



Open Letter of the European Youth Forum to Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the situation of the Youth Sector of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the Ministerial meeting in Helsinki - 16-17 May

On behalf of over 100 national and international youth networks that represent millions of young people, the European Youth Forum calls on Ministries of Foreign Affairs to **guarantee that the Youth Sector of the Council of Europe remains in the ordinary budget of the organisation**. By focusing its activities on enhancing young people's commitment to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has been supporting thousands of youth activities and has been training thousands of young people to become human rights advocates, and act as multipliers to promote the rule of law and participation of young people in democratic life.

The proposal to transfer the youth sector to a Partial Agreement, as included in the Contingency Plan of the current Secretary General, was met by a surprise and shock by the entire youth sector in Europe and some Member States have already expressed their rejection.

The impact of this proposal on the youth sector will be huge! Moving to a Partial Agreement will end its unique possibility to make direct proposals to the Committee of Ministers Recommendations and thus developing common European standards in youth policy and human rights. The co-management system will stop reporting directly to the Committee of Ministers, ending the most advanced form of youth participation in the world where young people have the same decision making power of governmental representing in youth policy development. The two European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, would close down, sending the wrong signal to young people that they no longer have a place to gather and work together. Young people in Europe cannot afford to lose all that.

Young people stand against this proposal. It's crucial for Europe that we preserve the existence of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, including its structures - European Youth Foundation, the 2 European Youth Centres and the

co-management system. On the occasion of the Ministerial meeting in Helsinki on 16-17 May, we call for:

- maintaining the Youth Sector in the ordinary budget of the organisation;
- avoiding any disproportionate cuts compared to other sectors of the Council of Europe;
- postponing any budgetary decisions to when the new Secretary General will take office in October 2019;
- increasing Member States contribution to the Council of Europe by 10% to face the budgetary implications due to a potential withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the organisation.

Brussels, 15 May 2019

Carina Autengruber



*President of the
European Youth Forum*