



Live from Brussels - A YMCA Europe Brussels Newsletter

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INTERESTING TIMES

THIS MONTH

Interesting Times

by Ilenia Ventroni

June has brought incredible changes to Europe. On June 23rd the British people have voted to leave the European Union, and this has started a chain of events which was quite unprecedented.

Many European institutions and political parties have called for Treaty changes, something that will probably have consequences on EU competencies. This might change the landscape where YMCA Europe works: there might be different areas where we can concentrate our advocacy, or funds to use for our activities. The Brussels office is now in a good position to monitor these historic changes, and to try to make the most out of it.

The role of civil society

Whatever the changes in the frameworks of political power in Europe, one thing that comes clearly out of these big changes is the need to empower civil society and young people. The lack of participation of young people to the democratic process and the

divisiveness of political debates are worrying elements of today's society, areas where YMCA can bring positive change. Many of our countries see growing inequalities and social exclusion, which often bring disunity and political and social unrest. The effects of a long and dramatic economic crisis have brought forward very strong feelings toward political elites, but also towards other segments of society like migrants and minorities. YMCA strives not only to bring our youth's voice closer and closer to the big political decisions, but also to bring our message of peace and unity, inclusion and understanding.

Our job is to give voice to young people and to what they need, and we will keep doing this.

Projects and Programmes

Summer is a quite slower time for call for proposals at a European level. However, European programmes are built in such a way that we can know well in advance what are the new funding

opportunities. Thus, in this issue, you will see several calls and their deadlines quite far away. This means that there is some time to apply: contact us to discover how and to let us help you in this! For more info, see [page 2 and 3](#).



A stronger voice

Our work with advocacy continues, and the first results are already here to be observed. This regards particularly the work done with the European Youth Forum and advocacy related to the next budget of the European Union. To discover how are action in Brussels is making a difference in European funding, please see [page 2!](#)

What's up in Brussels?

by Ilenia Ventroni



We continue here to give you updates on the **Multi Annual Financial Framework** of the EU (MFF). The MFF sets the priorities for EU spending over the 7 years' period of programming of the EU, and we were able to give our priorities to both the Commission and the Parliament on that during a meeting organized by the YFJ. Because of the Brexit issue, the vote in committee has been moved from the 27th of June to the 29th of June. Political groups decide to compromise on certain groups of amendments ahead of the vote, this makes them practically sure to pass. Together with the Youth Intergroup we tabled amendments for these compromises,

in particular after the meeting we reported in the previous issues of this newsletter. Gladly, almost all the amendments we tabled as result of our event "Invest in Youth: Youth Voices in EU Budget" were included.

This means that there was no need to reach out to numerous MEPs to reach out to BUDG MEPs. The report will be voted in Plenary in July, this week.

After this, our work with the YFJ will see these next steps:

- We will try to include all the elements we didn't include in the amendments to the MFF report in the discussions of EU Budget 2017. The proposal from the Commission is expected this week, and it remains to be seen if BREXIT will have an influence on that).

- We keep an eye on the Erasmus+ Implementation report. The first exchange of views in the CULT Committee is foreseen on the 13th of July.

Discovering YMCA

by Ilenia Ventroni

During the month of June, I had the opportunity to continue to improve my knowledge of the YMCA movements across Europe. In particular, I had the great chance to visit YMCA England and YMCA France. I visited YMCA England between the 14th and the 16th of June, and I had the opportunity to visit also a number of local movements: Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Birmingham and Coventry. These movements have a very long history of service in their communities, and provide incredible services to families and young people alike: housing for the homeless, childcare, sport activities, mental health support, training for jobs, youth clubs, etc. I also had the chance to meet the President of the World Alliance, Peter Posner, who very kindly welcomed me at YMCA Derbyshire. I had the opportunity to discuss cooperation

with these YMCAs on many topics, with particular attention to projects and advocacy. On June 20th I had the opportunity to visit YMCA France in Paris, and I had the chance to spend some time learning about the very diverse activities carried out and ways in which the Brussels office can support them. The key word is diversity: YMCAs across Europe do very different things, and this is the beauty and the strength of the movement. There is no area of service where YMCA is not present, making us an actor who can speak on behalf of young people even more extensively than other youth organizations. I have learned a lot from the work of the movements I have visited, and the visit has been very useful to understand



modes of operating and ways in which the Brussels office can be useful to our movements. I would like to thank again Ken Montgomery and Alexandra Box for organizing this important experience, which will be beneficial for the work of the Brussels office and hopefully also for their movements, but most of all for their warm welcome and great support!

Here you will be able to find all relevant calls for proposals open at the moment. If you have any question on them, **feel free to contact us** and we will help you out!

Funding Opportunities

	What is it?	Deadline	Link
<i>Open call for Visegrad Fund's Small grants</i>	The International Visegrad Fund is an international organization, founded by the governments of the Visegrad Group (V4) countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic). Grant support is given to original projects in the areas of culture, science and research, youth exchanges, crossborder cooperation and tourism promotion.	September 1 and December 1 2016	http://visegradfund.org/grants/standard-grants/
<i>International Activity – Council of Europe</i>	International meeting of young people or youth leaders in Europe which contribute to the work of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in topic, methodology and with a clear European dimension.	October 1 st 2016	http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/international-activity
<i>Key Action 1: Mobility of individuals</i>	Learning Mobility of Individuals in the field of Youth	October 4 th 2016	Please refer to you National Agency and to the Programme Guide (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en) at page 32, 75 and 89
<i>Key Action 2: Co-operation for innovation and the exchange of good practices</i>	Strategic Partnerships in the field of youth	October 4 th 2016	Please refer to you National Agency and to the Programme Guide (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en) at page 107
<i>Key Action 3: Support for policy reform</i>	Structured Dialogue with Youth	October 4 th 2016	Please refer to you National Agency and to the Programme Guide (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en) at page 185