

International workshop “Access of information for youth – using interactive tools for processing and disseminating information” by Blanca Trepát

Last January 15, 2020 the International workshop “Access of information for youth – using interactive tools for processing and disseminating information” took place in Riga, Latvia. It brought together more than 60 young people from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belgium and Poland. The aim of the workshop was to present rights and opportunities for young people to access public information in school, municipality and country.

During the first part of the day, there was presentations on different civic activities taking place in different EU countries related to the application of the right of access to information that youth can benefit from. One of the initiatives was presented by ENUT (Estonian Women’s Studies and Resource Centre) on gender budgeting as a strategy to achieve equality between women and men by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent. Next to this, there was a presentation by Estonian youth who introduced the Tallinn City Youth Council, to which they belong. This is a youth representative body of the Tallinn City Council as the higher decision-making institution of the Tallinn municipality. The aim of this Council is to represent the city youth and stand for their rights and interests. During the presentation, it was underlined the need of introducing this body in other countries and international institutions, such as in the United Nations. Other presentations focused on the right of access to information from the lobbying and media perspective. Both claimed for a more transparent right to access of information published in the media and in transparency lobbying registers. In fact, it was explained that there is no mandatory EU lobby register for all EU institutions, and this contributes to corruption, lack of integrity and lack of accountability in EU institutions, policies and legislation.



I had the chance to present about the right of access to information from an international perspective by presenting CUNCR’s research mission on how a more democratic and inclusive United Nations and UN Charter could be a solution to this global challenge: lack of transparency and lack of participation in global decision-making processes for citizens. Currently, the right of access to information is recognized at many domestic levels and enshrined in International Conventions such as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or in the International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights. This right can be invoked by anyone despite its narrowly drawn restrictions. However, the problem arises with the enforcement of it. International Law does not have a comprehensive system that ensures compliance. For instance, there is the International Court of Justice, main judicial organ of the United Nations located in The Hague (Netherlands). Nevertheless, this organ settles legal disputes submitted to it by States only, not individuals. Moreover, it only operates if both States agree to adjudicate competence to the Court.

During the second part of the day, youth had to create innovative informative materials – presentations, videos and posters – while the evaluation committee, which were the speakers who presented, chose the best presentations in 4 categories: best learning material, clearest message, most original idea and best content.

All in all, we can see that the right of access to information, lacks an effective enforceability at an international level. A solution to this problem would be the creation of an International Court of Human Rights where individuals could claim their right of access to information. Also, a more democratic and participatory UN for citizens that complies with the UN Charter note of “We the peoples” would contribute to address citizens’ needs such as the right of access to information. This could be done through the creation of a World Parliament, which would represent individuals as well as states. Therefore, a World Parliament could be a solution to citizens’ underrepresentation and democratic deficit within the UN.