



League of Arab States



Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



Call for expression of interest

Symposium

“Arab spring: Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms”

Facilitators and rapporteur

Programme

27-28-29 August 2012, Tunisia

Background of the symposium

The South-Med youth policy cooperation of the partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the League of Arab States (LAS) and other actors started in 2005. The cooperation aims at developing a common understanding and exchange of ideas on specific issues of concern for youth policy in Europe and South Med region. Since 2006, other national and international stakeholders of youth policy in European and South Med countries have become involved and extended the framework of this informal cooperation. The activities undertaken brought together youth researchers, governmental institutions responsible for youth policy and non-governmental youth organisations in European and South Med countries. Among other results, this cooperation has supported the process of the Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (EACMYO), created possibilities for direct exchanges between South Med and European youth leaders through relevant youth fora, and provided opportunities for capacity-building of civil society youth organisations through training courses on human rights education, intercultural dialogue and youth participation. These activities have also greatly contributed to the objectives of intercultural dialogue and exchange among its different partners and stakeholders. The possibility to meet and learn about and with each other is an essential component of dialogue in the same way that cooperation ought to be built on a genuine desire to go beyond stereotypical mutual perceptions.

The process of changes brought about by the "Arab Spring" in various countries provides the context and drives the need for re-visiting this cooperation so as to respond to all stakeholders' expectations and to ensure a long-term perspective. As a first step in this direction, a seminar on "[Empowerment of youth organisations and youth-led civil society initiatives in the South-Mediterranean framework](#)" was organised in Malta with the main aim of providing youth non-governmental organisations and stakeholders with the opportunity to reflect upon recent developments and their implications for the empowerment and participation of young people.

In the context of this event the following issues have been repeatedly raised by young Arab leaders:

- Stakeholders should go beyond the level of analysis of Arab spring and act quickly in order to support (youth) civil society initiatives and progressive forces to establish inclusive democracies;
- A majority of young people who contributed to the developments of Arab spring are no longer participating in the transition to democratic societies: they did not vote in recent elections and do not feel represented by traditional parties;
- With many civil society movements focusing on competing as regards participation in power, other relevant issues such as human rights and equal opportunities risk being downgraded.

In light of these statements, this symposium aims to raise awareness and establish understanding of needs identified by young people in Malta, by supporting a structured dialogue between civil society, policy makers and international stakeholders.

The exchange on future cooperation is being taken up and continued by two events: the Euro-Arab and Mediterranean Youth Leaders Meeting: Networking and Partnership Development (Rome, 7-12 May 2012) organised by the European Youth Forum and the Italian National Youth Council as well as by the League of Arab States Youth Forum and 4th Euro-Arab Meeting (Ramallah/Palestine, 2-7 July).

“Arab spring” and social movements in Europe

The events in a number of countries in the Arab region since the beginning of 2011 have imposed a new perception of young people’s capacities and aspirations. As crucial actors in the processes of political changes, young people have stood up for more freedom, equality and justice. But they also stand up for better future perspectives in education and work, economic and social development.

Young people have legitimate aspirations to be listened to and respected, and to participate in decision-making about their present and their future and that of their nations. Youth is demanding a voice in the transition process towards real democracy. The new political environments need to take into consideration the strong civic engagement of young people. Similarly, the role and organisation of youth policy needs to be reviewed. International youth policy cooperation has also an important role to play.

At the same time, in many countries all over the world, young people are paying a high price for the financial and economic crisis affecting their societies; youth unemployment rates have risen sharply since 2009 and the foundations of the welfare states are being shaken in several European countries. Many young people are growing up in Europe with the perception that their living standards will be lower than that of the preceding generation. The “indignados” movements, very much inspired by young people in Tunisia and Egypt, may be considered the tip of the iceberg of social movements. The new realities the crises call for a review of political processes and practices in favour of more equity, social justice and democratic governance.

Despite the obvious differences between the Arab and European regions, it is clear that both are affected by consequences of globalisation processes. The massive spread of global communication, and particularly social media, has become a new and powerful vehicle for young people to get organised and participate.

The processes of change seem to have been triggered by economic, social and political conditions perceived as unbearable and unsustainable by some young people. Social media have been a vehicle, catalyser and facilitating factor, but it is people, especially young people, who have been the main factors and actors.

Eastern European countries have a recent history of engaging in political transition processes towards democratic societies. Their experiences with regard to the construction of democratic societies and the development of citizenship and participation cultures can provide an enriching background for the current events. Youth organisations in Europe might be interested to learn from the efficient use of social networks and online media by youth organisations in the South-Mediterranean region.

In reaction to the political changes in their Southern neighbouring countries, the European Union and the Council of Europe are strengthening their joint efforts to support these developments towards democracy. Young people in Egypt, Tunisia and other parts of the South-Mediterranean hold the key to the sustainable and peaceful development of their societies based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Understanding and taking into account their expectations and needs is very important for all the institutional stakeholders, such as the League of Arab States, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), national youth policy authorities and youth organisations. The experience of young people from the Maghreb diasporas in Europe and their role in and perception of recent developments can also positively contribute to this process.

Symposium "Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms"

The symposium will be co-organised by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the League of Arab States, the Tunisian governmental authorities, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Euro-Med Platform, the United Nations Population Fund and the European Youth Forum. It follows an invitation from the Tunisian authorities to host the seminar in Tunisia and hereby give an impetus to the current revision of national youth policies in the country.

1. Objectives

Given the recent political changes, the symposium aims at providing a high level setting for the exchange of perspectives on how international and regional organisations, governments and civil society can and must adjust to the new realities from a policy point of view, taking into account existing and future programmes. Awareness should be raised on implications of the proposals made for advocacy and partnerships with existing and emerging youth networks.

In order to come up with well-grounded youth policy recommendations, young people, policy makers and international organisations, supported by experts should be given an opportunity for discussion in the framework of working groups. Ideas voiced by young people during the youth empowerment seminar in Malta and existing instruments of youth policy for enhancing young people's participation and democratic citizenship and their relevance for the regional context will be presented in this framework. Special attention should be paid to the circumstances and specific needs of youth policy actors in transition countries.

In line with the exchange of the symposium, stakeholders engaged in Euro-Arab youth cooperation should develop ideas for further cooperation and coordinating instruments for supporting youth participation and human rights in the process of transition to democracy.

The *objectives* of the symposium are:

- On the basis of the needs analysis made by youth activists in Malta, to discuss how the empowerment of youth in view of active participation in a democratic society could be supported and enhanced through strategies and projects promoting civic participation;
- To present youth policy and participation models and discuss their relevance for the regional context;
- To develop concrete proposals for the development and support of youth participation, youth policy institutions, and youth research;
- To strengthen and support the role of civil society and non-governmental youth led organisations and networks;
- To reinforce and further develop youth cooperation between the Southern Mediterranean region and Europe through the adoption of a conference statement based on the common approaches, objectives and programmes of international organisations, youth policy institutions and youth organisations.

2. Participants

The symposium aims at bringing together 120-150 policy makers, youth leaders and representatives, researchers, youth workers and other experts in youth policy from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region and from the networks and projects of the co-organisers.

3. Call for expression of interest

Roles and competencies

A) Facilitators (2)

The Facilitators' role will be to assist the organising team with the implementation of the programme of the symposium. Their tasks will include the following:

- Coordinating the planning of the facilitation of four Working Groups (each) and facilitating up to two working groups (remaining facilitators will be recruited from among stakeholders)
- Facilitating four sessions, among them
 - August 28: Introduction of participants
 - August 29: Presentation of the 2nd round of working groups' conclusions: ideas, proposals, actions and expectations for future cooperation
 - Presentation of stakeholders' activities in South Mediterranean cooperation (introducing the topic and panellists)

Accordingly, the facilitators should have:

- Good knowledge about Euro-Arab and Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation
- Substantial experience with the role of facilitation;
- Experience of implementing conferences and applying non-formal education methods;
- Very good spoken English and/or French (in addition to Arabic the working languages of the seminar);
- Proven record of facilitation in intercultural settings including a variety of different actors (policy makers, young people, VIPs)
- Familiarity with the concept of knowledge (evidence) based approach to youth policy would be an asset;
- High team work and communication skills;
- Flexibility;

B) Rapporteur

The Rapporteur's role will be to gather all relevant input from the symposium and to draft a substantial report on the activity. This entails:

- Notetaking throughout the different sessions of the seminar
- Coordinating the reports from working groups on 28th and 29th of August
- Preparing the first substantial draft of the report for this activity by 20 September 2012.

The report (notwithstanding the background information for the event, the agenda and the list of participants) should be between 50 and 70 pages long and contain an executive summary of the major conclusions and lines of argumentation.

Accordingly, the Rapporteur should have:

- Good knowledge about Euro-Arab and Euro-Mediterranean youth policy cooperation
- Substantial experience with the role of rapporteur;
- High conceptualising, summarising and writing skills;
- Very good written and spoken English and/or French (the working languages of the seminar in addition to Arabic);
- Ability to layout comprehensive documents including a variety of elements (text, tables, images etc.)
- Good time management and respect for deadlines;
- Attention to detail.

Time involvement and fees:

A) Facilitator

The facilitators will have to participate fully in the event (28-29 August) as well as arrive earlier on 27th August for a preparatory meeting. He/she will also have to be available online for communicating with the rest of the organising team before the event. The fee for this role is 1000 Euros (corresponding to 4 working days at 250 Euro fee per day)

B) Rapporteur

The rapporteur will have to participate fully in the event (28-29 August) as well as arrive earlier on 27th August for a preparatory meeting. He/she will also have to be available online for communicating with the rest of the organising team before and after the event. He/she will have to draft the report after the event. The fee for this role is 2000 Euros (corresponding to 8 working days at 250 Euro fee per day)

Application and contact:

All interested applicants should send their letter of interest and CV to the persons responsible for this activity at the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth: Joachim Schild, External Relations Coordinator and Philipp Boetzelen, Research and Youth Policy Officer. Email: Joachim.Schild@partnership-eu.coe.int; Philipp.Boetzelen@partnership-eu.coe.int

DEADLINE for applications: 13th July 2012, at noon (CET).