

5th European Policy Dialogue Forum “Young People and Social Inclusion in Cities”

Rotterdam, Netherlands

13-15 November 2023

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Young people have been disproportionately affected by intersecting crises due to conflicts, climate shocks and economic instability. The growing marginalisation and the pervasive feeling of being “left behind” fuel anger and resentment that exacerbate social inclusion challenges. The rising of hate speech, in the form of discriminatory and xenophobic language or intolerant and hateful expressions, represents both the symptom and the cause of deep societal divisions that hamper mutual recognition and respect across different social, ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

As the world becomes more and more urban, cities have a greater potential to ensure that community members are actively engaged in solutions. Addressing social inclusion challenges in increasingly diverse local communities calls for the growing involvement of religious leaders and cultural actors. Harnessing common values within different cultural, religious and humanist heritages is critical towards building a genuine culture of belonging.

Based on the past four editions, the 5th European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) will explore ways to build a genuine culture of belonging so to address ethnic, religious and social inequities in European cities. By pooling the EPDF research and policy papers, the intention is to leverage the untapped potential of broad-based partnerships and mobilise collaborative efforts of a wide variety of secular and religious stakeholders, including youth groups, towards cohesive and inclusive cities.

THE FORUM

Under the motto “**Inspire, Connect, Engage**”, around 130 participants from Europe – one third between 18 and 30 years of age – gather in Rotterdam on 13-15 November: religious leaders and faith-based actors, policymakers, civil society and international organizations including Network for Dialogue members as well as migrant and refugee-led organizations active in the field of social inclusion, migrant and refugee integration, youth and urban policies, including countering discrimination and hate speech.

With the purpose to build bridges between cultures and religions, age segments and social groups, since 2019 the European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) has offered a space to build trust, foster unexpected exchanges and networking, expanding visions and opportunities for action.

THE OBJECTIVES

- Provide a space for mutual learning, where young people’s ideas, concerns and recommendations are voiced, including those expressed by young refugees and migrants;
- Share meaningful experiences that can inspire policies and actions for enhanced social inclusion of young people, particularly in urban areas;
- Foster dialogue and partnerships between different stakeholders, in particular secular and religious leaders, institutions and actors, as well as youth groups.

THE PARTNERS

The EPDF is organized by the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), in partnership with the European Council of Religious Leaders/Religions for Peace Europe (ECRL/RfP), the KAICIID-supported Network for Dialogue and the local partner Multicoloured Religions Rotterdam. We also have the valued support of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Netherlands.

THE THEMATIC AREAS

Pooling the insights provided by three input papers as well as the outcomes of an EPDF Expert Meeting organized in Lisbon on 28–29 March 2023, the Forum will offer opportunities to delve into the following three thematic areas where also input papers have been produced:

- **Words that heal:** Often perpetrated in the name of or because of religion, hate speech is grounded on rising inequalities and increasing marginalisation of fragile segments of the city population, particularly cultural, ethnic and religious minorities. The Forum will explore the untapped potential of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as key tools to prevent and mitigate the pernicious effect of hate speech offline and online;
- **Cities fostering belonging:** In urban spaces, refugees, migrants and other vulnerable groups are progressively pushed to the periphery. Young migrants and refugees experience further exclusion within their own communities, from other migrant and refugee groups as well as from host communities. The Forum will discuss how inter-faith and intercultural dialogue can mobilise collaborative efforts towards an urban environment where everyone can access suitable opportunities for socioeconomic, cultural and religious participation;
- **Leadership in action:** While young people remain passionate and motivated about issues that matter to them, they tend to experience growing marginalisation in decision-making. The Forum will look into approaches that, while fostering the active citizenship and participation of young people, can enhance youth’s trust in secular and religious leadership – the very leadership responsible for managing change and social cohesion.

THE DRAFT AGENDA

Time	Monday 13 November “Inspire”	Tuesday 14 November “Connect”	Wednesday 15 November “Engage”
09:00-10:30	Opening session , including welcome words and presentation of input papers	Short plenary and Inspirational talks about the three themes	Short plenary and Action Planning workshop (part 1)
11:00-12:30	Break-out sessions to discuss input papers (part 1)	Human library to learn more about personal journeys	Action Planning workshop (part 2)
14:00-15:15	Break-out sessions to discuss input (part 2)	Reflective dialogue session #1 with capacity-building tools	Reflective dialogue session #2 to discuss ways forward
15:45-17:00	Market space of ideas to learn from initiatives around Europe	Site visit in Rotterdam of relevant projects (optional)	Closing plenary with pledges for follow-up

THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE CENTRE (KAICIID)

Thanks to its dual governance structure - a Council of Parties made of States, and a Board of Directors made up of religious leaders - KAICIID is an intergovernmental organization uniquely placed to bring together followers of different religious traditions, religious leaders and policymakers and harness the transformative power of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as effective tools to promote justice, peace, social cohesion and reconciliation.

Get in touch with the organisers at europe@kaiciid.org