



Resolution on Key Issues Concerning European Youth

Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations¹, Phiren Amenca², Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)³ and Youth of European Nationalities (YEN)⁴ are European networks which together represent ethnic, national and language minorities, Roma and Sinti population, young refugees and volunteers. As we all have closely related target audiences and common aims, we have partnered to collaborate for the promotion of youth participation, intercultural understanding, preservation and development of the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups. We are striving to understand and offer solutions for the problems young people are facing in Europe.

Europe has been struggling with several major issues in recent years, including the increased displacement of people, the rise of xenophobia and intolerance in society as well as a lack of possibilities and motivation of youth to participate. Together we have developed this resolution to take a standpoint on the developments of Europe for young people today.

Alliance, Phiren Amenca, VYRE and YEN having considered the recent developments in Europe, notably:

- Today, increasing obstacles to social inclusion, particularly for minorities, and marginalised and vulnerable groups in Europe can be observed. This is largely due to increasing polarisation and fear of the 'other', lack of representation and participation in society, especially in the political, institutional and legal structures.

¹ Alliance is a Europe based INGYO of 50 national organisations founded in 1982 promoting intercultural understanding, peace, democratic youth participation, equality through International Voluntary Service, in the spirit of respect for universal human rights. Alliance is a cooperative network striving for quality, development & recognition of International Voluntary Service as a tool of non-formal education and open space for informal learning. Each member organisation runs an annual programme of International Voluntary Projects in their own country and exchanges volunteers with each other following quality standards agreed by members. Indirectly, we reach annually 2600 young leaders, 15000 young volunteers, among which 5% with fewer opportunities, and 1300 local communities through the voluntary projects of our 50 members. Website: www.alliance-network.eu

² Phiren Amenca is a network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and voluntary service organisations creating opportunities for non-formal education, dialogue and engagement, to challenge stereotypes and racism. We believe that volunteering is a powerful tool of social change, as volunteers dedicate their time and energy to contribute to society. Based on national and international voluntary service programs, the Phiren Amenca network creates opportunities for young Roma and non-Roma to live and engage in local communities and projects for up to one year. Website: www.phirenamenca.eu

³ VYRE is an international network created by, with and for young refugees. It was founded in the effort to unify and strengthen the voices of individual young refugees and refugee organisations in Europe. VYRE is a grass-root network in which members can share experiences and raise common concerns. Young refugees acquire new skills and strengthen their capacities so they can contribute to a Europe with greater knowledge of the reasons for being a refugee and with greater capacity for building social cohesion with intercultural learning as a base. Website: www.wearevyre.net

⁴ YEN is a dynamic and active network of 40 youth member organisations in a multicultural and multilingual Europe, representing and fighting for the interests and rights of ethnic and autochthonous minorities. YEN is run by young people for young people. YEN plans and runs seminars and trainings using non-formal education methodologies. In this way, YEN strengthens the connection between minorities, as well as to develop strategies to promote minority rights. The positions found in these strategies are then transported via public relations and lobbying on different levels to influence policy makers on the needs of minorities. By support of its members in exchanging and networking, YEN supports the strive of European institutions to guarantee human rights. YEN is full member of the YFJ. Website: www.yeni.org

- The needs of marginalised young people and vulnerable groups, particularly refugees and the Roma community, are not being sufficiently considered or prioritised in current social structures and legal frameworks. They are often facing limited access to different parts of the society, such as the education system and the labour market.
- A lack of awareness and understanding of diverse groups in society is partly caused by youth distanced from society, uninformed young people, an education system that is not meeting the needs of the youth and irresponsible media.
- Lack of transparency and unapproachable decision-making processes are described by youth as problematic. Thus, there has been an increasing lack of trust in politicians, creating a gap and disconnection between youth and decision-makers.
- Changes in society and promoting active participation are not sufficiently considered in the current formal education system. Non-formal education and the expertise of NGOs are not being recognised as important tools for learning.
- Due to ineffective communication methods by stakeholders, a lack of awareness of the meaning and benefits of active citizenship and participation can be monitored.
- Minority languages and languages of marginalised groups are often being considered as invaluable and unnecessary tools of communication. Hence, many minorities have difficulties with preserving their identity, language and culture.
- Increased polarisation in society and a negative effect on the participation of young people in their communities has been caused by the regular use of social media as a channel of hate speech, populism and sharing false information.

Therefore, soliciting all national, regional and international institutions in Europe, YEN, VYRE, Alliance and Phiren Amenca:

Call for an accurate, equitable and increased representation of all social groups in the media, political system and official institutions.

Ask for the promotion of diversity and equity through increasing awareness, encouraging collaboration, sharing best practices and concrete actions on the rights of youth.

Highlight the need to support minorities and vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially refugees and the Roma population, to reduce obstacles, increase access and prioritization of their needs to facilitate inclusion in society. The adaptation of current social structures and legal frameworks, as well as implementing representative policies are recommended.

Urge for equal access to education for marginalised and vulnerable groups and minorities. This will also require the increase of research and improvement of teacher education regarding minorities and vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Call for the promotion of societal-oriented education and empowerment within the education system with the implementation of subjects regarding decision-making processes and active citizenship in the education system.

Appeal for more transparency in decision making processes using user friendly tools, such as online platforms and public dialogue.

Highlight the importance of active citizenship and participation, especially volunteering, within society through formal and non-formal education and within official institutions and the media.

Urge for official recognition and adequate representation of minority languages and history within society, particularly in all levels of the education system, the public sphere, in state institutions and the media, with the provision of platforms to promote and preserve minority languages and culture.

Appeal for the involvement of all stakeholders in the promotion of responsible media and social media usage, through formal and non-formal education. This should counter irresponsible, incomplete and exclusive media reporting.