



Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) is a dynamic and active network of 39 youth member organizations in a multicultural and multilingual Europe, representing and fighting for the interests and rights of ethnic and autochthonous minorities. YEN plans and runs seminars and trainings using non-formal education methodologies to fight discrimination, hate speech and racism, as well as to develop strategies to promote minority rights. The positions found in these strategies are then transported via public relations and lobbying on different levels to influence policy makers on the needs and rights of minorities. YEN is member of the European Youth Forum and has consultative status at the ECOSOC of the United Nations.

Considering our work and expertise on this topic, we would like to express the following recommendations to the 11th session of the Forum on Minority Issues: “Statelessness: A Minority Issue” that takes place from November 29th to 30th, 2018 in Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

1. Root causes and consequences of statelessness affecting minorities: preventing statelessness through a human rights approach

We as Youth of European Nationalities, a European umbrella organisation of 39 members representing national ethnic autochthonous minorities, have observed that statelessness affects many people, especially those with a minority background, but is discussed and recognised by few.

However, the issue of statelessness and the denial of human rights for these people is a matter that should concern us all. A person with a minority background already can face the lack of recognition, discrimination, inequality, underrepresentation, and difficulties to access education, medical care and the labour market. Statelessness disproportionately enhances the inequality of minorities in society.

Last year, 1.128.385 EU citizens cooperated and supported minority rights by signing the *Minority Safepack Initiative*, calling for an inclusive society with better and constructive minority rights, and also vouching for statelessness to be recognised and eradicated by all EU member states.

Stateless people are often not given the opportunity to address their situation. Therefore, we stand here to speak up on behalf of those who are unable to do so, as we stand for minority rights, regardless citizenship or lack thereof.

Therefore we as YEN:

appeal: to everyone, citizen or nation state, to recognise the issues of stateless people and step up to form concrete solutions to annihilate statelessness.

call: for the harmonisation of legal frameworks and procedural conventions to address and successfully resolve statelessness

highlight: that minorities are entitled to all human rights including a nationality which brings them civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

urge: for the EU member states to support and implement the Minority Safepack Initiative and realise the concrete recommendations for minority rights, including the eradication of statelessness.



2. Statelessness resulting from conflicts, forced population movements and migration affecting minorities: main challenges and possible solutions

We as Youth of European Nationalities, a European umbrella organisation of 39 members representing national ethnic autochthonous minorities, want to take this opportunity to address the position of youth who are drawn into conflicts, forced population movements and migration. These phenomena are experienced by all ages, but especially youth are involved and affected by them.

Voluntary or involuntary relocation of young people challenges their development and identity. What is more, stateless youth are more likely to face a future in illegality, as they have no rights to equity, democracy, education, civil grants, and/or the economical market. No state shall gain from this inequality, but every state will thrive on an inclusive society.

As stateless youth have most to gain from the decisions and possible solutions on statelessness, it is important to not only involve these young voices, but to actively include them in the resolutions and decision making processes towards an inclusive society.

Therefore, we as YEN:

ask: to acknowledge conflicts and forced population movements and migration of minorities as a root cause for young people to be stateless.

call: to recognise the importance to immediate solutions to resolve statelessness in light of the young lives that are affected.

highlight: the importance of self-representation and youth involvement in the decision making processes for solutions to statelessness.

appeal: to stateless youth to speak up of their situation and demand to be part of the decision making processes regarding statelessness.



3. Ensuring the right to a nationality for persons belonging to minorities through facilitation of birth registration, naturalization and citizenship for stateless minorities

We as Youth of European Nationalities, a European umbrella organisation of 39 members representing national ethnic autochthonous minorities, want to highlight that there are structural and legal obstacles for overcoming statelessness.

There are several legal conventions to address statelessness, such as the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. However, there is an inconsistency in states that have ratified these, forming a legal void. For a sustainable approach to annihilate statelessness, more recognition and ratifications of such frameworks are needed.

Furthermore we observe a gap between the recognition and ratification of framework conventions and procedural conventions and the execution thereof. Additional provisions are needed to bridge the gap between the recognition of statelessness and the procedure to resolve this, as well as the expansion of possibilities for stateless people to act upon.

Therefore, we of YEN:

appeal: to raise awareness about the situation of stateless people among decision making bodies and international stakeholders and improve access to information for individuals who may be stateless

call: for all states to recognise and ratify framework and procedural conventions concerning statelessness

highlight: the importance of overcoming the gap between convention and practice and provide structural implementation of the ratified conventions

urge: states to reconsider current practices concerning statelessness that constrain the possibilities of stateless people to appeal to.

