

2017 OSCE Youth Conference
“Working with Youth for Youth:
strengthening security and cooperation online”

Youth is not only a demographic and democratic imperative nowadays but an important stakeholder in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Armed conflicts and the rise of political, ethnic and religious radicalization and violent extremism in the OSCE area requires to address youth needs but also to count on the important contribution of young people. They still are an untapped resource whose positive contribution can add much to the common efforts to achieve stability and development in our region.

December 2015 was a hallmark in the Youth and Security agenda due to the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2250, on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution recognizes the important and positive role of young people and delivers a clear message to the international community to take active measures for the participation of youth in promoting a culture of peace, in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict situations.

The OSCE is not losing track of these developments. The last Chairmanships-in-Office of Switzerland, Serbia and Germany gave new impetus to youth participation recognizing their role in the implementation of OSCE commitments. Thus, in 2014, the Basel Ministerial Declaration (MC.DOC/3/14) reaffirmed the contribution of Youth in the implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions; and in 2015 in Belgrade two Ministerial Declarations were adopted on Youth and Security (MC.DOC/5/15), and on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (MC.DOC/4/15) acknowledging the importance of working with youth. This important effort has been taken up by Austria as current Chairmanship in Office by setting youth issues as one of its priorities during its 2017.

Ten years ago, the First OSCE Youth Forum took place in Madrid during the OSCE Spanish Chairmanship of 2007. This Anniversary provides a timely occasion to revisit the achievements of these 10 last years and to discuss UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security and OSCE commitments and its implementation, as well as opportunities for young people’s participation in peacebuilding today, how to support them, and the ways to promote Youth participation and Youth mainstreaming in the work of the Organization.

Furthermore, in these 10 years new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have contributed to change the way citizens perceive the world. Social networks are used by young people to spreading ideas, opinions and insights. Its impact on international security is difficult to measure but this is an undisputable fact. From the North of Africa to the heart of Europe, or to Central Asia, the mass exchange of information through twitter or Facebook, manly among youngsters, has influenced important geopolitical changes.

This is also the right time to take advantage of the important transformation that the social media and new ICTs bring. Young women and men, many of them *digital natives*, are in the best position to offer creative solutions benefiting from the new ICTs in order to strengthen security and cooperation across the OSCE.

In this regard, the Conference will take into consideration this perspective, not only in the substance through the three OSCE dimensions but also as a methodology. An online platform set up prior to the Forum will facilitate the preparation of the debates, allowing participants to start the discussions, exchange information, as well as producing quality outcomes.

Structure and Format

The Conference will take place in Málaga, at CEULAJ, a resource and activity center for youth events, on Thursday 25th and on Friday 26th of May.

The Conference will start with an opening ceremony followed by a plenary session. Then, the Youth Forum will start with simultaneous working groups, in which young representatives coming from OSCE participating States and partners for Co-operation, together with experts and facilitators, will discuss on the topics proposed in the programme. And finally, a plenary closing session.

Young attendants may only participate in one of the Working Groups of the Youth Forum, and must choose before the meeting (upon registration) their preferred options. Taking into account to the extent possible the applicants' preferences, a list of participants in each Working Group will be circulated.

The plenary sessions will be open to all attendants and guests. The media will have access to the Conference opening ceremony. An annotated agenda will be issued in due time.

Participants

Youth Forum participants will be young people between the ages of 18 and 29 (as defined by the UNSC resolution 2250/15). Up to two young persons from each OSCE participating States and partners for Co-operation are expected to attend. They will be selected in cooperation with countries of origin. Gender balance and a background or affiliation to relevant youth organizations will be strongly encouraged in the application process.

In addition there will be a number facilitators and experts who will be in charge of chairing and moderating the various working groups during the Youth Forum. Furthermore, relevant practitioners, OSCE youth focal points, scholars and prominent personalities, together with the Chairmanship-in-Office Special Representatives for Youth and Security will contribute to guiding the discussions.

Special Programme for Delegates

A special programme for High Level Government representatives and Delegates will be organized in Malaga on May 25 (afternoon), including a presentation of Malaga Strong City (Youth approach) in Malaga's Town Hall, followed by a cultural visit and official dinner.

Agenda

May 25th

Morning

2017 OSCE Conference on Youth and Security

Opening ceremony

Conference Plenary session I

Lunch - Offered to all Delegates and participants

Afternoon

2017 OSCE Youth Forum

Working Groups - Youth and Facilitators only

I Dimension Working Group I: "Youth, Peace and Security"

In the light of UNSC Resolution 2250/15, in which ways can we increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making and in mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts? How can we facilitate an enabling environment in which youth actors are provided with adequate support to implement prevention activities and support social cohesion? How could OSCE Missions in the field take into account youth-related considerations regarding their work? How can we reinforce synergies between United Nations, the European Union and the OSCE in order to promote the role of Youth in peace and security?

Working Group II: "Youth and social media: countering radicalization and extremism"

Social media can be used as a tool for prevention when facing terrorist threats or combating radicalization and extremism. How can youngsters take advantage of their knowledge of social media to foster this preventive role? How can young people participate in designing and implementing awareness raising and prevention campaigns? How can the main social networks contribute to spread inclusive messages and to counter radicalization?

II Dimension Working Group III: "Cybersecurity and the economic impact of malware"

Cybercrime is getting easier and has significant costs and impacts to individuals and economy: loss of intellectual property, additional costs for securing networks, cost of recovering from cyber-attacks. Is the solution a better monitoring of the digital world? In that case, what about privacy? How can we prevent youngsters from getting involved with cybercrime and use these skills positively?

Working Group IV: "Youth Environmental Platforms: creating a sustainable world"

Young people are key actors in addressing environmental challenges and critical agents of change in building a sustainable future. How can youth environmental platforms reinforce the participation of young people in environmental protection and in policy making? How can young people engage different stakeholders in a dialogue on environmental

challenges? How can we promote environmental education and generate greater awareness about environmental issues?

III Dimension Working Group V: “Promoting tolerance and countering disinformation online”

Social media and online platforms can be a channel for the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination but also for the dissemination of hate speech or divisive rhetoric. How can young women and men cooperate to promote contents compatible with OSCE values and commitments? How to avoid online violent extremism while protecting the right to freedom of expression and freedom of information? How to increase quality and reliability of online content? How to harmonize active State tolerance and non-discrimination policies with editorial independence and media development? How to coordinate the action between digital intermediaries and content editors in order to avoid any possible interference or undesired forms of private censorship?

Working Group VI: “Youth Political Participation”

New technologies are continuously changing the way citizens perceive democratic processes and affect the functioning of democratic institutions. At the same time, new technologies are transforming the modalities democratic institutions can use to encourage political participation and increase public trust. Young women and men are taking a leading role in shaping this process and are changing the way democratic institutions need to think about political participation. While conventional political participation of youth is giving signs of significant decline in many OSCE participating States, other findings indicate that youth continue to be interested in politics, asking for new forms of political participation and the ability to identify those issues most relevant to them as well as the most effective tools to exert their influence. How, and to what extent, are young men and women able to promote new forms of political participation? How ready and open are our democratic institutions in embracing new direct and indirect forms of political participation for youth? What could be the role of new technologies in reframing youth political participation? And how can we ensure that new forms of political participation will protect rights of marginalized youth groups?

Dinner

May 26th

2017 OSCE Youth Forum

Morning

Working Groups I-VI Final session - Youth and Facilitators only

Youth Forum Plenary session

Conference Plenary session II

Debate with OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation representatives, Field Missions and OSCE Secretariat.

Closing ceremony

Contact

- Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE:
Osce.youthforum2017@maec.es