



**1st Euro-Arab Coordination meeting of Youth Organisations
PREPARATORY MEETING
Rome, Italy, 28-30 March 2008
REPORT**

Presents

- Khaled Louchi (League of Arab States)
- Mohammed Azhaf (CJE)
- Noemi Ruzzi (FNG)
- Mohammed Ahmed (WOSM)
- Sophia Shoukri (YMCA)
- Jovana Bazerkovska (YFJ)
- Giuseppe Porcaro (YFJ)

1. Presentation of the Regional cooperation of the European Youth Forum and the ICMYO

A presentation was delivered by the YFJ about the Euro-Arab cooperation as part of the bigger picture and cooperation with other regions as well and not as initiative independent from those.

The main reference context was the Global Cooperation frame which in 1996 was established by the YFJ in cooperation with similar structures in the world such as: PYU, AYN, FLAJ, AYE, ASA, PYC, CYF and AYU. As a result of these efforts the Global Cooperation Coordination Committee (GCCC) got established. From 2004 an International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations started to be organised every year, including both Regional Platforms and the International Non Governmental Youth Organisations which are active at the global level. This initiative inspired the idea of organising for the first time a Euro-Arab coordination meeting.

At bi-regional level two process were recalled:

- The Euro-Arab Dialogue, under which two seminars on Euro-Arab dialogue were organised by the Council of Europe in 1995 and 1996, However, challenges were faced in this cooperation in terms of representativity and structural development from the official Arab counterpart, as many active organisations were not included in the initiative. The Arab Youth Union, in fact, was mainly organising party political youth organisations in the Arab region.
- The Euro-Mediterranean Process, which gave rise to the Euro-Med Youth Program and youth platform used as tool in which coordination YFJ has been involved as member of the Steering Group.

2. Experience of the Organisations present in global/regional cooperation

CJE: Big experience with Latin America Cooperation and small in the Mediterranean/Middle East. Projects with the Palestinian Youth Union and the Saharawi. Inter-cultural Dialogue in Spain. Representing 70 National Organisations.

FNG: A new National Youth Council representing 60 National Youth Organisations. The Dialogue with the Mediterranean Region started last year and they want to support youth dialogue in Mediterranean and Arab region.

IUSY: Two initiatives in the past to initiate Euro-Arab Dialogue with the Arab Youth Union with Political Youth Organisations. They learned that Civil Organisations should be included in the dialogue since their past initiatives did not achieve an inclusive and sustainable process. Experience with the Euro-Med Youth Programme in Lebanon.

YMCA: Presence in the Arab Region: provides services and NFE & development projects for youth 23 Branches in Egypt.

WOSM: Regional office in Cairo. Presence in all LAS Countries. Euro-Arab Scout meeting every two years and cooperation with other Youth NGOs for specific projects, and also cooperating with other European NGOs (e.g. University on Youth and Development and ICMYO).

LAS: NYCs in Arab Regions - in 7 countries. They are Government structures under the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. They play an important role of coordination between government and NGOs. Some are independent agencies (e.g. Jordan). Comparing to the Ministry of Youth and Sport they are the only national bodies working with youth. National Federation of Youth Organisations (Egypt made by NGOs; Tunisia with governmental elements; Morocco tentative initiative).

3. Presentation of the initiative in the context of the past cooperation in the Mediterranean and Arab Context

The project has the general objective to organise a *1st Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations* to reinforce dialogue and partnerships between Europe and the Arab world and to support initiatives of regional coordination among Non-Governmental Youth Organisations.

The meeting will take place in the framework of the 2nd Youth Forum of the League of Arab States, which will gather around 150 young people from the Arab Region and Europe. The theme of the 2008 Forum will be the dialogue between cultures, building a strong links with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The project will bring a Euro-Arab dimension to the League of Arab States event, inviting Member Organisations of the Youth Forum actively working to build cooperation between Europe and the Arab Region.

Around 30 Representatives from Europe and the Arab Region are expected to join for a four days working sessions:

The concrete objectives of the meeting will be:

- The coordination of common youth policy-making processes at bi-regional and global level (European Union, Council of Europe, League of Arab States. The United Nations system);
- The Support for new partnerships on concrete cooperation projects among Member Organisations;
- To discuss support measures to follow-up the Arab Regional Coordination of International Non-governmental Youth Organisations and the set up of National Federations of Youth NGOs.

2. Introduction on the League of Arab States Youth Policy and Youth Forum

The Director for Population and Migration Policy of the League of Arab State presented the main processes, achievement and project in the field of Youth Policy Development and youth participation:

- New policy dynamic in the Region which saw interest on youth issues in the last decade with the adoption of 8 National Strategies for Youth Empowerment, 7 Youth National Councils (Governmental) and participation in various meeting at the international level. The reason of the youth interest in the Arab Region, fear and at the same time demographic challenges (big proportion of population);
- Three years ago LAS started a project of Youth Empowerment, which was initiated by the UNFPA, with an assessment of the studies, research concerning youth in the Arab Region. The assessment result was that there was a huge amount of quantitative data on youth at the National Level (Census, etc.) and indicators concerning youth if the data is available for comparative studies. Indicator on youth and poverty. This was the starting point for developing a pro-active youth policy;
- Activities: a yearly report on youth data in the Region is being published; an annual review on youth participation; activity on Euro-Arab youth policy development seminar in Budapest; Arab Youth Empowerment Declaration drafter in cooperation with the UN Agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) and adopted by the Heads of States of the LAS; Regional Arab Youth Observatory now includes all the different activities (database, publications, forum, coordination of youth policies in the Arab Region); Advocacy with the decision makers (parliamentarians, ministries, dealing with Youth Issues);
- Advantage of the LAS: political institution with an easy access to the decision makers in the Member States of the League;
- Youth Forum 2007: Ain-El-Soukhna, 260 Youth, leaders and adolescents, 20 Parliamentarians; 5 Heads of NYCs; and International Organisation dealing with Youth; different very diverse and open as a testing phase, with plenaries (with different stakeholders) and thematic workshops;
- Outputs 2007: National Network on Youth Organisations - projects and networks. Difficult to evaluate. 7 Thematic Networks have been set up but they face challenges since they are on voluntary basis. Annual Coordination for Regional and International Organisations (including UN). Database on Arab Youth Leaders (1000 Organisations). Arab Parliament adopted a recommendation. Strengthening participant of youth leaders including the Ministerial Summit Meetings;

- Youth Summit, 7-8 July 2008, in preparation of the King and Presidents Summit, special session to the Summit dedicated to development projects - parallel Summit for Youth - with a youth declaration which will be presented.

3. Expectations from prep group on the EACMYO

A brainstorming among the participants was done on their expectations about the themes and the outcomes of the meeting. The results of the exercise is reported:

Expectations

- *Mapping of different initiatives undertaken by youth organisations in strengthening youth cooperation between Europe and the Arab region;*
- *Sharing experiences;*
- *Clarifying what areas the scope of initiative when working in the Mediterranean and Arab context;*
- *Working to make clear separation of religion and regions;*
- *Improving the coordination of in the youth cooperation and youth field, so to avoid duplicating efforts;*
- *Creating a common frame for action and networking;*
- *Identifying priorities in the cooperation;*
- *Developing good follow-up which would ensure sustainability of the initiative;*
- *Working to strengthening Youth NGOs work;*
- *Supporting the creation of a counterpart youth platform in the Arab Region;*
- *Starting from existing initiatives work to enlarge the participation of other youth NGOs;*
- *Working to foster youth and student exchanges;*
- *Working to increase the awareness to existing funding tools from the EU and elsewhere;*
- *Elaborate ways to increase the recognition of Youth Organisations in Political processes;*
- *Inclusion of organisation of migrants youth through NYCs - migrant issues (cross-cutting);*
- *Participation of Women Organisations - gender issues (cross-cutting);*
- *Decent work agenda in the context of youth & migrations - YEN/ILO;*
- *Identify for each theme the relevant institution/actors, political processes;*
- *Capacity Development of Youth Organisations;*
- *Facilitators on the Scientific and Educational fields (exchanges of students);*
- *Youth Participation and NFE;*
- *Fostering Parliamentary Dialogue (follow-up);*

Policy issues:

- *Participation & Empowerment*
- *Capacity Building and Recognition of Youth Organisations*
- *Migration*

Fears:

- *Not talk about political conflicts*

4. Integration of the EACMYO into the 2nd Arab Youth Forum

The LAS introduced the Arab Youth Forum 2008, which will have Inter-cultural Dialogue as main theme and will be a space for exchange and dialogue and networking for Arab and European youth to crystallize and elaborate practical suggestions for projects to be followed up after the Forum. Provisional dates of the Forum are 22-25 August in Tunisia.

- Feedback on the concept of the Forum can be still sent to the League;
- The European Youth Forum will be invited to the Preparation Meeting of the Arab Youth Forum to ensure the links with the EACMYO;
- A Call for papers was sent to select youth production related to cultural dialogue and a call for participants will be released soon;
- The Forum will be open to European youth and as soon as the call will be released it will be distributed by the YFJ to the Member Organisations which will be able to nominate participants (food and accommodation will be paid by the League while the travel costs will need to be supported by the sending organisations);
- The participants to the EACMYO will participate as well to the 2nd Arab Youth Forum, highlighting the importance of the Euro-Arab Dialogue among Youth Organisations as an important tool for Intercultural Dialogue;
- The preparatory team of the EACMYO has also been invited by the League of Arab States to present the conclusions of the EACMYO at the opening session of the Forum and to organise on the third day a workshop for all the participants of the Arab Youth Forum on how to build a regional Arab Coordinating Network of Youth Organisations;
- The EACMYO will take place two days prior to the 2nd Arab Youth Forum, the League of Arab States will support by covering food and accommodation and the European Youth Forum will cover travel expenses of participants;

5. Profile of participation to the EACMYO

The EACMYO aims to start up a sustainable a long-term cooperation among youth organisations from Europe and Arab Region. For this reason the profile of the participants is targeted to leaders and representatives responsible for cooperation of youth organisations.

The profile of the youth organisations will be membership-based, democratic and independent Organisations which have a regional scope or represents a leading national initiative to build a National Federation (or Forum/Council) of youth organisations.

There will be an open call for participants open for Europe to YFJ member organisations, For the Arab region the call will be open to the organisations participating to the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations, National Youth Federations where they exists, and other Independent Youth Organisation with a regional scope (as indicated previously). The call will be distributed via the courier of the YFJ, the ICMYO mailing list and the distribution list of Youth organisations of the League of Arab States.

The selection of participants will be finalised by the European Youth Forum.

6. Draft Agenda of the EACMYO

DAY 1 - Policy issues - Needs of young people in Euro-Arab context

morning: arrivals and prep meeting

15.00-16.00:

- **Opening**
(aims and objectives, presentation of the YFJ and presentation of the team and the agenda - facilitation by the whole prep team)
- **Policy issues - Needs of young people in Euro-Arab context**
(introduction to the themes of the workshops - Mohammed WOSM)

16.30-18.30:

- **Workshops (incl. Coffee break)**
 - Migration and decent work (CJE)
 - Participation and youth empowerment (WOSM + FNG)
 - Equality between women and men (YFJ + YMCA)
 - Capacity building and recognition of youth organisations (YFJ + IUSY)

18.30-19.00:

- **Presentation of the results of the workshop in Plenary**
(facilitation by Mohammed - WOSM)

DAY 2 - Structuring Euro-Arab cooperation in the youth field

9.30-10.30:

- **Tools for Euro-Arab dialogue and for capacity building on national and regional level**(e.g. youth and student exchanges, youth initiatives, Non Formal Education methodology, etc.) - Plenary Session (round-table chaired by YFJ)
- Introduction to the work for the Euro-Arab framework for cooperation in the youth field

10.30-11.00 (coffee break)

11.00-13.00

- Separate Regional Meetings on the framework for Euro-Arab cooperation in the youth field;

13.00-15.00 (team meeting to edit the outcomes of the regional meetings into a first draft framework)

15.00-19.30 (incl. Coffee break)

- presentation of the outcomes of the regional meetings
- discussion of the draft framework (2/3 mixed working groups)
- Plenary discussion and endorsement of the framework

DAY 3 - Presentation of the Outcomes

9.30 participation to the Opening of the 2nd Arab Youth Forum and presentation of the

outcomes of the EACMYO

During the day (Evaluation meeting)

During the day - tbc -(Meeting with the institutions presents - CoE, EU, LAS, etc.)

7. Institutional partnerships

The results of the two working days will be presented to the League of Arab States, the European Union and the Council of Europe as main institutional references, and spread among the other institutions which might support the process (UN Agencies, National Governments and Foundations).

8. Calendar and Follow-up plan

- 2nd of april JB sends template for workshops
- 5th of may deadline for the outlines of workshops

- The 16th or 23rd April Call sent out (depending on confirmation of dates from LAS)
Deadline between 25 May - 7 June) First or second week of June participants' list.
- mid-june organisation of skype conference with the prep team
- 19 August prep meeting (evening) plus morning of the 20 August