

Press Release

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European Commission Seminar Comes To Edinburgh

The issue of 'Youth Hostels and Young Workers Mobility' will be discussed at a seminar at SYHA's new international hostel, Edinburgh Central on November 23 –24. The seminar, which is part of The European Year of Worker's Mobility (EYWM), will be of significant importance for young people offering them new opportunities to work in other countries.

2006's European Year is the first of its kind to pair the issues of employment and mobility with the aim of making Europe more competitive. It will bring together the key representatives from several International Youth Hostel Associations, in an effort to mobilise European and national-level activities that will assist in educating youngsters, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, about working across borders and changing jobs.

The opportunity to work in another EU State, as a youth hostel staff member, could make a profound difference to the future job prospects of a significant number of young people. Increased mobility of our next generation could also lead to a reduction in xenophobia and cultural stereotyping.

Chief Executive of the Scottish Youth Hostel Association, Keith Legge said "The Youth Hostelling movement, in co-operation with statutory authorities and the NGO sector has immense potential in terms of facilitating trans-national mobility for young workers."

The two-day seminar, which is funded by the European Commission, will look at the obstacles to young workers and will address how these difficulties can be overcome. The focus will be on finding practical steps to achieving greater mobility and will discuss improvements such as an internet based portal showing work opportunities at youth hostels across Europe, the development of apprenticeship/certification schemes and vocational and language training.

With the growing pressure of globalisation and the likelihood of further economic restructuring in Europe, it is expected that the flexibility of European labour markets will increase.

The objectives of the European Year for Worker's Mobility are to sensitise all to workers rights, develop good practice on issues of mobility and to expand the knowledge base on mobility flows. It is hoped that this will motivate workers to undertake a period of mobility in another Member State.

Roger Clarke, EUFED Executive Committee Member said "The enlargement of the European Union has provided new opportunities for young people to work in other countries. This broadens their horizons and helps them learn new skills, including language skills.

Many young people from all over Europe already work in Youth Hostels. The seminar will consider how we can do more, and do it better. We want more young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to experience life in another country through work in a Youth

Hostel. And we want to do better, in offering improved skills training and support, so that young people's time abroad is enjoyable and worthwhile.

The seminar, funded by the European Commission, under Action 5 of the EU Youth Programme will bring together 24 delegates from 17 national Youth Hostel Associations, like-minded organisations in Europe and young people working in Scotland together. There will also be guest speakers from the National Agency of the EU Youth Programme and from YoungScot.”

Ultimately, it can be said that the event, as part of the European Year, will contribute to the fulfilment of the EU's commitment for more and better jobs and to the creation of a true European labour market.

For more information on the European Year of Workers' Mobility and the activities being organised, visit: <http://europa.eu.int/workersmobility2006>

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NOTE TO EDITORS

Scottish Youth Hostels Association

A registered charity, the Scottish Youth Hostels Association is an important provider of hostel and accommodation services within the Scottish tourism sector.

SYHA Hostels provide a unique base for environmental education and outdoor activities. For generations we have been of service to walkers, climbers and cyclists, children and adults, in some of Scotland's most inaccessible areas - places that would not be viable accommodation sites for commercial operators.

To celebrate the 75th Anniversary in 2006 the Association are to open a flagship international standard 300-bed hostel in the heart of Edinburgh.

The Association - a member of the International Youth Hostel Federation - has hostels in 70 across Scotland, offering low-cost, high quality facilities appealing to everyone from the very young to the young at heart.

Hostels regularly attract large numbers of visitors from all over the globe, especially those who want to visit Scotland's historic, cultural and tourist attractions, or enjoy outdoor pursuits and wildlife watching.

About the Scottish Youth Hostels Association

As a not-for-profit body with charitable status, the SYHA works for the benefit of all to promote recreation within Scotland, to increase international appreciation of our country and to improve understanding of hostelling in general. To this end we are committed to offering visitors from home and abroad affordable, quality accommodation in our network of Hostels throughout the country. From cities to remote locations, crofters' cottages to castles, we offer a variety of accommodation to suit all tastes, but all with the same friendly welcome.

SYHA is a self-governing voluntary organisation, established in 1931, with over 30,000 current members across all age groups and an active committee structure. As a not-for-profit business, any surplus is invested back into the organisation, enabling us to develop the network and to ensure high standards in existing properties. Our network of over 60 Scottish Hostels includes purpose-built premises, historic buildings and country cottages - in towns and cities, and in remote, rural and island locations.

SYHA is a leading member of the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF Hostelling International) which embraces 60 countries, 4,000 Hostels worldwide and the European Union Federation of Youth Hostel Associations (EUFED).

We are the largest Hostel accommodation provider in Scotland with 4,500 beds in more than 60 locations. Around 60% of SYHA visitors are from outside Scotland, contributing to tourism income and to the economic health of both city and, crucially, fragile rural communities, particularly in the north and northwest Highlands. The SYHA is a significant local employer throughout Scotland. A professional staff of over 450 employees with very varied experience and backgrounds ensures the efficient operation of our properties.

SYHA is a founder member of the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Grading Scheme for Hostels and is the original green tourism business. Environmental care has been our philosophy since starting out in 1931. SYHA has more environmental awards under the VisitScotland Green Tourism Business Scheme than any other organisation.

We provide an extensive programme of outdoor activities for hostellers of all ages, and for those with and without previous experience of their chosen activity.

SYHA co-operates with other voluntary organisations to promote youth leisure activities and appreciation of the countryside. Many projects are carried out in partnership with local authorities, community-based groups, and charitable trusts.

In summary, our Hostels provide a unique base for environmental education and outdoor activities. For generations we have been of service to walkers, climbers and cyclists, children and adults, in some of Scotland's most inaccessible areas - places that would not be viable accommodation sites for commercial operators.

All media enquiries to: Proscot Public Relations Tel: 0131 468 7055