



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DJS/TSem/RelDiv. (2007) 1



March 2007

*TRAINING SEMINAR ABOUT*  
RELIGION AND  
RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN  
YOUTH WORK

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
30 May -6 June 2007



[www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)  
[www.coe.int/hre](http://www.coe.int/hre)

**Seminar  
Presentation**

## Why a Training Seminar on Religion and Religious Diversity?

**What is interreligious dialogue?**

*Are all religions the same?*

*Is 'faith' the same as religion?*

**How can different religions live together?**

*Should all religions be tolerant of each other?*

*Tolerance of religion/ tolerance in religion*

**How do human rights and religion interact?**

**How can religion contribute to building peaceful societies?**

**Are there differences between belief, practice and fundamentalism?**

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his/her religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”* This fundamental human right, proclaimed and protected by the Universal Declaration and by the European Convention on Human Rights provides, together with the other human rights, the framework under which interreligious and intercultural dialogue can be held. Human rights, however, require the commitment of all, young people included to uphold them.

Questions such as these presented on the side don't have straight forward answers, particularly when reflecting on the situation many young people face today.

The resurgence of spirituality and religion among young people in Europe is often portrayed as a characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even though this perception is also countered by the decline of religious practice in most European countries. This would seem to confirm that the religious and spiritual features are closely related to contemporary issues such as identity and citizenship building.

Regardless of one's opinion on these issues, one can not ignore that religion does play a major role in the shaping of mutual perceptions in today's Europe and that these perceptions influence and are influenced by what is happening in the rest of the world – the consequences of the terrorism attacks since 11 September 2001 and the consequences of the “war on terror” are probably the most striking examples. The rise of Islamophobia in most European societies is among the most grave consequence of this and an example of the combination of religious, ethnic, cultural and political phobias, often identified with religion only. The unfortunate examples of this nature abound and they are not restricted to Islamophobia: the resurgence of Antisemitism and the intolerance towards Christians in predominately non-Christian societies would indicate that the phenomenon is widespread and cuts across different cultures and religions.

Another consequence and indicator of the growing intolerance on these matters is the question of secularism, which is at the heart of many democracies in Europe and which is either put into question or accused of being intolerant towards religion.

The sum of all these facts affects the whole of our societies and has direct consequences for young people as they undermine the very values of human rights, democracy and respect upon which our societies should be based.

The training seminar on religion and religious diversity is organised in order to focus on different approaches to working with young people on these topics. Religion is an issue that every young person in Europe has to deal with and religious tensions that have become evident in our societies are addressed in different ways through youth work. Understanding the role of intercultural learning, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and conflict transformation plays a part in this analysis, along with the core elements of a human rights framework. The training seminar will include both a theoretical and practical approach, building on past and present experiences in Europe, including those of the young people present.

The training seminar is an important element in the Council of Europe's youth programme "Youth promoting human rights education and intercultural dialogue". The Council of Europe is currently running an "All different – All equal" European Youth Campaign for Human Rights, Diversity and Participation and throughout the 48 member states, various initiatives addressing religion and religious diversity are taking place. One such campaign event that will take place is the symposium on Intercultural and Inter-religious Dialogue. This will take place in Istanbul, March 2007, the results of which will be taken into account during the training seminar. The outcomes of the symposium and this training seminar both play a role in determining the future work and follow up that is needed within this priority area.

### **Overall aim of the seminar**

The main aim of this training seminar is to widen the perspectives of youth workers and youth leaders on religion and interreligious dialogue in a human rights context through analysing concepts, realities and ways for developing them through youth work.

### **Objectives of the seminar**

The main objectives of this training seminar are:

- To explore concepts related to religion and religious diversity in youth work, in relation to human rights and conflict transformation
- To address and review pre-existing approaches of intercultural dialogue and their connection with human rights and human rights education
- To share experiences in religion and religious diversity in youth work, including interfaith youth work.
- To develop skills and competences needed for working on inter-religious dialogue with young people
- To identify ways for young people to contribute to the development of inter-religious dialogue in youth work and everyday life
- To develop action plans and make proposals for concrete follow-up after the seminar

### **Methodology of the seminar**

The working methods of the seminar will be based on and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, skills, attitudes and best practices and will provide training for the development of new competences. The projects and experiences of the participants will serve as a basis for reflection and discussion of good practice. Contributions by participants and invited experts will provide a closer look at existing theories, initiatives, projects and approaches to human rights education and conflict transformation, specifically in relation to religion and inter-religious dialogue. Inputs and discussions in plenary sessions, thematic working groups, exchange of experiences and competency building workshops will provide further understanding of the issue. A particular emphasis will be put on exchanging non formal educational practices and establishing links between human rights education and intercultural learning.

### **Profile of participants**

**The seminar will bring together some 30 participants who are:**

- Youth leaders and youth workers who are actively involved in faith based youth organisation or projects and/or;
- Other professionals or volunteers working with young people from different religious backgrounds or intending to develop inter-religious or interfaith projects with young people.

**In general all applicants should be:**

- actively involved within youth or human rights non-governmental organisations, associations and initiatives OR within relevant governmental organisations, institutions and agencies in Europe;
- motivated to contribute to the seminar and share experiences in the field of human rights education, intercultural learning and conflict transformation relating to religion and inter-religious dialogue;
- experienced in non-formal education practices;
- in the position to act as trainers or multipliers in organisations and projects at local, national and European level after the seminar;
- preferably aged between 18 and 35;
- able to work and communicate in English, French or Russian;
- committed to attend the full duration of the activity.

## **Languages**

There will be two working languages for the seminar, either English and French **or** English and Russian. The choice of the second working language (French or Russian) will be made according to the language skills of the selected participants.

However, in order to better adapt the seminar to the actual language needs of participants, all candidates are requested to state in their application forms all languages that they can work in comfortably. Candidates must have sufficient understanding of one of the working languages in order to comprehend and complete the application form without assistance from another person.

## **Preparatory team**

The programme of the seminar will be designed by a multicultural team of experienced trainers. These trainers are experts in the fields of human rights education, intercultural learning and inter-religious youth work. Other experts, if needed, will support the preparatory team.

## **Application, procedure and selection of participants**

Application forms must be submitted on-line by **1 April 2007** at the latest, using the following link:

[http://www.extraweb.coe.int/team40/educational\\_unit/default.aspx](http://www.extraweb.coe.int/team40/educational_unit/default.aspx)

**A recommendation letter of the youth organisation supporting you should be sent directly. The letter must reach the European Youth Centre before 3<sup>rd</sup> April, by post, fax or email.**

**e-mail: [conflicts@coe.int](mailto:conflicts@coe.int)**

**Fax: 0033 3 90 21 4964**

**Mail: Lesley King, DGIV Directorate of Youth & Sport, Council of Europe, European Youth Centre, 30, rue Pierre de Coubertin, F-67000 Strasbourg**

The preparatory team will select thirty participants on the basis of the profile outlined above. It will try as far as possible to respect the organisations' priorities, while also ensuring a balance between gender, geographical regions, different types of experience, cultural backgrounds and organisations, institutions or projects. A waiting list may be established. Candidates will be

informed by the end of April 2007. The accepted candidates will receive the seminar documentation directly from the European Youth Centre Strasbourg.

### **Deadline for applications**

**The application form must be submitted online by 1 April 2007.**

### Financial and practical conditions of participation

#### **Travel expenses**

Travel expenses and visa costs are reimbursed (upon presentation of the relevant receipts) according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only participants who attend the entire training seminar can be reimbursed. Payment will be made either by bank transfer after the seminar, or at the end of the seminar in cash (in Euros).

#### **Accommodation**

Board and lodging are provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg.

#### **Enrolment fee**

An enrolment fee of **55 Euros** is payable by each participant. This amount will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses or paid at the EYC Strasbourg during the seminar.



Human rights education,  
the promotion of human dignity  
and intercultural dialogue.

Human Rights Education and Intercultural Dialogue is one of the main priority areas of the Directorate of Youth and Sport 2006 – 2008. This programme area includes study sessions, training courses, symposia, etc. of which some have had a focus on religion and interreligious dialogue. We will be building upon the outcomes of these previous activities at the same time as setting a new agenda of work in this field.

The “All Different – All Equal” European Youth Campaign on Diversity, Human Rights and Participation was launched in June 2006 and is currently active throughout all the Council of Europe member states. Many different activities at local, national and European level are being organised in the framework of this campaign, including the Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, taking place in Turkey, March 2007. The final Declaration that will be produced as a result of this event will serve as one of the working documents for the training seminar.

The most recent activities dealing with issues of religion and interreligious dialogue organised in the framework of this programme are the following:

\*\*\*\*\*

**INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: RELIGIOUS DIMENSION IN YOUTH WORK- CONTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO TODAY'S RELIGIOUS-BASED CONFLICTS**

Study Session, 26 June- 3 July 2005, European Youth Centre Strasbourg

**RELIGION CONTRIBUTING TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

Study Session, 26 February- 5 March 2006, European Youth Centre Strasbourg

**OVERCOMING ISLAMOPHOBIA: PROMOTING INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION**

Study Session, 19-26 March 2006, European Youth Centre Strasbourg

**CROSSING THE BORDER: YOUNG WOMEN'S ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN EUROPE**

Study Session, 2-9 April 2006, European Youth Centre Strasbourg

