

The April issue looks at:

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(1) The big picture

The Council of Europe statutory organs on youth met in Budapest on 28-30 March. Both the governmental steering committee ([CDEJ](#)) and the Advisory Council of non-governmental youth organisations ([CCJ](#)) have new Chairs: Ms Seija Astala from Finland and Ms Maria Paschou (Hellenic National Youth Council, ESYN) respectively. Ms Astala will also chair the Joint Council in 2012, Ms Paschou in 2013.

In March 2012, the Committee of Ministers adopted a number of texts which are highly relevant to children and youth policy, among them:

- the “Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015)”
- the Internet governance strategy, which contains a section on children and young people as one of six priority areas
- the Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, proposed by the CMJ in co-operation with the Children's Programme
- the CM reply to PACE Recommendation 1978 (2011) “Towards a European framework convention on youth rights”.

Celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the youth sector will be launched during the June session of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly’s Sub-Committee on Education, Youth and Sport agreed to hold in the week 25-29 June an open meeting and a debate involving prominent youth personalities on the theme “a vision for the future”.

On 1 April, Mr Nils Muižnieks took up office as Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Mr Muižnieks, who has Latvian nationality, replaces Mr Tomas Hammarberg whose term ended after seven years.

(2) Youth Department update

The youth policy review carried out in Belgium was approved by the CMJ at its meeting in March. The next review will be carried out in Ukraine in 2012-2013; a first visit by the expert team will be held on 16-22 April, the second visit in September 2012.

The project “Young people combating hate speech in cyberspace” enters its operational phase; a first training course for young bloggers and on-line activists will be held in Budapest on 6-13 May.

Other forthcoming events include an evaluation and follow-up meeting of the *Enter!* Project (EYCS, 1-5 April) and three study sessions:

- IFLRY on “Local Politics, Local Youth Mobilization” (EYCS, 1-7 April)
- FERYP on “Strategies for inclusion of young Roma” (EYCS, 15 – 22 April)
- RYEurope on “Bridging the age gap: working together to develop rural communities” (EYCB, 15-22 April).

A seminar for young Russian parliamentarians will be held on 22-28 April at the EYCS.

A call for applications to participate in the Youth Peace Camp (EYCS, 22-30 June) was sent out in March.

Georgia has kindly accepted to host the 2012 “CDEJ Summer University”, planned to take place in the week 27-31 August 2012.

In the framework of the [partnership with the European Commission in the field of youth](#), a second meeting of the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) took place in Brussels on 5-7 March. The partnership also organised a seminar on “Empowerment of youth

organisations and youth-led civil society initiatives in the South-Mediterranean framework” in Malta on 22-24 March, in cooperation with the League of Arab States, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and Euro-Med Youth Platform/Aġenzija Żgħażaġh. The Malta seminar brought together youth representatives from the South Mediterranean and Council of Europe member states to discuss their needs in view of the changes initiated by the Arab Spring. The high-level youth policy symposium on Euro-Mediterranean issues is now planned for 28-29 August 2012 in Tunis.

There are staff movements to report. Ms Evelyne Caré-Colin will leave the financial unit after 23 years of loyal service in the Youth Department (and 30 years in the Council of Europe altogether), for a well-earned and youthful retirement. Ms Marilyn Horst left the financial unit of the Youth Department to join the secretariat of the European Youth Foundation. She is replaced by Mr Pascal Walter as from 1 April. In the youth partnership with the European Commission, Ms Irma Dzankovic will provide support in April, May and June in the policy and research activities sector.

(3) Other Council of Europe news

The PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development recently initiated a report entitled “Young Generation Sacrificed”. The Rapporteur, Mr Luca Volontè (Italy), addressed the CMJ during its meeting in Budapest on 29 March. The debate in the Assembly on this issue is foreseen for the June part-session (25-29 June 2012).

The Congress prepared a draft report and Resolution on the “political disengagement of young people” (Rapporteur: Ms Els Ampe, Belgium). The CMJ will forward its comments to the Congress, which should be in a position to adopt the Resolution in October.

Mr Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed a [letter](#) to the UK Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice indicating that “despite some progress, the system of juvenile justice in the United Kingdom remains excessively punitive.” He said, “The state’s response to juvenile crime should focus more on rehabilitation”.

(4) Other news

Already in December 2011, the EU had called for immediate action to drive down youth unemployment [\[link\]](#). The Commission will address the youth dimension in its country-specific recommendations to member states in May 2012.

At their meeting on 1-2 March 2012 the European Council of the EU stressed the need to alleviate youth unemployment and suggested that the social dimension of globalisation "in particular youth unemployment" should be one of the priorities pursued by the G20 summit [\[link\]](#).

The regular EU [Youth Conference](#) and Meeting of Director Generals under the Danish EU Presidency was held in Sorø (Denmark) on 18-21 March 2012.

On 28 February [Unicef](#) launched a report on [The State of the World's Children](#) 2012, highlighting the disparities within cities where many lack access to schools, health care and sanitation.

On 6 March the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO) submitted an [open letter](#) to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, putting forward expectations and recommendations regarding the appointment of the Special Advisor on Youth.

The 101st session of the International Labour Conference of the [ILO](#) (Geneva, 30 May to 15 June 2012) will discuss "[the youth employment crisis](#)". The ILO is organising a [video contest](#) on "Decent Work for Youth", to show how the global crisis is affecting their lives. The contest is for young people (18 – 29 years old). Winners will be invited to Geneva to present their videos at the "[Youth Employment Forum](#)", which will take place at the ILO on 23-25 May 2012.

Among many other topics, the EuroDIG conference in Stockholm on 14-15 June 2012 will take up the theme "Youth taking action against hate speech in cyberspace", following a proposal by the Council of Europe [\[link\]](#).

The “Rio+20” conference (Brazil, 20-22 June 2012) is expected to lay the foundation for a set of global sustainable development goals (the anti-poverty and social development targets that have an achievement deadline of 2015).

(5) Publications

The “Living Library” documentary “[Let’s Take the Feminist](#)” is now available, it was shot at the 2011 Sziget Festival where the EYCB organised a special event. The 26-minute feature documentary, produced by award-winning documentary filmmakers Bori Kriza and Balázs Wizner of Metaforum Film, is mostly in Hungarian, with English subtitles. The film is also distributed as a DVD compendium to the revised “Living Library” organisers’ guide “[Don’t Judge a Book by Its Cover](#).”

The CoE-EU youth partnership has recently published “[Intercultural learning in non-formal educating: theoretical frameworks and starting points](#)”. It also published “youth knowledge” books documenting the outcome of research seminars and expert workshops [[link](#)].

The UNHCR publication “[We Have Arrived](#)”, which documents a youth participatory project with young refugees held in Nuremberg (Germany) in 2011, is now available.

Best regards

Ulrich Bunjes

Youth Department - Service de la jeunesse
Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation - Direction
de la citoyenneté démocratique et de la participation
Council of Europe - Conseil de l'Europe
67075 Strasbourg
France
tel. +33 390 214640
www.coe.int/youth

Abbreviations:

CCJ: Advisory Council on Youth

CDEJ: European Steering Committee on Youth

CM: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

CMJ: Joint Council on Youth

CoE: Council of Europe

Congress: The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

DDCP: Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe

DG: Directorate General

EuroDIG: European Dialogue on Internet Governance

EYCB: European Youth Centre Budapest

EYCS: European Youth Centre Strasbourg

EYF: European Youth Foundation

FERYP: Forum of European Roma Young People

IFLRY: International Federation of Liberal Youth

ILO: International Labour Organisation

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PACE: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

RYEurope: Rural Youth Europe

YEE: Youth and Environment Europe

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anna.trigona@coe.int or emma.hellyer@coe.int