

WSCF European Staff and Officers' Meeting

Madrid, Spain

18-22 February 2015

Twenty-three young leaders of Student Christian Movements (SCMs) from across Europe met in Madrid, Spain, on February 18-22, 2015, for the annual WSCF-E Staff and Officers' meeting. This event, being the capacity-building and networking meeting for young leaders from Christian movements all around Europe, traditionally utilises non-formal and informal learning methods to allow participants to share their experience, ideas and resources. The event also featured a strategical networking meeting with a local Catholic Christian group,



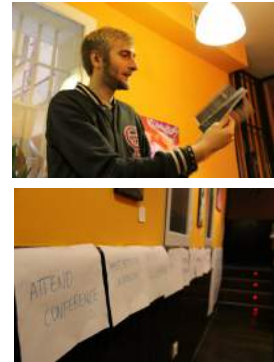
Milicia de Santa María, led by Mr Javier Segura. This Spanish SCM was enthusiastic to become our contact movement and to take part in our future events. Madrid as the location, and our venue in Madrid, the hostel Mad4You, have turned out to be an excellent choice for Staff and Officers' meeting. This location has allowed the participants, on the one hand, to concentrate on important and challenging topics of SCM work, and on the other hand, to feel the vibes of the Spanish capital.

The event featured three full days of working, which was one day more than at the last year's event. The sessions were arranged thematically: the sessions of the first working day concentrated on SCM communications. The second working day has been dedicated to membership databases creation and management - this training was requested by the Officers at last year's Staff and Officers' Meeting, as a follow-up for training on SCM fundraising. The third working day accentuated the upcoming WSCF statutory meetings this year - the General Assembly (GA) in Bogotá, Colombia, in March 2015, and the European Regional Assembly in Czech Republic in October 2015. The representatives of European SCMs have agreed on a list of proposals and concerns, which the Europe Region wants to raise at the GA. The Officers have agreed that it is important to discuss the current affairs prior to the Assembly, so that the delegates to the GA will unite their powers, and thus will have the chance to affect the decision-making in



Bogota in a more significant for the Europe region way. The event was prepared by a team of organisers: the Regional Secretary Natia Tsintsadze and the Publications and Office Intern Kathryn Cammish from the Berlin Office; the Officers from the European Regional Committee - the Chairperson Zuzana Babicova and the Links Coordinator Maria Kozhinova, and the assistant organiser, volunteer Jurgita Kozeniauskaite.

The meeting was officially opened by the Links Coordinator of the WSCF-Europe Maria Kozhinova. The opening was followed by a sessions on publications and the creation of Mozaik, the official magazine of WSCF-Europe, led by the Editor-in-Chief of the WSCF-Europe James Jackson. James has explained the lifespan of Mozaik from the first contact of potential authors and until holding a representative copy of magazine in readers' hands. Furthermore, James gave some practical tips on how to write an article.



The session on publications was followed by a session on effective online communication, led by Ellis Tsang from SCM Britain. In his movement Ellis is responsible for communications and fundraising. Ellis talked about how to make the online presence of an SCM more effective and visible. During his workshop, Ellis has led the participants in creation of an annual SCM online communication plan. Ellis has also tackled the topic of online campaigning and how to make it successful. The session has received excellent reviews from the participants, and all Officers got new and fresh ideas to take back home.



The first working day has also featured an SCM Fair and an Intercultural evening. The SCM Fair was designed as the space for SCM representatives to meet professionally, to learn about the events and activities, as well as struggles of each of the member movements. The Fair was half-structured, so that each SCM representatives had an equal chance to present their SCM, after which there was an open space for delegates to freely share ideas and experience with each other. The Intercultural evening was more of an informal activity, aiming at enhancing participants' intercultural communication skills, their cultural learning, as well as their networking skills. These two activities were aimed at helping participants to activate their English skills, and to find the comfort zone for communicating in English. Both the SCM Fair and the Intercultural Evening were a great success among the participants, which was visible from the evaluation



forms. Many participants have requested that in the future, Staff and Officers' Meetings could feature even more information sharing and networking sessions.



All sessions of the second working way dealt with databases creation and management, led by WSCF Senior Friend Miroslav Shindarov from Bulgaria. Miroslav has prepared an excellent overview of all existing types of databases, and then concentrated on the most appropriate ones for the SCM context. In the second part of the workshop, the participants created their own models of databases, with Miroslav's assistance. The participants had to think, e.g. about what kind of information they need to input into their

databases; which kind of output they want from these databases; which programs or online platforms they will use; what are the overall costs of the database creation and updating. Most of the participants have agreed that this information will be very useful for their movements.

The last day of this Staff and Officers' meeting was about the General Assembly (GA), which will be in Bogota, Columbia, on February 26-March 6. The Assembly is held every 4-6 years and it is the moment for representatives from all of the member movements to gather and set the priorities and direction for the next years. The session about the GA was intended to prepare the European SCMs and their GA delegates for this important event. This session was very intense, with a lot of discussions, many different opinions and new ideas were expressed. The most engaging topics the elections of the next leadership team to lead the Federation.



This year's event has exceeded our expectations in how popular and awaited it was. Many Officers said that they have received the information they have come for to Madrid, and many questions have been answered. Especially the sessions on the publications, on effective online communication, and on the GA have been indicated a useful by the participants. There was demand for both more training sessions and more networking and information sharing sessions. Some of the participants have expressed a wish that in the future, the Staff and Officers' meeting could have been even longer, to fit in more content and more interaction between representatives of various SCMs. The topics discussed were relevant for the officers in their everyday work, and the new ideas that the participants will take home, will have a significant positive impact on the organisation and functionality of their movements. Overall, the event was a success, and the precom team, lead by the Links Coordinator, will strive to preserve the high standard in the upcoming years' Staff and Officers' Meetings.

