

**Launching the process for the adoption of a Convention on the Rights of Young People**  
Motion for a recommendation  
presented by Mr. Antti Kaikkonen

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. Europe is a continent where the rights and responsibilities of individuals have always been at the core of building our societies. This approach has so far not been fully effective in guaranteeing the rights of a specific age group that is in the difficult situation of living in a period that can nor be considered solely as childhood, nor as solely adulthood. This demographic group is referred to as youth, and they are in a situation where many of their rights are not fully guaranteed. Such rights include participation in social and political life and decision processes, information, housing, the labour market, sports, leisure, education and culture.
2. In order to guarantee that every individual enjoys the protection of human rights, there needs to be a process that aims at explicitly recognising the rights of youth. This process should aim at guaranteeing better chances for youth to fully participate in ongoing processes in our societies. Many of these processes, whether relating to labour market reform, multiculturalism or demographic changes, are crucial for both the individual and society at large. Because of globalisation and deeper European integration, these challenges are not merely national but international, and they have an effect on millions of young people in Europe and the world today.
3. Youth is a period within which one develops her/his sense of identity and personal values. This process is made up of promises and opportunities, challenges and risks. The powerful changes that are taking place everyday and everywhere are making the transition to adulthood even more crucial. The nature of young people's future and consequently the nature of our society that is built by these individuals depends on how successfully they get through this critical period. A society's vitality depends on the opportunities given to its young generation to grow and develop in a society with a rights-based approach to participation and autonomy.
4. There is the need to build upon the commitments undertaken by the ratification of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in order to effectively ensure the enjoyment by youth of the rights enshrined in it. The right to education, the right to free elections, the freedom of association and assembly, the freedom of expression and the right to vote are of paramount importance for young

people. The Convention on the Rights of Young People would tackle the promotion of these rights, whose some aspects are not fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

5. In view of the international commitment to youth rights, including:
  - the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;
  - the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life;
  - the International Convention on the Rights of the Child;
  - the regional political commitments expressed in the African Youth Charter and the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights;
  - the aspiration of Council of Europe Youth Ministers to develop youth policies which are likely to result in the successful integration of all young people into society, with a strict focus on the values of human rights and democracy, youth co-existence in various societies and young people's inclusion, as stated in the Declaration of Youth Policy Development 2020;
  - the European Union's undertaking in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, especially Article 12 (freedom of association and assembly), Article 21 (non-discrimination on the ground of age), Article 32 (prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work) and Article 39-40 (the right to vote).;
  - the Lisbon Treaty, especially Article 165 (ex Article 149 TEC).
  
7. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the governments of Member States:
  - 1) Initiate a process of drafting, ratifying and implementing of a Convention on Youth Rights;
  - 2) Set up a framework to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the drafting and implementation processes;
  - 3) Put in place relevant and effective monitoring structures.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the right to free elections (article 3 of the ECHR) requires States Parties to uphold certain electoral standards. Nevertheless, other criteria should be fulfilled in order to promote a genuine democratic society such as the free and informed participation of everyone in elections; this should imply further commitment to involve the groups whose turnout is low, such as young people. Similarly the freedom of assembly and association, protected by article 11 of the ECHR, implies that States Parties should in general refrain from impeding the establishment of associations, except in times of war or other public emergencies. The active participation of young people in public life requires also the promotion of their involvement in youth organisations as well as in other civil society organisations; hence, further specific commitments to this regard are necessary and could be brought by the Convention on Youth Rights in order to ensure youth autonomy, enhance critical thinking and counter radicalisation;