



Meeting

“RAISING THE VOICES OF YOUNG REFUGEES:

A STEP FORWARD TO ORGANISE OURSELVES”

11-15 February 2008

European Youth Centre Budapest

Description and application form



With the support of
The UNHCR
The Council of Europe



Background of the meeting

"Refugees¹, Internally displaced persons, Exiles, "sans papier"... is a daily reality for plenty of young people in today's Europe. How can they participate in the development of the societies they are living in? Are their human rights respected in the societies they are living in? Are they able to break down the solitude and prejudices which are related to their situation? All these questions should be tackled on European institutions agendas. Because youth participation is inclusive it should also be for and by young refugees. Therefore it should be taken into account in the development of youth policies at national and European levels.

In December 2006, in the framework of the Campaign "All different-All equal", the Youth Sector of the Council of Europe, in cooperation with UNHCR, organised in Strasbourg a seminar "Being young refugees in Europe today", stressing that the European Youth Centers are also spaces for young refugees; that youth participation, youth policy, human rights and intercultural learning cannot be promoted without listening, without hearing all young people, and therefore also young people who are refugees.

During this seminar the participants had the opportunity to elaborate on issues that young refugees face. In the Final Recommendations² of the above mentioned seminar the participants stressed out that they are *"highly concerned by the plight of young exiles in Europe, being deprived of dignity and subject to incessant multiple discrimination, prejudices, violations of the fundamental human rights;*

carrying the burden of our personal testimonies, life stories, having suffered and escaped from terror, violence, armed conflicts, persecution, fears, poverty;
traumatized by witnessing atrocities and being tortured by uncertainty of the fate of our beloved ones left behind; wandering around feeling no where as home..."

All the above constitute the every day life of young refugees and exiles in Europe today...

This seminar reached its goal: to enable participants to look into the realities of young refugees in their everyday life, to identify problems and difficulties and to come up with recommendations in order to improve their situation. The problems identified are that young refugees lack information and means to participate and tend to get marginalized having some additional concerns compared to other young people (learning a new language, a new culture, being the translator for their parents, making their life alone even very young...).

At the end of the seminar and based on the conclusions formulated in the final Recommendations (sent out to decision making bodies), it became obvious that there should be a follow up, that it is necessary for young people to have a kind of tool which they will use in order to make their voices heard, to advocate and raise awareness on young refugees and exiles needs and rights, as also to enhance their participation and empowerment. We, the participants of the seminar, set up a very ambitious goal: the creation of a European Network to advocate the recognized issues that prevent young refugees from active participation and representation in a collective manner.

The Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe created and hosted an e-platform where we exchanged our ideas and thoughts and composed a project proposal for a meeting to set up the basis of the Network. The project proposal was submitted by the **Greek Council for Refugees, Community Development Center (Montenegro), Hi-Neighbour (Serbia)** and the **Lithuanian Red Cross Society**, to the European Youth Foundation. The proposal has been approved in June 2007 and the EYF and UNHCR allocated a grant to enable the creation of a European network of young refugees and exiles which brings us here organizing this new event.

¹ The term *refugee* is used in meeting as a generic term and therefore is intended to subsume the differentiated categories of refugees by the definition of the Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951 and those who were subject to forced migration and had to flee from their motherlands and are in need of international protection, such are asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, economic and ecological refugees, immigrants. Our definition is not exclusive.

² See in annex

Aim of the meeting

The aim of the meeting is to create/ launch a Network of Young European Refugees and Exiles as a step forward in organising young refugees and exiles to advocate their common concerns and to act as multipliers. The long-term aim is to ensure and further develop existing and new forms of participation of youth in decision-making processes, especially vulnerable young people, young refugees, who have less access to decision-making structures, and are under-represented in society, sometimes even “invisible”. The long-term aim would be in line with a point that seems to have been strongly emphasized by the participants of the Strasbourg seminar: there are many different practices with different standards in the area of asylum throughout Europe. As it is obvious that a common asylum system at the European level is needed, it is also obvious that in the process of development of such a system, the youth, young refugees must participate and their opinions taken into account, which is not the case now.

In order to have the voice of young refugees heard and have the aim achieved there is a pressing need and will to connect various youth organizations from the European civil society. Strategic linking, joint work and synergy will enable them achieve the aims and objectives.

Objectives

The following objectives for the meeting are based on the conclusions formulated in the Recommendations made by 32 young people living in 27 European countries:

- The framework of the Network
- The mission and vision of the Network
- The aims and goals
- The Statute of the Network
- The organizational structure
- The participatory and membership scheme
- Draft action plan
- Longer term strategy
- Concrete project proposal for future
- Follow up;

Methodology

The meeting is based on several components, such as discussion in panel and work in groups, exchange of experiences and best practices.

During the first 2 days participants will elaborate on the need of the Network, its framework, mission, its aims and objectives, its structure and synthesis, its modus operandi. In the last 2 days participants will concretely work on the formulation of the statute, membership and funding scheme, a proposal for follow up will be drafted for fundraising purposes.

The team is composed of participants from the seminar in December 2006 supported by experienced trainers.

Participants' experiences, active participation, group-work and teamwork, as well as theoretical inputs will characterize the programme.

Common conclusions will be formulated and adopted by the participants.

Profile of participants

The meeting will bring together 25 participants representing:

- participants of the seminar “Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today”
- young people who were once forced to move (refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs...)
- young people working with people forced to move, and
- experienced guests and activists from other similar networks who can provide useful advice about creation of a European network

All participants selected for this meeting must be:

Participants should be young refugees as well as young refugee workers aged from 18-35. They will be residents of the Council of Europe member states, involved/interested in displacement related issues. Indeed, participation will be open to young refugees structures that are not solid structured (in some countries there are no real recognised structures sometimes). No one is to be excluded.

All of them should be motivated and ready to act as multipliers towards their peers after the meeting and to invest themselves in the long term establishment of a network of young refugees.

Finally, participants should be able to communicate in English, as it is the only working language of the meeting.

Application Procedure and Selection of Participants

Applications should be sent to the Community Development Centre (CDC) in Podgorica, Montenegro.

People working with refugees should add a letter of support from the sending organisation. The letter of support for the candidate should explain the need and the value for the sending organisation or authority and for the candidate to attend this meeting. If an organisation wishes to propose more than one candidate, the order of priority should be clearly indicated and justification for the priority list should be provided.

25 participants will be selected on the basis of the profile outlined above by the Steering Committee. The team will try to respect the organisations’ priorities as far as possible, but also to ensure a geographical balance, gender balance, different types of experiences, cultural backgrounds, organisations, institutions. The motivation and experiences of the individual participants are among the criteria taken into consideration during the selection process.

The selection of candidates will take place in January 2008. Selected candidates will be informed of their selection just after the next team preparatory meeting on **10-11th January 2008**. A waiting list may be drawn up.

Deadline for applications

Application forms must reach the CDC by **05 January 2008 in the morning** at the latest by email.

Arrival and departure

The meeting will take place from 11th- 15th February 2008. Participants should arrive on 10th February and leave on 16th February 2008.

Financial and practical conditions of participation

Travel expenses

Travel expenses are covered by 50% and visa fees by 100% (on presentation of the relevant receipts). Only participants who have attended the entire meeting can be reimbursed. Payment will be made by bank transfer after the course in Euros.

Please, note that we are putting every effort to raise more funds in order to cover more than 50% of travel expenses, in the meantime, we suggest consulting your NGO (where applicable) on covering some of the expenses.

Accommodation

Board and lodging are provided and paid for by the organisers.

Participants fee

A participants fee of 50 euros will be deducted from your travel expenses.

Contact details:
Community Development Centre
Hercegovačka bb
81000 Podgorica
Montenegro
Tel.: +382 81 215 050
Fax: +382 81 215 051
e-mail: cdcmont@cg.yu
www.cdc.cg.yu

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Meeting

Raising the Voices of Young Refugees: One step forward to organize ourselves

European Youth Centre, Budapest
11-15 February 2008

APPLICATION FORM

Please type and return by email.

Use only the space provided. Append all additional information at the end of this form.

1. Personal data

Surname:

First name:

Sex: Male Female

Age:

Nationality:

2. Contacts

Postal address (*street, number, city, postal code, country*):

Telephone:

Telefax:

Mobile telephone:

E-mail:

3. Organisation or institution (if any)

Name:

Postal address:

Telephone:

Telefax:

E-mail:

Web-page: <http://www>.

4. Your status

- refugee
- Asylum seeker
- Rejected asylum seeker
- IDP (internally displaced person)
- Other: (please specify)

Country of residence:

Which documents allowing you to travel do you have?

Do you have specific travel restrictions due to your status?

If you are selected, will you need a visa to come to Budapest?

5. Organisational Interest and Personal Motivation:

What is your organisation's interest in sending you to this meeting? (if you are sent by an organisation)

(please include also a letter of support from your organisation).

What is your motivation for taking part in this meeting?

6. Expectations:

What do you consider to be your main needs for this meeting? What would you mainly like to work on?

What are your expectations from this meeting?

7. Brief description of your life story and situation

8. Human Rights Education and Intercultural Dialogue

“Being a young refugee in Europe”-What does that mean to you?

How do you think you could contribute to the meeting, and on a longer perspective, to youth work in Europe?

9. Special Needs:

Do you have any special needs or requirements (e.g. dietary, disability, etc.) ? *Please specify:*

Date:

Signature:

Please return the application form duly completed to the address below; if you require further information, please contact us at:

Contact details:

**Community Development Centre
Hercegovacka bb
81000 Podgorica
Montenegro**

Tel: + 382 81 215 050

Fax: + 382 81 215 051

e-mail: cdcmont@cg.yu

www.cdc.cg.yu

**Deadline for submitting the form is
5 January 2008**