



INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF CITIZENS

As a young person, it can sometimes feel as if no one listens to your opinions and that you'll never be able to change anything. Yet it's your action which will determine how Europe looks in the future. Do you want a Europe based on peace, justice and equality? If so, you've got to make your voice heard!

The Council of Europe was created to work towards these aims as part of the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War – if this progress is to continue, it's vital that we all work together, and that means including young people in the process.

Your opinion is not worth less than that of people older than you: there are no "mini-people" with "mini-rights". The Council of Europe works so that young people's views are considered, so that they are involved in decision-making, and so that they are informed about their rights and their responsibilities. So get involved and get active!

- Youth participation and democratic citizenship (see fact sheet 3);
- Social cohesion and the inclusion of young people;
- Developing youth policies for governments, and refocusing them on such issues as youth mobility, out-of-school education, voluntary service and youth information and participation.

To make sure young people are involved in this work, decisions are made through a system of co-management, where representatives from youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participate in committees at the Council.

In addition, the Council has created specialised bodies to focus on its youth work and support young people. Below are some examples:

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CENTRES BUDAPEST AND STRASBOURG

These are international training, meeting and educational centres. They receive youth leaders from all backgrounds for training courses that enable them to hold debates, share experiences and learn about diversity.

➔ www.coe.int/youthcentres

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION

The Youth Foundation provides financial support for European youth activities. Through its financing, it has enabled over 300 000 young people to receive training at international meetings throughout Europe.

➔ www.eyf.coe.int/fej

WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE?

The activities the Council develops are there to provide tools for young people to address the problems they and their communities face, whether through training, research, or involvement in decision making. Yet there are over 150 million young people in Europe; the Council cannot address every young person in Europe directly. Therefore it works with groups or individuals who represent the views of young people in their area, who can then pass on the message.

AREAS OF WORK:

The Council of Europe works with young people in the following fields:

- Human rights education and intercultural dialogue (see fact sheet 2);



➔ "It takes a long time to become young."

Pablo Picasso



COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Started in 1998, the Youth Partnership sees the Council of Europe working in partnership with the European Commission in order to provide training for youth workers and youth leaders, as well as facilitating research and co-operation.

➤ [www.youth-partnership.net/
youth-partnership/about/objectives.html](http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/about/objectives.html)

Other initiatives include:

YOUTH CARDS: CARTE BLANCHE FOR YOUTH MOBILITY

If you're under 26, you could get a youth card, which offers you information, discounts and advice, including for culture (museums, theatres, cinemas), transport (buses, trains, air travel), travel (language courses, accommodation), services (insurance) and shops.

➤ www.eyca.org

FUNDRAISING THROUGH TRAVEL

The Council of Europe and the International Union of Railways (UIC) have joined forces to set up the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility, which supports mobility projects for disadvantaged young people. Approximately one euro from each Inter Rail Card is donated to the fund, enabling young Europeans to participate in international activities for cross-cultural contact and discovery. Since its creation in 1995, the fund has supported some 300 projects and enabled more than 5 000 young people to travel across Europe for international meetings and projects.

➤ www.eyf.coe.int/fsmj

➤ MORE TO DISCOVER!

➤ www.coe.int/youthcentres

➤ www.eyf.coe.int/fej

➤ www.youth-partnership.net

➤ www.eyca.org

➤ www.eyf.coe.int/fsmj

INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF CITIZENS ACTIVITIES SHEET

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE YOUNG?

Our concepts of being young change over time and differ from culture to culture. In some cultures there is no concept of this at all: children remain children until they go through the rite of passage to become adults. In some societies you are young until the age of 40.

Ask your school students to define the main characteristics of being “young”. The Council of Europe and the European Union fund youth projects: what age limits do they set? What are the reasons behind such age limits?

CITIZENSHIP

Using the triangular model of civil society, explore the concept of citizenship with your school students.

What rights and responsibilities does the citizen have?

Why is it so important in a pluralist democracy to have active citizens?

What would a “European citizen” be?

LOCAL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Obtain a copy of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities’ publication *Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Affairs*.

What do your school students think of the ideas contained in the charter?

Contact the local council to find out if they have plans to implement the charter (if they have not already done so).

LOCAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

One of the ways for young people to participate in society is through membership of youth organisations.

Make a survey of local youth organisations: What types are there? Who are members? Do they have links to national and/or international organisations? Do any co-operate with the Council?

Which of your school students are members of a youth organisation?

If they wish ask them to make a presentation to the class about their organisations.

EUROPEAN YOUTH MOBILITY

Increasingly, young people in Europe are travelling to visit, study and work in other countries.

To what extent do your school students feel themselves to be young Europeans?

Where would your school students like to go?

What would they like to do and why?

Imagine a mobility project that would involve the whole class: how is this possible? Where could you obtain finance?

Find out what possibilities there are for individuals to study or work in another European country.

WHICH FIGURE IS BEHIND THIS QUOTE? →

“It takes a long time to become young.”

Answer on the back *





SOURCES

- * **Pablo Picasso:** Quote attributed to famous Spanish artist Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)