

ANNUAL REPORT

2013



European Youth for Action

Introduction

The year 2013 has been turbulent for EYFA. Looking back, we can say that thanks to the engagement of enthusiastic individuals the EYFA office made it through the financial crises and lots of positive changes have occurred in the EYFA headquarters. A new staff-member has joined, two volunteers started and the quantity of yearly activities are increasing. After three years in Berlin, EYFA can not imagine to be anywhere else.

With EYFA in transformation, 2013 hasn't brought the awaited changes for European Youth. Unemployment and rising living costs continue, while more repressive responses to protest could be observed throughout Europe. The Gezi park protests in Istanbul signaled the unhappiness of youth groups closer to home. Politicians complain about a lack of youth engagement and participation in democratic processes, while thousand of young people raise their voice in the streets.

In times as this, our work continues to support young people as actors of social change. Trainings for self-empowerment and skill-sharing platforms hopes to add sustainability and depth to European youth activism, especially in places or situations where it is hardest to express oneself.

2013 finally brought us a more transparent structure for our European network of trainers: The skill-share portal has been born and provides young people access to materials like guides, brochures, workshops and contact to trainers. Beside that, we coordinated a web-based project providing materials for anti-racist education in Eastern Europe. EYFA facilitated a Youth Grassroots Forum in Kiev; organized the Act now for Roma Youth gathering and an anti-gold mine skill-share camp in Rosia Montana, Romania.

For the next year, we will have an even stronger focus on exclusion by supporting spaces of self-empowerment and solidarity towards refugees in Europe with two international youth exchanges in France and Serbia with refugees and solidarity activists as well as a training on sustainable solidarity activism. Also, EYFA will carry out one youth gathering in Spain on community organizing.

1. What is EYFA?

1.1. The Eyfa story

EYFA (European Youth For Action) developed from a tour that was initiated by a Swedish/German group in 1986 to save the old forests in Europe: then named European Youth Forest Action. From these beginnings, EYFA has developed into a network of individuals, grassroots organisations and collectives working to transform local and international communities in their approach to environmental and social, political and economic positions. EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential.

EYFA focuses particularly on youth initiated activities and projects. EYFA projects are mainly for young people, giving them the opportunity to act and encouraging them to be active on local and international levels. A special focus is put on providing access for groups to take part in international grassroots movements. EYFA always puts effort into including youth from all corners of the continent, with different social, geographical and cultural backgrounds.

EYFA's organisational structure consists of a Europe-wide network of grassroots groups, an office, and an advisory board.

Picture...

1.2. What does EYFA do?

EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential. The international office located in Amsterdam coordinates EYFA's activities through administrative and communication functions and being the network's contact point for sharing local information.

EYFA support and encourages grassroots projects and initiatives in the following ways:

- Organising exchanges, seminars, trainings, network gatherings, projects & actions.
- Promoting innovative ways of working in the field of social and environmental activism (ie: consensus decision-making, art and activism, free and open-source software, etc).
- Disseminating call outs and information on environmental and social justice issues.
- Giving advice, knowledge and support in activities such as assisting with fund-raising, application writing, planning and implementing projects and networking.

1.3. Who does EYFA support?

Grassroots groups combating xenophobia, homo-, trans- and queerphobia, racism, fascism, sexism, ableism and all other forms of exploitation and injustice.

Grassroots groups promoting cultural diversity and the rights of women, LGBTIQ, indigenous, migrants and workers.

Grassroots groups combating environmental degradation, ecosystem destruction and animal exploitation and promoting biological diversity.

EYFA gives activists an international perspective, but it is very important to us that we keep our focus on the grassroots of social and ecological change. It is characteristic of EYFA that projects initiated by EYFA become independent sustainable long term projects.

1.4. EYFA Vision

EYFA's main aim is to encourage young people's initiative and autonomy. EYFA strives for a world based on social, environmental and economic justice, in which people feel empowered to act and raise their voices on the issues that affect their lives. EYFA works to challenge the current dominant social and economic system while developing new ways of organising our communities based on environmental and social sustainability.

Towards this we have three core objectives (Capacity Building; Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes; East-West Cooperation) and two priority areas (Environmental Justice; Exclusion) to guide us.

1.4.1. EYFA Objectives

EYFA has three core objectives at the centre of everything we do:

- ▣ *Capacity building: To help groups develop the skills and knowledge to gain access to funding, training and the tools to articulate, debate and enact their ideas.*
- ▣ *Civic engagement and participatory processes: To support grassroots groups to critically engage with already existing decision-making processes and politics, and also to develop egalitarian and participatory alternatives.*
- ▣ *East-West cooperation: To develop closer cooperation through joint initiatives and the sharing of ideas, histories and experiences amongst grassroots groups working in Eastern and Western Europe.*

1.4.2. EYFA Priorities

Over the course of EYFA's existence the network has focused its energy on a wide variety of projects all across Europe. Out of these projects patterns have emerged that point to some of EYFA's priorities. Developed by the network, office and Board, and re-evaluated each year at network strategy meetings, these priorities provide focus for EYFA's work. While we prioritise these two areas, we continue to offer support to groups whose work does not fall into one of these categories.

■ Environmental Justice

EYFA's environmental justice perspective is based on the understanding that most environmental problems are also a question of social and economic injustice. Socially sustainable and just communities go hand in hand with environmentally sound ways of living. EYFA's many climate justice, energy and environmental projects have aimed to draw the links between economic growth-obsession and the exploitation and destruction of our natural and human environment as well as excluding large populations from access to resources.

■ Exclusion

Social, cultural, institutional or individual beliefs and practices exist which privilege some human beings and exclude, by subordination and oppression others, based on attributes of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class or caste, among many other distinctions. EYFA believes that social and economic exclusion are tied into histories of patriarchy, colonialism and imperialism, as well as profit and power. These experiences have at times given rise to equally oppressive and excluding practices and policies. If we are to create a world free from hierarchy, exploitation and oppression that instead respects the autonomy and dignity of all human beings, the way these forces interact must be recognised and addressed. With our focus on supporting Eastern European groups, our current work includes many groups working to tackle issues of institutional exclusion, gender inequality, fascism, nationalism, racism and homophobia.

1.5. EYFA Structure

1.5.1. Decision-making

Decisions are made during different meetings throughout the year. During these meetings the following is discussed: old and new projects, focus of the network, strategies and future cooperation plans. Though we make use of on-line meetings and decision making tools, face-to-face network meetings are still highly valued and take place alongside all EYFA events. EYFA board meetings are organized once a year at the EYFA office in Berlin. The board has better insight in the works of the office this way and with everything at hand it heightens practicality.

All organizational decisions are made by reaching consensus. The consensus is a decision-making process that fully utilizes the resources of a group, seeks the agreement of most participants, and resolves or mitigates the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. Consensus is also used during all EYFA meetings, projects and events. EYFA functions on the belief that people in a group will relate to each other in a much more fair and productive way if everyone's contribution is considered and is equal to everyone else's. Consensus requires use of communication hand signals during meetings and decision making processes, and, sometimes, presence of trained facilitators and mediators.

1.5.2. EYFA Office

EYFA has one international office, located in Berlin. The office coordinates EYFA's activities, including administrative and financial tasks, as well as the communication functions of the network. This includes producing the EYFA newsletter, acting as an information point for organisations in the network and as a communication liaison between local and international projects.

The office is organised collectively and non-hierarchically, meaning that all staff and volunteers are expected to take an equal role in day-to-day tasks and decision-making processes. From watering the plants to writing applications, tasks are shared and rotated amongst all of those in the office.

The office also acts as a 'training ground' for young people to develop various skills, such as project coordination, fund-raising and bookkeeping.

EYFA does not require office staff to arrive already equipped with all the necessary knowledge and experience to carry out their tasks. Rather, the goal is to be a place where young people can work to develop skills in a supportive environment, learning-by-doing. It is normal for staff and volunteers to work in the office for 1–3 years, before moving on to share their new skills with other groups and projects.

1.5.3. EYFA Advisory Board

The 'Advisory Board' oversees the work of the office. The Board provides support and advice to the office – particularly in terms of strategy and finances.

Currently, there are three Board members, two of them used to be part of the office team. In both the office and the Board, effort is made to maintain balanced representation amongst the different corners of Europe.

1.5.4. EYFA Network

EYFA is a network that consists of individuals, collectives and organisations from all around Europe. There are no membership rules or fees required to join the EYFA network – EYFA is open to all current grassroots and alternative youth movements focusing on environmental, social justice and alternative economics and related issues.

The EYFA network is primarily used to share information, skills and resources. It connects groups working on similar topics around Europe, and groups wanting to share experiences or gain training from one another. The network acts as a way to connect local issues and struggles transnationally. In particular, the network works to connect groups in east and west Europe, building solidarity amongst different regions.

The EYFA Network has two permanent working groups, Network Strategy and East–West, which help the international office in Amsterdam identify the needs of groups in the network and decide where and on what issues upcoming gatherings should focus. This ensures that EYFA consistently works towards its aims of capacity building, participatory processes and East–West networking. For each EYFA project a temporary working group is also created to support the logistics and develop the content of the project. Sometimes these groups continue working together after the project's completion.

Typically, the network has one or two meetings each year where the priorities and strategy of the network are decided upon and projects and activities are developed. Between meetings, members can stay in touch via mailing lists and online meetings. Like all EYFA meetings, decisions are made on a consensus basis.

1.6. Partner Organizations

- Austria: Memfarado
- Belgium: Vredesactie; Catapa
- Germany: AKKU; Out of Action; Babel; Werkstatt für Aktion und Alternativen (WAA); New Yorck im Bethanien; KOKO – Kommunikationskollektiv.
- Hungary: The City is for All
- Poland: Inicjatywa Antynuklearna; Wegajty Theatre
- Poland: Spina
- Romania: Asociata DIY; Asociata Re.Generation
- Russia: ECOperestroika
- Slovenia: Art Center
- Spain: EcoDharma; Col·lectiu Eco-Actiu;
- Turkey: LAMDA
- United Kingdom: The Forest; Activist Mediation Network; Seeds for Change
- Netherland: ASEED

1.7. Thanks To

We would like to thank the Council of Europe's Youth Foundation, the European Commission's Youth in Action Program, ASTA Freie Universität Berlin, Xminy, Lush foundation, Haella, Alert and private donors for their financial support in 2013 without which it would not have been possible to carry out as many activities as we did.

2. Projects

2.1. European Voluntary Service Projects

2.1.1. Bi-lateral EVS: Art & Development

In 2012 a Dutch volunteer has been send to the ART Center in Slovenia to contribute to a project on "Art and Development".

The project ended in October 2013, as our volunteer stated the project was a great success for her: "Overall, the project was a great success for me and for Art Center, particularly because, besides from my ability to work on things that fall within my educational background and desired future career, I enjoyed the kind of life (in a rural area), where one lives side by side with fellow volunteers, artists, guests and staff in an intense manner, to the fullest."

The volunteer was involved in developing components of the program of the Art Center such as art-workshops, exhibitions, concerts, and other. Furthermore she was active on all levels from communicating with the artists to promotion strategies.

2.1.2. Multilateral EVS: Fighting precarity & exclusion

This year EYFA hosted again two volunteers in the office in Berlin. One coming from Spain and one from Slovenia. Both a great help in the project and are doing a really good job. They have organized end of November a ten day skill-share meeting in a seminar house close to Berlin. For this activity they managed to get co-funding and invited trainers from different countries, who together worked on the creation of training materials to fight precarity and exclusion.

Those where dedicated to the skillsharing.net website, that will be launched in 2014. In the second half of their EVS year they will concentrate a bit more on content work, set up a blog and research the situation of young workers in Europe. They want to organize a reading circle and do monthly info-events. Of course they will also continue to participate and enrich our project activities.

The volunteers have learned to coordinate project from the beginning to the end in an non-hierarchic environment. As well as to research and create materials on a specific topic, to develop and to give workshops.

3. Meetings

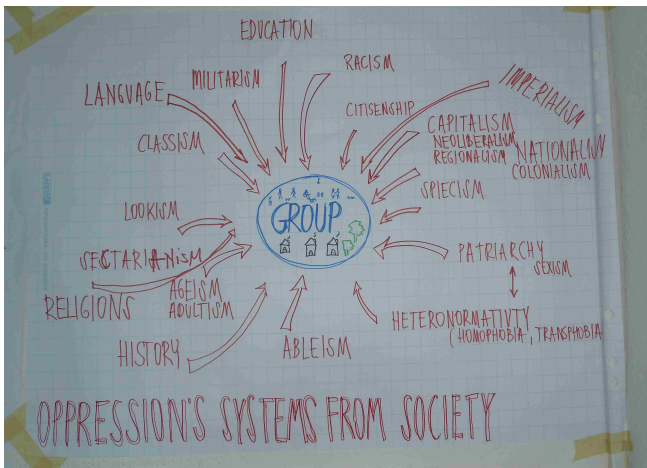
3.1. Grassroots Forum



During 7 days in the end of April, 45 participants attended this Forum. It brought together many activists working on various topics in different corners of Europe. Often we forget how much our challenges connect with the ones of other people abroad and the empowering potential of networking and alliances. However,

this forum has proved that through the collaboration and exchange among equals we can achieve more and renew our inspiration to work for a better world.

3.2 European Training Assembly



This self-organised training week on anti-oppression in grassroots movements brought together diverse training collectives and activist trainers from the EYFA network for skill-sharing, developing our training practice, strengthening grassroots movements and critically evaluate the tools we use. This week supported the emerging online skillshare portal and strengthened cooperation between activist trainers around the Europe.

3.2. Act Now for Roma Youth

This youth exchange in Ukraine explored the past and present discriminatory practices within Europe and the positions adopted by various European institutions, with a focus on marginalization and stigmatization of Roma individuals and communities; participants shared experiences and strategies of challenging discrimination; developed critical perspectives on how to strengthen youth movements and learned relevant skills for doing so. There was skill-sharing workshops, like community organizing, campaigning, facilitation and consensus, lobbying and non-violent communication.

3.4 Short-Term Skills for Long-Term Campaigning



Between the 20th and 29th of September 2013, EYFA organized a skill-share Camp that took place in Rosia Montana, Romania. This was a skill-sharing camp for young activist willing to empower themselves to be active for social and environmental justice. About 30 activist from 11

different countries attended trainings to skill-up for long-term Project. Furthermore the youngsters networked, exchanged knowledge and made up new plans for the future.

3.5. EYFA strategy meeting

The annual EYFA strategy meeting took place in September 2013. The discussions turned around the strategical focus of the network, mutual support and project Planning for 2015. Together with our partners we agreed to have a stronger focus on our priority environmental justice again.

3.6. Advisory Council on Youth

Since March 2012 EYFA has been a member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

The Advisory Council is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks who work together with government representatives to co-manage the youth sector of the Council of Europe. This involves setting priorities for the youth sector and making recommendations for future budgets and

programmes. These proposals are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making body.

Shannon Stephens has successfully ended her mandated after a two-year term and focuses particularly on the European Youth Foundation's Programming Committee on Youth, the project Combating Hate Speech Online, and the implementation of the Roma Youth Action Plan. EYFA has been reelected as an AC-Member and Alice Hamdi will take the responsibility for the next two year mandate.

4. Network Actions

4.1 Good night macho pride, crimea, ukraine

A feminist camp took place at the sea side in Crimea (13-17.07.2013). It hosted activists from Ukraine, Russia, Poland and Germany. During the forum there were many workshops, discussions and presentations. Here are some topics they tackled: self-defence, zine-making, consensus decision making, anti-oppression within activist circles. There were also some skill-shares and exchange of expe

4.2 manifa, wroclaw, poland

On 10.03.2013 Inicjatywa 8 Marca collective organised a feminist demo in Wroclaw. This year the main motto of this year's action was "Women pay for the crisis". There were bulletins and info-leaflets available during the march and other connected events. They provided information about social consequences of organisation of UEFA Euro 2012 in Wroclaw. Gigantic costs of this football event caused major cuts in financing of kindergardens and public transport in Wroclaw.

4.3 wroclaw dla wszystkich bez nienawisci, wroclaw, poland

On 23.03. in Wroclaw a collective of different activist groups organised a parade "Wroclaw for all. without hate". This march of

around 700 people was a reaction to a rising wave of right-wing violence in the city. One of the reasons to organise this parade was a nazi attack at a wagenplatz that happened half a year earlier. Many people showed up also to show their support for the Roma community in Wrocław.

4.4 Q alternatywie, queer festival, wrocław, poland

Between 4 and 6.10 a small group of activists organised a queerfest in Wrocław. The reason to organise such an event was to create space alternative to hetero- or homonormativity. The festival promoted queer art (film, photography, performance art), safer-space party culture, discussions about non-normative literature, sexuality and grassroots activism. On top of that the group supported the organisation of Wrocław March for Equality.

4.5 Zrenjanin Antifascist Festival, Serbia

This self-organised anti-fascist festival promotes the struggle against all forms of exploitation and domination and enables better networking among activists at the Balkan level and further development of common initiatives and struggles. Besides music, there are discussions and a bookfair.

4.6 New York im Bethanien, Germany



The EYFA office is based in the house project New Yorck im Bethanien, which organises affordable meals in people's kitchens, benefits in solidarity with diverse social and ecological struggle and provides space for alternative initiatives.

4.7 Burghfield Disarmament Camp, UK

Resistance camp that opposed the continued existence of the Trident nuclear weapons system with two weeks of non-violent disarmament actions; skill-sharing sessions on action planning and practice; how to run legal support; radical music and song and much more.

4.8 Climate Action Camp, Belgium

During this climate action camp activists came together to share experiences, live together peacefully and sustainably, and self-organise to make plans and carry out actions: a week full of action, exciting workshops, relaxation and vegan food.

4.9 Direct Action training Lithuania

With a bit of training and experience, direct action can turn into a necessary tool for positive social change. One of our partners, along with a former EYFA staff, organised last summer a week-long training in the Lithuanian countryside focusing on direct action. Participants from 15 different European countries participated. It's worth mentioning that some of them came from Lithuania and Latvia, countries where EYFA hasn't got many contacts yet.

4.10 Calais Migrant Solidarity Network



In the July 2013 a house was open for women and children without papers in Calais by some activist of the Calais Migrant Solidarity network. The squat Victor Hugo serve as a safe space for those who are especially vulnerable to the precarious situation. Activist do door shifts, give

workshop and organise food for the house.

On the 28th of December the Calais Migrant Solidarity network organized a network meeting to talk about the past five years and the future of the Migrant support.

4.11 Ecotopia Biketour



Ecotopia Biketour is an informal international group of social justice activists, environmentalists and interested people who cycle together across different part of Europe each year, joining up with grass routes campaigns, NGO's and social movements related to a consensually chosen theme.

In 2013, the tour cycled 3500km from Berlin to Romania, exploring the themes political & conceptual borders; Refugee struggles; Roma discrimination; Land rights; Gentrification; Political corruption; Racism; Rights of minorities; and social and ecological justice with the over 40 projects we joined thorough Eastern Europe for two and a half months on the open road.

5. EYFA Media.

5.2. On-Line

5.2.1 Eyfa website

Some preparation for the new EYFA Website has been done and we are looking forward to launched the results in 2014. The new website will be easier to administrate and can be updated by the whole collective. It will receive a complete new design and a modern interface. We also hope that it will give a better overview for the users.

5.2.2 Anti-racist toolkit



In November, the Anti-racist toolkit Ignite! Was launched. Since then it can be found under: antiracist-toolkit.net

There have been many resource guides, toolkits and education materials produced to assist

with anti-discrimination learning and action. So why make this website and Toolkit?

A key principle in the creation and selection of materials for this toolkit was the use of an anti-oppression framework based on a structural and historical approach. In Europe, much of the education (both formal and non-formal) about differences amongst people, discrimination and prejudice focus on the individual. Sure, individual attitudes and behaviours need to change, but people are products of history, rooted in economic and other systems that makes us very unequal in our access to power, legitimacy and resources.

In creating this Toolkit, we wanted to explore how the concepts and ideas relate to a central-east European context (Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania in particular) and adapt them where required

5.2.3 Skill-Share Portal



The Skill-Share Portal (skillshare.net) is the result of intense work of several Trainers-collective from all over Europe.

This website serves as an easy-to-access portal to resource guides and workshop modules that are made by and for activist groups across Europe in topics like consensus and facilitation, strategy, anti-oppression and direct action. There is an amazing amount of knowledge and skills in activist networks around the world. With this project we want to support skill-sharing processes among groups and hopes to make these as accessible as possible for groups that are often not connected to these networks. Thereby there are resources and modules in diverse languages and from diverse contexts.

5.3. Publications

5.3.1 Booklet: Transformative Community Organizing

This manual for Community Organizing is the result of several workshops that have taken place during the SkillShare Camp in Romania in autumn 2013. A lot of different

practices and points of views have been discussed. Nevertheless we all had one thing in common: We as active young people understand the local scale as our battleground for social change. We want to transform society as a whole, but understand that we need to transform the

community first. We are recognizing the importance of community work, often

neglected in favor of campaigns that are detached from the ones threatened by the issue.

This manual is a combination of ready-made concepts spiced with our own experiences and ideas about the practice and theory of Community Organizing. It can be copied, distributed and amended by everyone who might make use of it, if it is kept free of charge and open to Transform for third parties again.

5.9.2 Antiracist school manual: Shifting the perspective

The Roma culture is coded either as a culture that "borrows" all its elements from the culture of the majority, or it is exoticised as being characterised by a primitive "authenticity." The histories of Roma women and men who manage to break through the wall of systemic racism and manage to make their voices heard are coded as being the exceptions, as being rare examples of intelligence and willpower. They are also presented as the proof for the legitimacy of meritocracy, of the neoliberal rhetoric which declares that anyone can succeed in life, no matter their economic or social background and, in consequence, anyone who fails is completely responsible for their failure.

From the position of educators that belong to the privileged non-Roma majority, the feminist collective of artists h.arta along with other Romanian activists, present this school manual divided into 7 parts:

- Introduction
- About reproductive control
- About neoliberal hypocrisy
- Living conditions
- Discrimination and exoticization
- About nationalism and the Roma-Gypsy dispute
- Glossary

The whole content can be found under antiracist-toolkit.net

6. Financial Overview

EYFA 2013 Financial Overview – Expenses

Personnel Costs

Employees (full & part-time)	7,630.44
EVS Volunteers	4,792.00
Consultants and Freelancers	1,614.94

14,037.38

Office costs

Rental and Associated Costs	1,200.00
Communication Costs (telephone, internet, mail)	365.07
Copy and Print Costs	91.07
Office Materials	96.20
Equipment and Maintenance	176.50

1,928.84

Projects

Act Now: Youth for Roma Rights	11,928.20
Toolkit on Exclusion	13,400.47
Resources for Change	10,838.21
Grassroots Activist Youth Forum	21,860.70
Short-term Skill-up for Long-term Projects	24,129.59
Expression vs Aggression	5,594.22

87,751.39

Other Costs

Financial Costs (bank costs, chamber of commerce, interest)	252.74
Other Costs (board meeting, staff travel)	800.26

1,053.00

Total costs EYFA 2013	EUR 104,770.61
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EYFA 2013 Financial Overview – Income

EACEA Grants

EVS: bilateral 2013-2014	4,792.00
Act Now: Youth for Roma Rights	10,915.20
EVS sending fee	560.00

TOTAL

16,267.20

European Youth Foundation Grants

European Youth Foundation Admin Grant	11,785.00
Toolkit on Exclusion	9,000.00
Resources for Change	7,000.00
Grassroots Activist Youth Forum	14,574.00
Short-term Skill-up for Long-term Projects	16,000.00
Expression vs Aggression	5,500.00

TOTAL

63,859.00

Other income

Participation fees & fundraising: Act Now: Youth for Roma Rights	1,013.00
Participation fees & fundraising: Toolkit on Exclusion	3,976.40
Participation fees & fundraising: Resources for Change	3,774.40
Participation fees & fundraising: Grassroots Activist Youth Forum	6,821.92
Participation fees & fundraising: Short-term Skill-up for Long-term Projects	8,073.93
Participation fees & fundraising: Expression vs Aggression	94.22
Donations & gifts	1,000.00
Credit Interest	520.82

TOTAL	25,274.69
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Total Income EYFA 2013	EUR 105,400.89
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Balance EYFA 2013

Balance EYFA 2013	EUR 630.28
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