

ANOTHER
PEACE

really is

POSSIBLE

Youth Peace Ambassadors:

Human Dignity and Peace-Building by Young People in Europe

The Council of Europe was created in 1949 out of the necessity to pursue “peace based upon justice and international cooperation”. Its aim remains “to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress”.

Today, the Council of Europe brings together virtually all countries in Europe; but the state of peace on the continent is full of contrasts. An optimistic view will register progress in human rights and democracy, which are essential components for a culture of peace. The pessimistic view will no doubt notice several frozen conflicts, recent occasions where member states have resorted to force and a troubling rise in levels and forms of nationalism, xenophobia and discrimination. A realistic approach cannot deny the need to deepen peace-building in order to transform conflicts, prevent further escalation and deepen the understanding and practice of peace.

“Only societies based on democracy, the rule of law and human rights can provide sustainable long-term stability and peace.”

Thorbjørn Jagland
Secretary General
of the Council of Europe

“...In a community that lives in peace people mustn't strive for success in destroying others' destinies. The relations should be constructed on trust, cooperation and true benevolence. In this community no one is destroying, but everyone helps each other to build kindness.”

Sergey Kirakosyan
Participant

Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace based upon justice, human rights and democracy has to include peace within each state and not only between states. Social cohesion and social justice, together with respect for diversity and gender equality, are essential dimensions of peace and of sustainable democratic societies.

Consequently, the realistic view on peace on the European continent ought to be concerned with conflicts which include armies and guns, violence, and the criminalisation of poverty, but also anti-gypsyism, growing levels of social inequalities, aggressive nationalism, xenophobia and hostility towards refugees and migrants or religious and cultural minorities.



It is against this background that another peace really is possible. Young people are directly concerned in many ways, not only if they are soldiers. Growing up in Europe is hard for many young people; they look to the future with apprehension. They experience violence and discrimination in different forms and roles, as victims and actors, and they voice their indignation but they are rarely heard.

However, they are also active, and their activities show that it is necessary, and indeed possible, to engage more deeply in peace-building and conflict transformation.

“A community that lives in peace is a community where each individual is able to exercise his or her human rights and to actively participate in society without fearing that his or her safety might be jeopardised due to his or her ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural background.”

Natasha Jancheva
Participant

A project by young people

for peace and human dignity in Europe



"This project is a big chance on my way to becoming a youth leader who wants to engage young people in a peaceful dialogue."

Seda Papoyan
Participant

The Youth Peace Ambassadors is a Council of Europe youth sector project being carried out between 2011 and 2013. The project promotes and supports the role of young people in peace-building activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue.

The project is based on human rights, intercultural dialogue, youth participation and democratic citizenship processes in Europe. Young people are active citizens and protagonists of social change in conflict-affected communities.

The Youth Peace Ambassadors are young people from across Europe, active in youth-led civil society organisations and projects. During the project, they learn about peace and human rights, they develop local projects for peace, and they advocate for human rights and dignity. They thus act as ambassadors for the values of human rights, peace, and intercultural dialogue, and they will also bring these values to youth work and to youth initiatives in their communities.

The participants are also committed multipliers involved in an organisation or network, institution and/or informal group. Last, but not least, the participants are young people looking for a better world where a different peace is possible!

The conflict situations addressed by the participants are those where communities are experiencing or recovering from armed conflict, terrorism, frozen conflicts, racism and aggressive nationalism and hate speech. Discrimination and human rights violations experienced by Roma communities or young migrants and refugees are also covered by the project.



From young people, by young people, for young people

The Youth Peace Ambassadors is an initiative of the youth organisations of the Advisory Council on Youth. Their idea was endorsed by the governmental representatives of the European Steering Committee on Youth during their meeting in the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe in March 2010. The project illustrates the creative potential of youth participation and co-management as practised in the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

Linking youth work and youth policy to peace-building

The perspectives and contributions of youth work and youth policy to peace-building processes are particularly important, especially through their preventive and educational nature.

The Youth Peace Ambassadors project is developed within the framework of Agenda 2020 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, and aims to provide young people with equal opportunities and experience to enable them to play a full part in all aspects of society. This includes:

- Empowering young people to promote, in their daily lives, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.
- Preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any grounds.
- Supporting the initiatives of young people and their organisations with regard to conflict prevention and management, as well as post-conflict reconciliation by means of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension.¹

¹ Agenda 2020 is the framework policy document of the youth sector setting the work priorities for youth work in Council of Europe member states. Further information: www.coe.int/youth



The project consolidates and expands the work of the Council of Europe for human rights, intercultural dialogue and conflict transformation with young people, which includes:

- The Youth Peace Camp, an annual event bringing together young people and youth leaders from communities affected by armed conflicts.
- Training activities on conflict mediation and conflict transformation.
- Training Kits on Conflict Transformation and on Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work ('Mosaic').²
- *Compass and Compasito* - manuals on human rights education with young people and with children.
- Projects supported by the European Youth Foundation, notably pilot projects in conflict affected areas.
- Study sessions at the European Youth Centre in Budapest and Strasbourg, organised in cooperation with international youth organisations.

"A Peace Ambassador is a mediator, a person able to understand different mentalities and cultures."

Varvara Koneva
Participant

"As Peace Ambassadors we should become the eyes and ears of the Council of Europe in our countries and in Europe."

Zlata Kharitonova
Participant

² The T-Kits are published by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth.

Youth Peace Ambassadors

take action for peace and human rights

The Youth Peace Ambassadors project supports young people in peace-building activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue. Participants will take action by working with and in conflict-affected communities through training, awareness raising, campaigning, non-violent actions, youth work activities, local and international youth meetings, and mediation, amongst others.

A network of ambassadors will strengthen the presence and promote the values of the Council of Europe in conflict-affected areas and communities, and strengthen the sustainability of the project.

Other objectives are:

- To enhance the competences and role of young people in peace-building processes, namely by empowering them to speak up against violence, human rights violations, discrimination and hate speech.
- To introduce non-formal educational activities in youth-led projects for peace-building.
- To set up and strengthen alliances with services and partners of the Council of Europe in the member states, especially those active in peace-building.
- To advance the role of youth policy in peace-building and conflict transformation.

Young people are searching for new ideas and open to new challenges while adults have already formed their dogmatic discourses. I have seen this hundreds of times in my life. In peace-building processes, young people should meet, and even better, young women should meet.

Johan Galtung³

"I imagine a community based on education, research, innovation, opportunities for young people, and a powerful welfare state. Only by investing in these 'pillars' can we think about a Europe or a world without wars, conflicts and human injustices."

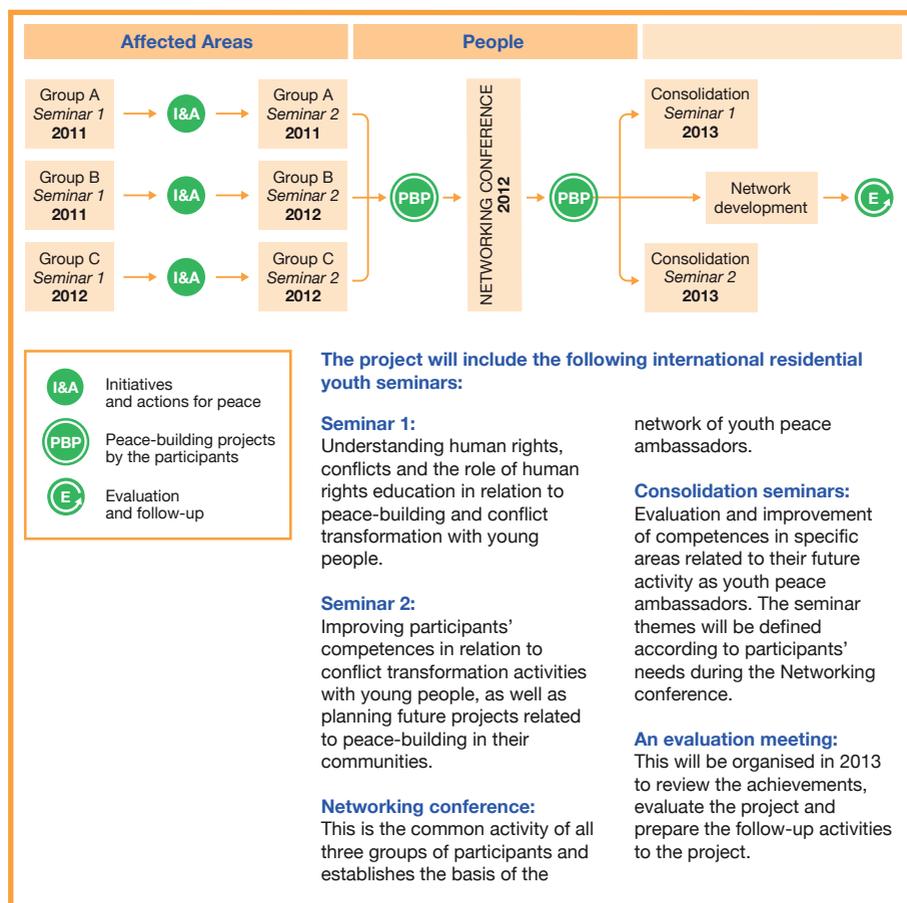
Marco Turrini
Participant

³ Johan Galtung, 11 May 2005, lecture at the European University Centre for Peace Studies, Austria

Learning for action for peace

The project is based on a long-term training course for 75 youth leaders coming from conflict-affected communities across Europe. The training sessions include residential seminars, and e-learning and project work by participants in their communities. Three groups of 25 youth leaders, the future youth ambassadors, follow a similar learning path. The three groups will meet at a network conference to share experiences and support each other in learning, action and networking.

Central to the learning programme are non-formal education approaches, experiential learning and intercultural learning.



Other elements of the projects are:

E-learning

Through e-learning, the participants co-operate on and learn online about the main themes addressed by the project, including the work and policies of the Council of Europe.

Participant's initiatives

The participants initiate actions for peace-building in their local communities. These initiatives are opportunities for the participants to take action for peace with young people.

Peer groups and mentoring

Small groups of participants act as peer support to each other in learning and action. Moreover, each participant also has a mentor / trainer to guide and support their learning throughout the project.

“Peace requires security, and more specifically, “deep security”, which can only be guaranteed through the proper respect of the values and standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Young people play a crucial role in peace-building and in overcoming the conflicts that still affect Europe today.”

Thorbjørn Jagland
Secretary General
of the Council of Europe

Competences developed by the participants

Participants will develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to:

- Human rights and human rights education, including taking action against human rights violations and advocacy for human rights.
- Intercultural dialogue in youth and community projects, including conflict transformation and peace-building concepts.
- Conflict transformation with other young people in their communities.
- The Council of Europe's work and approaches in the field of peace-building.
- Their ability to link up with different social actors involved in peace-building.
- Project management in the field of peace-building.

“The project will make me more competent in addressing the issues affecting my community to make it a better place to live and more equal for all people.”

Alban Kryeziu
Participant

Participants

GROUP A

NAME	ORGANISATION
Alban Kryeziu	NGO ZANA
Anisa Hysesani	Albanian Youth Council
Anna Andreyeva	MyChoice
Beata Bankowska	NEVER AGAIN Association and Youth Association DRONI
Bekkhan Gelgoev	Regional Public Organization "Sintem-Uspokoenie Dushi (Harmony)"
Corrine Heaney	Save the Children
Damjan Jugovic	Association of Secondary School Students in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ernad Deni Comaga	Demokratski omladinski pokret - Democratic Youth Movement
Ervin Tokic	IGMAN - Acció Solidària
Karen Pong	Centre for Research and Action for Peace (KEDE)
Liuba Tsvilik	Belarusian Youth Public Union "New Faces"
Murat Karabag	Takim Yildizi Izcilik Genclik
Nail Abdulov	National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Seda Papoyan	"Arit" cultural NGO
Sona Khachatryan	Caucasian Center for Proposing Non Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods NGO
Thomas Cottam	Hertfordshire County Council
Tigran Grigoryan	"European Movement" NGO
Vahram Ayvazyan	Armenian UN Association
Vakhtang Kekoshvili	Coalition For IDP's Rights
Varvara Koneva	Great Baikal Trail
Yuliya Ielfimova	Center for European Initiatives, Sumy city NGO
Zekeyia Dundar	Community Volunteers Foundation
Zlata Kharitonova	Minority Rights Group International

GROUP B

NAME	ORGANISATION
Arta Assiliani	Union of Balkan Egyptians
Bojana Sekulic	PRONI Center for Youth Development
Catarina Vanessa Rodrigues Barradas	NUEPI - Núcleo de Estudos e Projectos Internacionais
Costas Georgiades	Agros Youth Group
Ece Durmus	Bogazici University Social Services Club
Edlira Mullaj	CDS-RRROM
Elena Zhirukhina	Youth Club Social Diplomacy
Elza Fogel	Youth Educational Center for Human Rights
Eva Peterkova	Together
Gayane Selimyan	Skseel youth initiative
Hanna Baranouskaya	Freedom for Change
Jeyhun Ashirov	Bridge to the Future Youth Public Union
John Kelly	Holy Trinity Youth Centre

Ketevan Tsutskiridze
Livia Guglea
Luca Elek
Mane Gevorgyan
Maria Lukic
Nemanja Tenjovic
Nino Tsulaia
Nyakueth Wako
Petur Ragnhildursson
Ron Salaj
Tegiyé Birey
Viktor Miloshevski
Yusuf Alper Gurlek

Institute for Democratic Changes
Modus Vivendi
Utilaplu
Himal youth initiative group
Instituto de la Paz y los Conflictos
Regional Peace Institute
Our Generation for Future
Voices of Young Refugees in Europe
YMCA & YWCA
Peer Educators Network, UNICEF Innovations Laboratory
YKP-fem
Association Center for Youth Activity
United Nations Association

GROUP C

NAME

Alexandra Maria Huber
Ana Dulovic
Anastasiia Maksymova
Aydan Karimli
Bernadett Maria Varga
Cagkan Korur
Davit Mirvelashvili
Deimante Narijauskaite
Dzemaludin Paucinac
Edo Sadikovic
Emil Balavac
George Leonard Christodoulou
Gil Ibrahim Julius
Hanna Gynnerstedt
Joanna van der Hoek
Marco Turrini
Marine Yeghoyan
Nargiz Abdullayeva
Natasha Jancheva
Neda Velkova
Nikola Cabarkapa
Raminta Bagdonaite
Ratko Savic
Seg Kirakosyan
Shiva Sali
Siarhei Yushkevich
Viktoryia Kazuichytz

ORGANISATION

Anne Frank Zentrum
AEGEE
"Club of Young Leaders"
NUR Children and Youth Public Union
ROMED
United Nations Association of Turkey
Student forum of the University of Georgia
CISV Lithuania
City of Novi Pazar - Youth Office
JUMP organization
Youth Club "Under the Same Sun"
Athina SOS
Nigerian community Vinnitsa
CISV UK/ CISV Sweden
Saturday School project and CISV International
Associazione Sud
"Active Young Citizens Initiative" NGO
ASYOU (Azerbaijan Student Youth Organisations' Union)
Mladiinfo/FEJS MK
Regional Enterprise Support Center
NGO "Eco-movement" Bijelo Polje
Brave Phone
Association of high-school students in Bosnia and Herzegovina
"World Independent Youth Union" NGO
Association of Citizen Sumnal
Saints Methodius and Cyrill Christian Educational Centre (CEC)
MTÜ Öppe ja Arengukeskus "EV-Razam"

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate General of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe. It elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. Through the European Youth Foundation and the European Youth Centres, it provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming at the promotion of democratic citizenship, human rights education, youth participation and intercultural dialogue. In 2012 and 2013, in addition to the Youth Peace Ambassadors, the Youth Department has six other projects:

- Young People Combating Hate Speech online
- Roma Youth Action Plan
- Enter! – Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods
- Intercultural Dialogue with Neighbouring regions
- Human Rights Education and Democracy
- Youth Policy Development

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www.coe.int/youthpeace

