

**United Nations Security Council Debate**  
**Maintenance of International Peace and Security: The Role of Young Persons**  
**in Addressing Security Challenges in the Mediterranean**

*17 April 2024*  
*Joint Statement of EUMED9*

Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the group of EUMED9 (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal and my own country Cyprus). Allow me first to express our gratitude to Malta for organising this important Security Council debate and extend our appreciation to all briefers for their insightful presentations.

Mr President,

The Mediterranean region is home to a diverse - yet dynamic - youth population, facing multiple challenges. Young persons constitute a significant portion of the region's population, disproportionately affected by the many pressing and multifaceted challenges the Mediterranean is facing, including climate change, armed conflicts, irregular migration and organised crime. These challenges lead to vulnerability and socio-economic inequalities, also impacting the well-being and mental health of young persons.

Young persons are agents of positive change for peace and security in the Mediterranean. They are in the forefront of identifying innovative solutions to regional and global challenges. We must ensure their full, meaningful and effective participation, including the participation of girls and young women, at all levels of decision-making, including here at the UN. It is imperative to provide a safe, enabling and empowering environment for young persons, for challenges to be addressed in a coordinated, human rights based and gender responsive manner at all levels.

Almost 9 years after the unanimous adoption of the ground-breaking Security Council Resolution 2250, positive steps have been taken to enable young persons to build peaceful, inclusive and just societies. We welcome the third report of the UN Secretary General on Youth, Peace and Security<sup>1</sup> and call for an open debate on it in this Council. We also welcome the advancements by the United Nations, Member States and regional organisations in institutionalising the YPS agenda. In addition, we fully support the mandate of the new UN Youth Office, which has an indispensable role to play in the advancement of the YPS agenda and stand behind its efforts to lead the

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<sup>1</sup> (S/2024/207)

engagement and advocacy for the advancement of youth issues across the United Nations.

When it comes to addressing regional challenges and empowering Mediterranean youth, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation both play a key role for our region. We therefore commend and support the efforts and initiatives they undertake, which represent an important step forward in promoting dialogue and empowering young voices.

Mr President,

Young persons are both resilient and innovative during turbulent times. We can see this in the Mediterranean. We are committed to recognising and supporting the positive role young persons can play for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, including in our region. In this regard, we make the following suggestions:

Firstly, we need to ensure the full, meaningful and effective youth participation in policy and decision making in peace and security, including in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in the Mediterranean region and beyond. In this regard, we need to recognise that peace building is inherently intergenerational.

Second, regional and sub-regional organisations and institutions have an indispensable role to play in the implementation of the Youth Peace and Security Agenda. The European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean<sup>2</sup>, including the Euro-Mediterranean University's potential in strengthening educational, research and innovation opportunities, the Anna Lindh Foundation<sup>3</sup>, the Council of Europe<sup>4</sup> and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe<sup>5</sup> are all regional organisations and institutions we are members of, that play a key role. Our countries will continue to advance this issue in those multilateral fora. The role of young persons, and especially young women, should not be omitted in these regional efforts to implement the YPS agenda.

Third, climate change is without a doubt a great existential threat for the Mediterranean region. We have seen youth of the region being valuable contributors to climate action, being at the forefront of efforts to combat climate change and its impact. This cannot be done in isolation: recognising the linkage between the YPS agenda and climate and security is a *sine qua non* in these efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UfMYouthStrategy2030\\_dec2021\\_DEF.pdf](https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UfMYouthStrategy2030_dec2021_DEF.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/what-we-do/empowering-young-voices>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/north-south-centre/youth-peace-and-security>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.osce.org/youth>

Finally, substantial funding needs to be allocated for the YPS agenda. Instruments such as the Peacebuilding Fund could serve as a means to finance actions towards youth and peacebuilding. Funding mechanisms need to take into consideration the need to support young persons as well as youth-led and youth-focused organisations working on peace and security, but at the same time, it is necessary that they adopt a youth lens.

Mr President,

Young persons across the Mediterranean are building bridges, creating synergies, becoming champions for human rights, initiators for climate action, advancing peacebuilding efforts and creating more just and resilient societies. Their contributions should inspire us to commit to put youth issues in the centre in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future. We have an obligation to current and future generations of the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Thank you.