



by Galina Kupriyanova

A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d
A w a r d

Council of Europe Award “Young Active Citizens” 2006-2007

The Council of Europe Award “Young Active Citizens” was instituted in 2002 with a view to encourage young people to get active to change their lives. The general theme chosen for the competition focuses on the participation of young people in political, social and cultural life - at local, regional or national levels. It also focuses on cooperation between local and/or regional authorities and young people throughout the 49 states party to the European Cultural Convention.

In this format, the Award represented a concrete contribution of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe to the implementation of the revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. (See the article about the Charter in this issue). The Award aims to reward projects of outstanding quality; to establish direct links between young people and policy-makers; and to raise awareness of the practice of youth participation. Its objectives are to gather examples of good practice; to demonstrate the state of youth participation in Europe; to generate research and thematic studies; and to present these findings via the internet in order to enhance exchange between young actors. In particular, such projects should specify the means developed by young people to enhance their own possibilities for involvement in the life of their communities (towns, regions or countries); and to influence public authorities' decision-making processes. In this context, the Council of Europe Award “Young active citizens” also wants to realise the value of co-management between young people and public authorities at local, regional and national levels, which constitutes

an important feature of the Council of Europe's youth policy.

Awarded each year, it rewards young people who have made a difference to their community at regional or local level. Previous prizewinners have included projects to get to know local authorities, to encourage young people to vote, to bring young women into politics and to prevent self-harm amongst teenagers. There are also concrete examples of educational methods and tools useful in promoting the various aspects of the participation and citizenship of young people.

The Council of Europe is currently organising the “Young Active Citizens” Award for the fifth time. The Council of Europe “Young Active Citizens” Award for 2006-2007 is seen as an active contribution to the **“All Different – All Equal” European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation**.

The Award will be given to actions or projects which are directly and explicitly contributing to the Campaign. In this respect, the following issues constitute the basis for the core content of the Campaign and should be used as guidelines for the Award.



*The award has its roots in the Council of Europe's main mandate – to spread and protect **human rights**. That is the Council's first priority – building a Europe that respects the rights of everyone, no matter who they are, where they live or how they choose to live their lives. The Campaign highlights the values that have driven the Council of Europe for more than 55 years – that every European has a right to a democratic voice; that human rights must be a living principle; and that social justice is at the heart of a modern society. Recent events in Europe have shown that young people need not only employment and social inclusion, but that there is also a need for human rights education to cut levels of discrimination. It is also essential that young people participate in their world, in urban environments, in schools and universities and in the workplace. Too often young people feel they have no say.*

*This campaign aims to highlight **diversity** – celebrating the richness of our different cultures and traditions. One of the great strengths of the Council of Europe is to build a Europe around core values of democracy and human rights whilst respecting difference and enjoying the richness that exists in the cultures and traditions of Europe. Nobody wants a Europe where everyone looks and acts the same, eats the same food and has the same laws. Diversity and difference are important, and should be cherished.*

*Equally, real democracy means that everyone's voice is heard, that everyone has a say in their lives and the world around them. And it will work through **participation**; allowing everyone to play a part in building a better Europe – a Europe where everyone has the right to be themselves – to be different and equal. That is true participation, and it is especially important for young people – many of whom are not comfortable with traditional politics.*

Non-governmental youth organisations and networks, as well as any other structures involved in youth work, which are committed to contribute to the European Youth Campaign “All different, all equal” for diversity, human rights and participation are invited to take part in the competition. Organisations wishing to submit a project in the framework of the Award are requested to send their applications to their country's National Campaign Committee. For countries where there is no National Campaign Committee, applications may be sent directly to the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport. The deadline for applications is 15 July 2007. It is planned to hold the award ceremony in September 2007 during the closing event of the Campaign.

Five projects/actions will be rewarded. Each of the winning projects will be offered an amount of 1000 € and a diploma. Furthermore, two representatives of each of the winning projects will be invited to the closing event of the Campaign in order to receive their prize. These representatives will also be invited to present their projects by the means of an exhibition.

Following the Award, and at the end of the Campaign, a compendium of all good Campaign projects which have applied (and not just the winning projects), will be published by the Council of Europe in paper and on-line versions. The possibility to include photographs in the compendium will be considered.

Certainly, this Award can make a contribution to overcoming the ills that still beset European societies in the form of racism, discrimination, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, as well as make a contribution to young people's active participation, promoting human rights and diversity.

Notes and references :



- More information about youth activities in the Council of Europe may be found at the following address:
<http://www.coe.int/youth>

Contact :



Galina.KUPRIYANOVA@coe.int

