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Youth Peace Camp 2023

Engaging young people and youth organisations
from conflict-stricken regions in dialogue
and conflict transformation

4 – 11 July 2023

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Deadline for applications:
Wednesday, 1 April 2023, 23:59 CET

Background

The [Youth Peace Camp](#) is the flagship activity of the Council of Europe youth sector on promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. The Youth Peace Camp project was born in 2003 in the framework the programme of the Council of Europe's confidence-building measures and has been providing a unique opportunity for young people from conflict-stricken regions to meet and understand the process of transforming conflicts.

During the camp the participants follow an experiential learning process and acquired competences in the fields of peacebuilding, intercultural learning, dialogue and conflict transformation, within a human rights framework.

The Youth Peace Camp unique approach is the possibility for young people to better understand conflicts and their transformation by listening to and living together with young people affected by other conflicts elsewhere. The European Youth Centre provides an adequate environment for the young people from different conflict-stricken regions to learn together about conflict, to share their experiences in approaching them with other young people and to build their capacity to engage and/or develop future conflict transformation projects and initiatives.

In 2022, the Youth Peace Camp was replaced by the Youth Peace Camp Conference, held in the framework of the Youth Action Week – Democracy Now!. The [Call for Action](#) prepared by the participants of the Week has a chapter with various expectations, including that, "the Council of Europe and its member States must commit firmly to and advocate for action to address all conflicts through peacebuilding and non-violent conflict transformation". The participants also underlined the close interconnection between democracy and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

In 2023 the camp will take place in Strasbourg and its programme will be designed in line with the review of the Youth Peace Camp methodology based on the outcomes of the consultative meeting on Renewing Peace Education in intercultural activities which took place in January 2023. The consultative meeting put emphasis on ensuring peace education with a holistic approach that encompasses attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to tackling conflict and violence. The need of including practical steps in peacebuilding and peace education was also underlined, such as engaging young people in peace processes, advocacy, promoting diversity, and building alliances through international collaboration.

Rationale of the Youth Peace Camp

Young people growing up in regions affected by armed conflicts, being exposed to and/or enduring the consequences of physical, cultural and structural violence, are often confronted with dramatic life forming experiences, emotions and challenges. Such experiences may strongly influence their views and behaviour towards their own and other communities, their relation to conflict and peace and to their identity. Many young people choose to engage in constructive initiatives and dialogue instead of becoming themselves multipliers of hatred, violence, and discrimination. When supported and recognised in their role, these young people may become peer leaders and educators and, in turn, raise awareness of and involve other young people in dialogue, mediation, conflict transformation and peace work projects.

In their role as peer leaders and in learning about conflict and peace, it is important for them to be able to relate to and to be confronted with, the life stories, experiences, and aspirations of young people from other conflict regions. The Youth Peace Camp builds on these experiences and applies it to its participants.

Learning about peace, violence and its root-causes at the Youth Peace Camp is organised in line with the approaches of human rights education and intercultural learning. Intercultural learning became understood as representing the essence of the Youth Department's educational approach: recognising and addressing prejudice, combating aggressive and exclusive forms of nationalism, identifying the competences necessary for youth workers active in inter/multi-cultural environments. Intercultural learning is understood to be a natural part of the educational approach towards intercultural dialogue and, together with human rights education, provides useful approaches to some of the dilemmas resulting from violent, structural and cultural conflicts.

Attention to peace, intercultural dialogue, violence prevention and conflict transformation is deeply rooted in the history of the youth sector and remains a top priority by the persistence of several "frozen" and active conflicts. The ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has been a brutal reminder of the devastating impact of war and conflict on the culture of human rights that supports peaceful and inclusive societies.

The adoption by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of the Resolution on Strengthening the role of young people in the prevention and resolution of conflicts ([Resolution 2378 \(2021\)](#)) confirmed the political relevance of these approaches, adding to their proven educational suitability. The Resolution calls upon regarding young people and youth organisations as indispensable partners in any peace or political processes, as well as to foster continuous intercommunity dialogue and co-operation among young people from different communities, and to introduce democratic citizenship and peace education into the formal school curriculum from an early age. The Resolution emphasises also that democratic citizenship and peace education should include, but not be limited to, relationships and team working, empathy, critical thinking, media literacy, conflict transformation, reconciliation, human rights education, peaceful political participation and intercultural dialogue, so that young people may be better equipped to understand the root causes of violence, support peace and ensure respect for diversity in multicultural societies.

The attention placed on young people and youth organisations reflects also the orientations of the [UN Security Council Resolution 2250](#) on Youth, Peace and Security regarding Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, Disengagement and Reintegration.

The Youth Peace Camp enables the youth sector of the Council of Europe to identify and document challenges faced by young people in conflict regions and to improve its ability to support youth projects in those regions. The project promotes and supports the role of young people in peacebuilding activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue and bring in the perspective that youth work and youth policy can bring to peacebuilding processes in Europe, especially through its preventive and educational nature.

In 2023, the activity is organised in cooperation with Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations (DPAER) of the Council of Europe in the framework of its Confidence Building Measures.

The 2023 Youth Peace Camp

In 2023, the camp should bring together groups of young people from the following regions: Kosovo* (with a focus on Albanian and Serbian communities), South Caucasus (in particular

* All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

from border regions and ethnic minorities), Cyprus (Greek speaking and Turkish speaking young people) and from both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr. Each group should include an average of 4-5 participants.

Aims and objectives

The Youth Peace Camp engages young people and youth organisations from conflict affected regions in dialogue and peacebuilding activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning during and after the camp.

The objectives of the 2023 Youth Peace Camp are:

- To develop awareness and basic competences (knowledge, skills and attitude) of participants in human rights education, peacebuilding and intercultural learning to enable them to engage in dialogue and confidence-building initiatives with other young people affected by conflict;
- To support mutual learning from experiences of conflict and coping strategies;
- To foster relationship building as a foundation for peacebuilding and dialogue;
- To introduce and share existing youth work practices and experiences of young people working on dialogue and conflict transformation in their home communities
- To motivate and support participants in their role as multipliers and peer leaders in peacebuilding activities with young people encouraging them to implement follow-up initiatives;
- To strengthen the role of the Council of Europe, in particular through its Youth for Democracy programme, in peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue with young people and to support the approaches of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Methodology

The programme of the peace camp will be based on mutual learning situations among participants, making use of a variety of working methods. The participants will be able to share personal experiences with conflict and violence and share the coping strategies they developed. The programme will also allow time for participants to explore the relation between identity and the conflict in their region for young people and themselves. Personal reflections and sharing within community groups will be alternated with sharing, learning and reflecting between youth from the different conflict regions.

Central to the concept of the Youth Peace Camp is the motivation and the possibility for living, learning and discussing together with other young people with whom otherwise it may be very difficult to have contacts or cooperation.

A team of experienced trainers and facilitators will prepare and facilitate the programme. They have direct experience of the regions from where participants come and will be able to communicate with participants in their mother tongue.

The participants will be invited to implement their initiatives for peace building, with the support and guidance of the facilitators, to share their experience with their peers and promote the values and approaches of the Youth Peace Camp.

A series of educational resources and manuals of the Council of Europe will be the basis of programme design and implementation in the field of peace education, dialogue and conflict transformation activities, including:

- [Compass](#) and *Compasito*, the manuals for human rights education with young people and with children;
- [Youth Transforming Conflict](#) – a training kit published by the youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe
- The [Education Pack All Different-All Equal](#).

Towards the end of the camp, participants are expected to develop initiatives as peer leaders and multipliers with other young people in the field of dialogue and conflict transformation, in their home communities. The Council of Europe is committed to motivate and encourage such initiatives and would also offer institutional, educational and, where possible, financial support for the follow up initiatives of participants after the camp in 2023-2024. Therefore the preparation of meaningful and realistic follow up plans by the participants has utmost importance this year.

The Youth Peace Camp started as a *camp* with participants living in tents and doing also outdoor activities. Nowadays the activity is mostly held indoors at the European Youth Centre, where the participants are also accommodated. The spirit of a camp remains present in the activity though the extensive usage of non-formal education methods, the experience of living and learning together and, to the extent of the possible, the usage of outdoor activities.

Working language

The working language of the programme will be English. Participants must have sufficient understanding of English to comprehend and complete the application form without assistance from another person and to fully and actively take part in the programme.

Altogether, trainers and facilitators are experienced in running similar activities, have direct experience of the regions from where participants come and will be able to communicate with participants in their mother tongue.

Profile of participants

In 2023, the camp will bring together groups of young people from:

- Cyprus (Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking young people)
- Kosovo*, with a focus on Albanian and Serbian communities,
- South Caucasus, in particular from conflict-affected regions and ethnic communities
- Both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr.

All participants must:

- be aged between 18 and 25 years (with possible exceptions up to 30 years old);
- be able to work in English;
- be available and fully committed to take part in the Youth Peace Camp;
- be curious, open-minded, appreciate diversity and ready to learn about each other's realities;

- be motivated to learn and to apply the values and approaches of the Youth Peace Camp, notably human rights, democracy and peacebuilding;
- be motivated to implement youth initiatives for peacebuilding following the camp;
- possess a sense of responsibility for one's own actions, a commitment to personal and community development and continue the engagement with other participants;
- preferably be involved in an organisation or network, institution, formal and/or informal group that is ready to support them throughout the project duration and afterwards when implementing youth initiatives for peace building.

The group of participants should be balanced and reflect the diversity of their communities. The total number of participants and facilitators expected will be 40-50, with an average of 4-5 persons from each community present.

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the profile above, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Financial and practical conditions

Dates: Participants are expected to arrive on 3 July to the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg and depart on 12 July.

Travel expenses: Travel expenses and visa fees for accessing Strasbourg will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire Youth Peace Camp can be reimbursed.

Accommodation: Full board and lodging for the Youth Peace Camp will be provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre. The European Youth Centres are accessible to people with disabilities and can take measures to accommodate for any specific needs of participants in this respect. Please provide all the necessary information in your application form.

Application procedure and selection of participants

Applications must be submitted by **Wednesday, 1 April 2023, 23:59 CET** by completing the online application form available at: <https://youthapplications.coe.int>

A letter of support from their sending organisation or institution can be uploaded on the platform or sent separately by e-mail, to express support offered throughout the project to the participant and their initiatives. Participants who are member of an informal network or youth group can supply a letter of support from their fellow members in the informal network or group expressing their support for the participants' application.

Further inquiries

For more information about the activity and for technical assistance with the application form uploaded at the Council of Europe Youth Department platform, please address: eyc.programme@coe.int