



## **MIJARC EUROPE**

*Mouvement International de la Jeunesse Agricole et Rurale Catholique  
International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth  
Movimiento Internacional de la Juventud Agraria y Rural Catolica  
Internationale Katholische Land- und Bauernjugendbewegung*



## **NEWSLETTER APRIL 2009**

### **EDITORIAL**

**Do not forget to visit our website: it is now updated!**

Since last summer, all information about MIJARC Europe's activities has been putted on our website. The majority of the news presented in this newsletter is also available on the website as well as all our publications.

**[www.mijarc.info](http://www.mijarc.info)**

### **NEWS FROM MIJARC EUROPE**



#### **❖ Letters to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)**

At the occasion of the upcoming elections of the European Parliament, the European team of MIJARC has sent letters presenting its **"5 proposals for Europe"** to the MEPs members of:

##### **- the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development**

[http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter\\_MEPS\\_Committee\\_on\\_Agriculture\\_and\\_Rural\\_development.pdf](http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter_MEPS_Committee_on_Agriculture_and_Rural_development.pdf)

##### **- the Committee on Culture and Education**

[http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter\\_MEPS\\_Committee\\_on\\_Culture\\_and\\_Education.pdf](http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter_MEPS_Committee_on_Culture_and_Education.pdf)

##### **- the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs**

[http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter\\_MEPS\\_Committee\\_of\\_Employment\\_and\\_social\\_affairs.pdf](http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter_MEPS_Committee_of_Employment_and_social_affairs.pdf)

##### **- The Committee on Environment**

[http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter\\_MEPS\\_Committee\\_on\\_Environment.pdf](http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/Letter_MEPS_Committee_on_Environment.pdf)

By these letters, we would like to draw the attention of EU decision makers on the future of rural areas in Europe and invite them to take into consideration our "5 proposals for Europe" in the fields of education, agriculture, services and infrastructure, economy and youth participation in decision-making.

❖ **INFO-Letter "YOU(th) can make the Europe of tomorrow!"**



**An Info-Letter about the Campaign of MIJARC Europe has been published 2 weeks ago and can be downloaded on our website:**

[http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/INFO\\_YOU th can make the Europe of tomorrow 1 2009.pdf](http://www.mijarc.info/uploads/media/INFO_YOU_th_can_make_the_Europe_of_tomorrow_1_2009.pdf)

**In this Info-Letter you can find complementary information about the European elections and many ideas to implement actions at local level.**

**Read it!**

❖ **SUMMER CAMP 2009 : "Europe is a village" in Ruffec (France) – 20-26 July 2009 – Call for leaders and participants!**

***The summer camp 2009 of MIJARC Europe will be hosted by MRJC France and will take place in Ruffec (Province of Center, France) from the 20th to the 26th of July 2009. This camp will gather 30 youngsters coming from Germany, Belgium, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and France.***

**We are expecting 5 participants and one leader from each organization of MIJARC Europe. So it is now time to disseminate this invitation within your movement!**

- **The participants**, aged from 18 to 25 years old, are supposed to be members of local groups, people involved locally who have no/few opportunity to participate to activities at European level. This summer camp would like to offer an opportunity for new young people from your movements to discover what is MIJARC Europe and to live a European experience. We will provide you more information about the content, topics, activities of the camp as soon as possible.
- **Participation cost (per participant):** 60 € (if this cost is too high for some youngsters interested to participate, we will ask a minimum participation cost of 30€)
- **Accommodation:** in a camp house (the food will be prepared by the participants)
- **Activities:** games about Europe, experiences of intercultural learning, international evening, hiking, swimming, creative workshops (painting, writing, photo, postcards' creation), etc.....
- **Organizers:** Lara Bonneau from MRJC France (wild-lutin@wanadoo.fr) and Emilie Durochat from MIJARC Europe (e.durochat@mijarc.net)
- **Language:** The main activities will be presented by the leaders in English.



Programme «Jeunesse en action»

**The summer camp of MIJARC Europe is supported by the European Commission.**

# NEWS FROM EUROPE

## ❖ **European elections: Creation of a web portal!**

The European Youth Forum has created a web portal:

**[www.youthvotes.eu](http://www.youthvotes.eu)**

that will bring together all the campaigns prepared by youth organizations in Europe to get more young people to vote to the next European Parliament Elections (4-7 June 2009).

## ❖ **Hot topic: Vote at 16 years old ???!**

*Should all EU Member States follow the example of Austria ? Is lowering the voting age to 16 a good strategy to get more young people actively involved in society? In 2004 67% of young people aged 18-24 didn't vote for the European Elections. Will lowering the voting age help young people to regain faith in the democratic process? Will this help in having a more youthful European political scenario?*

## **The position of the European Youth Forum: Lowering the voting age to 16**

"The most tangible form of participation in society is the right to participate in a system of representative democracy and vote in elections. Currently, different voting ages apply across the European Union, with the lowest age for all elections established in Austria at 16. It is the European Youth Forum's opinion that young people should be granted the right to vote at all local, national and European elections from the age of 16. The European Youth Forum therefore calls on the European institutions to modify the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, establishing a common voting age of 16 for the European Parliament elections."

**There are three main arguments why the voting age should be lowered:**

### **Argument N°1: Democratic Participation**

Young people today have greater knowledge of society and are more informed than previous generations. It is a myth that young people are more prone to influence from political propaganda or simply copy the political opinion of their parents. Currently 16-17 year-olds are more reluctant than other age groups to participate in political discussions and political parties. The motivation to participate actively in decision-making processes is lower when you have no real influence. Lowering the electoral age would motivate the 16-17 year olds to participate more in the democracy. Simultaneously lowering the voting age would force politicians to formulate solid and substantial youth policies.

### **Argument N°2: Demographic Changes**

A few years from now the composition of voters in Europe will be much different than it is today. In general we live longer and the group of youngsters is proportionally shrinking. Lowering the voting age would contribute to maintaining a demographic balance between youngsters and adults. In 2000 12.4% of the population was between the age of 15 and 24 years, whereas the group of 65-90 years made up 16.2%. Eurostat numbers show that in 2020 the group of 15-24 years will make up 10.9% of the population and the group of 65-90 years of age will constitute 20.6% of the population.

### **Argument N°3: Citizens Rights and Responsibilities**

If the European politicians wish to give young people responsibilities – they need to give them influence as well. Young people are allowed to give birth in most European countries at the age of 15. Young people pay taxes when they get a job. Young people can be put into prison in most countries from the age of 15. However, young people below the age of 18 years are not allowed to vote at elections and thereby influence the decisions that have direct consequences for their everyday life.