



FORUM  
NAZIONALE  
DEI GIOVANI



## **RAGUSA DECLARATION** on Youth, Migration and Development

A Euro-Arab youth contribution to intercultural dialogue  
and global solidarity for the **International Year of Youth**

### **Euro-Arab Youth Conference**

Tunis and Ragusa (Italy) 22 -30 July 2010

1. We, Arab and European youth representatives taking part in the Euro-Arab conference on Youth, Migration and development co-organised by the Italian Youth Forum, the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum, have met in Ragusa from 25 to 30 July 2010 in order to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding between young and youth organisations from Arab and European countries.  
Our meeting built on the accumulated experience of Euro-Arab youth cooperation initiated by the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum in 2008 and continued the work done in the Assilah forum in 2009 about Migration and Human Rights as stated in the Assilah Appeal.
2. Our work together in the conference was strengthened by our common experience of travelling by boat from Tunis – where we initiated our work – to Sicily as a tribute to the thousands of young migrants who every year cross the Mediterranean in search of a better future.
3. We have worked and discussed together in order to:
  - strengthen the participation and role of young people and youth organisations in migration, development and intercultural dialogue issues
  - learn from each other and increase our awareness of migration issues, intercultural dialogue and related matters affecting young people such as racism, discrimination, segregation and violence
  - develop a common understanding of migration, human rights and development and how they affect young people in the European and Arab regions
  - to put together our concerns and aspirations about migration and development matters in the European and Arab regions in the spirit of the International Year of Youth and in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals
  - enlarge the spaces of debate and structured dialogue with institutions
  - reinforce dialogue and partnerships between European and Arab youth organisations
  - facilitate dialogue between youth leaders, decision-makers and representatives of regional and international organisations concerned by migration, human rights and development in the Euro-Arab and Euro-Mediterranean areas
  - foster the sustainability of Euro-Arab youth cooperation projects

- promote the role of youth organisations as agents of peace and dialogue.
4. We have worked together and agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations in the spirit and framework of existing intergovernmental cooperation frameworks, including:
    - The recommendations of the 2009 Kuwait Social and Economic Arab Summit
    - The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the Agenda 2020 on Youth Policy of the Council of Europe;
    - The Barcelona Declaration of 1995
    - The Union for the Mediterranean
    - The Mexico World Youth Conference of August 2010
  5. Migration, mobility and freedom of movement are assets in a globalised world. They can contribute to the reduction of poverty and to improvements in access to health and education for many families.  
However, migration should always be the result of a voluntary and informed choice. The right to migration should not be an obligation to no one. The respect of human rights – including human security and the right to development – in the sending and hosting countries have to be promoted together with the rights of migrants. Immigrants should not be criminalised on the basis of the regularity of their documents – no human being is “illegal”!
  6. Young people are in the front line of migration and are among the groups most vulnerable to its risks, as students, as migrant workers, as forced migrants, asylum-seekers or refugees or as children of migrants often growing up separated from their parents. Young people are also directly concerned as children of migrants in host societies, often exposed to greater levels of discrimination, exclusion and abuse.
  7. Young people, in particular young women and minors, are often in more vulnerable positions related to trafficking in human beings, resulting in exposure to forced labour and modern forms of slavery. Their human rights are often denied and violated and their legal situation makes the exercise of their rights a mirage. This concerns and affects migrants in European countries as much as in Arab countries, whether they are perceived as hosting or transit countries.
  8. Young people and youth organisations are key actors in promoting migration and integration policies embedding active citizenship and human rights, notably through non-formal education, human rights education and global education.
  9. We are particularly concerned with forced migration and internally displaced persons resulting from war and conflicts as well as environmental and climate change. The number of environmental migrants and displaced persons resulting from natural disasters is increasing and punishes more often women, the disadvantaged and the poor which are among the most vulnerable groups.
  10. We reiterate the Assilah Appeal in its call for all the stakeholders involved in migration issues, including youth and youth organisations in the Euro-Arab region, to address the underlying factors of migration and the challenges they pose to young people in the full respect of the dignity and human rights of migrants.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. Youth must be considered as partners for development and play a key role in pursuing the Millennium Development Goals; its role should be further supported by consistent youth and development policies and programmes.
12. The positive aspects brought by migration and the role of migrants need to be made visible and further acknowledged, in particular for development and for fostering intercultural learning by challenging stereotypical and prejudiced views.
13. The contributions of skilled migrants to the development of hosting societies must be highlighted and recognised, as well as their contribution to the development of their country of origin (“brain drain is also brain gain”).
14. National contact and support points for youth and children forced to migrate should be created in each country.
15. Networking and participation opportunities for young refugees and asylum seekers should be supported and their mobility facilitated.
16. The principles of *ius soli* (instead of *ius sanguis*) should be applied in all countries for children of migrants. Access to education and health services must be guaranteed for all children of migrant parents regardless of their formal legal status.
17. Joint ventures between Arab and European partners, including universities and industrial organisations, should be encouraged and set up aiming at job creation for young people.
18. European and Arab states should initiate negotiations aiming at setting up a recognition system for university curricula in order to facilitate mutual recognition of credits and diplomas for students.
19. Public authorities should provide information and counseling to youth organisations about visa procedures for young people. Embassies and consulates should adopt and follow codes of conduct respecting the dignity and human rights of visa applicants. The procedure of visas for intercultural programmes should be made easier and visa procedures should be harmonised according to the least demanding procedure for the applicant. This applies as much to visa requirements within the member states of Council of Europe and the of the League of Arab States as among the European and Arab states.
20. Migration should remain high on the agenda of Euro-Arab co-operation, including intra-regional migration and favouring regional inclusion of migrants.
21. Awareness-raising programmes about climate change and its consequences on population and migration should be developed in Arab and European countries; youth organisations should take a leading role in this respect and seek to involve other civil society actors and stakeholders concerned (business actors included).
22. Refugees, migrants and people displaced due to climate change must be legally recognised and supported.
23. National “green days” should be established to raise awareness for reducing negative consumption patterns and publicise good practices of responsible consumption and fair trade in order to limit the effects of climate change and its impact on migration.

24. Youth organisations must stand and react against scapegoating of migrants and all forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in the political arena. They should also support the political participation of immigrants and refugees
25. Non-formal education programmes and activities, based on human rights education, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue, must be increased in order to reduce tensions and conflicts in local communities. Awareness about the situation of migrants in their country of origin should be part of these programmes.
26. Tools and methods highlighting the commonalities and shared culture heritage between Arab and European people, including folk traditions, art and gastronomy, should be disseminated and put into practice in local communities in order to enhance social cohesion.
27. Links between Arab and European media should be strengthened in order to improve balanced media reporting to reduce mutual biases.  
Education and training of young journalists must include an intercultural learning dimension and adopt codes of conduct for responsible journalism based on intercultural dialogue.
28. History teaching must be reviewed in order to promote critical plural perspectives of historical events.
29. Intercultural education methods developed in and through non-formal education practitioners should be introduced in schools in order to develop students' competences for intercultural dialogue.  
The role of youth work and non-formal education should be further promoted and recognised in national youth policy plans and strategies
30. The capacity-building, training and technical assistance targeting young people as actors of civil societies should be further supported through in order to structure participation mechanisms for a better dialogue with public authorities at all levels. Youth should be supported as actors in local development through small and medium enterprises on priority areas such as territorial management, tourism and communication.
31. Activities for capacity building of trainers and youth leaders for exchanging Euro-Arab experiences in non-formal education should be increased.
32. The League of Arab States and the Council of Europe should increase funding for youth mobility projects with a special attention to disadvantaged areas.
33. A Euro-Arab committee for facilitating youth exchanges should be created. Euro-Arab exchange programmes for students and young workers should be set up, as well as voluntary service in the Euro-Arab area, including an Arab voluntary service programme in the Arab region.
34. A Youth card, offering discounts to young people (including travel services), like the Euro<26 Youth Card, should be adopted by more European and Arab countries.
35. The Council of Europe, notably through its partnership with the European Commission in the youth field, should work towards the enlargement of the youth exchange programmes of the European Union for young people from all the countries of the League of Arab States. The European Union and the League of Arab States, in

cooperation with the Council of Europe, should create an agency for funding Euro-Arab youth initiatives.

36. An international day of social inclusion should be established. A Euro-Arab youth campaign for social inclusion of migrants should be implemented.
  37. The representation of young migrants within existing national youth councils and organisations should be supported.
  38. Social media should be used for campaigning to promote equality and active citizenship and to combat racism and discrimination.
  39. European and Arab countries should ratify the Convention on Migrant Workers of the United Nations. National youth councils should raise awareness in their respective countries for this purpose.
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40. We strongly support the suggestion of the Sicilian authorities to establish a training centre for Euro-Arab youth cooperation supporting the role of youth leaders in setting up cooperation projects in both regions.
  41. We call on the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States to continue their support in the Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations and to continue their cooperation in youth policy, youth participation and intercultural dialogue.
  42. We request the partners in this conference to pursue and deepen their cooperation and to set up follow-up measures for the implementing these recommendations.
  43. We salute the setting up of the Arab Network of Youth Organisations during the conference.
  44. We commit ourselves to disseminate the outcomes of this conference in our own organisations and communities and ask the co-organisers to do the same at national and international level.
  45. We acknowledge and recognise the important support provided by the Constitutional Democratic Youth Organisation of Tunisia, the Ministry of Youth of Tunisia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Youth of the Italian Republic and the local authorities of Ragusa. We hope that their support and commitment will be an inspiration to other institutions interested in intercultural dialogue.