



JEUNES EUROPÉENS FÉDÉRALISTES
JUNGE EUROPÄISCHE FÖDERALISTEN
YOUNG EUROPEAN FEDERALISTS

JEF Pan European action against visa in over 20 European cities

Day of the fall of the Berlin wall, 9 November 2006

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Brussels, Belgium:

JEF organized a big manifestation right in front of the Council and the Commission to state their demands of an immediate revision of the visa procedures and the abolition of visa fee for European travelers. The action took place on the 8th, the day before the Pan-European visa action, as a kick off event. In front of a 10 meter long visa/Berlin wall, painted by a handicapped artist workshop (AFID) with the text VISA=BORDERS, almost 50 young people and MEPs joined the message! JEF's demand letter was also sent to the Finnish Presidency – just as in many other countries across Europe!

Vilnius, Lithuania:

In Vilnius the General Assembly of the European Youth Forum was taking place at the time of JEF's Pan European visa action and JEF, and the coorganiser LYMEC, was joined by dozens of European youth NGOs in a massive action against the current visa regime. With Europe United playing loud, a big manifestation took place in front of a 10 meter long visa wall (transported from Brussels and the pre-action!) to finally storm the visa wall and symbolically bring down the visa barrier running across Europe! The determination of young people to bring down this wall despite the rainy sky, and the extensive media coverage of the action made the action a huge success!

Romania, Bucharest:

JEF Romania met up in front of the National Theatre, central Bucharest, to build a wall symbolizing the barriers visas raise within Europe. The wall was moving and only allowing people to pass after they received from our members a European Passport in which the Visa Action was described and the JEF stamp, thus symbolizing the painstaking process of obtaining a transit visa!

Bulgaria:

Our protest was short but very intense and fruitful. The idea behind the project that JEF - Bulgaria implemented was to give passersby the chance to support us and to express their opinion on the issue by writing their protests on our wall. There was enormous interest, and had there been more time we would have gotten many more passionate contributions. However, about 20 photographers and journalists were anxiously waiting to see the climatic moment when we destroyed our symbolic wall. During the day there were announcements about the action and interviews with our Secretary General, Iva Dincheva, on several different radio stations. Later in the day she also appeared on the evening news.

We consider our Visa - Action as a complete success!

Latvia, Riga:

JEF-Latvia organized an informative action where we informed citizens about the current situation about visa regime. Due to our weather conditions (rain, wind 24 m/sec) and our will for the action to be prosperous we made this action interior - in Riga's biggest universities. We used colorful posters and spread out leaflets. Our action was not large, but successful.

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JEF is a supranational, politically pluralist youth organisation with about 25,000 members in over 35 European countries. The aim of JEF is to work for the creation of a European federation as a first step towards peace and a more free, just and democratic society. Our ideas are spread through international activities and youth exchanges, publications, public actions and co-operation with other youth-organisations.



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Italy, Turin:

In Turin we hold the VISA Action in the University hall. We built up an Airport-like scenario, with two gates, one for EU flights, another one for non-EU Flights (across). From 12.00 to 16.00 we've been involving people, giving leaflets and explaining the reasons of the protest. The feedback from the public was really positive, everybody showed interest and approval for the initiative.

Croatia, Zagreb:

Our action in Zagreb was special because we had many activists together with a visa/Berlin wall. We were holding signs "Wall" and people who were passing by had to take Visa-flyers to go to the other side of the wall, like this showing how visa prevents mobility and integration. In 40 minutes 800 Visa-flyers were distributed and most importantly we had a lot of fun!

Switzerland, Lucerne:

This action was a success in two respects: it emitted a pro-European signal into a region where people usually are not the most pro-European, and it gave birth to a new local section. Again, the message was streamlined to current euro-political debates in the country, stressing the absurdity of sealing off countries from the rest of Europe by whatever means. Activists distributed flyers and booted down a paper wall. It is thus maybe not a hazard that the action took place in front of a shoe shop.

Switzerland, Berne:

The Wall fell in Berne too. Walls can't solve problems nor do they protect, not even when fortified with restrictive visa policies, or with nasty barbed-wire, as it was the case in the Swiss capital. Our president - whose entire camera equipment has been stolen during the action - got a first-hand experience of this claim.

Switzerland, Geneva:

Every year Switzerland spends 2,5 billion Euros for its army, aimed at protecting the neutrality against the unknown enemy. At the same time, the planned annual contribution of 100 million Euros for cohesion projects in Eastern Europe faces severe resistance. Genevan activists pulled down a paper wall in front of the university, highlighting the merits of the European reunification for creating peace and stability on the continent, and denouncing the ridiculousness of the current debate on the financial support of the European integration. The message spread on flyers was directed against any attempt to build up walls, might they appear as expensive visas, tanks or isolationism.

Macedonia

JEF-Macedonia succeeded to gather more than 1000 young people in the streets of Skopje. JEF-Macedonia together with AEGEE-Skopje and other 5 really big, important and famous NGO.s in Macedonia succeeded to make the whole public talk about this issue, debate and support us.

Two weeks in advance we started the PR. First, on all of the blog's in Macedonia the main subject was VISAS and our action. All over national TV stations, newspapers and radios VISA, FORGET ABOUT IT, was the main subject. 5 days in a row our action was on the headlines of all mass media in Macedonia. We made a boom in macedonia yesterday.

We also have our own blog: <http://vizaajbatali.blogspot.com/>



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Bosnia Herzegovina, Sarajevo:

The activity started at 1 o'clock, when we put the canvas and colour sprays in front of Cathedral in Sarajevo, the most frequently visited place in Sarajevo. Soon there was a big crowd of various people around us and the canvas was filled with colorful drawings, messages...

We distributed flyers and the passengers were interested, they were stopping to talk to us, to show us support. We were also joined by a couple of NGOs, youth parties. A lot of media, local and international ones (DeutscheWelle, Serbian...) were present during the action.

At three o'clock Sarajevo Drum Orchestra joined the action. They are one of the most famous orchestras in BiH, known for making a great atmosphere. They managed to do it this time as well, and attracted even more people, who stopped to listen to them, but were also curious about the colorful canvas and the visas on flyers..

Kosova, Prishtina:

On 9th November, JEF Kosova, same as most of the other sections in Balkans and Europe, protested against the visa regime. Believing that the freedom of movement is fundamental right with which EU is being identified, JEF activists, supported by the activists of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and Kosova Youth Network, protested in front of the European Council in Prishtina. The action grabbed the attention of the people and media and has been covered by the Public Television of Kosova (RTK). Activists, wearing JEF T-shirts and holding slogans such as "United Europe", "Schengen Visa - the wall that is dividing Europe today", have distributed flyers and talked to the citizens informing them why we are against this visa regime.

Germany, Berlin:

For many Europeans that don't live in the EU the visa restrictions are posing a barrier hard to overcome, just like the Berlin wall once put up a barrier across Europe. As many are unaware of this visa wall JEF Europe did a Pan-European action to encourage people and governments to tear down this wall. In Berlin, on Brandenburger Tour where the Berlin wall once stood JEF Berlin (JEB) put up a paper wall with our messages written on it. Finally the hard wind and the hail destroyed our visa wall – a good step forward for uniting Europe!

Germany, Chemnitz:

The JEF Saxony section joined the call for an anti Visa demonstration and built a Visa fortress around the EU flag. Besides building a fortress around the EU we also placed it in the middle of the walking way from the incoming trains to the trainstation building. Over 1000 people faced the Visa issue due to this installation and 200 people even took flyers with further information. The local media joined and took pictures and filmed the action on this rainy day where the spirit gave us all the warmth we needed.

Finland:

JEF-Finland board had an intensive talk about the VISA resolution to be adopted. The resolution it adopted was handed over personally to the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament Ms Liisa Jaakonsaari and the chair of the Grand Committee of the Finnish Parliament Mr Jari Vilén. The resolution was also distributed to the Foreign Minister Mr Erkki Tuomioja and the Minister of the Interior Mr Kari Rajamäki.

France, Paris:

The visa action that took place in Paris the 9th of November was organised by 3 persons from JEF France. We were demonstrating on the Rennes street in the center of the city (close to the JEF France office). We've had a visa wall with the phrases:

Europe =liberty, visas =borders and many flyers with the information about visas fees and about our action was distributed to the public.



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