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The Role of Research in Youth Policy and Youth Work Development in the Broader Euro-Mediterranean Context

27-30 November 2006, Cairo, Egypt

SEMINAR REPORT

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Budapest, January 2010

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SEMINAR REPORT

edited by Maria Koutatzi

General rapporteur

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Introduction

The seminar “The role of research in youth policy and youth work development in the broader Euro-Med context” was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 27 - 30 November 2006. It received a lot of interest and 52 participants from 26 different countries participated. The seminar was a result of a new cooperation between different actors in Europe and in the Arab world: the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the League of Arab States, the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, the National Board for Youth Affairs in Sweden, the National Council of Youth in Egypt, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

1. Background

In the recent years initiatives regarding international cooperation in youth policy development have created different partnerships and involved different organisations. The seminar in Cairo in 2006 was a result of cooperation on youth policy development, which emerged within the framework of the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission (the Youth Partnership) and from participants within the Euro-Med Youth Programme. Since 1999 it was possible for youth workers and representatives from non-governmental organizations in Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, the Palestinian Authority, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom to meet and to participate in different study visits and trainings arranged within the programme. It was in this context of youth exchanges, human rights education, intercultural dialogue and voluntary service that wishes to know more about youth policy development were expressed and developed.

In 2004, the Youth Partnership, the Swedish Institute in Alexandria and the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, developed the idea together with the Ministry of Youth in Egypt and started their cooperation in youth policy, which resulted in the seminar: ‘Youth Policy – here and now!’ (Alexandria 11-13 September 2005). It focused on definition, implementation and monitoring of youth policy. It gathered participants from six countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Palestinian Authority, Slovakia and Sweden.

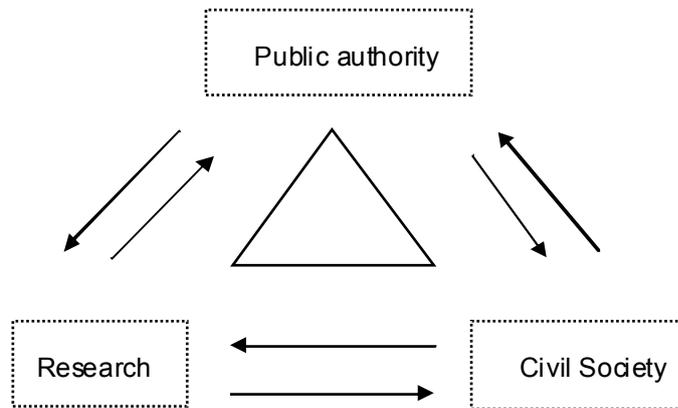
One of the results of the seminar was the idea to organise further events on the topic of youth policy development. An extended cooperation involved the League of Arab States and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in the planning and implementation of the first round-table discussion about youth research in the MENA-region, held in Cairo on 30 May 2006. It was followed by the seminar: “The role of research in the development of youth policy and youth work in a broader Euro-Med context” (Cairo, Egypt, 27-30 November 2006), focusing on health, gender, migration and mobility, participation, education and employment of young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The two seminars will be followed by a third event devoted to youth policy development, planned to take place in 2007. It will focus on youth participation and the role of civil society. Hence the three seminars will cover the three elements of the triangle of good governance in youth policy¹.

¹ The triangle, sometimes referred to as “*magic triangle*”, is the structured “trialogue” between public authority, civil society and the research community, and its aim is more transparency and better governance in youth policy.

The triangle of good governance

The participants in the seminars represented different professions and therefore various roles in youth policy development. Researchers, policy makers and youth workers/non-governmental organizations are all a part of the triangle of good governance promoted by the Council of Europe as a good practice of youth policy development.



- Public authority represents the decision-making power regarding public budgets, legislation, continuity and organisation of public support structures.
- The research community produces knowledge, provides relevant data and raises questions with regard to young people's values, aspirations, roles and living conditions.
- Civil society is the practice field, it reflects the context in which young people live, may exercise participation and social action with or without support of youth workers; it is here where things actually happen.

It is not only that they are a part of the triangle that is essential. Those are the interrelations and interactions between them that make the *'magic triangle'* of youth policy development function, that condition the quality of this *trialogue*. Cooperation is the key word in making a sustainable youth policy, which needs to be evidence-based and to involve young people in the civil society as a resource.

2. Aim, objectives and methodology

When the first international round table on "Youth policy and research development in the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework" was organised in May 2006 in Cairo, it was an attempt to extend cooperation and exchange experiences and information with key partners in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The round table acknowledged the need to associate researchers in the policy-making process and to promote their role in gathering reliable information about the youth world.

Many of the issues raised at the round table were integrated in the planning and formulating objectives of this seminar. It aimed at looking into the particular role of research in the development of youth policy in order to develop a process of exchange, mutual cooperation and joint actions between the fields of youth research, youth work and youth policy development in the broader Euro-Mediterranean context.

Indeed, a space of true and honest interaction between European and Arab participants and between researchers, youth workers and governmental officials was created during the

seminar. Despite difficulties in understanding each other because of different languages (national language, cultural language, professional language, etc.), in a spirit of sincere respect, tolerance and above all a commitment to youth, bridges of communication have been constructed.

Objectives of the seminar

- To identify strategic partnerships concerning youth research in the field of youth policy development in view of improved cooperation in the broader Euro-Mediterranean context.
- To promote possibilities for closer interaction between youth policy, youth research and youth work within the Euro-Med Youth programme and the Youth Partnership.
- To identify priorities and proposals for further development of youth policy cooperation in the broader Euro-Mediterranean context.
- To strengthen the process of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the youth policy field, leading to a foreseen high-level conference in 2008.
- To promote a stronger involvement of the civil society and the research world in the youth field.
- To learn about the role of religion, political philosophy, culture, and social stratification in the Euro-Mediterranean context.
- To develop a down-to-earth approach to research in the Euro-Mediterranean youth work: the role of action research, field studies, participative research, research as a learning process between young people subject to research and researchers.

The seminar's methodology was based on a mutual learning situation, where participants could share, compare and learn from each other's experiences. The experiences and realities of participants, as youth researchers, youth workers and governmental representatives, were therefore the starting point of the programme and the core of the learning process. In fact, at the opening of the seminar, all partners stressed the importance of this process of exchange and sharing. In particular, Christer Hallerby, State Secretary at the Ministry of Justice of Sweden, acknowledged those as "a good method for improving youth policy." Recommendations of the seminar are also following this line by suggesting further sharing and networking as an empowering tool for all stakeholders, who will be better informed, will have more experiences, data and realities to discern and will be better equipped to make appropriate decisions in the benefit of young people.

3. Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation

"The conference is a sign of hope", concluded Jan Henningson, Director of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, in this moment in history, when solidarity between Europeans and Arabs is encountering difficulties. Meetings, such as this seminar, where European and Arab professionals meet and share ideas and experience are important because "solidarity needs nourishment."

Cooperation of youth issues stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean context was recognised as central to youth policy formulation and implementation at all moments of the seminar. This has also been the conclusion of the first round-table (mentioned above), held in May 2006: Euro-Mediterranean youth policy co-operation is important as a platform to learn and improve our practices of youth policies; it is also important to promote intercultural dialogue and co-operation among youth and research professionals.

As Marzia Conte from DG Education and Culture of the European Commission stated: “This seminar will help us to find bridges for youth policies in Europe and the Euro-Med region.” Dr. Mohamed Solbeih, welcoming the seminar in the name of the League of Arab States, said that regionalism is the best way to deal with globalisation. In this context, the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue can help develop the human resources needed for the creation and/or reformulation of youth policies. This form of co-operation may be a cornerstone for the creation of a mechanism for sustainable dialogue between youth in the Arab and European regions, for the exchange of views and opinions, so much needed to remove existing physical and mental barriers.

Dr. Ali El-Din Hilal, Professor at Cairo University, addressed some contradictions and challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and reminded the participants that it was focused on five thematic areas: citizenship, minorities, environment, racism and gender. However, these were the priority-areas that the Europeans identified for their cooperation with the Arab countries. Thus, he suggested to the Arab countries to establish their own priorities for this cooperation, since they are full partners, who should consequently increase their ownership of the process.

4. Intercultural Dialogue and Human Rights key to Euro-Mediterranean co-operation

In his paper “Euro-Mediterranean co-operation in the field of youth – towards a knowledge based approach on youth policy development”², Peter Lauritzen, Head of Youth Department, Council of Europe, mentioned that “co-operation as strived for within the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation of the partnership agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Union respects difference, but needs agreement on a common framework of societal references. In the youth field these are human rights, also understood as core values for youth and community work; participation and citizenship; access and inclusion (with regard to education, employment, decent living conditions and leisure). Differences of cultural perception need to be outspoken.” A prerequisite in the communication process is the equal position of all partners, where there is no dominant culture or best model. Even models (e.g. in youth policy) that seem to have succeeded need to be evaluated and contextualised before being absorbed or adopted.

A successful Euro-Mediterranean cooperation (where all partners can see benefits for youth) can only be based on the principles of intercultural dialogue. Intercultural dialogue can not be taken as an “extra” or as a luxury. “It must be part of daily work and concerns, both in addressing the causes of polarised perceptions of each other and in putting into practice activities that help re-affirming the fundamental equality in dignity of every human being and the respect among peoples of different cultural and religious traditions” stressed Ralf-René Weingartner.

Intercultural dialogue requires from all to remain open-minded and show high level of respect, tolerance, appreciation of the difference and compromise.

Dr. Nabil Abdel Fattah, Al-Ahram Centre of Political Studies, pointed out that prevailing cultures of “fear” and “hatred” have erected many obstacles to Euro-Mediterranean relationships. These cultures are very dangerous and are reinforced in various ways, but mainly by:

- lack of information and/or correct information that leads to untrue images of each other;
- increase of radical/fundamentalist opinions and movements which close any possible door to dialogue and understanding.

² Report of the International Round-Table “Youth policy and research development in the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework”, 13 June 2006, p. 16, DJS/EYCB/EUROMED-YR/2006/23

How to promote then a culture of dialogue in which young people are called to play an essential role? How can youth research help in supporting a culture of dialogue? If youth organisations can activate this culture, how can they extend it to the whole of society? In this direction, Dr. Nabil Abdel Fattah recommends the implementation of projects like: research on the images of each other (European and Arab) especially the youth images; renewal of each other's images; re-training of media workers; a forum for comparative research in sociology and religion; and the translation of works/ researches/ policies to develop a more comprehensive image of each other.

"The necessary framework for intercultural learning is human rights" underlined Rui Gomes, Head of Unit Education and Training of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. For the Council of Europe, promotion and respect of human rights are crucial for consolidation of Pan-European co-operation. This could inspire Euro-Mediterranean co-operation. Human rights are also the framework that can allow a successful fight against terrorism and extremism. In this context, the Council of Europe produced a powerful tool for Human Rights Education with Young People, called Compass, or Ittijahat, already translated in 22 languages. The tool is used broadly by youth workers in Europe and in many Arab countries; a living evidence that "human rights are not relative and belong to all".

5. Youth

Lisa Modée, Research Officer at the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, reminded all that policy makers and researchers need definitions. Therefore defining youth, or at least finding a common understanding of youth, is important in discussions about youth policy. The definition of youth simply in terms of age (an age-group with specific needs) is probably the most commonly used in policy formulation³.

Youth can also be defined from the viewpoints of different disciplines. We should bear in mind that young people have never been a homogeneous social group, but rather a category with internal divisions defined, at the very least, by gender and social class. Dr. Metka Kuhar, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, notified that "in European youth research, researchers are still pivoting upon the question of whether youth is to be defined as an age group, as a transitional phase, with status-passages to adulthood being its main characteristic, or as a distinct phase in the life-course, with characteristics all of its own."

The present condition of transitional perspective shows young people oscillating between being young and adult in different situations, in different areas of youth life. Most life choices are now reversible, and most people can autonomously decide how to shape their own destination. In short, life courses are increasingly individualised and fragmented.

Regardless of the agreed definition, Tomas Knuts, Åbo Akademi University, Finland suggests that youth policy stakeholders always consider that the following:

- Children and youth are competent individuals;
- All young people, not only the resourceful, are entitled to be recognised;
- Every young person is entitled to experience being successful in everyday life;
- Young people deserve being supported in taking initiative, being enterprising and active citizens in order to increase their opportunities and choices at local level;

³ International law and international statistics define youth as the age period between 15 and 24 years. This is also the understanding of the League of Arab States. The Council of Europe and the European Union refer to 13 to 30 age range.

- Young people are to be seen as protagonists developing and implementing their own ideas and interests, supported by adults.

6. Youth Policy

As quoted from the paper *Essentials of a youth policy in the Council of Europe* written by Peter Lauritzen, head of the Youth and Sport Department in the Council of Europe, youth policies are cross-sectoral. This was also stated by Dr Safei Eddin Kharboush, National Council of Youth in Egypt, in the seminar “Youth Policy - here and now!” organised in 2005. Unlike other policy areas youth policies cover several domains such as access to education and the labour market; culture and cultural production; housing and urban or rural development; leisure time and sports; participation, civil society and citizenship; criminal justice; health, sexuality, reproductivity and healthy life-styles; prevention with regard to substance abuse and risky life-styles; welfare and social rights; military service and conscientious objection; non-formal education and learning; associative life; mobility and exchanges; career guidance and social assistance; counselling and information.”

According to the Swedish model, presented by Christer Hallerby, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, Sweden, a successful youth policy relies on three pillars:

1. Participation: youth and youth organisations are consulted by the government;
2. Young people are considered a resource for today and the future; they are not seen as a problem;
3. A holistic perspective of youth and their lives through multi-disciplinary research.

Astrid Utterström, Chairperson of the Joint Council on Youth, the statutory organ of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, emphasised that youth policy has greater impact, legitimacy, quality and sense of ownership if young people (as well as youth workers and youth researchers) are also included in the process of shaping, implementing and evaluating this policy.

Dr. Mofeed Shebab, Head of the Executive Bureau for the Arab Council of Youth Ministers, added that “in youth policy all government institutions (executive, legislative, educational and cultural) should cooperate to increase efficiency.” He also saw important to the national and local youth policy the integration of international youth-related conventions and other agreements.

Youth policy implementation needs to be accompanied by systematic evaluation. Developing and introducing a new policy is not sufficient. Youth policies in the Arab region should be reformulated and updated to better capture recent development and progress, e.g. the benefits and challenges of globalisation. A *National Youth Policy Review* process, similar to the one applied in the framework of intergovernmental cooperation in the Council of Europe, could also start in the Arab region. This would mean reviewing all policies and laws relating to youth and including mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. Dr. Ali El Din Hilal, Professor of Political Sciences at Cairo University, pointed out the need of researchers and youth being involved in such an evaluation process because “it is wrong for the governmental structures to evaluate their own policies [...] the provider cannot evaluate alone the service provided”.

An integral part of a successful youth policy is the principle of co-management, meaning that decisions are jointly taken by policy makers and young people. This is the basis of youth policy making at the Council of Europe, as well as the practice in some countries in Europe. In the Arab region, it was pointed out, there is a need to create an institutional framework

based on the principle of co-management (governmental and non-governmental) in such a way that there is an agreed common strategy for youth, and where activities are aimed at achieving this strategy. This would minimise incidents of double work and repetition and increase the policy effectiveness for the welfare of young people.

Are decision-makers willing to cooperate, to listen to and incorporate the results/recommendations coming from researchers and practitioners? Are they open to participating in regular meetings, where issues can be shared and discussed?

It is “enough” if policy makers take into account the youth perspective in all their decisions. Tomas Knuts presented the example of a checklist with simple questions like: do we have knowledge about young people’s situation and wishes? What consequences will our decision have on them? Can youth take part in the implementation? etc.. The checklist is used at the local government level in Sweden and it is meant to remind decision-makers of the youth perspective before and after their decisions. Involvement of young people themselves and youth researchers is the best way to secure the correct answers.

A relatively new and useful tool for youth policy stakeholders in Europe is the European Journal on Youth Policy “Forum 21”, presented by Stefan Becsky, coordinator of the journal’s editorial board. Recommendations were made to either include articles relating to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, or translate the journal in Arabic, or produce a similar journal specialising to the Euro- Mediterranean cooperation.

7. Youth Research

Speakers argued that a multi-disciplinary or cross-sectorial comparative research can provide a more comprehensive description and analysis of young people and their lives. Some of the dimensions mentioned were: transition to adulthood, education, labour market/employment, identities, lifestyles, culture, generational relationships, gender, information society, mobile economic and cultural environment, and migration. The value of youth research in the Euro-Mediterranean context is exactly to identify the areas of hot priority for cooperation between Arab and European sides as well as those areas where cooperation is not possible yet.

Tomas Knuts considered Action Research as most appropriate in youth research because it associates research and practice. Collecting data and working with mere indicators is not sufficient. For academic research to be relevant and useful “data has to be processed, interpreted and connected to the reality underlying it”⁴, a point that was re-affirmed during the seminar by several speakers, both European and Arab.

An erroneous belief exists that there is lack of research in the Arab countries, but what is lacking is knowledge of the existence of such research as well as a mechanism of its consolidation. Marking a significant shift in perception, the findings increasingly show a need to develop youth policies instead of simple activities/interventions. Dr. Abdel Bassat Abdel Muty, Coordinator of the Arab Youth Empowerment Project at the League of Arab States, spoke about the need for a different conceptual framework for youth research in the Arab countries, where youth is considered as an effective social group and not a problem.

“Do we want the future generation to photocopy the previous ones? Or do we want each generation to have their own reading of reality because situation changes?” Therefore “we need more research but we also need more youth involved in the research to better study the youth”, concluded Dr Ali El Din Hilal and suggested two approaches-methodologies for youth

⁴ International Round Table, “Youth Policy and Research development in the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework: Cairo, Egypt, 30 May 2006

research in the Arab context: (a) socialisation or social upbringing or social monitoring, and (b) youth participation.

In Europe, different approaches were introduced, partly following the changing definition of youth:

- 1) Descriptive youth research with focus on quantitative aspects of what young people do and how these different youth indicators are correlated.
- 2) Youth cultural research looking at new youth cultures and lifestyles - mainly qualitative research.
- 3) Youth research focused on understanding individualisation.
- 4) Praxis or evaluation research especially looking at the development of political youth initiatives and youth projects.

A remarkable feature of today's youth research in Europe, as pointed out by Dr. Metka Kuhar, is a methodological pluralism: national and international large-scale surveys are matched with small-scale local studies of qualitative methodology.

The role of youth research in the development of youth work and youth policy in Europe is increasingly recognised and youth research is gradually integrated in youth policy making. European youth research community is committed to the social co-production of useful knowledge and anchors this in the magic triangle (Luxembourg Presidency Conference, June 2005) between research, policy and practice. Research-based knowledge complements experiential and practical knowledge.

In terms of youth research, the recommendations could be summarised as:

- to produce and to provide more and better knowledge,
- to encourage enhanced dialogues and networks, and
- to create a database of experts, resource persons and tools.

8. Recommendations

The role of research in youth policy and youth work development in the broader Euro-Mediterranean context was discussed and analysed in five thematic foci (in five respective working groups): (a) Youth Participation, (b) Gender; (c) Education and Employment, (d) Health, (e) Mobility and Migration. The reasons for choosing these themes were their relation to challenges at present. In research it is for example an established fact that the "youth period" is prolonged due to longer education and unemployment, which in turn has effects on everyday life of young people such as health and the possibilities for young men and women to participate in the society. We also know that the population structure is changing, Europeans are growing older and they are having fewer children, while the opposite applies in the Arab world. Still the political and administrative institutions are dominated by people in the 50+ age category, in both regions.

The working groups were asked to:

- identify and discuss the key issues and objectives for youth research and youth policy in relation to the topic;
- discuss the (added) value of international youth cooperation in the specific thematic area, including Euro-Mediterranean cooperation;
- make proposals for follow-up work on the subject;
- discuss the role of youth research in (youth) policy definition (in the specific thematic area);

- discuss the role of youth work and civil society (youth organisations) in relation to the specific thematic area.

Full reports of the working groups follow in Appendix 1.

Youth Participation

Youth participation is not only a priority theme in youth policy but it is also inherent to the process of youth policy formulation and implementation. Youth participation is about real opportunities young people have to influence their life situation in all spheres. It is important to listen to what young people have to say because they are experts of their own living conditions. At the same time, it is important to also include youth research recognising its distinctive feature, i.e. the capacity to deliver quantitative and qualitative descriptions and analyses that are more detached from individual and political perspectives.

In the Euro-Mediterranean context, *closer cooperation* and *more-structured exchange* of all youth policy stakeholders is needed for strong youth participation.

1. At the policy level:

- To activate a high-level Committee of Ministers in charge of Youth Affairs from Euro-Mediterranean countries, with a possible meeting in 2008; to create a similar committee, but at the level of local authorities (e.g. mayors);
- To enhance existing partnerships between municipalities in the Euro-Mediterranean area, or forge new ones, with a particular focus on youth;
- To adopt a declaration on Youth Participation by the partners of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation;
- To extend Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to officially include other Arab countries, i.e. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, etc.

2. In research:

- To set up and maintain a website to include database of researchers, studies and reports;
- To create a database of researchers willing to cooperate with NGOs and policy makers in the area of youth;
- To translate research journal “Forum21” into Arabic and to develop a similar journal that will focus on Euro-Mediterranean region;
- Use the “action research” methodology on issues related to youth participation.

3. At civil society level:

- The Council of Europe should coordinate publications in Euro-Mediterranean partnership, to produce a single comprehensive bimonthly newsletter publicising all relevant activities (projects, workshops, research, etc.) This could be done through a submission form on the common website.
- Partnerships among local NGOs in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region could lead to professional exchange visits (e.g. media organisations) as well as joint creation of micro-funds to enable micro-level participation projects. This could be done through NGO networking through the website mentioned previously.

- Regional capacity building activities in the area of local government engagement could be organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe) for European and Mediterranean youth, based on the Revised Charter for Youth Participation in Local Government and political participation techniques should be more broadly promoted.

Gender

On the one hand, the working group talked about equality and equal opportunities for all youth and what equality and equal opportunities represent in each context. On the other hand, they analysed the difficulty in changing attitudes, stereotypes and values even when laws and legislation have changed. Comparative research was identified as essential to youth policy and youth work on gender in the Euro-Mediterranean context. Proposals for follow-up were formulated as follows:

- Building networks with continuous contacts through dialogue and discussion on the internet
- A forum and/or newsletter for participants of the seminar to continue communication and to work on the recommendations
- Organising meetings with young people at regional, national and international level
- Working with the same issues with young people from different cultures
- Comparative research on young people's daily life
- Research on youth mobility.

Education and Labour

In the area of Education and Labour, the working group came up with the following recommendations specifying the role of research as well as the needed steps in policy formulation and policy implementation. It tried to emphasise those issues that need to be dealt with in all countries despite the existing big differences:

- To analyse the demand of the labour market and reflect the findings in the education system
- To identify roles of formal, informal and non-formal education and to recognise non-formal education as inseparable part of an education system
- To provide career guidance to young graduates
- To integrate in (or complement with) formal education the learning of skills
- To change the perception of people on the matter of blue collar versus white collar jobs
- To minimise barriers to student mobility and unify the education system and recognise qualifications in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region
- To ensure equal access and participation in the education system and the labour market both by youngwomen and men by offering appropriate options
- To create the necessary environment for people with fewer possibilities to have equal opportunities in the education system and on the labour market.

Health

The list of issues addressed in the working group of health was extensive and covering a large spectrum of topics, like addiction, sexual health, mental health, disabilities, eating disorders, wars and conflicts, participation, health and environment.

The identification and deconstruction of taboos and stereotypes can be a special role for youth work. Some recommendations for the future are:

- To develop a statistical knowledge of health of young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region
- To identify and disseminate adapted methods for approaching youth issues in matters of health
- To change attitudes and values in research and policy making
- To move from a risk vision of youth towards a positive participative approach
- To benchmark scientific tools and methods to “study” youth
- To reinforce the importance of a balanced governance triangle (i.e. policy-research-civil society)
- To support NGOs by scientific work, e.g. by providing accurate statistical data.

Migration

Among the important issues on the area of migration there is the need to recognise the developmental role of migration for both sending and hosting countries. Research and policy should focus less on the problems of migration. The working group suggested a complex methodology in dealing with migration, taking into account both the triangle (policy-research-civil society) and the other four thematic areas of gender, health, participation, education and employment. The main recommendations are:

- To enhance research on international migration and support related research institutions/ centres towards a better understanding of the migration process in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- To establish regional and national databases giving priority to data-collection policy and to develop oriented research with a gender perspective.
- To strengthen dialogue, coordination and exchange between decision-makers, researchers, migrant institutions and youth organisations dealing with international migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region towards:
 - a better exchange of information
 - the creation of networks
 - humanising and unifying migration policies
 - maximising development benefits of migration, and
 - facing the challenges and negative impact of migration.

9. Conclusions and Follow-up

An undeniable affirmation coming out of this seminar is the need for amplified cooperation and complementarity between research, policy and practice in the youth field as well as between youth stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean region especially due to increased challenges in the last years. Foundations have been built gradually and this process must continue also by enlarging the range of activities.

The seminar became a micro-cosmos of sharing, exchange and learning between European and Arab youth stakeholders. A strong recommendation for follow-up that emerged in the

discussions, especially in the working groups, is to set up or strengthen (existing) networks of exchange.

It is extremely difficult to measure and monitor the personal impact of such an event, unless participants communicate widely the actions and projects that they have undertaken as a result of the seminar: thus, the recommendation for the creation of a (internet-based) forum for sharing and exchange.

Luiza Bara, Head of Youth Policy and Youth Work Development at the European Youth Forum, concluded by indicating the way in which the European Youth Forum will accompany the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation:

- To promote the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum
- To develop a focus on cooperation with the Middle East
- To continue efforts in the area of inter-religious dialogue
- To support initiatives fighting islamophobia and antisemitism in Europe.

Rui Gomes, Head of Unit Education and Training of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe presented actions for immediate follow-up:

- Production of the report of the seminar
- Immediate dissemination of the conclusions of the seminar
- Trainings for human rights leaders in Morocco and in Budapest
- Conferences on intercultural dialogue and inter-religious dialogue (2007)
- Hopefully, enlargement of the partnership to other partners (e.g. Anna Lindh Foundation)

Hans-Joachim Schild, Coordinator of the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, proposed the following actions for further co-operation:

- to invite a limited number of Euro-Mediterranean region researchers as observers to the annual network meeting of European youth researchers
- to invite young researchers of Euro-Mediterranean region to present research papers in the planned youth research seminar on Intercultural Dialogue in 2008 and potentially in other upcoming thematic research seminars (employment, equal opportunities, etc.), and
- to co-operate in providing information and knowledge via the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, i.e. background knowledge on political priorities, country information on youth policy structures and practice, research papers, expert database.

A. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Executive Summary

The following report concentrates on the importance of Youth Participation in relation to core themes and questions. The report firstly seeks to outline the definition of Youth Participation followed by a summary of recommendations, which are evaluated throughout the report. In examining the report the group focused on answering important key questions such as “*What should be done?*” and perhaps most importantly “*How this should be done?*” The group’s approach to examining Youth Participation was based on the three sides of the *triangle* – namely Policy, Civil Society, Research.

Youth Participation

- Defining Youth Participation to be any social process in which every person shares authority to be actively involved in influencing the decision-making process, that would affect a person’s needs and interests at a socio-economic and political level; to which every person has a right.
- Examining the decision-making process to include design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Recognising youth participation to include important pre-requisites such as freedom of expression/choice, accountability, transparency, equality and equity, accessibility to information, robust institutions, empowerment, and increasing trust at socio-economic and political levels.
- Concluding Youth Participation as a necessity for a healthy society, an indication of future political status, and a contributing factor.

Recommendations...

...At policy level

Overview:

- All partner organisations to make Euro-Mediterranean cooperation a priority with regard to youth.
- Activate the high level committee of youth ministers from Euro-Mediterranean countries (2008 meeting) and ensure youth participation.
- Develop separate committee of mayors or local authorities working with youth.
- The League of Arab States, the European Union and the Council of Europe to adopt an official declaration regarding youth participation.
- Enhance existing partnerships between municipalities and, if needed, forge new ones in Euro-Mediterranean area with activities with a particular focus on youth.
- Officially extend Euro-Mediterranean partnership to include all Arab countries (Yemen, Saudi Arabia, others which are not currently included).
- Civil society to lobby governments to facilitate youth participation.
- Develop a new study exchange program, modelled on Erasmus, for the promotion of broader Euro-Mediterranean exchange.

Specific Recommendations

Based on the current series of workshops, we recommend officially extending “Euro-Med” to include all Arab states which are otherwise not able to participate.

The existing high level committee of youth ministers should be activated and include consultation with civil society and most importantly, youth. A similar committee of local authorities (i.e. mayors) might be useful, as youth policy is most often implemented at the local level.

Encourage civil society organisations and umbrella organisations to cooperate to lobby their governments and other governments in the region on the topic of youth participation and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

...In research

Overview:

- Website to include database, studies and reports.
- Database of researchers willing to cooperate with NGOs and policy makers in the area of youth.
- Studies/reports on youth situation in each country/region.
- Translate ‘Forum 21’ into Arabic and develop a similar research journal for the broader Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Include more practical approaches, such as “action research” in research related to youth participation.

Specific recommendations

Participants could start by identifying researchers in their local areas, who are willing to provide training for youth workers and active youth in the area of research and perhaps action research. Such contacts can provide first of all dialogue to improve monitoring and evaluation among civil society and research’s connection and efficiency with regard to youth in civil society. They can be gathered and expanded to create a database of researchers in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region who are willing to cooperate with NGOs and public sector actors locally and regionally. This database, along with relevant studies in Arabic and European languages should be gathered in a single website.

Translation of the existing Forum 21 into Arabic will be very useful for youth participation in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region. Additionally, a new journal with similar topics, perhaps including civil society as well as public policy, should be developed for the broader Euro-Mediterranean region.

...At civil society level

Overview:

- Monitoring by civil society of youth policy (i.e. a high level committee).
- Capacity building locally and between Euro-Mediterranean countries.
 - For youth about participation and engagement in local government.
 - For youth service providers.
- Awareness raising.
- Network of youth NGOs, active youth.

- Increased and improved intercultural dialogue activities to increase contact with and know ledge of other Euro-Mediterranean cultures
- Euro-Mediterranean partnerships among media organisations to increase know ledge of local conditions in other countries
- Partnerships between small NGOs and the Council of Europe in order to increase knowledge of ongoing activities, challenges, successes
- Twinning of Euro-Mediterranean NGOs
- Enhance and coordinate more efficient publicity about broader Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

Specific recommendations

The Council of Europe should coordinate publications in Euro-Mediterranean to produce a single comprehensive bimonthly newsletter publicising all relevant activities (projects, workshops, research, etc). This could be done through a submission form on the common website.

Partnerships among local NGOs in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region could lead to professional exchange visits as well as joint creation of micro-funds to enable micro-level participation projects. This could be done through NGO networking through the website mentioned previously.

Regional capacity building activities in the area of local government engagement could be organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe) for European and Mediterranean youth, based on the Revised Charter for Youth Participation in Local Government and political participation techniques more broadly.

Summary of discussions

What are the key issues affecting youth in relation to participation (with specific country examples)?

In outlining the key issues affecting youth participation, we found from individual and professional experiences (from Euro-Mediterranean countries' respective) that Youth Participation is a complex issue, but the following issues composed the main factors which determine the level of Youth Participation.

- Legislation does not include youth participation
- Culture and tradition (ex: Voting is based on tribalism in some Arab countries)
- Religion (legal measures depend on human and at times wrong interpretations)
- Education (curricula do not include participation)
- Illiteracy
- Lack of youth participation in the implementation process
- Weak youth mobilisation (e.g. Denmark)
- Lack of awareness about youth rights
- Lack of trust and motivation
- Presence of challenges to identity formation
- Lack of confidence and esteem
- Lack of full knowledge of democratic application (mainly in Arab countries)
- Family and Tradition especially in the Arab region

- Lack of or presence of information and technology (knowledge of government processes, internet, technical policy information).

What is the added value of international cooperation in the area of participation, especially in the Euro-Mediterranean framework?

International cooperation is considered as an important contributing factor to the concept of participation, and even more so in the Euro-Mediterranean region. As a group we understood and recognised that the added value of international cooperation is priceless and constantly growing. Below we have outlined core themes and recommendations which could accrue to adding on to this value in the Euro-Mediterranean framework.

- Exchange best practices, experiences, and values
- Create a platform for culture dialogue
- Learning opportunities and skill building
- Peer-to-peer hands-on training
- Lobby governments (local and national) at the international level
- Raise awareness about international initiatives
- An inherently participatory experience by itself

What is/should be the role of research in relationship to youth participation?

The group focusing on the role of youth research concluded that youth participation is an indication of society's future political status, and develops skills among young citizens which enrich the future. Research is an imperative aspect of the triangle, and can serve to: narrow the gap between public officials and youth, link civil society actors with government, and increase the accountability of governments and civil society with regard to youth participation.

To be most useful, it should be practical, using, for example, techniques of action research, and include indications of WHAT should be done to address the issues raised by the research and HOW it should be done. Further, it should be conducted on the basis of local needs assessments to be sure that the information gathered is useful for policy makers and youth workers. However, once completed research conducted must be taken into account by other actors and its recommendations followed up on in cooperation between researchers, policy makers, and civil society.

What is/should be the role of policy in relationship to youth participation?

This group emphasised the need to recognise the importance of youth policy as an essential aspect of a region's, state's, and city's governance. All levels of government must have a framework – such as regulations, local youth councils/parliaments, quota of young representatives in Parliament/Congress – to facilitate real youth participation. Through such frameworks and other initiatives, governments should provide conditions for real involvement in the development of strategy and policy related to young people. Public authorities should provide financial support and technical tools for youth-led initiatives. Building capacity among young people *and* service providers is essential to promoting youth participation. Another possible policy approach is to include curriculum about participation (why, how, etc) in public education. Decentralisation of power to local authorities was highlighted as a way to allow youth to get involved, as the national government tends to be too distant from young people.

What is/should be the role of civil society (youth workers) in relationship to youth participation?

Civil society can advance youth participation in a variety of ways, firstly through cooperation with researchers. By working together, researchers and practitioners can develop high quality

monitoring and evaluation practices, as well as helping to make research more practical and based on reality. Secondly, civil society is very well placed to contribute to capacity building about participation among youth but also among service providers as recommended by the policy group. Of course, this capacity building should be conducted with the input of researchers (for input on the real needs and interests) and policy makers (for input on needs and interests, as well as possible funding). Civil society provides young people with opportunities to participate. As it was accepted that participation must be learned BY participating, this is an essential role for civil society – even in societies where political participation is difficult or impossible for young people, civil society organisations can provide them with the chance to learn what it means to participate, through non-governmental activities.

Conclusions:

- Sustainability
- Intra-Arab cooperation
- Maximise beneficiaries, while maintaining consistency of participants, ensure multiplier events. Selection criteria, for example, could be used to engage youth more broadly, not just elite.

B. GENDER

Background

The working definition of gender

- Includes women and men as well as sexual minorities and involve stereotypes
- Society creates gender; gender is a social and cultural construction of concerning both women and men
- While adopting gender instead of biological sex, in societies there is a move from sex to gender. Biology – culture.

Issues affecting young people

- We need to move from a female centred perspective when discussing gender, to a women- and men-centred approach.
- The number of women in population especially in MEDA area is higher than men's.
- It can be used as a polygamy, it is not always positive.
- Women are excluded from political decision-making processes.
- Gender is an issue for both men and women. Society and our culture stop women and might lead to the exclusion of women. Norms result in the exclusion of women.
- Now women and men issues are raised, equality between them – equal chances.
- There are values and ethics that we have to work on.
- Women's participation is low in the Arab world-quota issue.
- Lack of representation of women in the media and in other sectors.
- Many aspects of gender, we only talked about men and women roles. It is also about sexual identity, we may have 4 sexual identities.
- Gender has a biological side as well: there is recognition about sexual identity.
- Gender in Arabic- a problem with translation.
- Legislation: legal versus customary law, it is important everywhere.
- Absence of policy.
- The role of education regarding: attitudes, family life, career, time use, state economy, academic career (related to employment value of work).
- Cultural context
- Use of statistics
- Access and resources
- Involving men and women
- Opportunities and choices
- Media: how women are presented in media, perspective and perceptions
- Literature, language art: women writers use the male first person, while men do not use this method.
- Financial issues – economy: it is also related to resources.
- Health issues: access and quality health care, reproductive health.
- There is the risk of reinforcing existing roles through development projects.

Country-specific examples

- In Morocco, in the Palestinian Authority's rural areas economic development depends on women's decision, women may invest in having children, the more children she has the more secure she is or she feels, it gives her power.
- In Morocco women's housework is not considered a real work, it is not tiresome; for him, she is relaxing. But if raising chicken for example is a profitable project, he will take the lead.
- In Sweden, women work at day care more than men, men are only directors. Also in schools they have the same issue, and also men get paid more.
- Even though men are helping in housework it is still women's responsibility; now in Sweden they are trying to change things by law.
- In Jordan, there is more serious kind of problems like honour crimes, and the law is not changing.

Discussion about the similarities and difference in the Euro-Mediterranean context:

- Example laws
- Honour related crimes
- Funds
- Religion - Islamic and Christianity, culture and religion are interrelated
- Justify women's role

The role of youth research

- Inter-related and comprehensive research
 - Law and legislation
 - Movement of civil society, best practices
 - Gender and media
 - Role of education and gender
 - Cultural and religious norm-gender
 - Institutionalisation on studies – research on gender and youth to be actually be used in policy making
- Needs for gender sensitive research
- Need for action research to make the young people active participants of the research and not just subjects of the research.
- Need for research on young people on both sides of the Mediterranean
- Strong emphasis on youth and gender as a specific focus on issues coming from youth perspectives
- Build strategic partnership, cooperation research
- Evaluations are important
- Need to theorise from a Muslim Arab perspective
- Need for comparative research
 - Attitudes towards women's participation
 - Attitudes towards political issues
 - Attitudes towards religious issues
 - On prejudices and stereotypes (Euro-MENA).

The role of civil society

- Local level
- Mainstreaming and increasing the interaction among civil society
- Interaction among organisation
- Develop Human Rights Education
- Networking – learning to cooperate
- Join towards one agenda
- Division academic activists
- The research has to be conducted according to the needs of civil society, also public authority
- Develop an independent research action plan

The role of public authority

- It is the one who should fund the research: it should provide resources for research without owning it.
- Working with legislation to improve the situation in the field of gender
- Use media and resources – public material
- Make use of the research and transform it into action plans
- Make results available for the public
- Establish its own research that is not funded by public authority

The added value of international youth cooperation in this area

- Legitimacy for the issue
- Better documented and lessons learned
- Increased funding
- Exchange of experiences
- Learn from latest research and models
- Offer opportunities to gain experience and expertise and build capacity

General conclusions on the discussions on the “triangle”

- To actively connect all three sides of the triangle
- Partnership needed
- Activate the private sector

Proposals for follow up

- Building networks with continuous contact through dialogue and discussion on the internet
- Forum for participants to be able to communicate
- Newsletter with recommendations from the seminar
- Chat
- Organisation of meetings with youngsters and regional, national and international level
- Working with the same issues with young people from different cultures
- The need to deal with mobility of young people – lead to research
- Need to compare the daily life of youngsters.

C. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

General discussion

Who sets the demand for certain professions? Is it the market? If the market sets the demand for certain degrees, we have to forecast what the future demand is and change the patterns of choosing education. We have to predict the future and have a strategic vision on this matter.

University education system is producing specialists in all fields, no matter if a certain degree is on demand or is abundant. In that case the university education system distracts the labour market by the over- and under production of certain profession. For example, in Lithuania 17% of lawyers are either unemployed or work in the sectors that have nothing to do with law. There is a great demand for social engineers and constructors, while the universities do not produce a needed number of graduates in this field. Constructors and civil engineers have to be imported into the country, while lawyers have to emigrate.

University education today is just for getting a diploma, today's students rarely work in the field corresponding to their degree. The question is whether general education is better or worse than a specific education in today's world and for today's youth. Also young people after graduation tend to change jobs and position very often and are more flexible and tolerant to changes.

In *Egypt*, the education system does not respond to or fit the market, and it is more inherited and about giving a status in the society. If the father is a doctor, most probably his son will be a doctor as well. The society respects people by their education, not by their profession. A person who has a university diploma is respected more in the society than the person without it. And also some jobs are more respected by the society than others.

In *Sweden* the goal is that 50% of school graduates go to university, this was an aim in the society, but today it is being revised. There is a question whether we need so many people with university diplomas rather than workers like plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc.

There was a study done in Sweden on the patterns of youth employment in the perspective of an ever changing society, labour market and education system together with the changing perceptions and ambitions of the young people. The study was done in order to diminish youth unemployment in Sweden. The changes in the society have great influence in education and adjust the interpretation of the role of teacher, school leader, administrator, and the politician. Young people's ambitions and visions have to change together with a changing society.

In the *Palestinian Authority* students in a 9th or 10th year of secondary school have to pass exams which further on decide what fields they are going to study. Students by their grades are segregated into hard sciences, social sciences and humanities studies. Their exam results decide their further education and even career. Also it decides their financial and social status in the society, as some professions are more respected than the others.

Turkey is changing their curriculum in order to teach in the method of multiple intelligence and problem solving. It requires the change and re-qualification of school teachers. There are a lot of reforms and changes in the secondary school methodology and curriculum. Another reform takes place in the standards of getting into a university. Multiple choice tests decide the future education and career.

Universities have autonomy and they have to respond to the market demands and supply what is on demand.

But there is more to education than just the formal university education. There is a non-formal education, vocational education, life-long learning, etc. Non-formal education is learner-centered and individually driven. What is the role of non-formal education in the aspect of labour and employment?

In the *Palestinian Authority* there are 5 universities that produce a large number of graduates every year. The graduates choose to work in many surrounding countries. Palestinian businessmen responded to the market and established a number of colleges which are to supply labour required by the market. Education in the Palestinian Authority is education for life. Education is a value to the whole Palestinian family. Palestinian authorities try to limit the number of doctors and engineers, so they limit the numbers accepted to these specialisations. But because of this limitation many Palestinians emigrate looking for the place where they could reach their ambitions. Today the market is controlled and therefore there is large unemployment. Private schools are more successful in producing graduates relevant to the market demands. Private schools are filling the gap of education for work. Ministry of Education runs a professional orientation programme for school students.

In *Egypt* scout programme is an example of non-formal education.

In *Poland* entrepreneurship and business education is a part of formal education in secondary schools. However, it is dependant on the teachers, and the bigger cities have better classes on these subjects. Some teachers know business from theory only. Education is personal, and if a teacher is boring and old-fashioned students do not learn as much.

Entrepreneurship is fostered in *Sweden* and *Lithuania* in a formal and non-formal way. Entrepreneurship building skills required to produce social and economic value in the society. In *Sweden* there is an NGO 'Entre' which fosters entrepreneurship in primary, secondary schools. In *Lithuania* profession orientation centres and youth labour centres are started by the government and funded by the EU. These centres provide professional orientation assistance to the secondary school students and university students. It helps students to realise what they want to study or where they want to work. It assists them in filling the CV, writing a motivation letter, or preparing for the job interview. A number of youth entrepreneurship centres were opened recently, which provide assistant to the young entrepreneurs willing to start a business of their own.

Career centres and career guidance for young graduates is an important factor in helping young professionals to choose their career and enter the labour market successfully.

In the *Palestinian Authority* NGOs are sometimes pro-active in providing non-formal education, then the government. There is programme that guides university graduates in their search for work and provides wage subsidies in order to motivate the business to employ young graduates. The businesses pay only half of the salary, while the rest are funded by the NGOs. Each year over 100 graduate students take part in this programme.

Student mobility is not really promoted between Euro-Mediterranean countries. If European students can study in European universities this is not necessarily true with students entering from other Mediterranean countries. In Arab countries international students pay larger tuitions for universities abroad as compared to local students.

In *Italy*, the ministry of cultural heritage runs an apprenticeship programme 'S'ed' (Service education centre) for young people in order to help the young to understand better what they want to do in their lives. They offer apprenticeships in museums for youth to see themselves working in culture. It is a way to get experience on labour market. Furthermore, S'ed organises life-long learning process about how to teach arts history. The target group is: civil servants working in museums, archives and archaeological sites, cultural mediators, teachers, exhibition managers. S'ed publishes a magazine to spread its activities.

In many countries university programme includes a course of internship in order to get some working experience. Many employers do not enjoy interns, because the businesses do not get any value from them, because the internship lasts for a rather short time, and it requires a supervisor. But it is a free labour, so sometimes businesses enjoy interns. Internships are a way of non-formal education that prepares one for the labour market.

In *Turkey* female students are not able to go to school in more rural areas. There is a campaign running these days 'father, take me to school' it promotes female access to education. Famous people are involved in this programme so that to empower the girls and give them motivation. In small towns in the east, girls go to school until they learn elementary things and then they are left at home to learn the role of a woman. Sometimes the costs of education do not allow girls to go to school. Only half of the Turkish girls are going to school, while the other half does not have access to education.

In the *Palestinian Authority*, the access of women in education is not limited, but there are inequalities in the access to higher or further education. The problem starts in early education years, because of early marriage, economic and social reasons. Some families think that it is not worth or effective to invest in woman's education, so they do not let girls to acquire university degrees.

In many countries when we talk about university education there are often more women rather than men. But in the technical schools there are more male students. In *Sweden* they are doing a research on a local culture impact on boys choosing an education. There is a great difference in women's and men's ambitions to choose education. In European Voluntary Service 80% of participants are female. It is because the EVS host organisations propose female services that are not applicable and of interest to boys.

There is a great problem of the disabled people to participate in the education system and the labour market. This happens because of the technical barriers and cultural perceptions about the disabled.

In *Lithuania* high school students have to do some hours of voluntary service to the community, but the system is corrupted because the school principles and educators want students to do these hours in the school environment. It disrupts the whole idea of voluntarism and independence in choosing.

The government is not a panacea to fixing the issues in the education system and labour markets. Civil society with NGOs can do a lot and influence great change, but the government should coordinate and set common standards for the society. However, researchers should analyse the change patterns occurring in the education and labour systems.

The EU Bologna process suggests that all the EU countries unify their education procedures and policies so that every student would have an equal access to education in any country. Countries should implement the Bologna process faster and fully.

In the *Palestinian Authority* government promotes and convinces the families to send their daughters to school, by giving certain benefits to these families.

Recommendations

1. To analyse the demand of labour market and apply it in the education system.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Coordination of the research and studies	Provide data and analysis
Consult employers and the society in understanding the needs occurring in the labour and education market	Consult employers in developing data
Discuss the proposals with the practitioners in order to realise whether it is applicable in reality and whether it will work in practice	Proposing policy solutions and incentives
Accepting the policy suggestions	

2. To identify roles of formal, informal and non formal education and recognise non-formal education as an inseparable part of education

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Producing and providing guidelines and setting good practices for making best use of formal education, informal education, and non-formal education	To conduct research on what the NGO and civil societies do in the recognition and popularisation of the non formal education
Recognise the non formal education system as a part of learning system	Involve civil society in generating ideas for policy making
Non-formal education should fill in the gaps of the formal education inconsistencies	Monitoring of the programmes and policies already implemented by the civil society in order to find the gaps and inefficiencies
Formal education should be more flexible	To collect data on exact benefits of non formal education
Recognise and implement the EU White Paper on Youth and a European Youth Pact as guidelines on education and preparation for the labour market	Contributing to formulating and setting guidelines for the policies and strategies being accepted by the public authorities
In Arab countries non formal education methods should be more publicised and accepted by the society and business as adding value to all the people.	Carry research on a labour market, on what is required and demanded by the employees so that to follow the demand
Produce policies for recognition of non formal education	
Create strategies in consultancy with the civil society and target groups on the implementation of the policies	

3. To provide career guidance to young graduates

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Improve the teaching methodology in the formal education in order to reach the needs of the changing society and labour market needs	Research qualities and skills required for each profession
To apply different standards or bigger opportunities for young disadvantaged people to enter university outside their towns	Assist in providing data on career choices to certain types of skills and competences
To apply more opportunities for gender equality in the entrance of university and the acquiring of jobs	Suggest improvements to teaching methodology improvements
To create, promote and implement policies on training, guiding and mentoring of students at all levels outside formal education system on the university system and labour market	Research on what are the main factors deciding or choosing specialisation or career

4. Learning for life vs. learning for results. Is our education system leading to results or is it leading to learning?

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Education system should foster subject matters as much as to integrate general education into the formal education system	Research should analyse what civil society partners and NGOs can add to the education system and how the formal education system can benefit from them
Include civil society, NGOs and other players into an education system as partners for providing different arenas of education	Analyse what skills and knowledge the formal education does not provide and what the non formal education partners can step in and fill the gaps
To take into account the researchers' findings about the benefits of non formal education and allocate it to the education spheres most appropriate and in optimal ways	Analysing what methods of non formal learning should be left to implement by the civil society partners instead of incorporating them into the formal school curriculum

5. To change the perception of people on the matter of blue collar vs. white collar jobs

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Incorporate the researchers' findings into practice and into current policies on education and labour systems	Research the difference in a perception and reality of blue vs. white collar jobs (social, economic value)
Building and raising awareness at schools and the society on a choice between blue and white collar jobs	Analyse the proposals for balancing the perceptions of white collar vs. blue collar jobs

6. To minimise barriers to student mobility and unify the education system and recognition of qualifications in the broader Euro-Mediterranean region

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Implementing the Bologna process in the national EU members' policy	Research and compare the different education systems present in the Euro-Mediterranean countries
Creating and implementing a process similar to Bologna process among the Euro-Mediterranean countries so that to foster higher education mobility	

7. Access and participation in education system and labour market by female and male. Is it limited formally or culturally? Is it our minds that build barriers to our choices?

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
The goal is not to balance participation of female and male in education and labour, but more to ensure equal access by both sexes	Research the situation on how female and male make their choices in education and labour market. Analyse why the difference in boys' and girls' choices exists. Analyse why boys and girls do not have equal access to education

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
To encourage NGOs to offer activities interesting to boys and girls adequate to their needs and expectations	Understand the reasons (motivation and perception) why girls and boys participate in certain and sometimes different spheres of activities. Analyse whether these differences and perceptions exist in culture or economics and if they can be changed or whether alternatives can be found to solve the issue
If the reasons for not participating are financial, the policies should take this into consideration and try to solve the issue	Analyse how these differences in female and male choice and involvement result in the society and what kind of imbalances it creates

8. To increase the numbers of people with fewer possibilities in education system and labour market

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Research</i>
Make sure the policies do not give people a fish, but give a fishing rod to catch the fish themselves	Research what is the result of the social benefits policies in some European countries and what is the result of the social benefits inexistence in some MEDA countries
To make sure that social benefits do not take away the people's choices to be educated and have a job. On the other hand, provide for sufficient needs so that people could learn and get an education	Find and suggest a 'golden medium' in the social benefits policies so that it would not take away the people's motivation to be educated and enter the labour market
Policies should not de-motivate people from being active it should motivate people to come back to the labour market	
Motivate vocational retraining and re-qualification for unemployed	
Provide equal rights to long term migrants and their off-springs in education system and in the labour market	Analyse what is the added value to the national economy of migrant jobs
Create policies that would diminish the numbers of people working in the black labour market in indecent working conditions and with low wages	
Create policies and implement that would create equal access of the disabled to education and labour market	Research on the possibilities of the disabled to get an education in a educational system and labour market
Create a disabled-friendly environment technologically in education system and labour markets	Research how we could enforce disabled people to be active in education system and labour market
Promote an acceptance of the disabled in the education system and labour market	

D. HEALTH

1. Key issues identified by the participants

- 1) Addictions:
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco
 - Drugs
- 2) Sexual health:
 - Sexually transmitted disease including AIDS / HIV
 - Pregnancy (unwanted pregnancy; pregnancy of teenager; age of first pregnancy; number of pregnancy; choice of being pregnant / young parenthood)
 - Child marriage/teenage marriage
 - Access to prophylaxis (habits; use; cost)
 - Abortion
 - Sexual mutilation
 - Gender equality
 - Homosexuality
- 3) Stress and mental health:
 - Feeling of inexistence of future / hope
 - Insecure economic life / employment
 - Family construction (Keeping family supportive while open to some modernity)
 - Aggression / violence
 - Violence against women
- 4) Disability:
 - Mental disability
 - Physical disability
- 5) Eating disorder:
 - Under-nutrition
 - Malnutrition, including:
 - a. Anorexia / bulimia
 - b. Obesity (adiposity)
 - Body shaping based on “models”
- 6) Participation of young people:
 - Awareness
 - Prevention
 - Training / sexual education
 - Volunteerism
- 7) War and conflict:
 - Violence, war trauma and post-war psychological disorder
 - Psychological environment between people, including migration of conflicts
 - War crime including gender base abuse
- 8) Environmental health

Discussion

Alcohol: The Arabic stereotype about alcohol is that young people who are drinking are doing it to forget difficulties and accept bad living conditions.

Globally, if psychological context can explain alcohol abuse, another explanation is related to its cultural use. Drinking allows young people in Europe to access to a certain idea of adulthood or maturity. Out of this kind of ritual, they are gaining access to a new social level; they are part of the group. It is also related to fun and successful festivity.

Alcohol is a legally and socially accepted substance in Europe, but with limitation in terms of access related to the age of the young person. In Arab countries, it is neither legally, neither socially accepted, but it is a reality within the society. Lack of statistics does not allow having a clear figure of this issue.

Drugs: In Europe, drugs consumption can be related to depression, but as alcohol, can be linked with the notion of fun or giving the feeling of being fashion. Drugs, depending on specifications, can be legally or/and socially accepted. The large geographic disparity can generate border effects within the Union, especially along frontiers where soft drugs are like cannabis is tolerated on one side, and illegal on the other.

Within the Arab countries, drugs are not accepted, but are a reality. Unfortunately as alcohol, it is a phenomenon that is not well documented and seems to be hidden as not acceptable within the Arab cultural model.

In Europe, awareness campaigns are set to inform young people but also special treatments and psychological assistance can be given to addicted persons.

In Arab countries, it is very difficult issue with important cultural impacts. In Egypt, a governmental call centre informs young people about the risks while a network of NGOs, mainly linked with "Caritas", is providing assistance on voluntary and anonymous basis to addicted young people. It seems that new public structures have just been set. No real statistics exist, but as for alcohol, the trend is to see the phenomenon as small.

Disability: In Egypt, the movement to support structures helping mentally and physically handicapped persons. We assist to an increasing consciousness on how to improve life of disable people (activities, integrations, training, etc.). Unfortunately, it seems difficult to have an accurate report on the real situation; some statistics are available through the census but no specific studies are addressing the issue.

In Greece, 20 years ago, the families were hiding the case. Now, disabled people are really integrated within society. Even some adapted working places in public services are given to people with handicap. In Belgium, it is a specific topic in Public Health and Social Affairs specific managing and planning authorities. They can access to adapted working places, but also are financially supported.

Reproductive health: The participants are reminding the existence of the "Cairo Convention on Reproductive Health" that is given important right, especially to women.

It is mentioned that it is difficult to have a clear vision about "sexuality" in the Arab world within the youth population. Sexual act is forbidden before wedding under the Muslim religion. There is a large reluctance about the right to have an open sexual education without parental monitoring. No progress seems to be reported in Egypt by the specialists but it is an existing situation. Some encouraging and successful initiatives within the Maghreb are mentioned but not detailed. It is not allowed to openly discussed about issues as STD, especially HIV / AIDS. The environment does not seem ready to accept open discussions on this topic.

In Europe, generally speaking, the sex relationships are legally organised; no religious statements are prevailing or setting such regulations. Such regulation can be very different from one country to another. In this framework, sexuality acts can be freely chosen by the partners. This does not mean that high Religious authorities are not stating their point of view (The Pope but also the Orthodox Patriarch are against sexuality outside the wedding or the use of prophylaxis, etc.), but the majority European believers are implementing such recommendations following their own consciousness and have even strongly complain against statements that are identified against human rights or placing humanity in danger. More factually, the last report about sexuality in Europe is stating that the 1st sexual relationship is happening at an earlier age: 14 years of age. It is also clearly stated that the number of abortions is increasing, especially amongst the young population. The increasing number of unwanted pregnancy is seen as a problem related to the efficiency of our sexual education and maybe a difficulty to properly access to prophylaxis. In Sweden, it is clearly not a problem of sexual act but how to assist young people to live this experience safely.

Similarly, the issue of women freedom in sexual choice seems to be a difference between the European and Arab participants. The specialist is mentioning that women are strongly submitted to marital obligations; a woman can not refuse sexual relationship with her husband in Arab countries, and even is exposed to punishment in such circumstances.

Modern socio-economic environment seems deeply affecting sexual life of young people in all the Euro-Mediterranean area, generating stress within young population and affects social construction. Postponing wedding due to lack of socio-economic circumstances (low salaries, unemployment, etc.) generates frustrations, as sexual act is deeply related to the marital status within the Arabic countries; consequences are the development of underground behaviour that could be in final at risk, but also increased tensions leading to violence (sexual harassment, for instance). In Europe, insecurity of employment and large youth unemployment, the difficulties to combine professional and family life – especially for women than despite emancipation still are living in an environment with male oriented stereotypes about children education, cooking or cleaning – is postponing a strong family construction and conception of a child. This is partially – only partially – explaining the current European demographic evolution.

Homosexuality: Homosexuality is recognised in Europe. Awareness campaigns are reminding that it falls under the basic human rights to express different sexual orientation.

In Arab countries, the specialists claim that homosexual community is very limited. Unfortunately, it is not supported by real statistics, therefore vision is not clear.

Generally speaking, in Arab countries a lot of issues are not well documented as it is difficult to study them. Most of these issues can not be directly addressed. Most of the work is based on assumptions. We do not have necessarily a good evaluation of all the issues within this topic. Such theme requires new approaches and a deeper intercultural dialogue allowing the subject to be addressed in respect to the sensibilities of the actors.

2. Added Value for youth cooperation related to the health field

- To learn more (from each other) – exchange of knowledge on every level, exchange of methods: how to reach young people and different approaches or successful programs.
- Sharing statistics, experiences like, for example, reproductive health
- Need for development in discussing health issues, which often are taboos in society
- Starting to fight taboos (drugs, sexual issues before marriage) concerning society, especially concerning youth issues
- Health as a basic human rights, often neglected
- Young peoples violence as reaction of what is going on within this world

December 1st is the International Day against HIV / AIDS.

3. Follow up

- Research meetings; exchange of methods and statistics;
- Researchers meeting young people;
- Researchers should be more critical, mixed;
- Close cooperation with NGOs; NGOs have to address policy makers concerning the need for research on special subjects.
- Research meetings about method development such as peer-to-peer education. Young people are experts of being young.

4. Role of youth research in Youth Policy

- Lack of good statistics: statistics on youth needs to be developed, in addition to qualitative data. There is a need to use other methods to get a holistic picture about youth and health.
- There is a need to integrate youth participation within the youth research sector. Too often, within Youth Policy area, youth are not considered as a reliable referent. The dialogue is missing not only when studying an issue, but also when the time of the dissemination comes.
- Non adapted research practices leads to a general appreciation that it is based on top hypothesis that are not necessarily in relations with the “real” life of young people.
- Research approach should be modified. A “problem oriented” strategy is not enough to cover the Youth issue, it is also not realistic.
- A benchmarking approach should be applied to identify what are the methods that are working to tackle specific issues. We have to look for tools, methods or even postulate developed in different countries and sectors.
- The programmes addressing Youth issues should be evaluated, integrating young people.

5. Role of Youth Work/ NGOs in field

- The Civil Society sector can assist in developing a vision that will be closer to the reality of the young people and society in general.
- There is a need to get rid of taboos in the health field; NGOs and young people together could develop positive approaches. They could have a special mission to target and overcome these taboos.
- Migrant Health: In Sweden for example, not enough statistics on migrant community and health issues, as has been pointed out by different NGOs. For example, NGOs working with HBT-group in Sweden, have done significant work to point out the lack of that perspective in research.
- The development of exchanges between about real life experience could be fruitful. Benefits could be increased if such actions could be “recorded” and assisted by research work.
- It is important to integrate the fact that NGOs are at the front line of Youth realities. They can therefore face at an early stage new positive (e.g. creativity) or negative (e.g. new risky behavior) issues encountered within the society.

6. Public actors and Youth Policy

- It is important to have a more clear vision about health issues amongst youth.
- Budgets allowing monitoring policies should be improved.

7. Globally

- Lack of knowledge: It is important to develop a knowledge-based approach of young people and health within the Euro-Mediterranean context. Collecting existing knowledge and making it accessible will be a key issue but it is most important to develop a structured approach allowing having a transparent vision of Youth Policy topics.
- Lack of good statistics: statistics about youth need to be developed, in addition to qualitative data. There is a need to use other methods to get a holistic picture about youth and health.
- Research and policy making approaches should be deeply modified. Change of attitudes and values are required to move from a risk vision towards participative oriented approach of youth issues integrating Youth as a key resource. Some guidelines could be defined allowing an in-depth reflection within the Youth Policy area and increasing interaction under the “magic triangle”. This should include a methodological part identifying and disseminating adapted methods approaching young people issues but also provide results benchmarking efficient methods of working with health topics.
- Increasing dialogue seems to be a major issue for the immediate future. Fighting taboos and stereotypes appears as a priority to address sensible questions. Youth work could play a special role identifying taboos and stereotypes and deconstruct them as they are barriers for human rights, development and progress.
- This topic includes stereotypes on “youth”, “health” and “youth and health”, not only within each society, but also in sectors such as research.
- The working group would like to recommend developing longer projects allowing a better valorisation of their outputs.
- The group recommends also the creation of a kind of “alarm system” allowing a more integrated approach of the front line position of NGOs and youthworkers.

E MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

Reasons of youth migration:

- Bad conditions of young people in sending countries compared with the receiving countries
- Attractive factors
- Media roles
- Social network roles
- Increasing of female migration

Expectations for this working group:

- Better Knowledge and understanding
- Strengthen Euro – Med cooperation on Research on International Migration
- Collective work and sharing thoughts.
- Explore area of priority for research
- Suggest best follow up mechanisms.

Key Issues and challenges

- Humanisation of migration
- The developmental role for both sending and hosting countries is not recognised
- Lack of institutions / research centres working on youth migration
- Existing policies focus on security aspects while neglecting the developmental aspects.

Evidences, constraints, indicators

- Lack of political willingness to promote youth and migration research.
- Difficulty for inclusion/integration of migrant youth in hosting societies.
- Need to address tolerance and cross cultural diversity.
- Need for migrant participation in civil society.
- Lack of transparency and lobbying for youth migrants.

Suggestions /Recommendations

- Formulate legislations corresponding with migration and migrants' needs.
- More research and action on illegal aspects of migration (safety, trafficking and labour market)
- Change the negative image of migration & migrants

Methodology

Creating a table with 4 cross-cutting themes:

1. HEALTH 2. GENDER 3. PARTICIPATION 4. EDUCATION AND LABOR	—> in relation to —>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Research</i>• <i>Civil society</i>• <i>Policy makers</i>
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HEALTH:

Research

- Make visible, identify problems and suggest practices (e.g. for IST, SIDA, psychological problems because of war, FGM, education on sexuality and sexual diversity)

Civil society

Hosting countries:

- Health tests
- Mobilise to advocate for availability of health services for migrants

Policy-makers

Support efforts and recommendations in favour of migrants (for access to medical services)

GENDER:

Research

- Development of gender research
- Legal differences between hosting and sending countries' traditions and cultures

Hosting countries:

- To promote intercultural understanding (meeting preparation, dialogue, luggage self knowledge)

Civil society

Sending countries:

- Status of women: Image of female migrants; Rights
- Inform about problems women can face in foreign countries

Hosting countries:

- Discrimination - Loneliness

Policy-makers

- Integrate gender perspective in migration policies

PARTICIPATION:

Research

- Making SWOT analysis for migration
- Conducting research for and through migrants
- Networking group research about youth and migration
- Role of mass media
- ICT technologies
- Forecast long and short term issues

Civil society

- Strengthening the capacity of active migrants to advocate for their rights
- Networking the social workers about youth and migration
- Defending ethical norms
- Promoting cultural diplomacy
- Promoting round tables, training and dialogue

Policy-makers

- Supporting political participation of migrant youth
- Coordinating policies about migration and youth
- Guarantee independence role of the media about migration and youth
- Conflict transformation.

EDUCATION:

Research

- Stereotypes and mentalities (image of the other) and solution
- Integrate the concept of tolerance towards differences
- New forms of citizenship (3rd generations) to promote participation
- Brain drain issues
- Investment and labour force should find links (benefits also for the South)

Civil society

- Info packages for migrants prior leaving from sending countries
- Inclusion and involvement of children and young migrants in non formal education activities and programmes (in NGOs)

Policy-makers

- Elaboration of policies for the representation for migrants in different institutions (scientific, political, social...)
- Scientific, technological, cultural, etc cooperation policy between hosting and sending countries
- Promoting co-development in cooperation with civil society in hosting and sending countries

LABOUR:

Research

- Labour studies / research (job market studies in sending and receiving countries)
- Study push factors
- Absorption capacity

Civil Society

- Lobbying for new principles and forms of co-development
- Informing about rights and duties of migrants and risks of illegal migration

Policy-makers

- Elaboration migration policies based on cooperation ensuring the migrants' rights and choice
- Labour regulations and diploma recognition without discrimination
- Set plans for open vocational training to migrants

CONCERNING ALL AREAS:

- To promote intercultural understanding (dialogue preparation)

Research

- Developing databases on all issues
- Comparative studies (horizontal and vertical)

Civil society

- Advocacy, raising awareness, training, and mobilisation

Policy-makers

- Willingness and readiness

Proposals for Follow Up

- Ensure the continuity of the working group for the forthcoming event.
- Wide dissemination of the working group suggestions and recommendations to related research centres, institutions and organisations, governments at the regional and international level.
- Support research centres on studying migration
- Create specialised databases on migration
- Support comparative in-depth qualitative and quantitative studies/research
- Focus on Female Migration and female migrants

Follow-up proposals and recommendations

- Enhancing research on international migration and support related research institutions / centres towards better understanding of migration process in the Euro-Mediterranean region
- Establishing regional and national databases giving priority to data collection policy and to policy-oriented research with a gender perspective
- Strengthening dialogue, coordination and exchange between decision makers, researchers, migrant institutions and youth organisations dealing with international migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region toward better exchange of information, the creation of networks, humanising and unifying migration policies, maximising its development benefits and facing the challenges and negative impact.

Monday, 27 November

- 9:30 Opening session, *at the headquarters of the League of Arab States*, with:
- **Dr Mofeed Shebab**, Arab Council for Youth
 - **Dr Safei El-Din Kharboush**, National Council of Youth, Egypt
 - **Dr Ralf-René Weingärtner**, Director of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe
 - **Mr Christer Hallerby**, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Sweden
 - **Ms Marzia Conte**, European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture
 - **Mr Per Nilsson**, Director General of the Swedish Board for Youth Affairs
 - **Ms Astrid Utterström**, Chairperson of the Joint Council on Youth (Council of Europe)
 - **H. E. Dr Amr Moussa**, Secretary General of the League of Arab States
- Moderated by **Ms Thuraya Ismail**
- 11:00 Break and group picture
- 11:30 The Situation of Young People and the State of Youth Research in Europe and The Arab Region:
- **Dr Ali Eddine Hilal**, Cairo University
 - **Dr Metka Kuhar**, European Network of Youth Research
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 15:00 Opening of the seminar at the hotel
- Presentation of participants and their roles in youth research, youth work or youth policy development
 - Objectives and Working Methods of the Seminar, **Mr Rui Gomes**, Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport
- 15:40 The Role of Youth Policy, Youth Research and Youth Work and their inter-relations, by **Ms Lisa Modée**, National Board for Youth Affairs (Sweden)
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Working Groups:
- The role of researchers, civil society and government in the development of evidence-based youth policies in the participants' countries/ institutions
- 18:10 Feed-back from the working groups in plenary
- 19:00 Dinner-Reception at the League of Arab States

Tuesday, 28 November

- 09:15 Opening and review of the programme of the day
- 09:20 Youth policy development in practice, an example from Finland, with **Tomas Knuts**, Åbo Akademi i Vasa (Finland)
- 10:00 Youth Issues and Youth Research in the Arab World, **Dr Abdel Bassat Abdel Moati**, Coordinator of the Arab Youth Empowerment Project at the Population Policy and Migration Department at the League of Arab States

- 10:50 Break
- 11:20 Introductions to the Working Groups:
- Youth Participation, with **Mr Haythem Kamel**, Egyptian Youth Federation
 - Education and Labour Market, with **Dr Kamal Naguib**
 - Health, with **Dr Leila Nawar**, United Nations Population Fund
 - Mobility and Migration, with **Dr Khaled Louhichi**
 - Gender, with **Dr Amany Kandil**
- 12:00 Working Groups on the living conditions of young people, the state of youth research and the context for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation relating to:
- Youth Participation
 - Education and Labour Market
 - Health
 - Mobility and Migration
 - Gender
- 12:45 Lunch break
- 14:45 Working Groups on the living conditions of young people, the state of youth research and the context for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation relating to:
- Youth Participation
 - Education and Labour Market
 - Health
 - Mobility and Migration
 - Gender
- 19:30 Dinner on the Nile

Wednesday, 29 November

- 09:15 Opening and review of the programme of the day
- 09:20 Presentation of the "Forum 21", European Journal on Youth Policy by **Mr Stefan Becszy**, Coordinator of the editorial board
- 09:40 Intercultural Dialogue and Co-operation within the Euro-Mediterranean context, with **Mr Nabil Abdel Fattah**, Al-Ahram Strategic Studies Centre
- 10:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:00 Working Groups on the living conditions of young people, the state of youth research and the context for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation relating to:
- Youth Participation
 - Education and Labour Market
 - Health
 - Mobility and Migration
 - Gender
- 12:45 Lunch break
- 14:45 Working Groups on the living conditions of young people, the state of youth research and the context for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation relating to:
- Youth Participation

- Education and Labour Market
 - Health
 - Mobility and Migration
 - Gender
- 17:15 Information exchange of projects and initiatives
- 19:00 Reception at the Swedish Embassy

Thursday, 30 November

- 09:15 Opening and review of the programme of the day
- 09:20 "Human Rights: a Barrier or a Bridge for Cooperation?" by **Mr Rui Gomes**, coordinator of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme, Council of Europe
- 10:45 *Coffee break*
- 11:15 Working Groups on the living conditions of young people, the state of youth research and the context for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation relating to:
- Youth Participation
 - Education and Labour Market
 - Health
 - Mobility and Migration
 - Gender
- 12:45 Lunch
- 14:30 Report on the outcomes and results of the working groups
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Conclusions of the Seminar by the General Rapporteurs
- 17:00 Evaluation of the seminar
- 17:30 Closing of the seminar, with:
- Ms Luiza Bara**, European Youth Forum
- Dr Jan Henningson**, Director of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria
- 19:00 Dinner / Free evening

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