



ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND ETTW

No. 1 - Update September 2015

Pilot project

MALTA: IV Convention for Maltese Living Abroad 2015

The IV Convention for Maltese Living Abroad 2015 was organised a decade after the III Convention which took place in 2010. This Convention was held on 20-24 April 2015 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta, Malta and was officially opened by H.E. the President of the Republic of Malta with a solemn mass at the Russian Chapel of the San Anton Palace and Gardens celebrated by H.E. Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo.

Over 110 Maltese Diaspora delegates from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States of America attended this Convention and the topics discussed ranged from Maltese identity, language, culture, history, heritage and listing of problems encountered by Maltese living in different parts of the world. This was the first Convention to be organised since the passing of Act XX of 2011 establishing the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) which is constituted of 15 members of the Maltese Diaspora and chaired by the Hon Dr George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the establishment of the Directorate for the Maltese Living Abroad (DMLA) headed by Dr Raymond Xerri, Director, which forms part of the Directorate-General for Political, EU Affairs and Maltese Abroad within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Overall it was a successful event which renewed ties between the Maltese communities living abroad and their motherland, Malta. The V Convention for Maltese Living Abroad is earmarked to take place in 2020.”

FINLAND: FINNISH EXPAT PARLIAMENT

May 22-23, 2015

A noteworthy number of 125 expatriate Finnish organisations participated in the 8. assembly session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament on 22.-23. May 2015, at the University of Helsinki old main building. They sent 140 representatives and 47 official observers.

A fine number of initiatives, that is 54 motions for resolutions had been handed in. After combining them, a total of 41 initiatives were processed by the parliament session within its committees and at the plenary. All the adopted 41 resolutions form a strong viewpoint of expatriate Finns over the challenges, problems and ideas important to them. They are also suggestions to legislators and state officials.



Information about the 2015 session is found here under title 'Session 2015' (see the left side). You find there the meeting minutes of the session along with its attachments (speeches, participant list, short list of resolutions). Later in August you will find there also the long resolution compilation. The Secretariat is also pleased to assist (contact details below).

Were you prevented from the joining the Finnish Expatriate Parliament session in Helsinki? The solution is a local Helsinki radio station Radio Rapu. Radio Rapu made a full recording of the plenary session day two, Saturday 23. May. Therefore you can now listen to the interesting discussions over the 41 motions for resolutions, prior to voting, and also the festive speech by invitee speaker parliamentarian Pekka Haavisto, as well as the closing words of the 8. FEP session by Speaker Jarmo Virmavirta. The recording as a high-quality podcast is here: [Recording](#)

(Radio Rapu's home site is www.radorapu.com and there you find a 'radio' to listen to. Programs can be listened direct in the greater Helsinki area at 107,4 MHz or any time later, wherever in the world you are.)

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Expatriate Finns are a resource for Finland. They contribute to make Finland and Finnish culture known abroad. They also bring with them knowledge and skills which they have acquired home to Finland. It is important for Finland that the link between expatriate Finns and Finland stays strong and that expat Finns remain involved with the Finnish society.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament (the FEP) promotes the interest of all expatriate Finns, being their direct link to the Finnish society.

The FEP was established in 1997. Finland Society provides for it its permanent secretariat.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is a cooperative forum, where Finns living around the world collectively decide on issues they deem important. FEP is also a medium through which the collective decisions of Finnish expatriates are transmitted to the Finnish Government and non-governmental organisations. Moreover FEP is a lobbying organ which ensures the views of expatriates receive adequate attention in Finnish public policy decision making.

The FEP's activities are based on the initiatives or motions for resolutions made by the Finnish expatriate organisations, and on the subsequent resolutions adopted by their representatives at the parliament assembly session in Helsinki. It convenes approx. every 2½ years. All Finnish expatriate organizations can participate in the work of the parliament. All that is needed is a ratification of the FEP by-laws. All expatriate Finns whether they are holders of Finnish passport or not, can participate. Membership does not entail any financial responsibilities or privileges. The FEP is politically non-aligned. 521 Finnish expatriate organizations in 37 countries have ratified its by-laws.

Outside of Finland

live approximately 300 000 Finnish citizens, with some over 242 000 of them with voting rights. There are about 600 000 first and second generation expatriate Finns who live abroad. In case we take into account the third and subsequent generations, their number rises to well over 1,6 million.



This careful, that is, with certainty under-estimated figure of Finns living abroad is based on country specific statistics from 28 example countries. The statistics mostly date from years 2010-2014 and differ mutually from each others; for example in US statistics several generations can announce Finn as their ethnic background (2011: 650 000), and in Sweden statistics calculate 1.-3. generations (2013: 711 000), while instead figures in Great Britain only feature Finnish nationals (2014: 14 000). These estimates are hence safe to use since they are based on official statistics.

Italy: Annual Meeting of FRIULI NEL MONDO –

Cormòns, 1st and 2nd of August 2015

After exactly thirty years, Cormòns, an historical city in the province of Gorizia, in the North-eastern Italian Region of Friuli, hosted again the XII Convention of the Association Friuli nel Mondo.

The event, titled "*Friuli, a land of war and peace - Cormòns, the city of the Wine of Peace*", was organized by Ente Friuli nel Mondo, in cooperation with the municipality of the city of Cormòns.

During the first day, on Saturday 1st of August, took place the meetings related to the Convention. The day after, on Sunday the 2nd of August, participants met again for a traditional convivial moment.

With the aim of enhancing the international vocation of Cormòns, more than one thousand participants arriving from the different Countries where they live, were invited to discover, during their visit the cultural and touristic characteristics, the good food and the excellent wine of Cormòns, a hill town, which still maintains its historical frioulian roots.

The convention opened with the an original video on the World War I, edited by the Italian journalist Gianni Bisiach (born in Gorizia, capital of the province) and was followed by four speeches of exception:

- Mauro Pascolini, professor at the University of Udine, spoke about "*Places and memory: the value of a shared space*",
- The young historian Matteo Ermacora dealt with the theme "*Bread and work. Emigrants and workers from Friuli in the crisis of 1914*",
- Angelo Floramo, director of the Library Gurneriana, presented "*Friuli in the uniform. From imperial soldiers to prisoners, from prisoners to emigrants. The Siberian epic, a story just told*",
- Finally, the agronomist and journalist Claudio Fabbro closed with "*Collio, battles and bottles*", an overview from the events linked to the war to the positive notes of the local wines.



Coordinated the debate the famous journalist Bruno Pizzul, a real Cormons inhabitant.

In the afternoon, guided tours of the Cantina Produttori (of wine) of Cormòns were organized from 16h00 to 19h00.

The music show in Friulian "*Strolc, Almanac in Music*", from an original idea of Luca Bonutti, with texts by Peter Zorutti, music by Valter Sivilotti and Chorus "Natissa" of Aquileia, crowned the evening.

The Annual Meeting of Friuli nel Mondo foreseen for the day after, Sunday the 2nd of August, began at 10h30 am, with the rally in Piazza XXIV Maggio, the laying of a wreath at the war memorial in Piazza Libertà and the march along the town with the participation of the *Folk Group Danzerini of Lucinico*.

A Mass in the Friulian language in the Cathedral of St. Adalbert followed, celebrated by the musical accompaniment of choral *Sant'Adalberto*.

After the Authorities' greetings in the Piazza XXIV Maggio, the social lunch took place in the Cantina Produttori Cormòns, which hosted 750 Frioulians arrived for the Convention from all continents.

Switzerland: Swiss Community Annual Congress, August 14-15, 2015

The annual conference of ASO - the Swiss Community Abroad - took place in Geneva on August 14-15, 2015. About 300 participants took part, and many ministers and other representatives from the government and the cantons were there too. About 700.000 Swiss citizens live abroad, of which about 470.000 live in EU countries.

The two main questions discussed during the conference were: the reduced number of Swiss embassies and consulates around the world (more than 60 closed since 1990 for budget reasons) - and the use of electronic voting in Swiss elections. Electronic voting is possible in four cantons. ASO is actively working for making it possible in all Swiss cantons.

The congress adopted two resolutions:

On Swiss diplomatic representations abroad: See [here](#).

On e-voting: See [here](#).

For the Swiss federal elections on October 18, 2015 altogether 142.600 Swiss citizens abroad are registered to vote. This is about 25 % of those who have the right to vote. But most of them still cannot vote electronically.



Sweden: Swedish Expat Parliament August 18, 2015

Delegates of Swedes Worldwide met for the fifth time in Stockholm on August 18th to discuss issues of common interest and to agree on what Resolutions to bring forward to the Swedish Government and relevant authorities.

Identified expats problems and proposed resolutions were grouped and discussed in three categories:

- I. Taxes, pensions and insurances
- II. Citizenship and civil rights
- III. Migration and mobility – Swedish expats as a resource

The adopted Resolutions covered many questions relevant also for other ETTW members, such as the need for *better and clearer information* on the websites of public authorities on what rights and rules are applicable for pensioners living abroad, a whole range of questions related to the *renewal of passports*, such as applying electronically, accepting valid passports as identification when asking for a new passport, extending the validity from five to ten years, adding more pages in the passport for frequent travelers.

Another request was to reintroduce *a special constituency* for Swedish citizens living abroad. There are 660.000 Swedes worldwide, corresponding to 7% of the Swedish population that could become a real political force. Such a constituency would arouse the interest of the political parties for questions relevant to expats, which in turn can lead to an increase among the expats to vote in Swedish elections.

The Swedish Government's First Vice President, Tobias Billström, who opened the Parliament, revealed that two thirds of the *Swedes living abroad returns* within five years, making it even more urgent to take their problems seriously. Several resolutions underlined the need for better information on governmental websites for Swedish citizens abroad in view of their return to Sweden. Their *role as ambassadors* and as a resource for the Swedish government was also underlined by SVIV's Secretary General, Karin Ehnbohm-Palmquist and Annika Söder, the Cabinet Secretary in the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

The Resolutions that were adopted by the Expats Parliament were presented to *representatives of all political parties*, who gave their first reaction and, in several cases, firm commitment to bring them forward in their parties and in the Swedish Parliament.

The delegates had also the opportunity to listen and learn from invited speakers and *representatives from other countries*. Experience was shared on electronic voting (Estonia), special



constituency for expats (France) and electronic passport application and their validity (New Zealand).

Denmark: Dual Citizenship from September 1, 2015

Almost 300 happy Danes from Denmark and from abroad celebrated on September 1, that the Danish law on dual citizenship came into force. In cooperation with the daily national newspaper Politiken Danes Worldwide had organised a big party and event, to which members could buy tickets at a special price.

Editor-in-chief of Politiken, mr. Bo Lidegaard and vice-president of Danes Worldwide, Mr. Carsten Dencker Nielsen opened the event, Mr. Adam Price was presenting the contributions, and minister for culture, Mr. Bertel Haarder was the main speaker. A jazz-band was playing, and the prize to the Danish World Citizen of the Year, the actor Mr. Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, was presented.

You can see pictures from the celebration [here](#).

POLAND: The Government's new diaspora policy

The Polish Council of Ministers adopts a new programme of cooperation with Polish diaspora

August 19, 2015

Working with the Polish diaspora on a partnership basis, and tapping into the potential of Polishborn professionals – these are just some of the provisions of the Government Programme of Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora for 2015-20, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers.

There are between 18 and 20 million Polish expatriates living all over the world at the moment. The programme aims to address the challenge of collaborating with them – to allow migrants working on Europe's labour markets to maintain their bond with Poland, to offer young members of Polish communities cooperation on attractive terms, to tap into the potential of Polish-born professionals, and to effectively safeguard the rights of Polish minorities.

In the programme, the MFA invites Polish diaspora partners to engage in joint and mutually beneficial efforts to project a fair image of Poland abroad, and to work together on deepening



Poland's cooperation with our compatriots' countries of residence in the regional (through local governments) and sector-specific (through universities, cultural institutions, and businesses) dimensions.

The programme breaks new ground by laying down the rules of cooperation between the Government, and the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad, and by emphasizing the partnership aspect. Partnership was the guiding principle already at the drafting stage – the process of comprehensive consultations was well received by Polish communities abroad. We wish to emphasize that the document fully recognizes the fact that our fellow country people are, for the most part, citizens of other countries, to which they owe civil loyalty. We also appreciate that many of our compatriots have lost their command of the Polish language, so it is necessary to communicate with them in the language of their country of residence.

The programme sets out the following strategic goals: to support the teaching of the Polish language and education with Polish as the language of instruction, to promote knowledge about Poland, to reinforce Polish identity, to ensure participation in national culture, to enhance the Polish diaspora's standing abroad, to support Poles who want to return to their home country, to create incentives for people of Polish descent to settle in Poland, and to foster contacts with Poland at many levels.

The programme's framework part covers a six-year period. It is accompanied by a detailed document defining the tasks of specific ministries and central government bodies that play a part in implementing Polish diaspora policy. Currently, it assigns tasks for 2015-16, and will be updated twice to allocate tasks for 2017-18 and 2019-20.



ETTW PARTICIPATION IN EU ACTIVITIES

Labour Mobility Package

ETTW invited by the Commission to special hearing on June 17, 2015

Participant: Mr. Tony Venables, ETTW Board member

ETTW Follow-up mail to the Commission (DG Employment):

We would like to thank you for inviting ETTW to the consultative meeting on the Labour mobility package, which took place on 17 June. Our representative at the meeting, Tony Venables, reported back that it was a constructive event, excellently moderated with plenty of opportunity for participants to put forward their views. In his intervention the ETTW representative drew on the conclusions of the declaration approved in Riga after a high level conference on 11-12 May, which we attach for your information and that of the other participants.

Here too are links to the ETTW policy statement and background documents first for a conference held on 27 January in Brussels and then for the event in Riga, which show that our approach is based on policy research.

We do not think that we need to add much more to these documents and what was said at the meeting, especially since there appeared to be broad consensus among participants on the issues they would like to see reflected in the labour mobility package. On our side we would like to reiterate four points:

- 1) At the meeting suggested changes to the regulation on the coordination of social security arrangements were explained, essentially to fill gaps, clarify ambiguities and ensure more comprehensive coverage. Subject to seeing written descriptions at a later stage, the Commission's approach is convincing. What may be missing is some assessment of how well the system is working in practice especially in the areas of complaints handling and cooperation among member states.**
- 2) In addition to changes in the regulation and review of the posted workers regime, we urge that in the mobility package the Commission puts forward a list of the general principles, which should underpin ANY European legislation covering free movement of people in the EU and perhaps above all how it should be applied. Issues mentioned on 17 June included the definition of worker, equal treatment and the minimum wage, access to the labour market in the first place.**
- 3) In a climate of scare-mongering about free movement of workers in the EU, non-legislative measures are becoming increasingly important, especially to tackle adverse effects of the general benefits of free movement at a local level. There is increasing recognition that legislation alone is**



not enough and that accompanying measures are necessary. We urge that our proposal for a free movement solidarity fund should be studied further in the context of cohesion policy now and post-2020. It is important to show to local people that when sudden increases and heavy concentration of mobile workers create strains on local services that it is not only their contributions as taxpayers which carry the cost but that there could also be a contribution from the country of origin and the EU budget.

4) We urge the Commission to make more use of the evidence at its disposal from services such as EURES, YEA and SOLVIT to publicise (as it did for example in 2010 with a new single market package) the barriers to free movement of workers and how they should be overcome. This is particularly important at a time when some member states are attempting to introduce further restrictions on free movement of workers or job seekers and their access to social benefits.

We very much look forward to participating in the follow-up to the consultative meeting,

Yours sincerely,

Niels Jørgen Thøgersen
President of Europeans Throughout the World (www.euromonde.eu)

European Year on Mobile Citizens

Letter from Mrs. Sylvie Guillaume, Vice-President of the European Parliament

To EP Colleagues in different parliamentary committees

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to draw your attention to the project led by the 30 years old NGO "The Europeans throughout the World", for a European Year of Mobile Citizens (see attachments).

Before the summer recess, I had the opportunity to meet with Mrs Ylva Tiveus (ylva@tiveus.eu), former European Commission's Director for Communication with Citizens, and current member of "The Europeans throughout the World", on this very interesting initiative.

Her NGO is promoting the rights of European citizens living, working, studying in another country – be it in the EU or outside.

She's particularly engaged in defending the right of free movement, the right to vote and the necessity for better information on these issues to those some 80 million citizens. She also



advocates for a holistic approach of the issue of free movement, in order for these European citizens to see their rights being respected.

This initiative already got heavy support from the Latvian Presidency at a recent conference in Riga in May. The European Commission seems to be interested as well and a meeting is foreseen with 1st VP Timmermans in the coming weeks.

As far as the EP is concerned, I consider it would be very interesting for us to defend such a project for a coming European Year.

This is why I warmly invite you to meet her to have an idea of the project as it is envisaged.

Should you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my office.

Best regards,

Sylvie Guillaume

Vice-Présidente du Parlement européen

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President Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission

State of the Union speech, September 9, 2015 in Strasbourg

(parts of special interest to European expats)

.....A truly united, European migration policy also means that we need to look into opening legal channels for migration. Let us be clear: this will not help in addressing the current refugee crisis. But if there are more, safe and controlled roads opened to Europe, we can manage migration



better and make the illegal work of human traffickers less attractive. Let us not forget, we are an ageing continent in demographic decline. We will be needing talent. Over time, migration must change from a problem to be tackled to a well-managed resource. To this end, the Commission will come forward with a well-designed legal migration package in early 2016.

.....Fifth: We have to step up the work for a fair and truly pan-European labour market. Fairness in this context means promoting and safeguarding the free movement of citizens as a fundamental right of our Union, while avoiding cases of abuses and risks of social dumping. Labour mobility is welcome and needed to make the euro area and the single market prosper. But labour mobility should be based on clear rules and principles. The key principle should be that we ensure the same pay for the same job at the same place.

As part of these efforts, I will want to develop a European pillar of social rights, which takes account of the changing realities of Europe's societies and the world of work. And which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area.

This European pillar of social rights should complement what we have already jointly achieved when it comes to the protection of workers in the EU. I will expect social partners to play a central role in this process. I believe we do well to start with this initiative within the euro area, while allowing other EU Member States to join in if they want to do so.

..... “A united refugee and asylum policy also requires stronger joint efforts to secure our external borders. Fortunately, we have given up border controls between the Member States of the Schengen area, to guarantee free movement of people, a unique symbol of European integration. But the other side of the coin to free movement is that we must work together more closely to manage our external borders. This is what our citizens expect. The Commission said it back in May, and I said it during my election campaign”

COMING EVENTS

- 14.9.: ETTW meeting with EUROSTAT, Luxembourg (Steen Illeborg)
(follow-up to the Riga Recommendations)**
- 14.-15.9.: Luxembourg Presidency conference on: *Unionship and Justice*
(Steen Illeborg)**
- 21.9.: Meeting with the EU Representation in London on possible
follow-up conference to Riga).**



(Tony Venables)

- 23.9.: Working Group meeting on A new European Diaspora Policy
(chair: Aldis Austers and Steen Illeborg)
- 23.9.: Electronic voting: Meeting with the company Scytl, Barcelona
(Dorin Fleseriu, ROMBEL, etc.)
- 23.-24.9.: AEMI conference in Turino, Italy
(Association of European Migration Institutes). ETTW partner org.
- 27.-29.9.: IPRA World Congress, Johannesburg, South Africa
(International Public Relations Association). ETTW partner org.
- 28.9.: Working Group on ETTW statutes
(chair: Giuseppe Rosin in cooperation with Tony Venables and
George Vlachopoulos)
- 29.9.: NJT meeting with Hungarian MEP, Mr. Istvan Ujhelyi
(on activities for and with Hungarian expats)

- Oct.: NJT/Christian Vincke meeting with Mr. Anthony Teasdale, dir-gen
for the European Parliament's Research Service

- 7-9 Oct.: 6th World Congress of Basque Communities Abroad, Vitoria-Gasteiz
- 14.10.: Working Group on voting rights for European expats
(chair: Christian Vincke, ViW)
- 12.11.: ETTW Board meeting and general assembly, Brussels
- 27.11.: European Movement members meeting (ETTW ass. member)
- 3.12.: NJT meets the Board of ViW, Brussels

Niels Jørgen Thøgersen - 13 09 2015

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