



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout
Всемирная Организация Скаутского Движения
Organización Mundial del Movimiento Scout
المنظمة العالمية للحركة الكشفية

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TO:

**International Commissioners and other
principal contacts in NSOs and NSAs of
the European Region**

Circular 3/2014

Call for action: 2014 – A Europe of Opportunities

Dear friends,

Following the consultations in 2013 in response to Resolution 13 approved at the 21st European Scout Conference in Berlin, the European Scout Committee and the European Regional Office would like to share with you the document "A Europe of Opportunities". The document contains our Scouting vision of the Europe we want: a Europe of opportunities for all young people.

This vision is based on the principles of European integration and focuses on the obligations for Scouting to support European shared values, such as freedom, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, tolerance, diversity, solidarity, justice and the tradition of the welfare state.

Throughout the year that is just starting, many will be the occasions to work with our Scouts on civic education to contribute to making them better citizens. On 22-25 May, all European citizens of the European Union are called upon to elect their new European Parliament. Looking forward to the European Elections in 2014, we remember that civic participation and citizenship education are at the core of our Scouting message, not only in the European Union, but across our entire Region.

The Scouting vision we have developed, thanks to your contributions, encompasses the most important issues for Scouting in Europe and suggests how the situation can be changed. Starting with empowerment of young people, promoting diversity and social inclusion, removing obstacles for Scouting to investing in young people, this document explains the most important issues for Scouting that should be tackled in the future.

Together with "A Europe of Opportunities", LoveYouthFuture, the League of Young Voters and Vote Volunteering Vision, we hope to offer you support to engage with your Scouts on these themes and beyond. The themes are broad enough to encompass the entire Region and not just the European Union.

If you have any further question, please contact Letizia Gambini, Director for External Relations and Funding (lgambini@scout.org - +32 2 534 33 15).

Yours sincerely,

David McKee
Regional Director
European Region of WOSM



A Europe of Opportunities

Scouting vision for the future Europe

Scouting in Europe is a growing movement of over 1.7 million people, engaged as active citizens in their local communities to 'Create a Better World'. Scouting is a non-formal education youth movement working with and for young people through non-formal education and volunteering to develop skills and values necessary to promote youth empowerment, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Europe is facing a period of historic challenges and decisions. In the current economic crisis Europe's common history and its resulting responsibility for democracy, freedom, solidarity and social justice is in danger to be left aside. Crisis decision-making provides only a short-term course of action, failing to show a future vision on how Europe, and the EU, can develop as a community of European citizens.

The vision of Scouting for Europe is based on the principles of European integration. The idea of the Europe we want stands for shared values of freedom, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, tolerance, diversity, solidarity, justice and the tradition of the welfare state. Looking forward to the European Parliament Elections in 2014, we urge European Union and other policy makers to join us in working to make this Europe a Europe of opportunities for all young people.

An opportunity to empower European citizens

Scouting as an educational movement is committed to promote active citizenship and youth participation in the community. The elements of European Citizenship that define Scouting are solidarity, cooperation, peace education and intercultural dialogue. Especially in times of crisis, a sustainable democracy depends on the participation in democratic decision-making processes. To make this possible we believe that young people need to be more strongly associated to the debate on the future of our societies from local to European level and to be fully integrated into the decision-making system and political representation.

An opportunity to recognize skills for life gained through volunteering

Investing in Scouting means also investing in the skills that young people can gain for life, such as – but not only – leadership, teamwork and project management. A comprehensive set of National Qualifications Frameworks and a European Qualifications Framework recognizing skills for life gained through volunteering and non-formal education would foster young people's entry in the labour market and a smoother transition from education to employment.

An opportunity for global partnership for development

The challenges of the 21st Century cannot be tackled without involving and engaging the younger generations in promoting global equity, in the name of justice, solidarity and peace across regions and generations. In order to achieve this, the EU and the whole of Europe must promote greater engagement of youth organisations of all kinds into forming long-lasting, sustainable global youth partnerships. A strong youth dimension must be added in the External Action Service of the EU and in projects supported by national development agencies.

An opportunity for promoting diversity and social inclusion

Access to youth rights, such as quality education and employment, social services, housing and participation in decision-making must be ensured for all young people, regardless of their background. The success of better social inclusion policies lies in the cooperation and synergy between legislation and community. Scouting is a movement open to all and focuses its work to promote social inclusion and integration. A shift is needed in EU and wider European policy on migration, bringing forward the richness of mixed cultures, society and its benefits for economic development. Common values, such as dignity, equality and the defense of human rights must be brought back at the centre of the European agenda and youth organisations should be given recognition of their key contribution to the education to diversity.

An opportunity to remove obstacles for Scouting

Scouting, as a youth movement involved in civil society, faces more and more challenges to realise its activities due to increasing regulations on all aspects of life outdoors, international mobility, safety regulations and funding access. Measures that strengthen the recognition of youth volunteering across the whole of Europe and reduced administrative and bureaucratic procedures would contribute to the acceptance of the value of Scouting's role in the promotion of participation and active citizenship and remove obstacles for Scouting to reach out to more young people.



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An opportunity to think about the Europe we want beyond the crisis

We believe in an inclusive, democratic and globally engaged Europe. In order to overcome the current challenges of youth unemployment, sustainable development and social inequalities the EU and others must recognise the key role of young people as actors of change.

The Europe we want beyond the crisis must invest in young people, putting an end to the cuts that are affecting local and national youth structures such as National Youth Councils, local youth clubs, national funding to youth organisations. Strengthening social cohesion and equal opportunities means implementing more transparency, more access to decision-making and giving a greater value of civil society in the creation of a true Europe of citizens.

European Scouting thinks the European Parliament Elections as an opportunity to renew its commitment in 'Creating a Better World' and contribute to make young people aware of the importance of European integration and design participatory processes for young people to share their ideas and proposals on European issues.

About Scouting in Europe

The European Scout Region is the representative of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement in Europe and the coordination body of National Scout Organisations in the 28 EU Member States and 41 European Countries. We work actively with European institutions and other youth and civil society organizations in order to shape policies to strengthen the participation and living conditions of young people as well as to guarantee a sound regulatory environment for volunteering organisations.

For more information: www.scout.org/europe





ANNEX I - How can you take action?

Four ways to engage with your Scouts on civic education in 2014

1. SHARE "A EUROPE OF OPPORTUNITIES"

This vision is made to create debate, encourage Scouts all over Europe to discuss what is the Europe they want and how to get there.

Scout groups all over Europe can take the opportunity to start up new projects on European Citizenship, civic participation and volunteering engagement.

2014 is the year when all this comes together!

2. LOVEYOUTHFUTURE

Around the European Elections 2014, our partner, the European Youth Forum (www.youthforum.org) has started a campaign to promote youth rights and youth issues to the European Parliament candidates.

The campaign is called "LoveYouthFuture" and it advocates for a policy agenda which would change the current situation of youth in Europe. Candidates for Members of European Parliament are invited to sign pledges for youth. Those pledges aim for:

- Protections for young workers, volunteers and interns
- More youth rights
- Quality education
- Protection for youth
- Stronger youth
- Involving youth civil society
- Youth employment and youth guarantee
- Free movement for youth
- New resources for new investments
- A stronger and more inclusive democracy
- A balanced budget focused on growth

Young people and youth organisations are invited to meet their MEPs, introduce the LoveYouthFuture Pledges and invite MEPs to sign them. Their names will be then featured on the campaign website <http://www.loveyouthfuture.eu/supporters>.

For more information about the pledges and how to get MEPs sign them visit www.loveyouthfuture.eu.

3. VOTE VOLUNTEER VISION

As Volunteering remains a core issue for Scouting, our partner, CEV (European Volunteer Centre) is promoting a campaign to support volunteering. Vote Volunteer Vision aims to:

- Support voluntary sector organisations in their advocacy work at national level by providing tools to be used in the interaction with the 2014 European Parliament election candidates.
- Raise awareness about the role of the members of the European Parliament in strengthening the volunteer infrastructure in Europe.
- Draw attention to the need for an Intergroup on Volunteering in the European Parliament.
- Reveal future possible co-operations between MEPs and other volunteering stakeholders.
- Encourage citizens to vote and make decisions on their choice of candidates on the basis of EU issues that matter to them.

Young people and youth organisations are invited to meet MEPs and invite them to sign pledges for promoting and establishing EP intergroup on volunteering also to share their Volunteer vision. To find



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more information visit: <http://www.cev.be/votevolunteervision/>.

4. LEAGUE OF YOUNG VOTERS

In past European Parliament elections, a general lack of information on the elections and the issues at stake meant that around 70% of the European Union's youth did not make use of their right to vote.

The League of Young Voters in Europe is a politically neutral initiative that aims to amplify young people's concerns and expectations in the run-up to European elections.

It's a movement across Europe designed by young people, for young people.

The League of Young Voters is not just an initiative to get young people to vote - it's a movement that brings together all young people who want to choose what decisions Europe and its politicians will make on issues that concern them.

Most European National Youth Councils have joined the League of Young Voters and are implementing activities at local, regional and national level. For more information, check: www.youngvoters.eu.

On the website, you can start a topic, discuss it and try to get more young people engaged. Based on these collected issues, the League of Young Voters will bring together the positions of the different political parties in a table that young people can use to compare the different opinions and proposed solutions.

If you are more up for face-to-face debate, you can organise a political debate in your town, university or Scout group.

Are you a great blogger? Do you have an incredible talent for drawing cartoons or make great videos? We are eager to see how you experience Europe or how you can help spreading the message to other young people. Share it all on this platform!

