



EUROBLOG: The craziest journalistic adventure in Europe-ever

Jeugdwerknet is a Flemish organisation that gathers every piece of information that is useful for youth workers on one website: www.jeugdwerknet.be. We have a young team of volunteers who write articles for our website, 'VER-kijker'; my role is to co-ordinate them and to deal with everything concerning communication. During the European Youth Work Convention in Ghent we were present for six days to report about the topics discussed as well as the convention's atmosphere on www.euroblog.be.

by Kristof D'hanens

The Euroblog adventure

Twelve days, eight cities, six journalists, one mission: making young people aware of the influence of Europe in their everyday lives.

What do young people know about Europe and the European Union? Not that much, as we found out when we asked some students at the school gates. Are there 25 countries? 30? 27? Few students could tell us how many member states the European Union counts. And when we showed them a picture of José Manuel Barosso or Catherine Ashton, most did not recognise them.

From Amsterdam to Helsinki, from Istanbul to London

In the spring of 2010, six volunteers (two bloggers, two cameramen, one audio editor and one webmaster) were challenged to visit eight European cities in twelve days. They had to tackle thirteen European youth issues on their tour in blog posts, videos and audio reports and publish them on www.euroblog.be. Their ultimate goal: making young people aware of the influence the European Union has in their everyday lives.

Knowing this, one of the craziest ideas ever was launched by three Flemish youth media organisations: JAVI television, REC Radio centre and Jeugdwerknet. JAVI specialises in on-line video reports about youth work, made by young volunteers. REC trains young people in radio skills. Jeugdwerknet works with a team of young people who write articles about youth work for jeugdwerknet.be. When these three organisations pulled together, Euroblog was born.

And it sure was an amazing trip! Hitchhiking from Brussels to Amsterdam by truck, blogging on the boat between Helsinki and Tallinn, couchsurfing in Istanbul, almost being arrested in London... From any point of view it was a huge journalistic adventure!



Challenged by Herman Van Rompuy

Every morning the six Eurobloggers received a challenge from a well-known Flemish person through a YouTube video: European president Herman Van Rompuy, Belgian Minister of Justice Stefaan De Clerck or the rockstar Axl Peleman.

The type of challenges? 'Go to Amsterdam using three different kinds of transportation', 'Find out why they do not use euros in London' or 'Try to find the border of Europe in Istanbul', to name only a few.

The Eurobloggers succeeded in their mission and the project was well received by young people and youth workers in Flanders. After twelve days of hard work they returned home, exhausted but satisfied and a lot more experienced as journalists.

New challenges for Euroblog

As the website was no longer used after the project, JAVI, REC and Jeugdwerknet decided to give the project a second life when the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union started in July 2010. During the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and the 1st European Youth Convention, young people wrote reports about the workshops and visits; they also interviewed keynote speakers and participants. They published in Dutch, French and English in order to give all European youth workers the chance to stay in tune with everything that was going on during the conference. And Euroblog will continue to do so as long as Belgium holds the presidency and perhaps afterwards too, when Antwerp becomes the European Youth Capital in 2011.



www.euroblog.be
www.twitter.com/eurobloggers
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Empowering the powerful?

Who are the young people that join youth work organisations all over Europe? Are there really 'different youth work realities in different Europes' as one of the keynote speakers at the convention indicated?

If international mobility has an important and positive effect on the competence development of a youth worker, can we conclude that 'the best are on the move'? And if they are always on the move how far can they contribute to the development of youth work practices at national and local level?

It is said that professional and voluntary forms of youth work are, and should be, complementary just as formal and non-formal education are complementary. But for whom? Are we providing extra skills to the young people who are already being privileged through all this complementarity? Could it be the case that both professional and voluntary youth work practices are leaving out the same young people, the 'hard shells'?

Do you think the threshold of access to youth work should be lower? If so, what is the ideal level of competence of youth workers in order to keep the threshold lower and youth work accessible for all?

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