

Motion

Joint Declaration of the 22nd edition of the University on Youth and Development 23 September 2023, Mollina, Spain.

signed by: Organising Bureau of European
School Student Unions (OBESSU)

Since the year 2000, the University on Youth and Development (UYD) has served as an international hub for meetings, youth advocacy and exchange of good practices. For a week each year, it brings together hundreds of young people, youth workers, decision-makers, experts from the field and institutional representatives. This gathering provides themes with a space to meet, debate, build their capacities and cooperate on youth policy issues. The UYD is conceived as a platform to experience intercultural dialogue while debating the most pressing issues of the global youth movement. Youth organisations and youth-related institutions, gathering participants from across the world have enthusiastically applied to join the UYD, organising 9 activities within the framework of the event.¹

The 22nd edition of the UYD focuses on the theme “Young people, peace and climate change” with an emphasis on intersectionality. We recognise that peace is fundamental for all global progress to be made, including on climate action. Young people are disproportionately affected by conflicts, being at the forefront of dealing with the consequences of climate change. Unfortunately, they remain under-represented in national and regional institutions, lacking a platform to raise awareness and amplify their voices. Only 2,6% of national members of the parliament are under the age of 30 years old worldwide.² Youth organisations, regional platforms, national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations play a vital role in fostering pluralistic democracy and supporting youth participation.

Notable international processes such as the high-level political forum (HLPF) organised in July was followed by the publication during the SDG summit in September of the political declaration which reaffirms that the achievement of the SDGs is in peril, as the implementation of most of the SDGs is too slow or has even regressed since the adoption of the agenda in 2015. The declaration also recognises the important contribution of young people to achieve the 2030 Agenda, while also recognising that sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has outlined its priorities for the youth sector in the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 following the adoption of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution (2020)2. This strategy along with the Reykjavík Declaration 2023 emphasises the crucial role of young people in climate-related actions and generally in revitalising pluralistic democracies. In this regard, the role of the North-South Centre played a vital role, extending his global impact by the organisation of the Summer University.

The European Commission launched its new Youth Action Plan for External Action (2022-2027) aiming to engage young people in the EU external actions. It is composed of three pillars that aim to engage young people through existing youth structures or to support the creation of youth structures where they are missing. The action plan also aims to support the empowerment of youth structures financially through funding streams and connect young people through youth exchanges in the educational sector.

To achieve tangible positive peace and expedite progress on climate change, fostering inter-regional partnerships beyond the EU is imperative. UYD remains committed to demonstrate the possible impact of this inter-regional collaboration through engagements with youth from the Africa and Middle East regions. Additionally, through the EU-Africa partnership, youth exchange initiatives have been launched bringing together young people from both continents to co-create solutions to some of the most pressing development challenges, including peace and climate change. Such initiatives showcase the remarkable potential of what is possible when young people from various regions think and act together.

In light of the above, the 22nd edition of the University on Youth and Development united the voices of young people on peace and climate change, resulting in the following recommendations:

1. Recognise and safeguard the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment, through a legally binding human rights instrument;

1 Infopack, *22nd University on Youth and Development*

2 <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/youth-empowerment/data-youth-participation>

2. Strengthen the accountability of a wider range of stakeholders to safeguarding the full enjoyment of human rights by young people, and work towards a stronger international framework for youth rights;
3. Further implement and create links between the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and climate action, promoting an intersectional approach;
4. Empower young people to have a higher level of influence through meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes;
5. Actively support youth organisations in a systematic manner, as a way of strengthening pluralistic democracies;
6. Increase the participation of young people in the democratic life by recognising their imperative role in society and empower them to run for political positions;

This declaration is both a commitment and a call to action of the University on Youth and Development 2023 participants to the institutions, governments, and the global community at large. The support of partner organisations and institutions in organising this year's UYD is recognised and highly valued.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Youth Forum is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, the Council of Europe or the European Youth Foundation. Neither the European Union nor any other granting authority can be held responsible for them.

