

Appendix II

Declaration of the European Youth Organisations done at the Council of Europe Summit in Vienna, 8-9 October 1993

Council of European National Youth Committees - CENYC
European Co-ordination Bureau of International Youth Organisations
-ECB
Austrian Federal Youth Council - ÖBJR

Youth Declaration

We, the youth organisations present at this event welcome the Heads of State and Governments meeting and take this opportunity to make the following declaration:

1. We believe that discussions about racism and xenophobia must be held in a broad economic and social context and include wider issues such as marginalisation and social exclusion. As youth organisations we welcome the enrichment of our society by people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and recognise the positive impact that migrant communities have in our countries in economic, demographic, social and cultural fields.
2. When considering European policies towards refugees and the formulation of immigration policies, we must look at the global refugee situation and note that only 3 % of the world's total refugee population enter Europe.
3. We believe that a distinction must be drawn between the recent upsurge in racist violence, and the everyday discrimination faced by migrant communities and that any proposed action must cover both these areas.
4. Any consideration of the issue must also take into account the economic inequalities between the countries of the North and South, and the political instabilities which exist in much of the world.
5. Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia should not include discussions about closing down frontiers or restrictions to the right of asylum, which only serve to reinforce racist tendencies. We must not make scapegoats of existing migrant populations who are often already marginalised in Europe.
6. The fight against racism cannot be considered separately from the more general fight against exclusion. Xenophobia is a consequence of insecurity in the face of on going economic and social difficulties. As long as a part of the population feels excluded and marginalised we cannot expect it to see and judge foreigners without prejudice or bitterness.

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7. We welcome the idea of a European plan of action against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance and as youth organisations we look forward to playing a key role in encouraging active and full participation of all young people in our societies. We believe that such an action plan must include all organisations currently involved in combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance, and must aim to reach as many people as possible. We must also build upon past experience and current initiatives in this area.
8. To combat racism means to develop social policies helping the weakest sections of the community; and also to institute coherent urban policies aimed at, amongst other things, involving young people at the professional, school, local area or family level.
9. We believe in a Europe open to the world, a Europe based on the respect for human rights, democracy, on the full participation of everyone in society. We declare that racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance are not acceptable because these phenomena endanger the essential fabric of our societies. That is the reason why we will do our utmost to combat them.

The declaration of Vienna is generous and humanistic in its principles, but the proposals outlined must be fully implemented if they are to be effective.

We, the youth organisations present, earnestly request the Heads of States and the Governments attending the Summit to take the following elements into consideration:

A. At a political level:

We expect our political leaders:

- to be courageous enough to condemn racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance as wholly unacceptable to a free and democratic society;
- to condemn the implicit or explicit use of race issues by political parties for electoral purposes;
- to construct urban policies which facilitate young people's insertion into professional life by providing opportunities at a local level which enable all young people to participate fully in their societies;
- to implement and develop integrated youth policies, through an increased support to both local, regional, national and European youth organisations which are an essential basis for a stable society;
- to encourage youth mobility which promotes intercultural understanding. This implies the abolition of visa restrictions and the support of present programmes favouring youth mobility (e.g. the Inter-Rail card).

B. At a legislative level:

- to create where necessary, a legislative apparatus condemning racist acts as well as the diffusion of racist, xenophobic or anti-semitic propaganda;
- to publicise and fully implement such legislation;

- to introduce a system of compensation for the victims of racist acts;
- to set up independent legal bodies to deal with racist acts;
- to guarantee the right to asylum for refugees;
- to facilitate applications and granting of citizenship or dual citizenship where appropriate;
- to find suitable ways to eliminate restrictions of youth mobility through visa requirements;
- to ensure the political integration of foreigners, particularly at the local level, by granting full electoral and political rights to all foreigners legally resident;
- to fulfil their obligations as agreed under the European Human Rights Convention with regard to refugees and asylum seekers;
- to ensure that racist issues do not influence the debate on immigration policies.

C. At an educational level:

While recognizing that legislative action is essential in the fight against racism, it is important that national governments implement a real multi- and intercultural educational system at all levels (primary, secondary and university). It is at school that one learns to live with others, it is therefore at school that, from childhood, the respect of different cultures, tolerance and the will to live together should be taught and experienced.

Practical ways of achieving this should include:

- an approach aimed at favouring intercultural experiences within educational systems;
- the development of educational programmes (e.g. history, living languages) that aim at the respect for different cultures rather than fostering an excessive national self-esteem;
- the development and improvement of the learning of foreign languages, including the languages of migrant populations, not only for migrants but also for people in host countries;
- the establishment of international school exchange programmes and study visits as a full part of school and university curricula.

The training work already carried out in the youth area within the framework of the Council of Europe, the creation of second European youth centre, the setting up of the research unit, are crucial elements in implementing the plan of action against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance.

It is only by swift adoption of these measures that it will be possible to quell the racist, xenophobic and antisemitic propaganda we are currently experiencing.

If not, we should bear in mind the terrible sentence of Bertolt Brecht: *“The belly is still fertile that gave birth to the vile beast.”*