



European/African Youth Forum strengthens partnerships

?????:Vanessa Von der Muhll

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During the first week of December, 15 to 20 representatives of World Scouting attended the first European/African Youth Summit in Lisbon (Portugal). The idea of this summit, which itself is a few years old, became concrete a little over a year ago, when a Governance Committee was created, coordinated by the North-South Centre of the European Council, that World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) and other International Youth Organizations took part in, as well as representatives of African and European youth platforms (the European Youth Forum, for example).

This summit preceded the second summit of the European/African Heads of State, organized by the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union. Its goal was to transmit the demands and recommendations of Africa's and Europe's youth to the political authorities of both continents, so as to build a new EU-African partnership.

The Scout and Guide representatives, most often members of their National Youth Council, came from Romania, the Czech Republic, Finland, South Africa, France, Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Madagascar, Burundi, Central African Republic and Sweden to attend the different meetings and workshops in Lisbon, and to think about and build a better co-operation between Africa and Europe.

Eight themes were selected, all of them pertaining to present issues affecting youth: employment, migration and mobility, good governance and democracy, peace and conflict, Millennium Development Goals, the environment and climate change, globalisation and world trade. Youth from both continents were able to think about the challenges of the new millennium and to build a new Euro-African partnership together, highlighting the power of youth's role for an active development and a hope for a better world. ?During the summit, we learnt that another world is possible. It is up to us now, youth of both continents, and Scouts and Guides in particular, to reunite our strengths and to work together, so that our recommendations become a reality and to build a better African and European continents, as well as a better world? said Antoine Dulin from the Scouts et Guides de France who participated in the summit as a representative of WOSM.

Many regional consultations took place beforehand in Africa and in Europe, gathering over 600 representatives, members of National Youth Councils and of Youth Organisations, many of them Scouts, for a new dynamic to be set up and for recommendations for the Lisbon summit to resurface.

These recommendations were brought to the European and African Heads of State Summit, on the 9th of December. Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, the President of the Republic of Portugal, Cavaco Silva, and the Portuguese prime minister, José Socrates, as well as other members of the European Commission, members of the European Council and of the African Union all attended the opening and closing ceremonies of the Youth Summit, thus proving their interest in the process.

This Youth Summit, the first of its kind, is a historical step in the development of a new kind of partnership between both continents, even though the fact that many Scouts and Guides participated proves that strong ties already exist. Many Scout and Guide Associations in Africa and in Europe have already built partnerships through the Marrakech Charter, with the Education to Peace project in the Great Lakes (Amahoro Amani) proving to be a telling example.

Click [here](#) to download and read the final declaration of the Africa/Europe Youth Summit.