

EU YOUTH CONFERENCE AND DG MEETING OF THE CYPRUS EU PRESIDENCY

11.09-13.09.2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus

Description of workshops

Workshop A: INFORMATION

Role of Information Provision and Media in Social Inclusion

Information provision is one of the most effective measures to combat discrimination and a necessary condition for inclusion and participation in society. However, many young people and particularly those with migrant background experience difficulties accessing information about their rights, support services and existing opportunities in employment, education and training. Additionally, media plays an important role in informing and shaping the public opinion, but it often fails to advocate for social inclusion by promoting a distorted image of immigration.

How could equal access to information and support services enhanced? What actions could be taken to raise awareness of information on rights and support services? What is the role of media in providing information and shaping attitudes towards immigration?

Workshop B: EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Quality Education for Quality Inclusion

Education and language are the most widespread barriers to social inclusion of youth with migrant background. Segregation and marginalisation in the school environment from an early age has longstanding effects on young people's social inclusion throughout life. A multicultural education, however, can develop intercultural understanding and promote the social integration of youth with migrant background.

How the educational system and language raise barriers in social inclusion? What is the role of intercultural education in promoting social inclusion? How could formal and non-formal education co-operate in tackling social exclusion?

Workshop C: ATTITUDES

From Prejudices to Intercultural Dialogue

The attitude towards immigrants is highly negative across the EU and causes discrimination and stereotyping that leads, in turn, to aggravating immigrants' social exclusion and dissociating them from active participation. The root of such attitudes is often the lack of intercultural awareness and the underestimation of the benefits of cultural diversity. Additionally, the level of cohesion between migrant and non-migrant residents varies greatly across the EU states depending on the different national contexts. However, in all cases intercultural dialogue is considered as the main way to strengthen the cohesion.

What actions should be devised to tackle prejudices and negative stereotyping? How should intercultural awareness and dialogue be developed? How should the EU assist in tackling prejudices?

Workshop D: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

From Combating Discrimination to Equal Access to Labour Market and Social Welfare

Systematic discrimination exacerbated by racism and xenophobia is the cornerstone of social exclusion of youth with migrant background. The lack of equal opportunities creates polarisation and marginalisation between migrants and locals, feeding into a vicious circle of xenophobia. Discrimination and lack of equal opportunities are most evident in education, the labour and housing market, as well as, the access to health care and social services.

What concrete measures should be adopted to enhance equal access to work and employment? How can a more inclusive housing strategy for immigrants be achieved? What actions could lead to a better protection of the rights of young people with migrant background?

Workshop E:

SUPPORT MECHANISMS AND TOOLS

Better Policies, Programmes and Practices For Better Social Inclusion

Across the EU, immigration and inclusion policies are characterised by a substantial degree of diversity and variation, with differing approaches to integration of immigrants and those with migrant background. However, policy coordination between policy-makers at different levels, increased co-operation between governmental and non-governmental sector and more resources allocated for social inclusion at all levels are measures called upon by young people from across the continent, regardless of the state they live in.

How should stakeholders develop policy initiatives for better inclusion? How can better policy coordination among stakeholders be achieved? What should the role of Member States and the EU be in supporting social inclusion policy?

Workshop F:

PARTICIPATION

Youth Participation in Democratic and Social Life

Civic participation strengthens solidarity and social inclusion while, on the other hand, non-participation is closely associated to social exclusion and often derives from lack of political rights, knowledge or opportunities to participate. Many young people with migrant background across the EU do not have the right to vote in the national elections of the country they live in. However, there are other mechanisms and structures to participate in society, but these need to be promoted, recognised and their role enhanced.

How could youth participation in democratic and social life be promoted? What actions could support youth participation in the structured dialogue process? How should better representation of young migrants in the decision-making process be achieved?

Workshop G:

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Supporting the Role of Youth Organisations in Social Inclusion

Youth organisations play, in many different ways, a key role in fostering social inclusion of young people and, in particular, of those with fewer opportunities. Among others, they advocate for the rights and interests of all young people, promote intercultural dialogue through international exchanges, contribute to the developing of life skills through non-formal education activities, foster participatory attitudes via internal democratic processes and offer a common space for all young people to learn, communicate, participate and share.

How could the role of youth organisations be enhanced in promoting social inclusion? How should youth organisations be supported in their work? How can the role of youth organisations be better recognised?