

## Bishkek Declaration

The Red Cross Red Crescent European Youth Network (EYN) gathered in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, for the 23rd European Youth Cooperation Meeting to discuss its priorities and to find new ways of strengthening regional collaboration in the pursuit of our humanitarian mission. The network brings together youth members from 53 National Societies within Europe and Central Asia. Its work is based on three pillars of knowledge management, advocacy and cooperation. Through this declaration we are not only addressing the European Region but also all the visitors of the European Regional Conference, notably the Federation.

Humanitarian actors are increasingly challenged to adapt to today's rapidly changing societies and combat the threats to the Humanitarian Principles and Values. Young people are thereby seen as key contributors in humanitarian action. There is an increasing need for young people to be engaged as the current and future leaders as well as volunteers and members of affected communities. They are crucial contributors to the IFRC's vision to prevent and alleviate; human suffering, protect human dignity and promote peace.

Young people in all their capacities have specific strengths and vulnerabilities that the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement needs to empower and address. We as members of the Red Cross Red Crescent European Youth Network, willing to scale up our efforts in key areas that affect humanity.

### **We as youth leaders from the IFRC Europe Region commit to:**

Evolve with future challenges in a timely manner to ensure that we remain an impactful humanitarian network. This means that we commit to seek new ways of recruiting and retaining volunteers of all ages to ensure our relevance, we also commit to develop new, innovative solutions in the field of volunteering.

**Innovation  
in volunteering**

Undertake crucial networking in order to learn from each other, to share common solutions on similar issues, and to find new ways to solve the challenges that humanity faces. Having people of different ages, positions, and countries allows us to improve the impact and the relevance of Red Cross Red Crescent actions in our communities.

**Strengthening  
European  
Youth Network**

Further develop the Movement's common goals for the improvement of youth engagement, by raising National Societies's awareness of the added value that is brought by youth members within the network. We believe that young people make the Movement future-proof, hence it is paramount to facilitate and to develop the participation of youth in decision-making.

**Youth  
Engagement**

Support the actions of National Societies in the field of migration, particularly by focusing on psychosocial support for migrants and volunteers. This requires us to highlight the importance of issues affecting migrants as well as the volunteers who work alongside them, in addition to investing in knowledge and experience-sharing across the Network.

**Migration**

Encourage and reinforce the work of National Societies in the field of mental health and wellbeing, herewith recognizing the increasing number of people suffering from depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges faced by volunteers and communities.

**Mental Health  
and Emotional  
Wellbeing**

Actively promote a culture of non-violence and peace by ensuring that humanitarian education is a cross-cutting theme in everything that we do, in order to counter the rise of xenophobia and social exclusion.

**Humanitarian  
Education  
and Advocacy**

We are committed to do more, to do better, and to reach further!

We can do it alone but we want to do it with you!

To succeed we rely on an intergenerational partnership among the different stakeholders of the Movement and beyond. We are ready to play our part and we ask the IFRC Secretariat and the National Societies of the European Region to support our efforts by strengthening our capacities.

### **What the European Youth Network can contribute to these common goals is:**

- Fostering communication through developed cooperation within our region by providing tools of facilitation, which takes into consideration the differences and similarities between our National Societies;
- Creating an enabling environment to empower the volunteers of our National Societies, by developing our work to reach a new, wider range of vulnerable and affected communities;
- Being ready to carry out responsible youth-led action, which is accountable, transparent to all actors within and outside of the Movement;
- Providing a list of actions in line with the plan of the European Region and the Strategy of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement;
- Sharing and developing professional skills which benefit our members and improve the impact of our actions.

### **We call on the leadership of National Societies from the European Region to:**

- Implement concrete actions to ensure a diverse representation in the decision-making bodies of the National Societies and of the Federation, with a special emphasis on gender and age;
- Provide space at all levels and areas of action for young people to participate and bring in their vision, suggestions to the conversation and have the opportunity to take the lead;
- Empower young people to build and foster youth-led decision-making structures within National Societies;
- Treat and consider young volunteers indiscriminately. The Movement must acknowledge its youth members as an equally valuable asset in all of its fields of action, and not solely when considering youth actions
- Protect the integrity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including combating corruption, in order to ensure that the Movement can remain relevant and attract new, young, idealistic volunteers;
- Secure, open dialogues and concrete actions to combat any abuse of power including sexual misconduct at all levels of the Movement.

### **We call on the IFRC governing board, Secretariat and European Regional Office to:**

- Ensure the implementation of both the Youth Engagement Strategy and the Youth Policy within National Societies by maintaining and offering support during all stages of the process;
- To lead by example through the inclusion of youth leaders in its decision-making process and through the implementation of the decisions taken;
- Secure dedicated full-time technical staff with expertise in volunteering, particularly in the area of youth;
- Provide a sufficient operational budget to build a stronger and a more sustainable organization through youth engagement;
- Use the Strategy 2030 as a guideline to evaluate the real, measurable impact, that we are having as a Movement on the ground, in the lives of volunteers and affected communities.

The achievements of the EYN as well as the related calls on other actors in the Movement will be reviewed and taken into account during the 24th European Youth Cooperation Meeting.