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Euro-Arab
Youth Forum

Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security
حوار حول الشباب، السلام والأمن

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European Youth Centre Budapest

CONCLUSIONS



Organised by the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States
in co-operation with the European Youth Forum

1. The 7th Euro-Arab Youth Forum brought together youth leaders, youth workers and activists for peace and dialogue from member states of the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States, at the European Youth Centre Budapest. The forum fostered the participation of young people and youth organisations in peacebuilding and Euro-Arab cooperation for inclusive societies, based on the current situation and the principles of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, adopted in 2015 at the initiative of Jordan, and the Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).
2. During the forum we made an analysis of the role of the Council of Europe and the League of Arab states in implementing Resolution 2250, together with our own role and that of our youth organisations. We developed these conclusions in a spirit of critical thinking, active youth participation and human rights education as ethic frameworks for learning and acting for peace and dialogue.
3. Young people represent more than half of the Euro-Arab population. Yet many suffer from lack of political and social engagement. We, young people, would like to have the capacity to contribute to the implementation of the resolution in our countries and organisations, especially by exercising our right to participation on every level of decision-making.
4. The expectations placed on UN 2250 are far from being met by reality. Information about the resolution, especially at national level, is missing. It is not always clear who should be responsible for its implementation, and the possibilities for contributing to its implementation are not structured. Moreover, governmental youth policy authorities rarely feel concerned by the implementation of the resolution. Youth organisations advocating for and working toward its implementation face a lack of political and financial support.
5. We are appalled by the persistence and escalation of armed conflicts in our regions. We are alarmed that this has had drastic consequences upon the youth and their societies at large. Young people directly affected by conflict need protection and they need support. Any possibility for them to exert a positive role in conflict transformation requires that they are able to look at their own future with hope and confidence.
6. Among those requiring support are all the children and young people forced to take dangerous routes to safety, often endangering their livelihood. The right to seek asylum is a fundamental human right which obliges all the member states of the Council of Europe and of the League of Arab States without distinction.
7. We are concerned by the brain drain from Arab countries to Europe. Young graduates and professionals' talents and competencies are needed so that people in their communities can effectively enjoy their right to life in dignity, development and health.
8. We have observed increasing and persisting violations of universal human rights, especially of women's rights, the rights of minorities and of migrants. We are particularly concerned about the risks faced by young people with disabilities in situations of conflict.
9. We are equally concerned about the low level of protection and security offered to the youth activists who are working on the implementation of UN Resolution 2250 at ground level, who are facing defamation and oppressive legislation. We are equally worried by the growing disparities in accessing fundamental human rights and attempts to limit freedom of association and expression. This is unacceptable. The protection of human rights for all is a pre-condition to live in secure and peaceful societies.

10. Corruption curtails the purpose and impact of the UN Security Resolution 2250, especially when governments are not accountable to their citizens.
11. We witness a massive rate of polarisation within our communities, involving a division between the young and old, between faiths and cultures. Such divisions incite hatred and promote radicalisation. Much political discourse is built on a dangerous cocktail of propaganda, hate speech, fake news and 'alternative facts' which misleads the population as a whole. This puts into question the purpose of UN SC 2250 which functions only with the commitment of states to democracy, rule of law and human rights.
12. The potential of the UN SC Resolution remains fully valid and intact. We want to contribute to its implementation and believe that Euro-Arab youth dialogue plays an important role in restoring confidence and supporting peacefully-minded young people.
13. We encourage the relevant institutions in the field to build strategies to involve young people in long-term decision-making process, especially in the implementation of our proposals in this 7th Euro-Arab Youth Forum. We invite the member states of both institutions to put into effect policies and programmes to protect and empower young people.
14. We also encourage the Council of Europe, the League of Arab states and their partners to take a proactive role in combating gender-based violence, especially during conflict.
15. The lack of access to funding is a structural barrier that prevents the implementation of Resolution 2250. Therefore, we strongly encourage the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and their partners to provide sufficient capacity for youth organisations to receive monetary and non-monetary resources.
16. We are concerned that young people rarely receive appropriate education or training on the topic of peace and security with the result that they lack the expertise to tackle the sensitive nature of security. We encourage the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States to initiate a human rights education programme for youth activists enabling them to take action on the topic of peace and security and to invite their member states to implement such interventions in the education of young people.
17. We encourage the Council of Europe and the League of Arab states to continue their long-term cooperation and to share best practices and resources as a contribution to the implementation of UN SC Resolution 2250. We invite both institutions to build strategies for the implementation of UN2250 within their respective member states.
18. We welcome the findings of the study on the past 10 years of Euro-Arab youth cooperation and urge all the partners to learn from past experience in order to live up to the expectations of the participants of Euro-Arab Youth fora. We ask that the two partners facilitate the creation of an informal network of participants in the previous fora. We appreciate the involvement of the European Youth Forum as a partner and welcome the opening to new partners.

19. We are grateful to the expertise of Council of Europe in promoting intercultural dialogue as a means of combating hate and prejudice. We encourage our partners and the League of Arab States to make use of the tools provided and to replicate them in their projects.
20. We are inspired by the approach of the Council of Europe to youth participation by creating a co-management structure between decision makers and young people, in initiatives and the implementation of projects related to youth peace and security. We hope that similar principles can be put into place in Arab intergovernmental and national structures; there are many initiatives from Arab countries related to youth participation, but they are not sufficient. Meaningful youth participation requires resources, structures and, above all, the motivation to have trust in young people.
21. We expect that the future fora will strengthen youth participation and dialogue by having more transparent and open modes of recruitment of the participants, better and earlier management of visa applications and requirements, and secure participation of young people from the full spectrum of society.
22. We are committed to mobilise our organisations and the young people with whom we work to initiate activities serving the purposes and principles of UN SC 2250. We expect and ask the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States to support the implementation of the projects we prepared here, namely:
 - a) Protecting and supporting young peacebuilders targeted by defamation
 - b) Promoting a culture of human rights by young people through a Youtube channel
 - c) Engaging youth in decision-making processes with local authorities on issues affecting them directly
 - d) Media literacy and critical thinking to prevent misinformation and polarisation
 - e) Micro Euro-Arab youth fora to promote Resolution 2250 and youth participation opportunities at national level
 - f) Empowering civilly active youth to face and resist the oppressive situations they experience
 - g) Inclusion of young refugees in the UNSCR 2250 and peace processes
 - h) Training young people for peace building through arts and sports
 - i) Combating gender-based violence on social media
 - j) Platform for interreligious dialogue on peace and anti-radicalisation
 - k) Peace building and gender equality
23. We invite the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe to include the results of these projects in the next edition of the forum. We hope they will include success stories of activists, ensuring a positive image of the work that these young people carry out, and providing inspiration to other young people.

