

CONFERENCE REPORT

UNITED Conference

Intercultural Action in an Expanding Europe

Developing anti-discrimination tools in a new European context

June 25-29, 2003 Luxembourg

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1 [Introduction / Summary](#)

An enlargement of the European Union is forthcoming, as ten new countries are going to enter the EU in 2004 - Hungary, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Cyprus. The countries, which will not join EU and for which this prospect is probably out of the question, will face the rigid border rules and discriminatory visa policy. New divides appear in the eastern part of Europe, and relations between neighboring countries change for the worse. After the EU 'expansion' minorities, migrants and refugees will experience even more drastic inequality and discrimination in new political, economical and social realities and will have to shift to survive in those realities. Tony Blair's new proposal - the creation of 'protection centers' for refugees and migrants close to the countries of their origin or on the border of new EU countries, which will play the role of watchdogs, i.e. keep asylum seekers outside "Fortress Europe" - is already being discussed in EU structures. Today the future EU members have become a breeding ground for the growth of right extremism and manipulations of consciousness, especially that of the youth. Moreover, despite the fact that, following the EU "Race Equality Directive", the candidate countries are obliged to adopt a similar law, national parliaments of those countries linger to enact anti-discrimination legislation.

The UNITED Conference, which was held during five days in the Cultural Centre of the beautiful village Larochette (Luxembourg), underlined the importance of the European anti-discrimination NGOs networking. 80 young delegates of 76 organisations from all over Europe participated in the UNITED conference, thus representing Europe from Belarus (Anti-Fascist Youth Center) to France (Federation des Associations de Solidarité avec les Travailleurs Immigrés), from Spain (Movimiento contra la Intolerancia) to Romania (ROMANTIN - Roma Youth and Students' Association). Participants from a total of 36 countries took part in the conference. Through various working methods - discussions, brainstorming, presentations, working groups - the participants showed their strong interest in the development of anti-discrimination tools. They also shared their personal experience and that of their organisations to oppose discrimination through education and public wide campaigns, i.e. demonstrations, actions of protest, awareness-raising events, etc. Five major two-day thematic working groups tackled the issues of:

- Europe and its new borders;
- situation of migrants and refugees;
- situation of minorities;
- intercultural education;
- right extremist tendencies in Europe.

It gave the young participants multiple possibilities: to present the situation in their countries, share good practices, and develop common strategies.

The conference became a real platform for valuable experience exchange. Some of the organisations represented there have built a long-term co-operation within the UNITED network, e.g. 'Never Again Association' (Poland), 'Memorial' (Russia) while other organisations came to an UNITED conference for the first time.

Special debates were centred around the UNITED campaign dedicated to 9th November, International Day Against Fascism and Antisemitism that promotes the fight against fascist propaganda and present-day prejudice and discrimination of migrants, minorities and religious groups (Jews, Roma, Muslims, etc).

The participants also decided to make a clear statement concerning Tony Blair's discriminatory proposal and include this protest into the annual UNITED campaign in support of refugees.

The idea of active participation in the preparation of the joint 'Newsletter on Fighting Discrimination against Minorities in Europe' was also supported by most of the participants.

On the whole, the conference showed that for the organisations struggling against racism the time has come not only to react, but also to contribute to the creation of positive changes in our common European home.

2 Working Groups "My Multicultural Europe"

"Most Gypsies are criminals and drug-dealers. They are dirty they do not want to study", "All Muslims are terrorists", "Greek people are enemies to me" and vice versa from the Greek side towards Turks, etc. All these prejudices and negative stereotypes dominate society's thinking and frequently trigger violence and discrimination of such vulnerable groups as minorities and migrants.

At the beginning of the Conference the participants were divided into parallel groups to discuss the notion of "multicultural Europe", finding out what we have in common and what is different in us and what is the role of the anti-discrimination movement. For most of the participants Europe means common history, culture, challenges, identity and freedom of movement, but today each European country has to face negative stereotypes and prejudices. Discrimination is widespread, but it is not admitted and usually state officials insist that there is no racism in their country. The necessary components of multicultural Europe are diversity, understanding, learning from each other, equal treatment and equal chances for everybody, and integration.

The participants also discussed terminology used for cultural variety, integration of migrants and integration of minorities. They concluded that in a multicultural Europe integration could never be a 'one-way-street', but had to be implemented in all parts of society. In other words, not only migrants should integrate themselves into a new surrounding, but also the 'majority' has to be integrated into multicultural Europe. Therefore, the participants emphasised that integration means recognition of diversity and not mere assimilation into the mainstream culture. Today the term 'multiculturalism' has become very popular and is often abused by politicians and economists for reasons of economic profit. To achieve multicultural Europe it is necessary to reinforce education and exchange between different cultures and lifestyles. Cultural conflicts also appear inside the countries, for instance, tension between urban

and rural population, discrimination of gays and lesbians as well as "alternative" youth cultures. As a step to multicultural Europe, NGOs can play an important role in supporting educational facilities to raise young peoples' awareness in terms of tolerance and anti-discrimination.

3 Presentation and Debates

Europe: Quo Vadis?

The impact of the EU accession on asylum and migration policy in Europe

Marei Pelzer, PRO ASYL, Germany

Marei Pelzer spoke about the establishment of 'Fortress Europe' on the territory of the accession countries and their role in the treatment of immigrants from the so-called 'third group' of European countries, Africa and Asia. She gave the participants a general overview of the European asylum and migration policy. According to the Amsterdam Treaty, asylum and migration policy became part of the EU competence, and the Commission has a sole right to propose legislation on asylum law. For the first time it has become possible to speak meaningfully of a European asylum policy. Before the end of 2004 the main institutions of the EU must adopt measures defining:

- which member state is responsible for examining an asylum claim (a new legislation is adopted which is called "Dublin II");
- minimum standards on the reception of asylum seekers (deals mainly with social rights);
- minimum standards on the qualification of third country nationals as refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (they need to agree on what is the definition of refugee and who needs protection);
- minimum standards on procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee status (there is a proposal for a directive and it contains some problematic regulations, e.g. a possibility of detention of asylum seekers);
- minimum standards for giving temporary protection.

Marei Pelzer stated that this common policy is a good chance to stop the race of different European member states for the lowest standards. If we have minimum standards, then the process of lowering standards can be stopped. However, despite of this, after four years, she is sceptical, as there is a lot of pressure to adopt standards at the lowest common level.

Attention was focused on the political process of passing the Directive on Minimum standards on the qualification of third country nationals as refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This Directive will define which persons will get protection as refugees. It is supposed to be the directive in which the obligations of the Geneva Refugee Convention have to be implemented.

Two initiatives were voiced revealing a tendency towards a future 'Fortress Europe'. The first one was a recent proposal of Tony Blair, Prime-Minister of Great-Britain concerning the European asylum and migration policy, which was on the agenda of the EU Summit in Thessaloniki. The British Government had developed a scheme with the cynical headline "A New Vision for Refugees" that

substantially diminishes refugees' rights in Europe. The essence of this proposal is that refugees who succeed in reaching the European Union will be kept in detention for a short while and then as quickly as possible transferred to the so-called protection zones near the countries of origin, which will supposedly be administrated by the UNHCR and financed by affluent countries. According to the proposal of the British government, refugees are supposed to live in reservations until the situation in their countries of origin is stabilised. Only a small number of asylum seekers will be admitted to the EU member states. This "vision for refugees" consists in making the EU member states more or less free of refugees. This will transfer the responsibility to the regions of origin, which is called 'regionalisation of refugee politics'.

The second initiative was proposed by the UNHCR, and, as Marei Pelzer stated, it is more dangerous for now, as it can be more readily accepted by the majority of the EU member states. Blair's initiative has been accepted only by a few states - Denmark, Netherlands, Australia and the US. The head of UNHCR Ruud Lubbers suggested establishing closed reception centers at the borders of the European Union, especially on the territory of future EU-member states, where asylum seekers (most of them from the so-called 'secure countries of origin' migrating presumably for economic reasons) are supposed to be locked up. There will be a shortened one-month procedure that can only be implemented by accepting severe deficiencies regarding legal protection. Supporting different procedure standards is a contradiction to traditional UNHCR politics, while the idea that such procedures can be carried out in one month seems illusionary.

4 [Major Thematical Working Groups](#)

4.1 [Europe: New Borders, New Identities](#)

The group gathered participants of three groups of European countries - EU countries (Spain, Germany and Ireland), EU pre-accession countries (Poland and Czechia) and the former Soviet Republics that do not have a prospect to join the EU in the nearest future (Belarus, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan), which made the discussion fruitful and animated.

The beginning of the discussion was focused on brutal policy led by the European Union towards Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Using the parable about 15 kings living in an isolated but prosperous country and creating obstacles to everybody who expressed a wish to enter the castle, the participants analysed today's situation on the eve of EU accession. One needed to be respected, wealthy and had to obey the rules the 15 kings had established to be admitted to the castle.

The participants concluded that the EU does not want cultural and social globalisation, but stands for a "Fortress Europe". The EU favors cultural leadership (the EU vs. the USA) version of European culture and opposes solidarity in the form of trade unions, religious communities, human rights movement, etc.

Other problems discussed were polycentric Europe, democracy, responsibility towards the countries and the people that had been abused.

There were fears expressed accompanying the forthcoming accession of CEE countries to the EU:

- A new Eastern border will be created, border controls will be more severe and the EU is already getting ready to send technical "know-how" to the pre-accession countries; however, smuggling will not stop and people will continue to be at risk;
- Growth of nationalism among the inhabitants of pre-accession countries, which is connected with a fear of minorities (small nations like the Moravians in Czechia) to lose their identity that pushes them begin to express federalisation ideas;
- Agriculture will remain less developed compared to the EU;
- Pre-accession countries will need economic and political protection; they will not be in the same conditions as the EU, and there is a suspicion that they will not be understood and accepted by the Westerners. The prices will rise and the gap between the rich and the poor will grow.

The third group of countries (Moldova, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan) are already facing discriminatory policy. Thus, Romania, having a common history with Moldova, is going to join the EU in 2007 and will be obligated to apply a visa policy to Moldovan citizens. The participants' proposal was NGO lobbying to get a possibility to receive visas free of charge or at a reduced price for those who have relatives in the other country as well as for NGOs. A good example came from Moldova, where the Polish Consulate promptly issues free visas to NGOs representatives.

All post-Soviet states have much in common, but today they face problems that are different. There is also a problem that in some of the post-Soviet republics the idea of European integration and EU accession goes hand in hand with nationalist movements.

The issue of the identity and place of small nations, like the Moravians, was also discussed.

In conclusion, the group summed up common strategies that need implementation:

- European integration going together with cultural and social integration, as we think about Europe of social and civic rights;
- All-citizens approach based on respect for diversity as opposed to Europe dominated by transnational "Rich Men's Club";
- Immediate adoption, improvement and implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in all pre-accession countries;
- Recognition of rights and obligations of migrants, refugees, those in asylum process and 'Sans-papiers' (non-documented migrants);
- Promoting self-confidence and new patterns of identity with states;
- "Fair Trade" practices, reduction of arms trade - equitable resources;
- Allocation: non-exploitation of the resources of the south for the enrichment of the north;
- Promotion of cultural diversity to be realised within Europe;

- Labor migration: making fair and equitable agreements between the post-Soviet states and the EU in conditions of mass illegal migration from the NIS countries to the EU;
- Europe recognising and protecting all national minorities living within its borders;
- Official recognition of nomadic people/Roma and their citizenship within Europe;
- EU social enlargement (in/out)- adoption of good practices of protecting national minorities.

EU and Europe recognising their obligations to those parts of the world from which they have enriched themselves in terms of development and obtained resources.

4.2 [Situation of Migrants and Refugees in Expanding Europe](#)

The working group started with a discussion of growing negative attitude and xenophobia that refugees usually receive from inhabitants of the destination countries. It was considered that they also have a limited access to education and health care when kept in isolation. Discussed were various forms of human rights abuses, such as illegal immigrants' suffering during the forced extraditions. The possibilities of obtaining citizenship or refugee status in Europe are constantly reduced, which increases the number of those doomed to illegal existence. Life without official status means a constant fear of arrest, deportation and blackmail. It deprives people of their rights to protection in face of authorities, employers and landowners, and they have no access to medical service and education.

All participants had had certain experiences in working with refugees and migrants in their own organisations. However, before having a profound discussion and sharing their experience the participants clarified the terminology used in working with migrants and refugees. There are several types of migration - labor migration, economic/social migration, political migration, and the so-called 'welcome' migration. The latter consists in the control of migration according to the needs of the countries, bringing migrants 'just in time' when they are needed and bringing them 'voluntarily back' after the work is done. The approaches in the work with refugees and migrants can also be diverse: humanitarian approach, social approach, legal approach, empowerment approach (migrants and refugee's perspective), and political approach (lobbying, direct action, democratic protest).

People working with migrants and refugees face different types of problems:

- racism and xenophobia existing in the mainstream public opinion;
- right-wing extremist groups acting against migrants and refugees;
- right-wing policy implemented by governments and institutions that use populist ideas to maintain the 'Fortress Europe'.

The examples of work with refugees and migrants were presented, e.g. the campaign "No-One Is Illegal" spread in Europe (for more information visit: www.antimedia.net/nooneisillegal/) that establishes connections among activists and migrant communities. Another good example came from Finland where the Immigration Service in Espoo empowers local communities of

migrants and promotes dialogue between official institutions and migrant people. The groups they work with are women, children, disabled people, and people with mental health problems. They also reinforce non-discrimination of the migrant community in the Finnish health care system, researching migrants' health needs and how they are met.

Activists and NGOs should give up paternalistic help and start doing something together, from a face-to-face perspective. There is some kind of dependence upon support and fundraising, so NGOs need to take measures to avoid such dependence. Participants agreed that it is necessary to guarantee people's self-organisation. Here an example came from Romania, where the 'Refugee Women's Organisation' manages to self-organise and assist other refugee women, and give them vocational training. Now they are trying to make money on their own to develop their own projects. They are now always consulted by the institutions. A way of stimulating self-organisation of migrants can be encouraging initiatives in the field of the media. Especially alternative, non-commercial media, such as free and community radios, are open to projects in which a migrant community can spread their perspective, speak about their position, their news and needs. The participants asked themselves "Why do migrant communities have so many difficulties in organising themselves?" The problem is also with the media and their misrepresentation of migrants (for example, Somalis in Finland).

The participants from Portugal spoke about the trade unions' perspective, whose point of view concerning strategies in collaboration with migrants is focused on the defence of migrants as workers. All workers have the same rights theoretically, but in practice migrant people do not have any rights and are subjected to severe exploitation and kept in poor labour conditions. There should be more legal action against the employers that abuse migrant people. The group discussed the position of internally displaced people and the problems refugees face when returning to their country of origin. For example, Armenians coming back to Armenia after the bloody conflict of the 90s in Nagorno-Karabach felt vulnerable, as they did not speak Armenian.

Common strategies in short:

- assistance to refugees and migrants in self-organisation. Refugees have started to mobilise themselves, make demonstrations, lobby the institutions, use media campaigns, to improve their situation. The target group itself knows better what they want and need;
- deep and long-term work with the media in two ways - to encourage them to take the initiative in support of refugees and to eliminate the negative image of refugees and migrants in media;
- necessity of special workshops in future UNITED conferences to learn more about fundraising.

4.3 [Minorities in Europe](#)

The discussion started with debates on the notion and category of "minority", as some of the participants coming from the CEE considered that "minority" only referred to "national minorities". In other words, according to them, immigrants

living sometimes for over 30 years in the host country are not seen as belonging to this category. The word "minority" has many different meanings and it was a challenge to define what "minority" meant in each country. The participants described the position of minorities in their own countries. There are three million unemployed people in France and half of them belong to minorities. There are a lot of other hidden signs of discrimination. For example people belonging to minorities who have a dark skin colour or have foreign name face discrimination while renting a house; banks practice the same attitude towards them.

The most heated debates took place about Roma, who feel inequality and discrimination in all countries of Europe, and who are usually being expelled from one country to the next. Despite the fact that they have lived in Europe for centuries, the European community does not accept them as European citizens. Today there are approximately 12 million Roma in Europe. Most of them live in Central and Eastern Europe, in isolation from mainstream society, lacking access to health care, education, housing, etc. Very often they become victims of violence perpetrated by neo-nazis or police officers. Roma mortality rate is usually higher than the general national level, children and young people making up a significant share of the death rate. Most Roma people do not know about their civil rights.

The participants mentioned the necessity of official recognition of all minorities and stressed the role of NGOs in exercising pressure on the governments in this respect.

Participants also discussed their experience of action against discrimination as well as different projects, which are being implemented in their countries in order to assist minorities to integrate into society. These projects included:

- Trainings and seminars for Roma in order to prepare them for public participation, assisting in finding jobs for Roma people and educational projects for minorities who had just come from prison in Bulgaria;
- Reporting about Roma situation in order to inform journalists about the real position of Roma minority in Georgia;
- Minority media and news coming from origin countries (Turkey, Somalia, etc) in Denmark.

The possibilities were discussed that are provided for minorities in education and employment by different foundations and governmental agencies (e.g. scholarships for higher education, loans reserved for minority groups that want to start a business, etc.), but unfortunately there is lack of information about it among minorities, especially in the New Independent States.

For the common strategies, the participants discussed the necessity of the following:

- Active engagement in the joint 'Newsletter on Fighting Discrimination against Minorities in Europe' in future;
- Organisation of regular joint forums for local NGOs and political leaders (representatives of the government and/or local authorities) to raise NGOs' demands. However, participants from some of the CEE countries were sceptical about such forums' positive impact and how they could affect change in the CEE;

- NGO networking both on national and international level. Tailor-made strategies must be developed individually for every country;
- Both NGOs and state structures must undertake actions to help minorities become united and be able to develop ways to fight for their rights by themselves;
- Investigation of real needs and demands of minorities and then, based on the results, creation of a governmental program for minorities;
- Creation of special bodies (e.g. House of Nationalities, Minorities Councils, etc) that may support the need of minorities to lobby their interests in the political institutions.

4.4 Extreme-Right: Tendencies in Europe

The workshop started with an overview of state of right-wing extremism in Europe today. The old fascist heritage of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco was contrasted with a new image of fascism acquired by right-wing extremist parties in the 1980s and 1990s. They advertised themselves as an attractive political alternative to the existing system, exploiting such issues as corruption, crime (linking it with immigration), crisis of the welfare state, national sovereignty vs. the EU, patriarchal values and ecology as well as tradition and morality.

The participants of the working group shared information and thoughts about the developments in their countries (in both Western and Eastern Europe) focusing, among others, on such topics as "renewal of identity", electoral absenteeism, internationalisation of small neo-fascist groups, cultural hegemony, infiltration of "anti-globalisation" movements, and the acceptance of extreme-right ideas by the mainstream right. The growth of islamophobia in the context of the recent global events was also discussed.

Participants presented the work of NGOs in their countries against far-right tendencies. For example, a participant from Slovakia shared a concrete example of how complaints arrived at the infoline (telephone). Calls are followed by legal or social procedures. He also explained how the attitude of police officers and politicians developed into a positive approach to victims of racism after the police officers received training and after involving them in co-operative projects. The training helped to make the police understand the nature of the right-wing movement, as organised groups, not just individuals.

More examples came from Czechia, where campaigns were conducted against the police, because it sympathised with right-wing groups and demonstrated racist and discriminatory behaviour towards foreigners on the streets. In Spain, the main problem concerning right-wing extremism is manifested in football. Football clubs sponsor the antiracist groups to organise projects and activities against violence in sports.

A participant from Slovenia shared an example of organising debate tournaments on the topics related to anti-racism, right-wing extremism, etc. Participants should research the issue finding the best and strongest arguments to defend their position. Not only internal competitions should be organised, but also public debates on the radio, TV, and in public places.

Nevertheless, some of the workshop participants disapproved this technique, stating that these debates give a possibility to both sides to express their

position, and the racist movement gained supporters and became stronger. The opponents of public debates on fascism insisted that there should be not a democratic discussion with fascists, but a real fight to combat fascism. To prove this, examples were given of fascist websites that explained step-by-step how to infiltrate fascist ideas in democratic discussion forums in the Internet and slowly lead the discussion and its participants to acceptance of fascism. It was also mentioned that leaders of fascist movement, such as Hitler,

Mussolini, etc. were eloquent and persuasive speakers - not rational, but very charismatic. Therefore, we should fight fascist speeches mainly through the method of "deconstructing the discourse". A concrete example was brought from France where an extreme-nationalist discourse, full of falsified data and lies, was deconstructed. A group of activists point after point explained the information and supplied it with rational arguments, correct data and statistic figures; the corrected information was printed on flyers and then distributed. The action was successful - they influenced the election outcome.

There was also a presentation on the rightists' strategies to influence anti-racist organisations. Both social movements and peace movements criticise right as well as left ideologies, while far-right groups use the so-called "crossover-strategy" to infiltrate them. It was stated that far-right tendencies must be viewed as an international problem and cannot be solved or fought on a national level alone, especially in the CEE. The "new right" has found more chances to spread their message after 1989, as they could profit from the confusion on the political stage and ignorance of the public. A Polish participant mentioned a problematic appearance of the Polish branch of ATTAC; rightists are very influential in it and even publish a magazine called "Obyvateli" reflecting their right-wing views, e.g. praising the Oklahoma Terrorist Timothy McVeigh or the German Neo-Nazi Horst Mahler.

To find common strategies, the working group pointed out the importance of active pressure on the media and a strong network of shared information and active resistance to neo-fascist demonstrations.

4.5 [Intercultural Education](#)

The participants made an attempt to define the concept of intercultural education. They sketched a system according to which people from various cultures will be able to learn about and respect cultures different from their own and get acquainted with one another. It is also anti-racist education and fight against clichés, that it is formal or informal education whose aim is to break the blocks of fear, feelings of inferiority and superiority among different cultures, religions, etc. From the very beginning the working group benefited from a role-play method called "Appreciative Inquiry", the purpose of which was to break the mistrust between different cultures, between the majority and minorities, and involve the participants in thinking about cultural values and their positive experiences with the people from other cultures. The participants formed pairs of participants belonging to the majority or minority in their own view, and interviewed each other. Both representatives reflected their most positive experience in the company of majority/minority; each of them was in a position

when he/she could use his/her own abilities to help a majority/minority member. Moreover, each of them received a wonderful feedback-thank-you card.

The role-play ended with the participants answering the question: "What is necessary for you and other young people of minority/majority group to have more positive experiences like this?" The participants agreed that it is important to share their skills with others, co-operate with different organisations, educate others, be open-minded and make friends in the majority and minority groups. They presented projects from their organisations and countries related to intercultural education. For example, a participant from Russia presented a photo exhibition entitled "Photography as Moment of Dialogue and Reconciliation: Multicultural Samara through Human Faces". There was also discussion on a method of reflecting the past and discovering personal, structural and cultural racism, a hidden racism in hidden messages. Most of the participants agreed that multicultural festivals and trainings are the best way to spread the idea of multicultural Europe, reinforcing respect among various cultures and people who belong to them. The participants concluded that, although they have similar problems in their countries, there are different target groups and they need to find different approaches according to the needs of each country.

5 Action-Planning Working Groups

The action planning working groups represented a good platform of exchange of ideas for the annual UNITED campaigns. Giving inspiration and motivation to join the activities.

5.1 Campaign Working Group: International Day against Fascism & Antisemitism

Every year UNITED encourages local groups all over Europe to organise different actions against fascism and discrimination on November 9. The form varies from seminars at school to street demonstrations and protests. In 1938, in Nazi Germany, a large pogrom took place, Jewish stores and shops were destroyed and the Secret Department of the National-Socialist Party of Germany arrested many Jews. The night of November 9 was called "Kristallnacht" (night of broken glass) by the Nazis and is considered to be a symbolic beginning of the Holocaust. The initiatives focused on November 9 have as their goal both commemoration of the event and expressing protest against present-day discrimination and inequality as well as against modern forms of fascism. They are meant to draw public attention to these problems with the purpose of engaging more and more people. Every year after the campaign UNITED publishes a report of the anti-fascist actions all over Europe on the base of the NGO's reports, press cuttings etc. In the current year the campaign focused on the ways certain groups are used as scapegoats for economic, political and social problems. In a time of insecurity - political, social, economic or natural - people look for somebody other than themselves to shift the blame to.

In the working group participants discussed the best ways and means of organising the campaigns dedicated to November 9 and involving more people

in it at the local level. They shared recommendations and insights. One of the tips was that while preparing posters or postcards for the campaign it is necessary to avoid stereotypes and clichés. For example, it is not recommended to use a picture of homeless children of Romani origin or of a Romani beggar-woman with a child in her arms in the poster, as it may provoke another reaction rather than compassion. It was also strongly recommended to translate the UNITED posters devoted to the campaign as well as campaign slogans into the local languages, especially on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe, where many people do not speak English. The participants shared experience of their organisations and concluded that the following local campaigns under the UNITED campaign had to address hate speech in the Internet, hate music and racism in football. There was also a proposal to organise a joint campaign against fascism and against social exclusion in the future. NGO's that join the UNITED campaign on November 9 can receive posters and postcards free of charge and use them during their activities and display them in schools and public places. To get more campaign information visit the UNITED web-site:
www.unitedagainstracism.org

5.2 [Campaign Working Group: European Wide Action Week Against Racism](#)

March 21st was declared International Day for Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination by the UN General Assembly as a reaction to the murder of 70 demonstrators in South Africa in 1960. Many NGO's organise around this date activities against discrimination and combating racism. UNITED coordinates the European Wide Action Week Against Racism, around 21 March, motivating and giving inspiration to NGO's to join in with their activities.

In this working group, participants discussed the previous campaigns and shared their ideas about future ones. The last campaign's slogan was "Look Deeper - Fundamentally we are the same". Activities were organised in 39 countries, for some organisations it was their first involvement in a European wide campaign. The 2003 campaign report was disseminated among the participants of the working group and discussed upon. It was also mentioned that usually a lot of activities are organised in West-European countries, but not in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and especially not in the New Independent States (NIS), as people traditionally think that there is no racism in those countries and some officials also believe this idea.

The group discussed the possible focus of the following campaign, brainstormed its slogans, and discussed ideas concerning the image to be used as a common symbol for the next campaign. It was stated that the best are radical and dynamic campaigns. There should be a good balance in the campaign image with respect to minority/majority relation and gender sensibility. There was also a point that the target groups must be clearly determined, as what is good for some people is bad for others. Possible images and slogans for the next action week were proposed by the participants.

For example the proposed slogans:

- Difference = Richness;
- "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way". (M.Ghandi);
- Differences are not the difference;
- I am different. I plead not guilty!";

- "When you talk to me, forget that I am black. And never forget that I am black";
- Minorities is not a question of number, but a question of power. You can become a minority in every moment of your life.

5.3 [Campaign Working Group in Support of Refugees](#)

The working group agreed that the next campaign must be devoted to the problem of isolation and detention. There is a practice in Europe to keep refugees in camps/detention centers or other places with lack of communication with the population of the recipient country and limited access to education and health care. UK Prime Minister Blair's initiative was discussed again (see above) and participants decided to make a clear statement concerning it, with the aim to include it in the next campaign. The campaign should cover the whole territory of the EU and all the pre-accession countries; however, there is a potential risk to hold such a wide campaign, which the participants discussed, as all the three types of countries - those producing refugees, transit countries and reception countries - face totally different problems.

The campaign message needs to reach both national authorities and general public, as isolation of refugees/illegal migrants is a product of both state policy and negative public attitude. A separate approach must be adopted towards "infiltrating" publicly accepted networks of trade unions or professional organisations that can issue a statement in support of refugees, so that common people start questioning the statements of their governments (good illustrative practice was presented from Ireland).

The main message of the campaign should be focused on the universal character of freedom of movement. The EU is an organisation that is being designed on the principle of freedom of movement for all people, but it tends to apply this principle only to its citizens.

Slogan proposals for the future UNITED campaigns in support of refugees are the following:

- EU isolation instead of EU integration
- EU presents Universal Freedom of Movement
- Money travels - people do not
- Free movement is still a fundamental right
- Concentration camps for refugees, do we need them again?
- Camp Europe

5.4 [Working Group on Planning and Organising Training Courses](#)

This working group gathered those participants who had a strong interest in developing practical skills in writing project proposals and fundraising as well as those who were interested in joint international projects. Information was provided on how to fill out an application form, what are typical mistakes, how to improve practical skills in proposal writing, what is important, useful, and necessary to add to the application determining the target groups, what are possible types of the projects, how to focus on a specific topic, etc.

The participants had a chance to share information about the projects they were currently involved in. The potential foundations and their contact information

can be found in the European Address Book Against Racism, which is issued by UNITED every year (it is also available on www.unitedagainstracism.org). Jana Tikalova (Czechia), who was the working group leader and has experience in organizing different trainings and intercultural activities, can provide more information on the subject: opim@centrum.cz

6 Project presentation: Traveling for the future

Cor van de Griendt, The Netherlands

On the last day the participants had a chance to be acquainted with an excellent project which is going on in Western Europe, called "Travelling for the future". The project is devoted to bringing together different target groups (migrants, young people belonging to the ethnic majority, right-wing oriented youngsters, young extreme nationalists and also youth workers, police officers, anti-racist activists, teachers, etc.) It is a method of working to help raise awareness among teenage drop-outs on the subject of racism. "Travelling for the future" combines the aims to combat racism, meaningless violence and extreme nationalism, teaching history and drawing parallels with the pre-sent, analyzing the effects of WW II and the Holocaust. It is a complex program which includes a visit of memorial sites in Buchenwald and Auschwitz, the National War and Resistance museum, participation at the trainings, preparation of activities in the youth centres, writing for a symbolic wailing wall, and using cartoons. A manual is published in the framework of the project which includes a project description, a short Holocaust history, a map of Europe, addresses of anti-racist organisations, explanation of conceptions, etc.

Another example that was presented was a School without racism: a choice for future, a project initiated and sustained by youngsters (including teachers trainings, schooltrips, essay writing, exchanges, etc). For more information contact: cvdgriendt@paletweb.nl

7 Open Forum

The Open Forum gave the participants a possibility to speak out on different topics related to the subject of the conference and share information that, in their opinion, should become common knowledge, e.g. anti-discrimination activities implemented by their NGOs or proposals and ideas for the next UNITED conference. One of the participants presented a video on minority media in Aarhus, Denmark. It was a regional program called "The Foreigners' Television" aimed at introducing various cultural communities living in Denmark and covering current news, personal lives, cooking, children, etc.; being in their origin languages, the program was subtitled in Danish. The program creates bridges between the majority and minorities. There were also several proposals to implement joint projects. A participant from Moravia, in the Czech Republic suggested that an electronic network should be organised for those who are interested in receiving information about the Moravians, who are still not recognised as a minority in Czechia (for those interested moravec@volny.cz).

There were some proposals to organise a special conference that would deal with one particular major topic, e.g. immigrants, Roma, anti-fascism, etc.

8 [Social Activities](#)

The Info market - combined with the international snacks that were brought from all over Europe - demonstrated the variety of activities that have been realised by the NGOs present at the meeting: from anti-fascist leaflets and magazines to instructions how to work with refugees and migrants. The desks were so full with useful materials that latecomers almost had no space to put their publications. A new video "Show Racism the Red Card" on "Football against Racism" was shown at the info-market as examples of successful projects. During the whole conference a photo exhibit was displayed called "Photography as Means of Peacemaking and Interethnic Reconciliation" presented by Samara Society for Cultural Studies. It was an example of a project fighting by means of art and culture against violence, interethnic conflicts, fascism, nationalism and intolerance in multiethnic Samara, in the Povolzhye region of Russia. 25 photographs were subdivided into three categories: i) the human face as intercultural surface/mirror of interculturalism; ii) cultural diversity as a property of common human heritage and iii) refugees and human beings: it is all a matter of image (for those interested: roman@vis.infotel.ru).

On Friday evening the participants had the possibility to briefly go sightseeing in Luxembourg and see the building of the European Parliament, which was followed by a dinner in a Brazilian restaurant.

9 [Thanks to](#)

In co-operation with UNITED this conference was prepared by an International Preparatory Group.

This group consisted of:

· ASLIR - Student Association for Struggle Against Racism (Romania) · Bulgarian Helsinki Committee · CLAE - Comité de Liaison et d'Action des Etrangers (Luxembourg) · FFM - Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration (Germany) · Helping Hands Salzburg (Austria) · National Youth Service (Luxembourg) · Netzwerkstelle gegen Rechtsextremism bei Radio Lotte (Germany), Sesopi (Luxembourg) and · OPIM - Organisation Supporting the Integration of Minorities (Czechia).

We own a great deal of thanks especially to the Service National de la Jeunesse Luxembourg and Sesopi, as without their financial and logistic help none of this would have been possible.

10 [UNITED for Intercultural Action](#)

UNITED for Intercultural Action

European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees

Racism, nationalism, fascism, discrimination, asylum policies... all of them have a European dimension even though they often look like pure national issues. Reports from all over Europe demonstrate the increasing dangers facing migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities. Often these dangers are increased by undemocratic intergovernmental decisions like the Schengen Treaty. Strangely enough, racist and fascist organisations have strong European links from Portugal to Russia, from Sweden to Italy. Fortress Europe needs to be fought at local, regional and European levels - it cannot be fought on one level alone.

Linked through UNITED, hundreds of organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions and shared activities on a mutual respect.

UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Through the UNITED network organisations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. Europe-wide action weeks, campaigns and such are planned and discussed on UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations find each other on such conferences and work together on specific projects on specific topics. The workers in the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are transmitted rapidly. Information is received from more than 2300 organisations and mailings are sent out to about 2500 groups in Europe.

If you want to get involved... Discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that you would like to join or receive information. And add us to your mailing list!

More information you can find at www.unitedagainstracism.org or write to info@unitedagainstracism.org

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