

## Creating a Common Understanding of Issues and Values

**16–19 July.** This conference was organized in the framework of a four-year project seeking to engage Europeans from all backgrounds in actions to develop a spirit of partnership and solidarity across the continent.

**A**EUB 2015 was an opportunity for a diverse group of Europeans to reflect and share on current issues and European values: recurring conflicts, massive waves of migrations, shaky minority rights and dealing with the past. Groups met to discuss their concerns and hopes and make proposals for the future.

This year, AEUB also launched its Young Ambassadors programme: 35 ambassadors aged 18 to 25 representing 24 countries. The ambassadors were passionate about representing their countries.

Ample time was devoted to the vision and ideas of two of Europe's founding fathers, Monnet and Schuman, with the visit to the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne and a presentation by its Director, Gilles Grin, as well as



**Aurora Martin, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest, Senior Advisor within the Government of Romania, and Cathy Nobles, Founder and Director of the Reconciliation Walk Community**

one by Jeff Fountain, Director of the Schuman Centre for European Studies.

The opening plenary featured keynote speakers Ahmet Shala, Kosovo's Ambassador to Japan and former Minister of Finance; Stephanie Hofmann, Associate Professor at the Graduate Institute in Geneva; Cathy Nobles, a peacebuilding activist; and Leoluca Orlando, the Mayor of Palermo via video link from Italy.

Christoph Spreng, IofC delegate to the Council of Europe, spoke about the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations and of the role played by personal change there. Margaret Smith,

from the faculty of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University in Washington DC, gave a very moving lecture, exploring theoretical questions of building a common European narrative and practical ways of transforming tensions through social change.

On the final day, participants made commitments about what they would do to continue addressing Europe's unfinished business in the coming year. Some expressed their intention to start initiatives, including publishing articles and having a more proactive role in bringing minority groups in Europe together. One particular project came out: a



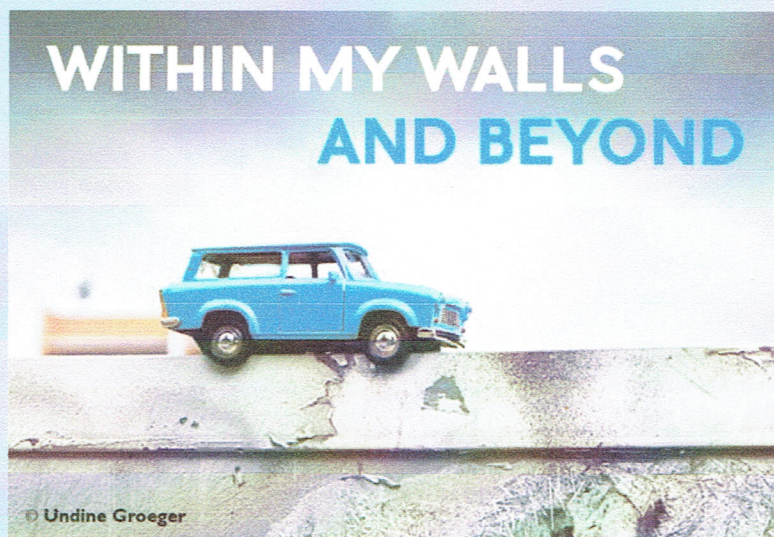
**Gilles Grin, Director of the Jean Monnet Foundation**



## Photo Exhibition: Within My Walls and Beyond

Undine Groeger's travelling photo exhibition, *Within My Walls and Beyond*, opened during the AEUB conference. It represents a personal journey towards understanding Germany's past. It includes three generations that experienced the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall, and, in parallel, opens a window onto life in a place that can be reminiscent of former East Germany, Transnistria, a post-Soviet frozen conflict zone between Moldova and Ukraine.

It will be exhibited at Caux Expo until **16 January 2016** and will engage visitors in a dialogue on walls that persist in people and in communities.



peace voyage across Europe in 2018. This project includes visiting places that have suffered or suffer from conflicts to share practical stories of trust-building and conflict resolution.

### Meet the Young Ambassadors: a youth perspective on Europe

For Lina, Young Ambassador from Albania, AEUB was a great occasion to discover what projects other young people are working on to build a better Europe. She said, 'despite our diversity, we have common values. There is a need for collaboration between European countries and to promote greater social cohesion.' For her, being a Young Ambassador gave her 'the ability to debate in a positive and constructive manner with peers coming from traditionally conflictual areas'. She went back home with a strong desire to stay engaged by expanding *Breaking Barriers*, her organization fighting racial and religious stereotyping, and developing an online forum for articles and blogs addressing Europe's challenges and hopes.

For Bastian, Young Ambassador from Germany, participating to AEUB contributed to a better understanding of Germany's identity. It was also an opportunity to discuss the challenges Europe is facing and to build a network of people of different ages and backgrounds to address these issues together and take initiatives. He concluded: 'we

will definitely keep in touch to work on the ideas we had and to implement them. Caux has a very holistic approach. The things I learned here changed me personally and I will take these experiences to my professional level one day.'



**Bastian, Young Ambassador  
from Germany**

### Mobility as an inalienable Right?

The Mayor of Palermo, Leoluca Orlando, made a lasting impression on AEUB's participants. This longstanding anti-mafia politician is now defending another cause of direct concern to all European countries: migrants.

Orlando explained that according to him, mobility should be an inalienable right. It is our duty to welcome those who are fleeing for their lives, as 'we do not choose where we are born, but we can choose where we want to live and die'.

His powerful and drastic words strengthened AEUB's wish for a more inclusive and empathetic Europe. Orlando had the International Human Mobility Charter of Palermo approved by the city council and is currently defending his ideas for a more humane and respectful Europe.