

This Practical Guide provides concrete information and tools about Action 3.1 "Youth in the World" of the Youth in Action Inis Fractical Guide provides concrete information and tools about Action 3.1 routh in the vvorid of the routh in Action

Programme and its links with Euro-Med Youth Programme IV. This Guide is focused on Youth Exchanges in EuroMed. Programme and its links with Euro-IYIed Youth Programme IV. I his Guide is tocused on Youth Exchanges in EuroMed.

Its goal is to provide tips to improve project development and to provide support mainly for first-time applicants. Its goal is to provide tips to improve project development and to provide support mainly for first-time applicants.

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Youth Exchange in EuroMed Author: Yael Ohama





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DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than 100 million youth in North Africa and the Middle East aged 15 to 29 years old. Young people constitute around one third of the population of these countries and about half of the population of working age.

If you are thinking about how the young people you work with and young people from the Southern Mediterranean region can get to know each other better, exchange ideas, discuss issues you find important and learn from each other, then youth exchange within in the EuroMed framework of the European Union could be an excellent opportunity for you!

SUPPORT FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE IN THE EUROMED REGION YOUTH IN ACTION & EUROMED YOUTH IV

Youth in Action (YiA) is the European Union's (EU) Programme for young people. It aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the EU's future. YiA promotes mobility within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background. It has a total budget of 885 million Euros for the period 2007 to 2013.

The Programme has three "actions" in which young people can participate directly, as follows:

Action 1: Youth for Europe: Encourages young people's active citizenship, participation and creativity through youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects.

Action 2: European Voluntary Service: Helps young people to develop their sense of solidarity by participating, either individually or in groups, in non-profit, unpaid voluntary activities abroad.

Action 3 - Youth in the World: Promotes partnerships and exchanges among young people and youth organisations across the world.

Other actions support youth work development and European cooperation in the field of youth. More information about YiA can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74 en.htm.

Youth Exchanges are also supported by EuroMed Youth IV, an instrument of the European Union for improving cooperation between 8 in the Southern Mediterranean region and the 27 member states of the European Union in the youth field. In total 35 countries can participate: all the Member States of the EU and 8 partner countries and territories in the Southern Mediterranean region. These are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority and Tunisia. Together these 35 countries are known as the EuroMed region. The EuroMed Youth Programme is part of the Union for the Mediterranean (formerly known as the Barcelona Process) for the promotion of cooperation between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries (http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/ index_en.htm).

EuroMed Youth IV exists to encourage and support mutual comprehension and solidarity among young people across the EuroMed region. The current edition of the EuroMed Youth Programme (Phase IV) runs from 2010 through 2013 and has a budget of 5 million Euros.

The programme supports three kinds of activity: Youth Exchanges, Voluntary Service and Training & Networking.

This practical guide will give you basic and easy to follow information about how you can get involved in Youth Exchanges in the Euro-Med region. Other practical guides (about Voluntary Service and Training & Networking) can be found on the following website: www.euromedyouth.net.

Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV pursue similar aims in relation to young people, including:

- motivating and support young people to take up an active and responsible role in social, professional and political life in their societies:
- strengthening the role of young people and youth organisations in the development of democracy;
- creating links between young people and youth organisations and
- · developing youth policies.

These two programmes divide responsibility for support to Youth Exchanges between them. Formally, applicants based in the 27 member states of the European Union apply to organise their youth exchange with the Mediterranean region to Youth in Action. Youth exchanges taking place with and in the Mediterranean region are covered under Action 3 of the Youth in Action programme. Young people in the participating Mediterranean countries apply to the EuroMed Youth IV programme.



**ORGANISING A YOUTH EXCHANGE IN THE EUROMED CONTEXT

YOUTH EXCHANGE

A youth exchange is an encounter between young people from different countries and backgrounds in which they live and learn together for a short period of time both at home and abroad. One or more groups of young people are hosted by a group from another country and participate together in a joint programme of activities. Youth exchanges enable young people to go abroad, to meet peers from different countries with different social and cultural backgrounds and to learn from each other through active participation in joint activities on themes of common interest. Youth exchanges are facilitated by young people and youth workers and work with the methods of nonformal education. They are an excellent way for young people to discover their social and cultural similarities and differences with peers from other countries and regions. In the European context, they can help young people experience the value of European integration and to develop a sense of European citizenship. They can also contribute to the competence development of participants.

A youth exchange within the EuroMed framework is a project that brings together groups of young people from two or more countries from the region to live and learn together for a specific period of time. Such youth exchanges offer their participants the opportunity to

- take part in activities where they can discuss a theme of mutual interest;
- become aware of social realities and cultural backgrounds different to their own and
- learn about each other's countries and cultures.

They are based on transnational partnerships between two or more organisations from different countries (known as promoters).

YOUTH EXCHANGES WITHIN THE EUROMED FRAMEWORK ARE NOT

- · academic study trips
- · make financial profit
- tourism
- festivals
- language courses
- · performance tours

- school class exchanges
- sports competitions
- official meetings of organisations (e.g. board meetings, general assemblies, etc)
- political gatherings
- work camps

₩ WHAT?

Different types of Youth Exchanges supported within EuroMed framework (bilateral, multilateral, etc). You can find out more information about the different types of exchange and the condi-

tions they should fulfil in the Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV user guides (www.ec.europa.eu/youth and www.euromedyouth.net.).

₩ WHO?

There are two main categories of groups involved in youth exchanges, as follows:

Promoters

There are two types of promoters involved in youth exchanges:

- Sending organisations: these are the promoters that send a group of participants to another country
- Hosting organisations: these are the promoters that host the youth exchange in its country.

For both programmes, promoters can be

- non profit/non governmental organisations;
- local, regional public bodies;
- bodies active at European level in the youth field.

In the Youth in Action programme, promoters can also be informal groups of young people.

Participants

Participants of youth exchanges are • aged between 13 and 25 with some exceptions

You can find more information about who is eligible to act as a promoter and who can be a participant in a youth exchange in the Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV user guides (www.ec.europa.eulyouth and www.euromedyouth.net.).

᠅ WHERE?

The part of the programme during which the participating groups of young people meet, live and work together is known as the **exchange activity.** This is organised by the hosting organisation and takes place in the hosting organisation's country. Other parts of the exchange project take place at home in the country where

the promoter is based, for example preparation with participants.

The conditions applying to where youth exchanges can take place are outlined in the Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV user guides (www.ec.europa.eulyouth and www.euromedyouth.net.)



**** ABOUT WHAT?**

Youth exchanges have a theme. The theme of a youth exchange is chosen by the partner groups involved in the project. It is a theme that is of mutual interest and importance for the participants of the partner groups. It has some relevance for their daily lives and it is an issue they wish to explore together. The theme should be reflected in the daily programme of the youth exchange activity. Examples of common themes of youth exchanges include: participation of young people in society, the fight against racism & xenophobia, inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue, post-conflict resolution and reconstruction, heritage and environmental protection. Some themes are very important for the EuroMed region and exchanges about these themes are given special consideration. You can read more about priority themes below.

WITH WHICH RESOURCES?

To run a EuroMed youth exchange project, you can apply for funding to the European Union through the Youth in Action programme or through the EuroMed Youth Programme. Where you apply to, depends where the promoter and the participants are based. As mentioned above, if the promoter is based in one of the 27 EU member states, they will apply to the Youth in Action programme under Action 3 - Youth in the World. If the promoter is based in one of the participating Mediterranean countries, then they will apply to the EuroMed Youth IV programme.

Each participating country has a body responsible for receiving youth exchange applications and each of these has some specific guidelines concerning how the resources available will be disbursed. You can find more information about financing your youth exchange project by contacting the responsible body in your country.

- In the 8 Mediterranean countries. these are the EuroMed Youth Units: www.euromedyouth.net
- In the member states of the EU, these are the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/ doc152 en.htm

Youth exchanges are always co-funded. In other words, the funds you receive from the EU for the youth exchange will not cover 100% of the cost of the exchange project, although it will cover the biggest part. Another funder or funders should provide the remainder of the resources required to run the project, either in cash or in-kind.

More information about funding criteria and the costs that can be covered can be found in the user guides of the two programmes (www.ec.europa.eu/youth and www.euromedyouth.net.)

SOME KEY THEMES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE IN THE EUROMED CONTEXT

All regions have cultural, historical and political specificities. The Southern Mediterranean is no exception. Conducting a youth exchange in Western or Eastern Europe will be different than conducting it in the Southern Mediterranean. To work effectively in the EuroMed context it is important to be aware of some especially important issues and themes. These have an impact on the way in which youth exchanges are organised and on the experience that the young people participating will have. To organise a great youth exchange in the EuroMed context it is important to consider these themes in the preparation, implementation and evaluation, either implicitly or explicitly.

RELIGION

In the EuroMed youth exchange context religion can play a much more important role than in other contexts. In European and Mediterranean societies, there have always been different religions and religious diversity. Many misconceptions exist. For example, many European young people are not aware of the fact that while Islam is a majority religion in many of the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. it is by far not the only one. Although many Mediterranean states are officially defined as Muslim in terms of their predominant faith and their legal framework, each country has its own cultural and social practices specific to its history and geographical features, as well as non-Muslim communities. Many people living in this region are Christian, lewish or Baha'i and secular. Some of the Southern Mediterranean societies participating in the programme could be considered more traditional than the EU member states, in that religion

continues to play an important role in the regulation of people's lives and daily habits. Young people who have grown up in traditional religious societies and those who grew up in more secular societies often have different views on the place and role of religion in the life of the individual and in public. Many stereotypes exist. For example, young people from Western Europe might think that the fact that young women wear headscarves means they are oppressed by their fathers or brothers. Or they might think that all Muslims are Arabs. For their part, young Muslims might consider the clothes worn by young women in many European countries to be immodest, provocative and disrespectful of themselves and others because their religious background has a different approach to the idea of appropriate dress. None of this has to be a problem for the implementation of an excellent youth exchange. Youth work can help to



make religious differences enriching for young people. Instead of being a source of confrontation, the different perspectives and practices of the young people participating on religion can be a means of working towards mutual understanding, tolerance and acceptance of difference. It should also be remembered that in the EuroMed context, religion is not the only factor influencing social or political life. Processes of globalisation, migration and socio-economic development all have an important impact. Suffice it to remember that religion is an issue that is very present for many young people coming from the Southern Mediterranean, and that when hosting a youth exchange with young people from the region, it is necessary to consider some important practical and programmatic issues such as:

- Food: In addition to vegetarians, religious groups present in the region have specific dietary needs. For example, many Muslims will only eat halal meet and food and will not consume foods or drinks containing alcohol. Many Jewish people will only eat kosher food;
- Politics: Due to ongoing entrenched conflicts in the region, some participants may be legally prohibited from participating in activities involving members of certain states. You need to be clear about who can meet with who and where when developing your exchange project;
- Working methods: Consider carefully ice-breaking activities and exercises you intend to use in your exchange activity. Some participants may not

feel comfortable with activities that involve direct physical contact with people of the opposite sex and it is important not to exclude them;

- Religious practices: You may have to consider the dates of and fasting customs associated with religious holidays in choosing the date of your exchange activity. You may also have to consider prayer times in the preparation of the programme;
- Sleeping arrangements: Mixedsex accommodation and bathroom facilities may not be acceptable for participants and should not be forced on anyone.

Considering these issues in the preparation of your exchange and working an explicit reflection on them into the programme of the exchange activity can help participants to consider questions of difference and mutual understanding in the youth exchange. By reflecting on why things are being done the way they are being done (for example, the fact that the menu during the exchange does not contain pork) the participants of the exchange can begin to work on understanding the religious and cultural background of the others, and to work on their misconceptions, stereotypes and eventual prejudices.

☆ INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Among the key goals of the Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV Programmes, and therefore, of Youth Exchanges within the EuroMed framework, are to increase participating young people's positive awareness of cultural difference and to support dialogue and intercultural encounters between young people from different backgrounds. Youth exchanges in the EuroMed context should also contribute to the prevention of prejudice, racism and all attitudes leading to exclusion, developing tolerance and understanding of diversity.

However, increasing contact between culturally diverse people and/or making them aware of cultural differences do not automatically result in tolerance, acceptance and mutual understanding.

Historical exchanges and interactions between peoples across the Mediterranean have not always led to better knowledge of and respect for others' culture and identities. On the contrary, encounters between people who are different always carry the risk of regenerating and/or multiplying the existing prejudices or stereotypes, especially if they are not extensively prepared in advance.

The intercultural dimension of such encounters needs to be taken into account. Just being aware of cultural differences is not enough; young people need specific competences to deal with different and unexpected situations. These can be learned

through intercultural learning activities in preparation of your youth exchange. They can also be learned during the exchange activity by actively reflecting on how diversity and cultural differences in the group are being lived during the exchange.

In terms of the programme, an intercultural approach refers to first, being aware of stereotypes and prejudices that one has towards others (who ever the other might be), and second, making an effort to change them within the framework of mutual respect, understanding and dialogue. Youth exchanges can, through their international group composition, programme and adequate preparation, support young people in questioning inherited ideas about others. This is a first step towards preventing negative stereotyping and prejudices.

As an educational method, intercultural learning recognises the diversity and multiplicity of the world, in the sense that differences of opinion, viewpoints and values exist not only within each individual culture but also between cultures. It helps young people to acquire the confidence and competence to express themselves, the willingness and capacity to listen actively to what others have to say, the capacity to confront conflicts and transform them by peaceful means. But, it also requires open-mindedness, willingness to engage in dialogue and allow others to express their point and the recognition of the well-founded arguments of others.





As mentioned above, there are several issues that should be taken into consideration in organising a EuroMed youth exchange to ensure that inherent intercultural differences are properly taken into account and respected. For example, the inclusion or exclusion of

pork in the menu of a youth exchange activity may seem like a trivial organisational issue, but in the EuroMed context taking it into account can make all the difference to participants feeling comfortable, respected and open to new experiences.

If you are interested in learning more about intercultural learning, you can consult:

- T-Kit Intercultural Learning: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit_4_EN
- Compass The Manual on Human Rights Education: http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/contents.html
- "All Different All Equal" Education Pack: http://www.eycb.coe.int/edupack/default.htm
- Mosaic T-kit on Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits

PARTICIPATION

Supporting the active democratic participation of young people in the societies in which they live is a key aim of the EuroMed youth programme. But, opportunities for democratic participation and active citizenship are differently distributed across the countries participating in the EuroMed youth programme. Many countries in the EU and in the Southern Mediterranean do not have developed systems of youth participation in decision-making on policies and issues pertaining to youth or youth political participation. Often those mechanisms that do exist involve only a limited number of young people and might be considered tokenistic or elitist. Further, in some countries of the EuroMed region freedom of association and expression through civil

society are limited - young people have fewer opportunities to express their opinions on the issues that concern them and to influence the development of their societies. In others, young people are in the numeric majority (in terms of population), but their limited access to the labour market means that they are excluded from participation in the economy. A youth exchange can be an opportunity to explore and problematise such questions. At the same time, it can be an occasion to practice and develop innovative approaches to participating and learning for participation. There are some basic ways to ensure that your youth exchange respects basic democratic standards and encourages real participation. These relate to two dimensions of youth exchanges in the Euro-Med region, in particular. The first is the process of the developing the project within which the exchange activity takes place. The partnership on the basis of which the project is developed needs to be established on solid working principles of equality of ownership and responsibility for the project. If all the promoters and groups involved in the project have an equal say and an adequate share of the responsibility for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the project, it has a better chance of guaranteeing meaningful participation for everyone taking part. The second relates to the running and practice of the exchange activity itself. Participating groups need to feel that

this is "their" exchange. In other words, they need to be involved to the extent possible in the decision making about the content and running of the exchange activity, and the process of its preparation and implementation need to be transparent for them. There are some relatively simple, but effective, methods for ensuring active participation, including asking participants for their expectations and considering them in the preparation of the programme, giving participants responsibility for preparing and running different parts of the programme or involving them in discussions when important decisions need to be made or conflicts need to be resolved.

More information is available about the situation of youth policy in the Mediterranean countries in the following studies conducted by SALTO: http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/EMyouthpolicies/.

**** NON-FORMAL EDUCATION & LEARNING**

Youth exchanges are meant to be an educational experience for their participants. In the EuroMed youth exchange context, learning in relation to citizenship, democratic participation and intercultural competence and dialogue are the most important goals. The idea is that the participants and promoters of the exchange gain some new knowledge, skills and attitudes that help them to develop in personal, social or professional terms.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION & LEARNING

Non-formal education and learning have a purpose, but they are voluntary. They take place in many different environments and situations which do not have for their primary purpose teaching or training, such as schools. Non-formal education and learning activities may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth workers, educators or trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders and peer educators). The activities are planned, have learning objectives and have structured programmes including educational inputs. But, they are rarely structured in the same way as school curricu la (i.e. formal education). An important difference to formal education is that non-formal education and learning is not assessed and certified conventional ways, such as through examinations and diplomas.







As educational experiences that take place outside of school, youth exchanges rely heavily on the principles and methods of non-formal education.

Some key characteristics of non-formal education are that it

- is learner-centred
- is participatory in its approach
- is based on equality between the educator and the learner
- is voluntary
- takes place in groups but respects the importance of the individual learner

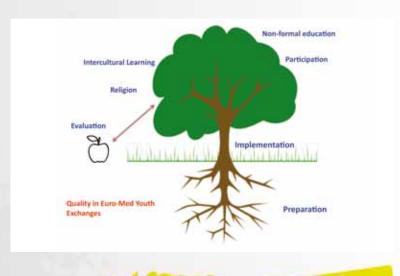
- creates a learning environment that is democratic, creative, inventive and challenging
- considers learning a life-long process
- relies on learning by doing
- seeks to promote values
- is accessible to everyone

The methods used in non-formal education and learning activities are active and engaging, involve learning by doing, appeal to the creativity of participants, and consider the fact that people are different and, therefore, learn in a variety of ways.

If you are interested in learning more about non-formal education, you can consult:

- T-Kit on Training Essentials: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/6/Tkit_6_EN
- Educational Report "Jump into EuroMed Youth Exchanges": http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportpeace/

QUALITY IN THE EUROMED YOUTH EXCHANGE CONTEXT



It is important to the EuroMed Youth Programme that the youth exchanges funded and undertaken are of good quality. For its own purposes the programme has developed some quality criteria - in other words, ideas about what makes a EuroMed youth exchange a good EuroMed youth exchange. These quality criteria are used in the process of making the selection of projects for funding, and in the long run, in the evaluation of the achievements of the programme. Euro Med youth exchange partnerships need to take these quality considerations into account when planning their exchange, when implementing it and when evaluating and reporting on it.

Quality can be ensured in a variety of ways, but a big step in the right direction is to consider quality issues in the preparation phase. Good and in depth preparation of your exchange can prevent many problems and difficulties in the logistical and educational implementation of the project, and can prevent unnecessary conflicts.

Preparing your EuroMed Exchange

Preparation is of crucial importance for the success of every youth exchange. In the preparation phase, promoters and the participants should agree on the common theme of the youth exchange. They should reflect on and develop their ownership of the project. Among others they need to sort out the division of tasks, the programme of the exchange activity, its working methods, the role and preparation of the participants for the exchange activity and all the practical arrangements (venue, transfers, accommodations, support material, linguistic support). The preparation phase should furthermore enhance the participants' involvement in the Youth Exchange and prepare them for intercultural encounters with other young people from different backgrounds and cultures.

The choice of partners for your exchange project is important. Partners understand the importance of trust and regular, open and transparent communication for the success of a youth exchange. This can be ensured if promoters are upfront with each other about their motivations for doing the exchange and about what they want to achieve through the partnership and the exchange. A feasibility visit can help get the partners to that point.

MAKING THE BEST OF PARTNERSHIP

When trying to work out with whom to partner, reflecting on the following things can help you get it right:

- the profile and background of partners as concerns the theme of the exchange.
- the motivation and commitment of the promoters
- the specific roles and tasks for each promoter in the project
- the capacity of the partnership to ensure implementation, follow-up and dissemination of the results of the exchange





It can be helpful to formalise the partnership through a partnership agreement that lays out its purpose and defines its responsibilities, tasks and financial contributions of all those involved.

Implementing your EuroMed youth exchange

In the implementation of the youth exchange, you might want to consider some of the following aspects. Doing so can help you to run a good quality activity - one that meets its objectives, is a good and satisfactory experience for the participants and the promoters, and meets the requirements laid down by the programme.

Programme: The programme of the exchange activity must be clearly defined, scheduled realistically, include a variety of contents and methods and be linked to the objectives of the project and the overall EuroMed youth programme. It should be adapted to the profile of its participants, consider their interests and concerns they have identified and provide learning opportunities for them.

Contents and methods: The exchange project should be developed around a theme of common interest and relevance to all the promoters and the groups of participants. This means that the participants will explore this theme through the different preparatory activities and the exchange activity. The methods used should respect the principles of non-formal education and should be adequate to the themes to be explored.

Participation: To the maximum possible extent, participants should play an active role in the implementation of the project and should take responsibility for the daily work in the exchange activity. The programme and methods should help the participants to learn about and through participation. Participants also should be actively involved in the preparation and evaluation phases of the project. The project should ensure that participation on an equal basis is made possible.

Social and personal development:

The exchange project should enable participants to develop competencies they consider important and that can contribute to their social and personal growth. Youth exchanges are particularly effective at developing the self-confidence of young people in dealing effectively with new experiences, attitudes and behaviours.

Safety: Promoters must make sure that any issues of risk are addressed in the project. The number of group leaders present must be adequate to the number and profile of the participants and they must be supported to provide the young people participating with safe environment in which to share their experiences. When both genders are participating in a project the group of leaders will preferably be of both genders. When working in the EuroMed region it must be remembered that some regional conflicts might impact on the level of risk and eventual safety of the participants.

Evaluating and following up your EuroMed youth exchange

Two important aspects of any youth exchange are evaluation and follow-up. When conducted in an adequate manner, these can make the project and its results more sustainable.

The final evaluation should make it possible to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved and the expectations of the promoters and participants have been met. The evaluation should also highlight the learning outcomes of participants and promoters. Besides the final evaluation, evaluation sessions before, during and after the exchange activity are encouraged. These sessions provide the promoters with information they need to improve the quality of the activity while the project is unfolding.

Evaluation before the activity should enable promoters to fine-tune the project's design, while ongoing evaluation sessions are important in order to receive feedback from participants and to adapt the activity programme accordingly. Other aspects to consider in the evaluation are the impact of the project and its multiplying effect.

Furthermore follow-up needs to be planned and prepared on the basis of the results of the evaluation. Questions that can help you to decide on your follow-up plan include:

- Will the exchange be reciprocal?
- Could a new promoter be involved in a next youth exchange?
- How can discussion on the theme be continued and what could the next steps be to ensure that?
- What can the participants do next as a result of their participation?

FURTHER READING AND USEFUL LINKS

- The EuroMed Youth Programme: www.euromedyouth.net
- Salto-Youth EuroMed Resource Centre: www.salto-youth.net/euromed
- Youth in Action Programme Guide: www.ec.europa.eulyouth
- The Partnership between Council of Europe and European Commission on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/index.html
- Publication on 2 years (2007-2008) of Euro-Mediterranean youth Cooperation.
 Projects implemented in Euro-Med Youth III
- www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/EMYCoop0708/

Publication Director: O. Toche (Director of INJEP)
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