

**Press release**

*not to be released before 19.00 h*

**The future of Europe in seven comics  
Winner of “Animate Europe 2015” awarded in Brussels today**

**Brussels, 14.10.2015**

German student Nicole Knötig wins 2nd International Comics Competition

The second edition of the International Comics Competition “Animate Europe”, organized by the Brussels office of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, has drawn to a close. The German student Nicole Knötig was awarded the first prize for her comic “The Union”.

Knötig tells the story of the split-up of the European Union in a rich Northern and a poor Southern part. Her story expresses the concerns that many Europeans share these days: The migration crisis, the financial crisis, the contrast in the standard of living between North and South, the growing Euroscepticism as well as the eternal and universal pursuit of happiness. According to the jury, “Knötig manages to enthrall the reader in her eight-page story. We would love the comic to continue.” Knötig convinced the jury with her well-rounded concept and the strong characters. “Her story sticks and makes you think.” Knötig, who is a self-taught artist, successfully asserted herself against professional comic artists.

The second prize went to Bue Bredsdorff (Denmark) for his poem in comic form „Europe 2065“, and Domingo Pozanco Torrejón (Spain) came third with his “Dream for Europe”. The other finalists were Sara Ferreira and Gisela Martins (Portugal, „Boundless“), Eva Hilhorst (Netherlands, „After the tempest“), Maran Hrachyan (Armenia, „Europe is a Human Being“) and Jenny Robins (Great Britain, „EuropeLand“).

“Our aim was to find out how artists, how young people see the future of Europe”, says Hans H. Stein, Director of the Brussels office of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. “We see the comics as food for thought and discussion about Europe. It struck us that the artists do voice fears, but still hope for a solution of the problems in a European framework. At the same time, we wish to encourage young comics artists to pursue their dream and support them.”

The international expert jury selected seven finalists from 60 proposals coming from 23 countries. This year’s jury consisted of Willem De Graeve (Director Belgian Com-

ic Strip Centre, Brussels), Paul Gravett (Comics Expert, London), Andreas C. Knigge (Comics Expert, Hamburg, Kreta), Birgit Weyhe (Comics Artist, Hamburg) und Valérie Constant (Apropos Agency, Namur).

The comics are published in the anthology „Europe Fast Forward“. The exhibition will tour in Europe and the U.S. next year. More than 40.000 visitors saw the exhibition of the 2013 competition „Animate Europe“ and more than 10.000 books found their readers.

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**The finalists and their stories:**

Nicole Knötig (Germany): The Union

About the longing for a better life and the split-up of the European Union

Bue Bredsdorff (Denmark): Europe 2065

A poem about the continuity of the planet even after a troubled history

Domingo Pozanco Torrejón (Spain): A Dream for Europe

Towards a Europe where “Lampedusa Station“ is a symbol for hope

Sara Ferreira & Gisela Martins (Portugal): Boundless

A visitor from outer space learns about the qualities of a modern European Union, united in diversity

Eva Hillhorst (Netherlands): After the Tempest

A tale of environmental disasters, short-sighted policy, concerted effort and the triumph of reason

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Maran Hrychan (Armenia): Europe is a Human Being

About the longing for European values and answers to homophobia and racism

Jenny Robbins (Great Britain): EuropeLand

A future where Europe is an amusement park featuring all major European traditions

Contact:

Christina Brunnenkamp, [christina.brunnenkamp@fnst.org](mailto:christina.brunnenkamp@fnst.org), +32 (0)2 282 09 32

Caroline M. Haury, [caroline.haury@fnst.org](mailto:caroline.haury@fnst.org), +32 (0) 2 282 09 37