

# NEWSLETTER

No. 6 May – July 2014



## YMCA in Europe

44 countries, 5500 local associations

1,8 million people reached per year

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Dear Friend of YMCA Europe,

We are very glad to welcome you to another YMCA EUROPE'S NEWSLETTER with our programme highlights and main events organized during the past three months.

***We are thankful for your service and commitment!***

Everything that we have achieved was possible thanks to the support of our YMCA network, partners and friends like you.

We hope that you enjoy reading and we wish you a wonderful rest of the summer!





**GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014.  
ROOTS AND LEAVES, PART III**

**Litomysl, Czech Republic.  
May 29th – June 1st**

*105 delegates from 32 European countries plus guests from the YMCAs of Canada and Brasil, gathered in Litomysl at YMCA Europe's General Assembly.*



Under the title **“Roots and Leaves, Part III – Inclusive Christianity”**, the agenda included discussions and approval of reports, elections for new Executive Committee members, group work sessions and inspiring keynote speeches focusing on Inclusive Christianity.

The report about the past year's highlights was presented, including details about YMCA Europe's events, trainings, seminars, Movement Strengthening strategy and management procedures emphasizing our response to the challenges of contemporary Europe. Also the 2013 financial

and auditor reports together with our budget for 2015 together with the proposal for the review of National Contributions System were approved by the delegates.

The “YES event” took place also in Litomysl before the General Assembly with young delegates from 10 countries. One more time, the YES network of young people inspired the rest of delegates.

The renewed Portuguese National Movement was officially welcomed as new National Movement and six interest groups about relevant topics were also organized. In their meeting, National General Secretaries

raised topics for the next NGS Forum (London, November 24th - 26th ). Several presentations of upcoming pan European programmes developed by several National Movements completed the agenda of an intense and fruitful event.

**Thank you to all of you for a successful and inspiring General Assembly !!**

We look forward to our next General Assembly in May 2015 in Tallin, (Estonia) including a day in Helsinki hosted by YMCA Finland.



## NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

One of the highlights of the General Assembly was also the election of 5 new assessors as members of our Executive Committee following our Constitution. Kie Cummings (England), Birgir Urbanic Asgeirsson (Iceland), Martin Winter (Germany), Diana Zarembiene (Lithuania) and Dan Carpov (Romania) were elected.



We deeply thank and congratulate Eva Magassy (Hungary) and Ion State (Romania) for their service, contribution and commitment as members of the Executive Committee over the past two years. Together with Ed Eggink (President), Stepan Cerny (Vice President), Mike Will (Treasurer) and Beate Turck (Recording Secretary), the new Executive Committee had its first meeting immediately after the GA.



YMCA Europe Annual Report 2013

## YMCA EUROPE'S 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

This is our opportunity to share our progress with our Members, our members, partners and supporters. Reflecting on our achievements, we are proud to say that we made a significant impact in different areas through a variety of initiatives. For many reasons, this was a crucial year for YMCA Europe!

Following our Strategic Plan, in 2013 we focused on our second signature programme under the title "Healthy Living" and you will also read about the main seminars, trainings and conferences involving local and national YMCAs across Europe.

Read the Annual Report [here](#).

## STAFF VISIT TO ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

May 6th - 12th, YMCA Europe staff travel to three Baltic countries had one main purpose: to assess the capacity of the movements for programme cooperation on European level.

Additionally, there were particular goals to achieve: In Estonia early arrangements for the GA in Tallin - Helsinki in 2015 was crucial. In Latvia we agreed on ways to provide further support to the movement and in Lithuania the recent developments were evaluated, strengthening the cooperation between Y's Men and the YMCA-YWCA leadership.



## click to watch



## JUNE 6TH. THE YMCA IS 170 YEARS YOUNG.

We celebrate the foundation of the YMCA in London on June 6th 1844 by a group of young people led by George Williams. On June 6th, the "World Challenge 2014" inspired millions of people in Europe and the whole world.

This video was produced by the World Alliance of YMCAs to celebrate the 170 years of the YMCA in the world and our passion for empowering young people. The final result you see on your screen was made from footage sent by YMCAs in 34 different countries. For more information go to <http://challenge.ymca.int>

## BRIDGES FOR THE FUTURE - PRISTINA, KOSOVO

June 20th - 22nd, Roots for Reconciliation Balkan Tandem Team met in Pristina, Kosovo planning "Bridges for the future project" that will take place in September 2014.

This International activity, co founded by Council of Europe and BFDW Germany would contribute to the tandem grant phase within the "Roots for Reconciliation" project, where neighboring post conflict countries are encouraged to work together. This initiative is led by successful graduates from previous

support for cross-border or regional initiatives aiming to bring together young people from different conflict sides. 35 young people will meet for a week to engage and utilize a new generation of peace advocates using social media and cross country collaboration as tools of engagement.



Follow Roots for Reconciliation



## YMCA EUROPE REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCE ABOUT YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT.

From 23rd to 25th of June 2014, an international conference organized by "Europatriates" about prospects to tackle youth unemployment in Europe took place in Saarbrücken (Germany). 5,5 million young people are unemployed within EU countries. Our President, Ed Eggink, participated in a panel discussion during the conference, together with representatives from science (Hilarion Petzold); the European Trade Union Confederation (their Youth President Salvatore Marra); Industry (Business Europe representative Javier Calderon Beltran) and cross border youth work Germany-France (Beatrice Angrand).

Ed has emphasized the importance of paying attention to employment opportunities for all youth; including minorities and those who have problems in entering the labour market because of their background. Not only focus on unemployed, well educated young people, but also creating opportunities for other, less privileged, youth. He gave examples of projects of YMCA's in different countries supporting labour opportunities for young people and preparing young people on their way to working experience and jobs.

## PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

Liam Preston is the Parliamentary and Policy Officer at YMCA England and he also represents YMCA Europe at the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

Liam was invited to be the keynote speaker at the conference promoted by the Congress of Local Regional Authorities under the title "Promoting active citizenship and engagement of young people representative institutions and other means".

Please [click here](#) for Liam's speech and discover an inspiring approach to the meaning of youth participation.





## FROM "NEW WAY" TO "OUR WAY"

### WORLD ALLIANCE OF YMCA'S WORLD COUNCIL

ESTES PARK, COLORADO, USA  
JUNE 29th - JULY 5th.

In the heart of the Rocky Mountains, more than 1,300 participants from five continents joined the 18th World Council of YMCAs in Estes Park, benefiting from an event that provided personal and collective learning and fellowship in a creative, participatory and effective way.

Delegates discussed and agreed on the World Alliance Strategic Plan 2014 -2018 through group and plenary sessions, most of them led by "change agents" as the living expression of the "youth empowerment" approach.

The Plan identifies three priorities that will inspire our global movement : Youth Empowerment, Resource Development and Communications /Advocacy /Research /Impact.

Peter Posner (England) was elected as new President of the World Alliance of YMCAs. Also the 5 candidates from different European YMCAs were elected members of the new Executive Committee : Dorothee Pfrommer (Germany), Otto Vainio (Finland), Peter Jeffrey (England), Mike Will (Scotland) and Silvio Krauss (Switzerland). Ed Eggink (Netherlands) as our Area President is also a member of the Executive Committee.



*220 delegates representing YMCAs in Europe gathered in Estes Park.*

*YMCA Europe organized two area meetings during the week and resolutions from Sweden ("Safe space for core values discussions within our movement") and Norway ("Poverty Eradication") were presented and approved in plenary sessions. Also, Armenia, Romania, Portugal and Georgia became new members of WAY.*

Thank you to the World Alliance, the YMCA of the USA, the YMCA of the Rockies and everyone who contributed to this inspiring and innovative World Council.





## 'LIRIA' MEANS FREEDOM: VISIT TO THE BALKANS

Facilitating developments within different YMCA contexts and movement strengthening are key objectives for YMCA Europe.

Therefore last July 9-14, we visited Slovenia, Albania and Montenegro and were updated on the YMCA realities within those countries. It is always an experience to be there! And to learn. This time, for example, we got to know that in Balkan Roma language the word 'liria' means "freedom" and that this word is one of most important for them - the essence of their philosophy of life, their contribution to setting universal human values...

[click for full article](#)

## 'CATCH THE VISION' SEMINAR

Qualification of participants open!

The seminar will take place in Voloshin, Belarus - October 13-18, 2014 and it's addressed for everyone over 18 years old. Language of the seminar: English

In 2014 YMCA Europe focuses on 'Inclusive Christianity' and the CtV seminar is our 'highlight-event' - hosted by YMCA Belarus and local YMCA in Voloshin.



[click for full article](#)

## MORE NEWS

YMCA Europe signed the Operational Grant Agreement with the Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (European Commission). The grant supports YMCA Europe and our initiatives in the field of youth.

YMCA Canada renewed the annual grant to YMCA Europe and again in 2014 we will be able to host all European National General Secretaries at their 3rd Forum (London, November 24-26) More information and details will be sent to NGS's.

In the frame of the cooperation between the International Group of YMCA USA and YMCA Europe, Sebastian Vogt (change agent, Germany) was hosted at the YMCAs of the Rockies and Boulder in Colorado and YUSA Office in Chicago as part of his internship after the World Council.

Albrecht Kaul from Germany is the new WFYR (World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees) Vice Chair for Europe. John Knox ceased to be the WFYR Vice Chair for Europe after six years of successful service. Thank you, John, and all the best Albrecht!

Paola Petracchi (Italy) and Robert Faith (The Netherlands) were appointed as new National General Secretaries of their YMCAs. Best wishes for Paola and Robert in their new responsibilities.

Flemming Stentoft was appointed as new Europe Service Director for YMCA relations of Y's Men International. Flemming attended YMCA Europe's General Assembly in May and he was. We are thankful for Y's Men commitment and contribution to YMCA Europe through Paul Thompson and Paul Henrik over the years.

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