



ECUMENICAL YOUTH COUNCIL IN EUROPE^{aisbl}



DATE: **Brussels, the 16th of April, 2008**

TO: **EYCE National Correspondents and Contacts**

RE: **Invitation to the EYCE Training Course April 2008**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

.....

**"Tearing down the walls,
- a training course on overcoming conflict and stimulating
reconciliation in Europe"
Corrymeela, Ballycastle, Northern Ireland
22nd - 27th June 2008**

.....

PLEASE READ THE COMPLETE INVITATION LETTER CAREFULLY!

Dear Friends,

Greetings on behalf of the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE)!
We are very happy to send you today the invitation to the upcoming EYCE seminar
"Tearing down the walls, – a training course on overcoming conflict and stimulating
reconciliation in Europe" to be held at Corrymeela Centre in Northern Ireland. Please share
this invitation as widely as possible in your network! We are looking forward to receiving the
nominations of your candidates for this event!



1. INTRODUCTION

"It is easier to tear down the walls of bricks than the walls in the heads of people." This reflection of a person actively involved in the armed conflict in Northern Ireland inspired EYCE to the title for this training course. What do young people need to actively contribute to tearing down walls of conflict and inequality but creating a culture of peace, respect for

diversity and solidarity? How can violence be overcome and reconciliation of conflicting parties be achieved? Which tools do young people need in order to actively contribute to a reconciliation process in Europe? Answering these questions will be the key objectives of this training course.

We therefore would like to welcome young people from all over Europe who are active in their church or organisation to take part in this training.

As churches have contributed (and still do) to conflict and violence, it is important for EYCE to critically analyse where churches have contributed, triggered or actively promoted conflict – and at the same time to learn from those churches that have nurtured, promoted and facilitated reconciliation processes. Given this aim, EYCE purposefully chose Northern Ireland as a venue for this training course. Looking at this particular region of Europe and holding a training course on reconciliation we cannot turn our head to the fact that conflict there has a strong religious connotation. However, recent news give hope as churches and faith based organisations have also contributed to the healing and reconciling process in Northern Ireland. Today, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians meet in the Corrymeela Community to discuss and learn how to be “conflict transformers” and “reconcilers”.

Profile of participants:

The target group for this event are young people (18 to 30 years of age) and youth leaders from various backgrounds. They should be active in youth work and able to act as multipliers for the issue of overcoming conflict and stimulation reconciliation in their respective home countries and religious communities. In order to act as multipliers they should be ready to commit themselves to implement a small project in their home country that has the potential to increase dialogue, reconciliation and understanding among people of different faiths and cultures, be in a position to do that and report back to EYCE.

This seminar is aimed at young people who do not have professional knowledge on the theme. However, the participants should be interested in questions of reconciliation and conflict transformation and ready to contribute actively to the content of the training course.

EYCE is inviting youth workers, students and other young people to be participants as we hope to gather people with different experiences to share. Participants are expected to be open minded and willing to listen to others as well as able and ready to share their own experiences and backgrounds and to participate actively and fully in the programme.

Arrivals and Departures:

Sunday the 22nd of June is the day of arrival

Friday the 27th of June is the day of departure.

As the seminar will be held in Northern Ireland, all participants are expected to come to either Belfast International Airport or Belfast City Airport. Local transport from these airports to the Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle will be arranged. More detailed travel instructions will be available to the participants selected.

Please make sure to arrive/depart on these dates as the possibilities of arranging accommodation in case of early arrival and late departure will be extremely limited. **EYCE cannot arrange extra night's accommodation** unless this is absolutely necessary for reasons of travelling schedule and **approved in advance** by the EYCE Treasurer.



2. BACKGROUND OF THE TRAINING COURSE

EYCE's constitution points out that one of the main objectives for EYCE is to focus on reconciliation. "EYCE works in a continent shaped by many social and political systems as well as different traditions. It assumes that these conditions may result in tensions and problems; its task is to resolve these differences, create better understanding and build community between young people. It is by this understanding and the fullness of its international ecumenical experience that EYCE actively contributes to building unity in Europe where people encounter others in mutual respect." Reconciliation is an integral part of creating mutual respect and active participation in a society that is based on equality and respect of Human Rights. Reconciliation can only be achieved where conflicts are addressed and transformed into a sustainable peace that will provide the space and empower young people to be active citizens and to be themselves actors in preventing violence and conflict.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) to which EYCE is affiliated engages into a Decade on Overcoming Violence from 2001 - 2010 and the United Nations have declared the same time as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World". EYCE has contributed actively to this decade by organising a seminar on "Overcoming Violence", a Study Session on "Reconciliation" and furthermore organised a training course on conflict transformation in May 2007 with the support of the European Youth Foundation. The engagement in these areas has shown that our members and partners want EYCE to focus more on this area and to provide young people with skills to overcome conflict and engage in reconciliation. EYCE wants therefore to provide such practical training as a fundamental contribution of faith based youth organisations to peace building in Europe.



3. THEMES OF THE SEMINAR

The main themes of the training course will be an introduction to theories on overcoming conflict, case studies on the involvement of churches in creating and promoting conflict but also their contributions to reconciliation, the psychology of reconciliation as well as practical training in reconciliation and peace building projects. For this training course, EYCE is working in strong cooperation with the Corrymeela Community. This community is committed to any work fostering reconciliation in the world. It is based in Northern Ireland and well known for its peace building initiatives.

The objectives of the training course are:

- To understand the complexity of conflicts, conflict transformation and reconciliation;
- To learn about steps in reconciliation with a particular focus on Northern Ireland;

- To analyze the conflicts in different regions in Europe;
- To define churches roles and possibilities in conflicts;
- To understand how to live in dialogue vs. trying to agree on everything;
- To create network and relationships;
- To get practical training in overcoming conflict and fostering reconciliation;
- To equip multipliers with tools to contribute to reconciliation and promoting respect for all in their respective context.

More information on the programme will be provided by the International Planning Committee and available for download from EYCE's website at www.eyce.org .



4. METHODS

With input from guest speakers and the active participation of all participants we are confident to achieve these objectives. The training course will use a wide variety of methods: lectures, role game, creative presentation and most of all concrete training in small regional groups and finally developing concrete peace-making and reconciling programmes to be implemented at home that are sustainable. Methods and reflections encouraged by the "Compass" on peace education will be used widely. Also the huge experience of the Corrymeela Community in reconciliation work will be made available to all participants.

Programme elements will include: analysis of conflict and reconciliation from various perspectives such as of sociology, economy, theology and history, critical analysis of practices and traditions of Christianity, sharing of experiences on the issue of reconciliation as well as practical development of regional, national and personal reconciliation stimulating projects.



5. TIMETABLE

A draft timetable will be available on the EYCE website www.eyce.org.



6. MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (IPC)

The seminar will be prepared and implemented by a team of volunteers from EYCE and Corrymeela who met from the 11th to the 13th of April at Corrymeela in order to finalise the programme. The International Planning Committee for the training course is composed of the following people:



1. Petra Schnabel petra.schnabel@eyce.org
2. Miroslava Popova mirapopova@yahoo.com
3. Georgina Walsh flowalsh@yahoo.co.uk
4. Becca Moody beccamoody@corrymeela.org
5. Rebekka Jensen general.secretary@eyce.org

EYCE ExCo – Germany
Bulgaria
United Kingdom
Corrymeela Intern, USA
EYCE General Secretary
- Belgium

If you want to get in contact with the members of the IPC please do not hesitate to send an email.



7. PARTICIPATION FEE

The participation fee for the training course will be **200 € (Euros)** including accommodation, meals, programme and excursion. Please note that this amount can only be offered because of the subsidies received from the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, the Ecumenical Solidarity Fund and Diakonisches Werk which subsidises the total cost of accommodation, meals, programme and excursion.

Subsides for the participation fees are available in accordance with the reimbursement policies for travel subsidies mentioned under “8. Travel Subsidies”. Please search for your country there in order to identify if you are entitled to any subsidies.

Please note that the payment of a **cancellation fee** of 200 € (Euros) is expected from participants who cancel their participation in the event less than 2 weeks prior to commencement of the activity.



8. TRAVEL SUBSIDIES

Contributions:

Some participants of this training course are entitled to partial reimbursement of their travel expenses and participation fees. These expenses, however, are a heavy burden on EYCE's finances. Therefore, all participants are expected to contribute something to the travel costs and the participation fee of the training course they are attending. Please do also discover ways of finding subsidies yourself carefully – we have heard some very successful stories of individual fundraising at our past events. You may contact national aid agencies, your national EYCE member or your local congregation.

Least costly route:

Participants will be reimbursed on the basis of the shortest and least costly route between their place of residence and Ballycastle. If participants start their journey from a place further away than their residence to the training course venue or the return journey is to a place further away than their place of residence, the extra costs will not be covered by EYCE. We also strongly recommend looking around for cheap tickets, e.g. using students' discount tickets or Internet booking as well as low cost airlines flying to Belfast, such as EasyJet, TUIit, airlingus, Ryan Air or BravoFly.

Train or Plane?

If the distance between the participants' residence and the training course is less than 800 km, then the participant should travel by train second class. For distances greater than 800 km the participant should travel by either train or plane (whichever is least expensive). If the participant has travelled in a more expensive manner they will only get subsidised to the extent of the allowed method of travel according to the above guidelines.

Participation:

The participants should be present for the whole training course. Those who participate for less than 90% of the total duration of the activity will not be reimbursed.

Entitlements:

The standard EYCE policy concerning entitlements for travel subsidies and participation fees apply for this event for ALL participants. They are as follows:

Band One: 90% subsidy entitlement for the following countries:

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Slovak Republic.

Band Two: 50% subsidy entitlement for the following countries:

Belgium, Iceland, Italy, Northern Ireland/ Eire, Malta, Portugal and Spain.

Band Three: Other countries:

You might come from a country not mentioned above. If you come from a country not mentioned but require assistance with travel and participation fee subsidies, then this should be noted in the Application Form, and the EYCE Treasurer Mr. Paul Welch should be contacted regarding the request (paul.welch@eyce.org).

Copy of tickets:

Travel expenses are only reimbursed upon the presentation of a copy of all travel documents and receipts. **Please prepare these copies beforehand.** Participants travelling with e-tickets need to provide the boarding cards of their journey TO Northern Ireland. Please do not throw them away.

If you can pay more than required:

It might also be the case that participants can afford to pay more than what is asked. We kindly ask these participants to pay what they can afford since this means that more funds are available to subsidise others... and this, we believe, is what teamwork and solidarity is all about!

Authorisation:

The participants requesting financial assistance need to have the subsidy amount authorised in writing by EYCE Office. The amounts indicated in the Application Form will be the starting point for agreements, but the binding reference point for reimbursement will be the amount authorised in writing by EYCE Office. For selected participants EYCE will provide a subsidy request form together with the letter of acceptance.

Any participants, staying in Northern Ireland either before or after the training course will need to be responsible for all their own costs, unless a prior agreement is arranged with the Office due to travel schedules.

Enclosed is the application form where we ask you to indicate your need for a travel subsidy. No subsidies will be paid without prior agreement.

Please note that **health insurance is NOT arranged by EYCE.** We advise participants to make sure that you have a European health insurance card or similar before travelling.

Please ensure bookings are made at the best fare but do not buy any tickets prior to confirmation of your participation, agreement with EYCE Office and visa acknowledgement (if applicable).



9. VENUE OF THE TRAINING COURSE

You can read about the venue at the Corrymeela website: www.corrymeela.org

Founded in 1965 Corrymeela's objective has always been, and continues to be, promoting reconciliation and peace-building through the healing of social, religious and political divisions in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela's history is built upon a committed work with individuals and communities, which have suffered through the violence and polarisation of the Northern Irish conflict. The vision of Christian community and reconciliation has been expressed through a commitment to encounter, interaction and positive relationships between all kinds and conditions of people.

The Corrymeela Community currently has 150 members and over 5,000 friends and supporters throughout the world. Many Corrymeela members are active in a wide variety of peace and reconciliation activity and some have created their own training agencies involved in conflict transformation work.

CorrymeelaCommunity
Corrymeela Centre
5 Drumaroan Road
Ballycastle
BT54 6QU
United Kingdom



Coastline beneath the Corrymeela Centre



10. CONTACT Northern Ireland (for visa enquiries)

Some of the participants may need a visa to enter Northern Ireland. Please check immediately with the British embassy or consulate in your country whether you need a visa to enter the United Kingdom. Please note that participants needing visa have to apply for the seminar as soon as possible in order to avoid any troubles in getting a visa.

If needed, an official “Letter of invitation” issued by an organisation registered in the United Kingdom will be sent to the selected participants as soon as they are selected. Please **do not go ahead** applying for a visa prior to receiving the letter of acceptance to the training course. Please note that EYCE as an organisation registered in Belgium will under no circumstance be able to help participants obtaining a Visa for the United Kingdom. Therefore, selected participants will be instructed carefully whom to address in order to obtain documents needed.

Please be very careful. Be sure that you ask exact details of the documents needed. Some of you might not need a visa but a proof that you will be insured and taken care of during your stay in the United Kingdom. In any case please let us know as soon as possible, so we can ensure that all participants get the documents on time. More detailed information will be given in the letter of acceptance.



11. LANGUAGES

The language of the training course will be English. It will be essential for all the participants to understand and speak English in order to take full advantage out of the activity. Translation into one other language could maybe be organised if requested. If you wish translation please indicate this clearly in the application form.



12. DEADLINE FOR APPLYING/ SELECTION CRITERIA

Please send your application form to the EYCE Office as soon as possible. The absolutely latest deadline for receiving applications will be

5th of May 2008, 16:00 C.E.T.

We kindly ask that the enclosed application is filled in using a computer or typewriter and returned to the EYCE Office via email and / or fax. (The form will be available also on the EYCE website at www.eyce.org).

Sending incomplete forms, filling them in unreadable handwriting or sending them too late might mean that applications are **not** processed. If you fear that the application will not reach the office in time, please give the EYCE Office a call or send a fax/email to notify the secretariat.

Up to 25 participants will be selected by the International Planning Committee to attend the event. This selection will try to ensure a geographical, denominational and gender balance.

In addition, sending the application forms early increases the chances of being selected, while sending them the very last minute might disadvantage your application. The deadline for applications is less than two months prior to the event. Therefore we are forced to select participants immediately after the deadline, thus ensuring a smooth implementation of the training course and reasonably priced tickets. Right after selecting participants, those selected will receive more detailed information about the seminar programme. Also note that participants are only accepted if they have received a written confirmation from EYCE (email). Please keep in mind that selected participants will have to agree on travel costs with the EYCE Office **within one week** after having received the letter of acceptance. Therefore they are kindly requested to ensure **email access between the 6th and the 13th of May**.



13. PREPERATORY DOCUMENTS

Please share this letter, the accompanying documents and the information included with the persons you will nominate to the event.

The selected participants will receive more detailed information after the selection and documents to prepare themselves for the training course.

EYCE is working on an entirely ecumenical basis. Therefore, participants will come from many denominations. Everyone should be thus ready to welcome and respect others. All participants will have to discuss together how to value the traditions of the other. It may be that ideas and behaviours one person takes for granted are not easy to understand for someone else. Intercultural and ecumenical dialogue is a challenge – and the entire Planning Committee is looking forward to experiencing this challenge with many committed participants.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

With my very best wishes and on behalf of International Planning Committee,

Rebekka Højmark Jensen
EYCE General Secretary

Enclosed:

- Application Form including Motivation Questionnaire