

# MIJARC Europe Specific Objectives 2017-2021



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### Introduction

This document defines MIJARC Europe's roadmap between 2017 and 2021 and the means to use as a guideline to fulfil these objectives as well as to realize the general mission and values of MIJARC Europe.

Our organisation works to support rural development. We support the personal development of individuals through educational activities. We provide space to share and exchange ideas and experience with the aim of it resulting in the cohesion of development processes. MIJARC Europe empowers young people to participate actively in society to represent and advocate their needs and interests of their organisations, as well as to improve their own lives. As a platform of nationally represented NGOs we work and advocate for the well-being of all young people living in the rural areas across Europe.

Christianity is part of MIJARC Europe's identity. Our Christian values and belief lead our work, our activities, our visions and positions. We advocate and promote a world of tolerance, respect, solidarity and peace.

To promote our goals and to provide non-formal education for our members, the following content will build the basis of our work to motivate youth to take on the topics of our activities.

#### Thematic focus points of MIJARC Europe

1. A sustainable future for agriculture and rural youth
2. Our European vision in an interconnected world
3. Citizenship and youth participation in rural development

In the second part of the document we will see how internal operations could strengthen MIJARC Europe's role as a motivating network for our members, on the world level, in external cooperation and in internal challenges.

#### Operational objectives of MIJARC Europe

1. Internal development of MIJARC Europe as a network for and with its member organisations
2. MIJARC Europe, European System: advocate and cooperate for the interests of rural youth in a partner strategy
3. MIJARC Europe in world perspective
4. MIJARC Europe Communication – Finances

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## Thematic focus points of MIJARC Europe

### 1. A sustainable future for agriculture and rural youth

Rural areas constitute a significant territory of Europe (51.3 % in 2012). We see that the evolution of the population in those areas is diverse among Europe, with countries where it is significantly decreasing<sup>1</sup> or increasing; making us wonder why and gets us to work to find an answer to set a hold on this. MIJARC Europe is a network of rural youth organisations. We are promoting and working to obtain a present and a future for the youth in rural areas.

- Rural areas are places to grow-up, to work and to live in. Rural areas are places for chances, perspectives, challenges and engagement. Living in Rural areas is a way of life worth promoting. Rural life is our way of life.

We promote liveable rural areas, with infrastructure and opportunities for youth. It is not only a place for tourism, even if it could be an opportunity of development.

- Rural life and communities are spaces for engagement, the roots of our local groups. We are a voice for these groups and engaged rural youth at the European level.

- Rural life is marked by different economic activities, among which agriculture has a significant role. Agriculture is feeding the population and defining our landscape.

We defend agriculture which:

- o is sustainable
- o gives opportunities to youth to get involved and have a future in agriculture
- o secures affordable and fair prices for farmers and consumers
- o is based on the concept of food sovereignty

We therefore are in favour of a reorientation of CAP to sustain this agriculture, using the opportunity of change of CAP 2020.

Our rural realities are affected by global rules set up to improve free trade and exchange. As a result, the production of our rural places is not sold locally or is not produced for the local market. We will raise awareness about how policy making and consumption behaviours affect agriculture by creating links between producers and consumers.

We will support a trade system that prioritises for local products and local markets.

- Youth unemployment is a challenge everywhere in Europe, also in rural areas. Rural areas should offer youth a perspective in life and home for their now and future.

We will support youth in finding ideas to develop and promote jobs in the rural areas. We will advocate for specific support to guarantee the existence of job opportunities in rural areas.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Rural\\_development\\_statistics\\_by\\_urban-rural\\_typology](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Rural_development_statistics_by_urban-rural_typology)

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## 2. Our European vision in an interconnected world

We are a European network in a world organisation: MIJARC World. We are well aware of the challenges we are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in an interconnected world.

- Europe is facing different challenges. Within the EU and outside of the EU, the economic competition leads to a race of who is cheapest. This leads us to a too intensive use of land, energy, and to the exploitation of humans.

We promote cooperation with our neighbours to increase the respect of the earth, land, biodiversity and high social standards.

- Europe is also the destination of many migrants escaping wars and famine.

As Europeans, we will welcome them, respecting the right of Asylum in decent condition. We will be aware of the actions taken by our European governments that amplify the explosive situation in many countries of the world.

Many of the conflicts, famines and other reasons for such a high amount of migration towards Europe are linked to global warming and the lack of responsibility taken by the governments.

We will continue to work on this topic to advocate for an improvement in European policies to ensure a human inclusive approach towards the migrants and to challenge all the factors causing people to leave their home.

- After the terrorist attacks around Europe, the answer from the governments is mainly an increase of intolerance and populist expressions, an increase of army forces instead of dialogue. Contrary to these policies, we will continue to promote this idea of dialogue, to raise awareness on the sensitivity of these and show that it is not to be solved by military action but by dialogue and by respect to social rights.

In a world of change; with threats to our democratic countries, with global warming, with migration, we want to take advantage of being part of a worldwide network to promote and build a peaceful vision towards the others and the world. To build this common vision the Sustainable Development Goals are a good compass.

All this will allow us to realize our aim of a Europe of cooperation, playing its role in a world of peace.

## 3. Citizenship and youth participation in rural development

As a youth organisation with young people speaking up for their rights and interests as active citizens, we will support young people to grow in their role in society. Our work is based on non-formal education methods, with which we offer opportunities to develop skills and strengthen the empowerment of young people.

- Youth organisations are spaces to learn the importance of taking responsibility, get used to democratic processes, to start and develop projects, to gain experience and to acquire new skills.

We promote youth work and the principles of youth organisations, lead and animated by youth for youth.

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- Political institutions at the European level have to be representatives of the diversity of our societies: young and old, men and women, poor and rich or all in between.  
This also means that in European organisations and institutions gender equality and diversity need to be better represented.  
We want to be one voice of the rural youth in these institutions. We want to be recognized as youth and be recognized as citizens and to have the deserved representation.
- As a Christian organisation, our religious belief and its core values are a starting point for exchanges between people with different conviction.  
We will promote inter-religious dialogue and peace in this interconnected world.

### Operational objectives of MIJARC Europe

#### 1. Internal development of MIJARC Europe as a network for and with its member organisation

We see our organisation as a platform to connect people, give them the opportunities to share realities and exchange ideas and positions. To be a fruitful network towards these aims we see possibilities for improvements by striving for a better connection between our member organisations and the European level, between the member organisation themselves and by getting the local level better involved in and informed about the international work of MIJARC.

#### - **Connections and Collaborations between our member organisations**

As a grass root organisation the most important ideas, actions and positions come from the ground and not from the head of our organisation. Thus, MIJARC Europe encourages the collaboration between its organisations, to organize events and activities together. MIJARC Europe will support and join these meetings.

Considering that those kinds of events occur when the member organisation know each other better, MIJARC Europe will work on improving the mutual knowledge of its members, by providing systems, methods and ways to meet and exchange about their realities and best practices. We will support the meeting of the leaders of our member organisations.

We will provide the possibility of easily accessible activities to get more members from the local level involved in MIJARC Europe.

#### - **Good exchange between European level and member organisations**

MIJARC Europe will improve its link with its member organisations to improve their representation at the European level and in MIJARC world. A good connection, a habit of meetings between different bodies of MIJARC and its members and the problems they are tackling will allow a better representation of their ideas and projects and to make small changes at the European level. Based on this good connection MIJARC Europe is benefiting from the expertise of its member organisations.

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### **- Support to struggling member organisations**

One challenge and the role of MIJARC Europe is to support its member organisation when needed.

We show our support through our presence at the national meetings as far as possible and in a consulting role.

MIJARC Europe will have a supporting role of networking and facilitating the contacts between its organisations in order to encourage youth projects and youth meetings between local groups in Europe and in the world.

The role of MIJARC Europe is also to pick up the best practices appearing in the realities of its members and to spread it at the European level during its activities. By connecting organisations that already succeeded in finding solutions for challenges others are struggling with, our member could profit from the experiences of others. Next to that, MIJARC Europe will encourage its organisations to share their experiences and best practices with other organisations in order to support them in challenging situations.

### **- Get member organisations more involved on European level**

We, as MIJARC Europe, think that one of the ways to get member organisations more connected and to have a more common goal and strategy is to get more people involved at the European level in MIJARC Europe. We will encourage more involvement. We will provide easy access to our European network for our participants and the volunteers in our member organisations. Therefore, we will find possible strategies to build a stronger network involving more volunteers. An idea is to form commissions that come together about a certain topic on a regular time to follow up, discuss and work out strategies on how MIJARC Europe should deal with a topic and promote its visions on it. This will lead into topics more interconnected with the interests of our member organisations and the topics they deal with. It will encourage more people to get involved with a lower responsibility.

### **- Encourage Organisations fitting the profile of MIJARC Europe to become part of our organisation.**

To be a vivid and diverse organisation we need member organisations with different ideas, perspectives and realities, but still sharing the views and common ideas of our organisation. Therefore, we will find organisations open to get to know and to get involved in MIJARC Europe.

## **2. MIJARC Europe, European System: advocate and cooperate in the interest of rural youth in a partner strategy**

### **- Improve our advocacy work**

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Our realities and the realities of rural youth are underrepresented at the European level. During the next four years we will improve this visibility and the materials of our topics. We will set up commissions to work on different topics. This will guarantee us a follow up on the topic.

Three commissions will work on different topics:

- A sustainable culture for agriculture and rural youth
- Our European vision towards an interconnected world
- Citizenship and youth participation in rural development

The results can be used by our members at the local level and the European bodies of MIJARC to construct and build common positions in MIJARC Europe. It will also be the space for youth leaders to work on a topic that concern them. These commissions will be able to make some representations in the different activities offered by the Council of Europe, the European Union and our partners. This has to be based on a redefined partnership strategy.

### - **A partner strategy supporting the 3 pillars of action**

In order to enable us to share, strengthen, develop our actions and gain results, we will continue our work with partners in the field of:

- Rurality and agriculture
- Citizenship, Europe, democracy and youth
- Church and religion

### - **Promotion in our work**

To promote our work, we will be present in several forms of (social) media and at the local level of our member organisations. With our easy access activities, we will motivate our participants. They will spread our ideas and positions further in their local community and in the local level of their organisation. This way we will motivate youth and reach out, reach minority groups and achieve open minded organisations. It is thus important that the outcomes of our activities can be used to achieve those goals.

## **3. MIJARC Europe in world perspective**

MIJARC Europe will play an active role in MIJARC World and improve its contribution as a continent. Therefore, we will work on our topics keeping the world's perspective in mind. Each topic needs to be connected to the realities of our local groups. We will make sure that our topics are also linked to the world level. This way we will give our umbrella organisation our points of view and do more advocacy work supported through our member organisations.

MIJARC Europe will promote MIJARC World to its member organisations. It is in order to reinforce this network, which is more needed than ever. In the world we live in, full of massive migration, a globalized economy and an interconnected world, MIJARC World and our involvement in it will provide us more knowledge and materials to find local, national and international solutions.

### - **A new organisational structure for deeper and more effective work**

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One of the weaknesses of MIJARC Europe is that too few people invest time in the daily life of MIJARC Europe. Only 5 team members and 2 staff members have to assume, to represent, to find the financing and to set up the activities. This way of working is not efficient enough. The renewal of the team members is more and more difficult. We as MIJARC Europe have to involve more people in our European structure at different stages in the organisation.

The three commissions are seen as an answer to these challenges as they will be in charge of the elaboration of positions (under the responsibility and supervision of the European Team) and be in charge of the representation at the local and European level. This will allow the European Team to concentrate on the most important representations and on the organisation of events useful for its member organisations. The commissions will also be a more direct link and platform to share ideas and methods of and to our member organisations.

### **4. MIJARC Europe Communication – Finances**

#### **- The secretariat**

Finding financing for international activities and meetings is challenging. The European Union and the council of Europe provide good opportunities, but the grant applications and the reports needed are time and resource consuming. That is why a secretariat is wanted and necessary. Next to that, the secretariat forms the first and most direct contact to our member organisations to our structure.

#### **- Internal and external communication**

We will continue and improve our different levels of internal and external communication. A magazine such as Info Europe and our website are important tools to spread news and to share our views and positions.

We will keep in mind that our member organisations and a lot of our target groups don't have English as their primary language; this means that we will find the best translation system according to our possibilities.

#### **- Financial strategy**

At the time this document was written, MIJARC Europe is highly dependent on grants and their rules. Those rules change over time and are sometimes contradictory to other grants. This makes it very challenging to follow and to count on these grants. Moreover, a lot of grants ask for co-financing done by the movement or other grants. That is why it is important to search and grow towards a financially sustainable autonomy, allowing us to overcome losing some grants and still can do our work and activities and keep our secretariat. It will also allow us to do work around topics that not necessarily are in the priorities of our donors.

The financial strategy should focus on two pillars: stabilizing the membership fee system with our member organisation and having a prospective activity to find support from different foundations. We will develop a mid and long term saving strategy in order to enable MIJARC Europe to ensure its work and the continuation of its network.

#### **- Activities**

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When we organise and execute activities, we will keep in mind and live according to our views on topics such as sustainable food and eco-friendly materials. If you want to bring up a view and/or values of the network it is important to act according to it to be credible.