

EU Youth Conference of the Cyprus Presidency

11- 13.09.2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus

Joint Recommendations

The EU Youth Conference is an element of the structured dialogue process that was established by the Council of the European Union in the *Resolution on the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018)*. The structured dialogue is an instrument to ensure that the opinion of young people is taken into account in the formation of youth policy in the EU.

For the duration of the 18 month Trio Presidency (1 July 2011 – 31 December 2012), the Trio Presidency of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum made a common decision to implement the structured dialogue on the theme of *youth participation in democratic life in Europe* with a chosen specific focus area for each of the three presidencies. In this context, the structured dialogue under the Cyprus Presidency focuses on *Youth Participation and Social Inclusion, with an emphasis on the young people with migrant background*.

The third phase of the structured dialogue came to an end with the EU Youth Conference in Nicosia, where youth delegates and Directors General of EU Member States jointly defined the following recommendations based on the results of national consultations. The recommendations address aspects related to *How youth participation leads to the social inclusion of all young people, with emphasis on the inclusion of young people with a migrant background* as well as *The importance of the participation of young people and youth organizations, especially in decision making for the creation of inclusive, democratic and prosperous societies*.



A: INFORMATION – Role of information provision and media in social inclusion

1. Member States and the Commission should establish, support and further develop youth information and counseling services that target young people with migrant background, in order to provide tailor-made and innovative information and counseling via face-to-face and online methods.
2. Member States and the Commission should encourage and support the cooperation between youth organisations and media in promoting an unbiased image of young people with migrant background in order to enhance social inclusion.

B: EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE – Quality education for quality inclusion

1. Member States should introduce citizenship and intercultural education as curricular subjects in schools from an early age and ensure the training of teachers in cooperation with youth organisations and relevant institutions, in order to foster the social inclusion and active participation of youth.
2. In order to promote social inclusion of young people with migrant background, Member States should encourage the learning of the official language(s) of the host country by providing free language courses.

C: ATTITUDES – From prejudices to intercultural dialogue

1. Within the next generation of EU programmes for education and youth, the Commission should strengthen the support and funding of youth activities at all levels that focus on social inclusion and intercultural dialogue of young people from EU and non-EU countries.
2. Member States and youth organisations should cooperate in developing, promoting and supporting accessible peer mentoring systems through which non-migrant youth can help young people with migrant background to integrate into society by fostering mutual respect, tolerance and intercultural understanding.

D: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – From combating discrimination to equal access to labour market and social welfare

1. Member States should ensure equal access to health services, including non-urgent health care, for all people living in an EU country, including undocumented immigrants.
2. Member States and the Commission should facilitate the exchange of good practices, such as vocational training, counseling centres and job mentoring schemes, in order to improve the access to the labour market and ensure fair working conditions for young people with migrant background.

E: SUPPORT MECHANISMS AND TOOLS – Better policies, programmes and practices for better social inclusion

1. Member States and the Commission are urged to fully implement the social inclusion plans, especially the European platform against poverty and social exclusion and Youth on the Move, as well as other youth related initiatives, in order to reach the benchmarks of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
2. Member States and the Commission should promote cross-departmental work as well as consult and involve youth organisations and NGOs working with young people with migrant background in decision-making, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes that involve and affect these young people, in order to address their specific needs.

F: PARTICIPATION – Youth participation in democratic and social life

1. Within their respective spheres of competences, the Commission and Member States, including regional and local authorities, should create financial, political and legal conditions for the empowerment of all young people to participate in social and political life through youth organisations, social media and other participatory fora.
2. In order to enhance equal rights, Member States and the EU institutions should ensure the right of all long-term residents, as defined by national law, to vote and run for office at local, regional and national level.

G: YOUTH ORGANISATIONS – Supporting the role of youth organisations in social inclusion

1. The Commission and Member States should ensure sufficient long-term financial support as well as administrative and logistical support to youth councils and youth organisations, in order to enhance their role as facilitators of social inclusion and set up easily accessible micro-grant schemes for youth-led initiatives.
2. The Commission and Member States should promote the specific role of youth organisations in fostering social inclusion through validating non-formal learning and recognising youth organisations as key providers of non-formal education.