

OSCE Youth Forum

The idea of organizing a Youth Forum, within the framework of the OSCE, is a pioneering initiative of the Spanish Chairmanship, aiming at bringing together young representatives of youth associations and other appropriate institutions from participating States and their cooperation partners, in order to provide a venue for young people to share their views on the Organization's principles and activities.

The Spanish Chairmanship regards youth as a strategic actor, as an agent for social change. It considers the participation of young people to be of vital importance for the development of a democratic and plural society. For all these reasons, it wishes to highlight the importance of the creative force, the spontaneity and the capacity for transformation which are distinctive features of youth.

The aim of this Forum is to encourage young people to become involved in OSCE activities and enable them to become aware of their responsibility as citizens and political actors in the changes taking place on a local and global scale, as well as to enable them to express their commitment to the Organization's values.

Diversity and Participation in Pluralistic Societies is the general theme of the Human Dimension of the Spanish Chairmanship. An appropriate definition of the scenario of the Forum is: A dynamic, active Forum where each of the participants can contribute his or her experience and knowledge, and where they can all share their viewpoints and opinions on current world events.

Taking into account the above, as well as the multidisciplinary nature of the Organization, the Forum will be based on three fundamental elements:

- Young people are its major and genuine actors.
- The Forum is envisaged as a platform for sharing ideas and viewpoints, and will be attended not only by young representatives of youth bodies, but also by experts who will guide and moderate the various working sessions.
- The Organization's three Dimensions will be present throughout the Forum, with a plural and participative approach. To do this, various working groups will be set up.

Participants

The planned participants are, firstly, young people between the ages of 18 and 30. Two or three young people from each country are expected to attend, and they will be selected mainly among representative youth organizations of participating States and partners for cooperation. In addition, there will be moderators, who will be in charge of chairing and moderating the various working groups that, during the two days of the Forum, will debate different issues representing the multidisciplinary nature of the Organization. There will be at least one moderator per working group. These may be experts, academicians or other figures with a relevant professional career.

The Chairmanship would like to encourage participating States and partners for cooperation to propose candidates to participate as moderators. The more diverse the participation in the Forum, the more fruitful it will be.

Countries wishing to propose a candidate to participate in the Forum as a moderator should send the Chairmanship a written proposal to this effect.

Moreover, participating States are requested to inform the Chairmanship if any high-ranking officials from their Administrations will attend the Forum.

In addition to the above mentioned participants, the Spanish Chairmanship also counts on the participation of other young people from States in the OSCE region, who will be selected on their own merits.

Modalities and Format

The Forum will take place in Madrid, at the *Palacio Municipal de Congresos* (Municipal Conference Centre) It will begin on Monday 5th November, at 9.00 a.m. and will be closed on Tuesday 6th November at 5.00 p.m.

The format consists of an opening ceremony, two plenary sessions (the opening session and the closing session) and simultaneous meetings of working groups.

The plenary sessions and the working group meetings will be held in accordance with the programme set out by the Spanish Chairmanship. The plenary sessions will be open to all attendants and guests. The opening ceremony will be open to the media.

Languages: The opening ceremony and the plenary sessions will have interpretation from and into Spanish, English and Russian. The working group sessions will take place in one or more of these three languages, depending on the composition of each group.

The working group sessions will be informal, so that dialogue can flow freely and debate is more dynamic.

The plenary closing session will focus on the issues that were most debated in the working groups, and on the presentation of their conclusions and recommendations.

The possible agenda would be:

Opening Ceremony: Brief, with two speeches, one by the authority opening the Conference, and the other by a special guest as key note speaker.

Opening Plenary Session: Will consist of a panel of experts, who will present their knowledge and experience as an introduction to the different working groups.

Working groups: The main goal of the working groups is to offer young people the opportunity to actively participate in the Forum, so that they can work together with people of other nationalities and cultures. The groups will be set up in line with the multi-dimensional nature of the Organization, that is to say, grouped according to each one of the three OSCE dimensions.

There will be 6-9 groups, an appropriate number to enable dialogue among all their members. Attendants may only participate in one of the groups, and must choose in advance, before the meeting, which one they wish to join.

In order to set up the groups in the best possible way, the Spanish Chairmanship will send the participants a brief questionnaire where they can indicate, in order of preference, from one to four, the groups they would like to take part in and the

languages in which they can work. Once the proposals have been studied, taking into account – to the extent possible – the participants' preferences, the Chairmanship will publish the list of groups and the members of each one.

As far as possible, and after the group participation assignments have been made, the members of each group will be encouraged to communicate with each other via electronic media, in order to advance in their respective issues.

Each working group must draw up brief conclusions which will be presented to the other participants at the final plenary session.

The groups could be set up as follows:

First Dimension Groups. These will focus on activities within the politico-military dimension. They will mostly deal with issues concerning the youth perspective on the new politico-military threats in the OSCE area.

Possible groups that could be set up in this area:

- International cooperation in the fight against terrorism and support for its victims: youth perspective.
- Protracted conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh, Transdniestria and South Ossetia): Does youth have a role in finding a solution?
- Confidence and Security Building Measures among States: assessment and possible new initiatives by the youth.
- The role of youth in conflict prevention in the OSCE region.
- OSCE field missions: their role and how they are perceived by young people.

Second Dimension Groups. These will focus on economic and environmental issues. These working groups will be aimed at contributing youth initiatives on economic and environmental challenges to the security of OSCE participating States, and suggesting possible cooperation activities in the economic and environmental sphere from the youth perspective.

Possible working groups that could be set up in this area:

- Use and distribution of natural resources: specific examples.

- The environment and security: New forms of cooperation.
- Joint action by OSCE participating States in disasters and emergencies.
- The contribution of youth to an OSCE environmental strategy.

Third Dimension Groups. These will deal with themes concerning human rights, democratization, good governance, tolerance, gender equality and other issues included in the OSCE human dimension.

Possible working groups that could be set up in this area:

- Fostering mutual awareness and understanding between cultures and religions.
- The role of youth in the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Ways in which youth may contribute to the promotion of democracy.
- Education as a tool for tolerance between different cultures.
- Roma communities and youth: making a commitment to solidarity.

Final Plenary Session – Presentation of the main conclusions and recommendations of the working groups.

Closing Ceremony

Important dates

- 1 October: Deadline for registration of prospective participants.
- 3 October: Publication of the provisional list of participants.
- 11 October: Deadline for confirmation of attendance by those selected.

Contact

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