

ENTER!

Youth Meeting
Rencontre de jeunes

Access to social rights
for **all** young people!

Accès aux droits sociaux
pour **tous** les jeunes!



STRASBOURG | 30 | 6 ▶ 3 | 7 | 2015

MESSAGE



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Message to the Council of Europe by the participants in the *Enter!* Youth Meeting 2015

We, the 180 participants of the *Enter!* Youth Meeting, coming from the entire continent, want to express our appreciation for the possibility given to us to create and live together at home in the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe. We are committed to human rights and citizenship for all and want to play our part as actors for change.

We shared our experiences and views about the realities we face regarding social rights, especially the discrimination in accessing them. All young people in Europe today should grow up and live under the protection of the Council of Europe's human rights system. Yet, we are concerned about the living conditions and prospects for many of us whose human rights are too often threatened or denied.

The economic and social crises, aggravated by austerity policies and systemic violence, impact deeply on the living conditions for many young people and families. Access to work is a pre-condition for other rights to be effective and for our autonomy. Too many young people are pessimistic about their future. We need to be able to dream and believe in dreams coming true!

We are outraged with the cuts in public services, especially the health and social sectors. We are alarmed by growing disparities in accessing quality education. Quality education is a right, not a privilege!

We are frustrated by the increasing presence of discrimination and the re-emergence of racism, sometimes exemplified by governments themselves. We support the No Hate Speech Movement campaign, which needs to be taken more seriously by our authorities. We claim equal dignity for everyone, everywhere!

We are appalled by armed conflicts on the continent and their impact in the lives of millions of young people and their families.

We are worried by the lack of solidarity in Europe. We are especially upset by the fate of millions of migrants at the heart and the shores of Europe. Building walls cannot be the solution!

Young people are a key resource to any society and should be valued accordingly.

We welcome the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Recommendation on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights¹. We hope that it reaches its full potential and serves its purpose: to prevent and eradicate poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion faced by young people. It now needs to be taken seriously by the authorities in our countries. It is imperative that all the measures proposed in the Recommendation are given equal attention. We hope that the programme "Building Inclusive Societies" will also contribute to its implementation.

As active young people, as multipliers in youth organisations and projects, as members of local authorities, we are committed to making a positive change in our communities. We need the Council of Europe to help us on this mission by:

1. Recognising the important role of youth work and youth workers in supporting people in their transition to autonomy and exercising their rights. More possibilities for training of youth workers need to be created. The *Enter!* long-term training course

should continue as a model to be replicated. Valuing youth workers as professionals is an important step to better the impact of their work.

2. Investing in youth centres, and similar agencies working with young people, for their potential to promote the values of non-formal education. Young people also need places to be together and grow their own initiatives.
3. Valuing sports, culture and leisure time activities as platforms for self-development. In the process of transition to autonomy, interaction among young people is a way to promote social inclusion and prevent destructive processes leading to racism and extremism.
4. Furthering the recognition of non-formal education and youth work. Closer links between non-formal and formal education should also be encouraged. Non-formal education has the potential to contribute to curricula in promoting human rights and citizenship education. The youth friendly and reality-based methodologies of non-formal education are an asset for quality education.
5. Putting pressure on governments to dedicate financial resources for youth work and the promotion of social rights for all. Youth work can not rely on unpaid volunteers alone.
6. Following on the statementⁱⁱ of Human Rights Commissioner regarding the negative impact of austerity measures on children and young people.

In our meeting we have developed strategies to support the implementation of the recommendation in our communities. We need the Council of Europe to support our actions by:

7. Involving local, regional and national authorities to implement youth policies and other measures for transforming the realities of young people in ways that correspond with the content of the Recommendation. The needs of young people ought to be the starting point and to be put at the centre of all actions.
8. Regularly reviewing the implementation of the Recommendation and sharing of best practices across member states. The future Enter! Youth Meetings should contribute to this. We should be part of this process, too.
9. Encouraging the dissemination of the Recommendation through support to its translation in all the official languages of the member states and promoting youth friendly versions.
10. Securing that grants for youth-led projects are made easier to apply for by young people. These grants are even more important during times of economic crises.

Youth meetings like the one we have attended at the European Youth Centre are exceptional learning opportunities. The outcomes of the Enter! projects need to be consolidated and followed up. More young people in Europe should benefit from projects and meetings like this.

Exclusion, violence and discrimination are not inevitable! Human rights and social inclusion are achievable!

ⁱ Recommendation CM/Rec (2015)3

ⁱⁱ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2234521>