

Euro-Atlantic Perspectives

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“Promoting Open Channels of Communication”

The e-Newsletter of the Atlantic Council of Finland Youth Network

Purpose of Euro-Atlantic Perspectives:

The purpose of *Euro-Atlantic Perspectives* is to impart information about Youth Network and ACF activities as well as Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) and Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA) activities in order that ACF and Youth Network members remain up-to-date on issues affecting transatlantic relations both nationally and internationally. The e-newsletter will help to circulate current ideas about issues that are on the agenda in Euro-Atlantic security and defence policy debates, in the ATA/YATA network, and nationally in Finland.

Besides the educational and informative aspect of the newsletter, it also aims at fostering discussion and debate about current issues influencing transatlantic relations. We hope to touch base on a broad range of topics via think pieces from security specialists, informative articles, event commentary, reviews and opinion pieces.

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National Section

Message from the editor:

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of *Euro-Atlantic Perspectives*. The process of compiling and editing this newsletter has been arduous at times, but also quite rewarding now that I have had the chance to view the newsletter in its entirety and realize that the articles included cover numerous issues and organizational perspectives. As I have never been in charge of organizing a newsletter, this undertaking has also been a rewarding learning experience as well. As such, the Estonian proverb “the work will teach you” has been quite comforting along the way.

Throughout my 9+ months in Finland, I have garnered the impression that disseminating information and generating debate about transatlantic relations and NATO in Finland is almost always an uphill battle. It is for this reason that I hold the members of the ACF and Youth Network in such high esteem; their work has taught them that circulating information and diverse opinion and fostering debate about Euro-Atlantic security issues and the respective roles of national ATA and YATA chapters is not always popular or easy, yet this realization has only furthered the attitude that digging ones heels in is necessary and right when one believes strongly in the pursuit of these objectives.

Along with lingering doubts over the security situation in Iraq, the open-ended development of ESDP and the upcoming NATO Istanbul Summit have come a certain level of tension in the international community over the form and identity that regional and transatlantic security organizations will assume in the future. It is precisely for this reason that a newsletter such as this is needed. It is the express ambition of the *E-A Perspectives* board to make sure that each issue contains articles by both foreign and Finnish security experts and also ATA/YATA chapter representatives. In this way, the ACF Youth Network hopes to better inform its members and other concerned individuals of matters affecting Euro-Atlantic and Finnish security and also keep these persons up-to-date on the activities of ATA/YATA national chapters, those associations that are charged with bringing fresh ideas, debate and current information on Euro-Atlantic security issues to their respective members.

This point brings me to the future of newsletter: *Euro-Atlantic Perspectives* is an ongoing pilot project and this leaves room for it to evolve in the future. Although the board desires to stick as precisely as possible to the *E-A* mission statement, the format of the newsletter is not set in stone; the potential array of contributions remains open to the incorporation the views of any one person or organization that is concerned about national and international security issues. I believe that this flexibility is in line with the purpose of the newsletter and firmly in line with the future needs of the members of the ACF.

I now kindly ask you to read on. Feel free to contact me personally or any other members of the board with comments and/or suggestions or if you or someone you know would like to contribute to future issues.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew L Friar
Editor of *Euro-Atlantic Perspectives*

Message from Mr Paavo Rantanen, Chairman of the ACF:

Dear Readers,

Youth activities within the Atlantic Council of Finland (ACF) started officially in 2003. The rules of the Council were duly amended, and a representative of the ACF Youth Network is now a member of our Board. These measures were taken in order to widen the base for membership as well as to support our younger members in their activities to contribute to the debate concerning current security issues, especially concerning NATO, European Union and transatlantic relations.

A review of the work of the Council gives a good picture of the achievements of the Youth Network. Examples are many, such as the organization of seminars on security issues, visits in Finland and abroad to authorities and institutions dealing with security questions, cooperation with YATA and participation in many other events of interest. I can say that the Youth Network has started its activities with resolution and energy. It has also contributed to the organization of ACF events, an example was our big conference “The US and the World” in November 2003.

The launching of this newsletter is further proof of the Youth Network’s devotion to the goals of our Council. Right now it is more than necessary to focus on questions about the Atlantic partnership. During the last fifty years there have been lots of positive achievements in building the Euro-Atlantic cooperation, but differences, arguments and disputes are also part of our common history. This is not tragic; rather we see here a natural phenomenon in the daily life of free nations belonging to the same family. The November conference gave a good illustration on earlier problems in Euro-Atlantic relations as well as on the current situation. Indeed, the state of relations turned for the worse in the context of the Iraq crisis.

It has been noted that America and Europe have been growing apart, and while we observe this, we must recognize the fundamental importance of the Atlantic partnership. Europe needs it, and Finland is here no exception. We have been strategic partners for a long time, and now we must keep this link alive and boldly face new threats, such as terrorism, in cooperation. Europe and the USA have grown economically together – it suffices to look at trade and investment figures only. But there are many more themes of common interest relevant to our relations.

It is true, the post-Iraq situation and post-Madrid developments bring us new challenges. But let us keep in mind that just as the USA needs Europe, Europe needs the USA. We need more discussion, more mutual understanding and more public diplomacy. The Youth Network can give here a useful contribution.

Paavo Rantanen
Chairman of the Atlantic Council of Finland

Message from Mr Martti Setälä:

Greetings from the Youth Network

The national picture: The list of completed activities for spring 2004 is nothing short of amazing! For such a new organization, the ACF Youth Network has already managed to put together three seminars in the three biggest university cities of Finland: Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. These seminars brought together a total of 100+ persons (mostly university students) to discuss NATO and ESDP evolution and its influence on Finland. In addition, the network branch in Turku organized two discussion events, one at the University of Turku (on Finnish foreign policy traditions) and one at Åbo Akademi (on Russian perspectives on European security). Our traditional spring excursion gave an introduction to the Finnish Ministry of Defence. Also noteworthy are our plans to publish a seminar report from the NATO/ESDP seminar in Turku in the near future.

This newsletter presently on your screen is the first of many, and will be developed further in the future. Also, a discussion group has been established on the internet that distributes a fair amount of information on Euro-Atlantic security and defence issues, related events, etc. As a consequence of our successes, the number of Youth Network members has gradually increased, our name has become known widely in Turku, and our repute in Helsinki and Tampere is steadily solidifying.

The international picture: We were able to send three persons to the Nordic/Baltic security conference in Stockholm in April, and plan to send a number of members to the NATO summit in Istanbul, the Danish Atlantic Youth Seminar (DAYS), the Portuguese Atlantic Youth Seminar (PAYS), the Second International Conference of the Estonian Atlantic Treaty Association and other international ATA and YATA seminars. The ability of the Youth Network to attend so many conferences can be regarded as an enormous success in view of the fact that acquiring funding for these activities is often very difficult.

Current challenges. Some consider the Youth Network a lobbying organization. To explain the organization in these terms is to offer a loaded definition; my vision has been to construct the Youth Network as an organization interested in an open-minded discussion on *all* Euro-Atlantic security and defence policy issues ranging from NATO to OSCE and from military/defence matters to soft security issues. The emphasis of our activity, in accordance with the ACF's mission, is on understanding and debating management of security and defence challenges within NATO and ESDP, but this does not mean that the Youth Network would ignore the importance of other organizations or the relevance of a broad concept of security.

The Youth Network's approach is not to impose opinions but to generate discussion and debate based on up-to-date and accurate information on current events in the Euro-Atlantic area. The goal is to find fresh ideas and mutual understanding through dialogue that engages all members of the Euro-Atlantic community and beyond. In order to avoid being pigeonholed as an organization with a biased agenda, the Youth Network must work diligently and conscientiously to present itself as non-biased and sincere. This is a responsibility of each and every one of its members.

This brings me to the second challenge: student groups often suffer from an "overload" of events arranged by a bulk of NGO's, some of which unavoidably overlap with our

organization's events. This means that there is huge competition over who gets the audiences, which boils down to the question of who can best attract the interest of busy students and youth. To win the crowds, one has to have perfect timing, top speakers, and hot topics – this is especially important for us, given that security and defence policy issues are not generally among the most popular topics for discussion among young people. My point is that one poorly organized Youth Network event can have an exponential effect on the outcome and attendance of future events, making the planning and content of each event critical to the success of the Youth Network (and the ACF) as a whole.

To conclude, we need to consolidate our existence in Turku, Tampere and Helsinki by organizing a limited number of high-quality, “precision-guided” events. We need to be active and vigorous in our efforts to maintain a public image that is both positive and truthful. We need also to find better ways of relaying impressions garnered and information presented at events and international seminars to our members and beyond.

One big step in achieving these goals culminates one year from now, when it becomes our task to organize YATA's Nordic/Baltic Security Conference in Finland. The conference will bring together dozens of students and youth from Euro-Atlantic nations to share information and debate contemporary Nordic security challenges. This will surely be – not the sole – but a main project for our Youth Network during next autumn and spring.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all Youth Network members for being active and having positive attitudes! I would also like to thank everyone who has supported us during this spring! I wish you all a warm and relaxing summer! You'll hear from the Youth Network next time as the exciting results of the Istanbul Summit unfold.

Martti Setälä
President of ACF Youth Network

“Leave No Neutral Behind” from Mr Henrikki Heikka

Finland’s isolationist defence posture is beginning to affect the country’s international reputation, notes Henrikki Heikka.

It has become a bit of a habit among the Finnish political elite to claim that our country has a credible independent defence capability and that our friends in Europe and across the Atlantic understand and respect our policy.

Finnish experts have, for years, known that this is not exactly the case - Finnish defence capabilities are neither up-to-date nor are the Finnish defence forces regarded abroad as the Nokia of network-based defence. However, the almost non-existent public attention to Finnish defence in the West since the end of the cold war has meant that the issue has remained more of a dirty little secret of a few professionals than a source of national humiliation, as was the case during the years of *Finlandization*.

This may be changing fast. The armed forces in Europe and America are going through a rapid transformation necessary to meet the requirements of a new security environment. Those left behind will see their influence wane in other fields of policy-making as well.

As part of this process, our friends are, for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet threat, taking a closer look at our capabilities, and doing so publicly. Judging by a recent study by William Hopkinson “Sizing and Shaping European Armed Forces: Lessons and Considerations from the Nordic Countries” (available at SIPRI’s website), our friends are not as impressed as our government would like us to believe they are.

An internationally recognized security expert and former Assistant Undersecretary of State (UK), Hopkinson takes a birds-eye view of the Nordic countries’ military capabilities in the context of European defence requirements. His case study of Finland does not make flattering reading for Finnish defence planners.

Hopkinson claims that Finland’s massive reserve is not justified even considering worst-case scenarios about Russia’s future. He states: “There seems to be no circumstances in which Finland could ever deploy such numbers or would need to do so in the foreseeable future, even allowing for all the uncertainty and turbulence in Russia.”

The report puts into context the claims made by senior Finnish military officers that our country is a leading player in the development of network-centric defences. Hopkinson notes: “[W]ithin network-centric warfare Finland has not embraced joint operations by air or ground forces, or close air-support by the latter. Indeed, joint activities do not extend beyond the highest level of command”.

Hopkinson concludes that Finland is “investing in equipment and doctrine suitable to fight an outdated type of war against an invader, rather than preparing itself for a flexible and joint war of manoeuvre that would be more likely in the future.” He predicts: “Finland may, therefore, continue to tie up resources on outdated requirements at the cost of not being able to meet other pressing demands.”

Hopkinson finishes by speculating on the reasons for Finland’s reluctance to engage internationally in anything else than peace-support operations, suggesting that this policy

“may stem from a desire to avoid exposing weaknesses.” Hopkinson warns that “if the EU becomes a more active security player, Finland will experience more pressure on this point.”

Whether or not Hopkinson’s analysis is entirely accurate, the thrust of his argument is worth debating openly as Finland prepares for next autumn’s security policy review. If the government insists on maintaining a huge reserve of conscripts, armed with aged weaponry and a cold-war era fighting doctrine, at least the decision to do so should be made conscious of the implications that it will have on Finland’s reputation in the transatlantic security community.

Henrikki Heikka

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Updates:

Forthcoming ACF Youth Network events from Mr Martti Setälä

After the busy months of winter and spring 2004, the Youth Network's national activities have been tuned down for the summer season. Network branches in both Turku and Helsinki will have their own evaluation meetings before the summer, but the general "national planning day" in Helsinki has been cancelled. Hopefully, the concept can be reintroduced in the autumn of 2004, or at the latest, spring 2005.

The summer will be filled with international activities. Network members will participate in I-PASS, i.e. the Istanbul Pan-Atlantic Student Summit organized in conjunction with the NATO Summit in June. There will also be participation to the Danish Atlantic Youth Seminar (DAYS) in July. Other events that we would like to participate in are the Portuguese Atlantic Youth Seminar (PAYS) in July-August, and the Latvian NATO Summer School in August. Information on any other events will be passed on via the Youth Network's mailing lists.

In the autumn, we will most likely start with the traditional yearly excursion. Other events for autumn will be planned later on in the summer. You can present your opinion on possible themes and locations for our future events by sending them to atlanttiseurannuoret@hotmail.com. Stay tuned for information on forthcoming planning meetings, where you can actively participate in the process of brainstorming and arranging our activities.

Upcoming ACF/ESF Conference From Ms Kristiina Rinkineva

Mark your calendars! 27 May "Europe After Istanbul" seminar held in Kansallissali at Aleksanterinkatu 44 starting at 08.30. Please be so kind as to confirm your participation and vocational affiliation to Mr Matthew Friar (by e-mail matthew.friar@fulbrightweb.org or by fax +358 9 612 7759) as soon as possible.

The objective of the conference is to inform the Finnish public regarding major issues on the NATO agenda before the Istanbul Summit and to assess the potential impact of decisions made and challenges defined at the Summit on Northern Europe and Finland. The seminar will be divided into the following three sub-topics: NATO Enlargement and Transformation, NATO-EU Relations, and Finland, the EU and NATO.

"Europe After Istanbul" has been organized by the Atlantic Council of Finland and the European Security Forum.

Recent Publication:

Make sure to check out *The United States and the World*, just freshly published in the spring of 2004 by the Atlantic Council of Finland. Edited by Youth Network members Terhi Suominen and Eero Kytömaa, this publication contains articles from speakers who participated in the conference on 21 November 2003 as well as insightful commentary by the editors. This publication as well as others can be found on the ACF website:

<http://www.atlantiseura.org/publications.html>

International Section

“Challenges on the Horizon – Perspectives on ESDP Development” from Mr Mika-Markus Leinonen*

I have kindly been asked to contribute a think piece to the e-Newsletter concerning perspectives on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) development. This is, however, no easy undertaking given that we are presently at a kind of a threshold between two phases. Many things have been achieved since the birth of ESDP in 1999 in terms of structures and quantity. The ESDP as a tool for the CFSP has been consolidated and made operational. All this was achieved according to plans by the end of 2003. But now, in 2004, we are about to embark on a second phase of which the desired end status is defined in the European Security Strategy (EES). The challenge is to adapt the ESDP tools and structures to get there.

Before addressing some of the new challenges we face in the development of the ESDP, let us have a closer look at where we stand today.

The EU has by now conducted two military operations (FYROM, Congo). A third one, a follow-up to NATO's SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina, should start by 2005. The very first crisis management operation, the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is well on track. Political control of all undertaken operations is ensured by new Council bodies (Political and Security Committee, EU Military Committee and Civilian Crisis Management Committee). A 150-strong EU Military Staff provides military expertise. Member States have pledged 60,000 troops and 5,000 police to be deployed. All in all, quite a remarkable face-lift for our 50-year-old Lady called Europe!

Against this background, at least four major challenges can be identified for the second phase of the ESDP:

- 1) A new "Helsinki Headline Goal" 2010 for military capabilities is needed to ensure that the EU can undertake all the tasks as defined in the EES (e.g. disarmament operations). The Union must also be able to respond faster to any emerging crises. A solution could be found in the form of "battle groups" of roughly 1500 soldiers. The new Armaments Agency is supposed to be launched by the end of 2004, but it will take some time before it is able to deliver.
- 2) Geographical reach: The present level of ESDP ambition is formulated vaguely enough: in and around Europe. With the strategic airlift capability in place through interim solutions even before the Airbus 400M planes enter into service 2008, the UN will be keen to "subcontract" ESDP, especially in Africa.
- 3) Real added value of EU Crisis Management: the comprehensive nature of the EU approach, with all the means, both civilian and military, at its disposal, has not yet been exploited in any of the operations conducted thus far. This should be the "niche" that makes the difference. However, old habits die hard and extra efforts are needed to be able to plan and conduct operations in this spirit.
- 4) Fight against Terrorism: so far more declaratory than operational in ESDP, but bound to be addressed in more detail in the very near future.

And finally there is, of course, still some unfinished business from last year... But I am sure we will soon see Javier Solana taking up his office as he EU Foreign Minister, with his staff combining the Commission RELEX and the Directorate for external and politico-military affairs of the Council Secretariat.

Mika-Markus Leinonen

Secretary to the EU Military Committee, Directorate for External and Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU

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*Mr Leinonen writes here in his personal capacity

“The Nordic Model - a Model!” from Mr Troels Egeskov Sørensen:

In April 2003, the Nordic seminar NORSEC was held for the first time. The seminar was a prototype for future seminars between YATA (the international executive board) and the Nordic YATA affiliations. The purpose was two-fold. Firstly, we hoped to create a knowledge-sharing forum where national NGOs could share experiences and create new ideas and projects. As the national YATA affiliates in Norway, Sweden and Finland were new NGOs, we sought to combine of the experience of the Danish YATA affiliation - which had existed already for many years - with the openness and creativity of the newly established Nordic associations. Secondly, we wished to create a regional seminar focusing on regional and international security issues from a Nordic perspective. However, knowing that regional topics cross borders and often garner much interest, youth from the Baltic countries were also invited to participate, learn about the Nordic region and contribute to debates by analyzing topics from a Baltic regional perspective. Importantly, the Nordic seminar was created as a “road trip” seminar, meaning that it will tour between all the partner countries in coming years. The first seminar was held in Oslo, Norway and this year the seminar was held in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Nordic annual seminar has inspired me to create a new and ambitious vision for the YATA. In the present situation, many of our 39 ATA/YATAs are successfully creating and organizing national and international activities by themselves. However, at the same time, there are many newly established YATA affiliations, which are located in countries and regions lacking experience in NGO work.

My vision is to create extensive *NGO knowledge-sharing cooperation*. This vision would take advantage of the many years of NGO experience within the YATA framework in building civil society in very different countries and regions. It would also take advantage of the unique network that YATA possesses - Youth partners from the Nordic countries across the Atlantic to Canada and the US, back again to the Balkans, Turkey, the Caucasus, Russia, Ukraine and all the countries in between.

This vision expressed in more concrete words is the creation of regional NGO cooperation and knowledge-sharing to produce information and foster debate about international politics in three regions: the Balkans, Ukraine/Russia and the Caucasus.

These three regions can all be characterized as being in a transition phase, which for me means that there exists an immense challenge in distributing information and creating debate among the citizens concerning where this transition should end. And at the same time, we must remember that these regions have recently been touched by conflict, both on a national and regional level. In other words, the challenge is two-fold: to create information and debate about national, regional and international politics *and* to create a dialogue between different ethnic, cultural or ideological groups on a national and regional scale. One can sum it up by using one of today’s buzzwords: *the creation of civil society*.

The foremost strength of YATA is that we can reach Youth in many countries by speaking the same lingo and seeing eye to eye on many issues. At the same time, we have many Youth networks engaged as partners in our YATA NGO cooperation framework already. These are young people who share the basic YATA philosophy; we believe that dialogue and exchanging ideas and opinions on ideology, religion and culture is the only way to create and maintain peaceful nation-states, peaceful regions and a peaceful international society.

The NGO cooperation projects in these three aforementioned regions should be created not only via cooperation between national YATA affiliations, but through collaboration in a wider NGO network. This ambition is big, but realistic: YATA bringing NGOs in the three regions together with the objective of creating and strengthening NGOs in particular and building civil society and generating debate in general. Our objective in YATA is to create information and debate about international politics, but as a NGO, we can also inspire and be inspired by other NGOs on how to work effectively as a NGO. Specific local goals may vary, but as NGOs we share a common objective, to create dialogue and debate, to foster civil society and to inspire people to be actively engaged and participative in the world that we live in.

On a concrete level, this regional NGO cooperation will be composed of either an annual or a biannual touring seminar. These seminars will be composed of two main elements, the NGO knowledge-sharing part - sharing, discussing and brainstorming on how to work efficiently as a NGO - and lectures and debates about regional and international politics. A regional cooperation link or sub section will be established on the YATA web page, where one will be able to read about seminars, articles and analyses which deal with individual regions and the challenges they face, and then debate using an online forum.

We are already on track! In April 2003 the first regional Balkans YATA seminar was held in Belgrade, Serbia & Montenegro, and in September 2003 the first Caucasus seminar was held in Tbilisi, Georgia. What we need now is to institutionalize these models of cooperation in order to promote a more continuous flow of information and debate, so that more young people will become involved and so that the cooperation and knowledge-sharing between the NGOs will become a permanent feature of the YATA-affiliated NGO network.

My vision is that within two years the YATA framework will include, in addition to our national and international activities, four regional cooperations: the Nordic cooperation, the Ukraine/Russia cooperation, the Balkan cooperation and the Caucasus cooperation. The Nordic cooperation has already been established and continues to demonstrate its functionality and success, and the foundation for the Balkans and the Caucasus cooperations has been laid. It is time for the next level. It is time to intensify the Youth dialogue, time to move on - not forgetting the conflictual past - but through mutual understanding, to create new and peaceful relations. A central part of YATA's obligation includes helping to attain this goal. We have an obligation to continue our engagement in maintaining the debate and dialogue in the countries that for years have been so fortunate to be stable and peaceful. But we also have an obligation to intensify our cooperation with the Youth in the transition countries. The new millennium is characterized among the Youth as one full of new possibilities, a willingness to cooperate and growing interest in building friendships. These NGO regional cooperation projects are the way to achieve this goal, the way to create civil society and the way to increase the chances of a peaceful future.

Troels Egeskov Sørensen
President of YATA
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Activities of the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association from Ms Kristina Ober:

At the Annual General Assembly of the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA) during the General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) in Edinburgh in November 2003 national delegates elected a new Executive Board of YATA. Members of the Executive Board were elected based upon their program of activities for 2004 in the fields of youth activities, public diplomacy, education, communication and programming.

The YATA Executive Board established common principals for strengthening the interest of youth in security issues: the promotion of understanding and cooperation among youth of national ATA organizations concerning international security organizations, especially NATO, EU and OSCE; the establishment of contacts and exchanges between young people in NATO, PfP and observer countries through support of meetings where youth will be able to share experiences; participation in activities of different platforms and co-ordination structures in NATO, PfP and observer countries and encouragement of YATA's member organizations to do the same at national levels.

For achieving the abovementioned established goals, the YATA Executive Board is going to strengthen youth branches in national associations. In this respect, we are encouraging establishment of new youth sections and strengthening already established ones. We are extending and providing institutional support and sharing our experiences. For instance, an email group was established for online discussion among representatives of national affiliations to share information on various activities and to exchange their experiences in promotion of youth interest in international security issues. This is an example of a necessary long-term project that is evolving according to the activities of its members.

One of YATA's most important goals, the promotion of understanding and cooperation among youth, was implemented and continues to operate via online email group discussion also known as "yata-talk". "Yata-talk" is an open-access communication medium which means that everyone who is interested in exchanging views on topics - YATA, ATA, NATO, UN, EU, national and international security, transatlantic relations, crisis areas and any other related issue - can freely join the group by sending a message to yata_talk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Currently we are moderating lively discussions among more than 250 members. We are also in the process of updating and upgrading the YATA webpage, which will provide valuable information on establishing national affiliations, regional cooperation, contacts at national affiliations, announcements of youth conferences and seminars, and a forum for discussing security issues, etc.

Last but not least, activities bent on strengthening youth cooperation and mutual understanding include organizing and coordinating international youth seminars and conferences. In September last year YATA organized the first youth international conference on the Future of NATO at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Fifty participants from more than 27 countries participated in discussing the future of NATO and wrote their views in a Memorandum, which was handed to Lord Robertson, the former Secretary General of NATO. Our goal is to turn this seminar into an annual gathering for youth at NATO Headquarters. Moreover, YATA is involved in coordination of the international youth conference "International Pan-Atlantic Seminar" (I-PASS), which will take place in Istanbul during the NATO Summit in June 2004. YATA is also extending cooperation and experience in organizing youth projects in the Caucasus and Ukraine.

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Additionally, YATA is a young non-governmental affiliation which links youth from the Euro-Atlantic area with common interests in international security issues. YATA is represented by youth for youth, and therefore we invite all interested persons to participate in our activities and contribute to our main goal of promoting understanding and cooperation among youth in the field of contemporary security issues.

Kristina Ober
Vice-President for Communications and Programming
kristina.ober@arsis.net

Activities of Russian Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation from Mr Sergei Utkin:

In the current stage of development of the AEAC Youth Section, its activities can be observed in the best way by dividing them in two groups – those taking place within Russia and those taking place abroad.

Activities within Russia

There was a slight decline in Youth Section activities in Russia in 2003 due mainly to financial and organizational reasons. Nonetheless, we organized some meetings of young people interested in our activities. These meetings were mainly focused on the possibility of organizing an international youth seminar in Moscow. The organization of this conference remains our main goal for the near future.

Also during 2003 the Youth Section enjoyed the presence and participation of some students who had never participated in our activities before. The Youth Section emphasized its usefulness as a network for information sharing among its participants.

Activities Abroad

In 2003, representatives from the Youth Section took part in several seminars and conferences abroad. These events were organized by the members of Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) and the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA). Events attended include:

- The 8th Portuguese Atlantic Youth seminar: “War and Peace: UN, NATO and the EU: Partners in security?” - Lisbon, Portugal;
- The 1st Conference of the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association: “Future of NATO” - Brussels, Belgium;
- The Atlantic Treaty Association Annual Assembly - Edinburgh, United Kingdom;
- The Youth seminar: “Regional security and role of youth in peace building” - Yerevan, Armenia

Agenda for 2004

We hope to intensify our efforts and work in 2004. We will focus primarily on improvements in activities within Russia, but we hope at the same time to maintain participation in events abroad at previously achieved levels. We are currently trying to find resources for an international youth seminar in Moscow, at which the participation of all the member organizations of YATA is desired. In case of success, the most probable time for the seminar seems to be in September 2004, although details are still rather vague.

Sergei Utkin
Chairman of the Youth Section
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Comments on International Conferences/Seminars attended:

From Mr Matthew L Friar:

3-10 March, 2004 – **Seminar on the EU and NATO – Fulbright Program**,
Brussels/Luxembourg

This week-long seminar brought together American Fulbright students and professors situated around Europe to learn about EU and NATO institutions. Our visits introduced us to the European Court of Justice, European Court of Auditors, the EU Commission, EU Parliament (in Brussels), Council of Ministers, College of Europe, SHAPE, NATO Headquarters and the US Mission to the EU.

This conference was quite intense and often overwhelming given the complexity of the EU, especially in light of recent expansion to 25. However, the sessions were very well organized and most speakers were excellent and often very candid when answering questions. The conference organizers made sure to insert one day of free time, which was very beneficial to those that had never before visited Brussels and wished to sightsee (like me).

Finland was mentioned at various times during the conference as a very responsible and active EU and NATO PfP member. Interestingly enough, the perceived complexity and peculiarity of the Finnish language was usually brought up in this context as well.

12 May, 2004 - **The Volatile Taiwan Strait: Can Peace Be Achieved? – The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (UPI)**

This highly interesting and intense seminar brought together experts from Beijing, Taipei and the United States for a true nail-biter. Despite the presentation of opinion from both extremes of the China-Taiwan debate continuum, all agreed that the present situation – marked by a strong pro-democracy movement in Taiwan, the growing clout and disapproval of mainland China, and the inability of the US, mired in Iraq, to posture itself as ready and willing to defend Taiwan – is the most potentially catastrophic in decades.

I was actually quite saddened during the seminar; it seems to me that the growing military and economic power of China, as well as the international isolation of Taiwan, is slowly crushing the possibility of a peaceful, independent Taiwan. It is my hope that more people begin to pay attention to this potentially tragic situation, especially in Europe, where it appears that the EU should consider asserting a stronger position (its current line is that cross-strait disputes should be resolved through “constructive dialogue”). As the presenters made clear, “dialogue” between China and Taiwan often exhibits itself in the form of talking *at* each other and not *to* each other, thus limiting its potential constructiveness.

Information on next issue:

In the next newsletter, Col. Sakari Honkamaa, chief of Strategic Planning Sector of the Operations Division of the Defence Staff, will write on the long-term development of the Finnish Defence Forces and Finnish defence ideas.

Euro-Atlantic Perspectives will be published again in the fall of 2004. Please contact Matthew Friar (matthew.friar@fulbrightweb.org) or Martti Setälä (masase@utu.fi) if you or someone you know is interested in submitting an article, update or comment.