

**TITLE :**           **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT FOR  
HIGHLY TALENTED PEOPLE: CONCLUSIONS  
ON EUROPEAN IDENTITY, YOUTH, AND  
FAMILY SITUATION.**

**AUTHOR :**           Juan A. Alonso  
Dr. of Education

**INSTITUTION :**    "Huerta del Rey" Center  
c/ Pío del Río Hortega 10  
47014 Valladolid  
Spain

Phone / fax : 34 - 983 - 34 13 82

## **ABSTRACT**

This presentation intends to show the conclusions of last year International youth summit on youth topics, European identity and the family. The summit, sponsored and supported by the European Community and Embassies, aimed to let applicants develop their abilities useful for their present and professional lives, the objectives were to :

- 1 · Understand economical, social and cultural life of the host country, Spain, by getting into touch with Spanish people.
- 2 · Create cooperative and friendly relations among young people groups from other countries.
- 3 · Interchange ideas and discuss mutual interests.

Participants should be from 15 to 25 years from around the European Community and it was opened to the East countries.

Besides, all participants had to be proposed by their specific state organization : university, ministry, society or specialized institution.

Because of being a profitable activity, the organization succeeded in awarding all participants, and grants ranged from 40 to 100 % discount of the fee.

## **INTRODUCTION**

By december 1993 after Valladolid II International Conference on Giftedness, just when we decided to organize a summer youth program, from and targeted to young people, to be held in Spain as the host country, we intended it to be considered neither a chance of meeting people, a schoolyear trip, a tourist route nor an interchanging program. This summit aimed to let applicants develop their abilities working on real and present topics concerning young people and so, improving their personal and professional lives, our intention was participants could :

1. Understand economical, social and cultural life of the host country, Spain, by getting into touch with Spanish people.
2. Participate creating cooperative and friendly relations among young people groups from around the world.
3. Interchanging ideas and discussing mutual interests.

## **· PARTICIPANTS - ORGANIZATION**

Any European young person being from 15 to 25 years could attend if she/he was proposed by any specific state organization : ministry, government, society or specialized center, any state institution who could answer for the young attending the program.

Because of being an intercultural meeting, participants were not only required to have a deep knowledge about Spain, and to understand the languages to be spoken, but also they had to be prepared to overcome prejudgements and stereotypes.

Our organization managed to get grants from public institutions for every participant, with discounts rating from 40% to 100% of the registration fee. Because of that, we thank very much for the interest shown and efforts made proposing the candidates to Spanish Embassies all over Europe, European Community, Junta de Castilla y León, European Youth Agency, European Space Agency, Valladolid town hall, Public Society of Tordesillas Treaty, Laguna de Duero town hall and Caja España.

Activities dealt with V Centenary of Tordesillas Treaty (1494-1994), environmental educational problems, youth topics as unemployment, racism, women to men and the family in our present European society. All participants took part in the visiting program and social events, as the visit to European agency of Space.

## · CONCLUSIONS ON EUROPEAN YOUTH AND IDENTITY

The main questions and conclusions arisen when analyzing this topic were :

4. Are European people and countries really ready for unity?
5. What is required to achieve unity :
  1. unified states first? is this possible?  
example: white and black problem
  2. Overcome barriers to unification. Eg. overcome old/traditional mentality/views/opinions.
  3. A change in the nature of education of new generations :
    1. changing knowledge + understanding
    2. a change of values/opinions
  4. Greater understanding between nations, understand each others' ways of life. Implications of this point: young people need to travel? Then, language and communication problems arise.
  5. A majority agreement among citizens in each nation will be required. Implications : education.
6. Will it be possible to achieve a real union at a deep level, or it will be only superficial?
  1. Maybe possible to get a surface change, but it is difficult to change citizens' underlying conceptions :
    1. deep problems and differences between European East and West, language problems and communication in general.
    2. problems and different points of view concerning the nature of population from European countries : culture, values and so on.
  2. UNITY BALANCED WITH EQUALITY is required.  
Is it possible? European Union is needing a community which can represent all countries involved, for instance a representation of all member states.
7. Why must European population work to get the Union? is it worth making efforts to?
  1. Are the politicians only working to get unified political policies? or, unified cultures and traditions, as well? is the latter desired by citizens and politicians?
  2. Will it imply more employment?
  3. Which are the other advantages?

## · CONCLUSIONS ON EUROPEAN FAMILY SITUATION

Generally speaking, family life in its conventional sense, as an important social institution does not exist in present Europe.

The number of family members are decreasing and values of the family are different in each country, depending on religious, economical and cultural reasons.

8. Demographic changes :
  1. Natality is increasingly going lower.
  2. Marriages are decreasing.
  3. Family instability : divorces
  4. People live longer
9. Economical changes.
10. Cultural changes :
  1. Social recognition of maternity and women's house work.
  2. Making easier women can combine home and work labours.
  3. Helping families with public money to support their younger children, the handicapped and the eldest.

#### **· AN ASSESMENT ON LAST SUMMIT**

Organizers' opinion on last youth summit is highly constructive. The organizing and coordinating committee tried to fulfil general aims and objectives that were proposed several months before.

Making a summary of the days spent together, let me tell you that in last year July, 60 young people arrived at the city of Valladolid coming from Portugal, England, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Romania, Hungary, Rusia and obviously Spain; and during the summit, barriers were eliminated because of the participants' will made it possible, solving any problem which arose: culture, language, etc. The language spoken and the culture practiced were Youth, Europe, Family, and Solidarity with others.

If innovation is the principal factor for any country progression, during those days we had the opportunity of knowing it, as communication technology : telecommunications, computers, electronic data processing and new information material. The progression has been possible thanks to acknowledgement and the melting of great efforts and many European countries activities since the 60's, and the result has been the foundation of an independent European Space Institution, which is called "European Space Agency".

But if discovering history is a reason of linking populations and overcoming past situations, and being this summit organized in Valladolid, it was an evident thing to take part in Tordesillas Treaty commemorative events, which was signed five hundred years ago between Spain and Portugal.

Last summit contained night time trips even though many people were frightened about stars could go down to hit the earth during the night spent in stars observation, besides, Carmen Linares was really succesful in the Flamenco Recital she gave, and people liked her as much as the pictures of the Prado museum.

But as life doesn't only consist of Technology, History and Art, we spent our free time enjoying ourselves : we got very close to the sky in the Monastery of Peña de Francia (Salamanca), we were close to death when we were fighting the bulls, and we had also been enjoying a lot the refreshing water of the Spanish swimming pools. As our time was so short we were lucky if we could fall asleep a few hours. Thanks to the calm and tranquility of "our residence" we managed to recover from the stressing first days. We also got plenty opportunities of enjoying nature with the help of the Nature Interpretation State Center.

Certainly, the summit succeeded in what was expected to, understanding Spanish way of living, and its cultural and economical situation; and specially the relations of interchanging and cooperation created among all participants from different nationalities.

Finally, the organizers hope this initiative to be followed by other countries at any place to give young people the opportunity to meet and discuss again.