

Summary EACMYO meeting

Morocco 19th of November 2009

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0. Welcome from the YFJ and the LAS

European Youth Forum (YFJ) presented by Vania Freitas told about the background for the cooperation, that this is the second coordination meeting in the EACMYO (European Arab Coordination meetings for Youth Organizations). YFJ is stressing the need for regular coordination meetings, and that the hope is to strengthen the relations among the organizations from the regions. There is a need and a will to find common interests/cooperation for advocacy on youth issues, which has also been elaborated internal in YFJ with a resolution stressing the cooperation with Arab youth. Vania is also stressing that YFJs mandate is to work with membership based youth organizations. The next LAS youth forum is planned to be in Sicily June/July 2010, and the event will be supported by YFJ.

League of Arab States (LAS) youth Advisory Committee presented by Ahmad Alhindawi would like to support more organizations that are not necessary part of the Euromed process through having a Euro-Arab cooperation. The aim is to capacity build civil society through the cross organizational and cross border cooperation. It has been fruitful for the cooperation that – as something new – at this forum there has been a youth advisory board representing youth organizations in the Arab world. And there were a great number of young people applying for entering the advisory board, which was finally formed three months ago. The process is aiming at creating an Arab platform to coordinate the youth work between the Arab youth organization and will result consequently to be an Arab counterpart for YFJ. The advisory board is not like an Arab YFJ now, but it is an important step for the Arab organizations to establish a regional Arab Coordination platform. The hope is that there will be a process leading to a formalized Arab entity.

0.1 Feedback from the last coordination meeting

The idea for creating EACMYO was started in 2007 in Rom. It was the first meeting between Arab and European youth organizations. The first formalized meeting was in 2008. The organizations agreed on a framework for the cooperation, including a thematic framing focusing on e.g. migration. The cooperation is working with different needs including: mapping existing youth initiatives; bilateral organizations by facilitating networking and exchange of experience; long-term youth exchanges and voluntary services; develop regional projects about migration; create opportunities for capacity building of youth organizations – communication, leadership, etc.; advocate of the legal status for youth organizations in the MENA region; improve information sharing to create joint projects; find more funds/sources from institutions and organizations. A paper summarizing the overall targets for the EACMYO was distributed at the meeting.

This meeting is aiming at discussing, what the structure of EACMYO could be. Furthermore we will look into the planning of the next forum in Sicily.

1. Adoption of the agenda

- (2) Introduction and feed back (including projects that happened)
- (3) Structure of the EAMCYO

- (4) Actions for Arab Youth Platform
- (5) Organizing for Sicily (including discussion on funding possibilities)
- (6) Action plan for the future (including plans from the participating organizations)

2. Introduction and feed back

At first there was a round, where representatives could give feed back from projects implemented since the last meeting:

The Euro-Mediterranean Academy for Young Journalists (**EMAJ**) Amsterdam 2009 is a 10-day, high-quality training course on Journalism and Intercultural Dialogue in which active discussions on current issues, lectures from experts on relevant subjects and practical assignments are tools in challenging mutual misperceptions. The practical work of the EMAJ team will be supervised and assisted by trainers, experts and journalists from each region with experience in journalism and facilitation. One of the European Youth Press' projects in EURO-MED context, EMAJ has firstly established in Jordan, and then it was held in Amsterdam this year. In 2010, it will be held in Egypt.

The European Youth Press (**EYP**) is an umbrella association of young journalists in Europe. It involves more than 48,000 journalists who are less than 30 years of age. Currently, the association consists of sixteen national youth media associations: fourteen full members and two observer members.

The Danish Youth Council (**DUF**) has a grant from the ministry of foreign affairs and is supporting partnership projects between Danish organizations and organizations all over the Arab world. There are around 20 Danish organizations working with partners from the Arab world. DUF is providing trainings and seminars in order to support the organizations. The overall aim is empowerment of youth organizations in terms of building intercultural skills, organizational development and advocacy. Concrete examples are scouts in Denmark in cooperation with scouts in Tunisia on leadership skills and intercultural dialogue; Red cross youth cooperating with Red Crescent in Jordan and Palestine about voluntarism and youth influence; Training of 40 dialogue ambassadors from Denmark, Jordan and Egypt.

Besides, DUF has an integration project aiming at capacity building minority organizations in Denmark. Many of the minority organizations have a great interest in – and benefit from – meeting with organizations in the Arab world.

JEF has invited representatives from the Euromed region to all activities (for more information contact Georgios Kipouros).

Youth for Understanding (**YFU**) is an exchange organization. At the moment, YFU is searching the possibilities for working with a counterpart in Egypt.

3. Structure of the EAMCYO

Background: The organizations represent young people either from national, regional and international organizations, and the EAMCYO is giving inputs to international institutions. The network works as follows: Informal network, membership based, democratic, consisting of

national organizations & regional platforms. The aim is to 1) strengthening organizations and 2) coordination of inputs on global issues. EACMYO is working with a steering committee.

Following was discussed in working groups: Membership, steering (how can we work in the process), funds (who will fund the process) & legal aspects.

The working group on **membership** came up with four criteria: Focus on youth, youth-led organizations, accountable, transparent. Membership based organizations will be an advantage, but it has to be considered that in some countries in the MENA it is difficult to have members. Following questions were raised: What is the definition of youth? Youth-led means that decisions are taken by youth or influenced by youth. Working for young people, and the members are primarily young people. Should there be a description of common values, vision and mission for the organizations participating in the cooperation? What about political youth organizations?

Steering (process): Three overarching values should be omnipresent: a democratic and open process, transparency in all aspects of our work and the essence of securing the continuation of our work.

The group was proposing the establishment of a "prep group" composed of experienced EACMYO participants that shall assist the organizers and facilitators in preparing the content and flow of the EACMYO in Sicily, in order to secure the direct representation of the youth organizations in the organization process, and bring in even more fresh and innovative ideas. They were furthermore proposing the compilation of this group to take place at the end of the 2nd EACMYO in Assilah.

There was a proposal of creating a series of Working Groups that shall be composed of participants of the EACMYO meetings that are willing and capable of working between the actual meetings in order to increase the productivity and speed of our mission. Following Working Group Themes was suggested: 1) Migration, 2) Youth Policy, 3) Mobility, 4) Development, 5) Intercultural Dialogue. There was also a wish to have two 'preparatory' working groups, one on Funding/Fundraising for Euro-Arab activities as well as one on EACMYO itself (examining the structure/future steps and developments). These two working groups should start working the soonest possible.

The group also called upon the LAS/ YFJ/ COE to allocate further funding to the EACMYO to cover the functioning of the Working Group in between the actual EACMYO meetings.

Funding is a very important issue, since funding is needed in order to realize the projects and partnerships. In order to increase the funding possibilities, there has to be e.g. online database with suggestions/practical information regarding funding, a courier, or intranet including information on country state budgets for cooperation. Besides, it could be good to create a working group that will work on funding opportunities: Lobbying for more financial support from LAS and CoE; organizing workshops for exchange of good practices and funds management; update the database of funding opportunities including even state funds from our countries. There was a question of, to what extent will the YFJ and LAS be involved – and will the platforms "invest"?

Concerning the **legal aspects**, it was discussed how to create legitimacy – and that the legitimacy would as a starting point have to come from the organizations participating and the

implemented projects. The advantages and disadvantages of being formal/informal was listed: With the informal network it could be difficult to make fundraising and it will lack legitimacy for external partners. Likewise it can be difficult to coordinate and facilitate activities, when the structure is not formalized. At the same time it is important to be activity based, so the structure is not an aim in itself, and the network could give legitimacy to a structure that is not really representing the youth (leading back to the activity based platform involving young people from both regions).

4. Actions for Arab youth platform

Ahmad Alhindawi explained that the background is to strengthen the civil society in the Arab region by establishing a strong Arab Youth Platform. The situation is divers from country to another in the Arabic countries in term of civil society and youth organizations' situations, general speaking; we can categorize them to three categories:

- a. Countries that have civil society and well established youth organizations as well as a federation for youth organizations.
- b. Countries that have civil society and well established youth organizations but without a federation for youth organizations.
- c. Countries that lack youth organizations but have youth groups and individual youth activists.

Along with that, there are number of regional organizations that work in several Arabic countries.

To this end, LAS will support the endeavors toward establishing a regional Youth Arab Platform to advocate for a stronger youth agenda in the Arabic countries and to coordinate the youth work in the Arabic countries.

The approach is to form a Youth Task Force representing youth Organizations that aim at:

- Conduct mapping of civil society youth organizations/youth initiatives in the region
- Review the studies and the surveys on the youth situation from the regions
- Building on the findings of the above, the task force will be responsible to formulate a draft road map for establishing the Arab Youth Platform to be presented in a meeting with Arab youth Organization

The Platform should start with a pilot of 6 Arabic countries but the aim is to include the entire region. Bearing in mind that LAS will not implement a formalized platform but LAS will support the process through providing technical, administrative and some financial support to cover the meetings' expenses. LAS is hoping that these efforts will lead to an independent Arab youth platform.

It was recommended by one of the participants to create a website creating transparency for the process. The question was raised, what will happen, if organizations not recognized by their governments want to join? LAS is not expecting all organizations/countries to take part, and the working with youth organizations in the region includes difficulties and opportunities,

and again, LAS will facilitate the process, and the final decisions will be made from representatives from the organizations themselves.

Ahmad is very happy that the process has been started, and LAS will depend on active participation and contribution from the Arab organizations, and from support from the European organizations sharing their experience.

5. Planning for Sicily

The next meeting will be organized by the Italian youth council, CoE, YFJ and LAS together. The meeting that will focus on migration will be divided in two – one on the sea on boats, and the other in the city. The first part will be an educational game about migration.

Following was discussed:

Proposals or recommendations

- **Working groups**
 - Highlighting the youth perspectives also in the working groups
 - The workshop have to be elaborated ... more information should be provided to the participants to decide on workshop
 - The goal of the workshop should be more clear from the beginning
 - Better balance between working groups and plenary sessions
 - More information from the other working groups is needed, better share of information
 - More time for the working groups (focus on the content) – less panels, plenary sessions ...
 - Working groups – conclusions were not presented in a plenary in a proper way (for next forum it should be improved)
 - Facilitators should be aware about legal framework of the topic
 - Structured working groups
 - Background of the issue should have been send before the working groups. Participants should have known before what they will talk about
 - # of working groups according to # of participants
 - Inform participants on what subjects and topics they are expected to inform themselves. Base workshops on knowledge and facts instead of personal experiences
- **Plenary sessions**
 - Gender balance also for the speakers/experts
 - Work on the plenary sessions (aim and method)
 - No speeches more than 15 minutes long
 - Activizer / energizer - Energizers regularly once in an hour! We are supposed to enjoy
- **Communication**
 - To establish an online magazine in both English and Arabic (like "orange")
 - Euro Arab Cooperation Online Magazine as a common forum to share articles and project ideas(cafebabel.com)
- **Process**
 - Preparation team
- **Participants**

- Further focus on specific perspectives (migration and youth, migration within the Euro-Arab context, etc. + more expertise also from the participants
- Either choose participants who have more knowledge, or to provide more background information
- Bring more expertise/resource persons on specific themes (within working groups)
- EACMYO participants should have more knowledge about the topic
- **Theme**
 - Focus not only on the phenomenon of how to facilitate migration, but also on the underlying factor
 - Working groups topics – result of consultation
 - Include best practices, examples, presentation of projects and NGO's
 - Focus on youth! Stage for young people and youth NGO's activities
 - To monitor more project implementation as follow up of 3rd forum via internet and working groups – to present successful examples at next meeting
- **Logistics**
 - Vegetarian and other diet concerns
 - Divide tasks – define the key tasks time management
 - Introduction of the team of facilitators and organizers to participants (responsibilities)
 - Clear role definition of the role of a reporter and reporter responsibilities
 - Take into consideration some logistics needed for efficient functioning of committees ex. internet/stationary/printer/photocopy machines
 - Twin beds (or not?)
 - Logistics control for more time respect

Ideas for selection of Europe and Arab participants & facilitators

- More minority organizations represented – and from the European side let YFJ member organizations choose/find the strategic partners from the minority groups
- The balance between LAS youth forum members, YFJ member, CoE members and other organizations has to be considered and priority should be given to organizations active in the field
- Questions raised on rumors about daily allowances given to some participants. The allowance has been given to some organizers fulfilling special tasks at the forum. Each platform/organizations have their own regulations, which will not be dictated from the EACMYO
- Unified application process – common selection criteria
- Selection commission
- Include as participants also representatives from NGO's that may not be members of YFJ or Arabic platform, but focus directly on youth and migration

Funding possibilities

- There is a necessity to have a working group on fundraising at the meeting in Sicily. There are many project ideas, but the funding is lacking
- A suggestion is to have a session/meeting in between the forums about fundraising including meetings with potential donors

6. Action plan for the future

Expectations for the next EACMYO:

Steps

- Steering team
- Statutes – vision, values, target groups, goals, objectives, etc.
- Agenda – activities, projects
- Meeting with potential funds / fundraising
- Database/website as a reference point
- Creating courses on fundraising including meetings with stakeholders + project writing + evaluation
- Ensure same min. level among facilitators + development perspective – that the facilitators can develop their skills as part of their trainings
 - Leading to a pool of trainers
- Efficient follow up forum
- List of participants + information about participants
- More knowledge about which projects have been discussed
- Staying in touch/sustain the social network
- Establishing coordination meeting
- Joint committee LAS youth forum and YFJ
- Communication of media
- Selection of participants together

Contribution by your organization

- Public space
- Volunteers
- Organizations
- Projects
- Funds
- Human resources
- Feed back and follow up. Ask for feed back from our home organization in order to spread information, but also in order to bring back the feed back
- Constructive criticism on the aims in order to make a more coherent document on the statutes
- Share knowledge/experience about fundraising
- Elaborate more in application forms on motivation for participation
- Advocacy at national level – both for funds and for political good-will to support Arab-European cooperation
- Promotion of topic at the organizations, raise awareness
- Sharing online websites or modes of communications
- Media strategy
- Stress the need of implementing the outcome
- European organizations have experience
- Motor of communication – sharing of information on funding
- Encourage expert participants from youth organizations

Expectation/needs to partners (organizing organizations and stakeholders)

- Formality, legitimacy, not to try to influence agenda, provide knowledge and experiences
- Funding
- Share information via a newsletter
- Open process – to use the website for opening up the network to more organizations, also so that not all organizations have to participate in order to gain knowledge about the initiative. Transparency
- Provide continuity between the meetings. Give room for participants to go deeper into the topics/subjects. Establish working groups that will deal with all aspects of the work of the EACMYO
- Draft concept of task force will be presented
- Visa concerns
- Actual launching of EACMYO
- All participants should be treated equally
- Balanced group of participants
- Overview of migration politics from different countries

Outside category

- Euromed seminar in 25th-28th January 2010
- Alliance of civilizations by ALF March 2010 in Barcelona
- European Social Forum Istanbul 2010
- YFJ meeting on inclusiveness summer 2010 hosted by Alliance Finland

Task force

Tamer, Desio, Ayoub, Georgios, Emri, Charlotte and Denise will prepare a paper for the structure and the fund of the forum.

Timeline

15th of December there will be a report

28th of February a draft project proposal for funding and structure of EACMYO proposed by the task force

April, task force meeting will follow up on comments and suggestions by the organizations

Sharing of projects

Conference on migration by **AEGEE** and Euro-Arab project, where there will be a comparison on how global changes are perceived in the Arab countries and Europe. There will be study trips to both regions.

"Euromed Vibes" is the project of JEF Europe, partner sections and organizations from around Europe aiming to provide the youth perspective to the Barcelona Process/Union for the Euromediterranean using innovative online think tanks and physical meetings in 2010/2011.

Youth press is searching partners: Euro-Arab Cooperation Online Magazine (EA.COM), online magazine for multicultural dialogue. The Mission and Vision is to create value, modern, recognizable online magazine devoted to multicultural dialogue between youth from Europe and Arab countries. The online magazine is not only a way bridging the Euro and Arab young

people but also it is a chance for youth media creators with editors and networkers among countries and regions

Appendix: Participants