

## Newsletter 2017

International project activities cross borders and networking have always been in focus for IUC-Europe, since its origin in the 70s, and during reconstructions in 2000 and in 2013. Long before anyone in DK was engaged in political and intercultural youth work and education internationally, it was our main goal and over the years we have built up extensive international networks, useful and beneficiary to our project activities in DK and abroad.

In 2017/18 we will of course continue this line of work in many innovative ways as usual, at a time when international organizations are more needed than ever, to address rising Euroscepticism, right wing populism and crises in our part of the world and beyond. Few politicians have visions to really address and find solutions to the serious problems the EU faces, but instead focus on national agendas with a limited scope, often helped by populist media. Brexit is a sad example of this. IUC and partners will do its utmost to establish a progressive European agenda, discuss scenarios for the future and create links between civil society organizations and the political establishment.

One IUC flagship project are is Waves of Democracy seminars and the set up of the Summer Academy in Sønderborg, DK, at Alsion, which houses the University of Southern Denmark, Centre for Culture/Concert Hall and a cluster of businesses. Here young Europeans from many countries have met twice already to address topics on the European agenda, find solutions by working together in innovative and inspiring ways. We already started the Waves projects back in 2007 in Rhodes and DK, developed them in Novi Sad and Belgrade in 2010/11, and at present have a basis in DK. Centre for Culture/The Municipality of Sønderborg, SDU, and business companies Mærsk and Danfoss have supported the

project generously over the years as well as Erasmus+ funding. We are grateful for valuable assistance and for the many volunteers who have worked on developing the concept. In 2017 we are taking the project further, including our consultants in DK, Berlin and Paris leading to a vision seminar in Copenhagen in June, where plans for a big seminar in 2018 will be discussed and decided upon.

In the spring, also, we have carried out a youth parliament session - MEP BSR in Elverum, Norway for 50 young people. (Please look at [www.mepbsr.org](http://www.mepbsr.org) for further information) The youth parliaments are core project activities for IUC, where young people from 12 countries in the North meet to discuss hot topics of today - Iceland, Norway and Russia (Kaliningrad) are included in this network, which include more than 100 schools in our region. More info below.

Also, we hope to join a very interesting bike project in and around Rennes, France, where young people spend 14 days biking along with discussing sports, culture and politics.

Apart from carrying out project/activities in DK and abroad an important part of IUC's work is to network, make alliances and act as consultants all over Europe. Below please find examples of some of our most important networks.

**EYCA /European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance** <http://ey2013-alliance.eu/>

The European Year of Citizens 2013 was proposed from the EU to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the European Union Citizenship under the Maastricht Treaty. Major European civil society organizations and networks joined their forces and created the EYC2013 Alliance to put forward proposals aimed at placing European citizenship at the heart of the EU political



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agenda. National alliances in most of the 28 EU states were set up, and met in Brussels and elsewhere to exchange experiences and establish a common platform for European activities in 2013 and beyond.

In DK IUC- Europe and New Europe invited civil society organizations to meet to form a national alliance in close cooperation with the European Movement DK. The EYCA network presented its recommendations in Brussels and has continued this important work to highlight the important task of including citizens and promote active citizenship at a time when many Europeans face difficulties and have low respect for the political establishment. The European Movement DK is a very important actor in setting up a proactive European agenda in DK, and in the autumn, it gathered politicians, civil society organizations, media people etc. to create a strong and innovative European agenda in DK. IUC was invited to take part in this important discussion, the results of which will be carried out in 2017/18 towards the 2019 European parliament election.

### **EUNET/European Network for Education and Training** ([www.european-net.org](http://www.european-net.org))

We have always been a very active member of this European network of close to 70 Europe Houses/Academies. We have been represented at board level, been president of the organisation and active in the former Committee on Content and Methodology. In order to revitalise the organisation, key members of EUNET and Head of the Secretariat Thomas Heckeberg set up a working committee at Bad Marienberg some years ago for a new and efficient structure to be established. EUNET members have e.g. started projects in the Balkans and in relation to the European Parliament election for young first time voters. Lately an Immigration Committee has been established, where IUC is



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represented. For the Waves projects IUC has found most of its partners from this network. In March and April spring meetings are held in Rome and Germany for EUNET members to discuss future project activities in the organization. Ifor Molenhuis represented IUC in Rome, and Lea Krusell will take part in the workshop in Germany set up by the Youth Committee to discuss creative digital tools. The recent EUNET General Assembly was held in Malta. Next one will be in October 2016 in Budapest.

### **MEP BSR ([www.mepbsr.org](http://www.mepbsr.org) )**

IUC acts as administrative coordinator to this network, which consists of educational schools/institutions in the Baltic Sea Region, who host youth parliaments twice a year. It has grown into a very influential network in the Nordic/Baltic region and now comprises 12 countries. In 2017 the session was held in Elverum. The other 2017 session will take place in Riga (tbc). The conferences are important training ground for future young leaders and for students taking an interest in discussing current issues in the region. MEP BSR is represented in the international MEP organization, seated in Madrid, Spain. The international session took place in Copenhagen in the autumn of 2016 ([www.mepcopenhagen.dk](http://www.mepcopenhagen.dk) ) in the Netherlands in January 2017 and the autumn session will be in Helsinki, Finland with delegates from 30 countries.

### **Baltic Development Forum ([www.bdforum.org](http://www.bdforum.org))**

A network for business, media, academia and politics, established by former Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann Jensen as a Nordic World Economic Forum and rapidly becoming one of the most important and influential networks in Northern Europe. MEP BSR students have kindly been invited to the Summits in Copenhagen, Stockholm , Vilnius and participated



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actively in the conference in Gdansk a few years ago. After a short break we will hopefully continue our cooperation with this important network, whose new chairperson is Ms. Lene Espersen, formerly Foreign Minister to DK. Former director Mr. Hans Brask is now the Danish Ambassador to Latvia and has paved the way for us in Riga in relation to the conferences we set up there in the spring of 2016 and hopefully in the autumn of 2017.

### **Heading towards 2018 and new horizons?**

In June (May 2016) IUC will be hosting a vision seminar for partners, colleagues and guests, to further discuss and develop our Waves activities. The seminar will be set up in cooperation with key IUC people: Andreas Guidi, Christin Knüpfer, Ifor Molenhuis, Tyler Adkins, and Leise Sandemann in cooperation with staff members and volunteers. The seminar will provide important inputs for working with European integration, discussing innovative and stimulating methods and ways of continuing the ongoing and necessary debate about Europe.

The seminar will be discussing the development of our organization and the work with young people, who are at the core of our activities.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the IUC board has been expanded, and a number of younger people have been included. It now consists of Nina Nørgaard, chair, Rasmus Stobbe, vice-chair, Hans Lindemann, Ifor Molenhuis, Jesper E. Hansen and Sylvia Baptista - a strong mix of people with different backgrounds of international experience. The office has until quite recently been run expertly by Magdalena Tashkova - who still acts as a consultant. She recently landed a job with the European Environmental Agency.

For further information about IUC and its projects, activities and networks, please take a look at our website, or contact us



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directly. We are looking forward to an interesting and rewarding year as always with partners, colleagues, volunteers and friends.

Nina Nørgaard,  
Executive Director,  
Copenhagen, March/April 2016