

PRESS RELEASE



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**'Hello, future of Europe!'
The European Youth Forum elects a new leadership**

**European Youth Forum (YFJ) General Assembly
13-15 November, Rotterdam (The Netherlands)**

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) General Assembly (GA) took place in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) on 13-15 November 2008, hosted by *YOUR WORLD – Rotterdam European Youth Capital 2009*. Elections were held to elect new leadership for the 2009-10 mandate and adopt policies on youth matters.

A new leadership elected

During three intense working days, over 200 young delegates from National Youth Councils and International Non Governmental Youth Organisations gathered in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) to elect a new Bureau for 2009-10 and adopt a Work Plan and budget for the coming two years.

For the first time the new President of the European Youth Forum will come from South East Europe. Tine Radinja (28, Slovenia) stressed in his closing speech the need to "join efforts even stronger into the recognition of the crucial role of youth organisations in building Europe as a space of progress, equal opportunities and mutual understanding".

Advocating for youth in Europe

The General Assembly adopted different policy documents during its working sessions that will shape its actions in representing youth interests towards its partners in Europe.

Seven months before the European Elections, the European Youth Forum has approved a set of 'Proposals for a new youth agenda for the European Union' stating YFJ's main expectations of the next mandate of the European Parliament and European Commission (2009 -2014).

The General Assembly adopted two policy papers on 'Health and well-being of young people' and 'Early education leaving', as well as the 'Key principles for the new framework for European cooperation in the youth field'. In addition, the European Youth Forum adopted resolutions on the Return Directive on

Immigration passed by the European Parliament, on the Arms Trade Treaty and on the European Directive to increase the working time. An urgent resolution on the situation in the Republic of Belarus was prepared by RADA, the Belarusian Union of Youth and Children's Public Associations, and adopted by the delegates of the European Youth Forum.

A bigger family

During the General Assembly, the European Youth Forum welcomed three new organisations: one as a Candidate (Croatian Youth Network) and two as Observer Members: YEN (Youth Express Network) and ENGSO (European Non Governmental Sport Organisation).

“There is more and more need of active young people in Europe,” underlines Bettina Schwarzmayr at the end of her mandate as President, “and we are happy to see that the YFJ is continuously growing as an organisation”.

The GA also welcomed guests from different European institutional partners. The presence of representatives from the Latin-American Youth Forum and the All-China Youth Federation strengthened the active role of the YFJ in developing a coherent strategy of global and interregional cooperation in the youth field.

The young leaders of tomorrow meet the Club de Madrid

The young delegates of the YFJ General Assembly were invited by the Club of Madrid to participate in an evening event of the *First Global Forum on Leadership for Shared Societies*.

During this event, the ‘young leaders of tomorrow’ had the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas with some of the former and current leaders of the world, officials from international organisations, international experts and civil society leaders.

Open doors to the future of Europe

The Former Prime Minister of Latvia and member of the Club de Madrid, Mr. Valdis Birkavs, addressed the young delegates during a session of the future of Europe. “I very much believe that a new generation will come and change politics”, he said, “and this is your generation. The future of Europe is knocking at your doors every morning and you are the ones that don’t hesitate to open [them], because you want to change Europe and make it a better place”. With his words, he showed his pleasure at seeing so many committed young people fostering democratic values and engaging themselves in political life.

“The European Youth Forum is ready to be a loudspeaker for youth in Europe,” concluded Tine Radinja, new President-elect, “and to take all the new challenges for the future of young people in Europe”.

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The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is a platform made up of 99 National Youth Councils and international youth NGOs from across Europe, that promotes the interests of young people towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. For more information, visit www.youthforum.org

