

# Terms of Reference

## European Union Red Cross Youth Network

### 1. Vision and Mission

#### Our vision:

We strive, through voluntary action, for a world of empowered communities, better able to address human suffering and crises with hope, respect for dignity and a concern for equity.

#### Our mission:

To improve the lives of vulnerable people, by working together for humanity.

#### Our goal<sup>1</sup>:

“To strengthen the National Societies Youth programmes and structures by developing (sub)regional<sup>2</sup> youth networks in order to share relevant knowledge and experience among RC/RC Youth leaders who can ensure a multiplier effect by empowering NSs youth volunteers and implementing responsive programmes to improve the lives of vulnerable people in their community”.

### 2. Definition



In the EU, ‘be European’ is one of the leading principles,<sup>3</sup> meaning that one should be active in as much European Union Member States (EU MS) as possible and represent the EU dimension of its organization or field of expertise. As Red Cross Youth National Societies (RCY NS), we have the advantage to be indeed represented in every country of the EU. The European Union Red Cross Youth Network (EURCYN) wants to reflect this reality in its composition. It consists of the Youth entities of 30 National Red Cross Societies, 27 from the EU Member States.

#### Definition of a network<sup>4</sup>:

“A RC/RC (regional or sub-regional) Youth network is an interconnected support system for youth who interact, meet and remain in communication for mutual assistance. This structured system facilitates the sharing of experience and consequently peer-support among Youth in NSs”.

The network encompasses the National Societies of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In what follows these National Societies are indicated as ‘EURCYN members’.

<sup>1</sup> From “A common approach to YOUTH”, Federation Secretariat, November 2006

<sup>2</sup> The 52 National Societies of the European continent form together the European region. All networks comprising of less than the region, are subregional networks, hence the EURCYN is a subregional network.

<sup>3</sup> The word ‘Europe’ is used in daily language for both the continent (depending on the source, 49 to 52 states) and the European Union (27 Member States). To try to make the difference clear in the text, Europe refers to the continent (The European zone consists of 52 states according to the Federation), unless stated otherwise in the text. The adjective ‘European’ needs to be used for both concepts, but where possible we make clear which of both concepts it refers to.

<sup>4</sup> From “A common approach to YOUTH”, Federation Secretariat, November 2006

Almost all of these countries are a Member State of the European Union, or have strong links with it and its Member States. The National Societies of these countries share common realities, vulnerabilities, challenges and capacities that characterize their work. The EURCYN also consists of non-EU European NS of which countries concluded special agreements with the EU : EEA (European Economic Area : Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein) and EFTA (European Free Trade Association : Norway, Switzerland). The National Red Cross Societies of the EEA and EFTA countries are as such directly influenced by EU legislation in the areas, which are covered by the agreements. This allows them to participate in certain programmes and benefit from funding possibilities (among others the Youth in Action Programme), which has been the case in the past.

The EURCYN is supported by the Red Cross/European Union Office.

The EURCYN can at all times admit observers to attend EURCYN meetings.

### 3. Functions

Experience shows that where youth networks have been established and are working, youth in National Societies have a greater opportunity to meet and exchange knowledge, ideas and experiences in program implementation. This EU wide RCY network has a lot of advantages, both to enhance the participation of young people in decision-making on EU level and to make more use of the opportunities the EU offers, both in partnerships and funding. This is necessary to enable EU National Societies to benefit more from the EU framework in executing the existing Federation Youth Policy.

Looking at the European region, one could derive three main kinds of networks: policy-oriented, exchange-oriented (information sharing) or campaign-oriented. The EURCYN will focus its efforts on two of these orientations, namely policies and information sharing.

#### ***Strategic line 1: Advocacy***

- To influence the EU to increase the opportunity for the Red Cross Youth to take action to meet the needs of vulnerable people both within and outside the EU,
- To contribute to the advocacy work of the Members and RC/EU Office (e.g. through common positions) according to identified priorities,
- To be involved in the decision-making of the RC/EU Office with regard to youth issues,
- To promote the values of Red Cross in the European Union,
- To make sure to talk with a strong unified voice on behalf of Red Cross Youth.

#### ***Strategic line 2: Information sharing and Analysis***

- To enable the exchange of timely, relevant and quality information on EU issues.
- To establish effective communication lines between EU institutions and young people in the Red Cross.

#### ***Strategic line 3: Partnerships and networking***

- To strengthen collaboration and partnership building for submission of joint proposals.
- To strengthen the links between Western and Eastern European National Societies,
- To encourage bi- or multilateral cooperation,
- To create awareness of the EURCYN in the National Societies.

These goals will be attained by regular information exchange, both by e-communication and an annual meeting, and policy-oriented activities. Every year the youth policy and programmes of the EU will be discussed and a proper action plan adopted.

## 4. Working Principles and Procedures

### 4.1 Meeting of the EURCYN

The EURCYN meets every year. There will be two kinds of meetings:

- Decision making meetings will discuss the advocacy agenda and necessary strategies for the following two years (cfr. Strategic Line 1).
- Follow up meetings will take stock of the progress made in carrying out the advocacy strategies. They preferably take place in parallel to the ECM.

When appropriate, the CG can call for an extraordinary meeting.

### 4.1 Governance

The governance of the network is insured through a Co-ordination Group (CG).

At least three national societies should be members of the CG. The members of the EURCYN will elect three CG members at the decision-making meetings. The mandate of the CG lasts until the next decision-making meeting, and can be prolonged once, resulting in maximum two successive mandates. Amongst themselves, the CG members choose a chairperson who has the responsibility to invoke the meeting of CG.

The CG can also meet between the meetings of the EURCYN to carry out its duties.

Main functions of the CG:

- Prepare and organise the EURCYN Meetings
- Follow up on the decisions taken during the EURCYN meeting
- Have close co-operation with RC/EU Office, IFRC and ECC

The CG is responsible for the EURCYN meeting to be held, the preparation process and the reporting after the meeting.

The CG shall set the agenda through communication with the other National Societies. A clear draft of the agenda should be sent out through the e-group to the national societies at least three months before the meeting. The national societies should respond with their comments and suggestions within one month from this.

The RC/EU Office carries out the secretariat of the CG.

### 4.2 Formulating Common RC Positions in the EU arena

Influencing EU policy, safeguarding and promoting our principles, to be recognised as a major actor in the developments of the EU institutions and strengthening internal collaboration have been identified as the major objectives for our joint work in the EU arena. A key element to achieve this is to agree on **'common positions' across all EUNS on key policy areas in a timely manner**. At present most 'common positions' are initiated by the RC/EU Office when the debates require an opinion or when there is a desire to have an influence.

**A position becomes final when there is a qualified majority of 2/3 of the members.** All members of the network have the possibility to comment, as well as the Federation Secretariat or the ICRC when relevant. A non-response for a given deadline is taken as consent. The CG or the RC/EU Office presents the position to the relevant decision makers in the EU institutions. The Members are requested to use the same position papers with their national interlocutors.

### 4.3 Interaction with other subregional and regional actors

The European Coordination Committee (ECC) of the European Youth Network has the mandate to speak on behalf of all RCY of Europe. Therefore the EURCYN will communicate through its CG or through the youth officer at the RC/EU office with the ECC. This means that the internal advocacy<sup>5</sup> will be the responsibility of the ECC. The external advocacy on behalf of EURCYN Members will be done by the CG and the youth officer of the RC/EU Office. To ensure a good information flow, the ECC will be invited to the EURCYN meetings as an observer.

When addressing European NS outside the EURCYN or global bodies (like the Youth Commission), we use the already established communication lines, hence the ECC is the main interlocutor. Bilateral or multilateral contacts between NS are a capacity of the NS themselves, regardless to which network they belong.

The EURCYN cooperates with the Federation Secretariat, as well as already existing European networks, both Youth and other networks, within and outside the Movement.

### 4.4 Resources

RC/EU Office supports the EURCYN. The person responsible for youth at the RC/EU Office will be responsible for the daily coordination of the EURCYN network, under the guidance of the CG.

The CG ensures that there is a communication platform to manage information in an efficient and effective way. This may include an email group, a chat room, an extranet, or another communication tool. The youth officer of the RC/EU Office is in charge of the maintenance of the platform.

Responsibilities of the RC/EU Office:

- Secretariat of the CG
- Communicating the decisions to all the members and keeps contact with all the members
- Maintenance of the EURCYN digital communication platforms<sup>6</sup>

### 4.5 Profile of the attendees of EURCYN Meetings

There is no specific profile required for observers. Full members of EURCYN comply with the following:

- Age: From 18 to around 35
- Position: Youth president, youth director or youth responsible involved in the higher level of the governance of the National Society. If this is not case, a youth representative responsible for the development of youth at national level;
- Experience/knowledge/skills;
  - Good ownership of the RC/RC Movement principles and values;
  - Good understanding of the IFRC structure (governance and management);
  - Consistent experience in the National Society youth work;
  - Strong commitment in improving the work of youth to contribute to humanitarian mission of the International Federation.
- Participants should have the mandate to take decisions on behalf of their National Societies. This means they can present the opinion of their NS and commit their NS to engagements.

### 4.6 Becoming a member of the EURCYN

The network EURCYN is open to all new NS from new EU member states. Becoming a member is done by request of the NS involved, addressed to the CG. The requesting NS should also nominate a person who can attend the meetings according to the profile explained in section 4.5.

---

<sup>5</sup> Internal advocacy means concerns from RCY, which need to be voiced to RC bodies. External advocacy is advocacy on behalf of the network or its members targeting persons or entities who do not belong to the RC/RC Movement

<sup>6</sup> This could take the form of a yahoo group, an extranet, a discussion forum in FedNet, etc