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## EDITORIAL

MIJARC Europe is pleased to present the first edition of our magazine Info Europe this year. This issue focuses on the topic of youth unemployment, looking at the situation of young people at European level but also at specific national issues. You can also read about the latest events and activities of MIJARC Europe and of some of its member movements - KLJB Germany, YMDRAB Bulgaria, MRJC France, APSD - Agenda 21 Romania and KLJ Belgium. In this issue we want to introduce to you one of the members of our current Think Tank, who is also a representative of one of our newest member movements. If you want to find out what we are planning for the second half of the year, have a look at the calendar of upcoming activities for 2015!

Enjoy the reading!

# INTRODUCTION

## Youth unemployment - Step up to the plate and face the challenge!

In the last years, especially since the financial crisis the unemployment rate of young people in Europe has increased. 23,1 percent of the youth in Europe were unemployed in the end of the year 2013. The Youth is the potential and future of every country and of Europe. Through unemployment, young people are endangered to lose their perspectives and an optimistic way to look ahead. They have to face social exclusion, insecurity, frustration, the loss of income and independency and a risk of long-term unemployment. Especially south and eastern European countries struggle with a high amount of young unemployed people. In 2011 many young people in Spain, Italy, Greece and a lot of other European countries felt left behind and were on the streets to protest against youth-unemployment. By this they tried to force their governments to improve their situation and perspectives. The topic youth-unemployment got more attention in society. In the European Union it ranks highly on the agenda and many initiatives have been taken. Governments with a long-term vision for

welfare and development in their countries are concerned with the best ways to integrate the young people into the labor force.

The situation in the various European countries differs a lot. The development in every country has its own dynamics and needs special solutions. Also in rural areas youth faces other difficulties to find jobs than urban youth. They are confronted with a lack of infrastructure which complicates it to get to work. Often there is just a small variety of jobs given and leaves less options for young people with a good qualification or those who want to upgrade their skills. On the other hand rural areas seem to hold possibilities. Long-term youth unemployment tends to be less common in rural than in urban areas. Social networks facilitated access to job opportunities for those young people with good local contacts. Why is Youth-unemployment an important topic for MIJARC? Because we are directly affected! We as MIJARC represent the rural youth. Many of our members struggle directly or indirectly from youth-unemployment or from the prob-

lems which arise from it in society. So we need to take our future in our own hands. We've got the knowledge of the field. We need to exchange our experiences and ideas with politicians and decision-making bodies.

How could MIJARC become active to influence the recent situation for the rural youth? Guided by the See, Judge and Act method we need to get a broader picture of the recent developments. That's why we make the topic 'youth unemployment' to our current focus. So let's get into it! Let's figure out which role we as rural youth could play to bring youth-unemployment on the top of the agendas. How can we support unemployed people and get an impact in politics and in our region and on national level? What could be our contribution to change the situation? Let's create a society where the youth can look optimistic in the future! We are young, we are flexible and we can take the challenges!

*Veronika Nordhus*

Vice-President of MIJARC Europe

## NEWS FROM EUROPE

### European employment strategy for youth



young people in Europe, with over 5 million young people under the age of 25 were unemployed in the EU-28 area in the second quarter of 2014. This represents an unemployment rate of 21.7% (23.2% in the euro area), which is twice as high as the adult unemployment rate (9.0%). Despite the crisis, there are over **2 million unfilled vacancies** in the EU.

The key actions taken by the EU are included in two big initiatives: the Youth Employment Package (2012) which is the follow-up to the actions on youth laid out in the wider Employment Package and the Youth Employment Initiative (2013) which reinforces and accelerates measures outlined in the Youth Employment Package. It aims to support particularly young people not in education, employment or trainings in regions with a youth unemployment rate above 25%.

In 2015, Juncker Commission has made a proposal of making 1 billion euro from the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) available in order to help the Commission achieve its top priorities: to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, to stimulate investment and to create jobs. If approved, the proposal will increase by up to

30 times the pre-financing Member States receive to boost youth employment - reaching up to 650 000 young people and helping them get into work, faster.

Reducing the youth unemployment rate is a top priority for European Union as the 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years) target is far from being reached in the near future. This top concern has to do with the alarming numbers depicting the situation of

This information was provided by the European Commission in articles retrieved here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1036&newsId=2173&furtherNews=yes>

# NEWS FROM MIJARC

## European Coordination Meeting 2015



With a whole new team, a new assistant secretary, some new European coordinators but the same place, Dilbeek - Belgium, the European Coordination Meeting started on a windy day of March 27th. The coordinators from Belgium, France, Germany, Macedonia, Romania and Spain, together with the European team and the Secretariat, discussed for two days about the future of MIJARC Europe, looking at some of the most important aspects of our work.

After a motivating welcoming given by MIJARC's President, Jan Vanwijnsberghe and a vote on the

agenda of the meeting, the focus went to the current Action Plan and to what has been done so far. Special attention was given to external representation, as the new team is starting to take a more active role in MIJARC's external partners, such as Via Campesina or the European Youth Forum, about which you can read more in this issue. The review of the action plan was followed by a close look given to the financial situation of the organization, with the good news that the ERASMUS+ operational grant for 2015 was approved spreading an optimistic vibe on all the member movements present at the meeting. After the analysis of the past and current situation, the group talked about the future of MIJARC and the ongoing expansion

process. Working in groups, the European coordinators concluded that it was very important to attract new movements in our network but also to focus on maintaining a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the existing movements. One way to do this is by involving them in our activities, especially in the upcoming activities of 2015. The coordinators were happy that the summer and autumn of 2015 would bring together many of their members who will take part to a lot of interesting activities. You can find out more about when and where our upcoming

events are taking place, by having a look at the calendar of activities in this issue. The first day ended with a wonderful session of "News from our member movements" where we all got the chance to share our work and set new bridges for cooperation. Have a look at "News from member movements section" to find out what our member movements have been up to lately.

On the second day, the group already started the preparation of the Extended Generally Assembly of 2015, by setting the agenda and discussing about logistics and other practical aspects. The next topic on the agenda was the paper for the Committee of External Representation, a very useful document including guidelines and information for the people who are part of the committee but also for those that would like to join it and represent MIJARC at different external events. Other conclusion of the second day included the decision to give the staff an external representation mandate for a period of two years and the decision to keep the Newsletter as an internal tool. As you can see, these were two full days but amazingly we managed to finish on time with all the points on the agenda. All the participants appreciated the chance to meet the other movements and hear about their work as well as the great atmosphere during the entire event.

*Florina Potîrniche*  
Assistant secretary

## La Via Campesina: The peasants' way!

From the 27<sup>th</sup> of February to the 4<sup>th</sup> of March the peasants farmer leaders were meeting in Brussels and MIJARC Europe was there ! « Peasants farmer leaders », what is that ? MIJARC Europe is a member of the European Coordination la Via Campesina (ECVC). It is the European coordination of small and family farming organizations and trade unions. From the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, ECVC had its Youth Assembly and from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of March its General Assembly took place. Thibault Duisit (Vice-president of MIJARC Europe) and François (the French European coordinator) were present there to represent MIJARC. The first news from these two

assemblies is that the construction of the Youth Group of ECVC is in progress! We can add that different events against TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) are planned and more precisely we are invited to organize symbolic actions locally and we were invited to join the public demonstration in Brussels on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of April. ECVC proposed to each movement to join the different events around the COP21 in December 2015 in Paris. Around this world conference for climate a lot of non formal or unofficial events will happened. The French organization member of ECVC (la Confédération Paysanne) will plan and participate to a lot of them. Different events and public actions or internal debates are planned for the next year. We (as a full member of ECVC) are deeply encouraged to be more active in some working groups of ECVC. So the question to answer is: What to do?



*Thibault Duisit*  
Vice-President of MIJARC Europe

# MIJARC Europe attended the Council of Members and the general Assembly of the European Youth Forum



The Council of Members (COMEM) and the extraordinary General Assembly of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) took place in the heart of Brussels. The big topics of the spring COMEM were: the election of the members of the Advisory Council of Youth of the COE, the Resolutions about Quality jobs and social inclusion, the membership fees and the applications of new members. And of course it was very interesting to hear the reports of activities and finances of the last period.

Next to the presentation of the AC-candidates, the first day focused on the report, finances and on discussions about the position papers. When 99 organizations meet there are of course many amendments and discussions about every aspect

of a resolution paper. This year MIJARC focuses on the topic is Youth-unemployment. So I joined the discussion on the Resolution "Time to act: More quality Employment!" It deals with sustainable growth, job creation and fair working conditions as heart of the solution for young people's access to quality jobs. Furthermore it stresses the importance of an inclusive labour market and the transition from education to labour market.

The other Resolution "Inclusive Societies at stake" had its origin in the attacks in France. It is a statement against discrimination, exclusion and xenophobia. It stresses the importance of youth organizations to build a diverse and democratic Europe with a strong civil society.

MIJARC Europe applied with our candidate Claire Perrot-Minot for the Advisory Council of Youth. After a tough election campaign at the COMEM where I had the chance to present Claire and MIJARC to many member organizations, Claire was unfortunately not elected. Nevertheless it was a great opportunity to present our work and the positions of MIJARC Europe and to get in contact with people from other youth organizations.

In a real run through the resolution papers and the amendments both papers were accepted by the member organizations. Furthermore the assembly decided on an increase of the membership fees.

It was the first COMEM I attended. Thanks to the Faith-based-organization Cooperation I had a lot of help to find my way at the assembly. We met before the COMEM to talk about the topics of the Assembly, to discuss about the resolutions and the candidates. Also during the COMEM we spend a lot of time to interview candidates together and to do amendments on the papers. So it was really great to get in contact with this group and share ideas, positions and strategies and to keep the relationship between the Faith-based-organizations and MIJARC fresh.

*Veronika Nordhus*

Vice-president of MIJARC Europe



## NEWS FROM MOVEMENTS

### KLJB NEWS



## New board, new position papers, new motivation: KLJB General Assembly



Around 100 KLJB delegates gathered in a small town near Aachen to hold KLJB's annual General Assembly. This year's topics were diverse and the agenda of the assembly was full of proposals, elections and evening events.

The elections for a new board as well as new members of different working groups took almost a whole day. In the end, a new KLJB board was elected. Daniel Steiger, KLJB chaplain for the last three years, was unanimously re-elected. Tobias Müller won with a large majority and he will start his new job in the middle of April. One of his responsibilities will be the KLJB main topic "rural development" in Germany. The delegates also had to say goodbye to Karin Silbe, former board member. We wish her all the best for her future.

Fairtrade is never out of fashion. That is why the working group on international development worked on a position paper on this topic for the last two years. They finally submitted a proposal on KLJB's vision of Fairtrade at this General Assembly. As a preparation for the delegates, they held a seminar with interesting Fairtrade experts e.g. an employee of

Fairphone and Fairtransport. They showed all participants how important it is to be courageous and to be active for a better world. The position paper was unanimously approved. In the paper, KLJB demands among other things that the world trade has to be based on human rights. It is thus not enough to implement Fairtrade only in the global south but to expand the concept to the north. Moreover, KLJB wants a certification system not only for products but also for the entire companies.

From Fairtrade to a better policy on asylum and refugees: Various dioceses already live a culture of welcome for migrants and refugees and that is something KLJB demands of everyone. A position paper for more justice for asylum seekers worldwide was adopted in which KLJB wants a stronger fight against the causes of migration and flight e.g. poverty, climate change, resource scarcity.

The General Assembly was a success. With new papers adopted, the board can get in contact with politicians and companies to make all the positions heard. This summer, KLJB organises its great national meeting called "Plattacke!" with more than 1.000 members and international guests. Four days of learning, discussions and fun awaits us. You are all very much welcome to join us from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August in Lastrup, Germany.

Natalie Hohmann  
KLJB

## YMDRAB NEWS

### A good start of the year



*YMDRAB is planning to realize two projects this summer funded by Erasmus + Programme and European Youth Foundation*

It's almost a tradition for YMDRAB to apply for funds each year to Erasmus + Programme or European Youth Foundation in order to support children at risk and young people living in rural areas in Bulgaria. This year we are planning to realize two projects supporting rural youngsters. The first project is dedicated to young people with autism as their number in Europe is constantly increasing. Each autistic youngster has a unique personality. It is necessary to work with each person on an individual program suited to his/her specific problems and needs, in order to have a chance for normal development and successful integration into the educational system and society. Unfortunately, in the rural areas of Eastern Europe, youth workers often continue to work with autistic youngsters using outdated methodologies. The main reasons for this are the relatively limited

access to quality information on the latest working methods and lack of international interaction and exchange between organisations involved in this mission.

In response to these problems and led by a sincere desire to really help rural young people with autism, YMDRAB in partnership with 4 organisations from different European countries apply with the project **"The magic to communicate" to Erasmus + Programme**. Its main aim is to improve the quality of work of youth workers who are engaged in non-formal education of young people with autism in the rural areas of Eastern Europe, through their training and development of their cooperation for innovation and exchange of experience, skills and best practices.

The training will be held from 31.07.2015 to 09.08.2015 in the city of Varna, Bulgaria and will bring together 50 youth workers and experts from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania and Bulgaria. During the course, participants will discuss and analyze the realities and current problems in working with autistic youth in rural areas of different countries. The course will improve their professional capacity and will enhance the quality of their work. This experience will help participants and their organisations to initiate and implement new quality youth practices and initiatives at different levels to support autistic youngsters. But undoubtedly the most important project result will be that the newly acquired knowledge and skills will be immediately put into practice through the daily activities of participants with rural autistic youngsters at local level.

In light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, the continuous interreligious tensions in the Middle East and the burdens of the Bulgarian history, YMDRAB is applying with its second project tackling interreligious intolerance and hate.

Led by our desire to contribute to the well-being of the Bulgarian rural youth (irrespective of religion), YMDRAB in cooperation with institutions

and supported by like-minded organisations is applying to the **European Youth Foundation (CoE)** with the project **"Stronger together: youth collaboration for interreligious solidarity"**. Its main aim is the prevention and peaceful transformation of interreligious conflicts between young people living in the Bulgarian rural areas. The main project activity will be a one week collaboration event taking place between 3<sup>rd</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> July in the city of Varna, Bulgaria. The event will bring together 26 rural youngsters from the municipalities of Botevgrad (mainly Christian) and Ardino (mainly Muslim), young people that have fewer opportunities for volunteering and lack of access to non-formal education. During the event the participants will have the chance to reflect on the stereotypes and prejudice that lead to interreligious conflicts. Furthermore, the program will allow developing awareness and understanding of the concepts of human and social rights as well as the underlying personal responsibilities. Eventually, the participants will also be able to reflect and identify a set of actions that could contribute to the prevention and peaceful transformation of interreligious conflicts in their local communities. In the end of the event, a position paper will be developed outlining the results of the project, which will be then used as an advocacy tool by YMDRAB. In parallel to that, action groups will be established in the local communities of the participants, which will act as a moving force for the implementation of an effective follow-up. We hope that together with the support from the Erasmus + Programme and European Youth Foundation we will be able to implement these projects and contribute for implement new quality youth practices and initiatives at different levels to support autistic youngsters and for the prevention and peaceful transformation of interreligious conflicts in the Bulgarian rural areas.

Yonko Dodev  
Vice-president of YMDRAB



## Access to employment for young people: Let's not miss the point!

### **"Employment, one of the major concerns of young people in France"**

Just like several other European countries, France, and most particularly its young people are affected by unemployment, i.e. excluded from employment by the rest of the society. Nearly 25% of the youth labour force is looking for jobs. 15% of the 15-29 year-olds have no jobs and no training.

### **"This scourge is not inevitable and it is not a compulsory step in a person's life"**

There is a misconception that young people should really "struggle" to enter the labour market, that this "will help them discover the real world". We, MRJC young people, do not subscribe to that point of view! As victims of unemployment because of a lack of training mechanisms and limited work sharing, among other things, young people are supposed to comply with that requirement, they are supposed to adapt so that competition can prevail over dignity, over their dignity! The MRJC is opposed to it!

### **"Greater vulnerability of young people"**

Young people are faced with the reversal of the solidarity mechanisms that have been in place over the last 30 years. Young people used to help their parents to make ends meet. Now, it is the other way around. Young people depend more and more on their parents: they have no access to housing, they are unable to care for themselves... This phenomenon has been made worse by the growing number of specific youth plans related to the employment issue. No less than 30 over a 30-year period. They have stigmatised and strengthened competition between generations, excluding them from the common right through the creation of specific insecure employment conditions.

This alarming situation must prompt us to react and act together, because young people who have lost their bearings and confidence no longer believe in the future, they get marginalised, they fall into a climate of misunderstanding and injustice which is a godsend for those stigmatising exclusion policies.

### **"Let's not miss the point!"**

Focusing on an increase in youth jobs leads to forgetting that youth is an age for experiment and

for learning to understand the world as well as a trade or profession.

We cannot promote that youth employment race. Too many young people are forced to work at the same time as studying, leading to school failure. Others have to end their studies because they cannot afford to pay them, leading to social failure, their education depending at the end of the day on whether they have a family to back them. Those young people will be affected by these failures for the rest of their lives since having a diploma or degree in France is essential for professional recognition.

The MRJC wants a change of outlook

Flagging the access to employment as the only key to solving youth problems means obscuring all the factors related to youth integration and emancipation in society, accepting a normalisation of their precariousness and marginalisation. The political debate focuses on the issue of mass unemployment. It would all be due to the labour cost problem. Unemployed people are then blamed for being unemployable, young people for being too demanding, and French people for clinging to outdated privileges.

We want to talk about work! This includes the whole range of human activities, whether paid or unpaid. Talking about employment, wages and production amounts to hiding a meaningful aspect in the construction of each person and each society: social relations. Talking about work implies taking into consideration all non-market activities that contribute both to the economy

and to societal well-being. We say that work must be a tool in the fight against social exclusion because everyone works, from children to elderly people.

Talking about work leads to readdress the question of the social value of human activities, in other words its definition and the way it is measured. We say that society as a whole must decide what is important and the meaning of things that are produced, and that the organisation of work must be collective, enhancing all people's participation and self-esteem through their contributing to a collective project.

A few proposals

As MRJC we think that youth is an age for testing and learning. We want young people's need to enjoy the same rights as their fellow citizens to be recognised. We call for the establishment of an independence social allowance and a universal right to life-long training to allow each and every one to learn, to experiment, to test...

The issue is to provide young people the means to understand the world's economic stakes and to act upon it in all conscience. In practical terms, there is an ever growing number of projects led by young people around the "life plans, career plans" reflection, aiming at dealing with questions related to guidance and the place of work in our lives, at considering the creation of activities in rural areas in a collective framework...

*Thibault Sauvageon*

National Secretary for Economy, MRJC - France



## Education for the future



Young people stimulate the economic development, as enthusiastic employees or as entrepreneurs with innovative ideas or as active participants in the market, but still represent one of the most vulnerable groups in society, facing challenges related to education, filling a job, social inclusion and health. In Romania, Eurostat data showed that in 2011, the unemployment rate was 7.4%, but the most affected category of age was the one between 15 and 24 years old with a percent of 23.7%.

Although, there is no recent data regarding the situation on the labor market of the institutional-

ized young people, it can be asserted that they face bigger difficulties than other categories of young people regarding their insertion on the labor market and their capacity to live independently. The institutionalized young people represent an extreme vulnerable category which needs a special attention taking in consideration the extremely sudden transition to the life post-institution. At the age of 18, if they don't continue their studies, they must face the institution of social assistance and face a reality unprepared enough.

Taking all these into account, Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21

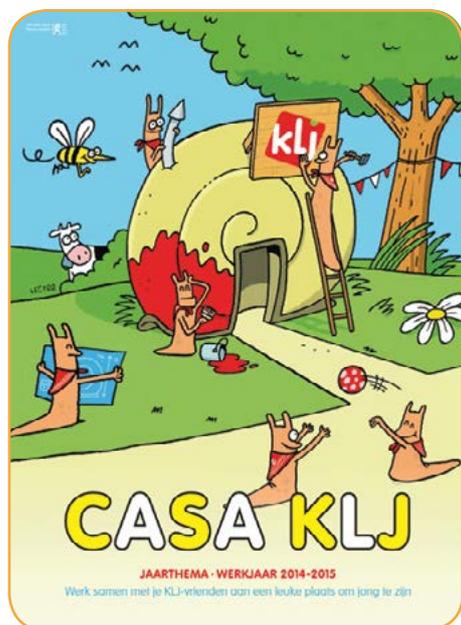
(Romanian NGO, observer within MIJARC Europe), implemented a 1 year project focused on this issue at the local level. „Education for the future” aimed at improving the skills of 30 institutionalized young people and endowing them with abilities meant to open their perspectives within the labor market and prepare them regarding the employers’ requirements. The project was implemented between September 2013 and August 2014 in partnership with the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection and was financed by the European Commission through the Program Youth in Action, action 1.2 – Young people initiatives. A training course was dedicated delivered to 12 multipliers who worked with institutionalized young people. The role of the trained multipliers within „Education for the future” project was to work with 30 young people who were beneficiaries of social assistance services in Ilfov County on the aforementioned topics in 12 thematic workshops. Another achievement of the activities with young people was the “Education for Employment” Toolkit which can be used by any youth worker who would like to educate young people in this perspective.

*Andreea Tătaru*

Project officer, APSD-Agenda 21

## KLJ NEWS

### Casa KLJ



The year theme of KLJ is this year “Casa KLJ”. With this theme we want to put the buildings of our local groups in the main picture. Some of them have a very nice and new building but a lot of our groups have a lot of problems with their building (safety, too small, accessibility etc.). 5% of our local groups don't even have a building for their KLJ-activities so they always have to search for different solutions to be able to hold their KLJ-activities. The buildings are often property of the church or of the local government. With this action we want to raise awareness of this reality. For this we want to show this problems and share positive stories. On this way we want to show solutions to the local government. We've organized a Building-fair for our local groups. On this event they could follow a lot of workshops

about buildings (for example: workshops about safety, interior of your building). We've also been on the national news with this action. On this news item they've showed a building of one of our local groups that has a lot of problems. With this year theme we also want to show that this buildings aren't just buildings but a KLJ-home for our 22 000 KLJ'ers. We also gave our local groups lots of methodologies to make their home even more cozy and to show that everybody is welcome. For this we've made, like we do with every year theme, a booklet with activities and catholic moments.

*Karel Billet*

European Coordinator - KLJ Belgium

# INTERVIEW



**Name:** Charlene Debrincat  
**Nationality:** Maltese  
**Age:** 26

Charlene is one of the members of the "Think Tank", the fancy name we give to the team of volunteers who are preparing the activities for our seminar "Let us in-keeping the faith in you(th)", taking place between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015, in Belgium. The Think Tank members will also facilitate the working sessions during this

event. Their task is very important but, as you will conclude from Charlene's answers, it is also very fun and rewarding.

#### **How did you find out about the Think Tank?**

I was actually referred to by a friend of mine, Ryan Mercieca, from GUG. The organisation thought I would be a good fit.

#### **What did you think the "Think Tank" was going to be like before joining it?**

I thought that it would be less fun, more formal and kind of "let's do the work and that's it", but it turned out to be quite nice because you get to know a lot of people and it's not just working together, it's also getting to know other people, discovering similarities and differences.

#### **What's the atmosphere within a MIJARC Europe Think Tank?**

The first session was a little bit strange because we did not know each other but we are all very dynamic people and we managed to make everybody feel comfortable. I am quite happy and glad that it's turning out like that. I have never done this before and I have to be honest: I thought it would be awkward. But it's quite nice and finding similarities with the other people makes you feel that the world is a smaller place. It makes you feel that whatever there is

that is daunting you: a project, impossible tasks or anything that you feel is too much, becomes less stressful because you know that someone is passing through the same thing. The help from the others is quite nice.

#### **Can you give us a short insight into your work?**

#### **Are there some special activities, something interesting, something that you think the participants will really enjoy?**

Well, that would spoil the surprise so I can't tell you. We're planning as many activities as we can but at the moment we are focusing more on the subject itself: youth unemployment. What I found interesting is that we are planning a lot of field visits and meetings with experts which I think will be very interesting for the participants.

#### **What would you say to someone who has the chance of joining a MIJARC Europe Think Tank?**

Go head! That would summarize it! Just go ahead! It's quite an interesting experience. You learn a lot from it: even the way you look at research: you know, there is the typical research - Google, go to the library - but research with MIJARC is more than that. It's not just talking about figures and statistics but sharing experiences and stories and finding out about the others. We are exploring realities and this gives the image behind the data.

## Calendar of upcoming activities in 2015

<i>When...?</i>	<i>What...?</i>	<i>Where...?</i>
25 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	General Assembly	Belgium
27 <sup>th</sup> July - 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2015	Seminar	Belgium
4 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	Study session	France
26 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2015	Training session	Malta

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