

**Dialogue Seminar
Berlaymont, Salle S9
1 June 2016 14h30**

Steering note

Description of the context, the agenda and the issues to be discussed

You participate in the Dialogue Seminar "Facing the European crisis: refugees, intolerance and the role of youth in society" organised by DG JUST and Association Européenne de la Pensée Libre (AEPL), Association maçonnique européenne (AME), Contribution des obédiences maçonniques libérales et adogmatiques à la construction européenne (COMALACE), Egalité Laïcité Europe (EGALE), Fédération Humaniste Européenne (FHE).

You have been invited to deliver an opening speech in Session 3 on "How our values can re-enchant the European youth?" with a general overview on Youth, Education and New Narrative for Europe. [REDACTED] will participate in the session on behalf of DG EAC.

This Seminar precedes the annual meeting of VP Timmermans with the non-confessional organisation leaders.

Working language is EN and FR, however most participants will use FR during the session.

Speaking points:

- We believe that young people should have a bigger say on the topics that affect our society and, more importantly, that their voice should be heard.
- Europe is part of our daily lives. Decisions taken at European level have an impact on all of us and on our future. This is even more true for young people (they have more future...)
- It is important for the younger generation to see clear benefits in being part of the EU. To understand that Europe is not just a single market but first and foremost a community of values such as freedom of thought and expression, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination.
- Values are not *demodé*. They are the foundation of our way of life.
- We want to expand the dialogue on these issues and reach out to more Europeans. Public events in the Member States and the media can be used to carry forward the debate, with the involvement of youth, cultural and civil society representatives.
- This month we are launching a comprehensive online and offline debate among young people about Europe's vision

and our shared European values. It can be accessed through on the Youth Portal.

- The Commission is mobilising youth networks and partners in order to reach out to the grassroots level in the Member States.
- These initiatives are part of the "New Narrative for Europe" project. We want to engage young people in a reflection on what is Europe today and how it can move forward.
- Youth involvement is a key strand of the New Narrative, as you can see in the fiche you received. (The others are Education, Culture, Trainees, Ambassadors and Religions and Values).
- [REDACTED] will explain the different strands in more detail in the course of the session.
- I would just like to invite you to take advantage of these opportunities in order to reach out beyond your usual circle of partner organisations and engage with those whose voices are not normally heard.
- The reflection on what Europe stands for today should not be left to the "experts". It should involve everyone. In fact, it should start at an early age - and for that we need our education partners. Teachers, youth leaders, politicians, parents, civil society organisations can foster participatory discussions on the essence of the European Union and

empower young people to carry out this unique project of peace in the future.

- Especially important is the capacity to think critically. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Internet and social media. People, and especially young people need to be able to separate fact from opinion, to recognise propaganda and to resist all forms of indoctrination and hate speech.
- Last week, in the Colloquium we organised on "Promoting inclusion and fundamental values through education: a way to prevent violent radicalisation", Commissioner Tibor Navracsics highlighted the role of education in all its forms, as well as youth actions, culture and sport as playing a vital role in fostering knowledge, understanding and acceptance of democratic values and fundamental rights and the capacity to make informed choices.
- In line with this, the Commission will continue to propose actions through its policy frameworks and programmes to support schools, universities, educators, youth workers and sport organisations to prevent violent radicalisation.
- Your role as representatives of civic organisations is crucial in taking this discussion forward.

- You are in a position to steer the debate about values, and to involve young people in the discussions. You can help us better understand the mind-set of young people today, and to design better policies to help young people to become 'ready for life' and 'ready for society'.
- I am pleased to note the involvement of some of your organisations in different projects in the field youth. Every opportunity should be seized to move the debate from the realm of the abstract to the real world and to bring it closer to people's daily lives.
- I look forward to your contribution. Thank you for your attention.

