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# **“PEACE ADVOCACY – STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN ADVOCACY FOR PEACE AND PEACE-BUILDING PROCESS FROM THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL”**

Report of the study session held by  
Youth Peace Ambassadors Network

in co-operation with the  
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
18-25 October 2020

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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## Executive summary

**Peace Advocacy - Strengthening the role of youth in advocacy for peace and peace-building process from the grassroots level** was organised by the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network in cooperation with the European Youth Centre Strasbourg of the Council of Europe on 18-25 October 2020.

This study session falls within YPAN's long-term strategic priorities to support young people with knowledge, skills, time, resources and space to become agents of change and peacebuilders with tools for active citizenship. Cooperation and work toward mutual values of peace and stability will pave the way for long-term change, in which the participation of young people is crucial.

**The aim of the** study session was to empower young people, from Europe and beyond, to take an active role in peace-building by equipping them with skills and competences in advocacy and conflict transformation.

### **The study session had the following objectives:**

1. To build capacity in using non-violent methods and tools to foster peace process and transform conflicts non-violently (based on the Council of Europe's approach);
2. Explore advocacy as a tool for change as well as, gain new advocacy skills.
3. Introduce the work of the Council of Europe and the different European and UN human rights mechanisms that can be used to promote peace
4. To raise awareness about legal instruments such as UNSCR 2250 and reflect on the role youth organisations have in its promotion 5 years since its adoption
5. Create a common and safe space to share experiences, challenges and initiatives on local level
6. Establish the cooperation between young peacebuilders in Europe and encourage them to advocate and plan common activities promoting a culture of peace at the European, regional and local level.

The study session gathered 20 participants from different countries all over Europe, so that they could find out the ways to cooperate and advocate for peace contribute to conflict transformation and fostering a sustainable culture of peace. The participants in their applications have mentioned they are facing various challenges towards peace on everyday basis such as the existing political conflicts, personal conflicts, lack of awareness of their local community on the importance of peace, missing competences to be the actors in conflict transformation, lack of information on existing political conflicts and how do they affect the life of people. The participants concluded that as a way to respond to the challenges mentioned above, they would like to develop their awareness and analyse those challenges to peace by sharing first-hand experience stories, so that they can continue international cooperation towards peace, explore more the idea of peacebuilding and appreciate the diversity that they were representing. They also noticed that peacebuilding activism, youth-led advocacy and conflict transformation could be the answers to conflicts in Europe. Participants also expressed their will and need to keep on cooperating in the field of peacebuilding at the international level.

The recommendation that the YPAN and the participants of the study session have after this study session is to create and design more spaces in which young people could exchange their experiences on conflicts and co-create international initiatives towards building the culture of peace.

## II. Introduction

This report is prepared by the facilitator's team of Peace Advocacy Study Session and contains information about each phase (preparation, implementation and evaluation of the activity). It represents all the details about the 3 mentioned phases of the Study Session, and also gives a further insight on participants and their follow up projects.

### The background to the session

Peace is one of the vital factors contributing to quality life; a peaceful environment plays a significant role for the development of an individual, of the society and the country, since it affects all aspects of economic and social development in a country. According to the Global Peace Index, Europe is the most peaceful part of the world, but there are still lots of challenges in different European fragile peace processes, such as post-conflict transitions (Balkans; Turkey and Kurdish population), frozen conflicts (Cyprus, Moldova and Transnistria, Cyprus and Northern Cyprus, Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia), conflicts related to independence and autonomy and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. YPAN recognises the need for an effective system that could improve building dialogue and living in welcoming and inclusive societies, with the absence of violations to human rights. Therefore, this study session, supported by the Council of Europe, brought together 20 participants from Council of Europe member states for 6 days to explore their role in creating and maintaining peace in their communities and in Europe as a whole.

YPAN recognizes the crucial role of young people in peacebuilding efforts, especially with respect to social integration and efforts for reduction of violence. We also recognized that young people have a need to feel empowered and have the skills to express their efforts and vision in their communities and beyond. In order to do so, we identified the need to equip young people, within YPAN and others, with advocacy skills that will enable them to contribute to strengthen the culture of peace in Europe and be able to stand up for their human rights, specifically their right to be actively involved in peace and security issues at local, national and European level.

With this study session we aimed to respond to the learning needs coming from our network – especially linked with understanding and engaging in advocacy processes. The study session presented an opportunity to explore in depth a topic that was not well known across the network. It was also timely, as the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, which is the first international framework to recognize the positive contribution of young people to peace, turned 5 years old in December 2020.

Bearing all those aspects in mind, we wanted to highlight the crucial role of young people in peacebuilding efforts, especially through advocacy at the grassroots level where most of the participants work. We also focused on intercultural dialogue and learning, as well as, peer to peer learning as a tool of conflict transformation and youth empowerment.

This study session is linked with the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network long-term strategic priorities to support young people with knowledge, skills, time, resources and space to become

agents of change and peacebuilders with tools for peace advocacy. Cooperation and work toward mutual values of peace and stability will pave the way for long-term change, in which the participation of young people is crucial. Advocacy, understood as an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions is an essential part of active citizenship and a democratic society. Being able to formulate a desired change, knowing who to approach and how to go about it are some key elements to successful advocacy efforts.

### The profile of participants number and other information

YPAN made sure to include participants from different backgrounds and different fields of youth work. The selection of participants was based on their country of residence (due to strict travel restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19), membership/expression of interest in YPAN, previous experience/interest in the topic of the study session, multiplier possibility as well as gender balance. Diversity was prioritized during selection and composition of the group to form a group with a range of experiences, backgrounds and different approaches to youth/peacebuilding work, representing different geographic areas and cultural differences. Participants were expected to provide a contribution to the Study Session from their personal experience and knowledge of the topic and to commit to follow up activities.

The group was formed of young people coming from Council of Europe member states, who are involved in youth work connected to peace-building, conflict transformation or human rights. We received over 300 applications which made the selection of participants very difficult. We also received a lot of applications from people residing in countries outside of the EU, which due to travel restrictions linked to COVID-19 could not be invited to the study session. The call was disseminated through various social media channels, including our Facebook page as well as SALTO's European training calendar.

How many participants did you apply for?	45
How many people applied for the study session?	333
How many participants were finally invited?	21
How many participants did actually attend?	20
What was the gender distribution of the participants: male/female/other	8 M / 12 F
What was the average age of participants?	27
What was the average age of the preparatory team?	30

### Number of participants by country of residence

Belgium	1	Georgia	2	Germany	4
Czech Republic	1	Lithuania	1	Poland	2
Estonia	1	Italy	2	Spain	4
France	1	The Netherlands	1		

For the selection of participants, the team has used the following criteria to prioritise the applications:

1. Young peacebuilders including Youth Peace Ambassadors Network members and alumni
2. Age of participants: 18-30 (however some of the participants may be over the age of 30)

3. Able to communicate and work in English
4. Be motivated to cooperate with the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and/or other participants
5. Be motivated to act as multiplier and implement local, regional or international activities in their communities
6. Have practical experience in work relevant to the topic
7. Be able to attend the entire study session.

### Presentation of the organisers

#### About Youth Peace Ambassadors Network:

The Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN) is an informal network of 83 young peacebuilders across Europe who works *with* and *in* conflict affected communities. The YPAN was developed from the '**Youth Peace Ambassadors**' project. The project itself was proposed by the Advisory Council on Youth and endorsed by the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe in 2010 and lasted from April 2011 until December 2013. The mission of YPAN is to develop a culture of peace by empowering young people, promoting human rights, dignity, equality and respect of diversity through education, advocacy and other non-violent actions. The YPAN brings together 83 young people from 30 countries of the Council of Europe. Members of the Network are involved in working *with and for* young people within different structures: organisations, institutions, informal groups. Therefore, in the peace-building activities, the Network has a big support from youth organizations all over Europe.

More information can be found at:

[ypa.network](http://ypa.network)

<http://www.coe.int/web/youth-peace-dialogue/youth-peace-ambassadors>

<https://www.facebook.com/YouthPeaceAmbassadorsNetwork>

### III. Content of the Study Session

#### The topic and main contents/issues discussed

The study session covered many issues regarding youth work, peacebuilding and advocacy from the grassroots level, human rights education and conflict transformation. At the beginning of the activity, the participants were able to discuss how they understand some of the terms and definitions that are at the core of the study session. These terms included: Peace, Violence, Conflict, Advocacy, Human Rights, Culture of peace and Peacebuilding. Many of the participants had different understanding of the same term. They were perceiving them differently and interpreting according to their own realities and experiences. It was very valuable to discuss various approaches and point of views.

On the second day, participants built up on the “conflict” and “peacebuilding” discussions they had started on the first day. They discovered the conflict as a dynamic body and discussed the difference and relations between conflict management, conflict transformation and conflict resolution. The methodology used during these sessions allowed the participants to learn from one another in a process of effective peer learning. Participants then discussed the real work examples. They mapped the conflicts happening in their own societies and all around Europe, also trying to foresee possible future conflicts. After mapping the negative conflicts and possible threats to the culture of peace in our societies, participants discussed their capacity as a peacebuilder to address those issues. They discovered the values, attitudes and behaviours a peacebuilder should have. On top of it, they shared their own experiences and discussed the path of the peace builder with ups and downs.

The following day the discussions were started with participants analysing their own realities, by focusing on analysing conflict. During the same day, participants continued exploring advocacy step by step, learning altogether how to create advocacy campaigns and use it in peacebuilding.

The fourth day of the Study Session was opened by the expert, Rebecca Hovhannisyan, who informed participants further on the topic of Youth, Peace and Advocacy and UN resolution 2250. On the same day, participants had a chance to share their contributions and experience. Participants were learning from each other and exchanging their knowledge, skills, tools and methods from their work or field of interest. This method also allowed participants to practice their facilitation skills. In the afternoon, participants had free time, and a joint dinner in Strasbourg old town.

The following days of the study session created opportunities to discuss how to address the conflicts that were defined and analysed previously. First of all, participants learned more about advocacy on the grassroots level, from the expert, Agta Stajer. Later on, the participants explored further the role of the Council of Europe in Capacity-building programmes, as well as the role of the Advocacy Council of Youth. As part of the introduction to youth advocacy, we invited Jorge Aguado Sánchez, member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe (portfolio on Human Rights Education). Jorge presented the work of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) in the plenary. The session brought a new vision on how youth can have an active participation in international policy making and also it showed the example of the Youth Department through the practical application of co-management. At the end, participants asked several questions in order to understand how they can take part or how they can bring ideas to the CCJ.

The last days of the Study session were dedicated to the creation of the advocacy campaign by participants, as well as, the evaluation of the study session.

Taking into consideration the topic of our Study Session, we will dedicate the following paragraph to explain further how we tackled the concept of peace advocacy.

The peace advocacy concept was introduced during the “Finding common ground session” as one of the key topics for the framework of the study session. Furthermore, the third day of training was specifically oriented to explore in the elements, tools and strategies of Advocacy with a special focus on Peace Advocacy as the core structuring element of the programme. During the third day, two sessions were facilitated: “Advocacy 101” and “Advocacy in practice”. Advocacy 101 was a theoretical session in which the elements, strategies and actors of the advocacy process were presented by the trainer. All the information was adapted from the manual provided by the Educational Advisor paying attention to the needs and previous knowledge of the participants. The second session, “Advocacy in practice” aimed to create learning by doing activity in which the group was encouraged to define an advocacy campaign for a current issue: The impact of COVID in the educational activities in the youth centres. The group felt motivated and learnt from the practical activity as it was mentioned in the evaluation. To provide an example, one comment of a participant in the evaluation form is: “... it was a great combination of theoretical input and practice (in particular the advocacy session). However, for the advocacy part, it would be better to provide more detailed input as the input was too general ...”

## Methodology

The team of trainers from Youth Peace Ambassadors Network designed and implemented the study session using the principles and values of non-formal education. Participants were introduced with these principles during the first day of the Study Session. The study session included a range of typical non-formal education methods and activities, including but not limited to working groups, role-playing games, plenary and small group discussions, simulations, interactive lectures, case studies, experts’ talks, brainstorming, world café and open space. There was provided space for each participant to freely express their point of view, their perceptions, beliefs and values. The whole process of learning was accompanied with the following principles: encouraging active participation and added value to all participants, freedom of expression, respecting others point of view. The participants had the opportunity to practice the gained information and knowledge through teamwork activities that strengthened the process of learning, impact and use of various methods, tools, skills, knowledge and information. There was also a focus on future, through working on participant’s own projects or activities on peacebuilding.

In order to ensure that the programme was tailored to participants’ needs, reflection groups were done at the end of every day. Each reflection group was facilitated by one of the trainers. During the evening’s team meetings, the main pointers from reflection groups were discussed and programmed revised, if necessary.

Materials from the Council of Europe were used in the design and delivery of sessions, including Compass, and T-Kit 12 *Youth Transforming conflict*. Additionally, various resources from the Council of Europe were also used during the study session, such as the Recommendations on young people’s access to rights, as well as, the draft advocacy toolkit which is yet to be published.



## Main highlights from the programme

The study session's design and facilitation created a safe space for discussions and reflections on the sensitive topics such as violence, conflict, advocacy and peacebuilding on the grassroots level, analysis of local communities and conflict transformation. Even though the session faced many limitations in terms of inviting participants from different countries due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the group was still international. Furthermore, a range of various stakeholders were represented, including NGOs, student associations, Universities which was appreciated by many participants. This diversity has supported a lot of debates about specific concepts, in fact, it showed how challenging certain definitions can be, especially with participants sharing their very diverse experiences.

The other highlight of the program was the participants' visit at the Palais de l'Europe and having an opportunity to get to know the insights of Council of Europe's work in confidence-building in regions affected by conflicts.

Participants liked the visit so much that they invited the speaker to the EYC to continue the session. To provide an example, one comment of a participant in the evaluation form is: '...I would have given an additional time to the council of Europe to understand its role (during the visit for example -the session with Anna was very short )... '

The full programme of the study session is attached to the report as appendix II.

## Guest lecturers

There were three external lecturers at the study session:

**Agata Stajer**, a co-founder of Alive Peace and a board member of the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN), running international trainings on peace and human rights education, gender equality and peace activism. Agata is also a lawyer specialized in Human Rights by profession and within the Human Rights Commission of the Polish Bar Association she works on the development of human rights education among young lawyers. During this study session, Agata has run the session on Advocacy for Human Rights from a grassroots level sharing the experience when she was involved in the project "Advocates at the border" using in practice the mechanisms of human rights protection to ensure rights of asylum seekers at the Polish-Belarus border. The experience which was introduced to the participants was very beneficial from the perspective of practices. Participants were very happy with this input.

**Jorge Aguado Sánchez**, YPAN Board Member, Journalist and expert in storytelling. Jorge has been working for the European Commission, the Climate movements and is a member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe (CCJ). He is researching the topics of human rights, migrations, and climate change. As a member of the Advisory Council on Youth (portfolio on HR Education), Jorge presented the CCJ work in the plenary. The session brought a new vision on how youth can take an active participation in international policy and also it showed the resources of the Youth Department and the co-management possibilities.

**Rebecca Hovhannisyan**, International Board Chairperson of the Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre NGO – has run the session on introduction on Youth Peace and Security – UN Security Council Resolution 2250. Within her presentation she concluded that this Resolution is an important milestone and advocacy tool; youth power and influence over negotiations not always correlated to young people's proximity to the peace table and that further long-term investment to this document, monitor, assess, and support youth-inclusive peace processes is needed. Participants were very happy with this study session's input.

## **The link between the session's theme and the Council of Europe**

The study session is directly linked to the Council of Europe work, concerning conflict transformation, peace-building and human rights. It is especially based on the one of the priorities of the Agenda 2030, focusing on peaceful and inclusive societies. We believe that the young people as active citizens can and should promote and protect human rights, intercultural dialogue, foster peaceful and inclusive societies and respect for diversity. It is important though, to explore efficient, creative and diverse ways in which young people could actively foster the above-mentioned values. Those are not only values of the YPA Network but – naturally as Youth Peace Ambassadors is the Council of Europe's project – values of the Council of Europe. Therefore, our work also strengthens the presence of the values of the Council of Europe in the local communities. To wider perspectives and to strengthen cooperation between young peacebuilders in order to encourage youth in common peacebuilding activities - we decided to implement this study session and base it on advocacy, as one of the important tools to foster and support peace activities and peaceful coexistence.

## **Council of Europe's work on confidence building**

Many of the regions in Europe that went through conflicts in the last decades are still suffering the consequences of such events. The Council of Europe offers support to the countries which were recently involved in conflicts and are undertaking the process of re-establishing their political, educational, cultural and social institutions. Recreating the necessary level of mutual trust between those parts of the population that were formerly opposed and promoting the basis for the reconciliation of society are a crucial step in the rebuilding process.

In this context, the Confidence Building Measures devised by the Council of Europe constitute a practical tool to consolidate stability and facilitate political dialogue in post- or frozen-conflict areas.

The participant had a chance to exchange with Anna Capello from the Directorate of Political Affairs, Confidence – Building measures (CBMs) about the work of the Council of Europe in some conflict stricken regions.

Devised as a tool to establish bridges between population groups to consolidate stability, CBMs belong to the core of the Council of Europe work programme. The thematic content of these activities spread over the entire work programme and cover a range of topics from human rights to education, social and media issues. They follow-up and complement the work of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, as well as the political debates held within the Committee of Ministers and PACE.

Many regions of Europe suffer from the consequences of recent or frozen conflicts. After the ceasefire, entire countries need to be rebuilt, not only as far as infrastructures are concerned but also in terms of society: notably political, educational, media, cultural and social institutions need to be redesigned to provide a framework where reconciliation of society can take place and democracy truly work. This reconciliation can only take place if a sufficient level of mutual trust is created between those parts of the population which were formerly opposed.

Confidence Building Measures designed and implemented by the Council of Europe are carried out with the full backing of the country(ies) concerned and aim at creating this required level of mutual trust, by addressing concerns common to the entire population and pointing at their common future rather than emphasising their divided past.

## IV. Results and conclusions

The study session and the work of its participants resulted in several outcomes and conclusions:

### Learning points of participants

The participants understood the concepts of youth advocacy in the field of peacebuilding, as well as, they have acquired tools for implementing conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning. These acquired tools will support them to perform peacebuilding activism in a non-violent way for achieving democracy and human rights.

The participants acquired experience of working in intercultural group and teamwork skills. They also received non-formal education tools to work with young people back in their organisations.

The participants learned more about human rights mechanisms in conflict transformation. They also acquired the tools for implementing conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning, such as examples of workshops in the peace education field, resources (manual) to design future activities and YPAN as source of know-how and partners for the future actions.

### New ideas, conclusions and projects emerging from the discussions and working groups

The participants realised that when working in the peacebuilding field there is a need to acquire competences that can be used on everyday basis to deal with the conflict in a nonviolent way, such as, prevention, resolution, management and transformation. Participants also noticed the importance of youth and their advocacy actions and peacebuilding projects in their local communities and they started to cooperate to design educational spaces for their peers and involve more people in the peacebuilding processes, especially at the international level. They were eager to explore each other's realities, they were constantly looking for more opportunities to learn about the conflicts in different communities from the other participants who had first-hand experience of it; by learning about each other's realities, also seeing some common problems, they felt motivated to act on working on transforming it.

The participants developed and planned joined actions of Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and other peacebuilders focused on promotion of dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict transformation based on the principles of nonviolence. There are 6 projects planned on the local, regional and international level. Several of the participants will apply for funding for Erasmus+, thus it is realistic that the projects will take place (detailed description in point 5); also many participants have mentioned their willingness to implement peace advocacy actions and various workshops on peace education based on their local context of their communities. The organizers will provide support in implementing the action plans through consultancy as well as through connecting participants to the YPAN members who can support them in implementing their action plans.

### Acquired competences

The activity aimed to provide also some training elements where the participants could acquire the following competences:

- non-violent methods and tools to foster peace process and transform conflicts non-violently

- peace advocacy and how to implement peace advocacy campaigns in a well-structured way
- project management and design
- educational activity design and implementation
- competences on how to be more effective activists as individuals, and as members of the network and how to work with multilingual youth groups to provide equality, inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

### Cooperation and networking

Cooperation and networking relations were established between participants (from YPAN, and new peacebuilders) which is visible in their work on the future projects. The participants widened their perspectives and learned about the conflicts and peacebuilding practices in Europe, which was a motivating factor for them to be changemakers and peacebuilders themselves.

This study session increased the visibility of YPAN as well as it served as multiplication of the Network values and principles. The study session served as a capacity building activity for the Network members as they have improved their competences in the relevant topics of the study session.

After the Study Session we expect to have the enrolment of 3 new members to the Network.

### Ambassadors for the Council of Europe`s values

More young people got familiar with the Council of Europe, its values and activities. Some of the participants are considering starting a project with support of the EYF.

During the study session all educational materials used were developed by the Council of Europe and the session also promoted the values of the Council of Europe and the work of the Youth Department. The Study Session provided the participants with the knowledge about the Youth Department and its activities but also possibilities given by it.

### Suggestions or proposals for the Council of Europe

The recommendation that the YPAN and the participants of the study session have after its implementation is to create and design more spaces in which young people could exchange their experiences on conflicts and co-create international initiatives towards building the culture of peace.

Taking into consideration how many people applied and the big interest for the study session, the recommendation we would have is that Council of Europe could support as many activities as possible in the field of development of the culture of peace.

## V. Follow-up and evaluation

One of the objectives was to establish cooperation between young peacebuilders in Europe and beyond and encourage them to plan common activities promoting a culture of peace.

There were 6 project groups established. Working on the local, regional and international level. Some of the participants in the groups will apply for funding for Erasmus+ to run their projects. Also many participants have mentioned their willingness to implement peace advocacy actions and various workshops on peace education based on the local context of their communities.

One session of during the last day of training aimed to create a feedback mechanism with the participation of the experts from YPAN, the Advisory Council on Youth and the Educational Advisor including the trainer's team. Each working group produced a project proposal, and these are the following advocacy projects:

1. *Eastern Europe for women rights* - Education on women empowerment, sexual education and reproductive rights as a response to the backlash in women rights in several countries in central and eastern part of Europe.
2. Covid influence on Peace in Europe - Raise awareness about the issues on human rights and positive peace derived from the post-pandemic situation through a communication campaign and training of youth activists
3. Empathy in classrooms - Training for students on empathy so that they can apply it back to their universities and high-schools advocating for non-violence in formal education settings
4. Art for change - Creating spaces for integration of hosting communities and newcomers where they can learn from each other through art (Possible further steps: to create guidelines for more organisations to implement same method in more countries)
5. Rethink gender roles with kids - Creation of set of educational materials for parents to educate their kids on gender equality and to start discussion on gender roles
6. New Europeans - "Aspiring Voices in Europe" campaign to show contributions of Europeans with migrant background to break stereotypes, empower new comers and inspire young people

All the initiatives were defined and proposed by groups of participants and the YPAN gave support by facilitating the process and giving feedback on the contents, methodologies and possible synergies and allies.

### Support in applying for new projects

The participants were supported by the YPAN members in preparation of the application forms for the project ideas developed during the study session. As some of the participants applied to be members of the YPAN Network, thus developing further cooperation, the scope of the network and its activities were also open for them.

Several participants of the study session were also invited for the online training course Training of trainers on Peace Education "Peace Insights" of the YPAN which took place in December 2020 with the support of the Spanish National Agency for Erasmus+. Sophie de Rijk was invited as an expert to explain her experience running Peace Education activities in Jerusalem for integrated schools. Also, a group of the youngest participants showed their interest in participating in the training "Youth Peace Leaders" that will be held in France during 2021 organized by YPAN France with the support of the French National Agency for Erasmus+.

## Follow-up activities (planned and/or implemented)

### **VISUALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - Project planned, to be applied in February - April 2021**

One of the participants, president of [The Polish Forum of Young Diplomats](#), in collaboration with members of the YPAN, trainers of the Study session, have developed the methodology of this future educational activity that will be presented for its evaluation in Poland for the Erasmus+ deadline of April 2021. The project definition and application is already written, and it is planned to be implemented during the Summer 2021.

The aim of the project is to equip 36 youth workers, activists and young peacebuilders with competences in the field of creative citizenship by developing their interest in human rights and activism, equipping them with peacebuilding competences in order to address the European human rights issues by designing visuals for human rights in their respective communities.

### **PAMELA. Conscious Art for and by young people - Pilot Activity - Planned for May - Sep 2021**

The organization Libre-pensadores de La Sierra de Madrid, in collaboration with YPAN has developed an application for the EYF Pilot activity deadline of the 11th of January, incorporating some of the advocacy methodologies and social issues affecting youth debated during the study session. Those include Empathy as an attitude needed for positive peace and the cooperation with local stakeholders in Peace Advocacy campaigns.

## The Study session in media

The Study Session was promoted mostly by using different [social media networks](#). The [call for the study session](#) reached the target group of almost 11.394 people, had 1801 engagements and 59 shares on YPAN Facebook page.

Many hashtags were used during the session which made the session even more visible and its outreach bigger. The hashtags were:

#peacefuleurope, #ypan, #coe, #ypanetwork, #peaceadvocacy.

Most of the activities were published on the [facebook](#) and [instagram](#) pages of the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and there was an article also on the Youth portal of the Council of Europe – access this [website](#).

During the Study Session participants were sharing pictures and messages on Instagram and the trainers created the [insta stories of the study session](#). All together were published on the official YPAN instagram page. These photos and short stories about the Study Session were used for promoting diversity and cooperation as well as informing about the activities and sessions.

During the study session we installed a semi-professional studio to record a video with the testimonials of some participants of the study session and the team of trainers. This aside activity was held during the last night and the outcome will be published online once the video will be edited. At the same time, some participants of the study session decided to collaborate in the long term communication project of the YPAN “Stories of Peacebuilders” aimed to give visibility to success stories of youth peacebuilders in Europe and beyond. We have published

two new stories of previous experiences of the participants. An example can be found on our [Medium](#) website.

### **Overall evaluation**

The Study Session participants evaluated this experience as “fully” and “mostly satisfied”. They emphasised in the evaluation that they saw this study as a space where they have improved their knowledge, found the safe space for expressing themselves but also learned about themselves. As they wrote in the evaluation, they learned about conflict transformation, peacebuilding, project management and youth led advocacy implementation steps. It was a chance for them to meet other people, from different countries and ethnicities and learn about them, it was a chance to gain new skills and competences, but also to get familiar with the work of Council of Europe and Youth Peace Ambassadors Network. Most participants said it was interesting and useful and they learned new things and gained the knowledge about peace-building.

The participants were especially worried about how they are going to handle the whole COVID19 situation. They were even worried if they were going to take part in the event, but this whole situation created a specific experience for the whole group, while respecting the social distance and EYCS measures.

Special COVID19 measures which were implemented in the EYCS were a bit strict according to participants, but understandable. There were those who found the measures too much and too strict, and those participants who said that this made them feel safe.

The group followed the whole COVID19 protocol which included the limited number of persons at each dining table, social distance in the common areas, each participant had only one chair, which could not be exchanged with other participants, while masks were obligatory. The participants had a chance to take off the mask during the break outside, while respecting the social distance.

During the program, there was one exercise where participants had to brainstorm COVID19 friendly energizers which were respecting the protocol. They came up with a list of 10 energizers which were conducted during the whole week.

During the whole event, all participants had a disinfectant liquid and masks available for use. Two days before the end of the whole event, the German participants went to do a COVID19 test (PCR) in order to be able to travel back to Germany. All participants were negative. The whole process was organized by EYCS staff.

The criteria for the study session were fully achieved and present during the implementation of this study session. The aims and objectives were clear from the very beginning and according to the evaluation of the participants, they were met at the end of the Study Session. The whole study session program was organized by using the non-formal education principles and approaches and it included the values and methodologies proposed by the Council of Europe. The session was fully supported by the staff at the EYCS and participants had the optimal working conditions.

## VI. Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of participants  
Appendix 2 - Daily Programme

### List of participants

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13 October 2020, Strasbourg

### Study session

“Peace Advocacy - Strengthening the role of youth in advocacy for peace and peace-building process from the grassroots level”

Study session organized by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN) in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
19-24 October 2020

## List of Participants

### *Participants*

#### Belgium

Melanie Christine Bernhofer "Connecting Europe" (European Policy Centre)

#### Czech Republic

Anastasiia Bondar Be International

#### Estonia

Susanna Veevo Peace Action Community Estonia

#### Georgia

Giorgi Gbedava Rondine International Peace Lab  
Giorgi Janjalashvili Youth for Human Rights

#### Germany

Nikolas Daniel Gomez Gutierrez



Lydia Letsch  
Ilgin Pasli  
Marwan Mhadhbi

Peace Up!  
European Integration Group

#### Italy

Ceveli Marjus  
Sara Jouhari

#### Lithuania

Laura Alciauskaite

#### The Netherlands

Sophie De Rijk

#### Poland

Weronika Knowska  
Kalina Wilk

The Polish Forum of Young Diplomats

#### Spain

Jose Juan Nunez Timermans  
Maria Rodriguez

Sende

#### Team members

Raminta Bagdonaite, course director  
Jose Barrios Sevillano  
Edo Sadikovic

#### Lecturers

Rebecca Hovhannisyan, International Board Chairperson of the Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre  
NGO  
Agata Stajer, trainer  
Jorge Aguado Sanchez, Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

#### *Council of Europe Secretariat*

Anna Capello, Head of the Confidence building measures division, Directorate for Political  
Affaires  
Sarah Walter, Deputy to the Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
Stefan Manevski, educational advisor, Youth Department  
Nina Kapoor, programme assistant, Youth Department  
Mirjam Hagmann, trainee, Youth Department

## Full program of the Study Session

# “Peace Advocacy - Strengthening the role of youth in advocacy for peace and peace-building process from the grassroots level”

Study session organized by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN) in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
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## Programme

### Sunday, 18 October 2020

Arrival of participants  
20:00 Dinner  
21:00 Welcome evening

### Monday, 19 October 2020

Breakfast  
09:30 Opening of the Study Session with Sarah Walter, Deputy Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
Introduction of the aims & objectives of the Study Session  
11:15 Break  
11:45 Group Building activity, Expectations & programme, working rules  
13:15 Lunch  
15:00 Building common ground –  
Concepts and keywords – peace, peacebuilding and conflict transformation  
16:30 Break  
17:00 Introduction to the Council of Europe and its youth sector  
Introduction to the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network  
19:00 Dinner  
21:00 Welcome café

### Tuesday, 20 October 2020

Breakfast

- 09:30 Defining peace
  - Different levels of peace
- 11:15 Break
- 11:45 Peace and peace-building
  - Examples and theoretical input
- 13:15 Lunch break
- 15:00 Conflict transformation
  - Theoretical input and practical examples
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Mapping realities connected with peace and conflicts
- 19:00 Dinner
- 21:00 Socialising evening proposed by participants

### **Wednesday, 21 October 2020**

#### Breakfast

- 09:30 Analysis of participants realities
  - Defining issues and challenges in conflict transformation
- 11:15 Break
- 11:45 Introduction to advocacy
- 13:15 Lunch break
- 14:30 Step by step in building advocacy initiatives
- 16:00 Coffee break
  - Continuation in the afternoon
- 19:00 Dinner

### **Thursday, 22 October 2020**

#### Breakfast

- 09:30 Youth Peace and Security – UN Security Council Resolution 2250
  - Introduction by Rebecca Hovhannisyanyan, International Board Chairperson of the Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre NGO
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Participant-led workshops on Youth, Peace and Security
- 13:15 Lunch
  - Free afternoon
  - Dinner in town

### **Friday, 23 October 2020**

#### Breakfast

- 09:30 Advocacy for Human Rights from a grassroots level, input by Agata Stajer, trainer in the youth field
- 11:00 Break

*PEACE ADVOCACY - YPAN study session 2020*

- 11:30 Council of Europe's work in Confidence-building in regions affected by conflicts, exchange with Anna Capello, Confidence-building measures division
- 13:15 Lunch at the European Youth Centre
- 15:00 Identifying the core issues and cases for advocacy action
- 16:00 Break
- 17:00 European Youth Foundation– funding opportunities  
Advisory Council on Youth and its work on building peaceful societies, exchange with Jorge Aguado Sanchez, Advisory Council on Youth  
The opportunities offered by the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, input by Agata Stajer
- 19:00 Dinner

**Saturday 3rd October 2020**

Breakfast

- 9:30 Creating advocacy plans
- 11:00 Break  
Creating advocacy plans  
Presentation of the advocacy ideas
- 13:00 Lunch
- 15:00 Presentation of the advocacy ideas  
Next steps - Group conclusions
- 16:30 Break
- 17:00 Evaluation and closing
- 19:00 Dinner
- Farewell party

**Saturday 3rd October 2020**

Breakfast

Departure