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Budapest, 24 May 2012

Euro-Arab Youth Forum

Youth Participation, Development and Human Rights

Bethlehem, Palestinian Authority

2-7 July 2012

Co-organised with the League of Arab States
and the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth and Sports.

In cooperation with the European Youth Forum

CALL FOR EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS

BACKGROUND

Intercultural dialogue: a priority for the Council of Europe's youth policy

The Council of Europe's youth sector has an outstanding tradition of intercultural dialogue and including the points of view of young people from across the globe in its activities, be them organised at the European youth centres or supported by the European Youth Foundation. Intercultural Dialogue provides the framework for cooperation with neighbouring regions, especially the South Mediterranean, while placing emphasis on the role of intercultural dialogue for managing diversity within each society.

Euro-Arab youth cooperation was initiated more than 10 years by the Council of Europe with a series of activities of Euro-Arab Dialogue. In the recent years the League of Arab States has become a regular partner in the activities of the Partnership between the

Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth. In April 2009 the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe held their first joint training course for youth leaders on youth participation and intercultural dialogue for Euro-Arab Youth Cooperation; this was followed by other capacity-building activities, including a long-term training course concluded in December 2011.

THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES YOUTH FORUM

The League of Arab States Youth Forum (LASYP) has been held annually since 2007, and is attended by a number of youth leaders, officials from youth sector, and parliamentarians from Arab countries.

The third LASYP, and the second EACMYO, were held in 2009 in Morocco, under the theme "Youth Migration through a Human Rights Perspective". This forum was held in the framework of strengthening the Euro – Arab partnership, and in follow-up with the recommendation of the Second LASYP, which called on the third LASYP to address the various dimensions of youth and migration, and to focus on cultural exchange, dialogue and the role of youth organizations in migratory issues. The forum, attended by around 140 youth leaders from Europe and the Arab states, adopted the "Assilah Appeal" on migration and youth mobility.

The third Euro – Arab Coordination Meeting for Youth Organizations (EACMYO), was held in Italy, accompanied by a cross-border conference in Tunisia.

The European Youth Forum has been a regular partner in the Euro-Arab youth forum meetings and the main promoter of the EACMYO process.

4TH EURO ARAB YOUTH FORUM: Youth Participation, Development and Human Rights

The 4th Euro – Arab Forum builds on the previous meetings' experiences, with a focus on "Youth Participation and Development from a Human Rights Perspective".

Background

The 4th Euro Arab Youth Forum in Palestinian Authority intends to relate and connect with the recent changes and uprisings in the region and their impact on Human Rights in the Middle East and the neighbouring countries. This scene is marked with a strong deep expression of youth voices and popular awareness of their political, social and economic human rights.

There is an urgent need to understand these changes and shifts, and their effects, especially the spill-over effects that ripple beyond the geographical borders of the region and reach out to affect international peace and security. Youth leaders in Europe and the Arab region need to discuss and understand the new realities created by those events, and their aftermath, from an overall perspective tackling the possible effects on the whole region and the world. This is, first and foremost, a need to continue and deepen intercultural dialogue and exchange on ways to contribute to a culture of universal human rights.

The success in dealing constructively with the challenges that the region faces an issue of common interest not only to the Arab countries, but also to Europe. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean and other initiatives, are only an expression of the sense of shared destiny and the importance of cooperation in the face of problems and challenges facing the region.

There are many different and complex effects and consequences of the current reality and the gap between the two shores of the Mediterranean, whether at the local, regional or international levels. One of the negative results is the escalation of human trafficking in general, and in particular the exploitation of youth and minorities for the purposes of human trafficking, their use as soldiers and fuel for the armed conflicts, especially because young people represent the largest percentage of the population in the Arab region. Another negative effect is the rise of migration amongst youth, whether forced migration, which turns migrants into refugees, or the migration – intra and inter-regional – in search of better life opportunities.

The Euro-Arab Youth Forum will bring together youth leaders from members states of the Council of Europe and from the Arab region in order to shed lights on the challenges to human rights in the Arab and European societies, and to develop partnerships between youth organizations concerned with the dissemination and promotion of the values of Human Rights, especially in the societies present at the meeting and through the work of the youth organisations represented.

As a continuation of the previous fora held in the past years in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Italy, the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth and Sports will be the host of the forum, in partnership with the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum and other concerned institutions and civil society organizations.

The Euro-Arab Youth Forum relates also with the broader processes of Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Arab youth cooperation that the League of Arab States, the European Youth Forum and the Council of Europe are involved in, including activities carried out in the framework of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of Youth.

Aims and objectives

Overall aim: To support and foster cooperation and intercultural dialogue among Arab and European youth leaders based upon Youth Participation, Development and Human Rights.

Forum Objectives

1. To discuss the challenges to a culture of universal human rights – in Europe and the Arab region - in the context of the Arab Spring movements and the role of young people and youth organisations therein
2. To contribute to the development of shared knowledge about Human Rights and their role on sustainable development and autonomy of young people
3. To share experiences and forms of youth involvement and youth participation in the European and Arab regions;
4. To formulate and develop proposals about improving the situation of youth in the European and Arab regions in relation to Youth Participation and Human Rights, with a focus on the of youth organisations and youth policy
5. To develop project ideas for Euro-Arab youth cooperation for intercultural dialogue and the promotion of a culture of universal human rights and for youth participation
6. To develop partnerships between participating youth organisations aimed at involving young people in the Euro-Arab issues to deal with disputes surrounding them at social, economic and political levels and challenging stereotypical images of the other
7. To promote intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding between youth, respecting cultural differences and specificities, and to deal with them on equal terms and with mutual respect.

Expected results

- Common statement/Appeal by the participants concerning the impact of Human Rights on Youth Participation and Development
- Euro-Arab youth projects and partnerships between European and Arab youth organizations.
- Youth projects with the related governmental and non-governmental organizations.

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. Part of the Council of Europe's role is also to invite - in cooperation with the European Youth Forum - and support the participation of 25 youth leaders and youth workers from Council of Europe member states.

This call concerns the recruitment and selection of these participants. The selection of the final group of European participants will be done by the Council of Europe in consultation with the European Youth Forum.

Profile of the participants

All participants recruited by the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum should be:

- Representatives of national, regional and international youth organisations, active in or concerned with human rights, youth participation and intercultural dialogue matters in the Euro-Arab context
- Active in intercultural dialogue through youth work, particularly through Euro-Arab or Euro-Mediterranean activities
- Resident in a member state of the European Cultural Convention¹
- Be motivated to take full part in the forum's programme and to follow-up its results within their organisations and projects
- Be aged between 18 and 30 years
- Be able to communicate in English.

Programme

A detailed daily programme is being finalised and will be sent to the participants together with the invitation letter.

PRACTICAL DETAILS

Dates: 2-7 July 2012 (arrival and departure)

Place: Bethlehem, Palestinian Authority

Number of attendants: 75 participants: 25 from the Arab region (League of Arab States), 25 European (through the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum), and 25 Palestinians

Working languages: Arabic, English and French (tbc)

¹ Signatories of the European Cultural Convention: 47 Council of Europe member states, Belarus, the Holy See and Kazakhstan.

Visa and Travel considerations

Participants selected by the Council of Europe (directly or via the European Youth Forum) will be invited to plan - in close cooperation with the Council of Europe secretariat - their flights to Tel Aviv, from where a **transfer will be organised** to the venue of the forum in Bethlehem.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Accommodation and meals will be provided, for the duration of the forum, by the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth and Sports.

Travel expenses for participants from Europe, invited by the European Youth Forum **or** the Council of Europe, will be reimbursed by the Council of Europe according to the Council of Europe rules **by bank transfer** after the forum.

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 12 June.

The deadline for submitting applications is **4 June 2012**.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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