



DJS/CAMP/NCC1/(2006)/01 E

"All Different - All Equal" European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation

CALL FOR SUPPORT AND ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

By the European Steering Group members from the Council of Europe youth sector* and
by the Council of Europe Secretariat of the Campaign

The European Youth Campaign "All different – All equal", run by the Council of Europe and its Member States in 1995 was a milestone in reinforcing the fight against racism, anti-semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. Now, from June 2006 to September 2007, the Council of Europe will, with the support of the European Union and other partners, organise a new campaign on the themes of Diversity, Human Rights and Participation, based upon the slogan "All Different – All Equal". This new Campaign is part of the Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2005.

Looking at the realities of racism, anti-Semitism, discrimination and all forms of intolerance today, the new campaign must go further than the 1995 experience and must fully reflect the concerns of all citizens, but particularly those of young people. Thus the campaign represents the summum of the issues and principles of the Council of Europe's youth policy, namely accession and inclusion, solidarity and social cohesion.

We, representatives of governments and youth organisations, are working together within the Council of Europe's unique co-management system on youth co-operation. We believe in DIVERSITY, as a condition for cultural and social life, as belonging to the very character of Europe; we believe in the core values of the Council of Europe – DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS and the RULE OF LAW – and we believe that PARTICIPATION as the concept of active democratic citizenship and a fully PARTICIPATIVE SOCIETY can ensure that these values are maintained and further developed.

However, we observe that this is not everybody's agenda. Many different recent events in Europe, threaten the concept of DIVERSITY and point not only to the need for employment for young people and their social inclusion, but also to the need for a concept of HUMAN RIGHTS

* The European Steering Group members from the Council of Europe youth sector comprise 8 members from the Statutory Bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector (four members of the European Steering Committee on Youth, CDEJ and four members of the Advisory Council on Youth, CCJ). The Steering group, established by a decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe invites as additional members – without the right to vote – representatives of the European Youth Forum, of the European Commission and of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and as observers the UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

EDUCATION, aimed at lowering levels of humiliation and discrimination. There is also a lack of movement on the idea of full social inclusion and PARTICIPATION – in urban environments, in school and university, in the workplace, and on the putting into practice of all these concepts on a political / policy level. Too often young people fear that they have no real influence on their future.

We see many achievements of the Council of Europe's work on Democracy, Human Rights and Participation in danger. Under the pressure of globalisation, and as a result of demographic developments and important changes in the burden-sharing of social and health costs, unemployment benefits, poverty and social assistance, massive fears about the future of work and the securing rule of the state have arisen. This obvious crisis seeks scapegoats, and as always in human history the weak and non-protected are chosen. 'Otherness' is seen as a threat, not as an inspiration for cultural production.

Europe is in the process of overcoming lastingly the damages of the Cold War and more than 50 years of ideological division. Pluralistic democracies, Human Rights and Participation have become a pan-European reference system; the European Union enlarges with high speed. Europe lives a peak of its history; yet nobody seems to enjoy it. We are concerned about a fear-driven climate of public debate and we are concerned about the prospect of a fortress Europe, which might be unable to face the challenge of globalisation in a spirit of openness.

Our call goes out to campaign for DIVERSITY; we want to prove that DIVERSITY provides the key for developing common values in Europe, assuring its economic success and enriching its cultural landscape. Our motivation is selfish – we do not trust a Europe disregarding DIVERSITY and drifting towards a system of relations between nations only; we feel that our own safety and the safety of children and young people depends on the continuation of the major DIVERSITY PROJECT called Europe.

What holds us together is laid down in the European Convention of HUMAN RIGHTS. But next to this Convention and the work of its unique permanent Court, next to the European Social Charter and the Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment there is something else: the *understanding* of HUMAN RIGHTS and knowledge about them. We are concerned that the thinking and acting of many actors does not give enough room to common values and HUMAN RIGHTS.

To build a fully-fledged participative society needs volunteers, committed citizens and politicians, who are convinced of democratic decision-making at all levels of the political process. And it needs the recognition of PARTICIPATION as the very centre of democracy and as the decisive indicator for its quality. There is an active associative life in Europe, there are volunteers everywhere, non-governmental organisations perform excellent work, with more success than is publicly recognised. Yet still not all citizens have the same access, particularly those from weak social backgrounds and minorities, but also children, women, workers and employees, pupils, students, immigrants and refugees....

For us, the themes of DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS and PARTICIPATION are inseparable. They describe a Europe as old as the history of the continent, its code of values and democratic fabric. And we know too that all this is in danger, if we do not constantly work for its further development.

This is why we will, during the Campaign, organise European events, create electronic campaign platforms, create national committees and support action in our member states; we will reach out to other European and global organisations, seek public/private partnerships, the support of municipalities, and create contacts with peripheral and rural areas. We will practice a maximum of flexibility, because our project cannot afford to exclude anybody, but we will also introduce quality standards and a label to be able to control and supervise responsibly the vast amount of actions and events that we believe should happen.

We place a strong emphasis on awareness-raising and on education, both formal and non-formal/informal; we believe in empowerment and lobby; we hope to see many coalitions of civil society and public authority; we support the research community and want to see our actions evidence-based. We stand in the tradition of the anti-racist and anti-discrimination movement – it is not for nothing that our logo is “All different – all equal”.

We are on the move again, ten years on, and we count on your support and active involvement.

To connect yourself to this campaign, please contact:

The Secretariat of the Campaign “All Different – All Equal”

Directorate for Youth and Sport
European Youth Centre
30, Rue Pierre de Coubertin
67000 Strasbourg
France

Tel. : +33.3.88.41.23.00

Fax : +33.3.88.41.27.77

e-mail: alldifferent-allegal@coe.int

You can also visit the Campaign virtually:

www.alldifferent-allegal.int