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Budapest, 17 December 2003

Citizenship matters: The participation of young women and minorities in Euro-Med youth projects

**A training course
for youth workers and youth leaders
active within Euro-Med youth projects**

Alexandria (Egypt), 19-29 April 2004

In co-operation with the Swedish Institute in Alexandria



**Profile and aims
of the course**



A joint effort for further quality training in Euro-Mediterranean youth work by the Council of Europe and the European Commission

It is often stated that the history of Europe has been shaped by the exchanges and interaction between peoples and cultures across the Mediterranean Sea. What is less obvious at present is to what extent, in which ways and in which spirit such exchanges will happen in the future.

The interdependence among peoples and societies bordering the Mediterranean is often stated as a political objective by all those concerned, but it often fails to materialise in practical, tangible terms. Instead of co-operation, young people are often confronted with suspicion, mistrust, borders and barriers, obstacles to mobility and youth exchanges that are as much the result of a “fortress Europe” mentality as of typical forms of xenophobia, prejudice and ignorance about each other. Yet, young people are crucial for the future of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation.

The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme of the European Commission was set up in 1999 and is based on the shared concern to combat prejudices and stereotypes that prevail across the Mediterranean area and persistently determine mutual perceptions. The Commission’s resolve to increase dialogue and co-operation across the Mediterranean area finds its roots in the Barcelona Process that involved the 15 EU Member States and 12 Meda partner countries¹. For the Council of Europe, the promotion of human rights and the development of democratic forms of participation are crucial objectives to further consolidate pan-European co-operation. The promotion of peace, co-operation and human rights in Europe, however, cannot be disconnected from the realities around Europe, in particular across the Mediterranean area.

It is within this framework that the Council of Europe and the European Commission have agreed to develop together a two-year covenant on Euro-Med youth training. The activities in this covenant are complementary to the activities of both organisations, notably the activities of the Euro-Med Salto Resource Centre.

Youth participation, young women, minority youth, human rights, citizenship...

The Euro-Med co-operation between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries signatory of the Barcelona process, was initiated in order to, among other things, promote greater understanding and co-operation among the peoples of Europe and the Mediterranean area. This co-operation is based on mutual respect, democracy, human rights and intercultural exchange.

The Barcelona process, on which the Euro-Med Youth programme is rooted, proposed the programme as a “permanent dialogue between young people from the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners, to foster mutual understanding among young people (...) and to contribute to the process of democratisation of the civil society.”² Promoting the ideals of a democratic and global citizenship based on human rights and intercultural exchange entails addressing two domains that are often indicators of challenges and needs for change: women’s rights and minorities’ rights.

¹ By “Meda” countries we refer to the 12 countries signatory (alongside the 15 member states of the European Union) of the Barcelona Declaration: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey

² Internet site of the European Commission’s Youth Programme

From a global human rights perspective, the extent to which women's rights are violated is disturbing. One of the most worrying factors is that the violations are not the result of abuse of power by state institutions: very often they happen in everyday life and the perpetrators may be those closest to the victims, such as occurs in violence against women. The phenomena of sexual discrimination and gender-based violence are, *alas*, common to young women in Europe and in the Mediterranean societies. It is not determined by culture, religion or levels of economic development, even though it is fair to assume that these factors also play a role.

In this respect, the participation of young women in youth projects is not just a quantitative matter. It is probably first and foremost a matter of doing youth work in a way that is inclusive of young women and that contributes to addressing, through education and action, situations of gender-based discrimination.

Similarly, if a "civilisation should be judged by its treatment of minorities" (M. Gandhi), we have to admit that there is room for a lot of progress when it comes to the respect of minorities' rights, equality of opportunities and, more generally, respect for cultural diversity as a key element for equality-driven and cohesive societies. The access of young people from minority backgrounds (religious, ethnic, social and national minorities) to the Youth Programme is one of its priorities, together with addressing racism, discrimination and xenophobia. This is so because minority young people often have less access to the programmes.

Similarly, intercultural learning, the key educational approach and objective of youth exchanges, is meaningless if it is not also applied to the way we deal with difference and diversity in our daily environment. This means the use of inclusive approaches to minority groups and communities.

If the levels of participation of, and discrimination against, young women and minority youth in youth projects are concerns for all countries and societies in Europe and the Mediterranean area, they are also themes that often lend themselves to the creation of stereotypical and ethnocentric views among those involved in European and Mediterranean countries. This process may be determined by ignorance and by prejudice, which together make it difficult for these issues to be addressed in educational projects in a non-confrontational way. One of the basic competencies of youth workers active in Euro-Med youth projects is, therefore, the ability to address these issues with young people and with others involved in youth projects. In this way, the youth workers can be multipliers and support young people in their own learning processes on these matters.

The Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, partner in the Euro-Med Youth Covenant with the European Commission, has intercultural learning, democratic citizenship and human rights education with young people at the core of its programme. The experiences accumulated all indicate that youth workers can be effective multipliers and agents of change in these matters, in the same way that all youth projects should be "little schools" of citizenship and participation.

In this framework, the training course seeks to explore the issues related to minorities' rights and women's rights in European and Mediterranean societies in a manner that can itself serve as an example and set guidelines for future activities on these issues. It seeks to explore conceptual proposals and analyses of the different realities and to provide indications of how these can be integrated into Euro-Med youth projects. The contrasts in form and conditions for youth work between each country are an additional challenge and motivation to seek a common ground of understanding.

The course is also part of the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme, which aims to bring human rights education into the mainstream of youth work practice.

Aims of the course

The training course aims to develop a common understanding about the challenges to the participation of women and minorities in youth projects and to identify educational principles to promote global citizenship of young people in Euro-Med projects.

Specific objectives:

- To develop participants' knowledge and understanding of women's and minorities' rights as universal human rights and their reality within the societies concerned with the Euro-Med Youth programme;
- To explore existing challenges and obstacles related to the participation of young women and minority young people in European and Mediterranean countries;
- To provide participants with methodological insights and approaches in using human rights education and intercultural learning in youth programmes and projects for social cohesion and citizenship;
- To discuss and identify common educational principles and criteria for the promotion of the participation of women and minorities in Euro-Med youth projects;
- To share experiences and projects of best practice in citizenship promotion through intercultural youth exchanges;
- To extend participants' knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural realities of young people across the Mediterranean area in general, and of Egypt in particular;
- To provide participants with useful information and contacts for future Euro-Med youth projects.

Methodology and programme of the course

The experiences and realities of participants, as youth workers and youth leaders, will be the starting point of the programme and of the learning process. The course is designed to give participants the opportunity to experience and reflect upon the issues of women's rights and minorities' rights in European and Mediterranean societies. Invited guests and experts will provide proposals for reflection in a process based on non-formal education and participant-centred methodologies. Thus, the course will be also a mutual learning situation, where participants can compare their approaches and concerns in a dialogical intercultural approach and environment. The use of experiential methods and workshops will strengthen the practical side of the course.

The programme outlined below will be further elaborated and revised by the team of trainers and facilitators of the course, taking into account also the expectations and needs expressed by the participants. A detailed and revised programme will be sent to all participants invited to the course. This outline should be looked upon as merely a draft version.

Programme outline

Monday, 19 April

Arrival of participants

Tuesday, 20 April

Introductions and getting to know each other

Exploring the key issues of the course

Wednesday, 21 April

Exchange of realities regarding the participation of minorities and women
Exploring the multicultural realities of Alexandria

Thursday 22 and Friday 23 April

Presentations and discussion on challenges to women's and minorities' rights.

Saturday 24 April

Free day – visit to Cairo and Giza.

Sunday 25 April

Women's and minorities' rights as human rights
Approaches and practices of human rights education

Monday 26 April

Thematic workshops

Tuesday 27 April

Criteria and principles for further inclusion of young women and minority young people

Round-table discussion with local associations and guests

Wednesday 28 April

Work on follow-up projects
Evaluation of the course

Thursday 29 April

Departure of participants

Working languages

The course will be held in English and in Arabic with simultaneous interpretation.

Profile of participants

The training course is open for youth workers and youth leaders who:

- are resident in one of the Council of Europe's member states or in the Mediterranean states concerned with the Barcelona process;
- are directly involved or interested in youth projects with minorities and women;
- are interested in making contacts and in developing future Euro-Med youth projects;
- are active in youth organisations or youth projects with a focus on the citizenship opportunities and access for young women and minority young people;
- are committed to attending the full duration of the course and to contributing to the fulfilment of its objectives;
- are motivated to develop their competence in human rights education and its practice in youth work projects;
- are able to work in English or Arabic.

The team of trainers will select a group of 30 participants, respecting the criteria outlined above, as well as geographical and cultural balances within the Euro-Med framework. Applications from youth workers with a minority background are particularly welcome.

Financial conditions of participation

- Board and lodging are provided and paid for by the Swedish Institute in Alexandria
- Travel expenses are fully reimbursed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission's Covenant according to the rules of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport.
- An enrolment fee of 20 EURO is due from each participant in the course. This fee will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Procedure for applications

Candidates must send the enclosed application form directly to the EYCB by post, fax or e-mail. The accepted candidates will be informed by mid-March 2004 and will subsequently receive a course file with additional information and programme.

Deadline for applications: 23 February 2004

Applications must be sent to:
European Youth Centre Budapest
Zivatar utca 1-3
H-1024 BUDAPEST, Hungary
Tel: + 36 1 438 1048
Fax: + 36 1 212 4076
<http://www.eycb.coe.int>

Other activities within the Covenant on Euro-Med Youth Co-operation in the field of training

The Covenant on Euro-Med Youth Co-operation in the field of training is a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The aim of this partnership is to provide further quality training and learning opportunities for youth workers and youth leaders active in Euro-Mediterranean youth projects. The two-year programme includes various education and training activities, such as:

- Long-term Training course "**Youth participation and intercultural learning through Euro-Med Youth Projects**", EYC Budapest February 2004 - February 2005
- **Training course for trainers** to be organised in November 2004 at the European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary, in co-operation with the Salto Euro-Med Resource Centre
- Production of a **T-Kit on Euro-Med youth work**, in co-operation with the Partnership on Training.

The Swedish Institute in Alexandria

Sweden has a long record of active engagement in issues of North-South relations, and of developmental co-operation with countries of the South. Today around one in fifty Swedes has a recent background from the Middle East and North Africa. Since Sweden entered the European Union in 1995 it has participated in the ongoing efforts towards closer co-operation between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours as expressed in the Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

The Swedish Institute in Alexandria was set up in 2000 in an agreement between the governments of Sweden and Egypt. It seeks to develop means to increase broad contacts and co-operation with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, to facilitate dialogues on issues of common concern, and to contribute to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The experience and expertise of the Institute in Euro-Med co-operation and their support for the course are a significant contribution to its chances of success. <http://www.swedalex.org>

The Human Rights Education Youth Programme



The Human Rights Education Youth Programme was started by the Council of Europe in 2000 and is currently part of the Directorate of the Youth and Sport's work priority "Youth Promoting Human Rights and Social Cohesion". The programme has the following objectives for the period 2003-2005:

- to identify responses to persistent violations of human dignity, such as social exclusion, violence, racism, intolerance and discrimination;
- to empower young people to develop activities which address the racism, xenophobia, discrimination and gender-based forms of violence that affect them;
- to develop educational tools and methodological resources for use by practitioners in human rights education;
- to promote and support the pilot projects and training activities on human rights education across Europe;
- to bring together European networks of trainers, multipliers and youth organisations that are active in promoting human rights.

In addition to this training course, the Human Rights Education Youth Programme includes, for 2004, the following activities on minorities and women's rights:

- **Long-term training course "Diversity and Cohesion"**, on minority youth participation and social cohesion (Budapest and Strasbourg, March 2004-March 2005);
- Seminar "**Preventing Islamophobia and its consequences for young European Muslims**", EYC Budapest, 2-5 June 2004;
- Training course "**Developing awareness about gender-based violence**", EYC Budapest, 10-17 June 2004.

For further information on these activities, please consult <http://www.coe.int/hre>