



# UNESCO EURO-MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH FORUM

“Young People and  
the Dialogue among Civilizations,  
Cultures and Peoples:  
Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue  
to Ensure Peace”

## Critical Report



Cyprus, 16-19 November 2006

## Table of Contents

I. The Background .....	3
A. Young people and the Dialogue among Civilizations,Cultures and Peoples...	3
B. The 4 <sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum and its recommendations .....	3
C. Regional UNESCO Youth Forums in 2006-2007 .....	3
D. The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum on 'Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace' in Cyprus.....	4
II. The preparatory process .....	4
A. E-dialogue .....	4
B. The nomination of the Forum's delegates.....	5
III. The Forum itself .....	6
A. The format .....	6
B. The participants .....	6
C. The opening plenary session .....	7
D. The sessions in working groups and the drafting of the Report.....	8
E. The closing plenary session and the outcome of the Forum .....	11
F. Excursions and cultural program.....	12
IV. What's next ? .....	12
A. The 5 avenues for follow-up.....	12
B. The Euro-Med Youth Fund .....	13
C. Networking through the UNESCO listserv and online meetings .....	13
V. The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Fourm in retrospect .....	13
A. Lessons learnt .....	13
B. The participants speak up .....	14
Annex .....	16

For more information: [uci@unesco.org](mailto:uci@unesco.org)

[www.unesco.org/youth](http://www.unesco.org/youth)



Photo credit: Mr. Michal Chalmovsky

## I. THE BACKGROUND

### A) **Young people** and the **Dialogue** among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples

Fostering dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples in the service of peace has long been one of UNESCO's objectives and has become ever more important in today's world, where learning to live with diversity is no longer optional. UNESCO is convinced that today's young generation, owing to its vision, commitment, imagination and needs, is particularly well placed to work towards enduring and meaningful dialogue for mutual understanding. Such dialogue must be based on openness towards others and willingness to shed misconceptions and stereotypes in order to generate confidence and trust across cultural and national borders.

Young people dispose of an enormous potential to **build bridges** between society's various stakeholders and can thus engage in practical action leading to tangible results. So, the dialogue among cultures and peoples needs the visions, ideas and commitment of young people!



### B) The **4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum** and its recommendations

UNESCO's commitment to empowering young people as major partners in the promotion of dialogue between civilizations became evident at the Youth Forum of the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference, held in October 2005 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. An integral part of the Organization's highest decision-making body, it brought together 237 participants from 129 Member States (189 delegates and 48 observers from international youth networks, governments and UNESCO National Commissions). The participants discussed ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication and information, youth-led and youth-targeted action to promote dialogue.

The **Youth Forum Report**, adopted after three days of intense debate and introduced at the opening plenary of the General Conference, outlined the young delegates' recommendations and proposals for youth-driven action to encourage and support dialogue at all levels of society. The report strongly recommended that preparatory **Regional UNESCO Youth Forums** should take place in 2006-2007, on 'Young People and the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples', with a specific focus on 'Education for Sustainable Development' and 'Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to ensure Peace.'

### c) **Regional UNESCO Youth Forums** in 2006 – 2007

In the immediate follow-up to the 4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum, the Section for Youth identified mechanisms and potential partnerships with a view to organizing a preparatory Youth Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations in six regions prior to the 2007 UNESCO Youth Forum.

This series of Regional Youth Forums, each following the model of the UNESCO Youth Forum, has been and will continue to be crucial for harnessing the immense potential of youth-driven initiatives for concrete action at all levels. The Forums allow youth delegates to share experiences, to address regional issues and related recommendations for action by and for young people and to take steps towards designing their own concrete initiatives. The Regional Youth Forums also provide for the development and consolidation of partnerships and networks between young people, youth organizations, UNESCO and other partners.

### Objectives of Regional Youth Forums

- To allow youth delegates to elaborate specific themes and related recommendations for action in favour of dialogue by and for young people
- To consolidate and encourage networks and partnerships between young people, youth organizations, UNESCO and other partners concerned with youth and dialogue in the region
- To define concrete youth-led follow up projects and initiatives in the region, which shall be supported with seed funding through a Regional Youth Project Fund

#### D) The **Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum** on 'Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace' in Cyprus

The Section for Youth organized the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum on 'Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace' in cooperation with the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO. It was held from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 and was **an exciting meeting of young minds** from all over the Euro-Med region, a discussion of intercultural and interfaith dialogue with absolutely no beating around the bush.

**The choice of Cyprus** as the location for the first Regional UNESCO Youth Forum on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace was by no means a co-incidence. At the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, the island's unique location and complex history provided the ideal backdrop for a discussion of the Euro-Mediterranean region's needs, capabilities, challenges and potential in the field of intercultural and interfaith dialogue to ensure peace. The Section for Youth found the Cyprus National Commission's interest in dialogue and commitment to letting young people's voices be heard to be the basis for a fantastic, flawless collaboration.



## II. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

**A) E-dialogue:** the online consultation process leading to the definition of the Forum's sub-themes (July 27<sup>th</sup> to September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006)

**The starting point:** the recommendation of the 4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum to provide *“a specific and permanent UNESCO Youth Forum website and discussion forum, where young people can actively participate in debates and channel their input”*

**The initiative:** the Section for Youth launched an online consultation process aiming at involving young people in the preparation of the Forum's agenda. Young people, aged between 18-30, nominated by National Commissions, national youth councils, UNITWIN Chairs, youth NGOs, organizations and networks in the Euro-Med region participated in this 6-week process which allowed for the elaboration of the Forum's sub-themes.

**The means:** a UNESCO listserv, moderated by the Section for Youth. The young people subscribed by the Section for Youth were the only ones able to post messages and access the online discussions, archives and background documents. Since its creation, the listserv has been a true e-space for youth dialogue and exchange of ideas.

**The procedure:** Questions and topics devised in consultation with experts in intercultural and interfaith dialogue served to kick off the online discussion- a new one was posted each week for a

period of six weeks<sup>1</sup>. A summary of each week's online discussions was sent to the National Commissions and national youth councils or similar structures of the participating countries, UNESCO sectors and field offices, youth NGOs, organisations and networks. Following the six-week period, the listserv remained online as a means of facilitating exchanges and disseminating both background information and participants' profiles prior to the Forum.

**The feedback:** The young subscribers' responses were consistently reflective, sometimes surprising, and never dull. They came up with ideas, argued for and against, reviewed their positions and brought a personal touch to the discussion:

<p>"We <b>fear what we do not know</b> and it is necessary to get to know the different peoples of the world or even communities living in our country or region"</p>	<p>"In spite of our differences, we share the same very <b>basic values.</b>"</p>	<p>"[We need] exchange <b>programs</b>, annual meetings, events, concerts, youth forums [...] trans-border sports events, ecological projects, exchange between influential personalities in the groups concerned."</p>
<p>"We usually get news of what the most outrageous extremists are doing and <b>no news of the silent majority</b>. The way most <b>media</b> is working - only using news that <b>shock and sell</b> - is creating wrong images of religion, nationality."</p>	<p>"On the <b>local level</b>, knowledge between groups is more concrete [whereas] on <b>the regional level</b>, knowledge is more composed of stereotypes. In order to generate trust on a regional level the stereotypes and symbols should be substituted by a <b>real knowledge</b> of each other."</p>	

**The results:**

- The determination of the three sub-themes of the Forum:

<p><b>a.</b></p>	<p>The role of communication and media in facilitating or hampering intercultural and interfaith dialogue</p>
<p><b>b.</b></p>	<p>Intercultural and Interfaith Values: Shared values and culturally and faith specific values (universalism vs. cultural relativism): does the opposition exist?</p>
<p><b>c.</b></p>	<p>Deligitimizing violence through intercultural and interfaith dialogue</p>

- A request from the participants to keep the listserv online



B) The **nomination** of the Forum's delegates

The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum is the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum organized by the Section for Youth where participants were nominated by both the **National Commissions for UNESCO** and the **national youth councils of the participating countries** (or, in the absence of a national youth council, the most appropriate national youth structure). This choice was made for two reasons:

<sup>1</sup> For the list of questions, see Annex 1

- To bring in the national youth councils' expertise on youth issues and networking capacity
- To encourage cooperation between National Commissions and national youth councils in getting young people involved in such initiatives

In addition to this, the Section for Youth provided a series of basic selection criteria<sup>2</sup> that were generally respected.

### III. THE FORUM ITSELF

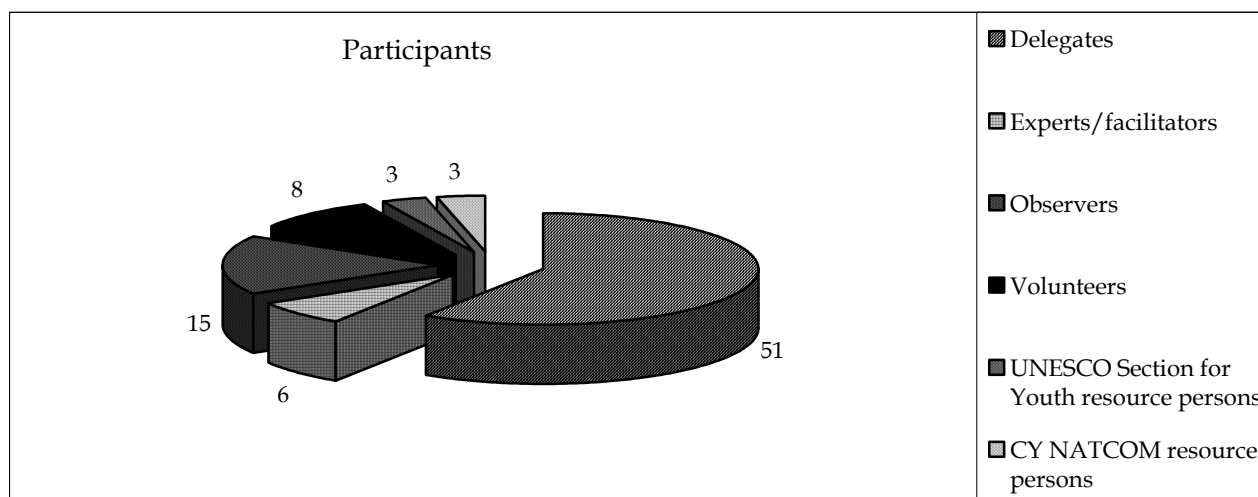
#### A) A **format** similar to that of the UNESCO General Conference Youth Forum

The Forum lasted for three days, and included opening and closing plenary sessions and sessions in three working groups. The working group sessions and the closing plenary were youth led, with experts acting as facilitators to support the discussion. Observers representing INGOs, regional networks and the UNESCO Secretariat were also there to share their opinions and experiences.



#### B) The **participants**

In total, 86 people participated in the Forum:



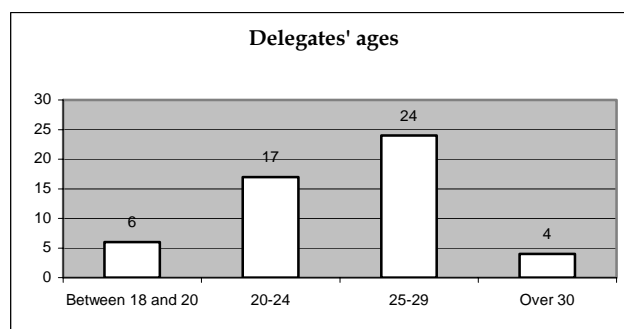
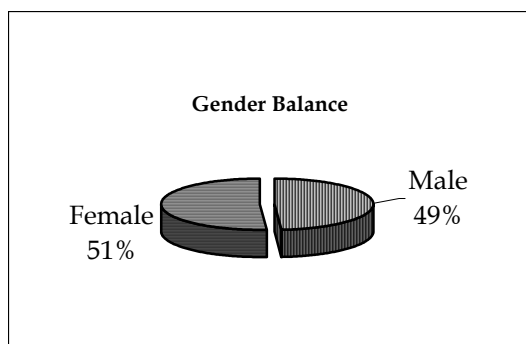
The majority of the **delegates**<sup>3</sup> had prior experience of youth forums and working with youth organisations and NGOs, and demonstrated great written and oral expression, synthesis and communication skills. They were all very enthusiastic, open-minded, eager to contribute and clearly committed to the objectives of the Forum and they put forward quite a few innovative ideas and concrete suggestions.

There were 26 female and 25 male delegates, ensuring gender parity, while just under 50% were between 25 and 29 years old.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex 2

<sup>3</sup> For the list of countries and territories represented at the Forum, see Annex 3





The 6 people selected by the Section for Youth to **facilitate** discussions in working groups have expertise in the Forum's sub-themes and/or on youth issues, policies and action in the Euro-Mediterranean region.<sup>4</sup> Two facilitators worked on each sub-theme:

<b>Sub-theme 1:</b> The role of communication and media in facilitating or hampering intercultural and interfaith dialogue
Ms. Matina Magkou (Public Relations Officer, European Capital of Culture- Patras 2006) Mr. Boyan Radoykov (UNESCO Communication and Information Sector)
<b>Sub-theme 2:</b> Intercultural and Interfaith Values: Shared values and culturally and faith specific values (universalism vs. cultural relativism): does the opposition exist?
Ms. Cristina Monteys Homar (Department of Inter-religious Dialogue of UNESCO Catalonia) Ms. Lisa Pelling (PhD. student, University of Vienna)
<b>Sub-theme 3:</b> Deligitimizing violence through intercultural and interfaith dialogue
Ms. Fleur Borgeat (Youth co-ordinator , PAX CHRISTI) Mr. Jihad Nammour (Assistant and project chief, UNESCO Chair of Comparative Religious Studies, University of St. Joseph, Beirut)

**Observers** came from the UNESCO Office Ramallah, the Swedish and the Korean National Commissions for UNESCO, the GLOCAL Forum, the European Youth Forum, WFUCA, IYCS-JECI<sup>5</sup>, the Cyprus Permanent Delegation to UNESCO and the Cyprus Youth Board. The two keynote speakers at the opening plenary session, Ambassador Lakatos, President of the NGO Committee of the UNESCO Executive Board and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Hungary to UNESCO, and Mr. Guy-Michel Brandtner from the Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe also participated as observers. Finally, all **volunteers** who helped with the running of the Forum came from the Cyprus National Youth Council.

## c) The **opening plenary session**

The Forum's opening ceremony got the whole event off to a great start- the participants were addressed by Mrs Edmee Leventis, the Permanent Delegate of Cyprus to UNESCO, who welcomed and encouraged the Forum's young delegates and used the Albanian and Serbian Kosovars as an example of the need for intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Mrs Loukia Hadjigavriel, the President of the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO, explained the significance of a Forum on dialogue through the symbolism of Famagusta Gate (the location of the ceremony) and the traditional Cypriot embroidery (chosen as the Forum's emblem), and thanked the organisers and participants.

<sup>4</sup> For the facilitators' profiles, see Annex 4

<sup>5</sup> International Young Catholic Students /Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique Internationale

Ms. Henriques Mueller, Chief of the Section for Youth, presented the context of UNESCO's regional youth forums and the running of the Forum (format and procedures). Finally, the Cyprus Minister for Education and Culture, Mr. Pefkios Georgiades, spoke of the ever-increasing need for intercultural and interfaith dialogue and the significance of Cyprus as the location for such a Forum. The State Youth Orchestra of Cyprus provided a wonderful interlude between the two parts of the opening.

The two keynote speakers were Mr. Andras Lakatos, the Chair of the NGO Committee of UNESCO's Executive Board and the Permanent Delegate of Hungary to UNESCO, and Mr. Guy-Michel Brandtner, the Head of the Administrative Office of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

Ambassador Lakatos discussed the many issues facing young people today, as well as what it means to be young. He explored the clear benefits and occasional pitfalls of dialogue, the need for tolerance, the need for gender equality, and he gave an account of the Open Forum on 'Youth' that was part of the NGO Committee of the 175<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO's Executive Board (October 2006). The very notion of 'youth' was the basis for Ambassador Lakatos' speech- not once did he move away from the fundamental idea that young people constitute a "crucial segment of society."

Mr. Brandtner gave an overview of the Council of Europe's second 'All Different- All Equal' youth campaign, promoting diversity, human rights and participation, as well as the Council's policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and commitment to the issue. He went on to explore the notion of dialogue from a more personal perspective, and made use of the six questions posted on the listserv to structure his thoughts on difference, values, conditions for dialogue, the media, confidence and trust, interaction, immediacy, ubiquity and universality.



In the discussion with the participants that followed, all the speakers were extremely positive about the Forum's potential, and encouraged the young delegates, reminding them of their capabilities and role in achieving the Forum's objectives.

## D) The sessions in **working groups** and the drafting of the Report

All delegates split in 3 working groups (2 Anglophone and 1 with French-English simultaneous interpretation). Each group elected a Chair to coordinate the debates and to ensure the group dynamics, and two Rapporteurs to objectively and accurately report on the group's discussions and to participate in the drafting of the Final Report. The sessions in working groups were supported by experts/facilitators: their presence ensured the intellectual quality of the discussions and the group's interaction, with the least possible intervention. Moreover, the participants came up with a series of ideas in order to facilitate their discussions, including splitting into smaller groups and playing various games to break the ice and improve interaction.

### 1. What was new?

**a. Rotation:** instead of assigning one theme to each working group, the 3 working groups rotated. This meant that the facilitators discussed their assigned theme with all participants, ensuring cohesion between sessions and that every participant had the opportunity to exchange views and elaborate recommendations on every sub-theme.

**b. The case studies session:** aiming at enabling participants to start thinking and discussing concrete proposals, the case studies session was more or less a brainstorm inspired by 6 examples of youth-related or youth-led action promoting intercultural and/or interfaith dialogue. These examples were chosen by the Section for Youth. During this one and a half hour session, participants examined some of the case-studies suggested, and analysed their strong and weak points and reflected on their effectiveness. This led to a wider discussion on the objectives of action and how to streamline proposals for concrete projects to promote dialogue.



To give an example<sup>6</sup>, one of the case studies proposed was that of the *Spirit of Enniskillen Trust* (Northern Ireland) and their annual 'Citizenship For a Shared Future' program. This program develops the dialogue and leadership capacity of 50 young people from all backgrounds and traditions in Northern Ireland through local and international learning opportunities, including a two-week summer project overseas to discuss and work alongside others who are also facing cultural differences or conflict.

In addition to the info sheets distributed prior to the Forum on the case studies, participants were given the opportunity to discuss, via Skype, with members of the Enniskillen Trust. After a short presentation by the Director, young people having participated in the Trust's projects and training talked about their experiences and the effect the program had had on them. The discussion that followed was quite stimulating, regarding both the situation in Northern Ireland and youth-related activities addressing it. In general, according to the participants, the case studies session *"added to our knowledge and gave ideas about future projects in these domains"*.

## 2. The facilitator's role

The facilitators' main tasks consisted of making a short presentation on their assigned sub-theme and remaining in the room in order to act as resource persons should the young delegates have questions. In addition to this, they were there to help, when necessary, the group communicate and achieve its goal of producing concrete recommendations and mapping out plans of action to implement these recommendations.



On the **1<sup>st</sup> sub-theme**, Boyan Radoykov highlighted facts, figures and ideas, and provided participants with food for thought. Starting with the two World Summits on Information Society (Geneva 2003, Tunis 2005), he referred to the international community's interest in bridging the digital divide and in involving young people in information decision-making processes. In addition to this, the data he provided clearly illustrated the rapid and continuous development of information and communication technologies, while outlining the importance of information technologies and provoking a reflection on their impact. Finally, after talking about the major role attributed to the young people and the media in rebuilding a culture of peace in the recent report of the High Level Group for the 'Alliance of Civilisations', he gave the participants a series of questions to think about, namely on the power of the image, the impact of audiovisual heritage on healing processes and the role of media both in the procedure of post-conflict reconciliation and in the long run. Matina Magkou brought in her experience of previous forums and project implementation by providing ideas to assist group interaction and the elaboration of the recommendations on media and communication.

To kick-off the exploration of the **2<sup>nd</sup> sub-theme**, Lisa Pelling and Cristina Monteys first provided participants with an overview of ongoing discussions related to the plurality of values in today's globalizing world – and the opposition that may exist between universally shared values (such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights) and those that are more culturally specific. Using key findings of the work of Robert Inglehart and the World Values Association ([www.worldvaluesurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluesurvey.org)), they illustrated the complexity of discussions of values, and their implications when trying to engage in dialogue with the 'other'. The 'ladder of values', an exercise where participants moved around the room depending on whether they strongly agreed or disagreed with a specific statement about the 'value choices' we face in everyday life, served to illustrate the wide variety of opinions and convictions among the group. Participants were given the opportunity to explain and justify their 'positioning', so this activity also helped to question hidden assumptions and stereotypes – and made clear to all of the participants that entering into a dialogue entails the risk that 'the other' might be right!

On the **3<sup>rd</sup> sub-theme**, Fleur Borgeat and Jihad Nammour began their joint presentation by explaining how violence has been legitimized through the instrumentalization of culture and religion

---

<sup>6</sup> For a description of the 6 case-studies see Annex 5

and in which way dialogue could be a more effective solution. They presented best practices from the two opposite shores of the Mediterranean; Fleur gave a European perspective by highlighting initiatives at the European level (Faith-based Expert Group of the European Youth Forum) and the local level (debates on the 'caricatures' incident, intercultural games in a French suburb). Referring to the southern shore, Jihad presented the contrast between tradition and hope, between confrontational situations where violence is perceived as the only means of communication between communities (Israeli-Palestinian and Cyprus conflicts) and civil society initiatives (in Israel, Palestine and Cyprus) that invest in dialogue through concrete action, and so offer an alternative to violence (*'Deaf people for Peace', 'The Olive Harvest' initiative*). In closing their presentation they suggested three conditions/characteristics for dialogue: *"share experiences, be creative and innovative, be realistic and hopeful!"*

### 3. Treating the themes

Participants demonstrated their open-mindedness and good will, and addressed challenging, sometimes conflictual and delicate issues in a mature and responsible way. It is for these reasons that minor misunderstandings such as the one that occurred between those working in English and those working in French, were efficiently resolved, with no adverse effects on the Forum as a whole.

#### a. Media and communication



While recognising that the freedom of the media should be respected, participants underlined the media's social responsibility, mainly their role in shaping citizens and affecting policies. They also examined the receptiveness of media users, focusing on the need for them to remain critical towards the information they receive, as well as the significant influence the media has, and how this influence should be used for the good of ICIF dialogue. Essentially, the young participants distinguished between (i) the media's capacity to inform, educate and sensitize their audiences, promote local culture and tolerance, and encourage civic activism, and (ii) the exploitation of the media to convey and perpetuate biases. Finally, all participants noted the emergence of interactive journalism and they emphasised its advantages as far as the involvement of non-professionals goes and its drawbacks regarding the reliability of sources and the quality of information

#### b. Values

The participants discussed the difference between universal and culturally- and faith-specific values. They determined that the recognition of universal values is key for ICIF dialogue, and that such values are identified through fundamental mutual understanding on a global level. They identified the important role that youth organisations can play in the promotion of universal values, and respect for diversity, while taking into account cultural and religious sensitivities. Another point made was the fact that dialogue does not seek to erase differences, but only to change mutual perceptions, and that the realisation and acceptance of difference may enrich cultures.

#### c. Delegitimizing violence

The participants examined the different forms of violence (physical, psychological etc) and the conditions that lead to escalation (non equal distribution of resources, manipulation of religious and ethno-centrist sentiments to political ends etc). Agreeing that violence should be renounced as a means to resolve differences, they reflected on the way dialogue can be used to wipe out stereotypes and change perspectives of difference, therefore resolving difficulties.

## 4. Drafting the Report

The members of the Drafting Committee (composed of the Chairs and Rapporteurs of the 3 working groups<sup>7</sup>) worked incredibly hard during the Forum. For the first two days they met after each working group session to produce a 'first draft' that would be submitted to the working groups on the third and final day for further elaboration. In this way, they were responsible for coordinating the contributions to the Final Report from the 3 working groups, finding the middle ground of all the views and suggestions expressed, and synthesizing and submitting them coherently.

On the third day, the Drafting Committee worked in parallel with the working groups on modifying the text to incorporate changes or further suggestions and finalize the draft that would be submitted to the closing plenary session. Once again the Committee's members were called on to take into consideration all opinions expressed. Given the fact that all 3 working groups had worked on all three themes, the task for the Drafting Committee was undoubtedly far from easy.

### E) The **closing plenary session** and the outcome of the Forum

Following three days and nights of hard work, debate, brainstorming and exchange, the participants wrapped up their discussions before starting a new, more exciting and promising chapter for youth action in the region.

Led by the Maltese delegate, as Chair of the Drafting Committee, the closing plenary session began with a discussion of the amendments to the final draft that was submitted by the Drafting Committee. Most of the amendments regarded the phrasing and few new points were brought up. That said, the observers' contribution to the discussion shed light on two immediate, practical needs, which were also shared by the delegates, although they were not incorporated into the text: the need to ensure youth presence and representation in National Commissions for UNESCO, and the importance of the exchange of best practices for youth involvement between the relevant structures in the Euro-Mediterranean countries.

The unanimous adoption of the Final Report<sup>8</sup> marked the conclusion of the 3-day Forum and presented:

- A problem analysis on all three sub-themes
- Salient recommendations for action and follow-up (in the fields of Media, Training, Education and Awareness and Youth Empowerment Through Networking), to be channelled into the preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum
- A sequential structure for project implementation and a series of supported projects



The closing ended with a presentation by Ms. Katerina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue at UNESCO, of the results of a brainstorming session on "The Olive Routes" project – an intercultural dialogue project for the Euro-Mediterranean region- that was held in Cyprus over the previous days. The meeting brought together representatives from UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ISESCO, other regional organisations and national authorities. The Forum's young participants expressed a great interest in this project and the will to associate certain follow-up actions to it.

---

<sup>7</sup> For a list of the members of the Drafting Committee, see Annex 6

<sup>8</sup> For the text of the Final Report, see Annex 7

## F) Excursions and cultural programme

The Cyprus National Commission, in cooperation with various local authorities and a team of highly motivated young volunteers, developed a rich programme of excursions and cultural events allowing participants to soak up the unique atmosphere of a place where 'intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to ensure peace' takes on a profound meaning:

- Visit to Hoirokoitia and Lefkara (World Heritage sites): Hoirokitia is a renowned Neolithic settlements; it dates from 7000BC. In Lefkara, participants discovered a beautiful village, famous for its lace and silverware.
- Visit to the Medieval Castle in Limassol: Cyprus' second biggest town and main commercial port.
- Walk in the old city of Nicosia, near the buffer zone: a reality check for most of the young participants who were able to witness the marks of the conflict on the walls of the abandoned buildings in the buffer zone, the barbed wire symbol of 30 years' division, a few reminders of the period of peaceful cohabitation (churches and mosques side by side) and the significant UN presence.
- Cypriot night at Tochni village: a relaxed evening that gave participants the opportunity to discover traditional Cypriot songs and dances.
- Visit to Larnaca: coastal town in southeast Cyprus, the island's second commercial port and birthplace of the philosopher Zinon.
- Visit to Paphos: the participants that remained in Cyprus the day after the Forum had the opportunity to visit the Akropolis and the theatre of Kourion, a site of the Greco-roman period and the "Petra tou Romiou" birthplace of Aphrodite according to legend. The walk in Paphos – a town included in the UNESCO Word Heritage list- provided a breather after the previous days' hard work.



## IV. WHAT'S NEXT?

In order to harness the delegates' enthusiasm and to support their ideas and recommendations for concrete action promoting ICIF dialogue in the Euro-Med region, the newly created Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education of the Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy at the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS/SRP/YSPE) has identified a series of priorities for the follow up of the Forum.

### A) The 5 avenues for follow-up

1.	Examine the potential for support and cooperation with the <b>Permanent Delegations</b> of the 49 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region that were invited to the Forum, especially with regards to regional programs
2.	Involve the region's network of <b>National Commissions</b> ensuring that the young delegates are also involved in this process
3.	Cooperate with <b>UNESCO Chairs</b> and related <b>academic initiatives</b>
4.	Involve <b>national youth councils, regional youth networks, IGOs, INGOs, youth organizations and structures</b>
5.	Cooperate with <b>UNESCO Secretariat</b> : approach and work with all Sectors and Field Offices, especially those that were actively involved in the Forum

## B) The Euro-Med Youth Fund

In order to give substance to the young delegates' ideas and suggestions YSPE will establish and administer a Euro-Mediterranean Youth Fund, which will provide seed funding for youth-led projects that aim at implementing the Forum's recommendations.

This Fund is based on the model of the 'Youth Visioning for Island Living' Trust Fund, which was launched as a follow-up to the Youth Visioning (YV) Meeting in Mauritius. The Section for Youth (now YSPE) had made a significant contribution (mainly expertise, know-how and human resources) to the establishment of the YV Fund, which is now successfully implemented and administered by the Sustainable Development of Coastal Regions and Small Islands Developing States Section in the Natural Sciences Sector.



## c) Networking through the UNESCO listserv and 'online meetings'

Based on the young participants' recommendations and aiming at preserving the group's dynamics and interaction, YSPE will:

- Keep the listserv online as a way to ensure dialogue among the participants, share information on activities in the Euro-Mediterranean region and to be able to address the entire group of participants efficiently
- Organize 'online meetings', during which young participants to the Forum and all interested parties can meet at real time to discuss the elaboration or implementation of follow-up projects

## V. THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH FORUM IN RETROSPECT

### A) Lessons learnt

In more ways than one, a Youth Forum always provides a learning opportunity for the organisers. The Euro-Mediterranean Forum was the first regional Youth Forum organized exclusively by the Section for Youth (now YSPE) and a National Commission for UNESCO. For that reason, both the preparation and the running of the Forum were unique learning experiences which will be an example for the future regional Forums that the Section will organise.

One of the most positive elements of this Forum was the qualities that the delegates brought to the table (mentioned above). This is mainly due to the **innovative selection procedure**. For the first time national youth councils and structures were directly implicated in the nomination of delegates, allowing them to bring in their expertise on youth issues. In the same vein, the cooperation between

---

<sup>9</sup> For the list of questions, see Annex 1

<sup>10</sup> For a description of the 6 case-studies see Annex 5

<sup>11</sup> For a list of the members of the Drafting Committee, see Annex 6



National Commissions and national youth councils and structures that was generated by this process created a good precedent and basis for similar future activities. In addition to this, the selection criteria for delegates corresponded to the nature and the objectives of the Forum and prevented random nominations. This ensured that all the delegates were competent, interested, motivated young people. YSPE will certainly suggest this selection procedure when organizing future youth forums.

Another good practice for the organization of regional youth forums is to **engage young people in the preparation of the Forum's agenda** through online discussions. The merit of this process lies in the fact that it allows the organizers to grasp the feelings, fears, demands, viewpoints of the young people, to understand what they believe, how they think, what they're expecting and what they need. This process permits young people to participate as equal partners in the preparation of their Forum and not to be treated simply as a target group. The feedback received by the Section for Youth from the young people that participated in this process, from the Forum's participants and from people who were kept informed of the listserv's progress, has been extremely positive.

On the other hand, while both the online consultation and the nomination procedure for the Forum's delegates proved to be highly successful, an important setback came from the fact that most of the delegates were not involved in the Forum from the beginning of the e-dialogue for the determination of the Forum's sub-themes. The Section for Youth had foreseen **two different nomination procedures**: one for the young people that would participate in the e-dialogue for the determination of the forum's sub-themes (July 2006) and one for the young delegates to the Forum (September 2006- once the sub-themes were identified). As a result, many of the young people that were nominated as delegates to the Forum were not involved in the procedure that began in July. Late nominations of participants by National Commissions and National Youth Councils meant that late nominees didn't have plenty of time to consult the background documents, nor were they able to participate in the discussions that determined the themes that they would address at the Forum. For these reasons, it would have been preferable to have launched only one nomination process for delegates. That way, once they had determined the Forum's agenda they would have been able to continue their discussions on the sub-themes they had identified, and therefore would have been better prepared for the Forum. A lesson for next time!



## B) The **participants speak up**

Feedback from delegates, facilitators and observers is key to be able to 'do better next time'. Here is what they had to say:

### 1. On the online consultation and the information provided prior to the Forum

- "Definitely useful – but a **listserv** is not user-friendly, you should use a phpBB-Forum instead"
- "It was useful sharing our experience with others through the listserv – and it should be used in the future!"
- "A lot of paper – too little time. Once getting to know the **documents** it brought valuable insights"
- "The website is informative and up-to-date"

### 2. On the Forum itself (running, format, sessions) and the Final Report

- "I liked the fact that **participants were given the main role** in shaping the final document which is sometimes not the case in other international youth gatherings"
- "Not enough **time** to discuss, too many additional activities scheduled"



- "The **case studies** were good to make us start thinking about certain aspects of the issues which we were discussing"
- "Case studies only started the engine and helped breaking the ice.. but did not really help the Forum's objectives"
- "**Facilitators** gave us the basis and inspirations for further debates"
- "The **working groups** were where the real exchange of ideas took place"
- "Endless discussions about unimportant things such as shall we speak in English or French, it takes time and should not happen at such a Forum. We have to improve our communication skills!"
- "The timetable was too tight – most fruitful time was between sessions, between lunches and after dinner. This was the time when we had taken off the seriousness and started talking about the really important issues that were very much interesting for all of us. Less tight timetable next time"
- "Editing the **Final Report** – a tough effort with serious implications"
- "The time constraint is always a problem and the Report contains abstract recommendations, but that is our own responsibility"
- "Some proposals are a bit from out of space, but in general the Report is a quality declaration"
- "**Side events** were very interesting and very useful to develop our cultural knowledge"
- "Great but lack of time and thus frustrating" (side events)

### 3. On their expectations for follow-up

- "To organize some of the projects and make National Commissions, governments and UNESCO read the declaration and take it into account"
- "A report on the **follow-up to the recommendations** and a list of activities that were developed thanks to the Forum"
- "Continue to work on our ideas, not only with UNESCO but also with the national youth councils and National Commissions"
- "I'm afraid this will not have much of an influence and I hope I'm wrong"
- "Keep **listserv** open and keep in touch with all other delegates"
- "A web forum and online discussion to share ideas and input from around the region would be great"
- "Concrete activities!"
- "A discussion to define 2007 Youth Forum themes should be established now"

### 4. On their suggestions for the next Forums

- "More **time** for reporting and informal sessions gathering all the participants"
- "Have **introductory activities**, introductions of UNESCO, clear roles for all delegates"
- "More work with **case studies**, more detailed, based on more analysis"
- "Careful choice of the **Drafting Committee** – demanding job"

### 5. On the overall experience

- "Working with people from all over the world was invaluable"
- "Thanks for a wonderful experience and a lot of new contacts!"
- "A big *bravo* for the volunteers, they were great!"

# **A N N E X**

**1. Questions posted on the UNESCO listserv for the preparation of the Forum's sub-themes (27<sup>th</sup> of July to 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2006)**

1	When we dialogue between cultures and faiths we encounter difference. Do you think we should concentrate solely on the issues of humanity that we have in common, or should we move on to discuss those areas that distinguish us from each other?
2	What are the necessary conditions for intercultural and interfaith dialogue to flourish at the local, regional and national levels? What steps can young people take to influence decisions makers, politicians, and policy making in order to realize and enhance these conditions?
3	What are the challenges at the local level (neighbourhood, community, or city level) in getting to know and understanding the position of young people from different backgrounds and communities? What can young people do to overcome these challenges and build relationships at the local level and how can policy makers support these actions?
4	What are the similarities and differences between building trust at the local level and at the regional level (between countries of the same region)? What are the new challenges that we face when building trust and creating a constructive and open dialogue at the regional level? What are the ways in which young people could respond to these challenges?
5	Do you hear about intercultural and interfaith dialogue occurring at the international level? If so, do you perceive it as: dialogue between heads of state, dialogue between peoples of different nations, dialogue organized by international organizations or institutions? As a young person, how do this dialogue and its outcomes affect you? What would you as a young person, representing young people, highlight as the most important features to be examined in a dialogue between cultures and faiths at the international level?
6	Throughout the past 5 weeks, you advanced many suggestions. Now it's time to do a reality-check! In addition to the commonly mentioned outcomes, such as getting to know people, increasing knowledge about the subject and having fun, what are your expectations in terms of new insights, networking and concrete action associated to this Forum?

## **2. Basic selection criteria for delegates to the Forum**

- Age: 18-30
- Gender parity (one young man and one young woman to represent each country)
- Active participation and membership in a youth organization in the Member State
- Substantial knowledge, competence and experience in intercultural and interfaith dialogue and youth issues
- Ability to represent a large range of the opinions of his/her country's youth
- An open mind and interest in promoting the initiative and recommendations adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum

### 3. Countries and territories represented

Andorra	Lithuania*
Austria	Lebanon
Belgium	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Malta
Bulgaria	Morocco*
Croatia	Netherlands
Cyprus	Norway
Czech Republic	Palestine
Denmark	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Finland	Republic of Moldova
France	Romania
Germany*	Serbia
Greece	Slovakia
Hungary*	Spain
Iceland*	Sweden
Ireland	Switzerland
Israel	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Italy*	Tunisia
Latvia	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

\* Countries represented only at the online consultation process

#### 4. Facilitators

<b>The role of communication and media in facilitating or hampering intercultural and interfaith dialogue</b>	
Mr. Boyan Radoykov	A Programme Specialist in the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, Mr. Radoykov works on information policy, the use of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace, and strategies for the elaboration of national information policies. He participated in the development of UNESCO's overall youth, information and communication policy, has a Ph.D. in Political Science and is also the author of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne.
Ms. Matina Magkou	Ms. Magkou is currently a Public Relations Officer for the European Capital of Culture- Patras 2006. She has extensive experience in youth-led projects and youth organizations and holds two Masters of Arts- in Cultural Management and in European Studies.

<b>Intercultural and Interfaith Values: Shared values and culturally and faith specific values (universalism vs. cultural relativism): does the opposition exist?</b>	
Ms. Cristina Monteys Homar	Currently on the staff of the Department of Interreligious Dialogue of Unescocat, Ms. Monteys has vast experience in interfaith dialogue, diversity and mediation. She has degrees in History (Barcelona University) and in Religious Sciences (Ramon Llull University Barcelona), as well as a Masters in Community Mediation (Barcelona University).
Ms. Lisa Pelling	Ms. Pelling is at present a PhD. Student at the University of Vienna. She has experience in youth policies and intercultural dialogue and holds a Masters in Political Sciences from Uppsala University, Sweden.

<b>Deligitimizing violence through intercultural and interfaith dialogue</b>	
Ms. Fleur Borgeat	Pax Christi International's Youth Co-ordinator and a member of the Faith-based Expert Group of the European Youth Forum, Ms. Borgeat has expertise and experience in working with youth in promoting peace and holds a Masters in International Relations from the University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.
Mr. Jihad Nammour	At the University of St. Joseph, Beirut, Mr. Nammour is a course tutor and Assistant and Project Chief at the UNESCO Chair of Comparative Religious Studies. He holds a PhD from the University of Nanterre Paris X and is a widely published authority on different aspects of peace and inter-religious mediation and dialogue.



## 5. Description of the Case studies

### **Bush Radio** (<http://www.bushradio.co.za/>)

A socially responsible, democratically participative community radio station that broadcasts from Cape Town in South Africa. Bush Radio's "Township Heroes" scheme aims to increase understanding between young people susceptible to getting caught up in crime and the larger community. Its strategy involves selecting a "hero" from the local townships of Cape Flats, a notoriously impoverished area, and getting this person on-air for several radio discussions and open phone line conversations. In this way it explores the causes of crime and reduces stigmatisation by increasing community solidarity.

### **Chat the Planet** (<http://www.chattheplanet.com/> )

A television show and internet community that connects groups of young Americans (aged 15 to 25) with other groups of young people around the world, via satellite, for honest discussions about politics, relationships, prejudices, and life in general. The producers' goals are to build bonds, to confront biases, to tackle cultural misunderstandings, and to get young people all fired up and ready to act for social change.

### **DigiArts** (<portal.unesco.org/digiarts> )

*Youth creating and communicating on HIV/AIDS* is one of UNESCO's Young Digital Creators programmes, inviting young people of different cultures to express their creative minds with digital tools and connect with each other in exploring the issue of HIV/AIDS, through the creation of digital art and in an interactive on-line forum.

### **The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust** (<http://www.soetrust.co.uk/> )

The annual 'Citizenship For a Shared Future' programme develops the dialogue and leadership capacity of 50 young people from all backgrounds and traditions in Northern Ireland through local and international learning opportunities, including a two-week summer project overseas to discuss with and work alongside others who are also facing cultural differences or conflict.

### **My multicultural home Afghanistan** (<http://www.unesco.org/culture>)

A programme where about 100 girls and boys living in the Allahudin and Tahiyeh Maskan Orphanages in Kabul were taught how to play traditional musical instruments. They were also given the opportunity to share their own diverse cultural backgrounds and learn about Afghanistan's history, traditions, and ethnic groups- all this in order to encourage intercultural dialogue and an awareness of the positive values of a multifaceted culture.

### **Reel Intercultural Dialogue** ([www.unesco.org/webworld/cc/reeldialogue/](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cc/reeldialogue/) )

A series of five short fiction films on intercultural dialogue, released through the Internet and on DVD, produced by UNESCO in collaboration with cinema and television schools of Burkina Faso, India, Israel, Mexico and Romania. The films aim

to increase inter-cultural understanding and to sensitise the younger generation on humanity's need for tolerance, dialogue and peace.

## **6. Members of the Drafting Committee**

Chair: Mr. Anson Aquinila (Malta)

General Rapporteurs : Ms. Sophia Mandilara (Greece)  
Ms. Dragana Simovic (Serbia)

Members:

- Mr. Ali Al-Jabery (Netherlands)
- Ms. An-Sophie Cottyn (Belgium)
- Ms. Zeina El-Zein (Lebanon)
- Ms. Tara Finglas (Ireland)
- Ms. Hayley Murphy (UK)
- Mr. Randy Nahle (Lebanon)

## **7. The Forum's Final Report**



Young People and the Dialogue among Civilizations,  
Cultures, and Peoples:  
Intercultural and  
Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace

**Connecting Youth  
From Dialogue to Action**

**REPORT**



*("Fithikiotika", Traditional Cypriot Embroidery)*

Cyprus, 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> November 2006

We, the Euro-Mediterranean delegates representing National Commissions for UNESCO and youth led organizations have come from all over the region to participate in the UNESCO Euro-Med Youth Forum on “Young People and the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures, and Peoples: Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue to Ensure Peace.”

Over 50 delegates from 34 countries, together with 15 observers and 9 facilitators have met in Cyprus between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 2006 to explore Intercultural and Interfaith (ICIF) issues and determine their possible impact on society. We engaged ourselves in promoting ICIF dialogue and evaluating its potential to influence public and political discourses, and, eventually, to contribute to fostering peace and tolerance.

Inspired by a variety of background documents, we proceeded to reflect on the subject and undertake in-depth discussions on the three focus areas chosen for this forum:

- The role of communication and media in facilitating or hampering intercultural and interfaith dialogue
- Intercultural and Interfaith Values: Shared values and culturally and faith specific values (universalism vs. cultural relativism): does the opposition exist?
- Deligitimizing violence through intercultural and interfaith dialogue

The synergy and inter-dependency of these three sub themes, which were the outcome of a six-week, youth-led online discussion, formed the substance of our debates. After having thoroughly analyzed the dynamics of ICIF dialogue and all related issues, we hereby submit a series of recommendations to UNESCO, policy-makers, opinion leaders, social actors and young people on how to promote ICIF dialogue to ensure peace.

### **Adopting Dialogue and Renouncing Violence as an Option**

We agree that violence in all its forms and manifestations – physical, psychological, etc. – should be renounced at all costs and should not be a means to resolve differences. Violence is often seen as an easy option or even the only option in many conflict situations. However, we, as young people, believe that violence serves only direct and short-term ends.

What begins as lack of knowledge or misunderstanding degenerates into a spiral of fear and desperation. This is often made worse by inequitable distribution of tangible and intangible resources and the manipulation of ethno-centrist and religious sentiments by leaders to achieve political purposes.

We, the Euro-Med delegates, affirm that dialogue is the best way to manage ICIF conflicts. Dialogue is sometimes seen as ineffective, and more often than not,

inefficient. Indeed, it may be a longer, more difficult path, but it affords durable and long-term results.

Dialogue can shatter both historical and current stereotypes and illusions. It renders the other side better understood and less abstract, more human and therefore less menacing.

Through dialogue, conflicts can be reframed and approached critically and cooperatively. Seen under a new light, conflict situations can lend themselves to win-win arrangements.

In an effective dialogue, parties should be mutually critical without being adversarial, should see issues from each other's perspective, and should not seek to fully convince each other of one's respective views. Furthermore, dialogue should aim at dealing with differences and embracing universal values in cultures through *evolution* not *revolution*.

### **Enhancing Media's Social Responsibility**

We, young people, would like to encourage media at all levels to facilitate ICIF dialogue.

We commit ourselves to using the new possibilities for interactivity, provided by technological development, to engage citizens in the process of reporting information and framing it. This would give people ownership over their primary sources of information and the ability to benefit from the media's impact.

While the recent emergence of interactive journalism, like blogs and eye-witness news coverage, as a common practice in media circles holds great promise for the increased involvement of non-professionals, it becomes ever more important to ascertain the reliability of sources and the quality of the provided information.

Possessing a tremendous amount of influence, the media have been given credit for generating new ideas and social change, informing and educating their audiences whilst promoting local culture through their various means. It is this very power that should be channeled to assist international efforts in ICIF issues.

At the same time, the media have been exploited to convey and perpetuate biases, thereby worsening existing conflicts in society. By resorting to manipulative tactics, media run the risk of losing credibility. Media coverage should be as objective and plural as possible and should avoid any intolerant discourse or propaganda.

The freedom of the media must be respected, but this also entails a duty towards society. The media should wield their power with social responsibility. In this regard, it has become necessary to ensure that media play a constructive role in shaping good citizens and affecting state and corporate policies. They should



endorse universal human values, raise awareness, promote tolerance, encourage civic activism, and foster ICIF dialogue.

On the other hand, media users also bear an amount of responsibility in the way they react to the information presented to them. In this regard, the users must be educated to be critical towards what they receive from the media.

## **Fostering Intercultural and Interfaith Values**

We, the Euro-Med delegates, perceive that interactions on a global level require the recognition of universal values, which transcend religious, cultural, ethnic, and other distinctions. These values are derived from a fundamental understanding between the people of the world as is evident in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and relevant documents.

We would like to stress the crucial role that youth organizations can play in disseminating universal values, taking into account cultural and religious sensitivities. Youth organizations can reinforce respect for diversity but will also make obvious to people of different backgrounds that they *can* and *do* share similar, or even identical, values. Our experience is that differences between cultures are not to be perceived as a deterrent to reaching an understanding.

We underscore the value of diversity and the importance of maintaining a “learning attitude” when faced with cultural and religious differences. Conflicts often appear in human relations, and dialogue does not seek to erase differences but only to change mutual perceptions. Even if conflicts cannot be fully resolved, they should be managed. In fact, we, young people, believe that cultures may actually be enriched both by differences and by the process of conflict management itself.

## **I. Recommendations**

We, young people, reaffirm the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (1993):

*“All human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and interrelated... while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind. It is the duty of states regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”*

We urge Governments, UNESCO, international organizations, civil society, youth-led organizations, and the private sector to take actions in the following fields:

### **1. Training, Education and Awareness**

- Organize regional and international UNESCO conferences and on-going training programs for teachers, future teachers, youth workers and youth trainers.
- Ensure the promotion of and wider accessibility to multicultural festivals and summer camps where young people worldwide can have the opportunity to enhance their own culture and learn about other cultures through an interactive environment.
- Provide training to youth NGOs and young people on how to develop effective media relations and how to promote their agenda to media actors on all levels.
- Introduce changes to the educational system adopting non-formal education methodology within the framework of fostering multicultural interaction and tolerance, providing opportunities for the involvement of students themselves, as well as parents, NGOs, and policy-makers.
- Introduce awareness programs about cultural diversity through youth networks and NGOs, in the framework of non-formal education.
- Invite religious leaders to join training and interfaith dialogue sessions on the linkages between human rights and religion.
- UNESCO should sponsor computer and internet education programs, for us, as the youth in the Euro-Mediterranean area but also the youth in the developing world, in order to reduce the digital divide, i.e. unequal access to information.
- Encourage the establishment of more youth exchange programs between culturally diverse areas in order to increase intercultural knowledge.
- Invite academics to develop intellectual frameworks through which one can conceptualize and analyze intercultural and interfaith dialogue and their influence on policy-related activities, including behavioural typologies, effectiveness criteria, and critical points in the policy process, in cooperation with regional and international organizations working in the field.
- Set guidelines for designing educational material in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Ensure that students are given the necessary intellectual skills to treat media messages using a critical approach.

- Hold workshops for young people in order to help them develop interpersonal communication skills, especially within the context of ICIF interactions.
- Sponsor art and media initiatives like travelling theatre groups that present educational plays that touch upon human rights and diversity issues.
- Train young people to convey their ideas to the public through opinion leaders.
- Promote informal methods of discussion using culture, drama, dancing and sport to encourage a wider range of young people, such as those who are socially and financially excluded, to participate in the dialogue.
- Provide society-wide education on the importance of dialogue and the efficient use of this tool.

## **2. Youth Empowerment Through Networking**

- Unite the youth-related efforts of all the various UN agencies under one umbrella organization, which will serve as primary coordinator and reference point for these projects.
- Promote greater involvement of youth in politics and policy-making processes.
- Encourage or organize regional and local drawing or essay-writing competitions for youth around the world, under the aegis of UNESCO, dealing with ICIF dialogue or related themes.
- Launch campaigns to promote the mobilization and social engagement of youth as “global citizens”.
- Lobby governments in the developed world to sponsor the purchase of low-cost computers that do not run on electricity and which were recently put on the market (\$100/unit). These devices should be distributed to underprivileged communities in the developing world that do not have access to information technology and by default should contain UNESCO materials that would promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue.
- Compile an online database, managed by one or more members of the Euro-Med Youth Forum, of successful projects and best practices

related to ICIF dialogue. This can serve as a guide for the National Youth Councils, and other organizations, to implement these best practices.

### 3. Media

- Reaffirm the UNESCO Executive Board’s decision regarding the “Respect for Freedom of Expression and Respect for Sacred Beliefs and Values and Religious and Cultural Symbols” (174 EX/42; 174 EX/48 Part II).
- Promote the creation of open-source media.
- Recommend best practices, under the aegis of UNESCO, for the portrayal of ICIF issues in the media.
- Forge partnerships between UNESCO and strategic entities like academic institutions and entertainment facilities to assist in diffusing information on ICIF dialogue, e.g. children’s channels, NGOs, universities, etc.
- Encourage NGOs to carry public debates on media in their community in order to inform the people about the policy-making process.
- Solicit the UNESCO National Commissions to promote further media education within their national curriculum.
- Create an international network of journalists who work to present a series of critical issues and commit themselves to the goal of promoting ICIF dialogue. Such a network should bring together their different points of views, and set certain standards that they must abide by.
- Use the Geneva and Tunis Declarations on information societies as inspiration in the integration of information technology in ICIF dialogue.
- Develop UNESCO national strategies to encourage national media in each country to produce and distribute materials such as documentary movies that will promote tolerance of different cultures.
  - Hold public screenings of these movies and organize a debate with young participants using the themes, concepts and issues brought up in those movies.
- Organize meetings between decision-makers and young people on TV, radio, web, etc.

- Sponsor the production of sitcoms and soap operas on tolerance, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination and violence targeting youth and aiming to disseminate positive social messages.
- Support youth movements that produce artistic works and media films that deal with social issues and involve children in role-playing and performance.
- Sponsor a program, using existing structures, to put youth into training positions in media organizations (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) in order to increase youth participation.
- Create an online interactive digital newspaper to encourage debate on current issues.
- Create a UNESCO media “white list” for media outlets that uphold ethics and norms of objectivity, offer balanced reporting, dedicate space to intercultural dialogue and understanding and employ proper methods of dealing with offensive reporting.
- Award the media outlets that excel in the norms mentioned under the preceding point with the “UNESCO Media Award”, on an annual basis.

## II. PROJECTS

### A. Sequential Structure

- Ensure that any dialogue projects that will be backed by the Euro-Med Youth Forum participants shall follow this formal sequential structure:
  - Institute **trust-building mechanisms** in order to ensure that the actors in the conflict have developed a sufficient amount of mutual trust and social capital in order to have a constructive dialogue.
  - Establish and disseminate to the actors a **blueprint or framework for dialogue** – a set of rules and guidelines to direct interactions among the actors and make sure they are as productive as possible. Such rules should be inspired by best practices in interpersonal communication and should take into account cultural sensitivities and language gaps.
  - Ensure that sensitive and critical topics are not touched upon among the actors until a sufficient amount of trust has been built and until the

framework for dialogue is established and disseminated. It should be understood that the positive outcomes of dialogue are sustainable only when there is trust, tolerance, and a mutually observed code for communication.

- Elaborate a feedback mechanism in order to optimize the structure and to define best practices.

## **B. Supported Project(s)**

- We strongly support the running program “The Olive Route” as a best practice for intercultural and interfaith dialogue and we reaffirm the participation of youth as a step in the right direction in order to achieve the best and most durable outcomes (see Annex).
- We urge for the listserv created within the scope of the Euro-med Forum to remain online. As such it can act as the ultimate platform for the creation of the UNESCO media “white list”, for the compilation of an online database of successful projects and best practice related to ICIF dialogue. It is hoped that the listserv will consolidate the partnerships entered into during the conference and be fully utilized by all participants. In the mean time it can serve as a general guide for future youth delegates in youth forums to come. Consequently, each subsequent youth forum logically and cumulatively builds upon the insights and the results of former conclusions.
- We encourage the organization of Model UN Conferences throughout the world and the promotion of such initiatives for young people.

### **The Members of the Drafting Committee**

Chair: Mr. Anson Aquinila (Malta)

General Rapporteurs : Ms. Sophia Mandilara (Greece)  
Ms. Dragana Simovic (Serbia)

#### Members:

- Mr. Ali Al-Jabery (Netherlands)
- Ms. An-Sophie Cottyn (Belgium)
- Ms. Zeina El-Zein (Lebanon)
- Ms. Tara Finglas (Ireland)
- Ms. Hayley Murphy (UK)
- Mr. Randy Nahle (Lebanon)