Schuman Forum Youth Participation - Flash Communiqué

Background

The Schuman Security and Defence Forum is a flagship European Union platform that brings together political leaders, defence and security experts, international organisations and partner countries to exchange perspectives on current and emerging security challenges and explore opportunities for international cooperation. In this context, the Youth Track of the Forum aimed to bring young people's experiences and recommendations into the broader discussion, particularly those of underrepresented and historically marginalised communities.

Outcomes

1. **Day One.** During the 1st day, we met with a number of EU Institutions' representatives including DG MENA, DG Education and Culture, DG for International Partnerships as well as the EEAS PCM.1, PCM.2 divisions, Directorate for Policy Planning and Strategic Communication and the Equality and Diversity Task Force. During the meetings, we raised important issues relevant to our countries, such as youth participation during the missile and drone attacks on the civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, EU integration paths of the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries with an emphasis on Ukraine and Albania, the transitional justice process in Syria, the future of Syrian refugees, the situation in Afghanistan with a particular focus on the restrictions on women's rights, access to education, civic space and the role of youth in addressing the country's ongoing challenges, peacebuilding process in Latin America and the Caribbean and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives on peace and security agendas.

2. **Day Two.** The second day provided opportunities to strengthen institutional engagement, explore regional partnerships and advance the visibility of the EU YPS network. Youth participants met desk officers for their specific countries and regions to discuss concrete mechanisms to support the EU YPS work on the ground, including discussions with the Afghanistan Desk Officer, opportunities to support young Afghan women and men through potential partnerships, discussions on EU enlargement process, Western Balkan's EU integration and socioeconomic transformations and possible follow-up actions to strengthen continued engagement. Then, we held a very productive in-person meeting with the Secretary General of the European Union External Action Service to discuss topics such as the relevance of EU-CELAC partnership and the importance of drawing on human rights approaches to conflict resolutions, the EU support to Ukraine in the field of defence and European integration and EU integration of the Western Balkans. We asked about channels for civil society activists to stay connected with the EEAS. We also called for non-negotiable standards in EU engagement with the transitional authorities to protect the dignity of the Syrian people. In addition, during the online meeting with the Nigerian Youth Sounding Board the importance to expand interregional dialogue was raised, and the fact that it is necessary to facilitate exchanges of good practices on the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Last but not least, we held a meeting with the UNDP and OHCHR agencies in Brussels in which we showed

the commitment to expanding the network and have exchanges with the Youth Advisory Board for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

In parallel, one of us attended the closing plenary session of the Schuman Forum and highlighted how young peacebuilders across Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and other regions are already serving as an often invisible but essential resilience infrastructure by preserving trust, sustaining dialogue, connecting divided communities, countering misinformation, and maintaining social cohesion where formal institutions are under pressure or unable to reach.

General next steps

- Following up with the meeting participants regarding further cooperation and implementation of joint initiatives
- Bringing up the issues discussed during the meetings to the next YPS network monthly meetings and working groups
- Disseminating the main messages discussed during the Schuman Forum with the local networks and stakeholders of the youth advocates
- Reinforce the EU YPS network

Some geo-specific next steps

Syria:

- Follow up with the EEAS Syria desk before next month's Day of Dialogue to push for the safe and inclusive participation of women, minorities and independent activists.
- monitor and report on the situation of women and targeted communities, and share these findings with the EEAS and the EU YPS Network.

Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Follow up the discussions with the desk officer of the EEAS for Latin American and the Caribbean for:
- Strengthening youth participation in the upcoming EU-CELAC Summit.
- Building alliances between the EU YPS Network and youth stakeholders participating in these high-level interregional dialogues.
- Ensuring that youth perspectives are meaningfully reflected in EU-LAC political cooperation.

Afghanistan:

- Exploring opportunities for continued engagement and cooperation between the EU YPS Network and stakeholders working with young Afghan women and men.
- Maintaining follow-up exchanges with the Afghanistan Desk to ensure that youth perspectives and developments affecting Afghan youth remain reflected in relevant discussions and initiatives.

Written in Brussels on 18 November 2026 by the youth track participants