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This bimonthly English-language newsletter covers a broad range of Foyer activities.

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Welcome to the 2013 Winter Edition of Foyer's International Newsletter

Winter is here and that calls for indoor entertainment. What could be nicer than telling stories by the fireplace? Plurilingual storytelling in a Brussels library, perhaps? If you must venture outside, Foyer's Youth Work Team can show you how to navigate through the urban jungle. And if you are a professional working with Roma in Brussels, you can navigate with the help of the Neighbourhood Files compiled by Foyer's Roma and Travellers' Service. Finally, to close off 2013, we look ahead to next year's celebration of 50 years of Moroccan and Turkish Migration to Belgium.

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A Thrice-Told Tale: Plurilingual Storytelling

All children enjoy being read to, but not all children have equal access to books or are equally familiar with them. To stimulate children and parents to read together, Regional Integration Centre Foyer organized a number of reading sessions in Dutch-language Brussels libraries. The sessions were a success.

In one library, located in the Molenbeek municipality, 29 children listened to the story of Pirate Lars by Christine Nöstlinger, which was read in Dutch, English and Berber. The audience, including seven Afghan children with undocumented parents currently staying in the Beguinage Church, loved the story. The different languages proved to be no barrier to enjoying the story. Rather, hearing the story in various languages enriched the children's experience, while also

giving participants a sense of recognition of their mother tongue and identity. Afterwards the children took part in a cookery workshop based on the story and could explore the library collection.

This plurilingual storytime was part of an interculturalization process that Foyer started in 2013 with five Brussels libraries. The library of Saint-Gilles, for instance, ran a similar story session, but opted for Chris Haughton's picture book A Bit Lost, the story of which was told, sung and acted out in Dutch, Berber and Spanish.

'Neighbourhood files' document the situation of Brussels Roma

As part of the "Roma-stewards" project, a Flemish urban policy initiative, Foyer's Roma and Travellers Service carried out a number of surveys and interviews in four Brussels neighbourhoods in order to draw up a profile of the East European Roma living there. They spoke with local residents, services and authorities. The study aimed at analysing the situation in terms of problems, challenges and potential.
Foyer's four Roma-stewards interviewed Roma families of different nationalities and backgrounds about their socio-economic situation and their relationship with the neighbourhood that they live in and/or spend their time in. Apart from one-to-one interviews, four focus groups with Roma representatives were organized. The stewards also visited local services and talked to them about their contact with the local Roma families, and any problems or potential concerning the Roma living in the neighbourhood.

They also asked in which areas the local actors could use the stewards' support.
These turned out to be:

- Facilitating communication and cooperation between municipal prevention services and Roma families (e.g. mediation in complex public nuisance files);
- Stimulating local social cohesion by
- Increasing Roma participation in local activities and events and
- Improving neighbourhood relations between Roma and non-Roma;
- Improving professionals' knowledge on Roma issues through information training;
- Sending children to school and preventing early school-leaving.

The files were published in the autumn of 2013 as a support tool for social work professionals and other local actors working with Roma families of the area.

Looking Ahead, Looking Back: Celebrating 50 Years of Moroccan and Turkish Migration to Belgium in 2014

In the 1960s, Belgium began recruiting Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants to work in the coal mines and the heavy industry. Bilateral agreements were signed with Turkey and Morocco in 1964.

The leaflet 'Living and Working in Belgium' aimed to convince prospective migrants, encouraging them to come to Belgium – and to bring their families over as well, which they were allowed to do after a one-month stay:

"We recommend that you bring to Belgium all your clothes and in particular your underwear, warm clothes (knitted sweaters, coats) and raincoats. For the children, pack baby clothes and baby linen, and even the children's clothes that have become too small. They will come in handy if another child is born in your family."

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the bilateral agreements with both Turkey and Morocco

and the start of the large recruitment campaign. The first generation of migrants now possesses a wealth of what could be considered 'living heritage' in the form of memories. Foyer wants to help catalogue this heritage and has teamed up with *Geheugen Collectief*, an Antwerp-based centre for historical research. Together, we set out in search of interesting life histories of the Moroccans and Turks that first set foot in Brussels in the 1960s. We encourage younger generations to ask their (grand)parents about their earliest memories of Belgium. This collection of stories should result in a print publication and a travelling exhibition.

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