

Draft brochure. May 2015

# My!Europe

*A Sonnenberg network project*

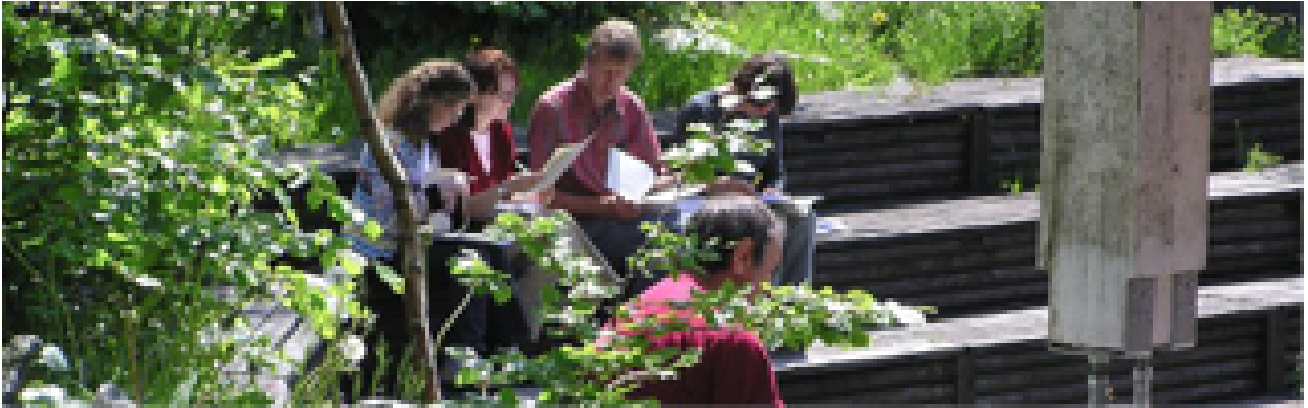


The My!Europe project will give a voice to those who want a more democratic Europe, involving ordinary people.

Eight conferences in seven different countries will draft a common My!Europe Declaration and promote cross-border cooperation between NGOs, institutions and individuals, serving as a launch-pad for a hundred projects on democracy and European values.

All citizens of Europe, young and old, are invited to take part at conference level and on the internet. We also need volunteers, so let us know, if you could give a hand.

The project is expected to run from August 2015 to December 2016. Conferences will take place in Denmark, Latvia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Bulgaria and the Netherlands.



The Sonnenberg movement has a unique history going back to 1949, - further than the institutions of the EU.

The idea was born in a refugee camp in Southern Denmark by Karl Rowold, a German refugee in Denmark since 1933, and Walter Schulze, a war-time refugee.

They saw that dialogue between normal citizens, respect and understanding across borders were necessary to create a new Europe, so they started an exchange program under primitive conditions to what is today the International House Sonnenberg.

The Sonnenberg formula, that emerged during those early camps

in the Harz Mountains in Central Germany, was simple and down-to-earth: “Talk together, overcome prejudice, understand one another, act responsibly”.

Today, the Sonnenberg movement has associations or circles in 12 European countries, organized in the International Sonnenberg Association. The International House Sonnenberg, which is run by the German Sonnenberg Kreis e.V., has trained approx. 200.000 persons of all nationalities over the years.

It is the intention of this project to make the Sonnenberg formula serve a catalyst for cross-border understanding and grassroots action in today’s Europe.



Karl  
Rowold



Walter  
Schulze



**THE OVER-ALL THEME** of the project will be how a popular-rooted, participatory European democracy close to daily life can be developed in the context of a modern, globalized and digital world.

Sub-themes could be e.g.:

**1. Popular-rooted participatory democracy:**

- cross-border dialogue between citizens, NGOs, and educational institutions
- enhancing the use of digital media for participatory democracy
- developing a clear idea of the individual's role and identity in a European context
- discussing ways to make voting in European elections have more direct influence.

**2. Values and dilemmas relating to Europe's future:**

- social welfare / free movement of people and capital
- national sovereignty / re-nationalisation / solidarity between nations
- max. green development / max. growth
- national identity / nationalism / immigration

**DECLARATION:** Together, the eight conferences and the internet magazine will prepare a "My!Europe Declaration" on participatory democracy as well as values and dilemmas in a new Europe.

In itself this project is only a tiny beginning, but the intention is to

make it the “mother of a hundred initiatives”.

**CONFERENCES.** Each conference will have participation from 3-6 other countries. Each conference will select at least one person to take part in the next.

**INTERNET.** The “My!Europe magazine” on the internet will include debate, interviews, webinars, and documents, pages for each of the participating conference as well as forums

open to the general European public.

The web magazine will serve as a “library” for project documents and materials - including the findings of each individual conference.

**PARTNERING.** In each country, the project will partner with educational institutions and relevant NGOs within each of the themes mentioned above. Also, European expats and their organizations in the country will be invited.



**The Sonnenberg Network** consists of the International House Sonnenberg and the Sonnenberg-Kreis in Germany, the International Sonnenberg Association (ISA), and ISA-members in Denmark, Great Britain, and the Netherlands as well as The University of Pardubice, the Czech Republic, the Bulgarian German Teachers’ Association, and the Danish Institute for the Baltic Countries, in Latvia.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
**[www.sonnenberg-international.de](http://www.sonnenberg-international.de)**