



Human Dimension Implementing Meeting

Warsaw, 12 October 2006

European Youth Forum Statement in Session 17

Following its participation in the OSCE Implementation Meeting held in Almaty in June 2006, the European Youth Forum has been closely associated with the OSCE's developing work on youth. In particular, the Youth Forum sent a written contribution to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) regarding today's forward looking session, which focuses on youth in relation to hate crimes and hate-related violence.

The European Youth Forum acknowledges the growing interest of the OSCE in youth and tolerance issues and strongly believes that this session of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is the right time to take concrete steps to allow the imminent launch of a genuine dialogue between the OSCE and youth organisations on these issues.

Regarding the topics at stake this afternoon, the European Youth Forum, as the pan-European representative of youth organisations and young people, is fully aware of the importance of monitoring, preventing and ultimately combating hate-motivated violence and other manifestations of intolerance. In the last months, the European Youth Forum has been developing a comprehensive Position Paper on Violence as it affects youth. This paper will be officially adopted during the upcoming General Assembly of the European Youth Forum, to be held in Vilnius, on 9-11 November 2006.

In this paper, the European Youth Forum identifies causes of violence and looks at the reasons why young people are increasingly perpetrating and suffering violence. Above all, the paper highlights the strong involvement of European youth NGOs as actors for change, who are engaged in finding ways to prevent and combat violence. Throughout the internal consultation process undertaken before drafting the paper, the European Youth Forum observed and indeed,



built its paper, upon the variety of initiatives and projects implemented by youth NGOs in Europe.

Today the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is looking forward to possible ways to develop its future work on youth and tolerance issues. In order to be effective, this work needs to be done in close cooperation with youth organisations. The OSCE should develop actions aimed at identifying and further supporting existing initiatives, as well as encouraging the development of innovative projects where they do not yet exist. The OSCE missions have an important role to play in this process, and should be given the financial means to develop their work further in this direction.

But in order to coordinate the work of the OSCE on youth and tolerance issues, a space for dialogue and cooperation with youth NGOs active on these issues in the OSCE region needs to be developed - and this, as a unique way forward. To that end, the development of a Working Group on the role of youth and youth organisations in tackling hate-related acts of intolerance and discrimination is a very important proposal to be implemented as early as possible after our meeting today.

Ladies and gentlemen, the European Youth Forum strongly believes in the added value of the OSCE's work on youth and tolerance issues. Also well acquainted with the work of other international institutions such as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the UNESCO on the same issues, the Youth Forum is looking forward to bringing its expertise to all stages of the OSCE's upcoming work with youth and youth organisations.

Thank you for your attention.

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