




Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention Merano '09

Once again

New year, new topics, new town and new people. Same project, same efforts and same mottos. The fourth Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention is taking place in Merano/Meran, hosted by the FOS Marie Curie. About seventy motivated teachers and students meet once again to discuss the future, problems, identity and similarities in the Alps. Split up in four committees, each focused on a specific question, the students are going to present their work at the general assembly in the end. But besides work and efforts, there is enough space to find new friends as well as to have some fun. Thanks to our hosts we are able to experience the life and sights of Meran, what makes the whole visit for all of us even more enjoyable.

Wednesday,
18.03.2009

temp. min.	2°C
temp. max.	18°C
morning	
afternoon	
evening	

Castle Tyrol



Castle Tyrol is a castle near Merano and gave the region of Tyrol its name. The first castle was built in 1100. The second construction phase was dated 1139/40. A third phase

of construction took place in the second half of the 13th century under Count Meinhard II. The castle was the seat of Tyrol's sovereigns until 1420, when Duke Frederick IV moved the seat to Innsbruck. Over the course of time the castle Tyrol disintegrated, in the 19th century it was restored. The frescos show many motifs of fables, religion and geometric figures. Today the Castle is used as the "South Tyrol's state museum of culture- and regional history", which also contains a falconry. In summer each day the castle offers the popular bird's eye view.

Dorf Tyrol



Dorf Tyrol is located to the North of Merano and has 2,200 inhabitants. Dorf Tyrol lays 600 meters

above sea level, in the middle of orchards and vineyards.

It has a beautiful view over Merano, Val Venosta and Val d' Adige.

Because of its Mediterranean climate and its 300 sunny days a year the village is perfect to make holidays and to relax near the Alps. In the Middle Ages Dorf Tyrol played a major part in the Tyrolean history.

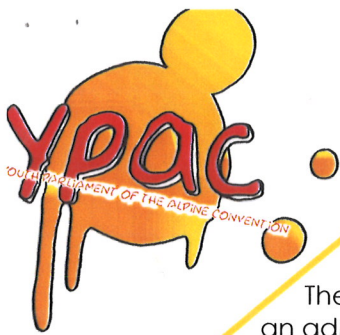
The famous "Tappeinerweg" connects Merano with Dorf Tyrol. From there a funicular goes to "Hochmut" (1,361m) and to the "Meraner Höhenweg", which belongs to the national park "Texelgruppe".

The Autonomous Province of South Tyrol

South Tyrol is an autonomous province of Italy. The capital of South Tyrol is Bolzano. The area has 7,400 km² and there live 500,000 people. In South Tyrol there are 116 communities and the president of the Province is Luis Durnwalder. It is located at the border of Austria. The highest mountain of South Tyrol is the Ortler. In South Tyrol there are three official languages: German, Italian and Ladin. Today both Italian and German have the status of co-official languages in the province of Bolzano-Bozen. Ladin is the additional official language in some municipalities.

The province of Bolzano-Bozen is one of the two provinces which make up Italy's region of *Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol*, which itself is an autonomous region. The region is renowned for its mountains, such as the Dolomites, which compose a significant section of the Alps.

to be continued ...



History

The province of Bolzano is an administrative entity, the origins of which go back to World War I. Formerly a part of the Austro-Hungarian county of Tyrol it was annexed by Italy at the end of the war and incorporated into the region *Venezia Tridentina*. The province as it exists today was created in 1926 after an administrative reorganization of the Kingdom of Italy. An autonomous status was granted after World War II, resulting ultimately in a considerable level of self-government.

Politics and government

The local government system is based upon the provisions of the Italian constitution and the Autonomy Statute of the Region *Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol*.

The province is divided into eight districts. Each district is headed by a president and two bodies called the district committee and the district council. The districts are responsible for intermunicipal disputes, roads, schools and social services such as retirement homes.

With the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence, the issue of independence, or "Freistaat" (free state), resurfaced again. Members of the local assembly such as Eva Klotz and her South Tyrolean Freedom advocate self-determination.

Defecating dogs, Heidi and hungry mouths

Denise Nyffenegger

Tuesday morning: 7.30 a.m. Sleepy faces. While the inhabitants of Merano were still asleep, we already met at the station for driving to the climbing park in Terlano. Having spent the first day at our host families, we saw each other for the first time and everyone had to exchange his experiences. Some of us are housed in the youth hostel of Merano, others enjoy their staying in a convent, but most of us live in a host family. Grandmothers offering erotic schnapps and dogs defecating on the floor were funny experiences we made on our first day. The participants, who are forced to live in a convent, worried about being forced to pray or not to get a meal during the period of fasting. Fortunately, these fears didn't come true.

Anyway, by bus we drove to the climbing park where we did different work shops and practiced our skills in climbing. We had some interesting discussions with a teacher of Merano and an expert from Switzerland. The atmosphere was supported by the cold and mysterious cave where we talked about Heidi and Klara. Even if some students were distracted by the sign "I didn't invent sex, but I perfected it", it was a great discussion about identity. Of course the highlight of our morning program was the climbing. After getting some instructions, we practiced our left-over of our very-very-ancestors. Some of us had to struggle with fear of heights and torn trousers, but all in all everybody enjoyed the sportive activity.

At the end of the morning agenda we were spoilt by delicious Italian food, although some students had to wait for a long time, as they fell in oblivion and had to hurry to catch the bus.



You should not...

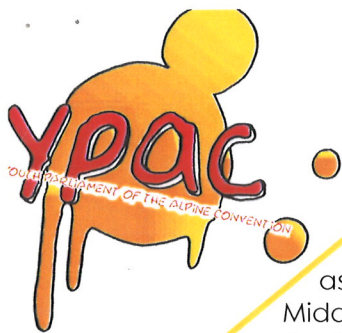
Daniel and the unimportant Others

Almost all members of the youth parliament aren't from Italy. In this country, especially in Meran, there are some things that you should try to avoid. For that reason, I came up with the idea of writing a few lines of the "don'ts in this nice town:

- Firstly, there is no need to pretend to be someone who you aren't. That includes behaving like a real Italian.

Well, I tried to do so in a café. When I reached my aim and ordered a "Latte Macchiato", I finished the issue with the obligatory "gracie" and "prego". The waiter realized immediately that I am no local and started talking English with me, although I made clear that he can speak German. But the man continued kidding me. So I just drank off and made my decision not to do that again.





- Let me talk about castles: "A castle is a defensive structure seen as one of the main symbols of the Middle Ages. Castles were places of protection from an invading enemy, a place of retreat. Roman forts and *hill forts* were the main antecedents of castles in Europe." The reason for me telling you these facts from Wikipedia is that last point. You normally have to walk up a hill. Consequently, high-heels and dress-shoes aren't advisable. Well, we had no chance, so some went home, complaining about blisters.



- Another topic is of a sad character. It was sad to pass a bagging sinner regardless, while we were wearing our costumes. I don't know if anybody spent some cents. Well I didn't and now I really think about it. But you can't undo those proceedings, hence let's see next time.

- You should not damage any car in any place, but if you scratched one in Meran, the consequences could be a bit worse. The range of automobiles is dominated by BMW, Audi and even an old guy with his Porsche, who drove down from the castle. You don't believe? Then just look on the street.

This list could be enlarged to three pages, but we went out yesterday evening, I am really tired and there are other articles to write. So keep care of yourselves here and everywhere.

Tuesday, 17th of March – Summary

C. P.



Guiding tour through Meran

After enjoying a wonderful lunch in Terlan, we went back to Meran by bus (this time nobody took the train, so some people had to stand during the trip. Fortunately the Carabinieri didn't check us).

The bus held at the railway station – as usual – while we were told to meet at the school. The next problem was that some of the delegates didn't recognize the school and went by right in front of it, so that the teachers had to call them back.

Arrived at the FOS, nobody really knew what to do, but soon we found out that we were going to enjoy a guiding tour through Meran. Our guides were members of the YPAC, who got a big applause for their efforts.

All of us really like Meran – we enjoyed the warm temperature, the promenades at the river, the Italian atmosphere and the wonderful *gélaterias* (after walking around through Meran, everybody met at the

same *gélateria*, so that we had to put together 6 tables to provide place for everybody).

We were told to meet at 4:20 p.m. at the *thermae* (were the delegation of Innsbruck had suspected their teachers to spend their morning, but actually they were working hard), because our wonderful double decker was waiting for us.

Schloss Tirol

We were a little late already when the bus held at "Dorf Tirol" after half an hour, where many of us almost fell asleep. But the most exhausting thing was still waiting for us: The tramp to the castle. Due to the dresscode, many of the girls were wearing high heels and complained strongly about getting blisters. But not only the girls had some trouble; it was quite hilarious to see our (new) Editor in Chief wearing just one shoe! So after half an hour of ordeal we were finally happy to find ourselves at Schloss Tirol – about 1 hour delayed. After another quarter of an hour without knowing what to do we finally dispersed into the different committees. Not every committee was lucky enough to get an own room where they could talk (especially a room containing chairs – one committee could be watched carrying their seats into the castle), but we could arrange a place for everybody somehow.



Official opening in Tyrol Castle Florian Kunstmann



After the first discussions in the 1st Official Committee Meeting, there was the big opening ceremony in the Knight's Hall at Tyrol Castle.

The ceremony was lead by Verena Rottensteiner, president of the YPAC. There were very important people talking to the delegates, what they expect from the students and they also talked about our chances to influence the future.

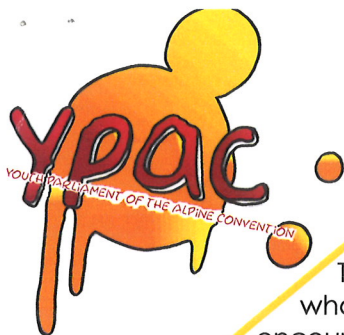
Günther Januth, Mayor of Meran, talked about his city, the conflict and similarities of German and Italian inhabitants. He is glad about the fact, that there are so many interested people in Meran who like to discuss and bring in new ideas. Unfortunately he cannot speak English, but thankfully there were two translators, so everybody could understand his impressive speech.

The next personality, who held a speech, was Christian Tommasini, a Member of the regional government of South Tirol. He talked about Tyrol Castle, representing many cultures and its history. He encouraged the students to use the opportunity to influence the politics concerning the Alps.

Dr. Peter Höllrigl was happy that Meran was possible to arrange the 4th meeting of the Alpine Convention. He mentioned a few problems which should be solved, like the traffic or the energy problem. He also presented the good advantages in the surroundings of Meran.

Dr. Veronika Rieder, headmistress of FOS Marie Curie Merano expressed her joy about her school hosting the Youth Parliament this year. She admitted that it is very important for the young generation to learn how to deal with political problems and to experience how hard it can be to find solutions, which please everybody, as well as to respect someone's other opinion. Projects like this form the community and help the students to develop specific skills. Special thanks go to the families and institutions, who agreed on hosting the guests.

All in all it was a very interesting opening, the majority of the speeches contained, that its our generation who has to decide how we will deal with problems in the future. The youth parliament is the best opportunity improve understanding of democracy and politics and to gain new experiences.



An expert speaking...

The main topic of the speech were the young people actually, the "new generation", on whom the future of the YPAC depends. The expert seemed to be very enthusiastic in encouraging us to achieve great aims and telling us about our big responsibility.

Furthermore he was talking about the publicity which is made for this project (the new website has already had 15,000 visitors!) and the process of enlarging the YPAC, which should continue properly (and this depends on us, of course).

All in all, the speech was rich in content, but though quite short – We were very glad about that, because our stomachs had already started to grumble.

Dancing performance



Before dinner we were lucky to see a breakdance performance of four students of the FOS, which was very sprightly and fresh and therefore a good change to the various speeches we had heard before. The dancing crew was honoured by big applause and the press team was happy about the

amazing photos they had taken.

Dinner

At first we were a bit disappointed, when we saw all the cheese and bacon, which was offered in the Rittersaal, because we had expected to have the possibility to eat something warm. Fortunately the cooks brought in a big pot of goulash, rice and



creamy pumpkin soup, which was delicious. (The cheese and bacon was fantastic too, of course – you can't complain about the South Tyrolean specialities.). When it was already 10 o'clock we started our hiking tour back to the double decker – just as we hadn't enough blisters yet! Furthermore it was cold and pretty dark outside and the Schloss Tirol couldn't provide torches for us – this would have been very helpful.

Fortunately we arrived fit and good humoured at the bus and nobody got lost. This was the official ending of our day program, but unofficially the day was still long – if you know what I mean.

Getting late

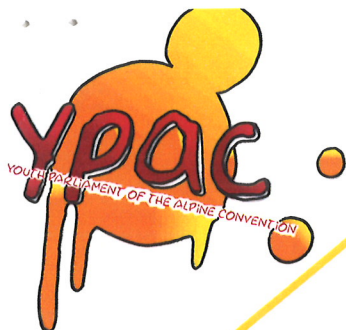
Daniel (trying to be a boulevard reporter)



It was an evening of the stars. On Tuesday, the 17th of March, several important political personalities came together to welcome the participants of the youth parliament. Some speeches were really interesting and rich in content, but you could also discover funny aspects. First of all, our VIP – Dr. Marco Onida – obviously had to work longer this day and came late. Forty-five minutes.

Unfortunately, Igor Robleck, a representative of the Alpine convention, took the same car. It demanded some organisational changes, but in the end, there were many words spoken. The speeches themselves differed a lot. Two orators who surprised were the two head teachers, who didn't want to hold their speech twice, one time German and the other time English, so two female

translators got some work. But the mysterious thing is the question, if they would have been able to hold it themselves. Let's forget about it and turn our view to silver-tongued people. Mister Ewald Galle from an Austrian Ministry trisected his monologue. His skills in the Italian, English and German language were immense. As a quid pro quo, the English of Fritz Staudigl, an important person for whole Tirol, showed his origin by a very strong Austrian accent. Worth mentioning is the fact, that all of them have a doctoral degree, but it was like everyone wanted to show: all of us could become that, too.



Our Presidency

A. Staudigl; J. Mölk

Connect the right facts with our presidents!

Childhood dream:

- a. travelling around the world
- b. horse
- c. to become an astronaut

Motto:

- d. be careful
- e. to look out for things approaching
- f. have fun

Favourite Sweets:

- g. any kind of chocolate, especially with coffee
- h. Schogetten
- i. fast melting chocolate

Age:

- j. 18
- k. 15
- l. 17

Eye colour:

- m. blue-green-orange
- n. light blue
- o. gray-blue

What's the correct answer?

1. Tim: How does your own paradise look like?

- A. beach, surfboard, waves
- B. everywhere flowers and sweets on the trees
- C. cabin in Alaska

2. Verena: What's the most romantic place for you?

- A. sunset, at the sea
- B. starry sky on the streets
- C. bonfire

3. Veronika: Which thing you can't miss in your everyday life?

- A. chocolate
- B. my favourite daily soap
- C. chewing gum

