



The youth voice in Rio + 20

Participation of a European youth delegation

A youth European delegation went to Rio Earth UN Summit in the framework of the 'Let's Take Care of the Planet'. They have participated in several events of the official UN Summit, the People's Summit and to several side events.

- **What were the Objectives of this delegation**

- **Bringing the European Youth voice to Rio**, in particular diffusing the [Youth Video message](#) and the [Open Letter to Decision-makers](#) that the youth from 14 countries had collectively created in May 2012 during Brussels' European Conference.
- **Participating to activities and debates** with youth from other continents to exchange on their experience and commitments, and to reinforce the youth common voice, focusing in particular the **notion of shared responsibility** for Sustainability.
- **Creating international links with youth networks on SD issues and shared responsibility, and on Rio follow-up.**
- Strengthening the connections with the [Ethics & Responsibility international network](#)
- **Reinforcing links with Organizations representing the youth, and those representing cities and regions**

- **Who was in the delegation?**

The delegation was composed by 3 people that participated to the European Youth Conference as facilitators last May 2012: Aynur Bayraktar (Turkey), Cristina Gonzalez Torrents (Spain) and Ivan Pascaud (France). Fernando Filipini, a young Brazilian who was also facilitator during the International Youth Conference in Brasilia (June 2010), has joined them in several activities.

2 members of Monde Pluriel were with the delegation: Delphine Astier and Lydia Nicolle. They had a complementary role: Delphine for Monde Pluriel strategic development and institutional relations, Lydia to coordinate the delegation and make links with the E&R network and other partners.

- **When were they in Rio?**

The delegation was there from 13 to 21 June 2012.

In Rio, the 'Official' UN Earth Summit (intergovernmental negotiations) was from 20 to 22 June. But hundreds of activities launched by institutions and by the civil society already started from the 7th of June.



What did the young delegation do in Rio?



Diffusing the young European Youth voice

The 3 delegates of Let's Take Care of the Planet presented the Youth video message and the Open letter to Decision-makers (both created in Brussels during the European Conference) in several events:

EU-BRICS civil Society meeting (EESC)

The [EESC](#) (European Economic and Social Committee), along with the [CDES](#) (Brazilian Economic and Social Development Council), organized a meeting between civil society representatives of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and of the European Union. Discussions focused on the strategic position of these regions and citizens as for sustainable development.

The EESC invited our delegation to take the floor and bring the voice of the young Europeans from the *Let's take care of the Planet* project. After visualizing the Video message made in Brussels by the young people, Aynur, Cristina and Ivan read the Open Letter to the Decision-makers, a very powerful moment for the public. Several participants answered confirming it was a necessity to work more closely with the youth!



“When cities breathe, people progress” Meeting (CoR)

This side event, organized by the Committee of the Regions, took place in Rio “official” space (international pavilions). Political elected representatives (Institutions and mayors) and members of the civil society participated. The European Delegation of young people was invited to take the floor in the name of the Europeans delegates from *Let's take Care of the Planet* project. Ivan did not only present the video message and the Open Letter, but he also gave a strong message concerning the Rio + 20 official Summit, emphasizing the main role of cities and regions to tackle environmental issues, as well as the one of civil society in general, and young people in particular, inviting all institutions to work more closely with them! <http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/events/Pages/rio-20.aspx>



In both events, the Open letter was distributed to the public, as well as some of the posters made by the European young delegates. Now your committed and artistic messages are in many walls of houses from all over the world...

Also, a part from these events, we diffused the Open Letter whenever it was relevant.

Discussing on responsibility and actions with people from other continents

The European Delegates, along with Lydia and Delphine from Monde pluriel, facilitated a workshop at the People's Summit: «Let's Take Care of the Planet and share our responsibilities!». It was a big challenge since the People's Summit gathers so many events and people, but no one knows how many people will attend his meeting before it starts! About 20 young people from South



America and Europe participated to the activities. Also, several members from the E&R network, from Europe and Asia participated as well, which enriched a lot the discussions on responsibility.

We had a double objective: creating intercultural exchange on the notion of responsibility and discuss on the actions each can take at his/her level, starting from the European Open Letter to Decision-makers.

The discussion on responsibility was really interesting. Some of the strong ideas exchanged were: the interconnection between everything beyond the frontiers means one should be responsible on his/her acts and requires solidarity; no rights without responsibilities; responsibility also means freedom; responsibility does not mean duty, since it is not imposed by others; awareness raising on sustainability and political culture are key elements for a real change; does globalization prevent us from being close to Nature? Finding coherence, every day, between being aware of the impacts of my choices and my acts is a big challenge.

The exchanges on the actions took place through a word café: the youth started from the responsibilities and actions proposed by the European young people in the Open letter, and proposed further actions, reflecting their own social and cultural environment. As an example, a Brazilian teenager proposed to raise awareness on sustainability to isolated communities, out of the schools.

The Youth Press Agency, who covered the People's Summit activities, attended to the workshop and wrote an article titled "If not now, then when, if not us, then who?" (in Italian): <http://www.agenciajovem.org/wp/?p=8626>



Exchanging life stories between generations

An Intergenerational Dialogue was organized by the Marina Silva Institute (IMAS).

The objective was to exchange between people from different age and experience, relating what personal story brought them to be committed to sustainability. Ivan, one of the three delegates, gave an emotional speech on his own story. It was a very large public, very emotional, and we all had a great feeling of solidarity between generations.



Some more photos here:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.449736141712097.105333.370226599663052&type=3>

Strengthening our contacts with Brazilian young people

We met several times Fernando Filippini and Mariana Matos, who were facilitators during the Let's Take Care of the Planet International Conference in 2010, and are now very involved in the [REJUMA](#) network and the Coletivo Jovem de Meio Ambiente networks.

Several ideas came out: making bridges between Brazilian and European schools and informal education groups, exchanging on the youth actions after Rio + 20. Let's think on how to do it concretely in 2013!

We also had two methodological meetings with the youth group in charge of making convergences between the youth attending the People's Summit. But it was not easy to follow the convergence meetings for two main reasons: the complex organization due to the high number of young participants and events, and the language, since a majority of young people were from Brazil.



Interacting with the Ethics and &Responsibility network

The [E&R Network](#) aims to introduce the concept of **Responsibility** into international debate in order to face the current multiple crises. We had several activities together.



We attended a meeting with several E&R members from Brazil, India and Europe, on a Strategic dialogue on the proposal of a Universal Charter of Responsibilities.

Many young Brazilians also participated. We altogether discussed on the notion of human responsibilities, a missing element in the main International referent documents (UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Each presented his/her activities related to the topic. The European delegates explained the *Let's take Care of the Planet* project and activities in the schools and at national and European levels. Two young Brazilian that are in the *Let's Take Care of the Planet* process from 2010 were also there. Also, a network of 'Sustainable Surfers', launched in Brazil by the E&R network in 2010, presented their action. They launched a [Surfers' Alliance for the Environment](#) and wrote a Surfers' Charter of Responsibilities! Fantastic to see how people can appropriate the concept...



The European delegation then had a working meeting with Pinky, a member of the E&R network from the Philippines, to see how to make concrete bridges between both projects, with the youth. Both meetings motivated us to plan concrete interactions with the E&R network, with youth from other continents. We could possibly (if we can gather all the conditions) start a network of young people (aged 18-30), proposing first to the facilitators and ex-delegates that participated in the 2010 and 2012 Conferences, to exchange on their experience, working with younger people (13-16). As a second stage, the facilitators could also launch a debate on the question of responsibilities and commitments. Why not having a Charter of responsibilities written by 18-30 young people?!

Networking for the Project continuity

Delphine and Lydia, but also Ivan, Cristina and Aynur were also in Rio to network with people and entities to reinforce the project future. And we met quite a lot of interesting persons in fact! For instance: Ivan met members of Green Cross International, Cristina reinforced links with her region's elected representatives, Aynur visited the Turkish Pavilion, Delphine met the French person in charge of SD at the Ministry of Education, Lydia met the Youth and Livelihoods unit leader of UN-habitat... and others. Now, time to relaunch these contacts and define for what exactly!

Participating to open events to learn from the others

There were hundreds of activities organized in Rio (Official Summit/People's Summit/side events) open to the public, on very diverse topics, from deforestation to the Rights for women,... Each of us chose to attend some of them. Some examples of the activities we attended (separately):



- **Dialogues between Environmental Education Networks for Sustainable Societies** – Launch of the Planetary Network of the Environmental Education treaty (June 16)

Workshops in small groups allowed the participants to discuss on ESD issues and projects in the different regions of the world.



- **Youth 21th UN Forum:** We also participated to the High Level Panel on Youth –Towards establishing a UN permanent Forum on Youth. We had the opportunity to hear Severn Suzuki, the Canadian activist who spoke for the first time in Rio 92 when she was only 12.

Now, 20 years later, she talked about the importance of having the young people representatives in all the International Conferences, as they are truly loved by the adults and therefore trusted by them. She also spoke about the importance of young people voice as they “always tell the truth”.

To visualize the video of her intervention, click [here](#).

- **No Roads to a Green Economy: meeting in the Official space**, facilitated by Kriton Arsenis, Greek European Deputy (who had facilitated a discussion in Brussels with young European delegates last May!)

It was a discussion about the need to promote roadless areas as a means to conserve biodiversity and secure the rights of indigenous people. Very instructive to see in the world map how quickly the wild places without roads are getting smaller and smaller. A huge challenge here for biodiversity future.

More information here: http://kritonarsenis.gr/eng/actions/view/PR_Roadless%20areas