

YOUTH DIMENSION OF COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACY



Youth Dimension of the Community of Democracies is a network of organisations and networks gathered around the Community of Democracies, focusing on strengthening the role of young people in democracy development around the world and supporting engagement of young people in civil society.

Youth Dimension understood as youth pillar of the Community of Democracies was launched during the Lithuanian Presidency in 2010 with two network events: Young Leaders Forum (YLF) in Lithuania and Young Diplomats for Democracy (YDD) Symposium at the Kraków High Level Democracy Meeting (HLDLM).

Young Leaders Forum was established as a result of the adopted Vilnius Declaration during Democracy Days in Vilnius. Participants from all over the world joined Young Leaders Forum with the goal to strengthen democracy development worldwide. At the same time, Young Diplomats for Democracy (YDD) Symposium brought together young diplomats and democratic activists for training, discussion, experience sharing and networking related to democracy promotion and support. Both networks started cooperation within the framework of the Core Group preparing for the Vilnius Ministerial Conference in 2011.



European Institute for Democracy (EID), Young Leaders Forum (YLF), and World Youth Movement for Democracy (WYMD) came together to form the Core Group of the Youth Dimension to share best practices and experiences from previous Community of Democracies (CoD) events and to join efforts for future CoD activities. The Permanent Secretariat agreed to support development of the Youth Dimension, liaise with other Community of Democracies institutions, pillars and dimensions, and as it has been the case from the outset, will take part in the programming

efforts to ensure continuity and synergies with other CoDs initiatives.

Objective of the Core group is to strengthen the Youth dimension of the CoD, to ensure participation, representation of youth in CoD initiatives and transparency of the CoD processes among youth.

The events organized by Youth Dimension partners can bear different titles: in Poland in 2010 the title of the Seminar was “Young Diplomats for Democracy”, in Vilnius “Young Leaders Forum”, now in Mongolia it is “Youth Forum”, but in each case all committed members of the Youth Dimension network decided to join efforts and work as a team, assuring development of the network and preserving institutional memory and benefitting from the experience of partner organizations gained during past events.



YOUTH DIMENSION OF COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES



During the period between the Vilnius and Mongolian Ministerial Conferences, the Youth Dimension partners focused on issues discussed in two working groups: Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, and Education for Democracy. The international workshop for youth organizations, financed by the National Endowment for Democracy in January 2012 in Warsaw on “Promoting Democracy Education in nondemocratic and transition societies” was a great opportunity to discuss engagement of young people in Democracy Education and to finalize the report published by EID: “Civil Society participation in Community of Democracies Ministerial Conferences Krakow 2010 – Vilnius 2011. Summary Conclusions and Lessons Learned”. The report served as a document helping to preserve institutional memory of activities carried out by civil society and specifically Youth Dimension as well as a working material for future organizers of civil society events organized as non governmental sector contribution into Ministerial Conferences of the Community of Democracies. The report was presented to the Permanent Secretariat, Governing Council members and the Mongolian Presidency.



There was organized International Young Leaders Academy in Vilnius hosted by the Young Leaders Forum. The next Academy planned for 2013 can initiate a series of annual events of the Core Group of the CoD which will bring young people and experts to discuss democracy related issues not from neighboring countries, but from all over the world.

The Core Group of Youth Dimension has been active since 2010. It is developing and building up for the future looking for partners, donors and supporters. Currently, it is comprised of

the Youth Dimension forerunners as well as a new organization responsible for the organization of the Youth Forum in Mongolia, Young Women for Change (Mongolia). Youth Dimension partners hope that soon a new organization from El Salvador will join for the period leading to Youth related event planned for Ministerial Conference in El Salvador in 2015.

The Youth Dimension partners do not want to work together just every two years but agreed to work between the events by:

- expanding the network;
- collecting Youth Dimension experience and lessons learned related to the issues of importance to Community of Democracies
- contribute to Working Group expert networks via the ISC members and experts, hoping that the space for direct representation of Youth Dimension will be possible in further activities of the WG
- organize Youth related events
- ensure presence of youth voice during future Community of Democracies events
- share and spread information related to the youth networks.

The Core Group will work with all existing and emerging institutions and pillars and will insure continuity of shared experiences by working with previous, current, and upcoming Presidencies of the CoD.