



"Good innovation is like lifting up the horizon and looking through to see the future."

## The Role of Youth in addressing Europe’s Innovation Emergency

Brussels, 18th April 2011: On Wednesday 13 April, over one hundred young innovators, students, interns and professionals representing businesses and start-ups, joined European Commission officials and Members of the European Parliament to discuss a shared-risk collaborative approach between Europe and its youth to build and sustain Europe’s capacity for innovation and renewal, as conceived and advocated by the [European Young Innovators Forum \(EYIF\)](#).

Since its official launch in July 2010, the EYIF has developed a set of concrete proposals to achieve this collaboration which it presented on Wednesday to a full auditorium at the European Parliament. Titled ‘Transforming Ideas into Actions, Roadmap 2011 – 2012’, the conference was hosted by the Chairman of the European Parliament’s Youth Intergroup, Damien ABAD MEP, and moderated by Kumardev CHATTERJEE, Founder and President of the EYIF.

Main speakers of the event :

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Damien ABAD      | MEP, Chairman, European Parliament Youth Intergroup, Member of Budget Committee           |
| Judith MERKIES   | MEP, European Parliament Rapporteur for the ‘Innovation Union’, Member of IT RE Committee |
| Robert JAN-SMITS | Director General, European Commission DG Research and Innovation                          |

### Call to Action: Start Changing Mindsets

The event was characterised by the youthful spirit of the audience and of the speakers themselves, who expressed their firm and abiding belief that changing the mindset of young Europeans towards innovation is the crucial first step, at home, school and work. Mr. Damian ABAD, one of the youngest members of the European Parliament, opened the event with a call to action for young people: “The easiest is to have an idea. The most difficult is to do something with it”.

Mr. Kumardev CHATTERJEE, presenting EYIF’s vision, objectives and approach emphasised, “Innovation is not just about jobs, growth and prosperity, Innovation is all about you – dreaming new ideas, realising them with your peers and driving change – Think | Do | Change”.

He was followed by his colleagues, Mr. Arno GEENS, responsible for EYIF’s Digital Platform, who presented EYIF’s three-stage process for online collaborative innovation to enable the ‘Think | Do | Change’ paradigm, and Ms. Ondina TAUT (a 2010 alumna of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme), who explained how EYIF’s proposed ‘Young Innovators Mobility’ programme would complement existing mobility programmes by matching young innovators with mentors and host organisations to work in partnership on developing their innovative ideas.

Ms. Judith Merkies continued “things are never going to be like they were before. No more life long shelter, no more people looking for you. We have to accept that we are going to another society. We have to accept that there is a duty to play our part in the society and influence it on a daily basis through social innovation. You have to innovate in order to participate. EYIF could be the movement supporting this in the European space.”

“An idea remains an idea if it’s not brought to something concrete. Do something. Don’t sit at home. Don’t wait until someone will help you. Don’t lose the spirit.” concluded Mr. Robert – Jan Smits in his message to the young innovators. He welcomed the EYIF initiative while addressing the Commission’s ongoing commitment to reducing unemployment and encouraging new start-ups all around Europe to achieve their goals, as they are the drivers of European competitiveness.



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think • do • change  
EUROPEAN YOUNG INNOVATORS FORUM

**eyIF**

“We live right now in the comfort zone. And that’s what actually keeps us back from innovating. It all starts with sharing your idea. This is what is going to transform it. It’s going to make it better once you have consulted it with other people. When that process is over, you’ll have people to support your idea and this will be transformed into sustainable business. ”, said Manuel DA SILVA, 25, a former President of the Belgian chapter of [AIESEC](#), the largest student run-organization. Turning Ideas into Actions The European Young Innovators Forum (EYIF) is focused on bridging the innovation gap between research and entrepreneurship using appropriate tools, encouraging young people to take risks and pitch their ideas on a Digital Innovation Platform and exchange knowledge and experiences in a multicultural, borderless environment with the Young Mobility Program. EYIF’s Digital Platform will enable a community across Europe of young Innovators and potentials, Academic and Industrial mentors and importantly business and funding intuitions to share ideas and knowledge to create new products and services. EYIF aims to create a unique online experience based on co-creation, co-working and social engagement.

Photos from the event are available online [here](#)  
Video interviews from the event are available [here](#)