



## Politics and Religion In Shores of Mediterranean Sea

*Youth in Action Programme  
Action 3.1 Networking Meeting*

Inter-religious dialogue: this *Training course* will focus on interreligious dialogue and include inside of this discussion people from the same religion but really different cultures (as Muslims from Bosnia and from Syria ; Christians from Italy and from Liban, etc). We do think that this representation of organisations from Europe, Mediterranean partners countries and South East Europe will be a unique opportunity for the participants to develop really new and innovative ideas on the subject.

This theme reflects the interest and needs of the participants as they will be youngsters that approach interreligious problematic at different levels in their work but that do not have enough opportunities to interact and use their expertise to develop creative and efficient ideas together. Moreover, by improving the creation of a strong network on this issue, we will contribute to a process of evolution initiated by youth participants and give stronger impact to their voices.

Urban development: the issue of inter-religious dialogue is mainly a “urban issue”, as our last century has been characterized by huge migratory movement touching mainly cities and an global urbanisation of the population. Big or small, cities need reliable and comparable information for urban planning and for their safe, sustainable and prosperous development. Cities needs to include their multi-religious realities and dialogue between communities in order to avoid raising of racism and extremisms. A possible solution stays in the establishment of a Network that will allow the exchange and interaction between key persons and put the youth at the center of the reflection and innovative initiatives.

This theme reflects the interest and needs of the participants as they will be youngsters involved in the local development promotion and focus on the social aspect of it. Moreover, during previous projects developed by CE.S.I.E or partners on the thematics of inter-cultural and interreligious dialogue, the young participants showed the importance to develop the reflection in a urban contexts. The training and the creation of the network will be an opportunities for the participants to become leaders on the urban development promotion.

The need to improve dialogue between religious and cities actors in urban areas is really important due to the increasing of immigration movement between the two shores of the Mediterranean sea. We also decide to open the reflection on these thematics to partners from South East, as the religious contexts is also really particular in this region, and that there is important migratory movement between those countries and western Europe. To improve social cohesion and considering multiple identities sharing the same urban space, youth have to be the ones who stimulate local authorities and social actors to take the utmost account of different religious, spirituality and values when establishing democratic rules and arrangements for "living together".

Our project will meet the following objectives of the Youth in Action Programme:

**Develops solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union**: The *Training course* will be focused on the creation of a South East Europe, European and Mediterranean countries cooperation on politics and religions in urban contexts and on the building of a Network called PRISM –Politics and Religions In shores of Mediterranean Sea- improving social cohesion and understanding of spiritual diversity in urban contemporary contexts in South East, European and Mediterranean cities.

The Training course will be open to local authorities actors working in the field of social cohesion, youth religious figures and youth social workers. By bringing together these different figures from really different cultures and by making them exchange and reflect on what must be create to foster social cohesion in the countries of these three different regions and how youth can be active participants in this dynamic, we will improve tolerance among them.

Moreover, during the meeting, participants will get aware of their cultural relativism (through the cultural exchange and the moments of non-formal time) and that immigration is a complex phenomenon and a challenge that request particular attention from youth people in order to create social cohesion within future generations.

**Fosters mutual understanding between young people in different countries:** The participants of the Training course will think together on how to improve mutual understanding. Moreover, they will reflect on how to stop the growing of radicalisation of some religious hand, and on the other hand the escalating violence based on religions and beliefs hate (The blocking of the construction of Mosques in Italy and the global xenophobic politic-security package-, example of profanations of tombs and holy places in France –last one in saint Denis where swastika crosses has been tagged on the pillars of the Basilique of Saint Denis (<http://www.agrif.fr>), religious minorities in Lebanon as Druzes and Maronite Christians). The network that will be built as result of the training course will include some tools to promote mutual understanding and knowledge of “the other” and fight against negative stereotypes.

**Contributes to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field:** The Training course will give competencies and knowledge for its participants to create new initiatives and a Network that will be supporting new activities on inter-religious dialogue developed by young people from South East Europe, European and Mediterranean countries.

The training will be focus on: presentation of local good practice, existing tools, site visits, policies and other experiences on inter-religious dialogue/ analyse of needs/ different kind of networks and analyse on how they can answer to these ideas/ how to deal with work in intercultural and interreligious team/ conflit transformation/ elaboration of a list of suggestions to local authorities from urban areas to improve interreligious dialogue. Through these sessions, we will actively develop the quality of support system for youth activites in youth fields (for example possibly a website will be created as a result of the project and will integrate a page on exchange of good practices, of partners finding and on tools & links to work on interreligious dialogue promotion).

Moreover, the participants will be trained on how to develop project and international network, disseminate information and become leaders in this field.

Moreover, our project will meet the following priorities of the Youth in Action Programme:

**Participation of youth people:** To improve social cohesion and considering multiple identities sharing the same urban space, youth have to be the ones who stimulate local authorities and social actors to take the utmost account of different religious, spirituality and values when establishing democratic rules and arrangements for "living together". The participants of the Training course will be youngsters from different backgrounds and field of actions active at local and/or international levels. The participants will together create innovative ideas on how to involve more youth people to participate in interreligious dialogue promotion.

Moreover, the young participants will elaborate a list of suggestions to local authorities from urban areas to create measures promoting interreligious dialogue focusing on: schools; minorities and immigrants rights; spaces and places of worship; religious holidays; cultural activities and inter-religious dialogue promoting the culture of peace and the respect for human rights; Meetings and tours in the different worship locations.

The results of their analyses and ideas will be synthetise in the network PRISM that will improve the exchange of knowledge and experience.

**Cultural diversity:** Lots of Euro-Mediterranean societies live only a multi-religious and not inter-religious dimension without having any constructive and realistic contact with each other and in which diversity is seen as a threat and is usually the cause of prejudice, racism and other forms of discrimination. The solution stays in rebuilding a society in

which there is a high level of social interaction, exchange and mutual respect of values, spirituality, traditions and social rules.

During the Training course participants will have a strong intercultural and interreligious experience. This will be increase by the involvement of participants from really different cultures, ways to live religion and to promote interreligious dialogue: Europe, Mediterranean partners countries and South East Europe. We choose to involve participants from the 3 regions in order to create a really strong cultural diversity dimension bringing to a high tolerance and fight against discrimination.

Also, we deliberately involved partners from Libanon and Bosnia that will attest from really specific and complex religious contexts.

Moreover, some participants from the same religion but totally different cultures will get aware of the cultural relativism of their understanding of religions and rules, that's why it will be really interesting to have for example muslims from Serbia, from Palestine and from Marocco.

The organisers will be particularly careful during the Training course to promote cultural diversity as a base to develop a fruitful and respectful dialogue.

**Creativity and innovation:** Our project is innovative in the way that it will bring together individuals acting at different levels (local authorities, youth religious figures and youth workers) who will have a unique chance to think together, rich of their diversity of experiences and points of view and also rich of their cultural differences. From their thoughts they will develop new projects and a network that can be useful within their 3 territorial regions.

During the Training course, we will use methodologies of work with participants that attested their effect in promoting creativity and innovation as parallel thinking (developed by Eduard de Bono) and maieutic methodology (developed by Danilo Dolci).

CE.S.I.E already worked successfully with these two methodologies and we found out that their combination lead to: improving of self-confidence of participants, new ideas to think out of the boxes and optimum climax of communication within participants from different cultures and faith.

This will be done in order to stimulate participants to develop new and attractive way of thinking and ideas on interreligious dialogue.

**PARTNERS INVOLVED:**

Italy	CE.S.I.E
Tunisia	Club Culturel Ali Belhouane – Tunis
Sweden	Arab Initiative/The Swedish Middle East and North African Group
Israel	Center Of Feminist Critical Pedagogy
Morocco	Observatoire Marocain pour la Paix Sociale
Bulgaria	Euro-Mediterranean Center for Cross-Cultural Dialogue
Lebanon	LEMG Lebanon
Palestine	Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center
Albania	European Movement Albania
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Institute for Strengthening Democracy in Bosnia (ISD)
France	Piste-Solidaire
Malta	SDA – Sustainable Development Association
Egypt	FTZ Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit