



RESOLUTION -
Freedom of expression, association and
assembly

*Adopted by the Council of Members/Extraordinary General
Assembly 27-28 April 2007, Baku (Azerbaijan)*

The rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are vital to every democratic society.

Freedom of association is a basic fundamental human right, as stated in Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights and should form the basis of any pluralist democracy. All groups in society should therefore have the freedom to participate in associative life as this contributes towards the development of a strong democratic civil society.

The right to freedom of expression is a cornerstone upon which the very existence of a democratic society rests, and it is indispensable for the formation of public opinion. The absence of the freedom of expression is a factor which contributes to a country's failure to respect other human rights. The right to freedom of expression includes not only freedom to impart information and ideas, but also the freedom to seek and receive them.

The rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) under Articles 19, 21 and 22, The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under Articles 13 and 15, and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) under Articles 10 and 11.

The European Youth Forum:

Stresses that all members of the international community shall fulfill jointly and separately, their solemn obligation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind;

Acknowledges the important role of international cooperation for, and the valuable work of individuals, groups and associations in contributing to, the effective elimination of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals;

Recognizes the relationship between international peace and security and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and mindful that the absence of international peace and security does not excuse non-compliance;

Recognizes the right and the responsibility of individuals, groups and associations to promote respect for and foster knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels;

The European Youth Forum therefore:

Underlines the importance of non-governmental organizations to a stable and democratic civil society built not only on principles such as the rule of law and

freedom of speech but also on the ability of citizens to associate freely;

Demands that Governments comply with their obligations that are enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties;

Demands that Governments stop politically motivated arrests and detentions of independent journalists, opposition candidates and their supporters and human rights defenders;

Demands that Governments stop the constant prosecution of constitutional rights of young people to freedom of association, freedom of choice and self-definition;

Demands that no Government who wishes to be part of the Council of Europe any longer engage in prosecution of constitutional rights of young people to freedom of association or speech;

Calls on the Council of Europe and the European Commission to enhance their support for civil society in Europe and to increase allocations for promoting human rights;

Calls for any new legislation concerning Non-governmental organizations and Non-Profit organizations to be made in comply with the norms and standards of the Council of Europe, in acceptance of Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Assembly as universal Human Rights thus preventing any discrimination, e.g. based on ethnic origin, gender and gender identity, ability, religion, political views, sexual orientation, or any other grounds.

Calls on the Council of Europe to focus on youth organizations right to association in their youth policy development.

Calls upon Governments and European institutions to eliminate any obstacles that stand against the right of individuals' and organizations' mobility and international cooperation.

Calls upon the Bureau of the European Youth Forum to follow up the All different - All equal campaign by building capacity in member organizations on how to fight violations of Human Rights and support the member organizations in this work.