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## 5<sup>th</sup> Euro-Arab Youth Forum

# Learning and Practicing Citizenship

Young people's values and commitments to intercultural and inclusive societies

**2 – 5 September, 2015**

European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France

*Call for  
Participants*

*in cooperation with*  
European Youth Forum

## BACKGROUND

Young people today in the European and Arab regions grow up in rapidly changing societies which present many of them with challenges regarding their understanding and exercise of the citizenship.

More than five years of economic crises and three years following the 'Arab spring', young people find themselves in societies hard hit by austerity measures and economic insecurities where social services and access to housing, education and the labour market have become more difficult. Increasing numbers of people have had to migrate in pursuit of education, better economic opportunities, or refuge from violence and political unrest. With the greater mobility comes the realisation that our societies are increasingly becoming more globalised but also more localised and fragmented. Many young today seem to consider themselves a national of a particular country or region and a European or Global citizen simultaneously. However resistance to the incorporation of new members with other backgrounds into the community is also growing, manifesting itself in support for nationalist movements and groups holding extremist views. In this context, nationalist and cultural essentialist views risk attracting more young people search for ways to shape their future and that of their societies.

While the political, economic and social developments in the European and Arab countries vary widely from country to country it is clear that many young people look for ways to respond to the changes in their society – such is the purpose of youth participation. Youth leaders embrace new formats to engage with their community and address the challenges affecting their society. They, out of will or necessity, create new forms of social entrepreneurship and develop innovative projects addressing a variety of issues ranging from providing basic needs and supporting vulnerable groups, to promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue and provide information and education on human rights, health, active citizenship or vocational training.

Young people in the Arab region and Europe seek for ways to be recognised as citizens, take responsibility and contribute to the improvement of the lives of the members of their society. Citizenship is both a right and a duty; while a citizen is expected to contribute to the economic, social, cultural and political processes in their society, they are also entitled to protection and enjoyment of their human rights.

The Council of Europe mission is to support its member's states to promote and protect Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy. It is acknowledged that the citizens of Europe have the right and the duty to contribute to the realisation of this mission. Education and training, research, and policy recommendations are a few of the various tools deployed by the Council of Europe to encourage involvement of young European citizens in the realisation of its aim.

The Youth sector of the Council of Europe has been particularly strong in promoting education for Human Rights and Citizenship, notably in supporting the role of non-governmental youth organisations as actors in the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

The League of Arab States mission is to encourage cooperation between its member states, safeguarding their independence and sovereignty, on a range of issues including Human Rights, economic and social development, migration, rights of women and youth. As part of its programme for youth, the League of Arab States Youth Forum (LASYP) has been held annually since 2007. These

forums have been attended by youth leaders, officials from the youth sector, and parliamentarians from Arab countries.

The 4th Euro-Arab Youth Forum held in Qatar, 8-11 December 2013, addressed the themes: “Human Rights, Youth Participation and Intercultural Dialogue”. The Doha Youth Declaration<sup>1</sup> acknowledges the valuable contribution that young people and youth organisations make to society and recognises that it is only by engaging with them that decision makers will be able to develop policies and programmes that effectively meet their needs. The participants of the forum highlighted the need to strengthening the policies, legal frameworks and other mechanisms such as a charter, that promote the fully enjoyment by young people of their human rights, including the rights to live in peace and security; education; participation in decision-making at all levels and in society in a wider sense. Promoting human rights and citizenship education for young people in formal education and in non-formal education was recommended as a concrete step to this aim.

The scope of what citizenship means and the responsibilities and expectations a young citizen holds deserves reflection and should be a solid basis for intercultural dialogue by young people. The 5<sup>th</sup> Euro-Arab Youth Forum seeks to be a platform for reflection and exchange among peer youth leaders from member states of the Council of Europe and of the Arab League. The European Youth Forum will further associate European youth organisations to this process as is the case since the first of these fora and as exemplified in the pioneering work of the Euro–Arab Coordination Meeting for Youth Organizations (EACMYO).

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The 5th Euro-Arab Youth Forum aims to foster mutual cooperation and dialogue among young Arab and European leaders, representatives of associations and decision-makers, on the meanings and practices of citizenship by young people and the challenges they face in their paths to autonomy.

### **Objectives of the forum**

- To contribute to the development of shared knowledge and to increase the awareness about meanings and practices of active citizenship by young people
- To reflect on the meanings of citizenship within the context of Euro-Arab cooperation.
- To exchange on realities and challenges faced youth organisations engaged in the education and promotion of citizenship and human rights
- To explore the role and practices of education for citizenship and human rights in building peaceful cohesive societies and preventing discrimination, hate speech, islamophobia and extremism leading to violence or terrorism
- To present and give visibility to projects and meaningful practices in the Euro-Arab region that educate and promote citizenship by and for young people.
- To develop proposals which aim to involve young people in the issues on the Arab-European dialogue agenda (social, economic, spiritual, cultural, and political) based on their ability to challenge stereotypical images.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/News&Calls/2013\\_Doha\\_Youth\\_Declaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/News&Calls/2013_Doha_Youth_Declaration_en.pdf)

## OUTCOMES

The most important outcome will be the results of the contacts, exchanges, debates and projects between the youth leaders attending the forum. The conclusions of the forum will be collected in a document gathering the conclusions issued by the working groups of the forum and indicate pathways for future Arab-European youth cooperation by the co-organisers and partners until the next edition of the forum. Other outcomes include:

- Direct cooperation projects between the participants and their organisations
- Strengthening youth participations opportunities Euro-Arab cooperation between the youth organisations represented
- The prioritization of future areas of cooperation between the youth sectors of the League of Arab States and of the Council of Europe.

## PROGRAMME AND METHODOLOGY

The programme will be structured on the thematic focus of the forum: Meanings, Challenges and Practices of Citizenship. A specific attention will be devoted to sharing approaches and tools for citizenship and human rights education and intercultural dialogue.

Non-formal education methodologies should facilitate the exchange of realities and intercultural dialogue; participants are expected to play an important role in the definition of the programme. Guests from other Council of Europe services will support the learning and exchanging, complemented by experts from the League of Arab States.

### DRAFT DAILY PROGRAMME

#### **Tuesday, 1 September**

Arrival of the participants

#### **Wednesday, 2 September**

Official opening session

Introductions to the forum's participants, programme and working methods

Exploring citizenship in all its forms

#### **Thursday, 3 September**

Challenges to Citizenship and Youth Participation

Visits to projects and associations in Strasbourg

#### **Friday, 4 September**

Sharing practices and tools for citizenship, human rights education and intercultural dialogue

Visit of the Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights

Free time in Strasbourg

#### **Saturday, 5 September**

Projects and initiatives for intercultural dialogue and Euro-Arab youth cooperation

Conclusions and commitments of the forum

Closing session

Farewell party

## **Saturday, 6 September**

Departure of the participants

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The forum is prepared for youth leaders and youth workers resident in member states of the League of Arab States or the Council of Europe. All participants must also meet the following criteria:

- Be aged between 18 and 30 years
- Have a demonstrated experience in civil society and youth work
- Be actively interested in the forum aims and themes and in following up of the forum within their organisations.
- Ability to communicate and communicate in English or Arabic.

The co-organisers aim to select and invite:

- 36 participants from member states of the Arab League
- 36 participants from the Council of Europe member states, co-recruited by the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum

The selection will respect an equal number of male and female participants from each country/region

### **RECRUITMENT OF EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS**

The Council of Europe's Youth Department contributes to the forum in various ways, including input in the preparatory process and recruitment of European participants. This call concerns the recruitment and selection of these participants *only*. The selection of the final group of European participants will be done by the Council of Europe in consultation with the European Youth Forum.

### **FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

Accommodation and meals will be provided, for the duration of the forum, by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Travel expenses for participants from Europe, invited by the European Youth Forum or by the Council of Europe, will be reimbursed by the Council of Europe according to the Council of Europe rules.

### **PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATIONS**

All those interested in attending the forum should register and fill in an on-line application form at <http://youthapplications.coe.int/> according to the instructions provided on the site. The application should be accompanied by a supporting letter of the sending organisation or institution which states the reasons why the participation of the applicant is important for the organisation.

Applicants will be informed about the decision concerning their application by 10 June 2015.

The deadline for submitting applications is **14 May 2015**.

Further information: [eyc.programme@coe.int](mailto:eyc.programme@coe.int)