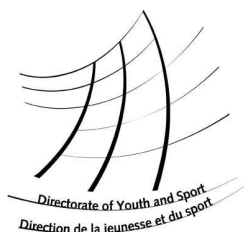




“Active Participation of Young Minority Women in European Public life”

Report of the study session held by Young Women from Minorities
in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre Budapest
of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Budapest
9-16 May 2004



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

“Active Participation of Young Minority Women in European Public life”

*Intercultural learning and gender mainstreaming as ways to
promote social inclusion and participation of young minority
women in Europe.*

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Young Women from Minorities

c/o Centro Interculturale di Giovani Migranti e Nativi ‘Alouan’
Via Reiss Romoli 45, I-10146 Torino, Italy
Tel: +39 347 7409 462
E-mail: info@ywfm.org
Website: www.ywfm.org

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Introduction

This activity was an outcome of the WFM research “As true as our lives” on the attitude and expectations of young minority women in Europe. This research pointed out the lack of active participation of young minority women in European societies. Social exclusion, gender based discrimination, racism and intolerance are the main causes of a weak feeling of belonging towards Europe. Thus the importance of promoting dialogue, intercultural learning, exchange of experiences among women from different backgrounds and realities.

WFM intends to continue a process of training and awareness raising activities in order to meet the need of participation of young minority women and fight against social exclusion and discrimination.

Overall aim of the study session

This activity is aiming at empowering young minority women to promote and motivate their active participation in European Public Life.

Objectives of the study session

- To exchange realities and challenges faced by young minority women in Europe today;
- To examine and introduce intercultural learning and gender mainstreaming as ways to promote social inclusion and participation of young minority women in Europe;
- To develop participants’ knowledge and competence on how to carry on projects aimed at empowering young women;
- To increase participants motivation to work on the topic of the study session and to actively participate themselves in European public life;
- To define possible realistic strategies and solutions towards encouragement of young minority women in public life.
- To provide relevant tools in order to increase competences to deal with active participation of minority young women;
- To provide relevant tools in order to increase competences to deal with active participation of minority young women;
- Drafting proposals for concrete project ideas on active participation of young minority women in public life;
- Promote networking among participants and within the frame of WFM.

Methodology of the study session

We adopted a participant orientated and inter-active. The working methods was combined structured exchange of experiences, inputs from experts and resource persons, working groups, study visits and experiential activities. The working methods was varied and interactive in order to ensure a balance between theory and practice. Working groups was be combined with analytical inputs from invited experts. Practical workshops provided the every-day-life-based side of the activity. Overall, the methods we adopted ensured an easy communication and allowed all participants to live fully through a progressive and valuable intercultural learning experience. The Study Session also created a forum of discussion in which participants were able to exchange experiences of high-quality practices and get specific information and training on the topic of the study session. Part of the programme specially aimed at creating new partnerships and collaboration among young minority women and/or their organizations in Europe.

Profile of participants

WFM members as well as local/national leaders of young women organisations interested in the European work of Young Women from Minorities, who:

- Are women aged between 18 and 30 years (exceptions are possible);
- Belong to a minority and active in their communities on the issues of the study session;
- Are able to work with at least one of the working languages of the study session;
- Are interested in sharing experiences and committed to learn about the subject of the study session;
- Have experience related to the topic of the study session;
- Are motivated to act as multipliers after the study session;
- Are able to attend the full duration of the activity.

The programme

Active Participation of Minority Young Women in European Public Life Budapest, 9th – 16th May 2004-03-17 Young Women from Minorities – WFM

The programme day by day

Sunday 9/5/04

The week started Sunday evening, 9th of May with a welcome evening. We played different kind of games, to get to know each other better.

Monday 10/5/04

Monday morning the study session was formally opened by WFM president Ms Mariam Yassin, who welcomed the participants and presented the team. The morning session was spent for background of the seminar, presentation of WFM, aim and objectives of the session and getting to know each other even more.

The afternoon was spent on participants' expectations and group work. The topics for the groups to focus on were our expectations, contributions and what we would like to avoid during this session.

The answers to the expectations were to make new friends, gain experience from others, more knowledge on minority issues the different organisations we're from and the different cultures.

It was also mentioned to get better tools for future work and find strategies for active participation.

Other expectations and hopes were of course to find new common projects for and with young minority women.

Moving on to the next topic which was about "what can contribute with", we found many talents and experiences. Everyone of course contributed with their stories, their past, work and experiences, but also with organisation materials, ideas feelings and opinions. Not to forget all the good music, food and cultural differences that we share. Last but definitely not least we will contribute with our love and friendship.

As for the things we wanted to avoid we all agreed that we really don't want to fight and offend each other and give unconstructive critic. We also discussed how we wouldn't want to wait for late participants and have events with lack of participants.

Monday afternoon was spent in six different groups to discuss the topic sharing realities. The questions to focus on were:

1-What does Active Participation of Young Minority Women in European Public life mean to you?

2- How is the topic connected to your realities?

Active participation means to us hearing the voices of young minority women other than when it comes to voting in political parties. The topic also means to us to integrate young women into society and social life.

The reality of young minority was described within our discussions as lack of participation, discrimination, racism male dominated politic, segregation, poor education and health and lack of money. All these are factors which creates loss of identity and lack of participation in public life.

All the groups also agreed that as long as we still have problems to solve on national and local level, it is very hard to think on a European level. The solution to this might be equal access to media and education, opportunities to increase abilities and not to forget to represent young minority women in the European politic structure.

Monday evening was spent with interesting presentation of different organisations. The presentation was made like a bazaar where we could find info sheets, books, posters pictures etc.

Tuesday 11/5/04

Tuesday 11th of May started with an input by Henrietta Szovati on the topic “Active participation of young minority women in European life.

Henrietta Szovati spoke about how our titles effect and suggest us and weather we really have to live up to them or not.

Among some she mentioned that minority does most of the time not necessarily mean the number of people but actually the power of being able to change things.

She also mentioned what kind of different backgrounds studies that could be helpful in order to be able to join the society and be a step a head. The short lists of studies are:

1. General Sociology studies
2. Basic psychology
3. Gender studies
4. Political studies (like pluralism and democracy)
5. Ethnic history and other minorities in Europe
6. Legislations concerning women
7. Human right studies

Henrietta also spoke about the basic principles in public life and shorted this up in points:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

To sum it all up what it takes to be good minority women in public life Henrietta put it up like the seven c's:

- Commitment
- Consciousness
- Confidence
- Common sense
- Courage
- Clarity
- Committee experience

After Henrietta input once again we divided into groups to discuss challenges to participation of minority young women.

Working groups on challenges to participation of minority young women

1. What are the challenges to participation of minority young women caused by:
 - Their families/communities
 - The society
 - Other
2. Identify common challenges
3. Prepare performance on the second question

First group called:

Results of question number 1 and 2 were the following:

- Lack of information
- Lack of education
- Gender roles
- Media
- Power structure
- Different challenges in different cultures
- Interpretation of religion
- Economy on a non equality basis

Performance:

- Forced marriage

- Indirect discrimination-young girl trying to get a job
- At the hairdresser-how media effects women and their self confidence

Second group:

Common challenges:

- Lack of education
- Languages problems
- Economical problems
- Traditional stereotypes
- Social problems

Performance:

- Young minority women-the family-her community-society.
- What should she chooses.

Third working group:

Common challenges:

- Racism
- Discrimination
- Stereotypes
- Lack of education
- Family traditions
- Lack of financial support

Performance:

A young minority woman applies for a job. Her family stops her ambitions, and the society also don't accept to employ her.

Fourth group:

Common challenges:

- Internalised traditional gender roles
- Social pressure from the religious and conservative circles in the community
- Fear of exclusion by the family/community
- Personal challenges- lack of empowerment, confidence and consciousness
- Lack of access to education
- Lack of trust in society towards minorities in general
- Lack of financial support for female candidates in politics

Performance:

A working meeting of the head of ministries in a government which is obliged to choose a project protecting the rights of minority women. Men talk.

Fifth group:

- Common challenges:
- Reproduction of stereotypes
- Lack of education
- Common language
- Awareness
- Solidarity between women
- Respecting choices
- Definition of “feminism”
- Structures of society

Performance:

“Feminism”-a woman can be female, working, active woman. Working with men –protecting women.

Wednesday 12/5/2004

Morning

Rui Gomes was the lecturer. He gave a lecture about the Council of Europe.

A summary of Rui's presentation

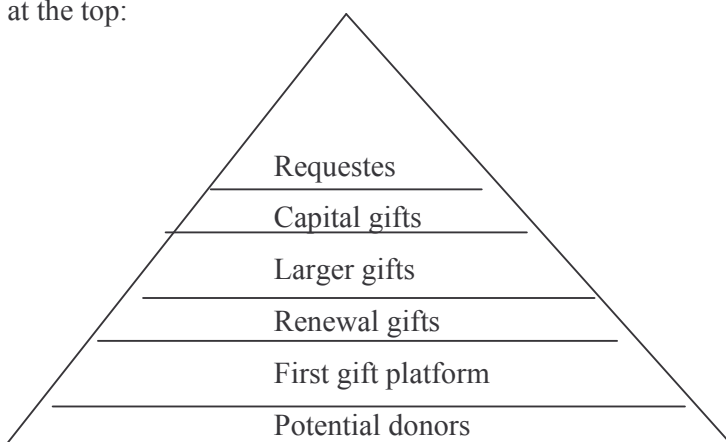
The CoE was created in 1949 to protect human rights, to encourage pluralism democracy and to respect rule of law. CoE has 45 member states DYS's work priorities for 2003-2005 are human rights education and social cohesion, peace and intercultural dialogue and active citizenship and participation. He gave more details about the structures of the DYS. He said that European Youth Foundation has four categories for projects these are:

- A. for youth meetings
- B. for other projects
- C. for administrative support
- D. pilot projects.

On the same day Alexandra Raykova, our educational advisor, gave a speech on founding possibilities for minority youth projects and fundraising skills. In her speech Alexandra said that there are several fundraising methods such as:

- A. Grant request
- B. Budget fundraising:
 - ◆ telemail
 - ◆ direct mail
 - ◆ special events

Alexandra explained the characteristics of the donor pyramid:
at the top:



She distributed a lot of documents on the topic such as, bibliography on funding- fundraising, list of contact details, foundations and corporate sponsors and contacting your potential donors.

Afternoon

Workshops

The topics of the workshops were:

- ◆ Media and women from minorities
- ◆ Intercultural learning and Gender Mainstreaming;
- ◆ Creative communication;
- ◆ Leadership and active Political participation

Thursday 13/5/04

The morning started with a game related to intercultural learning. The scenario was created and animated by Ms Teresa Fragoso and Ms Mariam Yassin. In addition, all the group participated in it. In the scenario there was a community where the earth is divine and so women sit on it, while the men sit on a chair. In this non existing society women were active and all the work was done by women.

After the game the group discussed how they felt about it and reflected over the challenges of coming to new cultures.

After the game Teresa held a lecture on Active participation of Minority Young women in European Public life. In her lecture Teresa gave a definition of culture and multicultural society.

Intercultural learning is about learning how we perceive others who are specially different from us, it is about us and our friends and how we work together to build a just community, how

communities can interlink to promote equality, solidarity and opportunity for all and finally it is about fostering respect and promoting dignity among cultures.

She explained the difference between sex and gender which is biological and sociological.

After that she spoke about equal opportunities and its three broad types which are equal treatment, positive action and gender mainstreaming.

She spoke about intercultural learning (ICL) and gender mainstreaming as a tool. At last she spoke about empowerment and European public life and how to implement ICL in our organisations.

Teresa gave some handouts and webpage copy at the end of the lecture which was very useful.

The afternoon was free and we gathered around for a nice Hungarian dinner.

Friday 14/5/04

On the 14th may, in the morning there was the statement game. The statements given and discussed were "All the minority communities oppress women", "Religion = Culture", "Love can solve any problem" etc. The group was divided into three for each statement, Yes/No/Don't know. Then for each group the participant who wanted to talk tried to persuade the others. It was a very fruitful activity, many participants found chance to talk and express themselves.

Then in the afternoon there were working groups on:

- minority young women and youth policy
- intercultural learning as a tool to work with minority young women
- keys to participation of minority young women
- gender mainstreaming in minority communities
- minority young women and human rights education

Working group 1 started the following:

1. All study sessions should start by clarifying the concept such as gender mainstreaming, intercultural learning etc.
2. At least some of the study sessions should be for both sexes. They must be gender balanced.
3. Whatever the topic of the study session that Directorate of Youth and Sport holds every year, they must have a minority young women, intercultural learning and gender perspective.
4. A week long study session on media and gender mainstreaming must be organized. A more comprehensive session will help minority young women be more aware of the media and its effects on the society. This session could be either European or on local level.

5. A complete session should be organized on fundraising skills, how to write a proposal, founders, project management etc.
6. The impact of gender roles in society must be emphasized. Reproduction of gender roles in general should be discussed.
7. In the study sessions participants should be thought how to handle everyday problems and these sessions should include workshops on conflict resolution, assertiveness, and awareness-raising on personal level.
8. Another suggestion is to organize a study session on structured racism which includes the topics discrimination, xenophobia, conflict management etc.
9. Another seminar could be organized on non violence and culture peace with minority young women.

Finally a local meeting could be organized for the women living in the rural areas of Albania who go to Italy and Greece for prostitution, to empower them.

Second working group worked on minority women and human rights education. They spoke about:

- Campaigns
- Importance of learning a language
- Scholarship to young minority women to get higher education

Saturday 15/5/04

15 of May and the last day of the session.

In the morning we still had some finishing to do with the projects and presentation of projects before lunch.

After lunch we had feedback from Ms Mariam Yassin and WFM.

Most of the afternoon was spent for evaluation, both in reflection groups and individual.

The session was closed outside in the garden with a game on however we feel, what we hope, what we've learned and what we will.

The participants proposed a variety of projects on the empowerment of Young Minority Women that WFM and its network are taking on board. Two of these projects are currently being developed by WFM.

Evaluation

A collective recapitulating was organized through with a collective game in the relaxing atmosphere of the garden, ran by the educational advisor, Ms Alexandra Raykova, and Ms Mariam Yassin, team member.

The reflection groups where the general view was the collective sadness of saying goodbye to the “soul sisters” and still a sense of fulfilment and achievement due to the intensity of the high

A sense of fulfilled expectations was found in the vast majority of the evaluation forms. Many had mentioned the positive impression of intimacy and intensity of the study session which had helped the participants to gain new knowledge about the situation of Minority Women.

Overall there was a sense of satisfaction with the lecturers.

No major changes in the programme were done which eased the working process for the team members and did not cause any unnecessary confusion for the participants.

We are satisfied with the work of the EYCB secretariat and the staff members. A special thank to Rui Gomes, Zsuzsanna Molnar and Erzsébet Banki for their constant support and high professionalism.

WFM would also like to thank warmly the participants, the team members and the external advisor, the resource persons, the invited experts and lecturer. EYCB and COE for supporting and contributing to an interesting, intense and intimate study session.

Overall, we are satisfied with the study session and its results.

We have proved, once again, that together we can!

This report was done with the support of the participants and coordinated by the team.

Annex I

Workshop ‘Intercultural Learning and Gender Mainstreaming’

Facilitator: Teresa Fragoso

Thursday 2004/05/14

The workshop started with the ‘Albatros’ exercise from COMPASS.

The participants were divided on a gender balanced perspective and were invited to get into another room in silence as if they were entering in another culture. The facilitator and Ms Mariam Yassin, the President of WFM, represented a different culture and the atmosphere was provided by candles and their clothes would assume a different way of living.

The participants both ‘men’ and women were invited to sit down and in silence they repeated the same gestures as the facilitators, assuming that it was a ritual that was taking place.

After the rituals, always using non-verbal communication, the participants were asked about what they’ve experienced: perception of what culture was there in presence, feelings and emotional on both men and women as well as who had the power in that culture if men or women.

People talked about their feelings and one of the participants identified this culture as being a Muslim community where women were oppressed. There was some conflict related to this interpretation and some participants took it personally.

The facilitator brushed aside the conflict and explained that in that culture women had the power because they were near the earth and therefore nearer to God among other explanations.

The participants had a totally different perception based on their own beliefs and stereotypes which led them to believe that women in that specific culture were oppressed.

The facilitator promised to come back after the coffee break and put the conflict into perspective and sort it out.

However, after the conflict the facilitator began to present us a Lecture on ‘Active Participation of Minority Young Women in European Public Life-Intercultural Learning and Gender Mainstreaming’ and never got back to the conflict installed among the participants.

In this lecture the facilitator defined culture providing the iceberg of culture from the Intercultural Learning Coe/EC T-Kit 2000 as well as definitions on multicultural society, Intercultural Learning, the differences between Sex and Gender, equal opportunities. Then we were presented to different approaches such as: equal treatment, positive action and Gender Mainstreaming.

We were also questioned about challenges to gender mainstreaming and we were introduced to Intercultural Learning and gender mainstreaming as a tool for active participation of minority young women in European public life.

The facilitator raised awareness about the importance of these tools to empower NGOs and young people in participating in European public life using the definitions of the Intercultural Learning T-Kit Coe/EC 2000 as well as from the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005.

The participants were given some input on how to implement these tools in their organisation and were introduced to some relevant websites on these issues such as <http://europa.eu.int>, <http://www.undp.org.in>, <http://www.worldbank.org> , <http://youngwomen.womenlobby.org/> and <http://www.womenlobby.org/>

Annex II

Active Participation of Minority Young Women in European Public Life Budapest, 9th – 16th May 2004-03-17 Young Women from Minorities – WFM

	Sun 9th	Mon 10th	Tue 11th	Wed 12th	Thu 13th	Fri 14th	Sat 15th
9.15		Official Opening Intro Team & Participants Intro Seminar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background Seminar • Presentation WFM • Aims and Objectives • Presentation Programme Pax Expectations Getting to Know Each Other Technicalities	Input: Active Participation of Minority Young Women in European Public Life Working Groups: Challenges to Participation of Minority Young women in Public Life	Presentation of CoE & DYS Funding Possibilities Fundraising skills	ICL & Gender Mainstreaming (MT / EA) Technicalities	Defining Realistic Strategies to increase the Participation of Minority Young Women in European Public Life	Presentation of Project Ideas Networking and Follow up
13.00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14.30		Sharing Realities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying Problems • Individual Perception of the Topic Reflection Groups	Challenges to Participation of Minority women in Public Life Round Table on Good Practice Reflection Groups	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority Young Women in the Media • Gender Mainstreaming • Political Participation • Leadership Reflexion Groups	Free Afternoon	Project Ideas	Evaluation
19.00	Welcome Evening	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
	Exhibition of the Organisations		Intercultural Evening	Sauna			Good-bye Party

Annex III

This is WFM:

Young Women from Minorities (WFM) is a European non-governmental organisation created out a pilot project set up during the Council of Europe's youth campaign "all different - all equal" whose major aims is to bring together and promote the work undertaken by and for minority young women's projects in Europe.

Aims and Objectives:

- To provide information and training at European levels to its members on the issues related to young minority women and foster the co-operation between them.
- To voice out the aspirations and concerns of young minority women as a way to promote their social integration's, help fighting their discrimination and social exclusion and sensitise the European and national institutions concerned.
- To represent them in the relevant European institutions or platforms.
- To establish links and networks with other minority and women's organisations.
- To carry out European activities in the fields of education, training and research contributing for a better participation of young minority women, namely those aimed at raising awareness, fighting racism and discrimination.
- To promote and support the creation and development of projects initiated for and by minority young women.

Activities:

As a European organisation, WFM's role is to organise training and education activities which, at the European level, can serve as example and support to the national and local projects.

These include:

- Leadership training courses;
- Seminars on specific issues of relevance to the European dimension of youth work with women;
- Providing information about and access to the European institutions and structures of relevance for young women's projects;

- Supporting network possibilities and contacts to local partners and encouraging to the development of youth work projects with young women.
- Research on the situation and perspectives of young women from Minorities in Europe.
- WFM intends also to publish a regular newsletter as a mean of supplying its members and interested organisations information about on-going training possibilities and as a concrete means to support networking demands and, in that respect, provide positive examples of work achieved with/by minority young women.

Membership and structure:

Membership to the association is voluntary and open to associations and individuals who:

- a) Share the concerns of and are active in working with minority women.
- b) Pursue their activities in the spirit of the international conventions of Human Rights, Minority Rights and Women's Rights.
- c) Wish to co-operate for the aims of a peaceful European integration, respecting the diversity and the rights of minorities and for promotion of the women's' role in society.

The association is composed of two categories of members:

- a) National or local associations or institutions, with the status of "full members".
- b) Individual persons, with the status of "individual members".

International, European or national organisations interested in supporting the association's aims and activities may be granted the status of observer and the right to participate in activities of WFM.

WFM is a registered European youth organisation, based in Italy. The General Assembly, meeting yearly, gathers the members and decides on the activities and policy of the organisation. The Assembly also elects the Board of Directors, necessarily composed of a multicultural European team in charge of implementing the plan of activities of the organisation.

For more information do not hesitate to contact:

Ms Mariam Yassin, President

- **WFM** - Young Women from Minorities

C/O Centro Interculturale di giovani Migranti e Nativi ALOUAN

Via Reiss Romoli, 45

Torino, ITALY

E-mail: info@ywfm.org

www.ywfm.org

List of Participants

Participants

ALBANIA / *ALBANIE*

DURO Hegla
SINANI Narvina

BELGIUM / *BELGIQUE*

DAHRI Gamila

BULGARIA / *BULGARIE*

VLADIMIROVA KADIEVA
Milena

DENMARK / *DANEMARK*

DYHR ARILDSEN Louise

FINLAND / *FINLANDE*

VALOPAASI Ojala Marianne

FRANCE / *FRANCE*

BOUKAKIOU Linda
TRINDADE Jackelina

GEORGIA / *GEORGIE*

BADASHVILI Medea

ITALY / *ITALIE*

BURLOTTO Elisabetta
DUCCO Tiziana

MOLDOVA / *MOLDAVIE*

BUGA Natalia Maria Vlada

NETHERLANDS / *PAYS-BAS*

HEJAZI Banafshe

NORWAY / *NORVEGE*

ENOKSEN Elisabeth

PORTUGAL / *PORTUGAL*

BELCHIOR Claudia
TAVARES Manuela
RODRIGUS MARTINS
CAIADO Maria Manuela

ROMANIA / *ROUMANIE*

RALUCA Simion Ioana
DIMA Mihaela

RUSSIAN FEDERATION / *FEDERATION DE RUSSIE*

NOURZIDA Bensguier Nora

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

DIMOVIC Nada

SPAIN / *ESPAGNE*

CORPUS IGLESIAS NIETO

SWEDEN / *SUEDE*

BARATI Mariam
DOUBAKIL Fatima
CHARAFI Saida

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

L'EX REPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACEDOINE

STERIOVA Andrijana
ISENI Hanriet

TURKEY / *TURQUIE*

KARAKAŞ Saniye
SARGIN Ayse
NİLGÜN EROĞLU ÜSTÜN

Preparatory team / *Equipe préparatoire:*

YASSIN Mariam
Italy / *Italie*

ASTORE Emilia
Italy / *Italie*

GODINHO Susana
Portugal / *Portugal*

THOMPSON Michelle
United Kingdom / *Royaume-Uni*

ABDULLE Wilo
Sweden / *Suède*

Lecturers / *Conférenciers*

SZOVATI Henrietta
United Kingdom / *Royaume-Uni*

FRAGOSO Teresa
Portugal / *Portugal*

Educational advisor / *Conseiller pédagogique*

RAYKOVA Alexandra
Bulgaria / *Bulgarie*

Council of Europe / *Conseil de l'Europe*

GOMES Rui
Programme and Training Administrator /
Administrateur en charge du programme et de la formation
European Youth Centre Budapest
Centre européen de la jeunesse de Budapest

MOLNAR Zsuzsa
Secretarial assistant / *Assistante secrétariale*
European Youth Centre Budapest
Centre européen de la jeunesse de Budapest

EBERLE Sarah
Trainee / *Stagiaire*