



## European Democratic Citizenship Awards

**Category :** NGO of the Year

**Name of the Organisation:** NGO Youthnet Hellas

**Description of the Organisation:**

"Youthnet Hellas is a non-governmental organisation that aims to engage young people at different levels through innovative activities. It aims to promote young people's active participation, information, social inclusion and active citizenship in community life.

It is the only Greek NGO member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the CoE.

It was awarded the European Citizen's Prize by the European Parliament and the UNESCO label at UNESCO's 8th Youth Forum in 2013 for the project "Training for Developing Youth Reporting Capacities".

Our specific goals are:

- enhancing the role of young people at decision-making
- endorsing the development and implementation of politics supporting children's and young people's rights
- encouraging environment-friendly activities
- advocating respect for democracy, peace, diversity and human rights
- strengthening of democratic values and human rights respect
- encouraging exchange mobility and multicultural dialogue among young people regardless of their nationality"

**Impact achieved by your Organisation:**

"In 2014 we focused on our mission, we tried to have an active and immediate role in the society and tried to improve young people lives in practice during the crisis in Greece.

We used our website and social media pages as platforms to inform young people for all the formal and non-formal education opportunities they have in Greece and Europe, as well internships and work opportunities. So far, more than 9000 young Greeks follow our news in social media and more than 15000 visit our site daily.

The last years, more than 600 young people participated in more than 180 EU funded programmes. In 2014, 121 young people (in 35 projects) benefited from these funds.

Youthnet Hellas also runs the Council of Europe's "No Hate Speech Movement" campaign in Greece (absence of National Campaign Committee), by creating a Facebook page and running the campaign online in Greek language. More than 2000 people have been informed for the campaign by receiving our newsletter and by following us on social media."

## **What makes the Organisation innovative?**

"Youthnet Hellas is a youth organisation, aiming to give voice to young people in Greece. Due to the current economic crisis, young people in Greece experience a really difficult situation (more than 60% youth unemployment, high immigration rates, brain drain). Unfortunately the absence of national initiatives and campaigns for young people is visible, so we, as a youth-led organisation, need to step in and provide support to young people in Greece. The last years we work hard on it and we have already influenced the national youth policies by publishing the "Greek Youth Policy Report" annually since 2010.

What makes us innovative is that we are an online organisation and thus an environment-friendly NGO. We don't use offices, we are all volunteers and we have never had any national funding. We have members and volunteers in almost every city of Greece, from little islands and border villages to towns and big cities. We count more than 345 members and hundreds of active volunteers. We work online from our places, so working in this way, we can work with young people from villages and remote areas that don't have access to any other organisation, project, initiative or activity. This gives them the chance to stay informed about youth policies, be more active in their community and take local initiatives.

Although we work on a voluntary basis, we have an important presence, as well as distinctions in European level. Our actions are well recognised abroad and we are represented often in Council of Europe's activities and campaigns."

## **Contribution to European values:**

"Youthnet Hellas is a European-oriented organisation that represents most of the core European values in Greece. Active youth participation is our most important sector, while we are active also to values such as respect of human rights, freedom of speech and democratic dialogue. In the past we have contributed a lot with our projects and initiatives in other values such as tolerance and non-discrimination, minority rights and gender equality.

By being one of the NHSM campaign's partners, we tried to define what hate speech is (in Greek language) and to spread the campaign's message and values in national level."

## **Website or promotional materials:**

Website: <http://youthnet.gr/GR/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/YouthnetHellas>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Youthnet\\_Hellas](https://twitter.com/Youthnet_Hellas)