

Opening Ceremony of the 18th University on Youth and Development

Speech of the Executive Director of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe
Ambassador António Gamito

Dear authorities,
Dear partners,
Dear friends,

I am deeply sorry for not being able to be with you today. My colleagues from the North-South Centre know how much I wanted to be there personally to welcome you all to the 18th edition of the University on Youth and Development on behalf of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

As executive director of the North-South Centre, I am convinced that the work our institutions develop will not be effective without your cooperation.

In the North-South Centre we believe in a working methodology based on partnership, solidarity and dialogue with all the stakeholders and that is why we rely on a bottom-up approach building bridges between governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society. We want you to feel included and we want you to know that we do not work for you but also with you in addressing the challenges our societies face today. We acknowledge the work you are doing for the development of more peaceful and inclusive societies. You are key drivers of our present and of our future.

I had the opportunity to take a look at the projects you will present during the next few days at the UYD. I must say it fills me with pride to witness the integration of such a diverse group of youth organisations and workers building together a world based on respect for human rights, active citizenship, diversity of cultures, gender equality, participation, democracy and above all, the recognition that dialogue is the core aspect of human relations.

The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe will continue to offer capacity building activities for civil society organisations and most importantly, we will continue to offer the platform of the "Network of Universities on Youth and Global Citizenship" that contributes to boost your work.

We will continue to facilitate spaces like this University on Youth and Development because we believe in our partnership and in the values and vision we all share. We are thankful for the strong partnerships built with the Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE), the Portuguese Youth Institute (IPDJ), the Tunisian Youth Observatory (ONJ), the European Youth Forum (YFJ) the Spanish National Youth Council (CJE) and the many other youth organisations and platforms that participate and contribute to our daily work.

Allow me to seize this occasion to express our gratitude to the Centro Euro-Latino Americano de la Juventud (CEULAJ) who celebrates its 25th anniversary. We have been partners for 17 years up until now and their contribution has been invaluable. They create the conditions for our UYD to strive.

I thank you all for your participation and for being an inspiration and I wish you a productive and fruitful week. I can't wait to learn about all the new projects that will result from this 18th edition of the UYD!