



**WORK PLAN OF THE  
EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM  
2009-2010**

ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS, 13-15 NOVEMBER 2008

## CONCEPT

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is a pan-European platform of youth organisations working in the fields of youth policy and youth work development. The YFJ focuses its work on European youth policy matters, whilst through engagement on the global level it is enhancing the capacities of its members and raising awareness of global interdependence. In its daily work the YFJ represents the views and opinions of young people in all relevant policy areas and promotes the cross-sector nature of youth policy towards a variety of institutional actors. The principles of sustainable development – in its environmental, social and economic poverty dimensions - are mainstreamed in the work of the YFJ.

The European Youth Forum bases its work on the following values:

- Participation;
- The empowerment of young people;
- Equality, gender equality and equal opportunities;
- Inclusiveness;
- Peace;
- Intercultural understanding;
- Democracy;
- Respect for human rights;
- Solidarity with all young people;
- Diversity and mutual respect;
- Global responsibility.

### **Vision of the European Youth Forum**

Be the voice of young people in Europe, where young people are considered as equal citizens, and are supported and encouraged to achieve their fullest potential as citizens of the World.

### **Mission of the European Youth Forum**

The European Youth Forum is a platform of youth organisations, which represents and advocates for the needs and interests of all young people in Europe, through their positive and active participation.

## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the YFJ Strategic Priorities 2007-2012 is ensured through two-year Work Plans. While the Strategic Priorities and previously adopted policy documents serve as a framework and context for the work of the YFJ, and will continue to give direction to relevant advocacy and lobby work, this Work Plan seeks to focus the implementation of the Strategic Priorities during the 2009-2010 period, by outlining key projects. These projects will have to employ a set of coordinated measures and tools to reach the objectives set and therefore need to be adequately resourced. By structuring advocacy and lobby work through activities based on longer lasting projects – and founded upon the adopted policies and Strategic Priorities - a better and longer term planning of resources and a more efficient use of the capacity of the YFJ should be facilitated.

## EDUCATION

### **Focus: A holistic approach to education in Europe**

The opening up of the formal education system to other learning providers, such as Youth NGOs and to non-formal education (NFE) methodologies, was identified as an objective under the European Youth Forum Strategic Priorities for the 2007-2012 period. Focusing on the specific aim – a holistic approach - will further the realisation of the other aims identified in this area within the Strategic Plan: valuing NFE as a dynamic and inclusive educational method; promoting equal access for all to quality life long learning opportunities; and considering youth mobility and exchanges as an integral step for developing intercultural awareness and understanding. This is in line with what the YFJ advocates with respect to Global Education<sup>1</sup>.

More specifically, this means that in 2009-2010, further efforts will be made towards the better recognition of NFE and of youth organisations as providers of this. The practice of annual dialogues with other relevant actors for the recognition of NFE should lead to the development of a long-term strategy and, in addition, the quality guidelines for NFE<sup>2</sup> should be consistently promoted and further evaluated; this should be done

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<sup>1</sup> 0007-08, Policy Paper on Global Education, adopted by the COMEM meeting held in Castelldefels on 3 May 2008

<sup>2</sup> 0009-08, Policy Paper on Non-Formal Education, adopted by the COMEM meeting held in Castelldefels on 3 May 2008

through the establishment of a framework for indicating and assuring quality in organised non-formal education schemes, constituting the YFJ's main project in the area of Education in this period.

## YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT

**Focus: To contribute to the establishment and/or development of National Youth Councils in all EU countries and South East Europe; strong cooperation with other regions in the world**

The YFJ strategy for youth work development (YWD) focuses on two main pillars – one being the provision of tailored organisational support to current Member Organisations, supporting and advocating for greater and more reliable resources to ensure the full independence of Youth NGOs, and supporting their continuous partnership with governments in Council of Europe member states, institutions, and other stakeholders in the youth field. Through this, the YFJ will be able to better serve the needs of its MOs and take steps to further the sustainability of youth organisations and youth councils; their sustainability is a crucial factor for their contribution to the development of society, providing non-formal education, training and services to young people, and to contributing to conflict prevention and post-conflict resolution. The second pillar of the YWD strategy is to support potential new members. In 2009-2010, the YFJ will clearly assume this objective through contributing to the establishment and/or development of National Youth Councils in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Turkey and Serbia.

With regards to Global Youth Work Development, the promotion of greater democracy, human rights, solidarity and global co-operation, on the one hand, and participation in partnerships for the full realisation of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, on the other, will remain the main guidelines for YFJ work in 2009-2010. As such, sustaining and facilitating political cooperation processes at the regional levels with Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Euro-Med Region and the Arab Region by involving relevant actors and stakeholders from both civil society and institutions, together with the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations and our partners in the Global Cooperation Coordination Committee<sup>3</sup>, will be the main purpose of the YFJ regarding

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<sup>3</sup> Asian Students Association, Asian Youth Council, Caribbean Federation of Youth, Latin America Youth Forum, Pacific Youth Council, Panafrican Youth Union;

inter-regional cooperation. In the coming two years the YFJ will proactively focus on Africa.

Facilitation of greater youth mobility will remain as one of the main aims for the YFJ in 2009-2010. Our work in this area will focus on achieving an end to visa requirements for young people participating in youth activities within Council of Europe member states.

## PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICY MAINSTREAMING

**Focus: Implementation of a European policy framework for participation; the European Parliamentary elections; a strong youth agenda for the EU, CoE and UN.**

Participation and Youth Policy Mainstreaming are at the very core of the mission of the European Youth Forum. This overarching aim will be achieved through continuous work with relevant partners, especially in the context of the revision of the framework for cooperation in the field of youth of the EU in 2009, the follow up of the written declaration of the European Parliament on youth empowerment and the implementation of the CoE Agenda 2020.

In recent years, the European Youth Forum has been successful in getting participation issues and cross-sector youth policy on the agenda of the European institutions. European countries have committed to clearly defined youth policy objectives and measures within the EU and Council of Europe. In order to have a strong and meaningful impact, the implementation of these commitments on the national level needs to be ensured, and in order to create best practice and a favourable environment for further progress, the YFJ will develop a project on the implementation of a European policy framework on participation<sup>4</sup>.

In the area of volunteering, the YFJ will focus, in 2009-2010, on the implementation of the framework for the rights of volunteers and on preparations for 2011, in anticipation for what we expect to be the European Year of Volunteers.

2009-2010 will, with respect to the European Union, be characterised by the elections of the European Parliament, the renewal of the European Commission, as well as the first steps in the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. In order to promote participation

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<sup>4</sup> Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and the Common objectives on Participation of the Open Method of Co-ordination on the Youth Field

and youth mainstreaming in the EU institutions and European Parliament elections, the YFJ will manage a youth campaign for the EU elections focusing on lowering the voting age to 16 and advocating for the implementation of a strong youth agenda by the renewed European Commission. In addition, the YFJ will work to ensure the strong implementation of the 'Youth Article' (art. 165) of the Lisbon Treaty.

In relation to the Council of Europe, the main challenge in 2009-2010 will be to develop a clear role and focus for the institution's youth policy work. The shift towards *rights based* youth policy needs to be reflected through development of appropriate tools. To this end, the YFJ will launch a process that will aim for the adoption of a European Convention on the Rights of Young People, within the Council of Europe framework.

With regards to the United Nations, the main challenge in 2009-2010 will be to ensure the recognition of youth participation through representative, democratic and independent youth organisations gathered in the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations and the corresponding provision of adequate and reliable resources. Furthermore, the YFJ will give priority to the development of measurable goals and targets for the UN World Program of Action for Youth, including goals and targets for youth participation, and to the implementation of these goals and targets on the national level.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### **Focus: Participation and inclusion of young people with migrant backgrounds.**

In 2009-2010, the YFJ will continue working to promote greater equality, gender equality and to combating discrimination. Promoting the development of diversity plans by public authorities and public administrations will be one of the retained objectives; however, increasing the participation of marginalised and disadvantaged young people in EU programmes, and in youth work in general, will be the main focus of our work. This will be done in close connection to the recently adopted vision of promoting a rights-based approach to migration.

Having regard to our commitment to spread of democracy and respect of Human Rights, the YFJ will strive to be more active on these fields by engaging in elections observation missions where the need arises. The idea rests on the belief that the involvement of young people in electoral processes is an important element of active citizenship and of the consolidation of democracy. These missions will observe, and

conclude upon: the turnout of young voters; the treatment of young voters at polling stations; the involvement of young voters in election commissions; the compliance of the election day processes with the international commitments of the national authorities.

In a very concrete and ambitious effort to lead by example, the YFJ will dedicate time and resources to a mapping exercise of what exists in terms of the representation of young migrants and their interests, both at the national and European levels. This mapping exercise should then be used to actively promote the establishment, consolidation or simply the inclusion of youth organisations representing young migrants and their interests in youth platforms, both at the national and the European level, and /or building on the capacity of already established youth organisations to include more young migrants and to better work with this constituency.

## EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

**Focus: To develop good practice on the creation jobs and decent working conditions for young people**

In the area of Employment and Social Affairs, the YFJ has in recent years dedicated its focus on a deep analysis of the current situation in Europe, and the subsequent formulation of relevant demands. In 2009-2010, the time has come to move ahead in strengthening the situation of young people in the labour market. A key tool for this is to produce good practice regarding the role of youth organisations in promoting the employment of young people. The YFJ will therefore co-ordinate, together with its members, a large-scale, long-term, trans-national project aimed at developing best practice on how to create entrance to the labour market and decent working conditions for young people.

With respect to the health, especially the mental health of young people, and their well being,, the European Youth Forum will further explore and highlight the relevant contributions that non-formal education and peer-learning can make. Youth organisations which work with young people, involving them and letting them gain competences and confidence, are key actors for preventing bad health and risky behaviour. The role of civil society in providing the necessary and objective information, resources and skills to enable youth to reach out, to get help for themselves and to know how they can support and give help to their friends who may be struggling, will be the core to promoting youth autonomy and well being.

The YFJ will therefore contribute to the implementation and further development of the EU mental health strategy 'Together for mental health: a strategic approach for the EU 2008-2013', and lobby for young people's involvement in the development of health policies at all decision-making levels, to ensure that health policies are relevant and accessible, and that they take the different needs, experiences and backgrounds of young people into account.

Climate change is an overarching and inauspicious threat to development. In 2009 the most important steps towards an agreement on mitigating and limiting climate change will take place through the adoption of the new climate convention in Copenhagen. The European Youth Forum will therefore ensure the coherent input of youth organisations in the parallel political processes of international institutions. Together with our partner organisations from all regions of the world, the YFJ will advocate policies and action on climate change.

Furthermore, the YFJ will suggest the wider adoption of new measures of development, in accordance with the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). In this sense, we will advocate for studies distinguishing the concepts of growth and development in public debate.

## **COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

After the introduction of the new internal working structures, an assessment of the statutory bodies should be held. This assessment should look at the role and composition of the General Assembly, the Council of Members, and the Bureau. Reflection on how the YFJ could best function should include consideration of the relationship between the Bureau and the Secretariat, the role of temporary working structures and the mandate of the Secretary General, and an evaluation of the Financial Control Commission and the Consultative Body on Membership Applications. The YFJ will also explore ways to promote cross-pillar cooperation between all of its members, be it INGyOs or NYCs.