



Strategy Paper

YFJ approach to the co-operation in the Mediterranean and Arab Regions

*- Towards more relevance, complementarity
and credibility -*

On the backdrop of the current Work-Plan implementation (2007-2008), this Strategy Paper attempts to build up on past and current challenges of European cooperation and Youth Work Development in the Mediterranean and Arab Regions. The paper in the same time sketches some directions for an integrated and innovative approach for the future action of YFJ in those areas.

1. Introduction

A challenging geographical puzzle

The Mediterranean is, by definition, an overlap of lands and water between Europe, the (Greater) Middle East, (North) Africa, Western Asia. The political geography of the region shows EU Countries in the North (plus Cyprus and Malta), the Balkans and pre-accession States (Turkey) in the East and the Arab States and Israel on the Southern shore. Further, conflicts are endemic: Western Sahara, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Cyprus. The geographical unity is also challenged by the socio-economic situation, since the North/South gap is dramatically visible in the area especially when looking at the Arab Mediterranean Countries. On the other hand, there is an increasing interdependence of the area: migrations, conflicts and the need for a sustainable management of shared natural resources that urgently calls for integrated “Mediterranean” policies.

The Arab Region is partly overlapping with the Mediterranean shores (Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Palestinian Authority, Lebanon and Syria) but it includes a larger number of States with Arabic population. The institutional frame of the League of Arab States gives the scope of the area concerned. In fact its current members are: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Lybia, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Kuwait, Algeria, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Mauritania, Somalia, Palestine, Djibouti, Comoros. Eritrea and India are observers respectively since 2003 and 2007.

Young people and development: some facts

Young people in those two overlapping regions are particularly affected by the North/South divide. Demographic trends show that in Southern Mediterranean, more than 50% of the population is less than 30 years old. This Region now faces an unprecedented challenge. Its labour forces, currently totalling 112 million, are expected to increase to 146 million in 2010, and 185 million in 2020. These new (young) entrants are increasingly educated and mostly women, who are still facing obstacles in enjoying their full and equal participation in society as additional burden. As for example to maintain the same (high) level of unemployment of today, 34 millions new jobs should be created in ten years. To reach the levels of European Union economy, 50 millions new jobs would need to be created by 2015¹.

In the debate of development and young people in the Mediterranean we must also bare in mind that it is still necessary to conform to a common base of universal values, as a way improve the economic and social rights,

1 FEMISE (2006), *Femise annual report 2006* (www.femise.org).

as well as civil and political rights of young people.

There is a state of fragility, which calls to establish a holistic approach to youth policies and to strengthen youth organisations as the backbone to build stronger civil societies advocating for democracy, social change and development.

Actors of co-operation

The geographical puzzle is reflected in the complexity of regional governance:

- **Regional intergovernmental organisations** are the *European Union*, the *Council of Europe* and the *League of Arab States*.
- **Regional offices of the United Nations System** are grouped for Middle East and North Africa - MENA - (UNICEF, UNFPA, WB), or the Arab Region (UNDP), or Western Asia (UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UN-ESCWA). The International Organisation of Migrations (IOM) has also a Mediterranean Regional Office in Rome.
- **Platforms for Mediterranean cooperation** are, instead, the result of more or less successful international agreements, such as the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, initiated by the EU, or the *Plan Bleu*, which monitors the Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean Sea, under the aegis of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).
- **Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)** which consists of parliamentarians appointed by parliaments of the EU Member States; the parliaments of the ten Mediterranean partners (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey); the European Parliament².
- **Foundations and Research institutes** are important tools for supporting projects. The *Anna Lindh Foundation* for the Dialogue between Cultures is co-funded by the European Union and each State within the Euro-Med partnership. Other institutes play also an interesting role, such as the *Swedish Institute in Alexandria*, the *European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation (MEDEA)* or the *Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Economic Institutes (FEMISE)*.
- **Non-governmental actors** are driving forces for bottom-up cooperation among civil society actors. The *Euro-Med Non-governmental Platform* has been the organiser of the Euro-Med Civil Forums in the past few years³.

2 More information Info:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa/home/default_en.htm

3 The Platform consists of members divided into three categories: regional networks, sub-regional networks and local networks. To obtain full membership, candidates should imperatively fulfill all following overall criteria: 1. Be legally registered or in the process of registration as a non-profit organization established in a member State of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) or in a potential member State of the EMP ; 2. Conspicuously demonstrate an organizational form complying with the other overall and specific membership criteria; 3. Have objectives and carry out activities which are compatible with present statutes; 4. Adhere to the Platform Charter; 5. Be recognized as being non-partisan and independent of public authorities; 6. Be composed of non-partisan stakeholders independent of public authorities; 7. Have an active track record in at least

2. Historical Background

EU Mediterranean and Arab policy

The **Euro-Arab Dialogue** as a forum shared by the European Community and the League of Arab States arose out of a French initiative and was launched at the European Council in Copenhagen in December 1973, shortly after the "October War" and the oil embargo. As the Europeans saw it, it was to be a forum to discuss economic affairs, whereas the Arab side saw it rather as one to discuss political affairs. This dialogue developed discontinuously during the 70s and the 80s. At the beginning of the 90s the Gulf Crisis and the Arab splits and differences that followed blocked the Dialogue in the meantime.

The **Euro-Mediterranean** space became a relevant scale of action for the European Community only after 1995, with the Barcelona Declaration. EC members plus 12 Southern Mediterranean partners agreed to work together on (1) Political and Security Cooperation (2) Economic Integration (3) Social and Cultural cooperation⁴. This third pillar specifies the importance of youth cooperation and laid down the basis for the Euro-Med Youth programme in the frame of the MEDA programme which is the technical and financial tool of implementation of the Barcelona partnership. The cooperation with the rest of the Arab Countries was re-organised in the frame of the *EU-Gulf Cooperation Council*.

In 2003, historical circumstances led again to re-shuffle European strategies in the Region. On one hand the war against Iraq and the subsequent USA strategy for a "Greater Middle East", on the other the upcoming EU enlargement. A new **European Neighbourhood Policy** was established in 2004, including the Barcelona partnership (and the MEDA programme) in the new frame, together with the new EU Eastern Neighbours.

CoE Trans-med programme

The main objective of the Trans-med programme, managed by the **North South Centre**, since 1996, is to promote a dialogue with the countries of the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East, guided by the basic values of the Council of Europe. Specific objectives are to promote an intercultural and inter-religious dialogue between the people of Europe and the Mediterranean region as well as to reinforce co-operation with regard to protection of human rights, with particular reference to the rights of women and codes of personal status in Arab countries. To initiate common projects with the Liaison Committee of the international non-governmental

one of the issues contained in the Barcelona Declaration, specifically in relation to the Euro-Mediterranean region; 8. Have a democratic governance structure; 9. Have a transparent accountability mechanism. (www.euromedplatform.org).

⁴ In 1995 the partners of the Barcelona process were: EU + Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Turkey (pre-accession), Cyprus and Malta (now within the EU).

organisations enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe, as well as other partners in civil society on the integration of Muslim migrants in host societies. To strengthen the dialogue on the advancement of democratic processes and the rule of law in southern Mediterranean countries, involving the quadrilogue partners (governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society) from Europe and Arab countries.

A decade of YFJ commitment in the Region

The European Youth Forum considers the Mediterranean and Arab Regions under the frame of the global and regional youth cooperation.

The main official partner of YFJ is still the ***Arab Youth Union***, which is member of the Global Coordination Cooperation Committee (GCCC). The Arab Youth Union historically gathers the youth wings of the Pan-Arab Political Movements (the *baas'* parties) arising during the period of the Arab Nationalism and Nasserism in the 50s of the past Century. Since the 2004 World Bank YDP conference in Sarajevo the YFJ had no contact with AYU and the scope, the representativity and the transparency of this structure is questionable.

In the past YFJ supported the establishment of the ***Mediterranean Youth Forum (MYF)***, which had a short life between 1998 and 2001⁵.

Three phases can be identified in the YFJ activities and policies in the area:

- a) **The “Pro-active” Policy**, between 1998 and 2000, saw the YFJ in the forefront of developing innovative mechanisms to set up youth cooperation, with a strong support of the European Commission. This phase was fuelled by the broader political context, which followed the signing of the Barcelona agreement and the Peace Process in the Middle East.

In this phase Political Dialogue (contribution of young people to the Barcelona Process) and Technical Cooperation (providing capacity building for the Euro-Med youth partnership) were two parallel tracks. This is the time in which YFJ started to develop global cooperation mechanisms, such as GCCC, and the Mediterranean was seen as a laboratory for the other regions. Member Organisations were actively involved in policy formulation and in developing pilot

⁵ The MYF was founded in Malta in May 1998. The YFJ acted as tutor and co-organiser of the initiative. MYF gathered youth representatives from 10 Southern Mediterranean partners of the Barcelona partnership: Algeria (Rassemblement Action Jeunesse, Conseil de la Jeunesse Algerienne) Cyprus (The National Youth Council of Cyprus) Egypt (The Egyptian Scouts and Guides Federation) Israel (Reut Sadakka, Israeli Council of Youth Movements) Jordan (The Crown Prince Award, Youth Building Future) Malta (The National Youth Council of Malta) Morocco (Les Chanties Sociaux Marocains) Palestine (International Palestinian Youth League) Tunisia (Union Tunisienne des Organisations de Jeunesse. Association Tunisienne de l'Action Volontaire) Turkey (The Youth Services Centre - GSM). For more information YFJ (1998), *Mediterranean Youth Forum Convention*, adopted by the General Assembly in Salzburg.

projects in the area. Already in 1997, the complementarity between Euro-Arab Dialogue and Euro-Med Cooperation was stated and the *Mediterranean Youth Forum*⁶ was launched.

The issue of a single partnership in Arab Countries with a political organisation such as the Arab Youth Union was already critically raised by European Organisations and reflected in the Youth Forum paper at the Executive Committee in Vilnius, April 1998, *Euro-Arab Dialogue - re-assert our partnership and take action*.

- b) **The “Follow-up Policy”**, between 2001 and 2003, saw YFJ trying to follow-up the mechanisms set up in the previous mandates but in a much more problematic context with the crisis of the EU Mediterranean Policy. The failure of the Peace Process in Palestine, 9/11 and the war in Iraq constituted major challenges for the political dialogue. The *Mediterranean Youth Forum* failed for lack of credible coordination, funds and political dialogue, further, in 2002 was the last Euro-Med Civil Forum YFJ participated. An evaluation of the first phase of the Euro-Med Youth programme was conducted with the involvement of the YFJ. Further, the establishment by the European Commission of the *Euro-Med Youth Platform*, as a place for technical cooperation in the frame of the EU programme, welcomed by the European Youth Forum, soon become a critical issue due to its management process. A similar situation can be found in the *Euro-Med Covenant* of the EU/CoE partnership, in which youth participation (both of YFJ and the Youth Statutory Bodies of the CoE) still does not go beyond monitoring and consultation. To sum-up this phase, the role of the YFJ had to face many challenges, which slowed down, or frozen various processes which were set-up in the previous years.
- c) **The “Exploratory” Policy**, between 2004 and 2006 saw YFJ engaged both in the follow-up of the existing tools (mainly the Euro-Med Youth programme - EU; Partnership agreement CoE-EU; the Steering Group of the Mediterranean Youth Platform) and in discovering new possible paths for cooperation. MOs were again proactive in policy drafting, through the establishment of the **Steering Group of the Middle East Youth Initiative** which conducted two study visits in the Region, the first one in Israel/Palestine with the double objective to meet with the local youth organisations and key political actors in the region, the second in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, more focused on grassroots organisations. Further, the results of the work of the Steering Group resulted in the **Policy Paper Towards a Culture of Peace in the Middle-East, the role of Youth Organisations**, adopted at the General Assembly in Vilnius. This approach highlighted the need for a renewed political Dialogue in the Region. However, it crystallised a

⁶ (1997), *Resolution on the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue*, the Executive Committee in Rotterdam; (1997), *Strategy Paper on Future Steps of Mediterranean Cooperation*, Executive Committee in Budapest; (1998), *Resolution on the Mediterranean Youth Forum*, General Assembly in Salzburg.

separation of the technical co-operation related to the Euro-Mediterranean programme from the political dialogue, pursued at a different geographical scale.

3. The state of the play

Euro-Med and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

The enlarged European Union needs an effective and coherent common policy to deal with numerous neighbours. But can the existing ENP meet all the expectations it has raised and the demands being made of it? The current ENP is not really a single policy: it is a set of bilateral programmes and instruments; an umbrella that brings together pre-existing EU funds and tries to give them a common rationale⁷. The real novelty of the ENP is to bring the same principles of conditionality, which have been driving the enlargement process to EU neighbours, in order to create around the Union's borders a ring of well governed Countries⁸. For Mediterranean cooperation this substantially outdated the Barcelona frame (even though formally included in the ENP) bringing back a bilateral agreement logic versus the multilateral frame of the Euro-Med partnership.

*What's in it for youth organisations?*⁹

In the objectives: supporting policies to promote health, education and training; democratisation process by enhancing the role of civil society organisations; fostering the development of civil society and of non-governmental organisations; promoting cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs (also visa issues); promoting cooperation between the member states and partner countries in higher education and mobility of teachers, researchers and students; promoting understanding between cultures, people-to-people contacts, cooperation between civil societies and exchanges of young people.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, is currently active in defining its White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which should be approved at the end of 2007. This tool should increase the institutional capacity to build up strategic partnership especially in the cultural cooperation field. On this regard, increasing mutual contacts have been established, in the frame of the Trans-Med programme with the League of Arab States, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALESCO), the Islamic Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ISESCO), the network initiated by the European Union in the context of the Barcelona Process - EUROMESCO, and other relevant institutions. The relations with the latter relies on the privileged position of the Council of Europe as a value-based,

7 Missiroli A. (2007), *The ENP three years on: where from - and where next?*, Policy Brief, European Policy Centre

8 COM(2006)726 final, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy*.

9 From: YFJ (2006), *Briefing on the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*.

Pan-Continental Organisation.

League of Arab States

Indeed the League of Arab States (LAS) resembles the Organization of American States, the Council of Europe, and the African Union, in that it has primarily political aims; one can regard each of these organizations as a regional version of the United Nations. However, LAS membership is based on culture rather than geographical location (which is the basis for membership of the other organizations cited above). The LAS has relations with the CoE in the frame of Trans-Med programme and also in the frame of the partnership agreement CoE/EU. Recently the LAS established official diplomatic relations with the EU by appointing an ambassador in Brussels.

→ YFJ involvement in current processes

As a result of the “Exploratory” phase, cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle-East has been included as a priority in the Work-Plan 2007-2008. In particular, YFJ is currently involved in several processes of cooperation, which include but go beyond the traditional “Euro-Med” scheme, including Middle-East and Euro-Arab Dialogue:

- **EU Youth programme:** Monitor and contribute to the implementation of the new phase of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth programme;
- **Euro-Med youth platform:** Participate in the Steering Committee in order to promote the development of truly representative youth structures and networks in the region;
- **Euro-Med Youth Parliament:** Co-organisation of the edition in 2007, prospects for 2008;
- **EU-CoE partnership:** Participation to the Partners' meetings and sectorial groups (directly and also through AC representatives). Participation to the meetings on Youth Policies and Youth Research organised in the frame of the Partnership;
- **Anna Lindh Foundation:** Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2006, stating principles for cooperation and promotion of projects and youth initiatives for the Dialogue in the Mediterranean¹⁰;
- **League of Arab States:** Initiation of a dialogue and forthcoming participation to their Youth Forum, organised in November 2007 where the Youth Forum will facilitate a workshop on Euro-Arab Dialogue;
- **Euro-Med Non-Governmental Platform:** YFJ Bureau decided in the first trimester of 2007 to join this network.
- **Club of Madrid:** Contacts were established with the Club of Madrid and informal cooperation initiated within the framework of the 2008 EU Year for Intercultural Dialogue.
- **Initial contacts have been made with the Suzanna Mubarak Foundation and options for cooperation would be explored.**

¹⁰ YFJ-AIF (2006), *Memorandum of Co-operation between the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between cultures and the European Youth Forum*, August.

Further the **Work-Plan 2007-2008** gives mandate to the current bureau to:

- Support the development of a strategy on youth policies in the Mediterranean region, based on the outcomes of the Euro-Med Seminar on Youth Policies and Youth Participation, Mollina, October 2006;
- Support, together with MOs, the development of youth coordination structures in the Region, based on the principles for global co-operation;
- To continuously engage in building partnerships with youth organisations in the Region;
- To promote the consolidation of National Youth Structures in the Region;

4. Prospects

European policy in the region faces great challenges. There is a concrete risk that the Mediterranean would relatively “disappear” from the world map since other geographical scales are competing. The Arab Region, although it covers a more clear geographical area faces as well great challenges in defining its role on the world-map. In regards of the two regions, European and American representations differed a lot in the past five years with a negative impact on cooperation policies.

Current developments seems to show the possibility to re-launch political initiative both at the “Mediterranean” and “Arab” level. For examples, the recent declarations from the newly elected French president for a “Mediterranean Union” seems to project the Mediterranean space as one of the top priorities of the forthcoming French presidency in the second semester 2008. Further, there is an increased willingness from Institutions and Donors to invest in youth co-operation in the region based especially on inter-religious dialogue and intercultural dialogue.

The YFJ is aware that inter-religious dialogue is just as much needed in Europe, and intercultural dialogue goes way beyond euro-med cooperation - it is relevant for the current political context. Many requests to cooperate for activities and for policy development concerning the euro-med region were made on issues of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. It wrongly became a synonym for Euro-Med cooperation to some Organisations, such as the Council of Europe, and Donors also due to a lack of distinguishing religious, geographic and political areas and a lack of understanding of the complexity of the Regions as outlined above. YFJ approach should encompass the complexity of Youth Policy Development and the need to move from policies to actions for the benefit of young people.

For the European Youth Forum, after a long period of reflection, “follow-up” and “exploration”, the current Work-Plan gives a unique chance to develop again an integrated strategic approach to youth cooperation in the Mediterranean/Middle East/Arab Region.

The new approach should bring back together the “political” dialogue and the “technical” cooperation, which developed separately in the past few years. Further, this “overlapping region” should become again a laboratory

for experimenting tools for regional cooperation, as a learning process to capitalise in YFJ endeavours in other regions of the world.

Three strategic principles: Relevance - Complementarity - Credibility

A) Relevance and Impact of YFJ and MOs cooperation

It is extremely important to be clear in the overall aim of youth cooperation between the Regions: **Development needs Youth!** This has the advantage to approach the goal set up by YFJ policy paper to promote a culture of peace in the region, taking into consideration the complex and delicate political situations on the ground. In particular, the relevance of YFJ action in the Region will have to be measured on the capability to address two levels:

- a) *Specific needs/challenges of young people in the Southern Mediterranean:* The relevance and credibility of any cooperation and political dialogue stands on the capacity of strengthen endogenous projects and initiatives which tackle **concrete problems of young people** (Employment, Education, Mobility, Capacity Building of “youth” democratic civil society, women’s rights, etc.). This “technical” cooperation must be coupled by a “political” dialogue to promote coherent, cross-sectorial and **transversal youth policies**.
- b) *Transversal issues of common interests for European and Mediterranean Youth:* Issues such as sustainable development, migrations, intercultural dialogue, respect of human rights concerns directly young people from Europe and from the Southern Mediterranean Countries. **Common issues needs to be tackled together** for an effective advocacy and lobby action towards the relevant regional, inter-regional and global institutions.

To assess the current situation in the Region YFJ should pursue, from a youth work development perspective, a **mapping research** on the situation of youth organisations and of cooperation projects dealing with youth issues.

B) Complementarity of European, Mediterranean and Arab cooperation

The approach to the most suitable geographical scale of YFJ cooperation in the region has been often debated at several occasions in the past ten years. The first ever YFJ resolution on Euro-Med co-operation in 1997 set a principle which is still valid now: the complementarity of various processes.

Translated and updated to the current situation in 2007 YFJ cooperation in the region is inevitably a variable geometry:

- The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Programme is still an important tool in terms of fund-raising;
- The Neighbourhood Policy of EU could bring additional space for political dialogue between the two Regions and technical cooperation at the bilateral level;
- The Euro-Arab cooperation could give the right institutional frame for

developing a youth partner in the South, upon verification of the intentions of the League of Arab State to eventually support a youth-led initiative in the Region;

- A specific dialogue with Israel could, for example, be more effective than trying to bring all the actors together, when there are not yet the material and the political conditions (we are not in 1998 when the experiment of the Mediterranean Youth Forum was at least worth to try!)¹¹;
- A more restricted “Mediterranean” scale, on the model of the Baltic Sea Cooperation or Barents Sea Cooperation, could make sense for addressing specific issues related to the common sea (sustainable development, etc.)

C) Credibility and sustainable partnerships

The approach to the YFJ cooperation in the region should first of all be integrated as a part of the mechanisms for Global Cooperation. In this regard the principles agreed at the ICMYO should be regarded as a first step to develop a coherent partnership in the area.

With which youth organisations should we engage in political dialogue/processes?

Youth NGOs that are:

- democratic
- membership based (assuring a link between the local, the national, the regional and the global levels)
- accountable and transparent
- legitimate and credible
- sharing common positive goals
- making an impact
- going to ensure sustainability of the global cooperation
- respecting of cultural and ideological diversity and Human Rights¹².

At the moment YFJ does not have a partner in the region, which reflects those principles. This situation threatens not only the credibility of YFJ Regional cooperation but also the one of its partners in ICMYO and GCCC.

Although these criteria should be a reference and should guide our cooperation with organisations all the time, they are not something static, excluding possible partners from the beginning, but something YFJ must be true to during its whole cooperation also giving the option to learn and improve.

11 Concerning Israel, a special attention has been paid by the YFJ to the Israeli Council of Youth Movements (ICYM) mentioned both the 2006 Policy Paper and object of a specific visit of YFJ in 1998, as one of the most organised and representative structures, though still gathering only a specific types of youth organisations (Youth Movements).

12 ICMYO (2005), *Principles for Global Youth Cooperation*

It is important, in this regard to organise a preparatory *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations* to re-launch the partnerships in the region and to foster the creation of a sustainable open and transparent *Arab Youth Coordination Network*. Natural partners in this endeavours will be ICMYO and YFJ MOs represented in the region.

There are clear advantages in facilitating this process:

- It addresses the need of YFJ for credible partners;
- It shows the capacity of YFJ to both EU and UN Agencies to be able to deliver concrete results on the ground coupled with broader political dialogue;
- It brings ownership to Member Organisations;
- It sets an example of how the ICMYO can reinforce regional cooperation (with YFJ in a leading role).

Concrete Actions

To avoid the risk of jeopardise YFJ co-operation, it is fundamental for the various processes to be included into the integrated approach here proposed. Some concrete steps for each of institutions/partners should be made to apply coherently the principles of relevance-complementarity-credibility:

- **ICMYO/GCCC**
 - To re-establish contact with the Arab Youth Union and assess their membership to GCCC/ICMYO;
 - To co-organise a preparatory *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations*, with the aim to establish a sustainable partnership among membership-based, democratic and transparent Youth NGOs (share the project idea with the ICMYO task force to organise support);
 - Meetings at Regional Offices of IYNGOs, AYN and PYU in Cairo¹³.
 - To promote in the medium-term the creation of a sustainable *Arab Youth Coordination Network* in cooperation with ICMYO and GCCC members with local ownership, respecting the principles for global cooperation, to be invited to GCCC/ICMYO and open both to emerging National Youth Councils and Regional Youth Organisations.
- **Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF):**
 - To propose, the funding and the co-organisation in the frame of the MoU with ALF of the preparatory *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations*, with the aim to establish a sustainable partnership among membership-based, democratic and transparent Youth NGOs and with a specific focus on Mediterranean Cooperation.
 - The project should be presented before the end of the year 2007, The preparatory meeting should take place in the first semester 2008, i.e. before the expiring of the MoU between YFJ and ALF (renewable by

¹³ From a first screening of Youth Forum Members done in August 2007, it results that 6 ICMYO participants have Regional Offices in Cairo, 4 MOs have more than three members in various LAS Countries, mostly on the Mediterranean side, 7 MOs have at least a member or a partner in a LAS Country.

- mutual consent).
- To organise a mission to Alexandria.
- To explore possibilities for support to the mapping/research of youth organisations in the region.
- **Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF):**
 - To propose, the funding and the co-organisation in the frame of the MoU with ALF of the preparatory *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations*, with the aim to establish a sustainable partnership among membership-based, democratic and transparent Youth NGOs and with a specific focus on Mediterranean Cooperation.
 - The project should be presented before the end of the year 2007, The preparatory meeting should take place in the first semester 2008, i.e. before the expiring of the MoU between YFJ and ALF (renewable by mutual consent).
 - To organise a mission to Alexandria.
 - To explore possibilities for support to the mapping/research of youth organisations in the region.
 - Participate to relevant activities in the frame of the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue organised by ALF;
 - Promote other activities with a Euro-Med scope under the MoU; In 2008 assess and eventually renew the MoU with them.
- **League of Arab States**
 - To organise the Euro-Arab Dialogue Workshop at the LAS Youth forum, November 2007, taking into consideration the historical facts, the political background and YFJ strategic view expressed in this paper;
 - To organise a bilateral meeting in Cairo with LAS in November 2007, after the LAS Youth Forum;
 - To explore further LAS mechanism of Youth Advisory Committee and share the experience of the CoE in this regards;
 - Explore the process towards an Arab Youth Strategy and possibility to promote participation of partner organisations to the drafting;
 - Associate LAS as partner of the Preparatory *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations* and ask for potential co-funding;
 - Invite LAS to the University on Youth and Development;
 - Envisage participation to the next year LAS youth forum which will be on the theme of the Alliance of Civilisations;
 - Undertake further research on the Youth Advisory Committee of the LAS.
- **European Union**
 - *French Presidency of the EU:* Immediate start of monitoring the preparation phase; establish contacts to follow-up the processes which might be *launched* during the second semester 2008; explore spaces for developing further Youth Cooperation and promote YFJ as the most relevant and credible partner for pursuing the re-launch of youth political dialogue in the area.
 - *DG AIDCO/EAC- Euro-Mediterranean Youth Programme:* Continue to monitor the implementation of the programme and promote it as a

- tool to *increase* cooperation among MOs in the area.
 - *DG AIDCO/EAC - Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform*: Steering Group have been discontinued, YFJ should advocate for it to be reconvened again and advocate for specific initiatives for Capacity Building of youth organisations in the Southern Mediterranean. Provide technical assistance for initiatives to foster the creation of National Youth Councils. Promote active participation of the partners participating to the Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations.
 - *DG Relex*: Introduce the *Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting Of Youth organisations* in the frame of the Neighbouring Policy and the broader Euro-Arab dialogue and ask for political support.
 - *DG EAC*: Ensure that in the framework of the Euromed partnership, civil society *organisations* are helped to be further strengthened through training and better networking, due to the role they have in ensuring participation in society, the advancement of women and respect of Human rights
- **Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)**
 - *Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament*: This time will be organised by the European Parliament; Promoting it as a “learning” experiment for Euro-Med. Advocate for MOs and partners participation;
 - *Mediterranean Youth Parliament*: Promote participation of Associate partner organisations both to the National Committee to be set up and to the MYP;
 - *Establish* contacts direct with the EMP which are part of the EMPA.
 - **Council of Europe**
 - Participate to sectorial meetings of the CoE/EU Partnership; More pro-active in the area of training / Salto-Med; Including the discussion on Euro-Med partnership within the broader debate on restructuring;
 - Participation to the seminar on the role of youth participation in Euro-Med youth policy cooperation, 2007. Governmental contacts for advocacy for national youth policy development. Put the results of the seminar in the background of the YFJ initiative for a coordination meeting of youth organisations;
 - Support the idea of trans-Mediterranean solidarity through the NSC in relation to the various existing networks. Follow-up on the idea emerging at the NSC seminar on “Women’s rights in the Euro-med: Women as agents of change” (Lisbon, June 2006) for the creation of trans-Mediterranean women’s network for the reinforcement of rights of European and Arab women
 - **Regional offices of the United Nations System**
 - Meet with some of them (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, WB) during the visit in Cairo;
 - Explore funding possibilities for youth projects in the area and for the permanent regional youth coordination.
 - **Independent research institutes**

- Explore possibilities for support the mapping research on youth organisations.
- **Euro-Med Non-governmental Platform**
 - Use the Platform as a space for raising the importance of youth issues and the youth sector of civil society within the Euro-Med partnership;
 - Use the Platform as a space for contact-making with other organisations in the south to be useful for the mapping research;
 - Participate to the Euro-Med Civil to bring the youth perspective and enhance the participation of MOs and the youth partners from the south.
- **Islam Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)**
 - As part of the MoU the YFJ shall explore the possibilities to establish contacts with Muslim Youth organisations through the ICYF-DC in the Arab region.
- **Embassies of European countries in the region**
 - explore the possibilities for financial support of meeting of European and Arab Youth organisations during 2008. Such meeting would facilitate the creation of stronger Euro-Arab youth partnerships and stronger network supporting and strengthening youth work
- **YFJ & the Member organisations**
 - YFJ shall encourage the engagement of the MOs in Euro-Arab and Mediterranean Youth cooperation
 - YFJ shall promote actively the work done in this regional cooperation framework towards the membership
 - The YFJ shall establish information network with the MOs working in this regions so to ensure there is coordination in the work both sides are doing
 - YFJ shall actively involve the MOs represented in the region in supporting the creation of Arab Youth coordination network