

Time to be welcome: youth work and integration of young refugees

Conference on the World Refugee Day

20 June 2017, Brussels (14:00 – 18:00)
Renaissance Hotel, Rue du Parnasse 19

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Background

Since 2001 every 20 June people around the world celebrate the “World Refugee Day”: the UN General Assembly has chosen this date as the year 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 “Convention relating to the Status of Refugees” and 20 June coincides with the Africa Refugee Day.

To mark the relevance of these topics for international youth organisations and youth sector stakeholders at large, the European Youth Forum and the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, with support from the partnership in the field of youth between the European Union and the Council of Europe have decided to organise a conference on the role of youth work and youth organisations in integration of young refugees.

Young people and youth organisations have often been at the forefront of welcoming refugees in Europe, promoting active citizenship and human rights education as well as fostering intercultural dialogue. Youth work and youth organisations are contributing to integration of young refugees in formal and non-formal education, access to health as well as access to employment.

Aims of the event

- To raise awareness on the situation of young refugees and show solidarity with the experiences they face across Europe;
- To present research findings so far on the challenges and policy responses to young refugee inclusion;
- To recognise the importance of youth work in integrating young refugees and share good practices from the ground, providing visibility to current funded initiatives (i.e. Time to be Welcome)

Target group

- Policy makers
- Peer organisations
- Youth workers
- Actors providing services and support to young refugees

Draft agenda

14:00	Registration
14:15 – 16:15	<p>Welcome & opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carina Autengruber, Vice-President, European Youth Forum• Ambassador Zoltan Taubner, Head of the Council of Europe Liaison Office with the EU <p>Lived realities of young refugees Abdellbaset Alheeshan, Tandem</p> <p>Panel I: youth work and integration of young refugees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emin Mammadli, Voices of Young Refugees in Europe and Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth• Tanya Basarab, Council of Europe-EU Youth Partnership: research findings on youth work and inclusion of young refugees• Andreas Tzekas, Scouts of Greece• MEP Brando Benifei, Co-Chair of the Youth Intergroup, European Parliament <p>Moderation: Carina Autengruber</p> <p>Panel II: working with partners and EU institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gabriel Almeida, Legal Assistant, European Council on Refugees and Exiles• Michalis Moschovakos, Policy Officer, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission• Steve Parry, British Red Cross <p>Moderation: Tanya Basarab</p>
16:15 – 16:30	Closing, wrap up & introduction to thematic reception
16:30 – 18:00	<p>Thematic reception & networking</p> <p>Presentation of projects and initiatives of youth organisations to support integration of young refugees.</p> <p>Themes (to be confirmed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-formal education• Advocacy for refugee rights• Empowerment and skills development• Raising awareness about refugees

Partners

Since 2015 the **European Youth Forum's** Migration and Human Rights Network has brought together youth organisations to share experience and practices, facilitate peer learning, and develop capacity to work with and advocate for the rights of young refugees.

This cooperation resulted, among others, in a Policy Resolution on *Protection and Integration of Young Refugees in Europe*, as well as a document compiling best practices on integration in education, vocational training and the labour market, laying the foundation for the Youth Forum's advocacy at EU level. Recognising the need to work more closely with actors representing refugees, and young refugees in particular, this event aims to bring several relevant couple key stakeholders including the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and Voices of Young Refugees (VYRE).

The **World Organisation of the Scout Movement** has been actively working in refugee relief activities and emergency support since the refugee crisis started in 2015. Since June 2015, more than 1.400 Young Greek Scouts have been engaged in migrants support activities at the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Kos and the refugees camp of Athens and Ellinikon. This includes getting involved in first responses and relief actions but also offering learning and safer spaces for young migrants. In the frame of refugee-relief actions, in 2016 the EU-funded project "Time to be Welcome" was developed and is currently under implementation through a consortium of youth organisations (scout and non scout) such as European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), British Red Cross, Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU) and so on.

The **EU-Council of Europe youth partnership** has, under the objective of social inclusion of young people, supported research on the situation of young refugees and their integration in the host communities. Analytical papers were developed in 2016 and these were the basis for the seminar *Journeys to a New Life: understanding the role of youth work in integration of young refugees*. In 2017, the partnership has launched a call for contributions to a Youth Knowledge Book on young refugees and youth work and a collection of good practices on this theme. It will also engage with practitioners, researchers and policy-makers in furthering the understanding of the challenges youth policy faces in the inclusion process, learning from local experiences. To this end, the youth partnership has been in touch with several Erasmus+ strategic partnership projects focusing on the topic and it contributes to the Council of Europe youth department initiatives to support young refugees in transition to adulthood. A workshop with youth workers from local level will be organised in October in Strasbourg and a second learning workshop is foreseen for December in Greece.