

EYS08

EUforIA Youth Summit **2008**

October 17 - October 19



EUforIA
Europeans United Informed Action

EUforIA – Raising global awareness and encouraging local activism.
www.euforiacion.org

handbook

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EUforIA
Europeans United **for** Informed Action

Who we are

Europeans United for Informed Action (EUforIA) is an independent, non-profit youth organization initiated by students from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Founded in 2007, EUforIA is a non-profit association under Swiss law and now registered as an international NGO at the Chancellerie d'Etat of the Canton of Geneva. Our main goals are to increase awareness of global challenges among students and to inspire young people to become active in their local communities.

Our Challenge

The beginning of the 21st century has seen the rise of many new and exciting means of communication. Young people are benefiting not only from “traditional” electronic tools like email and chat rooms but especially from up and coming forms of communication like social networking sites, blogs, VOIP and podcasts. These technologies have increasingly facilitated the exchange of news and ideas among young people from all over the world. Because the youth of today have better access to relevant information and ideas, international political and social conflicts appear to be in closer proximity to our daily lives, thus leading to greater empathy and sympathy among our generation.

Although many young people are anything but indifferent to global problems such as natural disasters, extreme poverty, and HIV/AIDS, few of us actively participate in the solutions to these challenges. Why aren't there more young people involved in the fight for a better world?

EUforIA has identified two of the many answers to this question and would like to address and tackle the challenges that they imply with you as a participating organization in the EYS '08.

One reason for what seems to be indifference in many young people is based on the way the media portray many of the problems around the globe. Influenced by frightening media reports about overpopulation, global warming, violent conflicts or poverty, young people are often led to believe that the problems of the world are so great that the world is on the brink of collapse and there is little one can do to make a meaningful difference. To fight feelings of resignation and powerlessness, youth needs to be shown enlightening examples of positive actions.

A second essential problem is an ignorance among our generation of the many existing concrete and immediate opportunities for each of us to make a difference. Many young people are uninformed as to how to get involved and have a lasting impact on their local and global environment. Organizations like yours can change this, by sharing your experience in the application of innovative and constructive ideas to solve local and global challenges.

We are convinced that a lot of passionate young people have the potential and will to become active and contribute their part to the creation of a more humane world. All they need is to get in contact with organizations like yours that can show them that they can make contributions that are not only tangi-

introduction

ble, but useful, meaningful, and important.

This is where EUforIA comes into play. Our challenge is to provide the missing link between students' desire to make meaningful contributions and the existing set of organizations in need of talented and committed young people to help support their causes.

Our Solution

In order to rise to this challenge, EUforIA is organizing the “EUforIA Youth Summit 2008” (EYS '08). This summit will feature a wide range of events, including presentations, workshops, small group sessions, and social events. Not only will the EYS '08 allow EUforIA to act as a vital link between your organization and passionate young leaders of tomorrow, it will also give us a platform to introduce and implement our concept of **Informed Actions**.

The term **Informed Action** is loosely inspired by the psychological concept of empowerment through information. Based on that premise, EUforIA is convinced that raising awareness and generating motivation go hand in hand. Once people of our generation learn where and why their personal engagement is needed and how problems can be solved, they will be ready and able to carry out **Informed Actions**.

From October 17th to October 19th, 2008, 120 students from Switzerland and other European countries will meet in Geneva to deal with the question “What can YOUth contribute to the solution of global challenges?” This event will mark the kick-off of our 2008/09 “Informed Action” campaign which will consist of a combination of

- presentations
- video conferences
- film screenings
- many other interactive components
- workshops
- art and cultural events
- social gatherings

All of these events will be carried out in accordance with our Informed Action philosophy “Raising global awareness and encouraging local activism”.

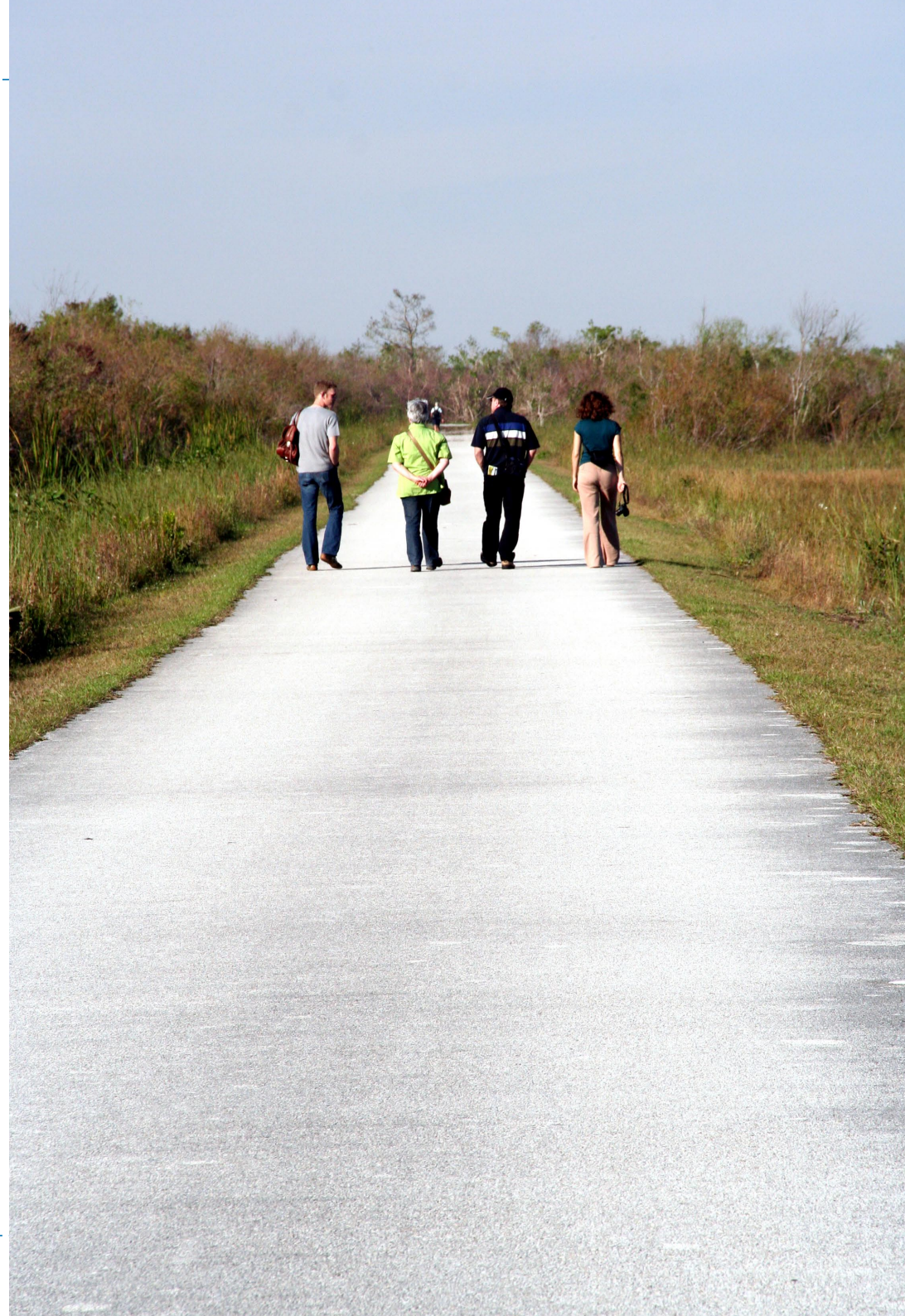
purpose

Using the EYS '08 as a starting point, EUforIA wants to offer (global) **change makers**¹ like the talented young people in your organization a platform to showcase their innovative and constructive solutions to an audience of their peers. By providing encouraging information and relevant examples set by other young people, we hope to generate a euphoric enthusiasm among the participants in the conference.

The great variety of possible engagements the EYS '08 offers its participants will help channel this positive energy immediately into concrete projects. Once they start exchanging ideas about possible personal commitments or projects and begin working closely with other like-minded young people, the participants will be able to overcome the paralyzing feeling of powerlessness and despair. By the end of the summit, the participants will choose the engagement that best fits their individual strengths and interests.

The basic goal of the EYS '08 is to prove to young people that their personal commitment matters. The event is expected to provide the impetus for future **change makers** to overcome a passive attitude and step up to the challenge of becoming active. Our generation lives in a world rife with problems, so we need to build a 'can do' attitude conducive to the solution of the global challenges of today and tomorrow. It is time for us to consider ourselves to be a part of the solution instead of being merely spectators in the theater of global affairs.

1) A global change maker is somebody who recognizes a social problem of global scope and who uses his or her creativity, talent, courage and will to organize a project that aims at changing the global society in such a way that the formerly identified deficiencies are mitigated and eventually entirely eliminated.



target audience

Students - Partner Organizations - General Public

The target audience of EUforIA basically consists of three major groups:

Students:

Our primarily targeted audience are people like us. We want to reach out to European students who would like to become actively involved but do not yet know how to. We are looking for students with an ability to think critically. Students, who believe in a fairer, more peaceful world and just need a final push in order to stand up for their beliefs and become the leaders of their generation.

We will invite 120 such talented young people to the EYS '08. About three quarters of these will come from as many of the 26 Swiss cantons as possible. The remaining quarter is expected to arrive from other European countries where our organization already has members (i.e. Germany, France, Italy and Spain). The major criteria in selecting the participants will be their willingness to become active in the field of global and local change. We strive to have both genders represented more or less equally at the event.

To us, it is tremendously important to equip the future decision makers in the fields of politics, economy and society with a differentiated understanding of global challenges as well as ways to successfully meet those challenges. The participation of young, well-educated and motivated people has an enormous potential for positive change. This will enable us to approach global challenges in an innovative and energetic fashion. We want to reach a large number of students and enable them to participate in the public discourse in an interdisciplinary setting. That way they can work out solutions to environmental and social challenges in the future.

Partner organizations:

Knowing that our generation seeks activities which yield concrete and direct results, we want global change partners such as your organization to join with us in meeting our goals of increased youth activism. Organizations like yours have impressed us with their efficiency and goal-oriented work, which is why we would like you to participate in the EYS '08. Your representatives can help motivate young people to make a personal commitment.

We put special emphasis on smaller, less well-known organizations, whose work is just as valuable and specialized as the work of large NGOs. We believe that smaller organizations in particular can offer interesting and challenging jobs or volunteer positions to students who are willing to work with them. But of course we are also looking for some well-known NGOs to respond to the desire of young people to learn more about them and get in touch with some of their collaborators.

Only in corporation with your organization, can we set up a program which will show our participants that their involvement can make a difference.

General public:

Furthermore, we are targeting the general public because we would like to provide them with an increasing number of positive reports on young people. This is ultimately aimed at changing the public opinion in a way that contributes to the spread of more positive and constructive outlook and attitudes toward our generation. Our message is that young people, too, are willing and able to contribute their part to the solution of global challenges.

structure of the event



The EYS '08 will implement our concept of **Informed Action**. In line with this strategy the event's main components evolve around the following principles:

- raising awareness of global problems
- motivating students to inform themselves
- encouraging students to become active
- inspiring young people to create a world corresponding to their ideals

Throughout the event participants will have the opportunity to get in touch with like-minded students, to inspire each other and to discover together the multiple ways in which they can contribute to global society.

The interactive program during these three days is aimed at creating an environment full of positive feedback in the sense of our message:

YOUTH can and want(s) to contribute to the solution of global challenges!

This message will be underscored by the various guest lecturers and further engrained through the tangible examples provided by the workshops we would like to organize in cooperation with you. Similarly, group projects will help individualize the message and work towards a personal implementation of solutions in the near future. Finally, the complementary social program will help generate a truly 'euphoric' event spirit.



Speeches

Two panel discussions and two speeches by inspiring young leaders of our society dealing with the question “**What can YOUTH contribute to the solution of global challenges?**” will frame the EYS '08. The speaker’s inspiring examples should motivate participants to join these extraordinary personalities in their efforts to create a world which meets our expectations of global justice, fairness and peace..

Two speeches will be delivered by prominent personalities with extensive experience in the field of global change.² Speakers should emphasize the importance of our generation’s commitments as constructive agents of change. They should also elaborate on their own experiences with regard to their personal commitments.

In addition, we will organize two panel discussions with active, young and charismatic “change makers”, who are looking to share their success stories, setbacks, as well as future plans with the participants. Their accomplishments should demonstrate that a smart idea, will power and determination can achieve a great deal – for oneself and for fellow human beings. The round-table talks will also offer the participants the possibility to ask personal questions and to gain first-hand insights.

Workshops

Workshops are the major component of the EYS '08. They will be conducted by organizations operating in the field of **global change** and will introduce innovative methods of resolution for global challenges. Exchanging ideas with people who have substantial experience with various projects and in organizations, students will be motivated to realize their own ideas and to contribute their part to the solution of global challenges.

In order to address as many of our participants’ interests as possible, we have planned to conduct 20 workshops, scheduled to take place in four blocks of 90 minutes each. The workshops will, among other things, deal with the following topics:

- intercultural learning/education
- international conflict
- international cooperation
- youth organizations
- migration
- scientific progress
- corporate social responsibility
- social entrepreneurship
- protection of the environment
- microcredits
- project management
- gender questions

The great diversity of topics covered by the workshops enables the participants to inform themselves about the issues they really care about.

2) People in positions of responsibility in international organizations, young „social entrepreneurs“, etc.

Timeline of a typical workshop

A typical workshop will be conducted by two or three organizations. Depending on the theme, it might be necessary for an expert to introduce the participants to the complexity and the challenges of an issue. He/she will then point out a specific need for action. Then, one or two social innovators will elaborate on their proposed solutions and share insights and experience from their work. The remaining time will be reserved for questions from the audience.

We worked out two broad types of workshops each of which follows a flexible and interactive model. They are open to reinterpretation but always need to include both elements of informed action: raising awareness and generate motivation.

Informative Workshop The idea of an informative workshop is to take on a global challenge from two controversial points of view in order to animate a discussion of the various potentially conflicting opinions on the problem in question. The debate should help the participants to gain a more inclusive and complex understanding of the issue at stake (e.g. Are/should Human Rights (be) a universal value?).

Ideally, two experts on the topic from different organizations give a first input, emphasizing opposing angles to the solution of the question. Such an approach aims at involving and motivating the participants to actively take part in the debate and to express their personal concerns, comments and questions. In doing so, they should obtain a more differentiated understanding of the global challenge. In addition, stimulated by the workshop moderator and the experts present, the participants should realize that apparently conflicting views can co-exist and antagonistic parties can reconcile.

Furthermore, it is important to EUforIA that the experts go beyond the level of discussion and eventually talk about the practical implications of their views. Questions such as the following should be addressed:

- What are the concrete possibilities for young people to have an impact on the issue at stake?
- Why should students join your organization?
- Can they do internships abroad, sign petitions, organize fundraiser?
- In short, what actions can be done³?



Becoming active Workshop In the becoming active workshops the young participants can learn about the importance of youth engagement and about the great diversity of existing opportunities in NGOs and organizations working on global challenges. Young activists will share their own experiences (personal setbacks as well as success stories) in a specific area (e.g. Social Entrepreneurship) with the participants. By providing concrete examples and experiences members of your organization can prove that youth engagement does make a difference. This can encourage the audience to become involved and active. Additionally the workshop organizers will present an eclectic mix of possible ways to become active in many areas⁴.

3) Example: Is Development aid a "good" thing?

An employee of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) explains their concept of development and cooperation that aims at helping people to help themselves and presents the SDC's "Junior Professional Officer Programme" for recent graduates.

A collaborator from the Berne Declaration (EvB) claims that the difference is not made abroad but at home, here in Switzerland. Moreover, (s)he points at the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and youth's socio-ecological conscious consumption behaviour and how this can have an impact on the development perspectives of other countries/people.

4) Example: How can I become active abroad?

A former Peace Corps volunteer, a medical student who interned at a hospital in Africa and a gap year social worker, share their experiences with the participants and tell them how they felt, what they learned and where they saw possibilities to make a difference. The moderator or a competent organization (e.g. cinfo) presents a couple of possible ways to do an internship or civil service abroad and hands out an extensive list, ordered by subcategories, of possible ways of getting engaged and who is looking for volunteers or paid collaborators and how they can be contacted/which their requirements are.

Group work sessions

Aside from speeches, roundtable discussions and workshops, the participants will also have the opportunity to work in smaller groups.

At the beginning of the event, the participating students will be asked to form twelve groups of ten members each. A EUforIA tutor will be assigned to each group to help familiarize them with the event schedule and offer the group members an opportunity to make first acquaintances.

Later, these groups will provide a space for the students to reflect on their experiences and begin discussing what future actions they would like to get involved in. Three scheduled group meetings will not only provide ample time for discussion but will also help prepare the participants for the realization of their ideas following the EYS '08. By the time our event draws to a close, the group members will be encouraged to compose and present a statement to their fellow participants, detailing among other things their ideas for own projects, fields of further study or possible involvements in other NGOs.



Social Program

As part of our social program, we are planning to show an emotionally engaging movie that will broach the issue of a particular global challenge and expose the need for action. To prevent the anger provoked by the movie and the determination to change our world from evaporating into thin air, we will invite one or two organizations working in a field associated with the movie. Their role will be to call on the audience to fight the problems exposed, by offering concrete and immediate solutions that can transform the motivation into informed actions right of the bat.

Two dinners and concluding festivities will round out the social program. This in particular will help the participants to socialize in a more comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. Since friendship and empathy facilitate future cooperation, we find it indispensable that enough time is provided to develop interpersonal relationships. By means of our attractive social program, we wish to give students a break from the heavy flow of information during the main parts of the event. Simultaneously, this will strengthen the links between the young leaders of tomorrow.

We are convinced that our strategy of combining information, discussion and exchange is tailored exactly to the needs of our generation. Thus, it will not only appeal to the participants for the duration of the event but keep them motivated in the long run.



long term planning and monitoring

In order to evaluate the viability and success of the EYS '08, we formulated a list of criteria to evaluate our success. In other words, can the generated euphoria be measured? With the purpose of keeping track of the participants' state of personal commitment, we are planning to send out an email-based questionnaire in two waves, the first wave coming one month, the second one six months after the event. To make sure that a sufficient number of questionnaires will be filled out and returned (i.e. high response rate), we will stress the importance of this feedback during the EYS '08.

The following criteria are indicators of our future success:

1. EUforIA

A During the event, EUforIA will try to recruit about twenty members for its own organizational growth. Joining an existing local EUforIA group or founding a new one are only two of the many possibilities for new members. In either case, new members can collaborate in organizing EUforIA events such as workshops, movie screenings, (video) conferences, social activities and so on.

B Convincing a maximum number of participants of our concept of Informed Action, we hope to be able to stage smaller events at different universities across Europe in the near future. Therefore, we hope to motivate up to three quarters of the participants of the EYS '08 to continue attending our events, to subscribe to our newsletter, to take part in discussions staged on the internet etc.

2. Partner organizations

One of our most important goals is to motivate as many participants as possible to become involved in organizations like yours. This includes finding information about your organization's work as well as committing oneself to the active support of and possible membership in your organization. Getting young people to support partner organizations, thus serving as a mediator between these people and an organization like yours is one of the primary functions of EUforIA.

3. EYS '09

We are striving to repeat the EYS experience in the years to come. Therefore, we hope to recruit a committee capable of organizing the EYS '09. Ideally, we hope to find five participants of this year's event who volunteer to help plan and carry out the EYS '09.

4. Multiplier effect

A We hope to convince at least ten participants to write a report about the EYS' 08, EUforIA or a derivative topic. These could then be published in a university journal, an online magazine, a blog, and even in the local or national press.

B Furthermore, our survey intends to determine to what extent the participants have spread the word about EUforIA, EYS '08, its partner organizations and the topics dealt with amongst their friends. Using the strategy of the snowball-approach, this could happen via the participants' blogs or their profile in social networking communities.

5. Behavioral changes

The parameter most difficult to measure is the number of participants who changed their behavior as a result of their newly gained knowledge and euphoric spirit.

Indicators of behavioral change include but are not limited to the following. How many participants will pay attention to simple actions such as buying fair trade, organic food or environmental friendly products? Will someone decide to change his or her career plans? Will their political participation increase, e.g. will they vote more often? How many will use their bikes more often, how many will think of turning off electronic equipment and start recycling more? How many participants will decide to commit to a cause they are deeply concerned about? Will anybody start working in the field of global change or carry out **Informed Actions**?

In the aftermath of the event, we will also offer an online platform where people can continue to exchange and share information as well as encourage each other to be young leaders of tomorrow.

Apart from the email survey (cf. page 11), all participants in the EYS '08 will fill out a questionnaire on the last day of the event. This will help us meet the individual interests of our participating students even better during the EYS '09. Within the bounds of their last group session, participants will be asked to write a letter expressing their feelings, citing what impressed them most, and anticipating their next steps.

The participants will hand in the letters to their EuforIA tutor, who will provide each person with written personal feedback and encouragement. A month after the event, the completed letters will be sent back to the participants, to help counter a possible loss of momentum.

Rereading their ideas, they will precisely remember the feeling they had when they were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave, knowing –possibly for the first time in their lives – that they could make a difference. A month after the event, this experience should give them a new impulse to continue their engagement and to integrate the global community of change.

We hope you will join us in spreading EuforIA among youth during the EYS 2008



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