations of various social phenomena, *Ugródeszka* serves as a continuous distance-learning tool for youth workers. *Ugródeszka* is an example that clearly demonstrates the content and nature of the three-party co-operation being supported by the European Commission through the Eurodesk network and the Youth Programme, using the Council of Europe's educational tools as resources and reaching local users in Hungary. Another example for the link function of MIS is its publishing work. Following the publication of two Council of Europe training manuals in 1999 in Hungarian, MIS initiated the Hungarian publication of the training kit (T-kit) series produced in the framework of the Partnership Programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

To make the results of innovative youth work more available to a wider public, MIS and the EYCB jointly organised an Open Day in September 2002, which included examples of training, roundtable discussions and exhibitions. MIS continued with this open space practice, providing a meeting place for Hungarian youth experts and visitors as well as for the participants of the EYCB's programmes. Several target-orientated programmes were organised in co-operation with NGOs to take full advantage of this openness and attract different groups of young people. Discussion forums and exhibitions¹² examined vital social questions in Europe. In bilateral co-operation several international seminars were also organised by MIS.

A new phase in the co-operation between the Hungarian partners and the EYCB started in 2003 when Hungary joined the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme (HRE). Since 2000 the EYCB has co-ordinated the HRE

¹¹ *Ugródeszka* means 'stepping stone'. Thematic subjects of *Ugródeszka* since 2000 have included: Mobile services in youth work; COMPASS - the manual on Human Rights Education in Hungarian; Eurodesk - a European youth information network; the European Youth Portal; Pedagogical approaches in combating right-wing extremism, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism; co-operation between NGOs and local governments in the field of youth crime prevention; the potential of street work with young people based on the model of football fan projects; global education. *Ugródeszka* has a circulation of 5500, and is distributed throughout Hungary.

¹² *Peace and conflict management*: Poster exhibition; *A common view – public service ads*: Postcard exhibition; *Photo exhibition on the Roma Minority in Romania*; *Berlin against violence and war*: Photo exhibition; *Agora*, Paintings; *My tale*: drawings of refugee children; *The World of Painting Eyes*: Photo exhibition; *What's the point?*: Photo exhibition about disabled people.



Programme and developed the HRE resource centre, which is based in the MIS-EYCB joint library. Hungary became one of the first countries in Europe to translate and publish COMPASS into its national language, for which MIS managed the translation-editing process. With the EYCB's professional assistance, Mobilitás developed a complex training offer around COMPASS including the training of trainers, regional courses in HRE and the use of COMPASS, information events and the preparation of the book in electronic format. A conference jointly organised by the EYCB, the Ministry of Education and the Hungarian Institute for Public Education in Spring 2005 brought citizenship education and Human Rights Education into the focus of experts in the formal education system. As such, the EYCB acted as a catalyst for the development of a new co-operation between Mobilitás and the Ministry of Education with the intention of bringing the non-formal educational approach closer to the public education system through teacher training courses and methodological publications.

The specific nature of the EYCB's activity and its international character does not make it easy for Hungarian people to get direct experience of its work. The public accessibility of MIS greatly facilitates interested Hungarian young people and youth professionals to get in touch with the EYCB and European level youth programmes. The EYCB, however, makes every effort to develop more widespread visibility. Since August 2003, the EYCB has participated in the *Sziget Festival*¹³ for a week every year, together with dozens of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations, to show its work at the *Civil Sziget*. The Centre presents its work through educational activities and specifically the Living Library programme¹⁴. The regular appearance at the Sziget Festival since 2003 has provided an innovative tool for the EYCB to promote non-formal educational methods developed within the framework of the Council of Europe youth sector with the aim of encouraging young people to be active.

2005 brought new possibilities for professional youth work to enter the spotlight in Hungary, and the EYCB had new opportunities to expand its co-operation with its Hungarian partners. The Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities carried out large-scale refurbishment on the EYCB building by which the complete façade was transformed. The project to re-look the Centre was only made possible through the generous financial support of the Ministry and its active involvement in the implementation. In September 2005, the Ministry hosted the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth and the International Youth Event connected to it in Budapest. A colourful Street Festival and an EYCB Open Day, which also celebrated the Centre's tenth anniversary and five years of the MIS, followed these political programmes. All these events were organised and carried out through the highly concentrated and intensive co-operation between the staff of the Ministry, the MIS, the EYCB and the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. These events represented something of a highlight for the youth field in Europe and in Hungary. They successfully demonstrated the value-orientated approach to youth and used many innovative examples and activities to show how modern European youth work can face up to the challenges of today's societies. Another great result was the worthwhile intercultural experience that the participants of this teamwork went through.

¹³ The *Sziget Festival* is an annual summer music festival held in Budapest that welcomes hundreds of thousands of young people from all over Europe. *Civil Sziget* is part of the Festival. For more information please consult www.sziget.hu.

¹⁴ For more information concerning the Living Library, please consult Abergel, Rothmund, Titley and Wootsch (eds), "Don't judge a book by its cover! The Living Library Organiser's Guide", (ISBN - 92 - 871 - 5776 - 9), Council of Europe Publishing, 2005.



All these events demonstrate that the co-operation between the EYCB and the Hungarian youth field has become more effective and diversified over the years. The quality of that co-operation also reflects the far-reaching development of the youth field in Hungary in the last decade. The once occasional co-operation with the EYCB has been replaced by a continuum of joint activities specifically with Mobilitás and through the EYCB's Human Rights Education Youth Programme. Today MIS plays an indispensable role in supporting Hungarian youth work, and, as a result, it has become natural that professionals in the Hungarian youth field are acquainted with European trends in this profession.

This promising co-operation between the EYCB and the Hungarian youth field can be still further expanded, in particular by strengthening the joint work with MIS. The training programme and the youth service system currently being developed to disseminate COMPASS create new possibilities for strengthening the culture of non-formal education among young people in Hungary. On this basis systematic, long-term co-operation can be expected. Mobilitás's recent reorganisation, whereby the Training Unit of the institution moved to the premises of the EYCB, indicates new orientations for the co-operation. In the next few years quality standards should be improved and players in the Hungarian youth field should be empowered to participate in ever-larger numbers in international professional co-operation activities. The joint information and resource centre can be developed to make it more user-friendly, and with new on-line tools it should also develop better outreach for new users.

Zita Németh has been the Manager of the Mobilitás Information Service since 2000. Between 1998 and 2000 Zita Németh worked at the Youth Centre in the city of Győr in Hungary. She was a secondary school teacher between 1991 and 1998. From 1995 to 2000 she also co-ordinated the work of the Association for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) in Hungary.

The EYCB story in Hungary is a success story. Successive Hungarian governments since 1990 and the EYCB have shown strong commitment to the co-operation and have made efforts to exploit the possibilities within the framework of the institutional limits described above. We believe that the different elements of the co-operation have significantly contributed to the development of youth work in Hungary on the one hand, and on the other, they have enriched the services of the EYCB. Many of our goals and ideas are still under construction. This unique co-operation between Hungary and the Council of Europe should serve as a good example and be exploited in the best way possible for the benefit of European young people.

Zsuzsanna Szélényi has been Deputy Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest since 1996. From 1994 to 1996, she was the Commissioner for the implementation of the EYCB project appointed by the Hungarian Ministry for Culture and Education. From 1990 to 1994, Zsuzsanna Szélényi was a Hungarian Member of the Hungarian Parliament and a member of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.



➤ One fax machine and an old typewriter

➤ EVA SZABÓ

"... In 1994 I was working as an administrative assistant in the sales department of the Csillebérc Youth and Leisure Centre in the Buda Hills, the alternative venue for the Youth Directorate's activities in Budapest during the reconstruction of the *Hotel Ifjúság*, where the first activities of the European Youth Centre Budapest took place. However, because I spoke English and only few of the other staff did, whenever anyone had a question or a problem, they came to me. Step by step, I ended up helping out with the preparation of the activities of the European Youth Centre Budapest.

At the beginning, no one really explained to those of us working at Csillebérc what these activities were about or who these foreign participants were. We were not even very aware of the Council of Europe or what it was. The activities needed some special materials, such as flip charts, which we had simply never seen and had no idea where to get. It was a challenge to respond to all these needs and to get a better idea of what the activities were about. Little by little, I got used to the regular contact with the tutors and with the administration and finance people who dealt with the travel reimbursements and I became increasingly involved in assisting in those activities, which I enjoyed very much. When the Centre finally opened in December 1995 the staff of Csillebérc were invited to attend the ceremony. I got to see the new home of the activities. I felt that I really wanted to continue working as a staff member and in February 1996 it became a reality.

At that time there were many important issues which were not widely or often discussed in Hungary – minorities, the environment, gender issues, disability, and so on. The special needs of certain groups opened our eyes to those issues – the Jewish students needed kosher food, and we discovered that there was only one restaurant in Budapest who could provide it. Similarly, when organisations working with disabled young people were in the house, we had to face the problem of how difficult it was at that time in Budapest to find a restaurant with facilities for the disabled.

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Eva Szabó has been the principal administrative assistant at the European Youth Centre Budapest since February 1996 and is the Centre's longest serving staff member. Prior to working at the Centre, she was the programme officer and later sales manager in the Sales Department of the Csillebérc Youth and Leisure Centre in Budapest when the first activities of the 2nd European Youth Centre were held there. Eva Szabó trained as a primary school teacher.

My new job at the EYCB turned out to be really interesting, despite all the administrative tasks and procedures it involved. I still enjoy most the direct contact with the international and national partners who organise activities in the Centre, and helping participants use the Centre to its potential. I find it great when the Centre

organises a big event and we can get more involved in the hands-on work. It is especially nice when we finally get to meet the real people behind the visa applications and the travel arrangements. I also like working with colleagues from other countries and getting to know about the work of the different organisations that hold activities in the Centre.

So many things have changed since we began in 1996 and had just one fax machine and an old typewriter. Things have also become much faster with new technology, and this makes our life easier. Having worked here from the very beginning and having been involved in helping the many new staff members who joined over the years to settle in, it is really nice to see how the European Youth Centre Budapest has successfully responded to the reality of the region. I feel part of this valuable process..."

Stepping into the EYCB felt like a pioneering act



LUCIJA POPOVSKA

"... At the beginning of the 1990s, I was the international secretary of the Macedonian Youth Council, at the time one of the youth structures set up at 'republic' level in what was then still Yugoslavia. As a result, I participated in the General Assembly meetings of CENYC, the then European coordinating structure for National Youth Councils, a structure which was very progressive in trying to include and integrate youth representatives from the so called 'new Europe'. And through this, I became involved in the European Youth Campaign against Racism, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance and specifically in the European Youth Week in 1995.

It was natural, therefore, that when the Macedonian Youth Council received the call for participation for 'Training for Trainers' in 1995, which was the first activity to be held at the EYCB, that we were interested in sending someone to the course. It was a relatively new course among those offered by the then Youth Directorate and was considered difficult to be accepted to. CENYC encouraged me to apply. I had already been to activities at the substitute venue for the 2nd Centre, the Csillebérc Youth and Leisure Centre, which hosted activities of the Youth Directorate during the reconstruction of the *Hotel Ifjúság*. So when I was finally accepted to participate in the course and I arrived in Budapest and found myself at the 'real' European Youth Centre Budapest, it felt like a great triumph for youth work in Europe.



Stepping into the house felt like a pioneering act – it still smelt of fresh paint, the floors were in the process of being carpeted and the house was teeming with workmen up to their eyes in light fittings, installations, parquet and glue. The course began amid persistent drilling and hammering. The course had a really unique group dynamic. Some participants had been at activities at the EYC in Strasbourg and were amazed at the quality of the facilities, so there were a lot of comparisons. Everything was brand new, but we missed the 'lived-in' feeling of a place where others had been before and there were some basic materials and equipment for our work, which we did not have; sometimes the electricity even went off.

At the beginning we did not cohabit very well with the workers. They could not really understand what we were doing and we desperately wanted them to be finished with what they were doing. But as the course progressed, a kind of mutual respect developed: the workers became curious about the kind of building they were putting together and what would happen in it after it was finished, and we began to see that without their efforts we would not be able to use the house to its full potential.

Since then, I have been involved as a trainer in countless activities at the EYCB, including some specifically for young people from former Yugoslavia and the Balkan region. The Centre's establishment was the first real step by any European institution over the line into the 'unknown' of Central and South Eastern Europe. And it has played a very significant role in providing a safe and neutral space for young people from conflict areas to meet, get to know each other and learn to trust their immediate neighbours.

The house is a living example of the values of the Council of Europe in the youth field – participation, inclusion, respect for difference and human rights. Young people feel that when they are in the house. For some, it is a life-changing experience to go there – one, which determines their attitude in social communication and interaction for years to come and empowers them to do things that they would otherwise not do. It was certainly the case for me..."

Lucija Popovska was a participant in the Youth Directorate's November 1995 Training for Trainers Training Course, which was the very first activity to take place in the European Youth Centre Budapest. At the time she was working for the National Youth Council of Macedonia. Since then she has been active as a trainer in the youth field, conducting many training activities at the EYCB. Today Lucija Popovska is Programme Director at the Europe and Central Asia Office of Habitat for Humanity International, an international non-governmental organisation whose main goal is to eliminate poverty housing worldwide.



➤ A positive measure to promote youth participation

➤ DANIEL TARSCHYS

"... My election campaign to become Secretary General of the Council of Europe was significantly marked by the return to democracy of Central and Eastern Europe and the need to enlarge the Council of Europe. I was convinced of the Council of Europe's important role in providing support for the building of democratic institutions, in reforming the legal and judicial systems and in helping the populations of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to develop a democratic political culture. We were determined to use the opportunity presented by the historic political changes of the early 1990s to promote the values of the Council of Europe, especially the rule of law and respect for human rights.



The youth sector of the Council of Europe has always been a strong instrument for the promotion of those values. But it soon became clear that the capacity of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg to cater for the growing number of young people eligible to participate in the activities of the Council of Europe's youth programme was limited. The establishment of a 2nd European Youth Centre would serve both purposes. I was very impressed by the offer made by the Hungarian authorities and their determination in the implementation of the project. They demonstrated strong and steadfast commitment to the values of the Council of Europe. The project was also an opportunity to establish significant co-operation with the government of a country in transition and to test the capacity of both parties to work together in a new political context.

When I received the key to the building on the occasion of the inauguration of the Centre, I hoped that young people in Europe would understand this initiative as a positive measure to support their participation and their mobility. I am convinced that the opportunity to meet peers from different countries and from different political, social and cultural backgrounds is an important impetus for active citizenship and for demonstrating civic responsibility.

Over the years, and even from a distance, it is obvious that the EYCB has taken up this important challenge and has made a very significant contribution, along with the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, to the development of youth participation in civil society. The success of the EYCB should be an example to institutions such as the European Union, which also actively promotes mobility and European integration. The future of European integration depends on a generation of young people capable to lead it forward in full respect of the most basic human principles, especially Human Rights..."

Daniel Tarschys was Secretary General of the Council of Europe from 1994 to 1999. During his term the Council of Europe and the Hungarian authorities concluded the seat agreement that regulated the establishment of the European Youth Centre Budapest. He presided over the opening of the Centre in December 2005, accepting the key to the building from Árpád Göncz, then President of the Republic of Hungary, in a symbolic ceremony. Today he lectures at the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Stockholm, in Sweden.

The Human Heart is Never Completely Born¹⁵



HENDRIK OTTEN

Admittedly, this is an awkward title for a contribution marking the ten-year existence of the European Youth Centre in Budapest, dealing with its specific function and role in the field of non-formal education and training. But in my opinion, this wise old Celtic saying conveys something that today, plainly, needs to be defended ever more forcefully: that European non-formal education, as understood and practised at the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) for the last ten years, influences, changes and marks individuals in manifold ways. Not only does it convey cognitive knowledge, but it supports the evolution of feelings, attitudes, designs for life and visions towards a holistic human image, even if not always intentionally.

This was one of the particular reasons, which at various stages of my professional life, made me consciously opt for co-operation with the EYCB. Another reason, admittedly, was the very liberal visa regime of the Hungarian authorities in the early 1990s. I chose to organise a number of training courses of the Institute for Research in Applied Communication (IKAB) at the EYCB, including participants from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as co-operation projects in the field of training between the Commission of the European Union and the Council of Europe; these included the pilot training course against social exclusion 'Navigare necesse est', and the European Commission's long-term training courses for staff of national agencies and Ministries responsible for the youth programme in the then candidate countries which have now joined the European Union (with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania).

Let us recall the *Zeitgeist*. When the European Youth Centre Budapest began its work, everything in Europe had changed and little remained of the world as previously known: state systems and power politics had broken up, borders had become permeable and the significance of hitherto established tendencies came into question. A pan-European civil society ethos had started to develop. The Council of Europe, together with the two European Youth Centres, has shown great merits in developing this discourse over the last ten years. The European Union became more attractive, as many expected it would bring a rapid improvement in living conditions in the countries formerly behind the Iron Curtain. There was not yet the widespread feeling of a need to develop civil society, nor that young people are significant players in the building process. At that point in time, there was little demand for socially orientated policy models, and in the area of youth policy the European Union did not yet play a major role in relation to these countries.

This state of radical change represented an important opportunity for the Council of Europe, having a more important role and standing than the European Union in the fields of culture and youth. Given the wisdom of hindsight, choosing Budapest as the site for a second European Youth Centre, with a focus on education and training in the perspective of a wider Europe, and combining it with practical support for the development of democratic youth work, has proven to be anticipative and highly appropriate. Today the EYCB is a place of encounter, discussion and debate, and a specific space of learning for people from diverse backgrounds, differing widely in their histories, democratic traditions and interpretations of values and standards, also those of human rights. This makes it particularly challenging to fulfil educational objectives without them becoming another form of ideological indoctrination, but rather by following a certain code of values.

¹⁵ Ancient Celtic saying



In anticipation of the conclusion of this brief article: we need more, not fewer, spaces for learning such as the European Youth Centre Budapest because a multicultural European civil society does not self-generate. Rather, its emergence requires the development and implementation of special and targeted education and training concepts. European youth work is the priority field for developing new educational and training theories and the education and training practices that are implied by them. European youth work can only be effective if conducted *in situ* with people. Indeed, I am convinced that competence for intercultural dialogue can become the hallmark of a European civil society only through direct communication and interaction.

Jürgen Habermas, in his book *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, provides further evidence for this line of reasoning:

"Discourse ethics correlates ethical and moral questions with different forms of argumentation, namely, with discourses of self-clarification and discourses of normative justification (and application), respectively. But it does not thereby reduce morality to equal treatment; rather, it takes account of both the aspects of justice and that of solidarity. A discursive agreement depends simultaneously on the non-substitutable 'yes' or 'no' responses of each individual and on overcoming the egocentric perspective, something that all participants are constrained to do by an argumentative practice designed to produce agreement of an epistemic kind. If the pragmatic features of discourse make possible an insightful process of opinion – and will-formation that guarantees both of these conditions, then the rationally motivated 'yes' or 'no' responses can take the interests of each individual into consideration without breaking the prior social bond that joins all those who are oriented toward reaching understanding in a transsubjective attitude¹⁶."

This is the particular challenge faced by the Council of Europe: to support this "will formation" by offering suitable learning opportunities. Implied in this is the need to impart the fundamental value of human dignity through education, as a concept of what is right and just. A word of explanation: in the course of their political socialisation, people also learn to develop certain values and priorities for their own lives. These values do not have to be shared by others. Nevertheless they are of significance for individual and social relations as they help to shape the mainly unconscious presuppositions that control attitudes, patterns of perception and behaviour. A European civil society needs a minimum consensus on the values that should govern relations between individuals and communities. Those values cannot be dependent on individual arbitrary choices: rather they must be binding for all those who live in a given society. In the context of a multicultural European civil society, reaching a consensus on Human Rights is probably the only expedient, or the only possible minimum, as it implies fundamental acceptance of the democratically legitimised protection of individual and social rights and duties. Consequently, people should be educated to observe Human Rights precisely in the context of intercultural education and training, which directly corresponds to the conception of the EYCB.

Such a training mission involves considerable potential for conflict. The interpretations of what respect for Human Rights means in concrete and everyday terms vary considerably. My view, which I readily accept is not universally shared, is

¹⁶ *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, Habermas, 5th edition, Frankfurt, 2003, pp. 34 - 35.

that respect for Human Rights in Europe must be interpreted with reference to Western cultural and historical development. Interpretations of Human Rights in other culture-specific frameworks and under developmental conditions that differ politically, economically, historically and temporally from those observable in the West, such as those that today apply in some Asian or Islamic societies, cannot be operative principles for a European civil society.

Debates on this point, the universality of Human Rights, need an educational and political 'protective space', allowing for the linking of moral postulates with political contents. There cannot be pluralism of values without potential conflicts of values. The form of dealing with these potential conflicts of values is a significant indicator of how far political practice meets democratic standards. If the end-result of conflict resolution is to assert that respect for and realisation of human dignity is not only an individual duty but also that it expresses a European conception of justice and is thus actionable, then multicultural societies will be viable.

For this to come about, the coherence of cognition, morality, political consciousness and political action must be systematically reflected and integrated into intercultural education and training. This requires face-to-face, not virtual, relationships. It also requires a setting for learning that provides practical educational competencies and proper infra-structural conditions in equal measures. On that score, too, the EYCB ranks high as a learning centre of the Council of Europe.

One further consideration in this regard is that non-formal education is currently receiving particular attention and recognition in debates at a European level. At the same time, however, there is an ongoing tendency to restrict requisite work conditions. Agencies delivering non-formal education and training must get by on constantly dwindling budgets, and the human resources needed to ensure the quality of the educational delivery are rarely prioritised. This affects youth organisations and associations too. At a time like this it is particularly important for non-formal education to show its mettle, exploit its possibilities to the full, and offer alternatives. This is something that the EYCB has not shied away from.

The demands on the services to be delivered are growing: European citizens need to be grown, forms of democratic participation must be further developed, and European civil society has to ensure peaceful co-existence under the conditions of multiculturalism. All this cannot be achieved solely through e-learning, nor does concentration on a virtual Internet world guarantee the development of articulate young people. Unfortunately, communicative impoverishment is no longer an isolated phenomenon.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The above statements are not intended to demonise modern technologies and learning media. They are indeed useful as part of an overall and structured learning process, involving other learning dimensions. As is so often the case, here too the question is a matter of proper combinations, in which specific non-formal learning should predominate. It involves social learning



processes which, by actively confronting individuals with their own life history and consulting the social environment, allow for the assimilation and elaboration of knowledge and experience, creative of a political consciousness, something that expresses itself in an individual's political proficiency. Democracy has to be learned in order to be lived, and real places of learning are needed for that.

The EYCB is one place amongst others which provides both the practical and reflective scope for the following learning results to be possible:

- Assimilation of knowledge
- Discovering that there are different ways of perceiving the same given reality
- Learning and exercising an *argumentative / confrontational* approach to the resultant differing opinions, on the basis of substantiated personal judgment
- Discovering the interest-relatedness of opinions in concrete situations and learning to tolerate ambiguity
- Emergence of orientations of importance to the individual for his or her active involvement in a European civil society.



Since 1978, Hendrik Otten (Dr. disc. pol and social scientist) has been Director of the Institute for Research in Applied Communication (IKAB) in Bonn, Germany, and of its educational department. He was instrumental in the development of the then European Communities Youth Programmes, having been a member of the board of directors of the European Commission's Youth Offices. At various stages of his professional career he has lectured in political education and social pedagogy and has acted as a consultant to European institutions on issues of quality in the provision of non-formal education and training and on the evaluation of intercultural educational programmes. He has regularly organised activities at the European Youth Centre Budapest.

Competencies for conflict management and consensus building, which are tangible expressions of a capacity for intercultural dialogue, cannot be self-taught. They can be acquired only in actual confrontation with others, and used with rigour. Otherwise there is little likelihood of lasting transfer into everyday life, and of democracy being liveable in the heart as well as in the mind. To achieve this, the EYCB and many other agencies will continue to be necessary now and into the future.



Concrete support for the development of European civil society



KARIN SCHEELE

"... I first came into contact with the EYCB when the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY), for whom I worked at the time as a political officer, held a study session in Budapest in 1996. At that time I was also the representative of IUSY in the co-managed statutory bodies of the Youth Directorate, where I participated alongside the representatives of governments and other non-governmental organisations in the decision making processes that establish the programme of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

I was very impressed with the excellent working conditions and with the level of technical, financial and logistical support available for our seminar, which allowed us to concentrate wholeheartedly on our political discussions concerning the future work of the organisation. That study session was one of the first activities I organised for IUSY, and I learned a lot about how to prepare a quality seminar, from an educational and from a technical perspective, by co-operating with the staff of the Centre. I did not have to waste a lot of time worrying about the technical things that usually take a lot of time at international seminars – travel reimbursements, making sure materials are available for the programme, and so on. I also became aware of the many non-formal educational resources available to youth organisations who want to conduct educational activities and who need advice about appropriate methods of work.

That experience was also important for me because I became familiar with some new practices, which are very important for working with groups of young people. I learned about how to give and take feedback, to evaluate progress in the educational process on a daily basis and to deal effectively with the dynamics of a group composed of people with differing needs, interests and backgrounds, despite the fact that they come from the same political movement.

The opportunity to hold such activities in a house such as the EYCB is extremely valuable for the sustainability and development of an international youth organisation. Most of them simply do not have the financial and human resources to run educational or political seminars at the level of quality afforded by the grant of a study session, which includes the hosting of the a one-week seminar, cover of travel costs and the provision of educational support. Through such support, international youth organisations can develop the quality of the content dimension of their work and their capacity to address important issues affecting young people and the wider society. In this way, structures such as the EYCB provide very concrete support for the development of European civil society. This support also helps to develop networks of multipliers, through which many more young people can benefit.

From 1996 to 1998, Karin Scheele was political officer at the International Union of Socialist Youth, responsible for relations with the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe. During this period she served a term as chair of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation. She has also been a Member of European Parliament, Socialist Group, since 1998. She has been International Officer of the Social Democratic Party of Austria responsible for relations with the Socialist International and for development issues.

For me, personally, the opportunity to participate in the co-management structures of the Youth Directorate and to organise several political-educational activities at the EYCB was a chance to practise politics. It has prepared me in some very practical ways for becoming a member of European Parliament..."



A kind of intergenerational dialogue

LORD RUSSELL-JOHNSTON

" ... Over the years I have had the opportunity to follow the work of both European Youth Centres in a variety of capacities, but primarily because I was the Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Culture and Education which also treats issues pertaining to young people. The already long record of international youth work at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg has demonstrated that, given the opportunity, young people can be a constructive force in the development of the European ideal.

With the generous offer of the Hungarian government to host the 2nd European Youth Centre, we saw an opportunity to extend the reach of that work to young people who had, until then, not had such opportunity. In the early days, the Centre in Budapest fulfilled some very important functions: it was a privileged meeting place for young people from East and West, until then largely isolated from and ignorant of each other, and it was a neutral meeting place for young people from a variety of conflict regions, but most especially from South East Europe. However, it was also a place where 'senior' meetings could take place and indeed, I recall taking part in several meetings where young people and youth representatives dialogued with members of the Parliamentary Assembly: a kind of intergenerational dialogue, you might say.

Ten years on, the Centre is still a place for dialogue and where political concepts and ideas can be further developed. But one of the keys to its effectiveness is that young people from all backgrounds and regions, without distinction, have the opportunity

Lord Russell-Johnston has been a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe since 1987. His present duties in this capacity include being Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly Sub-Committee on Youth and Sport. Lord Russell-Johnston has been the President of the Parliamentary Assembly from 1999 to 2002. He is a member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, representing the Liberal Democrat Party.

to get involved and to go there to participate. That requires conditions conducive to mobility, something that has become much more difficult recently. Governments should be encouraged to take seriously the constructive potential that can be unlocked in young people if they have the opportunity to develop their

capacities as articulate and active citizens and to make mobility to the kinds of activities that take place at the EYCB easier for young people.

This for me is one of the key challenges facing both European Youth Centres, if they are to live up to their key function in disseminating the values of the Council of Europe to more young people..."



Freedom is hard won



TAMÁS DEUTSCH

"... Despite the fact that the process of establishing a 2nd European Youth Centre began long before I became Minister for Youth, I consistently took a keen interest in the project's evolution. Even if youth issues could not be the top priority of the government, other political players were concerned that Budapest would be the place where the 2nd Centre would be established. There was, of course, a symbolic importance to the fact that the Centre should be established in a country in transition and in our capital.

The choice of Budapest gave credence to the achievements of Hungary in the transition process to date. But it was also important as a step towards full European integration, something that requires more than just diplomatic gestures. The Centre is a very real investment in Europe on the part of Hungary, with significant financial resources having been spent to acquire the building for the purpose of hosting the Centre and for its continuing maintenance, including the 2005's renovation of the façade. Naturally, it was always considered important that the presence of this European institution in Budapest should be of added value for the Hungarian youth sector and, to the extent possible, to the wider public of young people in Hungary. In this regard, the Centre has made significant efforts, with its Directors always being open for co-operation and having a welcoming attitude towards local partners.



Nevertheless, until 1999 the Centre did not have significant contact with the Hungarian youth scene. In its first years of functioning, it had fully established itself and had become a centre of excellent work. But it remained something of an 'expatriate' institution. When I was Minister it was one of my priorities to find ways to build bridges between the international work of the Centre and the local and national youth scenes in Hungary. One of the most important steps we took in this direction was the creation of the Mobilitás Information Service on the premises of the EYCB. This initiative was important for two reasons: in the first place, the information centre brings under one roof a variety of services for young people provided by the national authorities, the European Union and the Council of Europe. In the second place, it demonstrates that the Hungarian youth sector has also experienced a 'change of regime', even if it came later than 1989. Altogether the establishment of the Mobilitás Information Service demonstrates that Hungary has attained a certain maturity in its European relations, as well as in the implementation of a youth policy that has been informed by European standards.

Tamás Deutsch was Minister of Youth and Sports from 1999 to 2002. The Ministry was established in 1998 and he became the first ever minister of youth in Hungary. In 1999 the Ministry organised a month of action in co-operation with the EYCB on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe, including open events (human rights week, training days and a street festival) for the Hungarian public. The Mobilitás Information Service was created during his period as Minister. Today, Tamás Deutsch is the Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary.

Beyond this, the EYCB's programme has always been open to Hungarian youth professionals and the voluntary staff of Hungarian NGOs and over the years many have received training and gained experience in new approaches to working with young people. This has also reinforced the Hungarian youth sector significantly. The focus of the work of the EYCB on Human Rights and Human Rights Education is of particular importance. Sometimes it is easy to forget that we are fortunate to benefit from our fundamental rights and freedoms and the programme of the EYCB serves to remind us that these freedoms are hard won and need to be constantly taken care of. For me one of the key challenges facing those working with young people is the development of tolerance and intercultural dialogue among people from different backgrounds, places, nations, and religions. Providing young people with the opportunity to have positive experiences of difference is a promising approach to supporting them in their process of identity formation..."



➤ A Programme at the Centre at the Heart of Europe – The European Youth Centre Budapest and Human Rights Education

---➤ **RUI GOMES**

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IS MORE THAN YOU THINK...

Under this pretentious and provocative title the experts of a seminar on the curriculum for an advanced course in Human Rights Education addressed one of the most important misunderstandings in the European youth work scene: that Human Rights Education is essentially information on and, at best, awareness about Human Rights and how they are secured under international law. Human Rights Education is, indeed, a lot more than that.

In the same way as prophets are not appreciated in their home village, Human Rights Education (HRE) faces challenges even within the organisation, which in Europe, has Human Rights as its main concern and *raison d'être*, the Council of Europe. This is not so much due to any form of internal resistance to Human Rights Education as such, but rather to the perception that Human Rights Education is so obviously part of the organisation's mandate that it would almost be redundant to make it explicit. The experience of the Directorate of Youth and Sport demonstrates that this inherent implicitness has clear risks and limits, the most important of which is that the advocacy and promotion of Human Rights (and of the Council of Europe itself) and Human Rights Education as such become confused. Human Rights Education is more than just 'anything' about human rights, even if it is and must remain fundamentally connected with Human Rights. It is more than just information, communication, awareness raising or propaganda about Human Rights, even if the practice that is made of such is also responsible for such confusions.

... AND SO IS INTERCULTURAL LEARNING!

Seen from the perspective of ten years ago, the most interesting thing is not the above statement itself, but the simple fact that the meeting actually took place and was convened by the European Youth Centre. Back in 1995, this would have been quite a surprising occurrence in the Centre's programme. The general educational

approach of the Directorate of Youth and Sport at that time was centred on one concept: Intercultural Learning. Indeed, Intercultural Learning sums up the educational, social and methodological approach and guidelines that have in general presided over the development of European youth programmes.

From group and individual youth exchanges to training programmes and seminars, Intercultural Learning has been the common denominator to affirm the importance of knowing how to take into account the diversity of practices and cultures in Europe as a pre-condition for working together and for learning to work together. This approach was mainstreamed and made popular in many

youth activities, sometimes to the point of caricature: Intercultural Learning was reduced to a game, an interactive activity, where people expect to learn about cultures. The popularisation of 'intercultural evenings' as the common feature of European Youth Centre activities has angered more than one advocate of



Intercultural Learning, even if it proves nothing else than the need for a unifying purpose and concept for the work done by youth workers and organisations at European level.

Personally, I learned the most about Intercultural Learning when I had to explain it to a group of teachers who were looking for answers to questions and support for the problems they faced in their school realities. I felt its limits when I was challenged to apply it to the reality of daily educational youth work: *"what should guide my actions: the rules and instructions I receive, my own idea of what is right and wrong, the interests of the students – now or in the long-term...? And can you please tell me how I apply empathy and tolerance of ambiguity in a class room where the number of drop-outs is twice the national average?"*

We, and especially I myself, understood that we had a lot to learn from each other, as we struggled between ideals and practice, between long-term visions and short-term needs. It was not only the fact that the (educational) system was not ready for Intercultural Learning: it was the fact that we felt that we were part of the system and that we knew that our answers were insufficient, disconnected from reality and, ultimately, inadequate. Yet everyone agreed about how important and essential intercultural learning was and is. Empathy helps us to understand the other's point of view and to be in community with them. Tolerance of ambiguity reminds us that we must not, nor pretend to, do that without being aware of the risk of replacing the other, be they pupil, trainee, participant or colleague. What I learned is that we always bring into play our stereotypes and prejudices, because it is easier, more comfortable, and simpler for us. And, of course, if it is easier for us, it is also easier for others. There are no angels and demons here.



In the meantime, the question that keeps coming back is, whatever happened to Intercultural Learning? Has it been mainstreamed and absorbed into the prevailing non-formal education practice? Has it triumphed to the point that we no longer need to talk about it? Has it become obsolete and overruled by globalisation, by concerns for security, and integration and conformity with the common sense of some undefined majority? Why is it that after 30 years of remarkable work on Intercultural Learning, many of us feel that we are being overtaken by the urgency of Intercultural Dialogue, even if this often appears poorly defined and potentially misleading: who is having a dialogue with whom, and what makes it intercultural?

Not long ago a French philosopher shocked many by being quoted as stating that anti-Racism will be the Communism of the twenty-first century. Shocking as it might be, this statement should remind us that the most important challenge that we face is that of distinguishing between equality and difference, between overcoming the 'us' and 'them' divide or not; of understanding that the 'them' is all those not like us because they do not dress like us, eat like us, pray like us, think like us, live like us and participate like us. In the globalised economy and the era of mass information and communication technologies, we seem to be increasingly bound to value only that which we understand according to our standards and canons. This brings us back to the need and the urgency for a deepened approach and practice of Intercultural Learning. And while many things have changed since the European



Youth Centre Budapest was inaugurated in 1995, the need for Intercultural Learning has not. Or, rather, it is now ever more needed and it has become increasingly difficult. This is where Human Rights Education can be helpful.

Human Rights education brings to Intercultural Learning what is only implicit in the concept: the prevalence of universal Human Rights over cultural specificities, the affirmation of Human Rights – equality in human dignity – over and in conjunction with the need to respect and value cultural difference or diversity. It is the recognition of the 'human' as a universal moral and normative framework that makes Intercultural Learning particularly strong as a concept and which makes it so necessary. Therefore the Human Rights Education Youth Programme¹⁷ acknowledges the necessary articulation between Human Rights Education and Intercultural Learning¹⁸. Without a strong human rights dimension, Intercultural Learning risks being limited in its social and political purpose and, in educational terms, it risks pandering to relativist approaches and attitudes. It is similarly true of anti-Racism and anti-Discrimination education. Intercultural Learning needs to be argued on the legal and moral framework of Human Rights and not only on ideological grounds. Human Rights Education also provides the grounds for transformative education based on the development of critical thinking and the questioning of existing practices and modes of thought. Cultures do not violate Human Rights, but neither are they above them. The undisputed universality of Human Rights and the concept of human dignity do not object to the importance of recognising diversity, especially different cultural constellations or '*pluriverses*' that can be mobilised to amplify and enrich the notion of human dignity' itself.¹⁹

THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRACTICE BEHIND THE CONCEPTS (OR SHOULD IT BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND?)

The last conference of Ministers responsible for Youth of the Council of Europe held in Budapest in October 2005 confirmed the prominent role of Human Rights Education – including the pioneering role of the training activities based on COMPASS, the manual on Human Rights Education with young people – in promoting a culture of peace and addressing situations of violence involving young people.²⁰

The upcoming "All Different – All Equal" campaign has Human Rights as the central element of its triple dimension (diversity, human rights and participation)²¹. If the experiences accumulated by the Directorate of Youth and Sport and those of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme are to be taken into account, this should

¹⁷ For further information about this programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport and the European Youth Centre Budapest please refer to the Human Rights Education portal: www.coe.int/hre.

¹⁸ Human Rights Education has been defined, for the purpose of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme as "...educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity, in conjunction with other programmes such as those promoting Intercultural Learning, participation and empowerment of minorities".

¹⁹ Borges Reis, Inês; Cunha, Teresa and Ramos, Fernando, in "Contrabando de almas e outros mundos - Formação europeia em "Educação para os Direitos Humanos", Escola Superior de Educação de Coimbra, 2005, Unpublished.

²⁰ Paragraph 11 of the Final Declaration made at the 7th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth held in Budapest, Hungary, on 23 and 24 September 2005, states that the Council of Europe should be encouraged "To make Human Rights Education an essential and permanent component of the programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, including the dimension of violence prevention, and to enable it to act as a knowledge and resource centre on Human Rights Education for young people, based on its experience and practice of non-formal education/learning". The full text of the declaration can be found on the following website: www.coe.int.

²¹ The Council of Europe is organising a campaign on the themes of Diversity, Human Rights and Participation in 2006. The campaign will be based upon the slogan "All Different - All Equal", successfully used by the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Intolerance, run by the Council of Europe in 1995. For more information please check the following website: www.coe.int/youth.



mean that Human Rights and Human Rights Education are the centre of the campaign and also at the centre of the pedagogical approaches of the campaign. The awareness and promotion of cultural diversity cannot, in fact, be pursued without a conscious and explicit acceptance of a common framework of universal and indivisible Human Rights ("all human rights for all"). The campaign, combined with the launching of the United Nations' World Programme of Human Rights Education, presents therefore an important opportunity for campaigning for human rights and Human Rights Education in Europe, especially when taking into account the experiences of the youth work field, mostly based on non-formal education approaches and partners. And hopefully it can also contribute to the harmonisation of approaches and the practice of Human Rights Education *with* Intercultural Learning (or vice-versa).

These opportunities, however, should not blind the practitioners and organisations promoting Human Rights Education to the sustainability and depth of Human Rights Education in youth work: a field of non-formal education that is often tolerated rather than promoted, appreciated rather than understood and praised rather than actually recognised. These contradictions are nothing else than a reflection of the still recent history of explicit Human Rights Education in youth work and, especially, of its dependency (in most Member States) on the initiative and support of the Council of Europe and other international organisations.

In both Human Rights Education and Intercultural Learning the challenge stems from two inner tensions within youth work practice: to remain sufficiently open, simple, accessible and attractive to youth work practice (and specifically to young people) and, at the same time, to become credible, accepted, recognised and valued by the scientific community for whom good practice is not enough, if not backed up by a capacity to reflect and communicate results according to established canons. In this context, it is important for activists, trainers and NGO leaders concerned with non-formal Human Rights Education, to reflect about the ways to (1) contribute to the activities of the forthcoming campaign, especially at national level, and (2) to share approaches and develop common strategies to further develop and promote the recognition of Human Rights Education activities in the medium and long-term.



Experience seems to confirm the supremacy of practice over reflection, but this is far from being accepted and acknowledged. Inability to place actions for Human Rights Education (and / or Intercultural Learning) with young people in a broader social and educational scientific framework results in an inferiority complex on the part of involved practitioners (e.g. youth workers) in relation to other professionals concerned (e.g. educationalists, experts, researchers) or an unfinished project, something that is initiated, even started, but which is not driven or accepted in a fully consequent manner. Co-operation in the triangle youth work – youth research – youth policy is not only less harmonious than envisaged, it also seems to fail to produce communication and working methods that render the co-operation effective and efficient.



THE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION YOUTH PROGRAMME

The Council of Europe's mission is rooted in the European Convention on Human Rights and the other legal instruments that have been established to set standards for the promotion and safeguard of Human Rights, such as the European Social Charter and the Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Degrading Treatment²². Setting legal and verifiable standards for Human Rights is indeed where the Council of Europe's reputation is most established and most credible, of which the best known and most respected instrument is the European Court of Human Rights.

This concern for the legal dimension of Human Rights and for the effectiveness of the rights guaranteed by the legal instruments has also left its imprint on the practice and understanding of Human Rights Education. The Council of Europe, especially through its General Directorate of Human Rights, has focussed on promoting general awareness of Human Rights and on the training of specific professional groups, such as lawyers, police officers and judges. Human Rights Education has also been mostly present and confined to the formal education sector, within teacher training programmes or within projects such as that on Education for Democratic Citizenship.

There are many definitions of Human Rights Education and similarly many practices and schools of thought. Present in all of them is the aspect of awareness of one's own rights and of the rights of other human beings (learning *about* human rights). Some will emphasise concrete knowledge of the mechanisms for claiming one's rights or to prevent their violation (learning *for* human rights), while others will place emphasis on a process of personal empowerment and emancipation (learning *through* and learning in human rights).

The transformative nature of Human Rights Education is essential to its practice (as education for meaningful action) and the process is as important as the content, for only this way will people understand their experiences and take control of their lives. Ultimately, Human Rights Education should be conducive to empowerment that translates into meaningful action within young people's contexts. This is very much in line with the idea that citizenship should be the expression of knowledge at the service of society as recognised by Paulo Freire, among others.²³

This practice of Human Rights Education can be explained by the fact that the promotion of Human Rights Education at large is essentially the responsibility of national and regional authorities, especially in as far as formal education is concerned, or alternatively of specialised NGOs. But it is also explained by the fact that promoting awareness of and respect for human rights has, for a long time, been considered an implicit objective within other programmes, a horizontal dimension that should inform and inspire all the Council of Europe's activities. Not surprisingly, the Committee of Ministers' only recommendation on promoting Human Rights Education concerns teaching and learning about human rights in schools, practically ignoring non-formal education²⁴ and the specific role of youth work therein.

²² For more information concerning these instruments please see the following website: www.coe.int.

²³ Different authors and practitioners will add or emphasise specific areas of education according to their context. The universality of human rights should not ignore the need to contextualise the practice and purpose of Human Rights Education. The contents of Human Rights Education should imply, for example, a strong pacifist and non-violent approach as well as non-sexist, anti-racist, ecological and socially responsible contents.

²⁴ Recommendation No R (85) 7 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Within the youth policy and programmes of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, the practice of Human Rights Education has been similarly implicit. Human Rights and Human Rights Education have often served as the background of values and as a political framework for a multitude of activities and projects that are organised by the European Youth Centres or supported by the European Youth Foundation. They may range from a training course to a summer camp, from a youth exchange to the establishment of a youth network. It can equally be argued that a substantial part of the youth work practice of non-governmental organisations and educators across Europe is fundamentally Human Rights Education work, in other words, activities whose ultimate goal or value is the promotion of human dignity. Most of this is done with special youth groups (students, groups of vulnerable young people, young women, etc.), using special educational or political approaches, or focusing on a particular issue that is of closer interest to the group's membership or to the specific community (education, environment, peace, democracy, etc.). But in the same way that Human Rights Education goes beyond legal education and specific training of professional target groups, it should be sufficiently explicit and addressed so as not to be an invisible value in youth programmes. This implicitness is also curiously found in the Youth Programme of the European Commission: while the objectives and educational values have many references to practices of Human Rights Education, there is little reference to Human Rights Education as such, and some national agencies seem to have adopted a very narrow view of Human Rights Education projects, excluding them or discouraging them from a conscious treatment of the matter.



The widespread feeling of a 'loss' of common values which characterises part of Europe's youth scene (both in the perceptions of young people themselves and in the perceptions that society has of young people), together with the enlargement of the Council of Europe (both in geopolitical and in cultural and educational terms) has contributed to some changes in this attitude and to an affirmation of Human Rights Education as a practice of youth work with its own merit and value, deserving to be called by its proper and full name. The Human Rights Education Youth Programme established by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport in 2000 has contributed to redressing the above-described situation and to bringing Human Rights into the mainstream of youth work. It is a humble – but conscious – attempt to make Human Rights Education accessible and attractive to those youth workers, youth leaders, trainers and young people who work with other young people, mostly in non-formal education. Not only (or not primarily) to those who are already experienced, active and motivated, it aspires to bring human rights and Human Rights Education closer to the reality of young people. This is far from being an easy task. The first results of the programme so far reveal and confirm some trends that should be taken into account when reviewing the status and role of Human Rights Education today.

It should be noted that many youth workers (still) associate Human Rights Education with specialised work, requiring insider knowledge of international and constitutional law. The perception that a general – even if somewhat vague –



awareness of human rights is sufficient also prevails. Similarly, the perception that Human Rights are essentially civil, political and legal rights, contributes to the 'relative satisfaction' and apathy of the general population and of young people. Recent years have ushered in the tendency to accept violations to social and economic Human Rights as simply 'inevitable'. A particular emphasis of Human Rights Education is, therefore, the indivisibility of Human Rights: finding ways to connect the global and the local dimensions of human rights. It should also be noted that the 'European' reality also embraces very different specific situations across countries. It is obvious that there are some countries, societies and social groups that feel and are exposed to more open and visible forms of human rights violations and that have taken action against such. Generalisations are, thus, particularly difficult and risky: there is a constant need to take into account specific needs and realities from the national level down to the local level.


It should be obvious that the difference between an implicit and explicit approach to Human Rights Education is much more than a matter of semantics. Even if it is true that "we all pursue the same values in youth work anyway" (a statement commonly made by some youth workers and trainers), we know that only an explicit approach allows young people to understand and be part (if not in control) of the learning process in which they are involved. This is obviously even more important in the case of Human Rights because an awareness of one's own rights is a vital part of education for citizenship.

A PROGRAMME FOR ANOTHER TEN YEARS...

It is now obvious that the Human Rights Education Youth Programme cannot be limited to a priority action lasting for three years. It must, rather, become a permanent concern for the Council of Europe and be fully integrated into and articulated within the organisation's activities, allowing it to focus on its core mission with regards to Human Rights as defined by the organisation's last Summit of Heads of State and Government.

There are many reasons why Human Rights Education has quickly taken root in the European Youth Centre Budapest, notwithstanding it being the youngest outpost of the organisation. Some are related to its location and to the need to focus on essentials – something probably felt more strongly at the periphery than at the centre. But a great deal of responsibility for it lies in the individual commitment,

perseverance, motivation and conviction of the people that made it happen. Human Rights Education is difficult without these. Last but not least, a great belief in young people is essential. A European Youth Centre would be meaningless without them.



Rui Gomes is head of the training and programme unit of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and the co-ordinator of the Human Rights Education Programme. He has worked at the EYCB since March 2000. Prior to this, Rui Gomes worked as a freelance trainer, as a tutor at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, as Secretary General of a youth organisation and as a teacher.

As long as these prevail, there is ample room for the Directorate of Youth and Sport and, therefore, for the European Youth Centre Budapest, to keep mobilising, innovating and developing the practice of Human Rights Education with young people for at least another ten years. The need is certainly undisputed.

Safe from prejudice and discrimination



ALEXANDRA RAYKOVA

"...I had already been involved in the work of the Youth Directorate for some time through the follow-up to the European Youth Campaign against Racism, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance when I first had the opportunity to go to an activity at the European Youth Centre Budapest. That was the very first study session of what was to become the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) and it took place in 1996. That activity is particularly memorable for me, as it was there that we decided on the very basics of our organisation – our name, the main objectives and the initial working structure. Nearly ten years later, FERYP is an established partner of several institutions, including the Council of Europe, in the field of Roma advocacy and development.

I remember being very impressed with the building and with the facilities of the EYCB. Since then I have been a member of the training team of several training courses that have taken place at the EYCB and have had the opportunity to really test its working facilities, including several editions of the Long Term Training Course Participation and Citizenship for Minority Youth Leaders, the Long Term Training Course South East Europe and a study session of Young Women for Minorities. The Centre's service has adapted really well to the diversity of groups it receives. To feel that they are safe from prejudice and discrimination when they meet is of paramount importance for young people from minority backgrounds, especially as it may be their first chance to travel abroad or their first opportunity to meet young people from other countries and to discuss common problems and points of controversy for their communities. The space and physical working conditions are open and flexible. It should not be underestimated how much that can contribute to the empowerment of young people from minority backgrounds. It should also be noted that because of its location, the EYCB is more accessible for young Roma. Many young Roma cannot afford to lay out the cost of a plane ticket and many Roma live in the region, so travelling to Hungary is easier for them.



More recently, in 2004, I was also involved in one very important co-operation activity at the EYCB, organized by FERYP and the Migration and Roma Department at the Council of Europe on the theme of 'Young Roma and Alternatives to Migration'. The success of this activity benefited greatly from the professional expertise acquired by the Centre in the field of Human Rights Education and minority youth advocacy, as well as the open and respectful attitude of the staff and the political support we received. I am happy that FERYP is now working towards the organisation of a study session on a human rights related theme at the EYCB. The work we have done so far has been the work of consolidating our movement and organisation. Now we have the capacity to work on fundamental issues and human rights are of the first importance. There is nowhere better to do that than at the EYCB, a house where Human Rights are lived and experienced and not just spoken about..."

Alexandra Raykova is a founding member of both the Forum of European Roma Young People and the European Roma and Travellers Forum. A former participant of one of the first training courses organised by the Youth Directorate for minority youth leaders and Roma young people, and a trainer in minority youth work, she has worked extensively in recent years with both the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport on youth issues and the Roma Division on issues of Roma policies and advocacy. She is currently studying cultural anthropology at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia.





A whole new perspective on the issue of Muslim youth identities




SUNDUSS AL-HASSANI

"...The first time I came to the European Youth Centre Budapest, I thought it was simply a youth hostel. That was about five years ago, for the study session of my organisation, the Forum of Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO). But as the study session progressed, it became obvious to me that the EYCB was a lot more than a hotel.

Over time and through my ongoing involvement in youth sector of the Council of Europe, I realised the extent to which the EYCB could be a place of support and how young people and their organisations could find space for development within its walls. That study session was probably the first time I really felt that an institution took young people and their concerns seriously. One of the things we particularly appreciate about the EYCB is that we are given the freedom to come together and discuss our own issues in our own time and in our own way in a place which is dedicated to us and to serving youth organisations and which can offer us examples of good practice. Needless to say, the fact that we can have our own dedicated prayer room, and practise our religious rites in the Centre without being looked at sideways, is extremely important to us and the young people we represent. Interestingly, coming from communities that are often traditional, many of our members feel more at ease discussing issues that would be controversial in their home contexts within the context of activities such as those we hold at the EYCB. They don't feel the same kind of inhibitions as they would if they were at home. That means our work can be very thought provoking.

At the EYCB we also have access to excellent facilities, the kind that are really needed for good non-formal educational practice and for interaction between young people from many different countries. Not least, the fact that if we needed it we could access Arabic, French or other language interpretation, and continue to work with non-formal educational methods because of the mobile equipment, facilitates our work significantly. Coming into contact with the professional expertise that the EYCB has in the field of Human Rights Education has also been very important for the development of FEMYSO's programme. With the support of the resources and materials developed by the EYCB, and particularly COMPASS, we set up a human rights department and developed a whole new perspective on the issue of Muslim youth identities and situations in Europe.



Nevertheless, I think it would be very good if the EYCB would broaden the scope of its expertise beyond the field of Human Rights Education and focus on some other important issues, such as youth participation, in the future. But more than anything, the EYCB is a really nice place, in a really great city, and provides excellent working conditions for youth activities. It holds a lot of good memories for me and for lots of other young people around Europe..."

Sunduss Al-Hassani is a member of the Executive Committee of the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO). She represents FEMYSO in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. Since 1996 she has regularly participated in educational activities at the European Youth Centre Budapest. Sunduss Al-Hassani is a doctoral student at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

Support was out there!




ALEKSANDRA VIDANOVIC

"... In 1999 and early 2000 I was working in what is known as an 'Open Club' in then Yugoslavia as a youth worker and trainer. The club was working with youth leadership and empowerment, young people with disabilities and other issues such as cross-border dialogue. However, that period, in particular in Serbia, was very difficult for any non-governmental structure. The dictatorship saw any form of independent organisation as a threat to its survival. It was just after the bombing of Belgrade in reaction to the situation in Kosovo and Serbia was practically hermetically sealed. Most young people and NGO activists had little contact with the outside world and even less opportunity to leave the country to participate in an international activity. I was invited to attend a seminar entitled 'Human Rights as a Tool for Stability' organised by the EYCB in co-operation with the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Later, as I became more involved in the Human Rights Education programme, I also had the opportunity to take part in the Long Term Training Course Participation and Citizenship.

These opportunities, to take part in European level activities and to meet young people from other parts of Europe, helped me feel empowered to continue to work for Human Rights and for democracy at home, despite the difficulties that that entailed, and to feel that, if I needed it, there was support out there. For many of us from the Balkan region, the EYCB was a privileged meeting place. It was close to home, but far enough away for once warring neighbours to meet in safety. It was also easier for us to travel to Budapest because the Hungarian authorities did not have a strict visa regime, unlike most other European countries. It was a place where we felt welcome and where we felt our voice was heard. This is particularly important for young people, such as those living in the Balkans at the time, who did not have a wide range of participation opportunities. Finally, we got a different kind of non-formal education at the EYCB. It was of very high quality and was conducted with the greatest professionalism.

After the Exit 2000 Campaign, a sustained nationwide youth and citizen political protest, in which many organisations including my own participated, ousted Milosevic, I found myself in the unusual position of being considered a 'youth expert', and was offered a position in the new government with the task of setting up a European standard youth service. As a result I became involved in different activities connected to youth policy issues in South East Europe, such as the Stability Pact working table on Youth and the Assistance Programme to new member states of the Youth Directorate. My ongoing contact with the EYCB and its staff helped me to navigate my way through totally new territory.

Since then, the Human Rights Education programme of the EYCB has made significant progress in South East Europe. COMPASS has been translated into practically all the languages of the region, and several national and regional training courses in Human Rights Education have been organised with the participation of youth workers and other education professionals from the countries of the former Yugoslavia. These activities are of the utmost importance, in particular for the formal educational systems of this region. They demonstrate that Human Rights are not just some distant utopia but something relevant to everyday life. In that sense Human Rights really have become a tool for stability..."



Aleksandra Vidanovic was a participant at one of the first Human Rights Education related activities run by the EYCB in co-operation with the Hungarian government. As a youth activist she was involved in the Exit 2000 Campaign, which successfully ousted the Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia. Later, she was involved in the setting up of the governmental youth service. In this capacity she was involved in several activities of the Youth Directorate related to South East Europe. Today she works as a freelance trainer in the fields of NGO capacity building and Human Rights Education.



Birthday greetings from Europe and beyond

LAJOS AÁRY-TAMÁS

Commissioner for Educational Rights, Hungary

Developing the participation of young people in public life and raising their awareness of the importance of human rights is one of the most essential tasks as far as the preservation of democracy is concerned. Ever since its establishment the European Youth Centre Budapest has always been very active in maintaining these goals through launching innovative programmes and successful initiatives. I am convinced that the EYCB's commitment is an example worth following for all institutions working for the protection of human rights. Therefore, I hope that our co-operation on the advancement of democratic values among young people will only strengthen in the future.

ANTHONY E. AZZOPARDI D. PHIL.

Senior Lecturer/Coordinator, Youth Studies Programme, University of Malta

"Whether visiting, working or residing at EYCB, it is an **E**xperience
You
Cannot
But
cherish for a long, long time".



BERNARD BORG

**Member of Cabin Crew
Maltese, living in the United Arab Emirates**

Through my participation in the European Citizenship training course held in autumn 2001 at the EYCB, I not only learnt a lot about European institutions, youth work and other young people in various parts of Europe, but I made life-long friends in Italy, Malta and Sweden, and this in turn led to several projects involving young people from Malta, these countries and other regions. I feel that that Training Course at the EYCB set the ball rolling for many, many other projects and also for a great deal of personal development. Thank you!

CECILIA GRIMALDI

**Freelance trainer
Italian, living in France**

The first time I came to the EYCB I arrived late at night and I got a room with the peaceful view over the floodlit Parliament and the river ... I immediately had the feeling of a kind of magic. That image stayed in my mind and it always comes back to me when I think of the EYCB as it reflects the idea of lights and peace. Young people are the lights for a future of peace and whenever they stay at EYCB they recharge their batteries and they leave as more powerful lights. It is a place for them, by them, through them, with them. JOC study session in 2002: four languages and eight interpreters to help participants to communicate; after the third day we were all able to communicate without them! EYCB buon compleanno e ancora 100 di questi giorni!!!! (Happy Birthday EYCB and 100 more of these days!!!!)



CHRISTOFFER GRONSTAD

President of the Norwegian Youth Council (LNU)

My first experience with the European Youth Centre in Budapest was maybe the worst meeting I ever participated in. The conflict level was extremely high, and a lot was at risk for the big project of organizing the big Council of Europe youth campaign for 2006 and 2007. But youth organisations are used to overcoming barriers, and around 1 a.m. we were finally ready to face and convince the governmental representatives the next day. Half a year later I returned to the youth centre and got the chance to experience it from its very best side. The centre is one of the reasons for loving Budapest – and an important arena for the development of future European Youth Policy! Congratulations on the 10th anniversary. I hope those coming after me will learn as much as I have done within these four (and newly renovated) walls!

DANIEL ZIELINSKI

Honorary President of the Plenary Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe

The European Youth Centre Budapest is an irreplaceable opportunity for intercultural encounters in Europe. For many of us, participation in a seminar was also an occasion for fruitful intergenerational encounters and exchanges. It is necessary that this symbolic place continue to function into the future, exactly because it is in Budapest and acts as a link between Eastern and Western Europe. It is a symbol of the desire for reconciliation of this once divided continent that existed 10 years ago. Long life to the Centre in Budapest, which remains an important meeting place for all our international NGOs.

DR. ELIE ABOUAOUN

Iraq Programme Coordinator – Ockenden International (International Non Governmental Organisation for displaced persons and refugees), Lebanese, living in Jordan

I think that the achievements of the EYCB in the last 10 years went beyond Europe. One of the main tools of this outreach dimension is COMPASS. From being just a device for using in Europe, COMPASS has since been translated into several languages, including Arabic. This effort, impossible without the support of the EYCB, has allowed the use of this manual in Human Rights Education projects in the Arab world. Given the political and socio-cultural context of these countries, it is very important that local CSO now have at their disposal a valuable tool that can have an impact on youngsters in Yemen, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, etc. Best wishes for this 10th anniversary and looking forward to greeting you on the 25th anniversary.

IVAN STERJOSKI

Member of YMCA in the FYR of Macedonia Lawyer, Macedonia

There are places that you will never forget, there are people you will never forget and there is knowledge that will help you to help the others. Young people from this region have a place where they can get these. Thank you, EYCB, for that, and Happy Anniversary!

ELVIRA FUNDUKOVA

Programme Assistant at UNDP/CIDP, Crimea, Ukraine

The training conducted by EYCB was the first such one in my life. It helped me to understand how the role of young people is important, made me more self-confident, and helped me realise that I can improve myself and the people around me and make them more open to new challenges. I would like to congratulate you on the 10th Anniversary and wish you much prosperity in the future. I thank all the people who have worked for a long time at EYCB and devoted their life to the development of young people.



HANNELORE LANZRATH

Referent for European Youth Policy at the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany

Time and again over the past decade, the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) has also given German participants the opportunity to enjoy intercultural meetings and experiences and take part in international training courses for youth leaders. The Seventh Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth was so successfully supported by the Budapest Youth Centre that more than 10,000 young people there were able to address the issue of 'youth policy responses to violence', which I, too, consider highly important. The achievements of the Youth Centre, especially in promoting tolerance and combating racism, as well as its assistance in building democratic youth structures in Southern and Eastern Europe, serve to secure peace and democracy in Europe in the long term and, from the German perspective, deserve particular recognition.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FROM EUROPE AND BEYOND

JEYHUN OSMANLI

**Secretary General of the NAYORA (National Youth Council of Azerbaijan)
Member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe**

My best definition towards EYCB will be as one of two doors you go through to enter well-designed, programmed European Youth Integration. And of course it is not a secret that the second door is the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg. My personal experience with EYCB started with attending the meetings of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. I acted as a member this Council from 2002 to 2005 and I can tell you with great pleasure that I have only good memories relating to the EYCB. I can recommend EYCB to all young people of Europe who, if they feel they are indeed active young European people, then they should visit the EYCB at least once. EYCB is positively different, giving all possible assistance to young people, such as accommodation, library, technical facilities, kind and personal, professional youth workers, perfect management of the local and international youth events and of course great food, which is very necessary for every energetic young person ☺. EYCB's location in the most upper part of the Budapest gave us the invaluable opportunity of enjoying the beauty of the fascination Budapest directly from the balconies of the centre. So, the best motto in my opinion, which fits the EYCB can be "Enjoy and Learn". As Secretary General of the NAYORA (National Youth Council of Azerbaijan), I CAN SURELY SAY THAT EYCB left valuable experience and memories not only on my mind, but also on hundreds of young people from Azerbaijan.

JO CLAEYS

Freelance trainer, Belgian living in Portugal

1997, EYCB, study session ... as a turning point in my personal and professional life, I still look back, smiling at that wonderful and quite special experience. After having quit youth work almost 2 years previously, this study session shaped the beginning of what I do today and the person I became. I fell in love with the people, the building, its atmosphere, and its values! Since then, I have returned several times to EYCB. As a participant, trainer and team member, I've always felt very welcome and supported by all involved. It's great to know that EYCB can now blow out 10 candles! Congratulations.

KAROL CIOMA

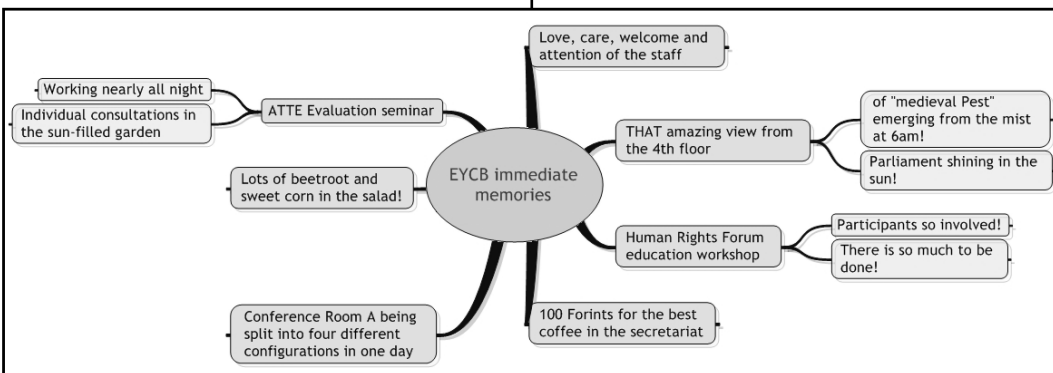
Training Project Manager for Circom Regional, the European Association of Regional Television, United Kingdom

Many congratulations on your 10th anniversary from Circom Regional. We, as an organisation, are extremely happy to have found an oasis for our training activities in Central Europe. You do a great job and here's looking forward to the next ten years – with bigger beds, though.

MARK TAYLOR

Freelance trainer and writer, British living in Belgium

Happy Birthday! I always remember feeling happy when receiving an invitation to go to the EYCB, ever since my first visit in 1996. It is a magical place in many ways. So I thought I'd just to send you a snap shot of my 'immediate memories' (at least the ones it might be possible to print!):



DR. TAMÁS VÁSÁRHELYI
Hungarian Natural History Museum
Deputy Director General

The European Museum Forum (EMF) works under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Its mission is to monitor and improve innovation in museums. After Italian meetings, a workshop was organised at the EYCB, for the first time for Central and Eastern European Museums, together with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the Hungarian Natural History Museum. Western and Eastern participants felt and wrote in the evaluation that the atmosphere and the facilities (including 'the view on the city') were excellent here. As organisers, we have to stress the flexibility and hospitality of the staff of EYCB, which was inevitable for the success of this pilot meeting. This attitude should be shared by the frontline staff of our museums too, to build our success stories. We hope to work here again, in the next decade of the Centre.



GEORGE OPPONG APPIAGYEI AMPONG
DCI-Ghana, Executive Secretary

My participation as an African in the Training Trainers in Human Rights Education with Young People using COMPASS (A manual on Human Rights Education with Young People) in April 2003 provided me with the great opportunity of experiencing the unique contribution of the Council of Europe's directorate, EYCB, to the Human rights of young people worldwide. This has impacted on my personal and professional development in piloting the Ghana section of Defence for Children International (DCI-Ghana) to promote human rights of young people in Ghana. I am proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the EYCB with all!!

TERESA CUNHA
Professor at the College of Education, Coimbra,
Portugal

I was on the balcony of the 4th floor looking at the city of Budapest. The Long-Term Training Course was making its path to an innovative Council of Europe's approach to youth work and youth training. Jean-Marie Bergeret was inside smoking a cigarette and we knew that later a long and difficult meeting would take place to prepare for the next day. I didn't mind because the city was incredibly beautiful, the Centre was warm and hospitable, and the Long Term Training Course, team and participants were a great life experience. Since then, May 1996, I have engraved on my memory that sunset over Budapest from Zivatar utca.

SÓNIA BREDÁ
International Freelance Trainer, Portugal

'Wanting to make a positive difference': that pretty much describes the common thread of those checking in and out of the EYCB; and the 'knitting' that comes out of each mind is of a different colour, size and shape, although the results often have as much in common as the original threads: the warmth of creating something useful and the thought of wearing it for the next winter. Wonderful solutions come from inspiration, and that top floor of the EYCB surely is good for knitting with a view! Well done, EYCB!

MICHEL GREGOIRE
Secretary General EGTA: Association of
Television and Radio Sales Houses

A very happy 1st decade from EGTA, the Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses, and best wishes for those years to come!!! It has been a truly enormous pleasure working with you over the past four years. The level of professionalism, both before and during an event, is rarely found with such friendliness, flexibility and ease. The facilities, always more than adequate, have now taken a hike to even higher levels following the very stylish renovations carried out over the summer. Although we have not yet worked together for a whole decade, we certainly hope to do so for at least the next decade. On behalf of our members, my team, Vanessa and myself, a very happy birthday to you!



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FROM EUROPE AND BEYOND

YASSINE ISBOUIA

Coordinator of "Mediterranean Forum for Childhood & Youth", Assilah, Morocco

Happy birthday to you, 'European Youth Centre in BUDAPEST'. On this distinguished anniversary I confess that my participation in the seminar of 'Training Active Trainers in Euro-Med youth work' in November 2004 was a real turning point in the process of my working with youth and children, because of the interesting inputs that I had from this seminar; the most important idea that has recently come to fruition is the founding of an organisation in my country. 'Mediterranean Forum for Childhood & Youth' in Assilah, MOROCCO aims to educate young people and children in human rights, and to contribute to the understanding and peace in the Med-area. We always use the important books and reference materials that I brought from the seminar.

AMARIA ISSOUFOU SALIA

Executive Secretary of CERVOD'AFRICA
Ouagadougou/Burkina Faso

For me, a young African, who appears to be among the fortunate beneficiaries of the EYCB, this tenth anniversary must be recognised as one of strengthening the achievements and developing outreach towards other continents, especially sub-Saharan African countries. As far as the youth training in human rights is concerned, the EYCB offers a unique experience in this world. Personally, I think that in the 20th century the EYCB must be classified as one of the most extraordinary inventions. Apart from the manual COMPASS, which I love to call the Bible of the third millennium for European youth, the EYCB can be considered as the temple from where a new generation of apostles for peace, tolerance, and solidarity between people come. GREAT COURAGE TO YOU, Staff of EYCB!!!!!!!

ANIS HAMDA

Contact person CUET-TUNISIA, CLUB UNESCO
EZZOUHOUR TUNIS-TUNISIA

I'll never forget the moments with the participants, the team and especially with Susanna from Finland at the discotheque. Also, the co-operation of the staff of the library at MOBILITÁS.
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

ALYONA OB'EZDCHIKOVA

Youth Human Rights Group, Chair, Russia

Once upon a time, there was a very beautiful city. On top of the mountain of the city there was a large palace, which was open to all strangers. Some of them were looking for shelter, rest and help to support them on their long journeys. Others, however, were full of energy and willing to share it. In different rooms numerous treasures were created, stored and then sent many miles away - magic pencils, coloured manuscripts and ancient books - all containing the knowledge of how to make the world a better place. But only people with an open heart and great determination were able to go to the palace. Nevertheless, the palace is still there. If you want to go there too, follow this sign:



ANDREY YUROV

International Network – Youth Human Rights
Movement, Honorary President
Free University of Human Rights, Russia

A discovery of Young Europe: this is what I got for the first time from the EYCB in 2000, when I was already not really very young. And from the first moment I realised how much I had lost in not going there 5 years earlier. By that time, I had already worked a lot with 'mature' and 'serious' Human Rights NGOs in Russia and the CIS. But the world of European youth I discovered at the EYCB impressed me a lot. There were those who had come for seminars and forums, those who working with them running training courses and study sessions, and those who write great books (such as COMPASS) – all to let this world grow and develop. And I really hope that despite my not belonging to the 'youth age', I will still have the chance to participate in the events of this EYCB world and make my contribution to it.

NAJATTE KAAOIS

Secretary General of the Federation of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, Belgium

Several Belgian organisations sent participants to the international seminar entitled "Islamophobia and its consequences for young people" that took place at the EYCB from 1 to June 2004, among them the Islamic Intercultural League of Belgium and the Association of Young Muslims. That seminar was marked by the willingness of the young people to break down barriers and borders, meeting the other and understanding Europe as richness. A certain solidarity developed among the participants through the exchange of different opinions on their realities, experiences and the situations and problems they live in their respective countries in relation to issues like Human Rights and Islamophobia. It was especially important that they had the chance to express their expectations towards European integration. The centre's role was clearly demonstrated during that seminar: giving impulse to diverse youth projects, contributing to the development of young people's knowledge and competence and consolidating their networks. The centre is a neutral place for meetings between different cultures, religions and political positions. To conclude, I would like to thank all the participants and organisations that were present at the seminar for providing me with that enriching experience. I will never forget the wonderful time we spent together both working and enjoying free time. I encourage every activity that goes in this direction. The most important is that the struggle to inform, raise awareness and organise actions goes on.

MARCEL HAGMANN

European Youth Card Association, Director, Budapest, Hungary

On behalf of the 42 member organisations of the European Youth Card Association, based in 36 countries in Europe, we would like to congratulate the EYCB on its 10th anniversary! The EYCA office relocated from Amsterdam to Budapest in 2004, and the location of the EYCB was one of the deciding factors. As close neighbours in the Buda hills, EYCA continues to value both the facilities and the far-reaching activities organised at the EYCB. Congratulations on all the work achieved so far, and here's to another great 10 years for the EYCB!

JAN VANHEE

Responsible for International Youth Policy, Division Youth and Sports, Flemish Community of Belgium

The European Youth Centres Budapest and Strasbourg are icons in the landscape of developing European Youth Policy – areas or free spaces where all key-players in the field of youth can reflect, discuss, create, debate, meet, make fun, train, ... places we need today even more for building democracy or making democracies stronger.

JANINE BEIER

Social Worker, German, living in Belgium

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to thank you for the great time I spent when at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. Actually, it was both the first time that I'd been to the EYCB and also the first time I'd attended one of Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe seminars. However, the reason for my stay at your centre was a study session on Racism and discrimination – one of the current European topics. 35 people from 15 different countries reflected and discussed in depth this important issue with guest speakers, the educational advisor and the International Planning Committee. I feel it necessary to act upon these issues and I'm glad that we did. I will certainly never forget these intense moments with people from all around Europe while viewing fantastic Budapest. Once again, thanks, and I wish you all the best for your future work.

MBOH EKALE

Trainer in Human Rights Education and project advisor, Mahatma Gandhi Organisation, Hungary

Talking about the 10th anniversary of the European youth centre in Budapest: it was really an exciting moment for me, because it was the friendliest human atmosphere I could think of it. This moment was very special because I was able to get very close to some really important personalities I had never before met. It gave me a sense of involvement to be part and parcel of this great unit. Over the past, this organisation has enabled me to get to know so many people from all over the world and, from that perspective, it acts like a very good instrument, like a window on the outside world. Thanks for this opportunity.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FROM EUROPE AND BEYOND

HEATHER ROY

Regional Director – Europe
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

A message from WAGGGS

So... How many Girl Guides does it take to fill the EYCB????

Over the years, WAGGGS has held on average one event a year at the EYCB. We have brought girl guides and girl scouts together to Budapest from all over Europe, to learn, share, empower and most importantly, ACT. Being in Budapest has made it easier for our members in the newly independent states to participate in activities, which is a major priority for our organisation. Being in Budapest gave us a different perspective on Europe – one that is not solely northern European. The EYCB has also given us an environment in which to empower young women. The EYCB has a special place in youth work in Europe – and one, which WAGGGS is happy to have been part of. We have gained from the input of the staff and trainers associated with the EYCB and we congratulate you on 10 years of innovation – and hope for at least another 10 years of new innovations in European youth work.

ANDREAS KARSTEN

Trainer, Germany

I really have no idea whatsoever when my first activity was... When I first saw the European Youth Centre Budapest, the feeling of ultimate happiness flowed through my body. Together with a friend of mine I decided to bike all the way to Budapest – after all, we were young, it was summer and we had bikes. To arrive in time for the seminar, we had to bike 130 km on the last day, and I was so relieved to see, at last, our destination after the discouraging torture of getting up the hill. I was exhausted, of course, but the welcome evening was like magic: I was sitting outside on the balcony of the 4th floor until 3 in the morning, talking to people I had never met before in my life. After everyone had gone to bed I was still sitting up there, enjoying the beauty of sleeping Budapest, despite all my tiredness, unable to sleep after all the excitement. Today it is my profession to work with people I have never met before in my life, and every time when I come back to Budapest, I return to the 4th floor to remember the power and magic of my first night at the EYCB.

KINGA KEREKES

Trainer and consultant, Romania

Setting up a European Youth Centre in Budapest at the beginning of the '90s was for us, for young people from Central and Eastern Europe, a clear message that we are also part of Europe. In my view, the keyword for the EYCB is "ACCESS". Access means, for instance, shorter distances, cheaper travel, no visa requirements (this unfortunately changed for some countries after Hungary joined the EU), and staff speaking languages of countries from the region, more familiar food and a very friendly atmosphere! I hope that EYCB will continue to serve young people from all over the world (with special attention to young people from Central and Eastern Europe) for at least 100 more years!

Ndong Mba Yannick, Youth worker in Nantes, consultant in various structures.

The EYCB is an organisation that proved to me that it is possible to change, on a global scale, the life of millions of young people by thinking, writing and exchanging working methods. It gave me the opportunity to travel across Europe and meet a lot of interesting people to share knowledge, cultural differences and enhance my methods of working.

GIOVANNI BUTTIGIEG

Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform, Director

Brought up in a generation that was given the impression that this side of Europe is full of enemies ready to annihilate us (in fact at that time we learnt that there was a Europe and an Eastern Europe), I can still recall the intense curiosity and sense of defiance of getting there for the launch of EYCB. And so I did, first in the camp-like surroundings of the original site, and later at the present venue. One can talk more comprehensively about the history of an institution by referring to that of its components. And in the story of EYCB one cannot leave out Antje, who I met for the first time in Moldavia around the time of the birth of the institution, – someone who has always managed to replace 'impossible' with 'we shall find a way'. Measuring the total impact EYCB has left on some of the current decision makers who are at the beginning of their political careers is like trying to nail jelly to a slippery wall. The only thing that is certain is that it has affected generations, in Europe and beyond.

AVTANDIL PRUIDZE
Tbilisi, Georgia

I really wish all the Best
To Youth Centre in Budapest
Hosting people and welcomed guests
I truly miss the time I spent ... (there)

LILIT ASATRYAN
Former Deputy Minister of Culture and Youth
Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Member of
the CDEJ

Please accept my congratulations on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of European Youth Centre Budapest. I thank the founders, former and present staff that were and are involved in this hard work – to establish such a perfect institution for European Youth. I wish the Centre a long life, and to be as loved among young people in the future as in nowadays.



GIORG KIKALISHVILI
President of Youth Association DRONI, Georgia

I have very fond memories associated with the EYCB. Participating in training seminars and study sessions there opened up Europe and the world to me. Without the relevant knowledge and experience I received at the EYCB (not to mention the coffee breaks...!), my organisation could not have pulled off the first NTC in Georgia and other projects, focussing on Human Rights Education using 'COMPASS'. The invaluable experiences I received, and the contacts I made through the EYCB have considerably affected my life and my goals, and continue to be reflected in my work and the work of my organisation and all its members. I shall forever cherish my times and my friends at the EYCB, with whom I still keep in touch, and I'm deeply grateful to you all for all that you have done for me. Thank you, EYCB!

SASHO KOCHANKOVSKI,
President of the Centre for Human Rights
"AMOS" Bitola, FYR of Macedonia

During the Consultative meeting on COMPASITO (2005), I realised that I had participated in the conception of COMPASITO; I wish it every successful delivery, in our EYCB in the future.

LEVENT EYIPI SIREN & DEEPAK NAIK
MBE, Minorities of Europe

The European Youth Centre Budapest and its enthusiastic staff of trainers, administration staff, reception, and other employees has and continues to play a crucial role in the development of Minorities of Europe. Like twins, the Centre and Minorities of Europe (MoE), which is also celebrating its 10th birthday, have travelled a long way. The Centre has always supported MoE by helping us plan, organize and manage projects. EYCB is a formidable forum for the participants of our events and have been offered both a great environment for creative thinking and productive teamwork. MoE would like to say 'Thank You' to Antje Rothemund, Rui Gomes and all the staff from EYCB who have been so caring – caring for us at MoE and crucially caring about young people, helping young people to be positive, motivated human citizens of Europe. Thank you.

LATIFA LAKER
Manager, Algeria

I would like to tell you how important the European Youth Centre Budapest was for me. Going to the EYCB was the first time I ever travelled abroad, and my discovery was wonderful. I met for the first time people from outside the Mediterranean region. It is thanks to the training I received at the EYCB that I could develop my knowledge of non-formal education and about youth in general. I also learned about the management of Euro-med projects, allowing me to assist other young people at home to conduct their projects. I wish a very long life and a lot of success to the EYCB from the bottom of my heart. I hope to return to the EYCB to receive more training and to visit once more Hungary, the first country I ever visited abroad and which I loved. I would like to thank the management of the Centre, the trainers and all those who make the Centre work so well.



VITALI NIKANOVICH

Programme Secretary of YMCA Belarus National Movement, Belarus

For my country the European Youth Centre in Budapest is an important place for advancing the level of skills and for the personal development of youth leaders and specialists in youth work. Many of my colleagues who have dealt seriously with youth policy in Belarus in different periods of their careers studied at EYCB or took part in symposiums and youth meetings there. It has shown that the centre does not only offer help to gain the useful skills necessary for working with youth, but is also an open stage for sharing opinions, ideas and approaches. It is very important for Belarus, where youth leaders lack informal education built on European values. I want to wish the team of European Youth Centre in Budapest good health to help them continue the important and enjoyable work on co-operation among young people in Europe and the development of European youth policy. I also wish to preserve the sensation of team spirit and collaboration, to preserve the skill of feeling the constantly changing needs of young people in Europe and to improve work for their satisfaction. Let EYCB remain the place where it is difficult to leave and where you dream to return, so as to feel what Europe and European values are. I'd also like to thank personally Ms Antje Rothmund and Mr Rui Gomes for the fact that they changed my life thanks to the course 'Citizenship and participation', which I was fortunate enough to complete in 1999. After this long-term educational course I became a really professional youth worker and I still remain true to the sphere of activity I chose. After my studies at EYCB I ran youth projects at the YMCA and RADA, UNICEF and UNDP. It proves that my competencies developed, thanks to EYCB, and I am very grateful for that. And during the Training for trainers on education in the field of human rights in 2003 I got to know my colleagues from Poland, together with whom in 2004-2005 we realised the joint international project 'Youth studies Europe', aimed at spreading European values among young people of the border districts of Poland, Germany, Ukraine and Belarus. This fact confirms that EYCB is an excellent opportunity for establishing long-term international cultural relations, which are able to grow into international projects in favour of the youth of Europe.

ERZSÉBET KOVÁCS

Trainer, General Director of the governmental Department of Youth Affairs in 1994/96, Hungary

The EYCB has always represented to me both challenges and encouragement to conceive and carry through great concepts and plans. I was able to follow the construction of the idea of a new European Youth Centre as a trainee in 1989/90, the first reconstruction of the well-known building in Budapest as a government civil servant in 1994/95 and since then the construction and the first reconstruction of this institution as a freelance trainer. Considering all these unique opportunities, the greatest challenge to me, relating to the EYCB at the very beginning, is that of European citizenship, a new political concept and non-formal educational practice 'under construction'. Thanks for inviting so many of us from all over Europe to contribute to it! I hope that the EYCB will be a strong forerunner in constructing and implementing important future concepts, and that it will not dissipate its energies on less important issues.

VOLUNTEERS AT EIP SLOVENIA – SCHOOL FOR PEACE

EYCB has been an excellent partner in our Human Rights Education work with young people and we see it as a key promoter of Human Rights Education in the region.

TEA BULIA

Trainer -Consultant, Association ATINATI

I represent Georgia, the country that, during last 10 years of searching, achievements and disappointments, has taken a step forward in democratic transformation. The European Youth Centre of Budapest has made a great contribution to my becoming a citizen of Europe. This is a place where everyone is equal regardless of their differences, the place where it is always warm because of smiles and understanding, the place where you can find yourself, where you have the opportunity to demonstrate your abilities and use them for the welfare of others. Thanks to the knowledge I gained, I was able to implement two projects concerning Human Rights, both of which were very important for my country. I truly wish you long life and prosperity!

SUZANA RICEA

**Inspector – European Integration Office,
Hunedoara Municipality, Romania**

You definitely must celebrate your decade! The reason is very simple: you know best how to organize an event and you are able to interact with anybody, no matter where I am from, what my sexual orientation is, or what my beliefs or my ethnic origin are. I had a great time in 2004 in Alexandria, Egypt. I dare not mention by name any of those involved because I am afraid that I will simply forget one of them, yet I have the memories of very special quality time and I assure you that all of you have a special place in my heart. Moreover, I would say you are the most enthusiastic people I have met up to now. Thank you, European Youth Centre from Budapest, for giving a voice to youth, for enabling 'the next generation' to express and promote their rights and their beliefs, and to build up its self-confidence and a system of values based on human rights principles.



SVITLANA TIMCHENKO
Trainer, Ukraine

The best way to predict your future is to create it! Taking part in EYCB events I create my future, I create the future for my friends, for my children and for the entire world. The Future, which is being created at the EYCB, is bright and peaceful, friendly for everybody and rich in many sorts of opportunities. The European Youth Centre in Budapest is very special place in Europe and has a very special place in our hearts.



MILORAD IVANOVIC
**Blic daily, Deputy Editor in Chief,
Belgrade, Serbia**

I still clearly remember the evening of 24 March 1999 when NATO started military action in Yugoslavia. I was in Strasbourg at the European Youth Centre participating at the International Young Nature Friends' seminar, 'Totalitarianism and Nationalism'.... And I didn't know where to go after the end of the seminar. My visa for France expired, the airport in Belgrade was closed and travelling through Serbia was very dangerous. Then I received a kind offer to stay at the EYC in Budapest until I could decide what to do. Although it was the Easter Holiday, and EYC was officially closed, I was accepted and welcomed together with two Serbian and Macedonian friends who had also participated in the IYNF seminar and were unable to go back to their homes. And we spent 5 days there in a safe and friendly environment. We felt as if we were at home – literally. I remember that one morning we went on the top floor and there were a lot of people in black suits and ladies in pretty dresses. And we appeared in pyjamas – as this was our home! I will always remember the kindness of EYC people, particularly Antje and her staff. I wish them many more happy years in the future! Cheers.



→ it is sometimes hard to gain the trust of decision makers

→ KRISZTIÁN KONCERT

"... My first activity at the EYCB was a seminar 'Youth work with young men and boys against violence', as part of the Human Rights Education Programme. My organisation, the 'Change Lanes Foundation', is working with young criminals and young offenders both in prison and after release. My colleagues and I decided to develop a project combining our work and Human Rights Education, conducting activities from COMPASS with young people in prison. We received financial support from the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. We piloted the project for 12 months and gained a lot of experience. Now we are in the process of negotiating access to other juvenile prisons and correctional institutions to continue the work we started.

In August 2005, I was invited to be a book in the Living Library during the *Sziget Festival*, the title of which was 'ex-bank robber'. Prior to becoming a student of social pedagogy, I served four years in prison for armed robbery. I was a very popular book and ended up spending between 6 and 7 hours in the library every day, not only on loan but also just observing what was going on in the library. Most people who took me on loan were really surprised that I had this 'past'. They could not imagine me as a bank robber or as someone that had a criminal record. During the conversations people got to know me as a person, not as a criminal, and some people perhaps understood that it is not only the young person who is responsible when such things happen, but that society is also responsible.

The EYCB has presented me with an enormous opportunity. When I first got involved, the whole idea was quite intimidating. I had just been released from prison. The Centre gave me a lot of support in working out the direction I wanted to take in my studies, it provided me with examples of how 'professional' youth work was being done in Europe and it provided me with access to training and partners. It also provided me with additional justification for my work. As an ex-criminal it is sometimes hard to access the trust of decision makers and it is even harder to be taken seriously when presenting a project for funding. I also had access to a lot of resources and materials that helped me with my daily work.

Krisztián Koncert is today a student of social pedagogy in Budapest, Hungary. He works for the "Change Lanes Foundation". He has been a participant of several activities in the Human Rights Education Programme, including seminars on violence prevention with young people and the Long Term Training Course Diversity and Cohesion. In 1997, Krisztian Koncert was arrested for multiple armed robbery, for which he served four years in prison in Budapest.

At the EYCB I found space to experiment and learn new things. I think it is quite similar for many other youth workers in Hungary, where the youth work scene would not be as developed as it is today if the European Youth Centre was not in Budapest. I think the main challenge for the EYCB in the future will be to extend its reach

to more people. Human Rights Education should certainly remain a priority, but the development of European citizenship is, in my opinion, also important. I also hope that the kind of work that the EYCB is doing will contribute to the development of a more progressive attitude on the part of the general public and government to the situation of young offenders..."

A gateway to Europe



KINGA GÖNCZ

"... The co-operation that has been established with the European Youth Centre Budapest has always been important to the Hungarian government. Being the first permanent European institutional presence in the region, it was exceptional at the time of its establishment, and Hungary has always been very proud of hosting the Centre. Although I have been the Minister responsible for the co-operation with the Centre only since October 2004, I have followed the development of the Centre and its relationship with the Hungarian youth sector for years. I was present at the launch of the Hungarian version of the Human Rights Education manual COMPASS and have visited the Centre on many other occasions. Moreover, my Ministry has been responsible, along with the colleagues at the EYCB, for the recent reconstruction of the building. The task force set up to prepare and implement the reconstruction project has become an example of our successful co-operation with the EYCB, even though one can observe differences between the organisational cultures of the different partners. The result is the fabulous new façade of the European Youth Centre Budapest.

I am also impressed by the success of the Centre with regard to its specific fields of expertise, notably in the field of Human Rights Education, and in the opportunities it has offered to young people, youth work volunteers and professionals in gaining access to European approaches to non-formal education and learning. The Centre has become a kind of gateway to Europe, providing information, opportunities for training and mobility and giving importance to European co-operation. Through the work of the Mobilitás Information Service (MIS), one of the aspects of the co-operation with the EYCB I most value and consider most successful is that it has opened doors for many Hungarians and other Europeans to live in Europe, rather than just being told about it. This role has become even more important in the light of Hungary's accession to the European Union. In particular, for the Hungarian formal educational system and for education professionals in Hungary, the COMPASS process has been a refreshing impetus to treat the subject of Human Rights in a manner meaningful to pupils. The question of what to teach has never really been the issue, but how to teach Human Rights using experiential methods of learning is a relatively new area in Hungary. The approach outlined in COMPASS is both accessible to professionals and the wider public. It brings something that would otherwise be very distant closer to people and to everyday life, and makes it a natural aspect of human communication and co-operation.

Kinga Göncz has been Minister of Youth, Family Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ICSZEM) since September 2004. Her Ministry has provided a significant budget for the reconstruction of the EYCB in 2005. Her Ministry also hosted the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs in September 2005. In 2004, Ms. Göncz was Minister for Equal Opportunities and from 2002 until 2004 she was State Secretary at the Ministry of Social and Health Affairs. Prior to 2002, Ms. Göncz led the Hungarian Partners Foundation, which introduced mediation techniques into the Hungarian civil sector.

I hope that in the future the Centre can develop its role beyond these achievements to date. It will be important to multiply the knowledge of the Centre to wider European audiences of young people and youth related professionals, to deepen further the trilateral co-operation that exists between the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Hungarian government through MIS, and to pass this model of good practice to other countries and regions. It will also be important for the Centre to use its unique location, status and potential to act as a bridge between older members of the European community and those who are yet to join the European Union, and to provide support to those who want to play an active part in the promotion of European co-operation..."



A short history of the European Youth Centre Budapest

INTRODUCTION

When the European Youth Centre Budapest officially opened its doors for business in 1995, the iron curtain that once divided Europe had been swept away and the idea of a reunited Europe was no longer a utopian 'pipedream'. Budapest was no longer a stranger to foreigners or inter-railers. It had even become fashionable to speak of Central Europe as if it had always been central. A few short years had passed but reality had completely changed. The establishment of the European Youth Centre Budapest can be understood as one of the miles-stones of that changed reality.

As initially planned, the function of the 2nd European Youth Centre was to extend the scope of the Council of Europe's work to include young people in Central and Eastern Europe and to be the Council of Europe's institutional presence in that increasingly important region. The objectives of the Council of Europe focus primarily on the promotion and safeguard of democracy, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law, democratic security, social cohesion and respect for diversity. The youth field of the Council of Europe²⁵ tries to involve young people in 'building' an inclusive, just, democratic and transparent Europe. To this end, a unique educational philosophy that puts at the centre of attention young people and their personal development, with the aim of developing their capacity to contribute to the constructive development of the societies in which they live, has been developed and both European Youth Centres are instruments of its promotion²⁶. Nevertheless, and given its unprecedented location, one of key functions of the European Youth Centre Budapest was to be a place of discovery of the reality of Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary and most notably, Budapest – an archetypal 'European' city.

However, the establishment and especially the definition of the role of the European Youth Centre Budapest were not without controversies. Certain parties inside the Council of Europe were afraid of setting an expensive precedent. In the same vein, there were those who felt the interests of young people, East or West, would be better served by the extension of the project funding available through the European Youth Foundation. There were those who believed that this Centre should be opened specifically with the aim of welcoming and integrating young people from Central and Eastern European countries, until then largely isolated from European level programmes. Their opponents feared this approach would 'ghettoise' the youth of Central and Eastern Europe.

There were also those who supported the project because creating a physical presence in the region and making it a residential training and education centre would underwrite the emergence of a youth generation with a strong identity influenced by the values promoted by the Council of Europe. It is worth noting that the programme, and by default the mission of the European Youth Centre Budapest, developed in tandem with events such as the tragic wars in the former Yugoslavia, the terrorist acts of September 11th 2001, the accession of Hungary and other Central European States to NATO and (or) the European Union and the further consolidation of authoritarianism in several countries in the Former Soviet Union. Such events clearly affected the priorities of the Council of Europe, which, as any international institution, had to reassess its role and to develop responses. As the Council of Europe's institutional presence in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and as one of the

²⁵ The youth sector of the Council of Europe is today known as the Directorate of Youth and Sport. It is jointly managed and overseen by representatives of governments and non-governmental youth organisations.

²⁶ The original European Youth Centre was opened in Strasbourg in 1972. For more information on the mission of two European Youth Centres and the Directorate of Youth and Sport, please refer to www.coe.int/youth.

primary instruments of its youth policy, the European Youth Centre Budapest was often at the forefront in developing and implementing those responses. As a result, and as this history seeks to demonstrate, the tasks, roles and functions fulfilled by the European Youth Centre Budapest have significantly evolved over the last ten years.

THE STORY

The history of the European Youth Centre Budapest to date is characterised by three interlinked phases: the establishment of the Centre from 1990 to 1995, its opening and trial period from 1995 to 1998 and its confirmation as a permanent institution of the Council of Europe in Hungary, and further consolidation from 1998 to the present day.

1990 – 1995: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE BUDAPEST

The origin of the idea to open a 2nd European Youth Centre dates back to 1990, when the regime changes that took place in Central and Eastern Europe changed the political and institutional landscape of Europe irreversibly. With the transition of the once 'Soviet Bloc' to democracy and market economies, the Council of Europe needed to establish a clear profile for its prospective relationships with the countries of the region, given its self-defined role as the promoter of democratic stability and Human Rights. For many of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, joining the Council of Europe was an integral step towards integration into the international community.

In the youth field specifically, the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation²⁷ elaborated its policy for working with the new democracies. This included the fulfilment, by the different instruments of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, of four specific conditions, namely increasing the number of participants from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in all activities in the youth field, developing training activities for youth leaders from new member states to take place in the countries concerned, developing a network of "decentralized European Youth Centres" conforming to a common set of quality criteria, as well as establishing a 2nd European Youth Centre in a country of Central and Eastern Europe.

The idea of the creation of a 2nd European Youth Centre in the region was discussed internally at the Council of Europe and raised as early as 1990. The 'in principle' decision of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation is indicative of the nature of the discussions that were taking place inside the youth sector of the Council of Europe. It reaffirmed its belief that the needs of young people in Europe could be better met if a decentralised youth centre were to be established in one of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Interest in hosting such a Centre was expressed by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary and Poland. Finally, the Committee of Ministers accepted the proposal of the Hungarian authorities to establish the Centre in Budapest. They did so without detailed consideration of the budget, an extremely rare occurrence. The "symbolic politics" were clear. With this decision, the Council of Europe offered a vote of confidence and further encouragement to the countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe.

²⁷ At this time, the most important body of the co-management system was known as the Governing Board and was made up of representatives of the member states responsible for youth issues in their respective national governments and representatives of international and national non-governmental youth organisations. Today the equivalent body is called the Joint Council. It meets twice a year with the aim of defining the programme and political priorities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport and to implement the distribution of its budget for the different youth programmes of the Council of Europe.





Despite the fact that the Committee of Ministers accepted the Hungarian offer without budgetary considerations, the establishment of the Centre was not, nevertheless, without other conditions, and those imposed by the co-management structures of the youth sector were strict. At the November 1992 meeting of the Governing Board, the establishment of a 2nd European Youth Centre was agreed upon, on the proviso that the building be adapted for the purpose of conducting educational activities at the same level of educational quality as in the existing European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. An additional condition was that the cost of maintaining the building would be borne by the host country. Originally 1st September 1994 was established as the date for the opening the 2nd European Youth Centre. However, a legal conflict over the property rights to the proposed building *Hotel Ifjúság*²⁸, formerly used by the Communist Youth Organisation as a venue for international youth meetings, meant that the envisaged timetable could not be kept²⁹. In the meantime, the Committee of Ministers authorised a limited programme of activities to be carried out in an alternative venue in Budapest³⁰.



With the settlement of the legal conflict, the then Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Education confirmed to the Secretary General that *Hotel Ifjúság* would be put at the disposal of the Council of Europe as a purpose built conference centre and that relevant budgets to cover the renovation work required had been established. The Hungarian authorities made it clear, however, that under the conditions of a market economy, they would be unable to make a blind and unlimited commitment to the running costs of the 2nd Centre. In their interpretation, they were responsible for assuring the maintenance of the building as a fully-equipped conference centre. All costs incurred in the running of activities would have to be undertaken by the Council of Europe.

Given the large capacity of the building³¹, these costs could not be covered by the annual programme of youth activities of the Council of Europe alone. A solution was found, however, with the acceptance of the Council of Europe, of the principle of 'full occupancy'³². It was suggested by the then Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Peter Leuprecht, that the activity profile of the Centre be enlarged to include activities in co-operation with the European Union and other Directorates of the Council of Europe³³ with the aim of opening up scope for synergy between a variety of civil society actors. While receptive to this proposal, the Governing Board underlined its overall responsibility for the annual programme of the 2nd European Youth Centre and insisted that in no case should the 2nd European Youth Centre be run on a profit-making basis.

The development of the architectural concept of the European Youth Centre Budapest is significant. The building required serious reconstruction. Two and a half entire floors of the building had to be completely remodelled and rebuilt. In addition

²⁸ *Hotel Ifjúság* is Hungarian for Hotel Youth.

²⁹ This legal conflict originated from the transfer of property from the former communist state to former owners in the aftermath of the collapse of state socialism. In this case, the users of the then *Hotel Ifjúság*, the former communist youth organisation, laid claim to the building. It was later established that the building in fact belonged to the government and could be offered to house the 2nd European Youth Centre.

³⁰ The *Csillebérc* Youth and Leisure Centre in Budapest

³¹ The European Youth Centre Budapest can provide accommodation for 110 persons in 70 rooms and conference facilities for up to 250 persons.

³² The full occupancy option means that the EYCB must be fully occupied for 250 days per year and has to seek self-financing activities outside the annual programme of the youth sector to ensure this.

³³ Particularly those responsible for the implementation of the work plans of the CDCC (the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe) whose activities are governed by the European Cultural Convention, to which 48 states in Europe are signatory and the Education Committee (a sub-committee of the CDCC). It is the statutory organ for education policy in the Council of Europe.



to the renovation of the existing facilities, an open plan and communication-friendly office space, an information-centre, two tutor apartments, and conference facilities were built from scratch. In addition, the original concept foresaw a live-in Director, and the Centre's renovation including the building of such an apartment. The building was transformed from a hotel into a conference centre, fully adapted to non-formal educational activities. Of particular relevance in this respect were the experiences of users of the facilities of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. With the needs of non-formal educational activities in mind, it was concluded that the conference facilities should be entirely mobile and that there would be a complete separation between the workspaces of the secretariat and of the activities. In fact, the entire logic of the building was changed. If at one time the fourth floor housed a restaurant with a panoramic view, it was now the conference facilities that would benefit from the view and the abounding natural light. The renovation was conducted under the co-operative supervision of a both a Hungarian and a Council of Europe architect³⁴ and in partnership with the representatives of the anticipated users of the Centre.



To supervise the final stages of the reconstruction of the building and for the actual opening of the centre, Peter Lauritzen, then Deputy Director of Youth, responsible for the implementation of the project at the Youth Directorate³⁵, was reassigned to Budapest on a long-term mission in autumn 1995. Together with Zsuzsanna Szelényi, the special commissioner assigned by the Minister, and one secretarial assistant temporarily reassigned from Strasbourg, he oversaw the finalisation of the transformation of the *Hotel Ifjúság* into the European Youth Centre Budapest. In the months that followed, temporary service companies were recruited and the operation of the Centre was ensured by a skeleton staff, composed of the acting Director, one secretarial assistant, one receptionist and a hotel manager. Educational staff came to Budapest from the Centre in Strasbourg on an activity-by-activity basis.



The first activity to be held in the newly renamed, but as yet not inaugurated, European Youth Centre Budapest was a training course entitled 'Training for Trainers'. It took place from 23rd November to 3rd December 1995. The aim of this training course was to enable participants to prepare, run and evaluate training programmes with an international dimension. Twenty-seven participants attended the course, which was conducted by a team of five trainers composed of educational staff of the Youth Directorate and its statutory partners³⁶. The Centre was still something of a building site. The agreement between the Hungarian authorities and the Council of Europe was that the reconstruction would be completed in time for the official inauguration on 15th December 1995. Nevertheless, the Centre was deemed ready to host its first participants in a test activity and these people certainly got hands-on experience of how to deal with the absence of ideal working conditions in the context of a training situation, which, for some, contributed irrevocably to their development as training professionals.

The official opening of the Centre took place on 15th December 1995 in the presence of the President of the Republic of Hungary, Árpád Göncz, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Miguel Martinez, the Secretary General of the Council of

³⁴ The architect responsible for the reconstruction on the part of the Council of Europe is Philippe de Romémont. The Hungarian authorities entrusted László Tóth of *Ókocentrum Kft.* with the equivalent task on their behalf.

³⁵ In 1992, the youth sector of the Council of Europe was renamed the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe as a result of an administrative reform.

³⁶ At this time CENYC (the Committee of European National Youth Councils) and ECB (the European Coordination Bureau of International non-Governmental Youth Organisations).





Europe, Daniel Tarschys, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Education of the Republic of Hungary, László Kovács and Gábor Fodor, and the Mayor of Budapest, Gábor Demszky. On this occasion, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the President of the Republic of Hungary exchanged keys in a symbolic ceremony. The programme of the inauguration included a ceremonial opening with a musical interlude, addresses and statements from the various representatives of the host country, the Council of Europe and other dignitaries representing the Youth Directorate's co-managed bodies, a press conference, a visit of the premises and a reception.

1995 – 1998: THE TRIAL PERIOD AT THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE BUDAPEST

With the official opening, the daily work of the Centre could begin. Peter Lauritzen was re-confirmed as Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest in January 1996 and his mission was extended until the end of the trial period of three years. In addition, the temporary contracts of those staff already working at the Centre were extended for the trial period and the recruitment and training of further essential staff and, in particular, stable service companies was prepared³⁷. This very first period of the existence and functioning of the European Youth Centre Budapest was truly a period of establishment. The main challenges and tasks were largely infra-structural in nature and focused on the provision of adequate conditions for the activities being hosted and on ensuring that the activities taking place could function in respect of the educational standards of the Youth Directorate, despite significant technical difficulties. These challenges related, in particular, to issues of staffing, information technology, and financial management and functioning. The Council of Europe had to learn how to work under the conditions of a transition economy, in a country with different traditions of public administration and with a decentralised service requiring a certain level of autonomy.



In its first year, the Centre's staff included the Executive Director, a Deputy Director, one secretarial assistant, one receptionist and a hotel manager. In the course of the development of the Centre's programme, the real staffing needs became apparent and the staff allocation, over a period of two and a half years, was significantly increased. Furthermore, the programme at that time consisted almost exclusively of the study sessions and training courses inscribed in the annual programme of the Youth Directorate³⁸. Therefore, one of the principal challenges facing the staff of the Centre was to develop its capacity to solicit and host self-financing activities to the extent required by the full occupancy financial restrictions.

This period of the Centre's functioning was unique. It is worth noting that at this time Hungary had an open visa regime, allowing for the participation of many young people who would otherwise be excluded from international activities due to their

³⁷ Between 1995 and 2005 the following companies have serviced the EYCB: Catering - Eurest Rt, ÍZ-S Vendéglátóipari és Szolgáltató Kft, Security and Reception - Eravis Rt, S-Komplex Biztonságvédelmi Rt, Argus Global Services Kft; Maintenance - Prometheus Rt, Bicalor Kft, Vegassy Kft; Cleaning - Piepenbrock Szolgáltató Kft, ISS Servisystem Kft.

³⁸ A study session is a one week long educational seminar proposed by an international youth organisation or by a network of national youth organisations on a subject of particular importance to their youth constituency and of relevance to the wider youth community. It is hosted at one of the European Youth Centres and is financed entirely by the Council of Europe. The seminar benefits from educational support and assistance from a member of the educational team or an external training consultant. A training course is an educational programme developed to respond to a particular need for capacity that may exist among actors in the voluntary and professional youth community. Training courses are multilateral, international activities, bringing together participants from many countries and organisations, and are prepared, run and evaluated by teams of external training consultants in co-operation with the educational staff of one of the European Youth Centres. For more information concerning study sessions and training courses please consult the following website: www.coe.int/youth.



nationality, status as a refugee or as an asylum seeker or due to the fact that their country was in the grips of war. Many activities that took place at the Centre were so-called 'impossible meetings': activities which brought together Cypriots from both sides of the green line, young people from the different ethnic groups at war in what was soon to become the former-Yugoslavia, and invisible minorities. The Centre became a space for exploring innovative political and educational responses to current events and problems in Europe and particularly in neighbouring regions. One result was that the youth sector of the Council of Europe gained in political importance, due to its new location at the heart of a region in transition and in proximity to many politically crucial if instable regions. In addition, the Centre served as a meeting point between East and West.

When the Committee of Ministers gave their agreement to the creation of a 2nd European Youth Centre, it was for an experimental period of three years. The Centre's viability was to be assessed before December 1998. In addition, at its meeting in June 1997, the Governing Board decided to commission an evaluation of the Centre's first pilot phase³⁹. Separate working parties with complementary functions were set up. The Committee of Ministers' evaluation focused largely on the experimental period of the Centre's functioning from the perspective of the fulfilment of the original objectives for the establishment of the Centre. The Governing Board evaluation focused on the achievements of the Centre according to criteria defining youth policy within the youth sector⁴⁰.

Both groups devoted several meetings to the evaluation of the European Youth Centre Budapest. In addition, visits to the Centre itself to meet the staff and inspect the premises took place. Those surveyed in the evaluation included internal and external partners, users, representatives of the statutory partners, including the European Youth Forum⁴¹, staff of relevant divisions inside the Council of Europe responsible for the functioning of the Centre (particularly, those dealing with staff and finance) and representatives of the host government.

In its first three years of existence, the European Youth Centre Budapest was understood to have fulfilled four main functions:

- Complementing the facilities provided by the European Youth Centre Strasbourg;
- Contributing to the democratisation process in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, notably the development of the voluntary sector in the youth field;
- Further underpinning the development of the identification of young people with the philosophy of the Council of Europe;
- Innovating in the areas of training, non-formal education, information, counselling, partnerships and co-operation⁴².

First and foremost, the evaluations highlighted the clear pan-European vocation of the European Youth Centre Budapest, at the same time pointing out some specificities of the Centre, which favour the participation of young people from the



³⁹ The full evaluation report of the Governing Board is available from the Secretariat of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, document number: DJ/CD (98) 20.

⁴⁰ For further information on the mandates of the different working parties please refer to the individual reports, available on request from the EYCB secretariat: info@eycb.coe.int.

⁴¹ The European Youth Forum is the representative platform of non-governmental youth organisations in Europe today. It was created in 1996 when the two main platforms representing national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations (CENYC and ECB) decided to join forces with the Youth Forum of the European Communities.

⁴² September 1998, Council of Europe, Evaluation Group on the European Youth Centre Budapest of the Governing Board of the EYCs and EYF, Final Report (DJ/CD (98) 20), p. 3.





region, including the liberal visa regime of the Hungarian Republic that was in force at the time. In addition, it was noted that the intercultural impact of the Centre had been important. Despite the time that had already passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the knowledge of young people from Western Europe concerning the history, culture and socio-economic realities of Central and Eastern Europe was still extremely limited. Through interaction with young people from these places and with the city hosting the Centre, such young people were among the first to question their assumptions about the "East". Secondly, the evaluations highlighted that the fear that this Centre would become the "second class" European Youth Centre had been unfounded, and that both the quality of service and educational practice offered were clearly equal to those offered in Strasbourg. Thirdly, in terms of educational practice, it was concluded that the very different composition of the European Youth Centre Budapest's programme, including self-financed activities and partnership activities with other institutions, contributed to an atmosphere of development, curiosity and innovation in the Centre. In particular, the movement towards the development of specific programmes related to education on human rights with young people was considered positive.



Both evaluation groups recommended the establishment of the European Youth Centre as a permanent service of the Council of Europe, based on their general satisfaction that the European Youth Centre Budapest's experimental phase had been a success. The Committee of Ministers' report gave the following positive outlook for the future of the Centre:

"...(The European Youth Centre) will undoubtedly help to consolidate democracy through the promotion of active citizenship and participation among young people. Through its partnership activities, it will also contribute to a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to youth problems, to a pooling of resources with the European Union and give the organisation's work greater impact. Considering the much wider area the Council of Europe now encompasses, an institutional presence should also be regarded as a very positive element for the organisation's influence. The EYCB symbolises the values the Council of Europe stands for"⁴³.

Hence, the European Youth Centre Budapest was confirmed as a permanent service of the Council of Europe at the 628th Meeting of the Committee of Ministers in November 1998. The deputies unanimously

"... decided that the Budapest European Youth Centre would become a permanent Council of Europe body as an instrument for the implementation of the Organisation's youth policy"⁴⁴.

1998 – PRESENT : CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE BUDAPEST AS A PERMANENT INSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

With the decision to establish the European Youth Centre Budapest as a permanent service of the Council of Europe, several members of staff, up until then employed only on temporary contracts, were offered permanent employment. The post of Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest was advertised as vacant, with the recall of Peter Lauritzen to his functions at the Youth Directorate in

⁴³ Council of Europe, Evaluation of the European Youth Centre, Committee of Minister's Evaluation Group, p. 80.

⁴⁴ CM/Del/Dec (98) 628/8.1, 9 and 10 November 1998.



Strasbourg at the end of the trial period. On 1st September 1999, Antje Rothmund took up her role as Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest. Her main tasks and challenges included the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation studies that had confirmed the Centre as a permanent service, for example, the consolidation of the staff and budget structures, establishment of information and documentation services, and the further development of the capacity of the EYCB programmes and services to provide quality standards commensurate with the values the Council of Europe seeks to promote.

A key moment was the preparation of the May 1999 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe, which in Budapest was to be celebrated with a month entitled 'Europe -Youth – Human Rights'; it included an exhibition on the Council of Europe, a Street Festival with a very diverse cultural programme including jazz and folk music, a food street, street theatre and animation, an NGO market, an open-door day at the European Youth Centre with workshops and lectures on subjects related to the theme of human rights, and a Human Rights Week, in which the value and practice of human rights in Europe was challenged and debated. With this month of action, the EYCB developed a new programme feature: the participation of 'day guests' in selected activities. This meant that the Centre offered short programmes that could be attended by an interested local public without having to pass any selection process.

The Europe – Youth – Human Rights month of action pre-empted a major development in the youth field of the Council of Europe: the transition of the programme of the Youth Directorate to a priority driven programme⁴⁵ in the year 2000. With this precedent and the placement of several follow-up activities to the European Youth Campaign against Racism, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance within the responsibility of programme staff at the EYCB, the preparation of an umbrella priority on Human Rights Education was a logical progression in the development of both the Youth Directorate and the EYCB. Since then, the Human Rights Education youth programme promoted by the EYCB has taken on several further dimensions, including pilot project finance for local projects on Human Rights Education, a highly differentiated training programme for trainers and youth educators working in the field of human rights and the elaboration of a training manual on Human Rights Education, entitled COMPASS⁴⁶.

A further development of importance during this period was the 1st March 2000⁴⁷ establishment and official opening of the MOBILITÁS Information Service. From the very outset, a documentation centre and library was part of the concept of the EYCB and facilities were built for such on the ground floor during the initial reconstruction. Nevertheless, for this documentation centre to have a broader reach than the participants of the EYCB's activities, partnership with a specialised Hungarian agency was found to be necessary.



⁴⁵ Until then, the Youth Directorate's programme was defined by the kind of activities it undertook and financed in areas such as research, non-formal education or youth policy development (training courses, study sessions, symposia, etc). With the priority driven programme the logic changed and the resources of the Youth Directorate were to be channelled into thematic fields where it could be most effective using its instruments (including those activity types).

⁴⁶ Please refer to the contribution of Rui Gomes p. 38 for further information concerning the Human Rights Education programme. COMPASS has to date been translated into 15 languages. Please refer to the following website for more information on COMPASS: www.coe.int/compass

⁴⁷ A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 12th October 1999 between the Hungarian authorities and the Council of Europe to the effect that a youth information service would be established on the premises of the EYCB for the benefit of a broad youth public in Hungary primarily but also taking into account the international public of the EYCB. Please refer to the contribution of Zsuzsanna Szelenyi and Zita Németh p. 23 for further information concerning the creation of the Mobilitás Information Service.





It is worth noting that this period was one of consolidation for the EYCB, in terms of its partnerships with the Hungarian host authorities, other services of the Council of Europe, international organisations and institutions using its facilities for self-financed activities and with partners involved in the youth work scene in Hungary. Most notable is the participation of the EYCB in the Market of Civic Organisations at the world famous *Sziget Music Festival* in August every year with its Living Library activity⁴⁸. In addition, the EYCB's Open Days have become an annual event and attract hundreds of young and older Hungarians to activities, which seek to make the values of the Council of Europe more accessible to people not otherwise involved in any form of association.

CONCLUSION

In the ten years since its establishment, the European Youth Centre Budapest has established itself as a fully functioning residential educational establishment with a reputation for a high level of quality in its conferencing services as well as in its in-house educational programme. It has become a popular location for discussions of socially and politically controversial issues among young people from all kinds of backgrounds. It is considered a safe and neutral place for European and international youth NGOs to develop their thinking and policies.



Over the years, the co-operation with the Hungarian authorities has been cemented into a supportive and fruitful relationship. The establishment of the Mobilitás Information Service and the institution of the Open Days have opened up the EYCB and its work to the wider Hungarian youth population. From early on, the EYCB welcomed activities that focused on the social and political development of Central and Eastern Europe, peace building and conflict resolution in South East Europe, the development of co-operation with the European Union and with other international institutions on the promotion of inclusion and participation of minority young people.

With the creation of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme, its quality training activities and educational materials, the EYCB has developed an umbrella under which the diversity of its programmes could effectively be put at the service of the objectives of the Council of Europe's youth sector. Since its creation in 2000, it has provided support and encouragement to many youth workers and activists in their efforts to make Europe a human rights respectful continent.



In addition, the EYCB has also consolidated its role as a host to many activities of other Council of Europe Directorates, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which appreciate its excellent service record and its central location in Europe. As such, both within and outside the Council of Europe, the visibility of the youth sector of the Council of Europe has increased and the potential for co-operation and mutual enrichment that exists in the field has become better utilised. Full occupancy, the principle by which the EYCB hosts self-financing activities of other institutions and organisations, has developed into more than a financing scheme: it has enhanced European co-operation, dialogue and the creation of knowledge networks in the youth and non-governmental sectors. And finally, as the host country to the EYCB, Hungary has become better known to many Europeans who otherwise might not have ventured to discover Central Europe.

⁴⁸ For more information concerning the living library, please consult Abergel, Rothmund, Titley and Wootsch (eds), "Don't judge a book by its cover! The Living Library Organiser's Guide", (ISBN - 92 - 871 - 5776 - 9), Council of Europe Publishing, 2005.



Timeline of European Youth Centre Budapest Events

1989

Fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Council of Europe has 23 member states and begins the process of enlargement with the countries formerly behind the Iron Curtain.

1990

Hungary joins the Council of Europe.

The co-managed governance system of the Council of Europe's Youth Directorate suggests a set of measures in the youth field as a response to the political changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe.

The 3rd Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth is held in Portugal. The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, and Hungary present their offers to host a 2nd European Youth Centre.

1991

The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and Poland join the Council of Europe.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe creates an Audit Commission to assess which candidate city's offer (Budapest, Bratislava or Krakow) is most suited to the establishment of a potential 2nd European Youth Centre.

1992

Bosnia declares independence from Yugoslavia. War breaks out.

Bulgaria joins the Council of Europe.

The "Velvet Divorce" is announced and the creation of two independent states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe agrees to the creation of a 2nd European Youth Centre in a Central or Eastern European city for a pilot phase of three years.

1993

The Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia join the Council of Europe.

The Committee of Ministers decides to accept the offer of Hungary to host the 2nd European Youth Centre in Budapest. The site allocated, formerly

known as the *Hotel Ifjúság*, was previously the international meeting place for communist youth organisations. Responsibility for the project rests with the Office of the Prime Minister.

1994

Andorra joins the Council of Europe.

A legal conflict over the ownership of the *Hotel Ifjúság* delays the start of reconstruction of the building that will host the European Youth Centre Budapest.

The programme of the 2nd European Youth Centre (European Youth Centre Budapest) begins with a limited number of activities at a temporary venue in Budapest – the Csillebérc Youth and Leisure Centre.

Change of government in Hungary: responsibility for the EYCB project is transferred to the Ministry for Culture and Education.

The legal conflict over the ownership of the *Hotel Ifjúság* is resolved, and reconstruction on the site of the EYCB begins.

1995

The Bosnian war ends with the Dayton Agreement.

Albania, Latvia, Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine join the Council of Europe.

A draft seat agreement is concluded between the Hungarian authorities and the Council of Europe for the establishment of the European Youth Centre Budapest.

Peter Lauritzen takes up his duties as Acting Executive Director of the EYCB for the pilot phase, moving into the building to supervise the final stages of the reconstruction and to prepare for the official opening of the Centre, planned for December 1995.

The first test activity – Training for Trainers in International Youth Activities – takes place in the European Youth Centre Budapest in November. Work continues to complete the reconstruction of the building.

Official inauguration and opening of the European Youth Centre Budapest on 15th December in the

TIMELINE OF EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE BUDAPEST EVENTS

presence of a variety of dignitaries including the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Daniel Tarschys and President of the Republic of Hungary, Árpád Göncz.

1996

Croatia and the Russian Federation join the Council of Europe

Eva Szabó takes up duties as Programme Assistant and first staff member of the EYCB. A tutor, two Programme Assistants and a Technician are in the process of being recruited.

Zsuzsanna Szelényi is nominated Deputy Executive Director of the EYCB and takes up her duties.

The EYCB hosts 60 activities with approximately 10,000 participant days registered, solidifying several key partnerships with international and Hungarian organisations.

1997

The process to evaluate the pilot phase of the existence of the EYCB begins with the establishment of evaluation working parties by both the Committee of Ministers and the co-managed governance system of the Youth Directorate.

The first Long Term Training Course for Minority Youth Leaders is implemented as important follow-up measure to the campaign "all different-all equal".

The EYCB hosts 93 activities with more than 11,000 participant days registered.

1998

The European Union opens accession negotiations with the four countries of the Visegrad region including Hungary.

Fighting breaks out in Kosovo.

Change of government in Hungary: responsibility for the EYCB is transferred to the newly established Ministry of Youth and Sport.

On the basis of the positive recommendations of the two evaluation working parties established to evaluate the pilot phase, the EYCB is unanimously confirmed by the Committee of Ministers as a permanent service of the Council of Europe in Hungary.

The EYCB hosts 113 activities with nearly 12,000 participant days registered.

1999

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland accede to NATO.

Georgia joins the Council of Europe.

Belgrade is bombed by NATO in response to the ongoing crisis and human rights abuses in Kosovo.

The 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe is celebrated by the EYCB with a month of activities on the theme 'Europe – Youth – Human Rights', including the first ever EYCB Open Day.

Antje Rothmund is nominated Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest and takes up her duties.

The EYCB and the Hungarian authorities agree to establish a youth information service of the Hungarian National Youth Service *Mobilitás* on the premises of the EYCB.

The EYCB hosts 101 activities with more than 11,000 participant days registered.

2000

The *Mobilitás* Youth Information Service is opened on the premises of the EYCB on 1st March.

Transition of the Youth Directorate to a priority based programme including the development of the first Human Rights Education programme, which will become the central pillar of the EYCB's annual programme. The first international Human Rights Education Forum is held at the EYCB.

The EYCB hosts 104 activities with more than 11,000 participant days registered.

2001

Terrorist attacks on the United States of America on September 11th.

Armenia and Azerbaijan join the Council of Europe.

The Human Rights Education programme continues to develop, with the dimension of gender-based violence becoming central to the EYCB's activities in the field.



During a six weeks' closing period, the entire water supply systems and the bathrooms of the EYCB building are renewed by the Hungarian Authorities.

The EYCB hosts 102 activities with almost 13,000 participant days registered.

2002

Bosnia and Herzegovina joins the Council of Europe.

'COMPASS' – a manual for Human Rights Education – is published in English and a programme of national training courses in Human Rights Education is launched. The process of translating COMPASS into several languages of the member states of the Council of Europe begins.

The EYCB hosts 93 activities with almost 11,000 participant days registered.

Change of government in Hungary: responsibility for the EYCB is transferred to the Ministry for Children, Youth and Sport.

2003

Serbia and Montenegro joins the Council of Europe

The Human Rights Education programme continues to grow with the extension of the programme to include youth work with young men and boys. Further translations of COMPASS are starting.

Intensive co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the situation of young refugees in Europe.

The EYCB participates for the first time in the annual Budapest 'Sziget' Music Festival with a Human Rights Education activity called the '"Living Library'.

The EYCB hosts 129 activities with nearly 12,000 participant days registered.

2004

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia accede to NATO.

Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia become members of the European Union.

Monaco joins the Council of Europe.

Government reshuffle in Hungary: responsibility for the EYCB is transferred to the Ministry for Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equality.

The 'Living Library' is organised for the second time at the 'Sziget' Music Festival in Budapest.

The Hungarian "KOMPASZ" is launched and promoted in a national training course for multipliers.

The EYCB hosts 114 activities with nearly 11,000 participant days registered.

2005

The Council of Europe has 46 Member States.

COMPASS, the manual on Human Rights Education, is published in 16 languages.

The façade of the European Youth Centre Budapest is completely renovated by the Hungarian authorities and the Centre is closed for a period of three months.

The 7th European Conference of Youth Ministers is held in Budapest. The 10th anniversary of the opening of the European Youth Centre Budapest and the inauguration of the renovated building are celebrated.

A photographic exhibition on 10 years of the European Youth Centre Budapest is exhibited in the newly reopened building.

A public street festival 'Europe – Youth – Human Rights' is organised in co-operation with the Hungarian authorities.

The EYCB hosts 104 activities with more than 7,500 participant days registered.



Staff of the EYCB since 1995 and today

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE WORKED AS MEMBERS OF STAFF AT THE EYCB SINCE 1995:

Erzsébet Bánki, Pál Barkóczy, Goran Buldioski, Marzia Conte, Péter Csuk, Adrienne Englert, Rui Gomes, Geraldine Grenet, Dariusz Grzemny, Tamás Holló, Viktoria Karpatska, Csaba Kedves, Zoltán Keresztes, Erika Komon, Edina Lancz, Peter Lauritzen, Katalin Lerch, Katalin Magyar, Mariuca Matanie, Natalia Miklash, Zsuzsanna Molnár, Yael Ohana, Katalin Ormos, Maggie Patterson, Antje Rothemund, Katalin Schmidt, Annette Schneider, Éva Szabó, Zsuzsanna Szelényi, Tamás Sziráki, Gabriella Tisza, André Toreilles, Eszter Ungor, Bálint Ványi, András Volszky, Amanda Wardrope, Katalin Zseni.

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE WORKED AS STAFF MEMBERS OF THE MOBILITÁS INFORMATION SERVICE SINCE 2000 ON THE PREMISES OF THE EYCB:

Szabina Bognár, Mónika Baloghné Marada, Réka Balogh, Zsuzsanna Egy, Péter Fejér, Róbert Gróf, Andrea Haáz, Zsolt Hartmann, Ivett Karvalits, Szilvia Márton, Szilvia Molnár, Zita Németh, Beáta Óry, Alexandra Sipos, Katalin Szabó, Marianna Szebenyi, Szilárd Strenner, Júlia Tokodi, Bálint Ványi, Péter Zelenka.

THE SEVERAL COMPANIES SERVICING THE EYCB CURRENTLY HAVE THE FOLLOWING STAFF WORKING ON THE PREMISES OF THE EYCB:

ARGUS Global Services Kft. (Security and Reception)

Imre Fazekas, Zoltán Golicza, Éva Karajos, István Kotroczó, Péter Kriskó, Katalin Krumpek, Sándor Lázár, István Mislai, Zoltán Nádasdi, Zoltán Pleskonics, Attila Szabó, Katalin Tamási, Viktor Vörös, László Zalán, Zita Zelei.

VEGASSY Kft. (Maintenance)

Csaba Horváth, Tibor Roóz, Sándor Rózsa.

ISS Servisystem Kft. (Cleaning)

Rozália Bagosi, Annamária Ferencfalvi, Kálmánné Forgács, Teréz Motruk, Árpádné Schöck, Andrea Száraz Nagy, Erzsébet Szendi.

IZ-S Kft. (Catering)

Zoltán Ferenczy, Mónika Juhász, Erzsébet Kissné, Krisztián Krémer, Norbert Szilágyi, Zsuzsanna Tímár, Klára Varga.

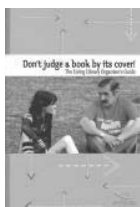


Select European Youth Centre Budapest Publications 2000 to 2005

(by type of publication)

TRAINING MATERIALS

Compass, the Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2002 [ISBN 92-871-4880-5]. Also available in French, Russian, Arabic and 13 other languages (through publishers of member states).



Don't Judge a Book by its Cover, the Living Library organiser's guide, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2005, [ISBN 92-871-5666-9]. Also available in Danish, French, Hungarian, Icelandic, Finnish, Swedish.

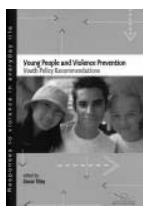
Training of Trainers in Human Rights Education with Young People, modules used by the team during the training course, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.



Training Trainers in Human Rights Education, modules used by the trainers, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002. Also available in Russian.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Young People and Violence Prevention – Youth Policy Recommendations, a collection of recommendations from reports and related documentation that employ a synthesis of the experience and good practices of young people, their associations and experienced practitioners in violence prevention and education, by Gavan Titley, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2004, [ISBN 92-871-5619-0]. Also available in French and Hungarian.



MEETING AND SEMINAR REPORTS, SURVEYS

Islamophobia and its Consequences on Young People, report of the seminar by Ingrid Ramberg, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004, [ISBN 92-871-5673-5]. Also available in French.



Learning from Violence, report of the Symposium by Ingrid Ramberg, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2003 [ISBN 92-871-5085-0]. Also available in French and Russian.



Making A Difference With Minority Youth In Europe, evaluation and impact study on the LTC Participation and Citizenship, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2003 [ISBN 92-871-5318-3]. Abridged report also available in French.



Youth Work with Boys and Young Men as a means of preventing violence in everyday life, report of the seminar, by Gavan Titley, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2003. [ISBN 92-871-5324-8].



Training Active Trainers in Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work, introduction seminar, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004

Different routes... – Survey on existing offers and needs in training trainers in Human Rights Education in Europe, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003



Hearing on the specific situation of young migrants, summary of proceedings of the hearing, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002. Also available in French.

LIST OF EYCB PUBLICATIONS 2000 TO 2005



Youth Against Violence, report of the seminar, by Bryony L. Hoskins and Marie-Laure Lemineur, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002.

Towards a Children's Agenda for Europe and Central Asia, report of the consultation of young people in Europe and Central Asia in preparation for the United Nations Special Session on Children, held in co-operation with Save the Children (UK) and UNICEF. European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002. Also available in Russian.

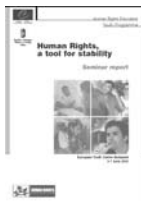
Violence Against Young Women in Europe, report of the seminar, by Ingrid Ramberg, Council of Europe Publishing, Budapest, 2001 [ISBN 92-971-4834-1]. Also available in French and Russian.



Forum on Human Rights Education, report of the Forum, by Tobias Flessenkemper and Adrienne Englert, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2001. Also available in French.



Human Rights, a tool for stability, seminar report, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2001.



PROGRAMME AND INFORMATION BROCHURES



Youth Promoting Human Rights and Social Cohesion, the Human Rights Education Youth Programme, 2003-2005, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004. Also available in French and Hungarian.

STUDY SESSION REPORTS

Discrimination and Racism – Overcoming a Threat to Human Dignity, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2005.



Young Women Working on HIV/AIDS: Educational and Cultural Dimensions, report of the study session held in co-operation with the European YWCA's – European Young Women's Christian Association, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2005.

Building a Human Rights Network, report of the study session held in co-operation with Service Civil International, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004.

The Universality of Human Rights in a Newly Extended Europe, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Human Rights Students' Initiative, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004.

Active Participation of Young Minority Women in European Public Life, report of the study session held in co-operation with Young Women from Minorities, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004.



Sustainability and Solidarity, report of the study session held in co-operation with Federation of Young European Greens, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2004.



Training for facilitators, report of the study session held in co-operation with Youth Action for Peace, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.

Regional Cohesion in the work of Youth NGOs, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.

Human Rights: The contribution of European Muslims, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003. Also available in French.

Working with Human Rights Education: Active Involvement and Participation of Young Women, report of the study session held in co-operation with the European Young Women's Christian Association, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.

Human Rights Advocacy Training, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Human Rights Students' Initiative, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.

Health and Human Rights of Refugees, Immigrants and Minorities in Europe, report of the study session held in co-operation with the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2003.

Reproductive Health: concern of young women in Europe, report of the study session held in co-operation with the European Young Women's Christian Association, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002.

Sustainable lifestyle, report of the study session held in co-operation with Youth and Environment Europe, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002.

Training Ecumenical Trainers in Europe: Getting organised, report of the study session held in co-operation with the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002.

Human Trafficking, report of the study session held in co-operation with the International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2002.

The investigations of the social and political reasons for youth violence in the different social-cultural regions of Europe, report of the study session held in co-operation with the European Federation of Youth Service Organisations, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2001.

Welcome to Europe – Intercultural Awareness, report of the study session held in co-operation with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, European Youth Centre Budapest, 2001.



European Youth Centre Budapest – Select Press Review 1994 to 2005

BEFORE THE OPENING

Our country also makes use of it!

"The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers decided upon the foundation of the Centre in 1993, having realised that extending its provisions to young people the next generation will learn to protect their interests in a more efficient way and to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the democratic institutions based on their own experience. This institution is ideal for achieving this objective."

Zsuzsanna Szelényi in Magyar Hírlap, October 1994

Second European Youth Centre to be the institution of democracy.

"It is important that the future Europe has strong democratic institutions because only they can eliminate the increasing danger of armed conflicts. I hope that the future Europe will be both economically and socially fairer, by providing training in democracy, which can be done using a variety of methodologies."

Peter Lauritzen in Magyar Hírlap, April 1995

The former hotel to be reborn by December

Minister Fodor emphasized that placing a European institution in Hungary is important both from the point of view of foreign relations, as well in terms of the recognition of the country by Europe. The Hungarian state proposed the building of Hotel Ifjúság for housing the centre but it was not until April 1995 that the construction works began, due to complications with its ownership. The European Youth Centre Budapest will function as a training institution on the one hand, helping civil youth organisations learn to make use of democratic institutions in a conscious and efficient way, and it will also house international programmes dealing with youth-related, educational, cultural, socio-political and human rights topics. The information centre, which will be open to the general public, offers information on European trends of youth policy and European institutions, much of which has, to date, been unavailable.

Gábor Fodor in Magyar Nemzet, 15 August 1995

European Youth Centre in Budapest from November

At the press conference, Gábor Fodor said that old youth policy was now outdated, and that the international centre would function without political bias, and offer programmes with a practical

approach. Following the decision of the Council of Europe, the 4-year debate over the ownership, which prevented the opening of the centre, almost damaged the prestige of the Hungarian government as the European Youth Centre could not be opened in January 1994, as has been promised by the government in an international treaty.

Gábor Fodor in Magyar Hírlap, 15 August 1995

INAUGURATION OF EYCB

Selected from Magyar Nemzet, 16 December 1995

The house for education in citizenship

"It is symbolic that the European Youth Centre Budapest of the Council of Europe (CoE) opened in Budapest one day after the signing of the Paris treaty which put an end to the Balkan conflict', László Kovács, Minister for Foreign Affairs, said. The key of the house was given to Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, by Gábor Fodor Minister of Education.

Árpád Göncz remembered his meeting with Ms Catherine Lalumiere, then Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in 1990, which focused on youth policy. It was during this meeting that the question of the establishment of a youth centre in Central-Eastern Europe, a similar one to the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg that opened in 1972, first came up. The president called the new institution an important scene in citizenship education, which is a new tool for the Council of Europe, too: a meeting place, a mediator for free thoughts and ideas.

Mario Frasa, President of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, reminded us of the main principles, pluralism and respect for human rights, and talked about the originality of the youth policy of the Council of Europe which is characterised by the following: partnership on several levels, continuous consultation, and shared, 50-50 participation in decision-making with government representatives.

Gábor Fodor, Minister for Youth and Education, said that 'everybody, regardless of their political views, had agreed that Hungary needs this centre.' He called it the house of the future and the scene of new thoughts and challenges, 'which will remind us of the irreversibility of the Central-Eastern European transformation'.

Organising work in a democratic way

Peter Lauritzen "We really understand what Europe is when travelling, as diversity means an extraordinary richness. If we want to examine structures beyond the nations, then we have to study topics such as the problems of ecology, war and peace. The starting phase of the foundation charter of UNESCO is that wars begin in people's minds, and that is where they must be stopped. The construction of the new Europe must also be started in people's minds. This centre will have to work on educating young people in this spirit."

How can Hungarian young people get involved in the activities of the centre?

The processes need to be developed. Theoretically we can organise courses where half of the participants are Hungarian, and the other half are foreigners. I would also like to publish a Hungarian journal giving information about the activities of the centre. Additionally, I plan to open the empty room on the ground floor for Hungarian youth. This will be an information and cultural centre-café. The furniture will be donated by the Nordic countries and we would like to create a music and reading corner. But it is just a plan at the moment.

What is the most difficult thing for the director?

To make people understand that the fact that I don't give orders is not a sign of weakness. I think it is very important to organise work in a democratic way, with multilateral communication and where everybody has their own tasks and obligations. Spiritual castes are over. The modern world cannot function on autocratic principles.

Peter Lauritzen in Magyar Nemzet, 16 December 1995

THE EYCB IN OPERATION

European Youth Centre in Buda

"Budapest is very attractive for European youth. Recently, Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth met in our centre', Peter Lauritzen begins, in his introduction. There are participants from at least fifteen countries in each programme. Their activities are focused on non-formal education: they organise several sessions and 'workshops', among others, those for minority youth, social workers and young public servants."

Peter Lauritzen in Népszabadság, 18 March 1999

Gypsy Women Unite- Call to Europe to Respect Rights

Budapest – Gypsy women from a dozen European countries ended a week of talks on Sunday on ways

to improve their situation. They agreed to call on the Council of Europe, the Continent's official human rights forum, to take action against racist manifestation, to pressure member states to respect rights, and to work towards equal opportunity for Gypsies. They also agreed to set up the Roma International Forum in Paris, which will monitor human rights issues affecting Gypsies. Young delegates, representing the Gypsies in Europe who number approximately 15 million, testified about the problems they face, from daily humiliations to skinhead attacks.

*International Herald Tribune,
30 September 1999*

Youth Conference on Human Rights

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe, the European Youth Centre in Budapest organised a 'Human Rights Week' between 27 and 30 May. Approximately 200 guests, among them 120 foreigners, were invited to tackle human rights questions over a 4-day period. The topics of 'human rights and democracy', 'human rights – a global responsibility' 'women's rights' and 'human rights in a multicultural Europe' were presented and discussed in a series of lectures and workshops.

Pester Lloyd, 2 June 1999

Europe – Youth – Human Rights

The Council of Europe, whose activities focus mainly on human rights questions, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The anniversary gives us the opportunity to focus the attention of the citizens of Central-Eastern Europe, especially of Hungarians, on the importance of the most basic human rights, to underline the need for open thinking and tolerance and to make the methodology of our institution more widely known. Furthermore, our programmes have also been supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Sziget Office and the Banán Klub.

Zsuzsanna Szelényi in Pesti Vigadó, June 1999

Human Rights Week

At the conference 'Human Rights Week' Denise Fuchs, the President of the European Women's Lobby, said that it is extremely important to enforce women's rights and to make those countries concerned respect the relevant international treaties.

*Magyar Nemzet,
31 May 1999*

Youth study human rights

Illir Dugolli, a 23-year-old participant from Kosovo, said "I come from a place where the universal values of human rights are neglected. A conference like this cannot change things radically, but it is encouraging to meet people coming from other countries where human rights problems are not as evident as in my country". Irene Jansen, a 21-year-old from the Netherlands, said "This is an event where someone with a Western perspective can broaden their knowledge. We can learn a lot from the Eastern Europeans."

EYCB Participants in The Budapest Sun, 3 June 1999

Youth work is valuable

"One must be convinced that international youth work is an important contribution to international understanding and civil society, and that Europe is a continent with 50 and not 15 states. And of course commitment to the basic values of the work of Council of Europe is related to human rights, parliamentary democracy and rule of law."

Antje Rothmund in Die Neue DL, September/October 2000

Successful balance

"In the last 3-4 years we have been able to see that international orientation is not limited to east-west contacts any more, and that there is an increasing co-operation between central and east European organisations and neighbouring countries looking for regional co-operation possibilities. This is a development we welcome and one that we would like to support through the facilities and opportunities the EYCB can offer."

Antje Rothmund in JugendPolitik, 2000

Democracy and Tolerance

The European Youth Centre in Budapest focuses on two types of activities. First and foremost, it hosts pedagogical seminars, such as the training of youth leaders or training courses related to European youth work, education, human rights or socio-political topics. The other type of activity which operates at the centre involves interested institutions or organisations, such as free associations, EU-agencies, embassies or different governmental institutions, in renting the premises: the Centre can host international conferences or training courses and can be a meeting point for organisations. On 1 March 2000, the Youth Information Service of the Hungarian national youth service, Mobilitás, opened in the building of the EYCB, but it remains independent of the Centre.

Budapester Zeitung, 8 January 2001

Human rights still a problem, experts say

Participants at the human rights conference at the European Youth Centre (EYC) in Budapest stressed that the observance of human rights for all remains a problem in Hungary, especially for certain minority groups who still experience official and unofficial discrimination. Parliamentary Minority Protection ombudsman Jenő Kaltenbach stressed that discrimination in the field of education was rapidly becoming the most glaring example for certain groups of young people, in particular Roma students.

Jenő Kaltenbach in The Budapest Sun, 3 October 2002

YOUTH MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND STREET FESTIVAL

All Different All Equal

"The Council of Europe is committed to continuing the campaign 'All Different All Equal' to protect human rights. Education is a means of preventing violence, but information, and acquainting young people with their human rights are equally important for enabling youth to be involved in those decisions, which concern them."

Kinga Göncz on Kossuth Radio, 24 September 2005

Europe is more than you think

"European cultural diversity involves not only cultural diversity but also openness, tolerance and understanding all of which, serve as the basis for human rights."

Zsuzsanna Szelényi on MTV1, 24 September 2005

Living Library

"As of today, 100 Books have been borrowed. This means 100 hours of conversation between people who wouldn't have met otherwise. If at least for 1 minute during all these hours they became aware of something they hadn't known before, then it was worth organising it."

Erzsébet Bánki on the Living Library

TV 2 Strucc Magazin, 23 September 2005

Street Festival on Human Rights

"This whole thing is something one would like to see more of. As a matter of fact, it places different groups of society next to each other at last, and not only next to each other, but together, which was a wonderful thing to see."

Kinga Göncz on TV 2 Strucc Magazin, 23 September 2005

Programme of the inauguration of the European Youth Centre in Budapest



PROGRAMME FOR THE INAUGURATION

of the
EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE
IN BUDAPEST

PROGRAMME DE L'INAUGURATION
du
CENTRE EUROPÉEN DE LA JEUNESSE
DE BUDAPEST

*European Youth Centre
Centre Européen de la Jeunesse
Zivatar utca 1-3
1024 Budapest*

Friday, 15 December 1995

- 10.00 a.m.** Opening of the inauguration ceremony.
Musical interlude
- 10.05 a.m.** Address by Mr Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary
- 10.15 a.m.** Address by Mr László Kovács, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary
- 10.20 a.m.** Address by Mr Gábor Demszky, Mayor of Budapest
- 10.25 a.m.** Address by Mr Ole Løvig Simonsen, Danish Minister for Housing and Building, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- 10.30 a.m.** Address by Mr Miguel Angel Martinez, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
- 10.35 a.m.** Statement by Mr Mario Frasa, President of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centres and of the European Youth Foundation
- 10.40 a.m.** Statement by Mr Mikael Trinksjaer, President of the Advisory Committee
- 10.45 a.m.** Statement by Mr Gábor Fodor, Minister of Education and Culture of Hungary and the handing over of the key of the European Youth Centre to Mr Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Statement by the Secretary General
Musical interlude
End of the ceremony.
*
- 11.00 a.m.** Press conference
*
Visit of the European Youth Centre and the exhibitions
*
- 12 noon-2 p.m.** Reception given by Mr. Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
*

Guests are requested to take their seats before 9.55 a.m.

Decisions related to the EYCB

STATUTE OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRE ⁴⁹

Article 1 – Role and aims

The European Youth Centre, hereinafter called the "Centre", shall be an educational establishment of the Council of Europe and a knowledge base on youth affairs, in particular youth policy and youth work, as well as emerging youth phenomena. As an instrument for the participation of European youth in the building of Europe, it shall contribute to implementing the youth activities programme of the Council of Europe. To this end, in the interests of both on-going education and cultural development, its aims shall be:

a to supplement the training of youth leaders in a European context;

b to provide non-governmental youth organisations and networks, as well as other non-governmental structures involved in areas of youth work, relevant to the Council of Europe youth policy, with a meeting place for the furtherance of international understanding in the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the detailed study of European problems;

c to seek, more particularly, means of ensuring participation by young people in solving the problems which concern them;

d to promote research into youth matters through the exchange of ideas and experiences.

DECISION (98)628 OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ⁵⁰

The Deputies

1. welcomed the report prepared by the "Evaluation" Working Party on the Budapest European Youth Centre during its 3 year experimental period (CM(98)168);
2. took note with appreciation of the support provided by the Hungarian Government to the Budapest Centre;
3. decided that the Budapest European Youth Centre would become a permanent Council of Europe body as an instrument for the implementation of the Organisation's youth policy;
4. invited their Rapporteur Group on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (GR-AB) and their Rapporteur Group on Youth (GR-Y) to examine further the budgetary and administrative aspects of the functioning of the Budapest Centre and to report back.

⁴⁹ Resolution (98)31 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Article 1 of the Statute of the European Youth Centre

⁵⁰ Decision (98)628 of the Committee of Ministers on the Evaluation of the European Youth Centre Budapest

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