



by João Salviano Carmo

Young people for a life without tobacco? A European Youth Manifesto!

In 2005 the European Commission approached the European Youth Forum to become a partner of the Help campaign, an anti-smoking campaign at EU level. The idea was to involve young people across Europe in the campaign while assessing their opinions and views about tobacco and how this affected their lives. The European Youth Forum before associating itself with the Help Campaign decided to organize an EU-wide consultation with young people and build a European Youth Manifesto which would reflect the views, needs and concerns of young people about tobacco.

Throughout the first four months of 2006, the European Youth Forum together with its member organisations organized an EU-wide consultation process that led to the development of national youth manifestos and engaged thousands of young people across all member states in various forms of participation spaces: workshops, concerts, smoke-free parties, conferences, debates, surveys and questionnaires, campaigns, etc. The outcome of the national manifestos, together with the outcomes of an online forum set up for the consultation process, was then conveyed and merged in a European Conference, held in Belgium in May 2006, where the first ever European Youth Manifesto for a life without tobacco was developed and created by 25 youth delegations of all the then EU Member States. This was mostly a youth participation process. It aimed to empower young people and bring their voices from the grass root level to the European level decision-makers and policy-makers.

The whole process was youth-led and organised by the European Youth Forum and its member organisations, with the support of the Help Campaign. This was a key factor for the success of the initiative for it allowed for a climate of trust to exist among the participants of the consultation process, which in turn led to a better understanding of the purpose and intent of the whole process, thus making it possible for thousands of young people to engage out of their own free will.

The first stage was a clear consultation process without any interference from external voices or opinions. Young people - smokers and non-smokers alike - were faced with facts and research information on the effects of smoking and tobacco and

they were given the chance to reflect, debate and come up with their own views and opinions on the matter. The outcome was a clear call for "a Life without tobacco" for European youth.

► Contributors notes...

The participation of young people in the decision making process of youth policies and programmes, has been increasing and gaining more importance. In the era of transparency and active citizenship, there is an urgent call for young people to get involved and give their contribution on central topics such as (just as example): environment, education and health.

Within the health sector, the first youth network on alcohol policy was established in Budapest, in March 2008: Alcohol Policy Youth Network (APYN). The Constitutive Meeting of





APYN gathered around 30 participants in the European Youth Centre.

In total, 21 youth organisations, identified among the member organisations of the European Youth Forum (National Youth Councils and International Youth Organisations) are already members of the network and participated in the Constitutive where they gave a great contribution for the elaboration of the strategic plan for the next 2 years.

APYN aims to capacitate young people to be active players at the definition, implementation and evaluation of alcohol policies and programmes at the local, national, European and international levels.

This summer, the network has already planed its first Training Course on “Alcohol and Youth” that is going to happen in Almada, Portugal, from 14th – 19th July. The training will be oriented to provide to the participants the necessary skills to start working on their own projects and will be focused in 7 areas of action: cultural reality, social inclusion, role of youth organisations, underage drinking, marketing and promotion, protection of third parties and impact of price and availability.

APYN’s project is promoted by Eurocare, in partnership with the European Youth Forum, and with the support of DG SANCO of the European Commission, as well as in cooperation with other International Intergovernmental Institutions, such

as WHO and UNICEF. APYN is also a member of Alcohol and Health Forum. ■

For more information please visit our webpage at www.apyn.org



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