



RESOLUTION:

Smack the Mosquito!

*Adopted by the Council of Members/ Extraordinary General
Assembly 2-3 May 2008 (Castelldefels, Catalonia - Spain)*

The Mosquito is a new instrument conceived by adults to chase young people away from public places. The Mosquito is an electronic device which emits high-frequency sounds, similar to the buzz of a mosquito (approximately 17.4 kHz at 85dB). Because the ability to hear high frequencies deteriorates in humans with age, the noise is most commonly audible to younger persons up to 25.

The device is marketed for use as a safety and security tool for preventing young people from hanging around on public places, such as squares, parking lots, etc. It is very popular in the UK, with some 3500 in use, mostly by shopkeepers and police authorities. In Belgium the Mosquito is emerging and some other European countries (e.g. France, Germany and Switzerland) are also faced with the Mosquito phenomenon. Even though it is currently legal for private citizens to use, the distributors and resellers of the product do not typically sell the device for home usage.

The European Youth Forum is concerned with the emergence of the Mosquito in several European countries.

- We express our concern at the use of ultra-sonic dispersal devices that indiscriminately target young people regardless of their behaviour.
- We are concerned by the image of young people. The idea behind the Mosquito shows an image that all young people perform anti-social behaviour. Loitering about as such is not a problem, the main problem lies in the perception of this as negative. Many young hang around as a way to spend their spare time, not because they feel bored, but simply because they like doing it.
- We believe that the use of these devices will have the consequence of reinforcing the imbalanced negative stereotypes of young people found within the media and society
- We stress that the Mosquito violates the International Treaty on the Rights of the Child. We consider the device as a kind of violence (article 19) to young people. Secondly, it also discriminates against minors (article 2).
- We believe that the Mosquito violates the principle of due process. We stress that an arbitrary enforcement such as Mosquito violates the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms art. 6.2, which states, innocent until proven guilty by law. Further more in a constitutional state it is the people through the government that should regulate public life and have the power to sanction. The Mosquito doesn't respect this principle.

That is why the European Youth Forum calls on the European Union Member States gathered in the Council of Ministers on May 21st and 22nd 2008, to denounce the use of the Mosquito and to prohibit the device.

We also call upon a dialogue with young people on this issue. We wish to emphasize that young people should be thoroughly involved in the creation of these community-led solutions. Not only should young participate in decisions which affect them, but their input will also aid the development of effective solutions.