

## European YWCAs Committee Meeting 15-17 June 2012, Brussels & Antwerp, Belgium

The European YWCA Committee met in Brussels and Antwerp, Belgium, June 15-17, 2012. The Committee visited European Partner Organisations to discuss opportunities for future cooperation with European YWCAs and had a productive meeting discussing the planning of the ERM and future directions for European YWCAs. We believe that the European YWCAs have an important role to play in being a strong voice for young women and gender equality in Europe.



The Committee expresses its appreciation to YWCA of Antwerp for providing space for the meeting. Tracy Guest from the YWCA of Great Britain joined the meeting as a special guest and participated in discussions around future priorities for European YWCAs. Michelle Higelin, the World YWCA's Focal Point for Europe and Deputy General Secretary also joined the meeting. The Committee would like to inform you on the following news:

### Partner Meetings

The meeting provided the opportunity to meet with key partners based in Brussels and to talk about ways of engaging them in the ERM in November.

### WAGGGS Europe

On the Friday afternoon, we met with Rosemary Hindle about cooperation between WAGGGS and YWCAs in Europe. We discussed opportunities for continuing the “BIG 6” project, which started in 2007, Litomsl, Czech Republic. WAGGGS will also invite some YWCAs in Europe to their study session on violence against girls later in the year as a starting point for future collaboration.



### European Women's Lobby

The European Committee visited the Office of EWL and met with Cecile Greboval, Executive Director. The meeting was very interesting and fruitful. It was an opportunity to share the priorities and work of YWCAs in the region with EWL. We discussed a number of areas where we can build further cooperation, including strengthening young women's representation in EWL, promoting women's rights through European and global events, and work on trafficking and migration. Cecile also shared ways



for EYWCAAs to be more involved in EWL campaigns and meetings.

The meeting also provided a briefing on the recent EWL Forum, at which Anna Paradowska, General Secretary of YWCA of Poland represented EYWCAAs. Anna's feedback on the EWL Forum is that the YWCA can be a stronger voice for women from Eastern Europe as EWL membership represents EU countries only.

### **European Youth Forum**

We also visited the EYF office and met with Jo Denman, Membership Officer. The meeting discussed opportunities for EYWCA engagement in the Youth Forum, and participating in its working groups and campaigns. EYF encouraged YWCAs to engage with their National Youth Councils to strengthen country level advocacy to promote EYF priorities such as the Vote@16 campaign and promotion of quality internship opportunities for young people. The meeting was also an opportunity for the EYWCAAs to promote a stronger gender focus within EYF and brief EYF on the work of YWCAs.



Leen Lesire, the Treasurer of the Committee, participated in the Council of Members Meeting of EYF in Brussels, April 2012, which strengthened partnerships with other youth and faith-based organisations in Europe. The EYF will hold its General Assembly in Slovenia from 15-18 November. The EYWCAAs have two funded positions at the GA and we invite members to nominate young women 30 or under who are interested in participating. Please send your expressions of interest by **1 September** to [europeanywcas@worldywca.org](mailto:europeanywcas@worldywca.org).

### **European Representatives Meeting**

The theme for the next ERM will be **Women Envisioning Europe's Future, which will be held in the Czech Republic from November 1-4 this year**. The registration form and further information will be circulated shortly. During the meeting in Antwerp, the Committee discussed issues of voting and representation, strategic planning, reporting and constitutional amendments, as well as member association updates and fundraising. It was an opportunity to explore the future role of the European YWCAs and discuss the needs of our members going forward. As part of our future directions, we are committed to building strong member associations in Europe and facilitating partnerships across YWCAs.

### **Power to Change Grant**

We are also pleased to report that EYWCAAs, with the support of YWCA-YMCA of Sweden, have been successful in obtaining a grant from the World YWCA's Power to Change Fund to support young women's participation and leadership at the ERM. This grant will enable us to fund young women delegates from YWCAs with limited resources to participate in the ERM and to develop a strategy for young women's leadership in YWCAs in Europe.

### **Delegates and Observers Policy**

Some associations have requested guidance on the number of observers and delegates they can bring to the ERM. In accordance with the constitution of EYWCAAs, members who have paid their levies will be entitled to 4 voting delegates (including 2 young women), and those who have not, will have

1 voting delegate. While the room at the venue is sufficient for additional observers to participate, the EYWCAAs would like to encourage members to bring no more than two observers. If your association has funds to send additional observers, we encourage you to use these resources to support a sister association. We have a number of YWCAs who have indicated that they cannot participate in the ERM unless they have some financial support. As EYWCAAs only have funding for young women delegates, support for other delegates from these YWCAs would be appreciated.

### **Worship Committee**

As part of our ERM programme planning, the EYWCAAs would like to invite interested members to nominate for the worship committee for the ERM. Please let us know of your interest by emailing [europeanywcas@worldywca.org](mailto:europeanywcas@worldywca.org)

### **Nominations Deadline**

A reminder that the deadline for nominations for the European YWCAs Committee is 1 August 2012. Please submit nominations on the form circulated in the last mailing to [europeanywcas@worldywca.org](mailto:europeanywcas@worldywca.org)

### **August mailing will include:**

- Detailed programme for the ERM
- Constitutional amendments
- List of candidates for European YWCAs Committee
- Number of voting delegates per member association

### **Levy Payments**

The new levy invoice for 2012 will be circulated over the coming week. The amounts have been revised based on new membership and unrestricted income figures reported to the World YWCA and an assessment of capacity to pay. We appreciate if payment can be made prior by September 30, 2012 or prior to the ERM. The committee also notes that some **LEVY** payments for 2011 are still outstanding, including Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Georgia, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia and Switzerland. We appreciate if any outstanding payments for 2011 can be made over the next month as we are finalising the number of votes for each association at the ERM. We also note that only YWCAs who have paid levies can nominate candidates for elections. Please contact our President, Anna Magnusson, or Treasurer, Leen Lesire if your association has difficulties paying the full levy amount for 2011 or has any questions regarding the new amounts for 2012.

### **Other Updates**

The EYWCAAs thanks Pirjo-Liisa Penttinen from YWCA of Finland for her support in reviewing the discussion paper for CEC around their new structure in the lead up to their General Assembly that will be held next year. The Committee has also supported the call to retain EU administrative grants for European youth organisations as part of the European Youth Forum. We have also submitted an application to host a study session in 2012 on the theme European Young Women Advocating for Human Rights and Equality. We hope to have a decision soon on the outcome of this application. The Committee has also been looking into the EU Youth in Action programme. The next deadline for applications is 1 September. We note that 2012 priorities are focused on projects tackling youth unemployment and poverty, particularly among marginalised groups, as well as those that support young people's entrepreneurship and employability; promote healthy lifestyles; and tackle global environmental challenges. Please contact us if there are any members who would like to work on a joint- application around one of these areas.

## Contact us

If you have any comments, suggestions or ideas please contact us. These are the e-mail addresses of European Committee members:

Anna Magnusson – President – [anna.magnusson@kfum.se](mailto:anna.magnusson@kfum.se)

Leen Lesire – Treasurer - [leen.lesire@base.be](mailto:leen.lesire@base.be)

Elena Dolakidze – member - [leladolakidze@yahoo.com](mailto:leladolakidze@yahoo.com)

Irina Rodygina – member - [irina\\_rodygina@mail.ru](mailto:irina_rodygina@mail.ru)

Birgit Steffensen - member - [b.stef@hafnet.dk](mailto:b.stef@hafnet.dk)

Michelle Higelin – World YWCA European Focal Point - [michelle.higelin@worldywca.org](mailto:michelle.higelin@worldywca.org)