

Dear excellencies-

It is an honour for me to present to you the conclusion of the Coordination meeting of Arab and European Youth Organisations. This Process started over one year ago at a meeting in 2006 Alexandria and took shape at last years League of Arab States Youth Forum Egypt. It was then that the European Youth Forum together with Arab Youth Organisations set up a steering group to prepare the meeting we now had. On the 22nd and 23rd November 2008, youth organisations from the Arab region and Europe met at the 1st Euro-Arab coordination meeting which was held prior to the 2nd Arab Youth Forum of the League of Arab States. Our aim was to develop a framework that would work to promote a sustainable and permanent cooperation between European and Arab Non-Governmental Youth Organisations. There were 30 different Youth Organisations from the Arab World and Europe present.

I will share our common visions and hopes, the principles of our cooperation and some ideas both - commitments from the youth organisations and demands towards decision makers with you.

1. What is our common vision?
2. What can we, as youth organisations offer?
3. What are the basic requirements we have?
4. What are we asking from you?

Our common vision:

European and Arab young people face common challenges such as sustainable development, in its environmental, economic and social dimension, and the achievement of human rights, including access to education, decent employment, migration and gender equality. In this context the aim for this cooperation is to promote peace and social justice, through stronger cooperation at bi-regional level by fostering intercultural dialogue and enhancing the exchange of experiences.

Our offer:

Youth organisations offer an outreach and multiplying effect and therefore play a key role in reducing the gap between where decisions are made and where they are implemented. We are engaged in opening up political processes at all levels, and

making them accessible to young people. We serve as learning spaces for democracy and leadership. Our wish and ability is to contribute with a spirit of enquiry, new thinking and competence. While the list of common challenges that we identified continues to grow, the willingness and enthusiasm of young people to contribute to the global partnership for development remains unbroken. In fact we are impatient and eager to put our cooperation into practise and will support each other in building capacity and sharing good practise.

Basic demands:

The basic requirement for this work is more support. True cooperation between Arab and European youth needs a reliable framework, needs programmes to support both - people to people exchange and political coordination. If we want to make sure the concerns and challenges of young people are addressed it needs to be possible that youth organisations can meet and work with each other, that the legal situation for youth organisations in the Arab world continues to enhance, that there is more meaningful participation for all young people. It is indispensable that young people are heard and listened to in policy development. Youth organisations need to be partners when policies are defined, implemented, monitored and evaluated. But we also need better knowledge of the Regions and a mapping of existing youth structures.

Our requests:

Bad governance or lack of action equals ignoring youth's most agonising problems, this is unsatisfactory and dangerous. In view of the ongoing implementation of the Arab Declaration on Youth Empowerment, adopted by the Members of the League of the Arab States (2006), of the Agenda 2020 approved at the 8th Youth Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe (2008), and of the Euro-Mediterranean youth dialogue, this Euro-Arab co-operation has a specific objective to strengthen youth participation in order to reduce the existing gaps between decision-makers and youth organisations. We hope those documents will serve as a solid basis for developing peace and intercultural dialogue. We hope the League of Arab States and Council of Europe cooperation will be of support to the attainment of these existing commitments, which also need to be equipped with accessible and reliable funding structures.

Dear Excellencies - let me conclude:

- We want to promote peace and social justice through dialogue and cooperation
- It is imperative to cooperate with youth organisations.
- It is fundamental to have more and better youth exchanges.
- It is indispensable that you create more and better participation opportunities.

Thank you.