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RENEWING PEACE EDUCATION IN INTERCULTURAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES

A consultative meeting about key contents and approaches to peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe

24-25 January 2023
European Youth Centre Strasbourg

Concept Note
Call for Participants

THE CONTEXT

The Council of Europe's youth sector aims at enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This includes associating young people with the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies as a purpose and a process for each community across Europe. The 2030 strategy of the Council of Europe's youth sector assigns an important priority to this work, notably by:

- strengthening young people's capacities, agency and leadership to prevent violence, transform conflict and to build a culture of peace through substantial support for funding, building networks and recognising the full diversity of young people and their ways of organising themselves;
- embedding key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and environmental sustainability, more prominently in policy, practice and research within and beyond the youth sector;
- better equipping stakeholders to tackle both the challenges of building inclusive societies through policies, programmes and projects that embrace diversity and of effectively monitoring and countering discrimination, violence and exclusion.

This attention to peace, 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 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, through the [Resolution 2378 \(2021\)](#), calls on the governments of the Council of Europe member states to regard 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:

Europe has several active and protracted conflicts on its territory, which deprive generations of young people of opportunities for a better future. At the same time, young people remain one of the most vulnerable groups in the countries affected by armed conflict. No lasting peace agreement can be reached without the positive involvement of youth, yet their potential and contribution to effective conflict regulation and peacebuilding has received little attention and support.

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 connection between citizenship and human rights education and education for peace is also stressed in the Council of Europe [Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#):

An essential element of all education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is the promotion of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue and the valuing of diversity and equality, including gender equality; to this end, it is essential to develop knowledge, personal

and social skills and understanding that reduce conflict, increase appreciation and understanding of the differences between faith and ethnic groups, build mutual respect for human dignity and shared values, encourage dialogue and promote non-violence in the resolution of problems and disputes.

The work of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in peace education and dialogue has focused on training courses and study sessions at the European Youth Centres and other youth-led activities supported by the European Youth Foundation. Throughout the years, many youth organisations have carried forward to thousands of young people in Europe a message of peace and peaceful conflict resolution. In this respect, civil society has been a key partner of the youth sector in promoting the values and principles of peacebuilding among young people.

A specific impetus was given in 2011 with the project Youth Peace Ambassadors project, which supported the role of young people in peace-building activities youth participation and democratic citizenship processes in Europe, based on the idea that young people are able and should be active citizens and protagonists of social change in conflict-affected communities.

A series of educational resources and manuals support youth leaders and multipliers in youth organisations to carry out activities on peace education, dialogue and conflict transformation, 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](#).

The Youth Peace Camp

The Youth Peace Camp is the flagship activity of the Council of Europe youth sector on peacebuilding, dialogue and conflict transformation. The Youth Peace Camp project was born in 2003 in the framework the programme of the Council of Europe's confidence-building measures at it has been providing a unique opportunity for young people from conflict-stricken regions to meet and understand the process of transforming conflicts.

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. It provides a safe space 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 2019, the Youth Peace Camp activity was complemented by Local Peace Camps that were organised in the communities of former participants. In 2020 and 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the activities with the participation of young people from conflict-affected communities took place online.

In 2022, a Youth Peace Camp Conference was 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

interconnection between democracy and the non-violent solution of conflicts cannot be neglected.

The Consultative meeting

These recent experiences have provided new insights on youth action and education for peace, especially its relevance at local and national level. They have also highlighted new (and old) educational challenges, including those related to sustainability and the impact of personal learning in communities and societies.

Too many conflicts remain active in Europe, in different forms, but all of them with the same potential of violence and destruction. Other threats to peace have also become more critical, such as the climate crisis, the attacks on human rights of refugees and migrants and the ever-growing competition for resources, including water.

This, and especially the ongoing war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, has shaken the confidence of some people on the impact of peace and human rights education; conversely, for other people it has further highlighted the importance of its provision and quality, and the relation between citizenship education and a supportive political and social environment.

For human rights activists and educators, many of these tensions are inevitable and manageable from an educational point of view. In all cases, it is important to reflect about them and adopt responses and approaches that are consistent with a human rights approach and the practices of non-formal learning in intercultural youth activities that characterise the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

This Consultative Meeting is thus organised to pool together experiences, approaches and identifying methodologies for credible activities in peace education and conflict transformation that take into account the realities of today's Europe and the concerns of young people.

The meeting will explore the following questions:

- 1.** Which (new) experiences and approaches to peace education and conflict transformation with and by young people are being developed and implemented?
- 2.** What are the essential contents and competences that peacebuilding and conflict transformation in intercultural youth activities should secure in order to be credible and effective?
- 3.** How to involve or address young people living under armed conflict in peace education and conflict transformation activities?
- 4.** How to support young peace activists and educators in their role as multipliers in their communities and organisations?

Objectives of the consultative meeting:

- To review approaches and practices of youth activities for peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the Council of Europe, including the activities at the European Youth Centres and activities supported by the European Youth Foundation
- To renew the role of peace education and conflict transformation in the programme Youth for Democracy and support the implementation of this priority in the Agenda

2030 of the youth sector of the Council of Europe

- To strengthen the role and sustainability of the Youth Peace Camp as a unique confidence-building and conflict transformation activity by updating the methodology and format of the activity;
- To propose additional measures and activities to further mainstream and integrate peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the Youth for Democracy programme, including activities supported by the European Youth Foundation.

The **programme** of the seminar is being prepared by a group of experts which includes trainers, Council of Europe secretariat and consultants. A daily programme will be sent to the meeting participants with their invitation.

Participants

The consultative meeting will bring together some 30 experts – youth workers, human rights and peace education activists, researchers, from a variety of backgrounds:

- International or national youth organisations active in the field of peacebuilding, peace education and dialogue,
- Members of the Joint Council on Youth,
- Youth leaders and youth workers engaged in the promotion of peace education and peacebuilding,
- Trainers and facilitators of peace and human rights education activities,
- Researchers active in the in the youth, conflict or peace education.

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

Practical and Financial Information

The meeting will be held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Board and lodging 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.

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

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 training course can be reimbursed.

Further Inquiries

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

PROCEDURE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

All interested candidates are requested to send the form of expression of interest (Appendix 1) to the following e-mail address: eyc.programme@coe.int

Deadline for applications: **19 December 2022**

FORM FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE

Activity	Consultative Meeting Renewing Peace Education in Intercultural Youth Activities EYC, Strasbourg, 24-25 January 2023
Name and SURNAME:	
Email:	
Mobile phone:	
Postal address:	

- 1. Please** provide details about your experiences of working in the field of peace education, intercultural dialogue and conflict transformation with young people, (*relevant to the consultative meeting*):
- 2. Your** ideas on methodologies for conflict transformation and peace-building approaches in intercultural activities with young people, preferably with youth from conflict-stricken regions:
- 3.** Your motivation to be a participant in the Consultative Meeting and possible contribution to the Meeting:

Deadline: 19 December 2022

To be returned to: eyc.programme@coe.int