



ESFESPAÑA

NEWSLETTER 2009

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1. ESF-E NEW COMMITTEE

On 4th November, 2009 a new committee was elected as follow:

- **PRESIDENT:** ELONORA POLANO, 28, Italian, Degree in Translation and Masters in Cooperation.
- **VICE-PRESIDENT:** PABLO LA PARRA PÉREZ, 22, Spanish, student of Art History.
- **SECRETARY:** MARINA PÉREZ LUQUE, 23, Spanish, German Language Degree;
- **TREASURER:** JULIO SOUTO SALOM, 22, Spanish, student of Political Science and Sociology;
- **MEMBER:** AGNELLO SCHISANO, 27, Italian, Degree in Political Science and Masters in Cooperation.

In November 2009 the Annual General Meeting unanimously voted for a new statement for ESF-E. From now on ESF-E would be officially describes as follow:

Estudios Sin Fronteras España (ESF-E) is a secular and politically independent non-governmental organisation (NGO). ESF-E is part of an international network of autonomous NGOs, which share commitment in contributing to development through education and culture.

ESF-E main goal is to raise awareness within Spanish civil society about the situation of students in conflict areas through information, sensitisation programmes and human rights protection. In addition ESF-E proposes itself as a platform for the coordination of projects on educational cooperation or grants programmes for university students from countries involved in the projects.

2. WESTERN SAHARA PROJECT

Since 2008, ESF's main field of operation has been the reality of university students in Western Sahara.

Students from Western Sahara Occupied Territories (OT) have to face evident difficulties throughout their studies. Firstly, Moroccan Government cultural obstructive policy in the territories is translated in a complete absence of Universities in Western Sahara. As a consequence, Sahrawian students see themselves forced to move to other main Universities in Morocco (Marrakech, Agadir, Rabat, and Casablanca). This means an economic and logistic burden, to which they have to add a constant ostracism within society: they are in fact often discriminated against and treated differently by other students, even professors and academic bodies.

Moreover, Sahrawian students suffer daily repression of their civil liberties (freedom of assembly and freedom of expression), especially for what concern political matters. Sahrawian students regularly organise non-violent protests to express their political opinion about the solution of the Sahrawian conflict. In these cases, the response of Moroccan authorities is absolutely excessive. In many occasions violations of the most basic human right have been recorded: arbitrary detentions, torture and rape.

The original Project endeavoured by ESF-E, in close collaboration with CODESA (Collective of Sahrawian Human Right Defenders, the main organisation working on the protection of Human Rights in Western Sahara) was based on a scholarship programme for student to attend a Spanish University. Through a formal process of examination coordinated by CODESA, two students were selected to attend a 3 year course at the University of Valencia. The students selected would have taken this opportunity to undertake a project on development once returning in their region. **Unfortunately, despite of strong efforts to carry out this project, we have observed the existence of serious obstacles to its implementation. The project is now being reconsidered and re-formulated.**

The Project is addressed to Saharawi communities in Moroccan territories. Therefore, the official announcement from the Spanish Government and Autonomous Regions do not observe it in their line of preferential action. For this reason, we could not count with enough financial guarantees to assure the right implementation of the protection programme. Moreover, recent reforms in the high education system (Plan Bologna and the European Space of High

Education), forced us to reconsider the proposed duration of the course (Plan Bologna consists of a 4 years of undergraduate course + 1 year of Masters). For all these reasons, and until the possibility to effectively implement the programme becomes reality, **we have decided to work on alternative ways to break the isolation of the collective of Sahrawian students.**

Below you can find an outline of the Projects started in 2009 and will continue throughout the course of 2010.

1. ESF-E is in process of production of a **documentary** about the situation in the region. This production can count on the participation of inedited testimonies by Sahrawian students and Human Rights activists. A delegation of ESF-E's members collected audiovisual material during a visit in Morocco and the OT in May 2008.
2. ESF-E launched the **awareness-raising campaign *Your voice will not be unheard.*** Through an e-mail campaign in 5 languages, human rights violations and detentions suffered by Sahrawian students are regularly denounced to relevant authorities.
3. **ESF-E is always present in significant interdisciplinary events on the situation in Western Sahara.** It is worth to mention, in this context, ESF-E's participation in the last two EUCOCO (European Conference of Coordination and Support to the Sahrawian People) in Valencia (2008) and Barcelona (2009), and the II Roundtable on Professional Training coordinated by Mundubat in Bilbao (2008).

3. ACTIVITIES/COMMUNICATION 2008-2009

NO POVERTY PLATFOM

ESF-E keeps on supporting activities and participating in the annual march organised by Plataforma Pobreza Zero. This platform has been created and coordinated by the Valencian Development NGO Coordinating body in 2005, which at present is supported by more than 163 very diversified organisations (neighbours societies, music or religious organisation, trade unions, Development NGOs, etc)

DEBATE ORGANISED BY *LLIGA DELS DRETS DELS POBLES* (LEAGUE FOR PEOPLE'S RIGHTS)

ESF-E was invited to contribute to the first debate organised by the Catalan organisation *Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles* (League for People's Rights), which took place on the 27th November 2008 in Sabadell. These debates aim to “develop a lobbying strategy coordinated between the different actors to end the conflict in Chechnya and bordering republics”.

During this launching debate, in which participated different Spanish bodies dealing with the Chechen situation, different questions were treated. The debate could count with the contribution of experts and representatives from different bodies, which led to a further discussion. At the end of the meeting, all contribution were recorded and shared between the participating organisations, in order to finalise the lobbying strategy.

In this context, ESF-F has participated as auditor, still committing to contribute in the sensitisation campaign about the Chechen situation, without taking any political stand.

LAUNCH OF THE COMIC *SOTA LA LLUNA DE GROZNI*” (MOONLIGHT IN GROZNI) BY *TRENKALÒS*

ESF-E members attended the launch of the comic *Sota la Lluna de Grozni* during the III WEEK ON COOPERATION BOOKS organised by Trenkalos in Barcelona on 27th November 2008. Milana Muidova was also present to the launch. Milana is a student from Chechnya studying in Paris thanks to the ESF programme.

The comic is based on the life of Milana Terlova, Chechen student graduated with top marks. The book describes the collaboration between Milana and ESF and the *Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles*. The book includes the documentary “Grozni, chronicle of a disappearance” by Manon Loizeau (DVD in French with Catalan subtitles). It is possible to purchase the DVD contacting info@trenkalos.org.

FOOD COLLECTION FOR SAHRAWIAN REFUGEES' CAMPS

Some **ESF-E volunteers collaborated with the Valencian organisation Al-Amal in the yearly food collection for Sahrawian refugees camps**. We contributed by placing collection containers at the entrance of every faculty and library of the University of Valencia. We fostered the students to collect three basic food items (rice, oil and sugar) and also took the opportunity to sensitise them about the difficult situation of the refugees and more generally about the Sahrawian conflict.

A Peace Convoy (*Caravana por la Paz*), organised by the Valencia Solidarity Network for Sahrawian People, was sent to Tindouf at the end of January 2009. 80 tons of humanitarian aid material was sent, including more than 63 tons of non-perishable food.

GUATEMALA PROJECT

During 2009, **ESF-E has provided with books several school libraries lacking of material**. The books sent were private donations collected during the Alternative Fair (*Fira Alternativa*) in Valencia. We could count for this programme with the support from teaching staff from secondary schools in Gandia (Valencia)

The shipping was coordinated with the organisation Education Without Borders, which offered the containers to send the collected material. On the field the programme was followed by the aid worker Gianluca Tenin.

The first delivery was donated to two centres in El Quiché, one of areas most affected by the escalation of violence against indigenous people during the '80s. The centres were the Community Basic Education Centre and the Official Rural Mixed School in Chichicastenango. A second delivery is now being donated to several communities in the suburbs of Guatemala City.

The positive outcome and the strengthening of the relation with the partner organisation have created good work dynamics. Therefore, **at the moment we are discussing other projects of educational cooperation on a larger scale with rural communities in Guatemala**.

We would like to show special gratitude to Mr José Vicente Puig Raga, Head of the Colegio Mayor San Juan of Ribera (Burjassot, València) for supplying some rooms of the school for the book

stocking. Other special thanks go to Ms Agustina Pérez López, who coordinated the collection of books in Maria Enríquez secondary school in Gandia (Valencia).

APPEALS AND CAMPAIGNS

ESF-E has launched the campaign **Your voice will not be unheard**. Through an e-mail campaign in 5 languages, human rights violations and detentions suffered by Sahrawian students are regularly denounced to relevant authorities.

4. PLANNING 2009/2010

During the Annual General Meeting, the following lines of action were agreed for the 2009-2010:

WEB

Development and publication of the website ESF-E, with the support of the German Section. We will use their model as a template.

DOCUMENTARY

During 2009-2010, ESF-E will finalise and circulate a documentary about the situation in Western Sahara. This production can count on the participation of inedited testimonies by Sahrawian students and Human Rights activists. A delegation of ESF-E's members collected audiovisual material during a visit in Morocco and the OT in May 2008.

CONFERENCE FORGOTTEN CONFLICTS

We have chosen to treat the theme of forgotten conflict again to give continuity to the activities undertaken by ESF-E in October 2007. Although the programme will start from the subjects proposed in the first meeting, the analysis will be deeper and focusing on different aspects of the conflicts. The conference will be supported also by a series of cultural events related to the theme treated.

COLLABORATION WITH UJSARIO

ESF-E is planning a collaboration with UJSARIO (Sagua El Hamra and Rio de Oro Youth Colaition) in Dajla (a Sahrawian camp) and with the Murcian organisation Mar Menor helping Sahrawian people, with the aim of furnishing the new youth Sahrawian centre built last year. The collaboration, which will be better defined in the next few months, will consist in delivery of books and school supplies.

COLLABORATION WITH ESF GERMANY

During the meeting between two members from the two sections different forms of mutual collaboration have been discussed. In the next few months the Congo scholarship programme and the library stocking project will be analysed in order to define the nature of collaboration.

ESF INTERNACIONAL

All ESF branches (France, Germany – which incorporates working groups from Austria and Switzerland – Italy, Belgium, Canada and Spain) are working together for the creation of an international headquarter (ESF International) which will liaise communication between different organisation and coordinate all the different ESF projects. Likewise the creation of this international network will strengthen visibility and will foster the development of more significant educational programmes within the framework of the EU.

5. FUNDRAISING

ESF-E finances its activities through the annual subscription of its members; donations during public events (conferences, debates, screenings); sale of self-produced items (bags and stickers) and lottery tickets.

To keep supporting ESF-E activities:

Account Number: **[IBAN ES87] 2077 0014 31 1102119396**

Bank: **BANCAIXA**

6. CONTACT US

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