



Live from Brussels

A YMCA Europe Brussels Newsletter



A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

THIS MONTH

Hear us Roar!

by Ilenia Ventroni and Dina Seck

First of all, we start this newsletter with a big change: we have a new volunteer, Dina Seck, from YMCA France. She will work in the Brussels Office for a while, and she will be a constant contributor of this newsletter. November is always quite busy in Brussels. In this end of year, we participated to several events and made many relevant contacts. The global political environment has been considered quite unpredictable: while the race to presidential election has started in France, we are sure now that the republican and very contentious Donald Trump is taking charge of US affairs from January 20, 2017.

Proactive Activism

In November, we participated to many coordination meetings which will influence our advocacy for the year. Among them, we took part in the Youth Work YFJ network, the Education network and the Alliance on Apprenticeships. You will be able to read

more on them at [page 3](#) of this issue. But more importantly, we participated to the YFJ General Assembly in Varna, to elect the new Board and President: please see [page 2](#) of this issue for more details on that. The Brussels Office was also present at the Peace Work Institute pre-session to plan the new era of our peacebuilding flagship programme: more info on that at [page 3](#) of this issue. [Page 4](#) will be finally dedicated, as promised, to the profiles of our new YPG!

Projects and Programmes

This November we have a number of good opportunities coming from different sources, but we will give special focus to an opportunity regarding Roma integration: please see [page 3](#) of this issue. Moreover, please see [page 5](#) for more information on the available calls. If you want to know how to apply, please contact us at ilenia@ymcaeurope.com.



YMCA Europe staff meeting in Prague

The Brussels Office participated to the regular Staff Meeting of YMCA Europe taking place in Prague between November 21st and November 24th. It was a great opportunity to plan for the rest of the year with the whole team, setting the goals for the months ahead, and updating everybody on the work done so far in Brussels. The Staff meeting was, as usual, a great moment to spend with the incredible team of YMCA Europe.

The YFJ General Assembly in Varna

by Dina Seck & Ilenia Ventroni

The General Assembly of the European Youth Forum was held in Varna, Bulgaria, from November 16 to November 19, 2016. As official delegates for YMCA Europe, Gerald Chifamba from YMCA England and Ana Sofia Abreu from YMCA Portugal took part of this event.



This important event saw the members of the YFJ voting for the new President, Board and observer members of the YFJ. The members also worked on the EU Youth Strategy and the YFJ Work Plan 2017-2019, while they also took part of European Youth Capital 2019 election.

The members selected Luis Alvarado Martinez, from AEGEE and the Spanish Youth Council as new president, and Carina Autengruber and Dejan Bojanic as vice president.

We are glad than some friends and partners like Villa Majaama from WOSM and Zuzana Vaneckova from the Czech National Youth Council were also elected as new members of the Board. The other members to join the team are Nafsika Vrettaki, Sebastiaan Rood, Tina Hocevar, Andrea Casamenti, Kristen Aigro, Mari Stromsvag.

A responsibility of our youth leaders was to work on amendments concerning the EU Youth Strategy and the YFJ Work Plan 2017-2019, to defend these amendments in front of the other YFJ members. We presented a total of 17 amendments, most of them passed by the assembly.

Moreover, the Council of Europe has chosen the General Assembly to announce the

'European Youth Capital' of 2018: Novi Sad in Serbia. This prize awards European cities implementing new ideas and innovative projects to empower young people.

At last, it was the occasion to socialize and debate in current issues in Europe through workshops involving migration and health,



youth rights and youth advocacy.

For more information about this event, you can consult the blog of Gerald Chifamba where he kindly shared his experience: (<http://ymcaglobalink.blogspot.be/2016/11/ymca-youth-ambassadors-post-from.html>).

Call for proposal: national or transnational projects on non-discrimination and Roma integration

by Dina Seck

This month, we draw your attention to this action grant offered by the European Commission.

Objective

is to support activities which tackle at least one of the following groups at risk of discrimination: racial or ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older/younger people, religious minorities and LGBTI people.

The **priority** areas of this call for proposals are:

1. Fighting against discrimination based on sexual orientation/promoting the rights of LGBTI people.
2. Diversity management in public and private sector: identification of existing

- practices, measurement of diversity management benefits, awareness-raising.
3. Roma: activities aiming to raise awareness and combat harmful stereotypes of Roma and supporting thereby their integration into mainstream society.
 4. To raise awareness on intergenerational solidarity and non-discrimination on the basis of age (in particular of young people).

Planned opening date

15/12/2016

Deadline

Deadline for submissions: 28/02/2017– 00:00 noon CET

Budget

Between **150.000** and **500.000** euros. The grant cannot exceed **80%** of overall eligible costs.

Example of eligible activities

- ✓ Training of professionals;
- ✓ Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, cooperation, including identifying best practices;
- ✓ Dissemination and awareness raising (including at local level), such as seminars, conferences, campaigns or social media and press activities

Clarification

The duration of the projects should not exceed 24 months. If you are interested in this call, please contact us at ilenia@ymcaeurope.com.





years, the backbone of the Peace and Justice part of our 2016-2020 Strategy.

The team discussed about the organization of the next years of the Programme and its new objectives and methods, along with future Tandem projects and the best way to select and support each participant.

For the Brussel office, in addition to get up to date with the Roots for Reconciliation programme and devise a support strategy, it was also the opportunity to present and to work on the Policy paper on Peace and Justice, our future framework to advocate on this subject. What are the causes of current conflicts in Europe? What is our role in peacebuilding and peacework? These are



some of the questions we were able to ask to our partners and experts of the Roots.

The Roots for Reconciliation is a YMCA Europe initiative aimed at enhancing activism among young people towards peace

Peace Work Institute planning session

by Ilenia Ventroni and Dina Seck

From November 25th until November 27th, a planning session took place in Litomysl, Czech Republic for the Peace Work Institute Planning Team. The main goal of this meeting was to plan the Roots for Reconciliation programme for the next

and justice. Initially it took place in post armed-conflict regions, especially in the South Caucasus. The Programme is now aimed at peacework everywhere in Europe.

Since the beginning, Roots for Reconciliation has been changing lives, movements and communities. Naturally, the Roots is a main resource for our advocacy on peace and justice, and the Brussels Office will support it strongly. We will also set up a platform for the results of the Roots to be broadcasted widely and advocate for peace and justice in Europe and in the world. For more info, please see <http://rfr3.ymcaeurope.com/>

The Advisory Council on Youth

by Ilenia Ventroni

Between December 7 and December 9, our Council of Europe Representative, TinnaRós Steinsdóttir was in Budapest, at a bureau meeting of the Advisory Council on youth of the Council of Europe.

It will be useful to explain the system and the function of Representative to the Advisory Council for all those did not have access to this info in the past. The Council of Europe (CoE) is an institution which is not part of the European Union. It has 47 members, 28 of each are also members of the EU, but the two are separate institutions. The Council of Europe works mostly on the protection of human rights, and the Ministers from all its member states meet regularly to draft common resolutions and monitor the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Advisory Council (AC) is a Council of Europe body made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks in Europe which provide opinions and input on all youth sector activities. It also ensures that young

people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe.

The Advisory Council contributes to the mainstreaming of youth policies across the Council of Europe programme of activities, formulating opinions and proposals on questions concerning youth in the Council of Europe as well as the priorities and budget allocations for the youth sector.

Tinna sits on the bureau of the AC, where she is responsible for the priority focus group on "Inclusive and Peaceful societies". The one she attended at the start of December was the third statutory meeting of the 2016-2017 Bureau.

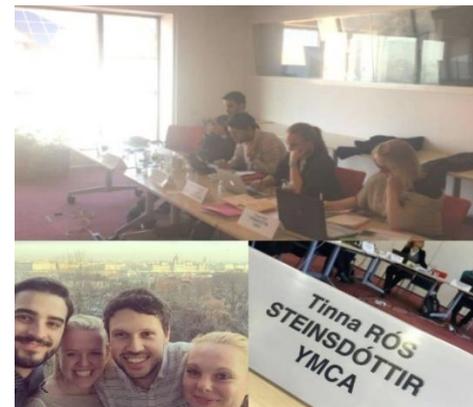
After a day of meetings between the AC bureau, the Joint Bureau of the Steering Committee on Youth of the Council of Europe met for a day. This is where the Ministers for Youth of the member states sit with the AC, and deliberate together on priorities and programming activities.

The biggest topics at the meeting touched on an evaluation of the work done so far and the current action plan. Moreover, plans were made on how to take forward the recently approved Recommendation to

Young People's access to rights (CM/Rec(2016)7 - adopted on 28 September 2016);. The meeting also discussed the CoE Youth Department's priorities for 2018-2019

Tinna has been our representative now for the first 2 years of the term, which will have another round of 2 years which will start in April. Tinna is also member of our YPG, where she will contribute to our policy papers thanks to the experience gained as our Representative these past years.

If you want to know more about the work of our Representatives, please contact the Advocacy Office at ilenia@ymcaeurope.com



Meet our new Youth Policy Group

By Dina Seck



Last month we named our seven new Youth Policy Group members. You can now learn more about them through the following brief descriptions. All these different background, character and skills will help us to build a strong and positive advocacy message that will drive policy change to solve many issues youth is facing right now. We are looking forward to start working with these new members.



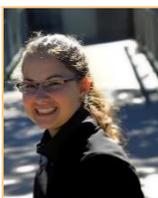
Martina Vitezova comes from Serbia where she is working in the board of Directors of *YMCA Serbia*. Her main tasks there are to advise on long term strategy and raised awareness of youth issues among government officials and civil societies members. She is truly concerned by challenges which affect youth especially ones related to education and employment. In February 2016 for instance, she represented *YMCA World* at the ECOSOC Youth forum. That was the opportunity to discuss the issue of youth unemployment in Europe with representatives of UN agencies. She is looking forwards to start her mission with YPG, a platform where she could contribute to help YMCA advocacy thanks to her many proposals to improve youth education and employment quality.

Here is Elisa Vas who is currently working as Expert/Project Coordinator within Studies and Analyses Unit, in the prestigious European Institute of Romania. She is also working as Communication and Public Relations Assistant within Young Initiative Association, an organization member of *YMCA Romania Federation*. Among other, she studied International Relations, Political and Communication Science at the University of Oradea (Romania). Her several work experiences in communication, pedagogy and social field allowed her to sharpen her communication and conflict management skills.



For two year, Eglantina Lula has been the Executive Director of YMCA Tirana, Albania. She has more than 10 years of experiences in management area, mostly on managerial drafting project proposals and fundraising in NGOs. Moreover, she also has a strong experience as a social worker. For instance, she was moderator within the Albanian World's Children-Human Rights Association where she offered psycho-social counseling. And presently, she provides training and coaching for employment to Albanian women and girls victims of trafficking. She would like to carry on her career in the humanitarian domain to build on and develop her managerial skills and enhance people's lives.

Here is Janette Van Kalkerem from The Netherlands. She is employed as an English teacher; she is also part of the international committee of YMCA of The Netherlands as a volunteer. She has worked with YMCA of The Netherlands for many years. Alongside this organization, she took part to several summer camps as a team member. She helped to improve internal and external communication, social media and the implementation of several new websites too. For a time, she worked as a communication employee for the NGO Youth for Christ. She has already worked in policy making regarding general youth policies for the political movement ChristenUnie -jongeren..



Lea Suzanne Wisseler is from Germany where she is doing her Master's degree in Peace and Conflict studies and Middle Eastern Studies international (B.A.) with major Politics at the Philipps University of Marburg. She loves traveling to discover other countries and religions. She visited many countries in Europe and beyond. Hereby, she stayed a year in Israel and studied for a few months in Jordan. Through those travels, she has seen a lot of human right violations and she realized how challenging peacebuilding can be. She is motivated to contribute to solve this issue and to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue. She is involved in the YMCA movement since an early age and she is looking forward to taking part on a European public debate level and to establishing a more coherent policy message alongside *YMCA Europe*.

Gerald Chifamba is the Project Coordinator of Coventry and Warwickshire YMCA in UK. He is strongly involved in YMCA in many ways. He helps as a volunteer in the World YMCA Resource Group on Health and in YMCA England Health and Wellbeing Committee. He Board member of the YMCA Europe YES group as a policy and advocacy Officer too. Thanks to his different affiliations he will be able to make sure that work in these YMCA groups is coherent and allow coordination between the groups to enhance the advocacy impact of YMCA. He is especially motivated to advocate to foster health provision, increased participation in sports and outdoor activity for young people across Europe.



Phillippa Lewis is from the UK too. Currently, she is working within YMCA England as Policy and Research Officer and previously as Policy Support Officer. A part of her mission consists to respond to Government consultations on behalf of the YMCA Federation. She also undertakes some research, for instance one which was focused on young people's experiences with stigma surrounding mental health difficulties. She has worked for years in the NGO sector especially in communication department with several organisations including Health Poverty Action and Crisis Action.

Funding Opportunities

	What is it?	Deadline	Link
KA3 – VET-Business Partnerships on Work-based learning and Apprenticeships	Erasmus+ call aims at funding either: 1) a partnership between i) a vocational training provider; ii) a small, medium or large enterprise (public or private) or Chamber or other sectoral/professional organisation; iii) and a local or regional authority; or 2) Strategic activities between umbrella organisations at European level and their members to strengthen vocational training-business partnerships on work-based learning and apprenticeships at local/regional context.	17 January 2017	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/ka3-%E2%80%93-vet-business-partnerships-work-based-learning-and-apprenticeships_en
Pilot Activity- European Youth Foundation	National level grassroots action aimed at solving a specific issue	Anytime	http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/pilot-activity
Pilot Project- Europe in diversity	trainings, seminars, workshops, and other activities aim at Mutual understanding, acceptance and tolerance among different ethnic, religious, national and linguistic groups to fight discrimination	28 February 2017	http://ec.europa.eu/research/participations/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/rec/topics/rec-rppi-eudi-ag-2016.html
Support dialogue and exchange of best practice in fostering tolerance and mutual respect	Grassroots projects on preventing and combating Antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred but also homophobia and transphobia. Projects to create better understanding between communities, including religious communities, and prevent and combat racism and xenophobia through interreligious and intercultural activities.	05 January 2017	http://ec.europa.eu/research/participations/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/rec/topics/rec-rrac-raci-ag-2016.html
Action grants to support national or transnational projects on non-discrimination and Roma integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fighting against discrimination based on sexual orientation and promoting the rights of LGBTI people. 2. Diversity management in the public and private sector: identification of existing practices, measurement of diversity management benefits, and awareness-raising. 3. Raise awareness and combat harmful stereotypes of Roma. 4. To raise awareness about intergenerational solidarity and non-discrimination on the basis of age. 	28 February 2017 17:00:00  Planned opening date: 15 December 2016	http://ec.europa.eu/research/participations/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/rec/topics/rec-rdis-disc-ag-2016.html