



# The key role of young workers in a modern Europe Newspaper

## Main emphasises:

- to address young employees in Europe
- to strengthen youth positions in the area of social and employment affairs and in practical matters.
- to focus on the analysis and discussion of all matters which are interesting for and related to young European workers
- to promote, organise and advance events and projects on both transnational and European level

## Second EZA-Youth Conference in Portugal

From 22nd until 25th of October 2009 the second youth conference of EZA took place, organised by its member centre CFTL.

This conference linked with the first youth conference of EZA which took place in Brussels in 2007.

This time the focus was put on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing educational, vocational and academic training structures as well as on the mobility of young workers and their participation in workers' organisations and trade unions.

Do they still meet the requirements of the European labour market of today?

To solve these questions three working groups were organised focussing on:

- Workshop 1: Education and Life Long Learning focused on the present European labour market demands
- Workshop 2: Mobility of young workers in the European market: interests, needs and goals

- Workshop 3: How to get greater involvement of young workers in European matters through social participation

One and a half day was reserved for the participants to make a state analysis of the current situations, to discover the needs and to think of projects which could be organised in the future.

In the end of the second day the Platform for Young Workers which was created unofficially after the last conference was founded by representatives of the Core Group (a board which developed and managed the preparation of this conference and settled regulations for the platform to be approved) as well as several member organisations.

The conference ended in the presentation of the work done by the three workshops and a development of a final document with the gained results and project proposals.



The youth conference 2009

## The EZA - Platform for Young Workers

In the year 2007 EZA conducted - after a very intensive preparation - the first youth conference in Brussels. Encouraged of the interest of the young participants and their motivation to become active, we decided to create a platform for young workers to strengthen youth positions in the area of social and employment affairs and in practical matters. The core group, which was built to prepare the conference and its contents, met to evaluate

the meeting in Brussels and to constitute main aims of the future work.

For that reason statutes were created approved to be a cornerstone for the official foundation of the PYW (Platform for Young Workers) which took place in Esposende during our second youth conference.

Several member organisations of EZA declared their participation in the new important platform through their represented

participants.

During the month after the official foundation the other organisations of EZA have the chance to enter the platform as well.

The core group of Brussels 2007, which is instituted to coordinate the platform's activities, will for another 2 years work for the interests of young workers in Europe.

From the year 2011 it will consist of officially elected representatives of the platform itself.

“...I'm asking you to trust in youth”

Barac Obama

## Newspaper



### Entering the topics

Like in 2007 Giovanni Gut, one of the presidents of the conference along with Anna Moskwa, welcomed the participants from all over Europe. Also Paulo Caetano, CFTL Chairman of Board, and Roswitha Gottbehüt, Secretary-General of EZA underlined the importance of the conference and its outcomes.

To facilitate the contacts between the young representatives a short overview was given who was attending from which country.

Then work started. According to the three different topics, which were chosen before (Life Long Learning, Mobility and Migration, Participation), three speakers did a brief introduction.

António Fezendeiro, a researcher from Portugal was the first. He emphasized the role of life long learning as a drive for the economic and social development of the European Union. What can be done to give everyone the chance of an equal access to education, to improve one's own competences? In his opinion knowledge should not only be considered with a focus on academics, but also in connection with techniques and experiences.

Jean-Paul Fabri, an economist from Malta, looked at the question, why young people are less participating in

organisations (workers' organisations, trade unions, etc.). Two main possible reasons were outlined: a wrong perception of governance leading to inequity, exclusivity, dependency and a lack of trust, as well as a wrong strategy of the organisations themselves not taking into account that youth have their own way of life. The main task that was highlighted: to engage young people.

The topic mobility and migration was outlined by Diane Vella, a member of the core group, which should also lead this working group the next days together with Stefania Isalia. She pointed out, that migration is very important for young people and often seen positively. Young workers often find it very easy to adopt to another culture and have less

difficulties in acquiring new skills.

After a short comfort break featuring the Portuguese weather that day - sun, rain and wind at the same time - people returned to the plenary session to ask questions to the speakers, express own opinions and to discuss the different situations and views.

Discussions were so intense, that lunch had to be delayed for half an hour and still seemed come to early as participation in the topics showed.

After lunch all participants were divided into the three working groups, which should be concentrated on the next days.

“It is not only important to learn **during** the whole life, but also to learn **of** life.”



### Workshop 1: Education and Life Long Learning focused on the present European labour market demands

The first Workshop about Life Long Learning started with finding an appropriate definition of the subject. After presenting the current situation concerning Life Long Learning in each participating country, the most important problems could be identified and discussed, as for example problems of communication and information or the problem of finance.

The second day has been fully dedicated to developing certain projects and to find solutions to the main problems of Life Long Learning.

At the end of a two-day's work, the group could present two projects to improve the situation of Lifelong Learning in every country.



Jolita Mikstaite, Tanja Thomas and Marta Jedrich (from left to right) were leading the first working group

## Special Edition

### Workshop 2: Mobility of young workers in the European market: interests, needs and goals

The working group on mobility and migration started with a state analysis of the participants' experiences. The participants tried to localize themselves within a certain frame and to improve the common awareness in order to find a basis for the following discussion. The difficulties about the promotion of mobility for young workers, starting from the workers' organisational point of view, were discussed and analysed with the final aim to outline possibilities to overcome these difficulties on personal, micro and European level.

Work concluded in a final document, being combined by notes developed by different subgroups.

An interesting and also important side

effect was the insight, that people could learn a lot of the different experiences of the participants as well as the whole process of the working group itself.



Migration and Mobility - Group 2

### Workshop 3: How to get greater involvement of young workers in European matters through social participation

During one and a half days this workgroup took in hands the task of analysing and discussing the questions involved in the participation of young workers in EU (or the lack of it.) The basis of the SWOT analysis was used which resulted in the conceptualisation of 4 projects: Build Up of an Computer Inventory / Shadowing Competences / Web School / Qualified Works for the new Europeans



Working group 3 was working very actively

“People expect youth to be like sheep - they should just follow.”

### Official foundation of the platform and its statutes

The youth conference also witnessed the formal creation of the EZA Youth Platform. Roswitha Gottbehüt, EZA Secretary General, explained the importance of the official setup of this Platform and the Core Group (that manages the Platform) within EZA so that young workers from various members' organisations can have a voice in the social dialogue.

Ms. Julia Rieck (EZA) outlined the aims of this Platform that was needed to strengthen the youth position within EZA and to focus on matters of interest to the youth. The Core Group will be

responsible organising the youth conference and of implementing the action plan. Members in the Platform will also be encouraged to make use of tools such as the website and the facebook group.

Mr. Paulo Branco (CFTL, Director) emphasised the importance that such a Platform exits to bridge the gap in EZA and in other workers' organisations. He concluded that youth need space, autonomy and trust to be able to work and have fruitful results.

The organisations present during the meeting agreed on the principles of the



“Are we sheep or individuals?”

## European Centre for Workers' Questions

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[EZA Youth Platform](#)



## About EZA



The work of EZA is supported financially by the European Community.

The European Centre for Workers' Questions is a network consisting of more than 60 workers' organisations from 20 different countries that are committed to Christian social values. Members of EZA are educational facilities from trade unions, socio-political and socio-cultural employees' organisations, as well as research entities that deal with questions concerning employees. EZA has additional partners all over Europe and maintains relations to employees' organisations in Central and South America as well as in Africa.

EZA has two central aims:

- the promotion of social dialogue and the discussion concerning social challenges on the European level.
- the promotion of the social, economical and cultural development of society.

In this context, EZA feels obliged to contribute to solving social questions and those concerning employees.



## About CFTL

C.F.T.L. (Centre of Training and Leisure Times) is a non profit private organisation with its headquarters at Coimbra, Portugal

Our organisation promotes the education and training of children, youth and adults. We also support and promote events of training, leisure, interchange co-operation at national and international level.