



# Diversity in Europe

*An (independently organised) Talking Across Generations on Education (iTAGe) event supported by the European Union and the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)*

Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019, 10:00 h – 13:00 h

M.A. Center Germany - Seminarzentrum Hof Herrenberg

Brombachtal, Germany

# Concept Note

## Context

The European Union is one of the most successful political projects in recent history. It has brought long-lasting peace, economic prosperity, and respect for human dignity, among many other improvements in people's lives.

Embracing 28 countries, 24 languages and 513 million citizens with multiple religious and ethnic backgrounds, the official EU motto "United in Diversity" is more than a pretty slogan for the world's largest combined economy. It is the underlying principle and modus operandi at the heart of the Union. It is a social, economic and ethical framework.

Yet, in the wake of increased immigration to and within Europe, and the emergence of other global superpowers, racism and ethnic and religious stereotyping is on the increase in many countries. Brexit and a surge in populism and nationalism are not only questioning, but also threatening the fundamental values that hold Europe together and ensure the continent's integrity, peace and security. Diversity and Inclusion are important topics to be addressed and assessed, now more than ever.

In its "Inclusion and Diversity Strategy" the European Commission is calling on civil society to "Invest in the intercultural and social skills of young people and youth workers as well as their competences to manage and work with diversity in all its forms."

AYUDH Europe is following this call by initiating the "Diversity in Europe" symposium. Building upon the successful ITAG<sup>e</sup> format designed by the MGIEP, its aim is to engage young people in a process of reflection, critical thinking and open exchange on Diversity and Inclusion, both amongst themselves and with senior decision makers.

## Format & Focus

In 2016, [AYUDH Europe](#) has initiated a series of symposiums, bringing together young Europeans with policy makers and experts to discuss matters such as the [prevention of radical extremism](#) (2016), [education for sustainable development](#) (2017) and [mental health of youth](#) (2018). The outcomes of the 2018 symposium have been presented to German Minister of Youth, Franziska Giffey.

This year, it will be the second time that the symposium follows the format of [iTAG<sup>e</sup>](#) - an independently organized Talking Across Generations on Education event. This format, developed by UNESCO MGIEP, provides an effective and unique intergenerational dialogue forum which mainstreams the collective voice of the youth for inclusion in decision-making at the highest levels.

“Diversity in Europe” will be the concluding event of AYUDH’s 15th annual [European Youth Summit](#) “Celebrate Diversity”, addressing issues related to education, mindfulness, citizenship, sustainability and peace.

“Diversity in Europe” is not a stand-alone event: a moderated dialogue first takes place on social media in the month before the summit, where young global citizens have the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon these four questions. In 2017, our moderated dialogue on social media gathered 210,000 views and generated more than 8,000 responses. This process will be moderated and summarized by AYUDH team members.

Equipped with the outcomes from the online global dialogue, the 250 summit participants will join international experts to discuss these questions further in four working groups at the symposium, followed by a moderated panel dialogue reflecting on the outcomes of the discussions.

The main discussion of “Diversity in Europe” will be focused on four central questions:

1. **What** kind of European society do you see today, especially in regards to diversity and inclusion?
2. **Why** should we promote a diverse society? What are the benefits? What are the risks?
3. **How** can education nurture a mindset of understanding and openness and foster a society based on the values of respect and inclusion?
4. **Who** is responsible to promote diversity and inclusion in Europe? Is it the governments, educational institutions, media, civil society, or the individual? What can youth organizations like AYUDH contribute in this respect?

## Participants

The symposium will bring together 250 youth activists, aged 15 - 30 from across Europe, as well as international experts (policy makers and decision takers from the youth sector and related fields) from the local, national and international level.

## Outcome Document

An outcome document will summarize the ideas, conclusions and concrete policy suggestions emerging from both the online discussions and the symposium. Voices of youth and international experts will be equally reflected in this document, which will be disseminated on the local, national and international level after the symposium, including at the World Youth Convention in New Delhi, India, in August 2019.

Examples of previous statements by AYUDH Europe: [2016](#), [2017](#), [2018](#)

## Programme (provisional)

10:00 – 10:15	<b>Musical Opening</b>
10:15 – 10:30	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>
10:30 – 10:45	<b>Keynote Speech</b>
10:45 – 10:55	<b>Introduction of International Experts</b>
10:55 – 11:05	<b>Introducing the Process</b>
11:05 – 11:50	<b>Discussion groups on the four key questions</b> , Youth and International Experts; each group addresses ONE question
11:50 – 12:00	<b>Energizer</b>
12:00 – 12:45	<b>iTAG<sup>®</sup> AYUDH Panel</b>
12:45 – 13:00	<b>Final Remarks / Group Photo</b>

## From Words to Action: Stories of Kindness

It is AYUDH's firm belief that words and ideas alone are not enough. Putting the ideals of solidarity, compassion and respect into action, the AYUDH participants from Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK pledge to implement at least 10 civic engagement activities in 2019 connected to social inclusion and diversity, thereby contributing to the [#kindnessmatters](#) campaign of UNESCO MGIEP. These activities will either directly involve youth with fewer opportunities or benefit their communities. Examples are: activities for the inclusion of refugees or homeless people, activities to protect biodiversity, workshops in non-violent communication, cultural understanding and mindfulness. As a guiding principle, all activities will be youth-led, participatory and aligned to principles of non-formal education. These activities will be narrated through social media, photo, video and testimonies from the participants, thereby forming communication sets about these concrete examples of action that could inspire other youth to walk the talk.

## About AYUDH

AYUDH is an international youth movement dedicated to empowering young people to contribute to a peaceful and sustainable world and become compassionate leaders with a sense of community, solidarity and responsibility.

The movement is inspired by the life and work of world-renowned spiritual and humanitarian leader Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi). AYUDH forms the youth wing of Embracing the World, a global network of humanitarian organisations guided by Amma and working to end poverty in over 40 countries worldwide.

Ensuring a better world for future generations is a shared responsibility and AYUDH strongly promotes multisectoral approaches. AYUDH therefore actively cooperates with its growing

network of partners including UN agencies, the European Union, Council of Europe, international organizations, educational institutions, civil society and youth programmes to carry out its mission.

Under the Youth in Action and ERASMUS+ programmes of the EU, AYUDH has carried out multiple Youth Exchanges, Transnational Youth Initiatives and the European Voluntary Service. In 2011, 2013 and 2018, AYUDH Europe's annual Youth Summit has been awarded as Good Practice project by the European Union, and the results of the 2018 project were presented to German Minister of Youth, Dr. Frankziska Giffey.

Since its inception in 2005, more than 5,000 young Europeans have been actively involved in AYUDH Europe's projects for personal empowerment, civic engagement and intercultural exchange, reaching and touching the lives of an additional 1,000 people per year.

Beyond its activities in Europe, AYUDH has also initiated global fundraising and solidarity programmes such as the White C(r)ane Project in Kenya, providing walking canes to visually impaired children across the country.

AYUDH's 15<sup>th</sup> European Youth Summit is co-funded by the European Union. It is carried out in partnership with Embracing the World, UNESCO MGIEP and the No Hate Speech Movement.