

YEN – Resolution on refugee situation in Europe

The Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) is the largest European network of youth organizations of ethnic, national, and language minorities in Europe. YEN and its 39 member organisations work actively for the preservation of minorities and their rights and strive, through intercultural exchange with majority populations and other minorities, to support and live in a united, inclusive, and diverse Europe. We as YEN believe that every person should be treated equally.

Migration has taken place throughout history and has shaped Europe. Today Europe has to face a huge challenge due to the influx of people for example from the Middle-East and North-African countries. Syria has been suffering from war for five years and many people do not have any other chance than leaving this country. These refugees have no other choice but starting a dangerous journey to come to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea. According to UNHCR, 3735 people had to die in 2015 while taking these sea routes hoping for a better life. Refugees spend a huge amount of money in order to reach Europe, more than 90% of asylum seekers had to pay a large fee to human traffickers to bring them to Europe.

Some states show inhuman attitude by building fences and not being prepared to let refugees into their countries. However, this refugee situation should be approached from a humanitarian perspective. Many volunteers throughout Europe have shown their solidarity by helping the 1,8 million refugees, who arrived in Europe.

Unfortunately media operates with negative stereotypes by using a language which creates fear. Refugees face cultural prejudice of European citizens. Many people do not try to understand the cultures, beliefs and values of the refugees but rather stick to their own prejudices against foreigners. This may lead to racism, xenophobia and neglecting basic human values.

Therefore we, the Youth of European Nationalities urge European countries and institutions to:

- **ensure conditions for the preservation of cultural identity of people fleeing to Europe** as preserving cultural diversity is one of the main goals of YEN. Governments and European institutions have to work on the social inclusion of refugees granting them access to education and social system. Furthermore, keeping their mother tongues and preventing the assimilation should be prioritized on the long term.
- **build a refugee-friendly environment** in order to prevent exclusion of these people. History taught us that exclusion of parts of the population leads to radicalization and social unrest.
- **collaborate together to find a common policy, to stop unequal treatment, hate speech, sexual, xenophobic and racial violence against refugees and prevent them from forced labour.**
- **punish the use of hate speech**, especially on social networks. While legislators and politicians have to work on proper regulations, public campaigns such as “no hate speech movement” should raise awareness on this topic in order to prevent violation. Hate speech of parties, organisations, media and people influencing public opinion have to be outlawed.
- **respect the arrangements of the Genève convention and the universal declaration of human rights** which state that refugees cannot be forced back to the countries they fled from if their life could be in danger there.

Furthermore, YEN calls on European and national media to:

- **pay more attention on the language used in public.** Media plays a significant role in public dialogue and the use of inappropriate language creates fear.