

MAPPING EXISTING EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY STRATEGIES ON YOUTH WORK

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MAPPING EXISTING EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY STRATEGIES ON YOUTH WORK

**IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PREPARATION OF THE
BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY
ON YOUTH 2024**

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Colophon

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following mapping exercise was conducted in July and August 2023 in the framework of the preparation of the youth dimension of Belgium's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2024. The study is mainly based on desk research by in-depth analysis of 38 youth policy documents, adopted and published in the framework of the European Union (Council of the European Union and Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council; European Commission) between 2001-2022 (20 documents), the Council of Europe (European Ministers responsible for Youth; Committee of Ministers; Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe) between 1998-2023 (15 documents) and the European Youth Work Conventions 2010, 2015 and 2020 (3 documents) (overview of documents see annex 1). The identification and selection of these policy documents (recommendations, resolutions, conclusions, reports, declarations) was made in close cooperation with the secretariat and team at the Department Cultuur, Jeugd en Media of the Flemish Government in Belgium which also commissioned the study.

The analysis looked particularly at objectives, principles, aims, actions and measures, instruments, and methods with particular emphasis on topics such as participation, voluntarism, public space, the right to play, social inclusion and (mental) health. It resulted in a brief one-page summary of the key messages of each document providing a first overview in chronological order. Four declarations of Council of Europe Youth Ministers responsible for Youth and one conclusion on a Youth Minister conference have not been included in this summary since they were similar to the Committee of Ministers Resolutions. The analysis led to a clustering of thematic areas and the identification of the most relevant topics reflected in these documents. The various clusters can be grouped under two major priorities respectively objectives: 'European Youth Policy Cooperation' and 'Development of Youth Work', while the focus of policy lies clearly on youth work (support). The identified thematic clusters are:

Human Rights, Democracy, Europe; Participation and Active Citizenship; Social Integration and Social Inclusion; Living in Diverse Societies; Education, Training, Lifelong Learning, Mobility; Employment and Entrepreneurship; Health and Well-Being; Creativity and Culture; Youth in the World; Other relevant subjects on the youth front: Public Spaces, Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection, Innovation, Digital Era.

In the next step the paper analyses and summarizes challenges as identified by the European institutions, mainly the Council of Europe Ministers responsible for Youth, the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union in their respective documents (declarations, resolutions, conclusions, White Paper), followed by a summary of and compared with the ten crises/challenges in a new Europe that currently impact the youth field which have been identified by Howard Williamson and discussed in the two meetings of the European Advisory and Resonance Group. This leads to a short summary of achievements, gaps, and undervalued items and the identification of recommendations per cluster/topic and for the various policy levels (local, regional, national, and European).

The mapping of existing European policy strategies on youth work has been finalised after its presentation and discussion in the third meeting of the European Resonance Group end of October

2023, taking insights, comments, and feedback of the EARG members in the final document into account¹.

It must be underlined that this mapping does not fulfil scientific standards with regard to citation formats since the essentials taken from the various documents have been made in a copy-and-paste mode not explicitly indicating them as individual quotes. They also have been modified, shortened, and compressed.

¹ Special thanks go to Guy Redig and Howard Williamson for their critical comments and suggestions

2. MAPPING RELEVANT EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY STRATEGIES ON YOUTH WORK

Some general remarks on the mapping exercise

It is not the intention of this analysis to define or to extract a proper and clear definition of youth policy nor of youth work. The understanding of both youth policy and youth work builds on the given definitions in the political documents and strategies as outlined there.

The introductory references to political backgrounds and dimensions (“Whereas...”, “Having regard...”, “Recalling...”, “Emphasising that...”, “Reaffirming...”, “Find and acknowledge that...”, “Bearing in mind...”) made in the analysed documents by both European Union and Council of Europe institutions have not been taken into account in this mapping since they do not have much relevance for clustering priority areas and actions. Instead, the mapping and clustering focused on an aggregated assessment of invitations and recommendations expressed towards various stakeholders.

The categories in the various policy documents in terms such as priorities, aims, actions and instruments are not always well defined and distinguished, which is why a clear categorisation and analysis were complicated. However, wherever possible, the main messages of each document were summarized in the following order: objectives, principles, aims, actions and measures, instruments, and methods, though not all categories were present in each document, nor were the distinctions between the categories always consistent.

When clustering in a second step the most important topics that had been extracted from the various documents, no distinction was made regarding their origin (European Union, Council of Europe, European Youth Work Convention) or particular authors (European Commission, Council of the European Union, Committee of Ministers, Committee of Local and Regional Authorities, participants of EYWCs), since the main purpose of the analysis lies in an overview of general thematic priority setting over the years and across the institutions.

The recommendations and suggestions expressed in the various documents are addressed to various levels of responsibility: local, regional, national, and European. Even if these levels are of high relevance for youth policy and youth work, they were not explicitly considered in the overview since the focus was placed on topics and themes.

Addressees of the analysed documents were governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union, multilateral organisations (European Union and its institutions such as the European Commission, Council of Europe, and United Nations), other European institutions and European Agencies, political structures and actors inside and outside the youth sector concerned with young people, researchers, the youth work field and young people themselves, also called the ‘youth work community of practice’.

Regarding instruments and methods, three major strategies can be identified:

- Actions in the proper field of youth policy (defining priority themes and common objectives or guidelines and/or indicators, monitoring and evaluation, implementing follow-up mechanisms, reporting mechanisms, knowledge building and evidence-based youth policy; periodic research and assessments; mutual learning; consultations, structured dialogue with young people & youth organisations; co-management in the Council of Europe; youth policy reviews and advisory missions, support to member states; in the European Union specifically application of the Open Method of Coordination.

- Mainstreaming youth, taking more account of youth in other policies in close coordination with various authorities and stakeholders at European and national levels.
- Making use and mobilization of various programs and funds in favour of youth in the framework of the European Union (in particular Erasmus+ Youth), the Council of Europe (European Youth Foundation, European Youth Centres), and the youth partnership of both institutions.

One item deserves particular mention: the demand, or rather the priority, to give particular attention to socially excluded young people, those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, or other socially marginalized or minority groups, such as young Roma or young people with migrant background and refugees. In many documents, priority is given broadly to these categories of young people, but some documents focus exclusively on one of the groups.

Some specific remarks on the mapping exercise

The mapping exercise highlights the essentials of, in total, 38 policy documents on youth policy and youth work, published by the European Union, and the Council of Europe and resulting from the European Youth Work Conventions.

The first part covering the European Union includes twenty documents, starting with the White Paper on Youth in the year 2001² and ending with a Council Recommendation on the Mobility of young volunteers across the European Union in 2022. One document (the White Paper on Youth) was published by the European Commission, one jointly by the Council of the European Union and European Commission (joint report), and eighteen by the Council of the European Union and Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council; these comprised eight Resolutions, three Recommendations and seven Conclusions³.

The second part includes ten documents of the Council of Europe, starting with a Resolution on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe (1998) and ending with the Recommendation on Roma Youth participation in 2023. One document (Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life⁴) was adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe (2003), all other nine documents were adopted by the Committee of Ministers with five Recommendations and four Resolutions⁵. As already stressed the declarations⁶ and the conclusion of the Council of European Ministers responsible for Youth were not included in the mapping but considered when identifying challenges for the youth field.

The third and final part includes the three declarations of participants of the European Youth Work Conventions 2010, 2015 and 2020.

² European Commission white papers are documents containing proposals for European Union (EU) action in a specific area.

³ Council Resolutions have no legal effect; the intention is to set out future work in a specific policy area. Council Recommendations are also without legal force but with a political weight as an instrument of indirect action; Council conclusions are adopted during each European Council meeting and used to identify specific issues of concern for the EU and outline particular actions to take or goals to reach.

⁴ A Charter is based on a ratification system, enabling States, under certain conditions, to choose the provisions they are willing to accept as binding international legal obligations. They are encouraged to progressively accept all the Charter's provisions.

⁵ Council of Europe Recommendations are made by the Committee of Ministers, are not binding, but set a policy framework agreed by member states; Resolutions are administrative decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers.

⁶ Declarations commit to political goals and standards of conduct, politically although not legally binding.

A. EUROPEAN UNION DOCUMENTS

WHITE PAPER - A NEW IMPETUS FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH

AUTHOR: EUROPEAN COMMISSION *Date & Document N°:* 21 November 2001 – COM (2001) 681 final
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/white-paper-on-youth.html>

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION**

PRINCIPLES

- Cooperation between various levels of responsibility & players; subsidiarity principle
- Compatibility with and supplementation of existing initiatives (incl. YOUTH)

AIMS

- provide new forms of governance
- develop a new framework for cooperation in the youth field

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Participation:
 - o primarily at local level, including young people who do not belong to associations
 - o consultation & dialogue at European level on specific topics & pilot projects
- Information:
 - o introduce an electronic information portal and forum about Europe
- Voluntary service among young people
 - o develop voluntary service significantly & reflect upon legal and social protection
 - o making voluntary service standard practice & remove obstacles to mobility
- Greater understanding of youth
 - o taking stock of, and networking, existing structures, studies, and research on youth
 - o drawing up a research programme & provision of statistical resources
- Education, lifelong learning, and mobility
 - o definition of the concepts, the skills acquired and of quality standards
 - o recognition of activities & greater complementarity with formal education & training
- Employment
 - o prevent long-term unemployment; improve education & training systems; reduce number of y.p. leaving education systems prematurely; instructing in new ICT's
- Social integration
 - o labour market; resources for y.p. in difficulties; tackling inequalities in education; access to quality services; regenerating areas suffering from multiple disadvantages
- Young people against racism and xenophobia
 - o tackling racism & xenophobia in all programmes & measures at all levels
- Autonomy for young people
 - o high-level working group with multi-disciplinary expertise

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- Open Method of Coordination in the specific field of youth
- Taking more account of youth in other policies
- Specific role of the YOUTH Programme

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON THE ADDED VALUE OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ACTION ON YOUTH

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 14 February 2002 - 2002/C 50/02

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2002:050:FULL>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

PRINCIPLES

- incorporate these policy objectives or measures in the follow-up of the White Paper Youth
- take account of the contribution of young volunteers to activities of the Youth programme
- develop synergies between initiatives of EC, CoE & other international organisations

AIMS

- acknowledge the added social value of various forms of v.a. of young people
- strengthen & further develop the role of voluntary activities
- develop policy on v.a. for young people & strengthen European cooperation

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- remove legal & administrative obstacles in national & international contexts
- recognise the importance of experience gained in this context; recognition & support by authorities at all levels
- recognise voluntary activities as informal and non-formal learning environments and opportunity to develop personal and professional skills
- support all parties involved in the implementation of voluntary activities
- make v.a. more easily accessible & avoid all forms of social exclusion or discrimination
- involve ngo's, youth organisations, other organisations active in v.a. & young volunteers
- promote mobility by enhancing conditions for cooperation between organisers
- facilitate the development of various lines of action
- develop a European Youth Volunteer Portal on voluntary activities
- improve accessibility & promotion of information provision
- sensitize public opinion, media, commerce, employers and civil society
- provide support through incentives and training of volunteers, their mentors & associations;
- improve quality care including health & safety aspects

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- collate & exchange good practice
- exchange of information and experiences about cooperation
- promote & support research via monitoring of developments
- networking between all parties involved

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON THE MOBILITY OF YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 20 November 2008 - 2008/C 319/03

OBJECTIVE **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES**

PRINCIPLES

- give particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities

AIMS

- every young person shall have the opportunity to volunteer in Europe

CONTENTS & MEASURES

- enhance the conditions for cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities
- facilitate the development of various lines of action
- develop a European Youth Volunteer Portal on voluntary activities
- make information on opportunities for v.a. abroad easily accessible to y.p. and to those active in youth work and in youth organisations
- make information available to all the relevant actors on the rights and opportunities
- promote the exchange of information on the opportunities for voluntary activities
- adopt a flexible approach to developing opportunities for cross-border voluntary activities (hosting capacities, contact points, mobility cards, training & information...)
- increase awareness of the importance of intercultural competences and language learning
- encourage organisers of voluntary activities to develop self-assessment tools
- providing assurances about the protection of young volunteers and service recipients
- examine further relevant social protection provisions
- promote the appropriate recognition of learning outcomes of voluntary activities

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- exchange of information and experiences about cooperation
- improve the level of knowledge of v.a.
- report to the Council four years after the adoption
- use of instruments at EU level by ensuring the transparency of qualifications (Europass, Youthpass & EQF)

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON A RENEWED FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD (2010-18)

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 27 November 2009 - 2009/C 311/01

[EUR-Lex - 32009G1219\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION

in the fields of education & training, employment & entrepreneurship, health & well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, creativity & culture

PRINCIPLES

- promoting gender equality, combating discrimination, including a children's policy dimension
- taking account of differences in living conditions, needs, aspirations, interests & attitudes of y.p.

AIMS

- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market
- promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people

ACTIONS & MEASURES / GENERAL INITIATIVES

- Cooperation between policy makers & with local and regional authorities
- Participation of young people and youth organisations
- Quality guidance and counselling services & quality youth information
- Better knowledge about the situation of young people
- Development of youth work and recognition of its value, experimental projects and programmes
- Value of bilateral & multilateral cooperation at European level

ACTIONS & MEASURES / SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

- promote learning mobility, cohesion & mutual understanding
- support young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
- stimulate integration of y.p. in the labour market, promote quality internships & apprenticeships
- encourage youth fitness, physical activity & healthy lifestyles; emphasise the role of sport
- promote protection of children and young people
- promote intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities
- support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people
- address the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion
- raise awareness about global issues such as sustainable development & human rights
- encourage to participate in 'green volunteering', 'green' patterns of consumption & production
- encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities
- support the development of creativity & widen quality access to culture and creative tools
- promote partnerships between creative sectors and youth organisations
- facilitate & support talent and entrepreneurial skills & promote knowledge about culture

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- 3-year work cycles, priority setting for each cycle, structured dialogue
- renewed open method of coordination in the youth field
- mainstreaming initiatives; cross-sectoral approach; take account of youth issues in other policies

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON YOUTH WORK

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 04 December 2010 - OJ C 327

[EUR-Lex - 42010Y1204\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

- in eight fields of action (policy areas) for cross-sectoral youth policy initiatives: education & training; employment & entrepreneurship; health & well-being; participation; voluntary activities; social inclusion; youth and the world; creativity & culture
- in other important action fields: human rights and democracy, cultural diversity and mobility

PRINCIPLES

- Promote gender equality, combat all forms of discrimination, fight poverty & social exclusion
- Taking account of differences in living conditions, needs, aspirations, interests & attitudes of y.p.
- Youth work complements formal education & offers benefits for children and young people

AIMS

- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market
- promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Remove barriers to engaging in youth work & create better conditions & opportunities for y.w.
- Support and develop the role of youth work in implementing the renewed framework
- Involve local & regional authorities & actors in developing, supporting, implementing youth work
- Develop a study to map the diversity, coverage and impact of youth work in the EU
- Support European youth NGO & smaller initiatives to stimulate a strong European civil society
- Enhance quality of youth work, capacity building & competence development of youth workers
- Enhance recognition of non-formal learning in youth work
- Develop European tools (e.g., Youthpass) & instruments for the documentation of competences
- Acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society
- Support capacity building of civil society in training for youth workers and youth leaders
- Identify different forms of youth work, competences and methods
- Promote employability of youth workers and youth leaders and their mobility
- Promote and support research in youth work and youth policy, including its historical dimension
- Make sufficient information on youth work available and accessible
- Promote the development of a systematic assessment of skills and competences
- Increase the accessibility of youth work for all children and young people
- Promote diverse forms of training of youth workers and youth leaders active in civil society
- Evaluate existing youth work approaches, practices and methods and invest in their innovation
- Exchange information and good practices, cooperate and network

INSTRUMENT & METHODS

- Promote different kinds of support for youth work, e.g., funding, resources or infrastructure
- Provide platforms for exchange on innovative research, policies, approaches, practices, methods
- Promote opportunities for exchange & networking of youth work, policymaking & research
- Exchange information and good practices, enhance cooperation and networks

2012 JOINT REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RENEWED FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD (2010-18)

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and European Commission

Date & Document N°: 20 December 2012 – OJ C 394

[EUR-Lex - 52012XG1220\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION

- In eight fields of action (policy areas) in which cross-sectoral youth policy initiatives are taken: education & training; employment & entrepreneurship; health & well-being; participation; voluntary activities; social inclusion; youth and the world; creativity & culture

PRINCIPLES

- youth work as support to all fields of action & cross-sectoral cooperation as underlying principle

AIMS

- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market
- promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Education & Training: recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning; support of youth organisations as providers of non-formal learning; emphasise the role of youth work
- Employment & Entrepreneurship: improve access to the labour market for young people, promotion of entrepreneurship education
- Health & Well-being: emphasise the value of peer-to-peer education in promoting healthy lifestyles
- Social Inclusion: combat (transgenerational) poverty and social exclusion through cross-sectoral cooperation
- Participation: involving young people in decision-making and review of the quality of participatory mechanisms, promoting structured dialogue and new ways of participation
- Voluntary Activities: development of (national) volunteering schemes, recognising the value of volunteering experiences, decrease obstacles to cross-border voluntary activities
- Culture & Creativity: emphasise the importance of creativity, culture and the role of young people, acknowledge the links between culture and creativity and youth policy
- Youth & the World: address the issue in education curricula or in youth policy strategies, provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- evidence-based policy-making
- mutual learning
- regular progress reporting, dissemination of results and monitoring
- structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations
- mobilisation of EU programmes and funds

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON THE VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 20 December 2012 - 2012/C 398/01

[Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)

OBJECTIVE **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & NON-FORMAL / INFORMAL LEARNING**

PRINCIPLES

- making links to National & European Qualifications Frameworks
- make use of European transparency tools and synergies with credit systems in formal E&T

AIMS

- Offering individuals the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned outside formal education and training
- make use of that learning for careers and further learning

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- put in place arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- develop relevant elements in arrangements such as identification, documentation, assessment & certification of an individual's learning outcomes
- provide information, guidance & counselling
- support of disadvantaged groups
- enhance quality assurance measures
- promote the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the development & implementation of the elements and principles and foster coordination between stakeholders

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- advisory and expert groups
- peer learning and exchanges of experience and good practice
- reviewing and further developing existing instruments
- use of European programmes for education, training, youth, sport & European Structural Funds
- assess, evaluate and report

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF QUALITY YOUTH WORK TO THE DEVELOPMENT, WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 14 June 2013 - OJ C 168

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02))

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK, WELL-BEING & SOCIAL INCLUSION

PRINCIPLES

- promote complementarity of youth work in the continuum of education and lifelong learning
- support the alignment of youth policy and youth work practice
- ensure more coordinated, evidence-informed youth work responses
- ensure that youth work is quality-based, outcomes-focused and evidence-informed
- develop supportive quality frameworks by involving all stakeholders including young people
- ensure that youth work initiatives are informed by the voices and aspirations of young people
- determine and recognise the personal, social and professional skills and competences deriving from the young people's participation in youth work

AIMS

- encourage & support young people through education, civil society, quality youth initiatives to participate in democratic life

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- strengthen relationships, both in policy and practice, with youth-related areas
- promote an emphasis on quality and the attainment of youth work outcomes
- support greater collaboration amongst all youth work stakeholders
- promote experiential learning & skills development
- promote recognition & validation of skills and competencies
- support the youth sector in developing structures, working methods & communication channels
- stimulate and support volunteer-led involvement in youth provision
- promote the contribution of quality youth work by maximising funding opportunities
- encourage intern. exchange of good practices, training, skills acquisition and peer-learning
- establish a thematic expert group to examine youth work quality systems in EU Member States
- explore how common indicators or frameworks may be developed
- build on the findings of the study on the value of youth work & consider a suitable follow-up
- take account of and disseminate other research studies and initiatives in this area

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- open method of coordination
- expert groups
- closer collaboration & knowledge exchange between policy, research, practice

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON A EUROPEAN UNION WORK PLAN FOR YOUTH FOR 2014-2015

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 20 May 2014 - 2014/C 183/02

[EUR-Lex - 42014Y0614\(02\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & EMPOWERMENT

- development of youth work and non-formal and informal learning and its contribution to addressing the effects of the crisis on young people
- enhanced cross-sectorial cooperation within the framework of EU strategies
- empowerment, with a special focus on access to rights, autonomy, participation, and active citizenship within and outside the EU

PRINCIPLES

- give impetus and prominence as appropriate to EU-level work in the youth field
- ensure through cross-sectorial cooperation that other EU policy domains are made aware of the specific issues faced by young people
- contribute to the overarching priorities of the EU economic and social policy agenda
- work towards knowledge and evidence-based youth policy
- remain a flexible framework which can respond to ongoing developments
- promote a cooperative and concerted approach among Member States and the Commission
- incorporate the existing informal structures into the structures established in this Work Plan
- make full use of the consultative procedures established by the Structured Dialogue

AIMS

- reinforce youth mainstreaming and cross sectorial cooperation in order to guarantee that policy making takes into account young people's conditions and needs

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Develop Youth Work in Europe
- Promote the contribution of youth policy to address Europe's challenges
- Strengthen cross-sectorial youth policymaking at EU and at national level
- Empowerment of young people with a special focus on access to rights in order to foster autonomy and participation to social life
- Empowerment for political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- cross-sectorial cooperation
- informal expert groups
- peer-learning activities among the Member States and the Commission
- structured dialogue as a means for joint reflection with young people

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON REINFORCING YOUTH WORK TO ENSURE COHESIVE SOCIETIES

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date and document N°: 23 May 2015 - 2015/C 170/02

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2015:170:FULL>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- establish a flexible framework for mutual learning and the exchange of good practice with regard to quality in youth work, especially with the aim of reaching out to all young people

AIMS

- Fostering youth work in contributing to personal, including professional, development, promoting values of social inclusion, cultural diversity, active citizenship and providing peer-environment based on mutual respect and tolerance
- further developing youth work across Europe & strengthening EU cooperation in this field

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- develop quality and professional youth work provision by supportive measures at all levels, including education and training opportunities for youth workers
- increase the outreach of youth work by focusing also on older age groups of young people (aged 18 and over) and young people with fewer opportunities
- strengthen 'quality' in youth work through considering the development of indicators, quality tools and systems which can be used in different forms of youth work
- enhance recognition of youth work by providing visibility not only to quantitative but also qualitative aspects and its impacts on young people's lives and cohesion in society
- consider the issues relating to knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the youth sector in any future review and other processes
- Taking into account the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems results, to conduct a study with a focus on developing basic quality principles for youth work in Europe (and a handbook)
- Both could serve as a reference and a guidance tool for national youth work services and facilities, ensuring transparency and quality for young people, including those in mobility
- consider making a proposal for a Council Recommendation on youth work with an emphasis on promoting young people's inclusion, citizenship, and a more cohesive society.

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- development of indicators & quality tools
- study & handbook

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON A EUROPEAN UNION WORK PLAN FOR YOUTH FOR 2016-2018

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 15 December 2015 - 2015/C 417/01

[EUR-Lex - 42015Y1215\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & YOUTH POLICY

PRINCIPLES

- build on the achievements of the previous Work Plan for Youth (2014-2015)
- give impetus and prominence as appropriate to EU level work in the youth field
- ensure, through cross-sectorial cooperation, the awareness of other EU policy domains
- contribute to the overarching priorities of the EU's security, economic and social policy agendas
- work towards knowledge and evidence-based youth policy
- remain a flexible instrument leading to adequate responses to a changing policy environment
- promote a cooperative and concerted approach among Member States and the Commission
- build on synergies with the Erasmus+ programme
- involve young people making use of consultative procedures
- give emphasis to young people at risk of marginalisation, NEETs, young migrants & refugees

AIMS

- combating radicalisation, marginalisation of youth
- increased social inclusion of all young people
- stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe
- easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood
- support to young people's health and well-being, including mental health
- addressing challenges & opportunities of the digital era for youth work & policy & young people
- responding to opportunities & challenges raised by young migrants and refugees

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- ensure relevance and visibility of activities
- support the capacity building of youth workers and in youth work
- consult & inform stakeholders at European level, including civil society & youth representatives
- encourage better outreach of and synergies within the EU programmes as well as cooperation with other international organisations like the Council of Europe
- continue close cooperation at expert level
- encourage other sectors to take the youth dimension into account
- promote recognition of the contribution of youth policies to the goals of European policies

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- Open Method of Coordination
- knowledge and evidence-based policymaking, expert groups, peer learning activities, peer reviews, studies, conferences, seminars, dissemination of results, informal forum with youth representatives, Directors General for Youth meetings, structured dialogue with young people
- reinforced cross-sectorial cooperation in the youth field & youth mainstreaming

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON PROMOTING NEW APPROACHES IN YOUTH WORK TO UNCOVER AND DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date and Document N°: 15.12.2016 - OJ C 467

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016XG1215%2802%29&qid=1686573841107>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Young people possess inner potential & talent that may be of benefit to them as well as to the whole of society
- Promote the implementation of effective cross-sectoral policies that can encourage and support young people and help them realise their full potential

AIMS

- Promote, support and evaluate the exploitation, design, development, testing and dissemination of new tools and approaches to be used in youth work

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Enhance capacities of youth workers for innovation & the development of the potential and talents of young people by providing educational and training opportunities focusing on:
 - o use and adaptation of innovative approaches in youth work practice
 - o incorporation of information on trends of y.p. into youth work education & practice
 - o use of cross-sectoral cooperation when designing innovative tools and approaches
 - o involve young people as a source of valuable information and expertise
 - o reach young people at risk of marginalisation
- Encourage sustainable support of the organisations working with and for young people
- Work closely with all relevant actors in the youth field, incl. young people
- Promote and support spaces and opportunities in partnership with local authorities
- Consider the creation of flexible spaces and opportunities for experimentation, trial and error
- Consider regular collection, analysis & dissemination of information on living trends of y.p.
- Search for innovative approaches implemented in youth work practice
- Identify new competences needed by youth workers & develop education and training modules
- Identify new approaches in youth work to uncover & develop the potential and talent of all y.p.
- Make regular analysis and provide accurate information on the latest lifestyles and living trends
- Support exchange of information on lifestyles and living trends of young people, as well as examples of good practice and innovative approaches implemented in youth work
- Make best use of the existing EU programmes such as Erasmus+

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- cross-sectoral cooperation
- young people, youth researchers, youth workers, youth organisations should take an active part at all stages of the process

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK IN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT OF ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS THAT FACILITATE THEIR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD, ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND WORKING LIFE

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date and Document N°: 15 June 2017 - OJ C 189

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017XG0615%2801%29&qid=1686574631319>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & LIFE SKILLS

PRINCIPLES

- Developing life skills is of equal importance in addressing the economic, political, social and human costs arising from high youth unemployment and in helping young people to determine and forge their futures through quality employment, social inclusion and active citizenship

AIMS

- Foster the contribution of youth work in developing young people's life skills in youth policy frameworks and measures

ACTIONS & OBJECTIVES

- Disseminate and promote among youth work providers, learning tools, methodologies and practices to support young people in acquiring life skills
- Support education, training and peer learning activities for youth work providers
- Recognise and validate education and training programmes for youth workers & youth leaders
- Promote and strengthen volunteering among young people and contribute to their participation in youth work projects and initiatives
- Promote and provide peer and mutual learning opportunities, projects and initiatives for youth work providers to share knowledge, tools and experience
- Consider which & how life skills acquired by young people through youth work can be identified, and documented in order to facilitate assessment and certification
- Maximise the use of Erasmus+ and other EU funding programmes
- Strengthen dialogue between youth work, youth policy and youth research and coordination between local, regional, national and European levels
- facilitate networking, cooperation, peer learning and exchange
- Identify, support and disseminate existing and innovative tools, methodologies and practices
- Promote and support cross-sectoral partnerships and initiatives between youth work providers, education and training institutions, social & employment services, social partners
- Contribute to knowledge building on life skills developed through youth work and support Member States in promoting capacity building & professional development of youth workers.
- Promote a cross-sectoral approach in helping young people acquire the necessary competencies to facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- networking, cooperation, peer learning and exchange
- cross-sectoral partnerships and initiatives
- knowledge building

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SMART YOUTH WORK

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 07 December 2017 - OJ C 418

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1207\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1207(01))

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF (DIGITAL) YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Digital media and technologies are increasingly part of everyday life and one of the supporting pillars for innovation and development in society
- Technological developments open great potential for empowerment of youth by providing access to information, by enriching opportunities for personal capabilities and competences, by providing opportunities for connectivity and interaction with others

AIMS

- addressing the challenges & opportunities of the digital era for youth policy, youth work and young people
- making use of and addressing digital media and technologies through smart youth work

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Create conditions for smart youth work, where and as appropriate, including:
 - o developing and implementing smart youth work in youth work and youth policy goals, strategic and financial instruments
 - o mapping and addressing the digital gap and inequalities to access technological developments from the viewpoint of young people, youth workers and youth leaders
 - o supporting the development of competencies relevant to smart youth work, including:
 - on issues such as information & data literacy, communication & collaboration through digital media & technologies, safety in digital environments etc.
 - through diverse approaches in teaching and learning, by incorporating smart youth work into training programmes, youth work occupational standards and guidelines
 - o exchanging examples of best practices in the use of digital media and technology
- Digital infrastructure enhancing connectivity and cross-sectoral partnerships, including with the education, innovation, research and development field, start-up companies and the business sector
- Synergies with the Digital Single Market Strategy, Research and Innovation strategies for Smart Specialisation, existing structures, public and private services, and programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020
- Ensure that these conclusions are acted upon in the context of ongoing work on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post-2018
- Organise an international event for further exploration of perspectives of smart youth work between interested Member States during the years 2017-2018

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- exchanging of examples of best practice
- cross-sectoral partnerships

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON A FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD: THE EUROPEAN UNION YOUTH STRATEGY 2019-2027

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 18 December 2018 - 2018/C 456/01

[EUR-Lex - C:2018:456:FULL - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION**

PRINCIPLES

- Equality and non-discrimination
- Inclusion of all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities
- Participation of young people and youth organisations
- Global, European, national, regional, and local dimension of youth policy

AIMS

- Enable y.p. to be architects of their own lives, support their personal development & growth to autonomy, build their resilience, equip them with life skills to cope with a changing world
- Equip y.p. with resources to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change
- Improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors
- Contribute to eradication of youth poverty, discrimination & promote social inclusion

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Encourage and promote inclusive democratic participation of all young people
- Actively engage young people in policies affecting the lives of young people
- Support establishment of youth representations & recognise young people's right to participate
- Support EU Youth Dialogue to include diverse voices of y.p. in decision-making processes
- Support opportunities for 'learning to participate' and help y.p. to prepare for participation
- Promote the use of innovative & alternative forms of democratic participation
- Enable access for all young people & youth workers to cross-border mobility opportunities,
- Encourage young people's engagement in solidarity
- Engage young people in design, implementation and evaluation of EU funding programmes
- Share best practices & work on systems for validation & recognition of skills & competencies
- Develop a European Youth Work Agenda for quality, innovation and recognition of youth work
- Support quality youth work development, incl. policy, training, legal frameworks & resources
- Support youth work activities & recognise youth organisations
- Create accessible youth contact points delivering a wide range of services, information, guidance

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- Dual approach: mainstreaming initiatives across policy areas & specific initiatives in youth sector
- evidence-based youth policy-making & knowledge building; mutual learning between Member States, European Commission & stakeholders; participatory governance; mobilising EU programmes & funds; EU Youth Dialogue & EU Youth Coordinator; Youth Information & Support; EU Work Plans for Youth; monitoring, reporting, evaluation, mid-term reviews, structured dialogue; mainstreaming & cross-sectoral cooperation; tackling core areas of the youth sector: Engage. Connect. Empower; 11 European Youth Goals

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF YOUTH WORKERS

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date and Document N°: 09 December 2019 - 2019/C 412/03

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1209\(01\)&rid=7](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1209(01)&rid=7)

OBJECTIVE **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK AND EDUCATION & TRAINING**

PRINCIPLES

- The variety and features of youth work in Member States reflect their respective histories, socio-economic conditions, cultural contexts & national, regional local priorities

AIMS

- High-quality, flexible and practice-oriented education & training for youth workers promoting both the quality and the recognition of youth work, building on its diversity
- deepen the knowledge of the impact of the policies, methods and tools developed at the European level on education and training of youth workers in the Member States

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Building on existing mapping exercise, carry out further research on current youth worker education and training systems in Europe
- Developing a shared understanding between Member States of quality youth worker education and training and their objectives
- Fostering the development of flexible, practice-based and multi-level approaches for the education and training of youth workers
- Create a competence-based framework for formal and non-formal youth work education and training, sensitive to the differences in training needs & based on peer learning, digital learning & other innovative methods
- Carry out country-specific mappings of competencies needed in youth work, as well as of key elements, and evaluate, update and further develop youth worker training programmes
- Work together with the Council of Europe, youth organisations and other relevant organisations and networks in further developing the education and training of youth workers
- Promote, facilitate bi- & multilateral cooperation between public administrations, universities, educational institutions for youth workers & those seeking to develop such programmes
- Promote cooperation between public youth work providers and civil society organisations engaged in youth worker education and training
- Enhance the education and training of youth workers, youth work related research and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work
- Improve digital competences through non-formal learning and training, taking into account the process of updating the Digital Education Action Plan in view of extending it to youth work

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- information gathering through available instruments, such as the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy and Youth Wiki
- provide opportunities for exchange, cooperation and networking through effective use of the opportunities provided by EU programmes and funds

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 10 December 2019 - 2019/C 414/02

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1210\(01\)&from=GA](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1210(01)&from=GA)

OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPMENT OF (DIGITAL) YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Digital literacy and other 21st-century skills play a crucial role in young people's independence, social inclusion, employability and daily lives
- Youth work has a great potential to allow for experiential learning in a non-formal setting and to involve young people in activities to strengthen their digital competencies and media literacy

AIMS

- contribute to the innovative development of youth work in Europe
- provide equal opportunities for all young people to enhance their digital competencies

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Promote youth policies and strategies with regard to technological development & digitalisation
- Include in youth strategies and policy plans clear goals and concrete steps for developing and implementing digital youth work and assessing its impact on young people and youth work
- Encourage youth work to develop digital activities & innovative methodologies
- Consider experimental & innovative approaches & co-operation models for digital youth work
- Invest in and set up guidelines for building digital capacity among youth workers & providers
- Embed digital youth work in professional curricula for youth workers and training for volunteers
- Encourage youth workers & y. p. to improve digital competencies in a co-learning process
- Promote the use of existing materials, develop new digital youth work materials and training
- Develop digital tools & services in youth work, bring together youth work, youth research & ICT
- Provide opportunities for young people to practise and improve digital competencies in various youth work settings, including key areas of digital competence
- Empower all young people to participate in decision-making processes & alternative forms of democratic participation
- Remove barriers to acquire digital competence throughout education, training & prof. pathways
- Strengthen the role of youth work in supporting young people's creative use of technology
- Give y.p. the skills to be both critical consumers and active creators in technological terms
- Promote access for all young people, amongst those living in rural and remote areas, or where face-to-face access is not feasible, to youth work services through the use of digital technologies
- Promote and make use of existing digital and physical platforms for peer-learning activities
- Organise events bringing young people, youth workers, experts, researchers and ICT sector figures together to innovate new ways and approaches to using technology in youth work
- Encourage Europe-wide research to increase the knowledge on the impact of digitalisation
- Improve the digital competencies through non-formal learning and training

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- cross-sectoral cooperation between relevant policy sectors and stakeholders
- exchange of best practices regarding implementation & development of digital strategies

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK AGENDA

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 01 December 2020 - OJ C 415

[EUR-Lex - 42020Y1201\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Youth work
 - o takes different forms with different perceptions, traditions, stakeholders, practices
 - o enables y.p. to learn about & experience universal values
 - o facilitates engagement among young people & promotes democratic awareness

AIMS

- Promote development and strengthening of quality & innovation in youth work
- Integrate youth work into existing and future youth policy strategies and their implementation
- Ensure sustainable structures, facilities & appropriate resources for quality youth work

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Strengthen the common principles of youth work within the community of practice
- Enhance understanding of concepts, methods & tools for education & training in youth work
- Monitor and evaluate the state of and developments & challenges in youth work
- Develop strategies & actions for recognition & validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Strengthen youth work's capacity to empower young people
- Promote the European dimension of youth work through cross-border & transnational activities
- Strengthen cooperation between Member States, the Council of Europe and other institutions
- Identify themes and fields of action for the further development of youth work
- Strengthen knowledge-building and evidence-based approaches in youth work
- Facilitate implementation of the Agenda through
 - o existing & new structures & tools
 - o monitoring and evaluation
 - o enshrining in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy
 - o using EU funding programmes
 - o informing relevant actors within the community of practice about the Agenda
- Foresee a European Youth Work Convention in principle every five years
- Set up a consultative 'Network for youth work development in Europe' of relevant structures
- Promote active, critical citizenship and democratic awareness and the appreciation of diversity
- Consider developing an open, multilingual dedicated European digital platform on youth work

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- cross-border & transnational exchange, cooperation, intercultural learning, and peer-learning
- monitoring, evaluation, dissemination, and sharing information, knowledge and good practices
- networks, cooperation, partnerships, dialogue within community of practice
- encounters, expert exchanges, and scientific- and practice-informed research

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY WORK PLAN 2022-2024

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 14 December 2021 - OJ C 504

[EUR-Lex - 42021Y1214\(02\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & YOUTH POLICY

PRINCIPLES

- The EU Work Plan works as a compass and guides Member States, the Commission and all stakeholders towards achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy

AIMS

- effectively implement the EU Youth Strategy across the EU and in the Member States with specific instruments – including the EU Work Plans for Youth

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- enhance participation of young people
- foster an intergenerational dimension in youth policy-making
- provide decent and affordable housing for young people
- enhance stable and well-paid employment for young people
- support engagement of young people for sustainable development, promote the social dimension of a sustainable green Europe, consider effects of climate change on inclusion
- support mobility of youth volunteers in the EU
- support young people with disabilities
- foster young people's LGBTI rights
- promote gender equality among young people
- enhance social inclusion of young people ('leaving no one behind')
- focus on 'the right to play' and the link with learning (formal, non-formal and informal learning)
- focus on local youth work
- recognise competences in education and training
- focus on child friendly cities
- promote European and international agenda's on children, youth and children's rights
- foster youth opportunities in rural areas and enable young people to fulfil their potential in rural areas

INSTRUMENTS

- Conferences, seminars, informal meetings
- Exchange of good practice
- Council Conclusions & Recommendations

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON THE MOBILITY OF YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTHOR: Council of the European Union and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 05 April 2022- 2022/C 157/01)

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0411%2801%29>

OBJECTIVE **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES**

PRINCIPLES

- experiences show the need to further facilitate transnational volunteering, in particular for young people with fewer opportunities

AIMS

- facilitating & improving the quality of transnational youth volunteering
- encouraging mutual learning, networking & synergies between volunteering schemes & activities in Member States

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Consider measures contributing to a legislative and implementation framework for the health, safety & security of participants in transnational volunteering activities
- Provide accessible information and raise awareness about volunteers' rights
- Enhance the quality of volunteering opportunities by supporting organisers of volunteering activities in their capacity-building endeavours
- Ensure access to transnational volunteering activities as a realistic opportunity for all y.p.
- Increase awareness of the benefits of volunteering through information, guidance & outreach
- Support and promote community-building activities related to volunteering
- Explore new trends and alternative dimensions and formats of volunteering
- Create synergies, complementarities and continuities between volunteering schemes and activities existing at European level and at various levels in Member States
- Support volunteering activities that make a contribution to tackling climate and environment-related challenges
- Facilitate exchange of practices between Member States on how to address obstacles that may prevent young people from participating in volunteering
- Facilitate mutual learning and exchanges among Member States and relevant stakeholders
- Explore new trends and formats of volunteering which respect the basic principles for equal opportunities and non-discrimination, accessibility, inclusiveness and high quality of activities
- Promote and disseminate information about European opportunities for youth volunteering
- Further develop, promote and provide support for the use of existing EU tools that support the validation of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning
- Support research & data collection on the impact of volunteering & solidarity activities
- Use the online platform Youth Wiki to gather information on Member States' progress

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- peer learning, peer counselling, expert groups, networking, and other cooperation structures
- make use of existing spaces such as the Youth Wiki and the European Youth Portal

B. COUNCIL OF EUROPE DOCUMENTS

RESOLUTION ON THE YOUTH POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 16 April 1998 - (98) 6 / 628th meeting

<https://rm.coe.int/native/09000016804e22e9>

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION**

PRINCIPLES

- make more of the potential offered by young people
- help young people, particularly the disadvantaged, to find ways of meeting the challenges facing them and their own aspirations
- strengthen civil society through the promotion of training for democratic citizenship in a non-formal educational context
- encourage young people's participation in civil society
- support the development of youth policies and the provision of suitable legislation & structures
- seek ways of promoting youth mobility in Europe.

AIMS

- the need for a dynamic Council of Europe youth policy
- ensuring a youth policy involving young people, effectively responding to the changes in contemporary society, and capable of advancing democratic, cultural, and social consolidation

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- promote intercultural dialogue and understanding in a spirit of respect for diversity
- combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance, all movements undermining democracy
- foster young people's awareness of and commitment to human rights and democracy
- stimulate a balanced development of youth structures in all member states
- encourage of new forms of youth participation and organisation
- provide training of young people to assume responsibilities
- contribute to social cohesion, especially by combating exclusion, and the prevention of phenomena specifically affecting young people
- facilitate young people's access to information and new information technologies
- organise systematic exchange of information and good practices
- foster ongoing analysis of national youth policies

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- a multidisciplinary and intercultural approach
- closer involvement of young people in decisions which affect them and in the management of programmes and resources
- adapting and opening up programmes and structures to the changes in society
- developing research into the problems of greatest concern to young people
- stimulating young people's creativity and critical sense
- making youth activities more co-ordinated, co-operative and coherent
- achieving greater transparency, flexibility and rapidity in the implementation of youth policies
- improving co-operation with the European Union and with other international organisations
- optimum use of human, financial and other resources shall be ensured

RESOLUTION ON THE YOUTH POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 29 October 2003 - Res(2003)7 / 859th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805deaab

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION**

PRINCIPLES

- youth policies need to be as comprehensive as possible, taking into account the overall needs of young people, and recognising their diversity and their many facets and resources

AIMS

- help young people to find ways of meeting the challenges they face & their aspirations
- encourage y.p. to be active in creating a closer European unity based on democratic values
- empower y.p. through non-formal education & participation in strengthening civil society
- promote and support the development of youth policies in Europe

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- promotion of intercultural dialogue and peace:
 - o mediation, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, intercultural dialogue & dialogue between civilisations
 - o training of youth leaders and capacity-building of European youth organisations
- human rights education and promotion of human dignity, and social cohesion:
 - o fight against racism, intolerance and all forms of discrimination
 - o development of social cohesion & fight against social exclusion of young people
 - o fight against violence in everyday life
- participation and democratic citizenship:
 - o training of young democratic leaders and of young people as “multipliers”
 - o support & development of non-governmental youth organisations & networks
 - o young people’s participation in and access to democratic institutions and processes
 - o establishment of democratic youth bodies and non-governmental youth organisations
- support to the setting up and development of appropriate youth policies:
 - o development & comparative analysis of national youth policies & strategies for youth
 - o relations between youth & childhood policies & policies for vulnerable young people
 - o recognition of non-formal education & its complementarity with formal education
 - o information and advice to young people
 - o contribution of young people to social and cultural innovation
 - o environmental education
 - o promotion of partnership between governments and youth organisations.
- taking into consideration the youth dimension in other activity sectors of the Council of Europe

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- multidisciplinary and intercultural approach
- involvement of young people in decisions; co-management
- research into the problems of greatest concern to young people
- exchange of experiences and good practice in the area of training
- co-operation with other international organisations & in particular with the European Union

REVISED EUROPEAN CHARTER ON THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL LIFE

AUTHOR: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

Date & Document N°: 21 May 2003 – 10th session – Recommendation 128 (2003)

<https://rm.coe.int/168071b4d6>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK & YOUTH POLICY

in sectoral policies: sport, leisure, associative life; youth employment; urban environment & habitat, housing, transport; education & training; health; gender equality; rural regions; culture; sustainable development & environment; violence & crime; anti-discrimination; sexuality; access to rights & law

PRINCIPLES

- participation of y.p. in local & regional life as part of a global policy of citizens' participation
- various forms of participation in all sectoral policies & for all y.p. without discrimination

AIMS

- active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- socio-cultural activities & training of facilitators of youth clubs, youth workers
- development of employment policies & programmes together with all stakeholders
- support of establishment of businesses, enterprises, and co-operatives by young people
- encourage experimentation by y.p. with social economy, community initiatives or co-operatives
- draw up programmes for a harmonious environment & a real solidarity between generations
- take account of residents' social, intercultural realities in housing (renovation) programmes
- ease access to public transport, in particular in rural areas
- encourage participation of young people in school life incl. civic and political education
- participation in international twinning activities, all types of exchanges, and European networks
- development of the concept of all-round health and the dynamics of community life
- educational & promotional policy of equality between women and men
- reflect and address the special needs of young people living in rural areas
- access to culture in all its forms and
- promote possibilities for creative activity incl. in new fields allowing to become cultural actors
- raise awareness of & promote sustainable development & environmental protection
- include young people in crime prevention & combat all form of violence by all means
- counter discrimination of all population groups & promote multicultural communities
- support sex education & offer information on relationships, sexual methods and family planning
- facilitate access to rights by developing knowledge & application of rights

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- Training & Information of young people, incl. ICT's and media
- Voluntary work & community causes
- Support for young people's projects, for youth organisations and in political parties
- Institutional participation through youth councils & parliaments or forums & other structures

RESOLUTION ON THE YOUTH POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 25 November 2008 - CM/Res(2008)23 / 1042nd meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d2245

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION**

PRINCIPLES

- cross-sectoral dimension of youth policy and the importance of involving young people in its formulation, implementation and follow-up

AIMS

- provide young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society

ACTIONS & MEASURES / PRIORITIES

- Human rights and democracy:
 - o promoting young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures
 - o promoting equal opportunities for participation of all young people in all aspects of lives
 - o effectively implementing gender equality; preventing all forms of gender-based violence
 - o promoting awareness education & action among y.p. on sustainable development
 - o facilitating access of all young people to information and counselling services
- Living together in diverse societies:
 - o empowering y.p. to promote cultural diversity, global solidarity, intercultural dialogue
 - o preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any ground
 - o supporting initiatives of young people regarding conflict prevention & management
 - o supporting youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons
 - o encouraging the development of sub-regional youth cooperation in Europe and beyond
- Social inclusion of young people:
 - o supporting the integration of excluded young people
 - o ensuring young people's access & transition to education, training and working life
 - o supporting young people's autonomy & well-being & access to decent living conditions
 - o ensuring young people's equal access to cultural, sporting and creative activities
 - o encouraging intergenerational dialogue and solidarity

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- youth policy development and cooperation:
 - o intergovernmental cooperation and international partnerships, including EU
 - o service to countries, through reviews of national youth policies & advisory missions
 - o co-management, as a unique and valuable cooperation mechanism
- youth work, education and training:
 - o multilateral co-operation & working with multipliers; development of quality youth work
 - o intercultural learning as a non-formal educational method
 - o European Youth Centres / European Youth Foundation for developing youth co-op.
- youth research and knowledge of youth:
 - o co-op. youth researchers & policymakers to promote evidence-based policies & practice
 - o carrying out studies & production of publications and educational and training material
 - o further development of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

RECOMMENDATION ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO RIGHTS

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 28 September 2016 - CM/Rec(2016)7 / 1266th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806a93e2

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION & ACCESS TO RIGHTS**

PRINCIPLES

- fundamental role of young people & youth organisations in the development of our societies
- access to rights as a prerequisite for personal development & access to autonomy

AIMS

- unhindered and full access of young people to rights as an essential element of a culture of human rights, democracy and rule of law

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- addressing discriminatory practices faced by young people; multifaceted identities and intersectionality of discrimination should be a particular focus
- removing legal, administrative and practical obstacles to the right of young people to assemble peacefully and to freely form, join and be active in associations and trade unions
- establishing youth policies to facilitate all young people's access to rights more effectively:
 - o barriers to accessing quality education
 - o difficulties on leaving education & to secure stable and meaningful employment
 - o lack of appropriate support for continuing education and training
 - o insufficient capacity of social and health-care services
 - o negative consequences of precarious life situations on the well-being and safety
 - o insufficient opportunities for participation in the life of society
 - o insufficient or non-existent financial and political support for youth initiatives
- improving young people's access to rights with co-operation across all relevant policy areas:
 - o undertake a critical and profound knowledge-based analysis of the problems
 - o carry out a review of existing and planned legislation, and introduce legislative measures
 - o consider additional steps to improve young people's access to rights
 - o modify the structure and practice of institutions and services catering for young people
- reflect principles of the universality & indivisibility of human rights, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, gender equality, accountability, participation, intergenerational solidarity.

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- knowledge-based analysis, review of existing and planned legislation
- co-operation across all relevant policy areas
- consultation with youth policy stakeholders

RECOMMENDATION ON ACCESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBOURHOODS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 21 January 2015 - CM/Rec(2015)3 / 1217th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c46f7

OBJECTIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION & ACCESS TO RIGHTS

PRINCIPLES

- young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are motivated to contribute to the improvement of their own situations and those of their communities
- young people & their organisations can play a positive role for social cohesion

AIMS

- developing sustainable, evidence-based public policies that take into consideration the specific situations and needs of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- preventing and eradicating poverty, discrimination, violence, and exclusion faced by such young people through efforts to:
 - o improve the living conditions of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods by providing accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services and other measures in education and training, employment and occupation, health, housing, information & counselling, sports, leisure and culture
 - o implement concrete measures to work towards abolition of the segregation and isolation that negatively affects disadvantaged neighbourhoods
 - o promote meaningful opportunities for consultation & participation of young people in all matters related to the planning and management of their living environment
 - o implement concrete measures to enable all young people to exercise their active role in society without discrimination
 - o recognise the role of non-formal education and youth work for the prevention of discrimination, violence and exclusion and the promotion of active citizenship
 - o develop gender-sensitive approaches to youth policies in disadvantaged neighbourhoods & provide support for capacity building and equal participation

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Improving the living conditions of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in education and training; employment & occupation; housing; health; information and counselling; sport, leisure and culture
- Breaking down segregation and the promotion of social inclusion
- Promoting meaningful participation in planning & management of living environment
- Ensuring that all young people can exercise their role as active citizens without discrimination
- Recognising non-formal education & youth work in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Improving gender equality of young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Preventing all forms of violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- providing accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services and other measures
- consultation and participation of young people

RECOMMENDATION ON YOUTH WORK

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Date & Document N°: 31 May 2017 – CM/Rec(2017)4 / 1287th meeting

[1680717e78 \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/t/t09/youth/youth_work/CM/Rec(2017)4.pdf)

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- the sustainability of European identity and CoE's core values relies on the creativity, competences, social commitment & contribution of y.p. on their confidence in the future
- government policies should support y.p. in realising their full potential as autonomous members of society, developing life plans and exercise democratic citizenship
- youth work makes an important contribution to active citizenship by providing opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for civic engagement and social action

AIMS

- ensuring further development of quality youth work while taking into account its diversity
- strengthening the capacity of youth work to respond to current changes and trends
- provide an enabling environment for both proven & innovative youth work practices

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- establishing a flexible competency-based framework for education & training of youth workers
- elaborating a mid-term strategy for knowledge-based development of European youth work, to
 - o improve coordination of and access to youth work knowledge and resources
 - o support the exchange of youth work practices, peer learning, networks & partnerships
 - o stimulate cooperation within the youth sector and with other sectors
 - o strengthen dialogue between youth work, youth policy and youth research
 - o mapping education & training & validation systems of competencies for youth workers
 - o develop a range of assistance measures to support Member States
- fostering national and European research on the different forms of youth work and their value
- supporting the development of forms of review & evaluation of impact and outcomes of y.w.
- strengthen the role and position of youth work to facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation
- promote coordination between local, regional, national and European levels of youth work
- promote the recognition of the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding
- promote equal access to youth work and its role by
 - o informing young people of their rights and of opportunities and services available
 - o strengthening active citizenship, participation and social inclusion of all young people
 - o broadening intercultural competencies, European identity, international understanding
 - o encouraging young people to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
 - o addressing and preventing discrimination, intolerance and social exclusion
- respect the freedom and autonomy of youth organisations and other youth ngo's
- encourage research, evaluation, documentation, validation, certification & recognition
- establish a competency-based framework for education and training of youth workers
- establish frameworks, strategies, programmes for professional development of youth workers

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- set up an ad hoc high-level taskforce of the relevant stakeholders in youth work in Europe
- networking, co-operation, peer learning and exchange

RECOMMENDATION ON SUPPORTING YOUNG REFUGEES IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Date and Document N°: 24 April 2019 - CM/Rec(2019)4 / 1344th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016809416e1

OBJECTIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION & ACCESS TO RIGHTS

PRINCIPLES

- education, accommodation, employment, and health care, incl. psychosocial support serve to facilitate the social inclusion of young people and help reduce their risk of exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse, including gender-based violence and discrimination

AIMS

- ensuring support for refugees after the age of 18 to enable them to access their rights
- recognising the role of youth work & the youth sector in promoting better access to these rights
- taking due consideration to the specific needs and situations of young women and of young men

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- improve the legal framework for young refugees in transition to adulthood
- foster interdisciplinary co-operation between institutions in relevant areas
- provide support and protection & ensure access to social services
- ensure access to welfare benefits and accommodation and an adequate standard of living
- provide educational opportunities incl. VET, languages & related to sexual, reproductive health
- recognise and certify young refugees' language competences & previous education experience
- provide opportunities to receive education for democratic citizenship & human rights education
- provide free, comprehensive health care, including mental health care & psychological support
- provide free legal advice & information about (access to) rights & responsibilities
- safeguard the right to family reunification for young refugees
- provide access to the labour market & to information, guidance
- promote inclusion & integration by mobilising the potential of youth work
- provide specific training for youth workers, including in mental health first aid
- support youth work offering non-formal education opportunities & addressing mental well-being
- support youth work to deliver leisure and recreational activities
- involve young refugees in all youth work and non-formal education activities
- provide information on youth work & non-formal education opportunities to refugees
- make sure that national and European youth programmes are accessible
- exchange good practice of youth work & non-formal education targeted at young refugees
- encourage co-operation between youth work, migration and other sectors
- build the capacity of young refugees by providing spaces to organise and express themselves
- develop sustainable short-, mid- and long-term programmes to link with the local population
- engage with young refugees and support them to become culturally, politically & socially active
- consult national youth councils & organisations, including those representing young refugees
- include young refugees in programmes and within organisations

INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS

- awareness raising, support & assistance, cooperation & dialogue, advice & information, exchange of good practice, consultation, capacity building & training

RESOLUTION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH SECTOR STRATEGY 2030

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 22 January 2020 - CM/Res(2020)2 / 1365th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998935

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK AND YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION

through

- revitalising pluralistic democracy, with special emphasis on strengthening:
 - o capacity of youth civil society to advance participatory democracy
 - o policies & governance processes in a meaningful, participatory manner
 - o youth policy and youth work in removing barriers to youth participation
- young people's access to rights, with special emphasis on strengthening:
 - o the implementation of CoE's standards on y.p.'s access to rights
 - o capacity building for youth organisations & others to provide HRE & EDC
 - o responses to emerging issues affecting young people's rights & transition to adulthood,
- living together in peaceful and inclusive societies, with special emphasis on strengthening:
 - o stakeholders to build inclusive societies & to counter discrimination, violence, exclusion
 - o opportunities that develop y.p.'s commitment to and exercise of democratic citizenship
 - o y.p.'s capacities to prevent violence, transform conflict & to build a culture of peace
- youth work, with special emphasis on strengthening:
 - o strengthening, recognising and advancing youth work policies and practices
 - o quality of youth work delivered by both volunteer and paid youth workers
 - o access & attractiveness of youth work and non-formal education/learning

PRINCIPLES

- achieving coherence & synergy with the work of international stakeholders in the youth field

AIMS

- enhance the CoE's main acquis in youth policy & setting up a new strategic framework 2020-30
- enabling young people to uphold, defend, promote & benefit from the CoE's core values

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- intergovernmental co-operation on implementation of youth policy, based on CoE standards
- assistance to youth policy development in MS through bilateral & multilateral support measures
- capacity building of young multipliers, notably through EYC's
- good governance and youth participation, notably through the co-management system
- financial support to the development of youth civil society, notably through EYF
- innovation & cooperation in & between youth work, youth policy & youth research
- quality development & standard setting in youth policy, anticipating challenges & opportunities
- co-operation with the European Union and partnerships with other stakeholders and services
- youth mainstreaming and cross-departmental co-operation inside the Council of Europe
- proactive outreach to and engagement of young people experiencing disadvantage

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- Co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector
- European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation
- Partnership with the European Commission in the youth field

RECOMMENDATION ON ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION

AUTHOR: Committee of Ministers

Date and Document N°: 5 April 2023 - CM/Rec(2023)4 / 1462nd meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680aacef2

OBJECTIVE **EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY COOPERATION & ACCESS TO RIGHTS**

PRINCIPLES

- equal, equitable and effective access of young Roma people to human rights constitutes a fundamental element of the member States' commitment to the Council of Europe's principles and core values

AIMS

- ensure substantive, fair participation and inclusion of young Roma people in all spheres of society, in decision-making processes & structures
- ensure young Roma people's full and effective access to and fulfilment of all fundamental human rights and freedoms

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- mainstream needs & priorities voiced by young Roma people in all policies & programmes
- assess relevant policies & democratic structures to ensure Roma youth's effective participation
- combat all forms and manifestations of structural anti-Roma racism and anti-gypsyism
- ensure free and non-discriminatory access to quality education, training and employment
- strengthen the capacity of Roma youth-led organisations and initiatives as spaces for exercising citizenship, promoting youth work & expressing their cultural identity, language and history
- invite civil society to contribute to the implementation and evaluation of this recommendation
- adopt policies, measures & programmes & allocate funding to implement this recommendation
- ensure that all policies, measures and programmes respect the diversity of Roma communities
- ensure freedom of assembly and association
- foster participation and representation in all spheres of society, in political parties and processes
- promote equal access of Roma youth to internships, traineeships and fellowships
- enhance diversity and inclusion practices of youth structures incl. Roma youth organisations
- prevent institutional racism & sanction employees committing acts of discrimination
- address intersectional or multiple discrimination through laws, policies and programmes

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- indicators, monitoring, reporting mechanisms, periodic research and assessments
- partnerships, cooperation with intergovernmental and international organisations
- courses, programmes, professional training, mentoring and affirmative action measures
- information about programmes & services
- participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies & objectives

C. DOCUMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTIONS

1st EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION – FINAL DECLARATION

AUTHOR: Participants of 1st European Youth Work Convention

DATE: 2010

<https://go.coe.int/nlMal>

OBJECTIVE **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK**

PRINCIPLES

- Youth Work provides space and opportunity for young people to shape their own futures: association, dialogue, action, support, experience, participation, empowerment & values

AIMS

- promote visibility, foster quality, enhance credibility of youth work

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- Youth work and policy priorities
 - o politicians need to establish a better knowledge of youth work
 - o youth workers have to secure a stronger grasp of how policy is made
- Position and cross-sectorial co-operation
 - o greater professional collaboration within a broader framework of cross-sectorial policy
 - o more communication, co-ordination, co-operation through collaborative practice
- Information, impact, and effect
 - o more forms of collection, dissemination, translation of information on youth work
 - o enlarging the 'triangle' research, policy, practice into a square incorporating y.p.
- Youth work for all and in diversity
 - o From understanding the need for tolerance to competencies around cultural diversity
 - o strengthening diversity within youth work organisations & youth work administrations
- The quality of practice
 - o participatory structures need to be broadened through dialogue and co-management
 - o establishing routes to validation through accreditation of prior learning
- Competence, training and recognition
 - o developing a competence-building framework based on approaches to learning
 - o foster recognition of youth work, both within & outside youth policy
- Mobility and networking
 - o means & opportunities for dialogue, contact & co-operation for practitioners
 - o foster international mobility opportunities for youth workers
- Sustainable support and funding
 - o legal framework to ensure the sustainability of youth work development
 - o European funds playing a triple additional role in development & implementation y.w.

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- mapping or inventory of forms and volume of youth work in member states
- youth workers advanced training, competence-building framework, mobility, recognition
- community development and community action
- platforms for dialogue, exchange & networking, communication, co-ordination, co-operation
- knowledge building, collection, dissemination, translation of information

2nd EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION – FINAL DECLARATION

AUTHOR: Participants of 2nd European Youth Work Convention

DATE: 2015

[2nd European Youth Work Convention - Youth Partnership \(coe.int\)](http://2nd European Youth Work Convention - Youth Partnership (coe.int))

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Youth work is about cultivating the imagination, initiative, integration, involvement and aspiration of y.p. Its principles are educative, empowering, participative, expressive and inclusive
- Youth work helps y.p. to discover their talents and develop the capacities and capabilities to navigate an ever more complex and challenging social, cultural and political environment

AIMS

- Map and review the evolutions in youth work practice and policy since 2010
- Discuss challenges facing youth work at local, national and European level
- Find common ground on which all 'youth work' stands within the diversity of youth work
- give a new impetus to the political and institutional debate around youth work
- foster further development and stronger recognition

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- 'European Agenda for Youth Work': European cooperation, national strategies in Member States, the responsibility of local and regional authorities, recognition of non-formal and informal learning, active promotion and advocacy
- Improving the quality of youth work: development of a set of competencies & qualifications for youth workers; strategies, concepts & programmes for training of youth workers; recognition of youth work & non-formal, informal learning in youth and qualifications of youth workers pathways for the professionalization of youth work in co-operation with the educational sector
- Towards a knowledge-based approach: build a knowledge base for youth work in Europe; more national and European research; support for appropriate forms of scrutiny, inquiry and assessment of youth work practice and concepts; development of reflective practice in Europe based on monitoring and research
- Funding: sustainable systems of funding for youth work practices & structures and for innovation and new forms of practice; support for European exchange and cooperation; accessibility for various target groups through access to information and guidance
- Cross-sectorial cooperation: collaborative practice & cooperation between different actors from other sectors working with y.p.; mapping links and existing practice, monitoring and evaluation to exchange the learning from these experiences; cross-sectorial training
- Civic dialogue: involve young people and youth structures from the beginning at all levels as partners in civic dialogue

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- (Cross-sectoral) Cooperation & cooperation & dialogue
- Recognition, promotion, and advocacy
- Research and knowledge building
- Training and capacity building
- Resources and funding

3rd EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION – FINAL DECLARATION: SIGNPOSTS FOR THE FUTURE

AUTHOR: Participants of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention

DATE: 2020

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17ejoiXwLwODGsoFUndAwVBlFy4oMdxsN/view>

OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES

- Non-formal education & learning provides y.p. with a sense of agency
- Youth work helps in creating critical youth citizenship

AIMS

- Putting flesh on the bones of the European Youth Work Agenda, while respecting its political framework & describing future steps, actions, and measures to be taken under the Bonn process
- striving towards maintenance & development of the good structures & practices that already exist incl. spaces for innovation *and* looking for new expressions of y.w. as new challenges arise

ACTIONS & MEASURES

- develop & expand youth work provision: setting standards, co-management, creation of spaces, building links to other domains, enhancing social inclusion & diversity
- quality development: establish occupational standards, youth work research agenda, map and spread knowledge on existing quality systems, national working groups
- common direction & cooperation within youth work community of practice: triangle of practice, research, policy; professional alliances, structures & unions; funding collaborative youth work structures, participatory knowledge & practice co-creation; information & capacity-building on European issues; European digital platform; Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Board
- beyond the youth work community of practice: engaging with different sectors; strategic & operational approaches to cross-sectoral as well as horizontal cooperation; multidisciplinary structures, networks and bodies on youth
- recognition: coordinated efforts & resources; set of common terms; joined efforts in promotion & communication; showcase the impact on youth work; research & ‘translation’ of youth work research findings; validation, certification and accreditation
- innovation and emerging challenges: mental health promotion; create resilient youth work structures; culture of innovation with regard to smart work & green youth work
- policy frameworks: strengthened cooperation; youth specific strategies; participatory working methods; youth work laws and strategies for youth work; systematic check of youth work policies; capacity building of formal policy actors
- A strategic framework for youth work development: European Commission & Council of Europe joint letter of commitment/memorandum of understanding; connecting the Bonn process to wider pan-European education & learning initiatives; networks and cooperation

INSTRUMENTS & METHODS

- European Charter on good governance, National working groups, think tank on education and training of youth workers, Peer-learning activities, European Network of Youth Workers Associations, strengthened cooperation EU – CoE

3. CLUSTERING OBJECTIVES, THEMATIC AREAS AND INSTRUMENTS

The following chapter tries to cluster the thematic areas of the analysed documents in a kind of order of quantitative importance, meaning that those items that have been mentioned most are ranked higher, and those that appear less frequently are located in a second line. The intention of this approach is not, however, to categorise these second-line items as less important, because there are many reasons for their lower prominence. Obviously, the main stakeholders in the youth field have set certain priorities over the past 25 years, guided by political will, interests and opportunities as well as needs, topical urgencies, and the spirit of the time. Moreover, some items have appeared only in recent years as relevant urgent priorities, such as the integration of migrants and refugees, green youth work or digitalisation. It will be the subject of discussion and reflection of future expert groups to consider which items should remain at a less prominent level or get higher on the agenda of youth policy. The ‘ranking’ adopted in this paper results from a rough counting of the various topics in the documents and doesn’t fulfil the standards of a systematic scientific analysis. It must also be stressed that the chosen headings of the clusters and the more subordinated items are a result of a rather random selection to avoid a too-detailed list of thematic areas.

The various clusters can be grouped under two major priority objectives: ‘*European Youth Policy Cooperation*’ and ‘*Development of Youth Work*’. The latter often provides a specific focus, be it youth work and voluntary activities, youth work and mobility, non-formal and informal learning, education and training, well-being and social inclusion, empowerment, life skills, digital aspects, or a focus on specific groups of young people such as Roma youth and young migrants and refugees. The relationship between youth policy and youth work is obvious but often blurred and unclear in the documentation, as the two concepts are often linked together, muddling the distinction between them’, in particular regarding youth *work* policy. Even if the borders are fluid, nearly more than one-third (16) of all analysed documents (38) fit plausibly within the category of youth policy, and two-thirds (22) within the category of youth work.

European Youth Policy Cooperation

European youth policy cooperation is mainly based on two pillars: actions in the specific field of youth and taking more account or mainstreaming of youth in other policies through a cross-sectoral approach. In the European Union actions are particularly implemented through the ‘open method of coordination in the field of youth’, applying a specific mechanism of objectives and priority setting, mutual learning, monitoring, evaluation and progress-reporting, dissemination of results, structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations, evidence-based youth policymaking, knowledge building and the mobilisation of EU programmes and funds. On the side of the Council of Europe youth policy development and cooperation is based on intergovernmental cooperation and international partnerships, incl. EU, services to countries through reviews of national youth policies and advisory missions, cooperation between youth research and policy, and co-management as a valuable mechanism between governments and youth representatives. The two European Youth Centres (in Strasbourg and Budapest) and the European Youth Foundation play a prominent role in developing youth cooperation.

European youth policy cooperation takes place between various levels of responsibility, European, national, regional, local, and different players, lately also called the youth work community of practice. The community includes “*youth workers and youth leaders, youth work managers, project carriers, accredited and independent youth work organisations, trainers, researchers, educators of youth workers, local communities and municipalities, National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, youth representations, young people, and policymakers at all levels of governance*” (3rd European Youth Work Convention). It is important to stress the principle of subsidiarity, from European to local. However, strengthening European cooperation in the youth field and developing synergies between initiatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, particularly through their partnership in the field of youth, and collaboration with other international organisations remains a core business.

Promotion and support for youth work

It is no surprise that the promotion, development, and support of all kinds and forms of youth work, including non-formal education/learning in youth work and voluntary activities, is a key priority in all analysed documents, be it explicitly or implicitly. It comprises issues like validation and recognition of the value of youth work and voluntary activities; quality development and capacity-building; provision of structures, resources, and funding; knowledge building and provision, innovation; youth worker competence development and education and training, cross-sectoral cooperation with other sectors as well as cooperation within the youth work community of practice. The specific role of mobility schemes and voluntary activities, including voluntary services and cross-border volunteering among young people must be highlighted. It is hoped that more young people engage in volunteering and expressed why information on opportunities abroad should be more easily accessible and made available to all relevant actors. Participatory approaches and value-based principles must be seen as fundamental items. It is largely acknowledged that youth work complements formal education and offers benefits for all young people, including children and older young people after the age of 18 years. Nevertheless, children are explicitly addressed only in a few documents. Also, the right to play and to have fun in youth work plays only a minor role.

The following thematic clusters have been identified:

1. Human rights, democracy, Europe

Even if human rights and democracy are not very frequently or explicitly mentioned, democratic cohesion and the protection of human and fundamental rights are relevant issues as underlying principles in nearly all documents; it includes the intention to foster the European dimension and to protect the sustainability of European identity, based on its core values, namely human rights, democracy, the rule of law as well as social cohesion. In this respect, government policies should support young people in realising their full potential as autonomous members of society, developing life plans and exercising democratic citizenship. Youth work and voluntary activities of young people make an important contribution to active citizenship, participation in democratic life, new forms of governance and revitalising pluralistic democracy while strengthening European cooperation. Thus, youth policy and youth work need to remove barriers to youth participation across Europe and to strengthen cooperation in this field by encouraging young people to be active in creating a closer European unity based on democratic values. Full access of young people to rights is a prerequisite and essential element of a universal culture of human rights and democracy.

2. Participation and active citizenship

Another important issue directly linked to this topic is the *participation* and *active citizenship* of young people, both at the local and regional levels as well as at the European level. It must be underlined that participation and active citizenship are two (different) concepts that do not necessarily everywhere go together, in particular in authoritarian states where young people who participate too much end up with an obstruction of their citizenship. This issue is hardly stressed in analysed documents. While particularly highlighting the relevance of participation in the youth field, other sectoral policies are invited to provide participatory opportunities; however, participation of young people in these other sectors, in education, employment, public spaces, health etc. seems to be a blind spot. All young people without any discrimination should be considered and in focus when providing opportunities for participation, even if a special emphasis is often given to young people who do not belong to associations ('non-organised') and to those with fewer opportunities. Minorities such as young Roma people, young migrants, and refugees, the LGBTQI community, and young people with disabilities are given special attention in a few documents. Children and gender equality issues are not very frequently mentioned. Concepts and forms of participation are manifold and vary from consultation and (structured) dialogue to involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and strategies, to decision-making and co-management. Innovative, alternative, and new forms and ways of participation are encouraged in some documents, but not further exemplified. Other items relevant to participation and active citizenship that are highlighted in a few cases are learning to participate, and information and guidance strategies. Partners for participation on the youth side are youth associations and civil society organisations, youth councils and other representative structures in democratic, social, and civic life.

3. Social integration and social inclusion

Since the publication of the White Paper on Youth social integration and social inclusion of young people has played a prominent role in debates on youth policy and youth work in Europe, figuring also under headlines such as social cohesion, access to rights, and the fight against poverty. The relevance of providing equal opportunities for *all* young people is also expressed in the strategies to guarantee access to rights and in the demand to create better chances for, for example, young people with fewer opportunities, marginalised young people and minority groups. The strategies range from addressing discriminatory practices faced by young people, with a particular focus on intersectionality of exclusion, to the removal of legal, administrative, and practical obstacles to inclusion, provision of appropriate financial and other support through social services and in general better opportunities for participation in all spheres of society. Altogether, strategies should reflect the principles of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, gender equality, accountability, participation, and intergenerational solidarity. However, despite the prominent place the topic takes, social inclusion remains a core challenge for youth and related policies.

4. Living together in diverse societies

Living together in diverse, peaceful, and inclusive societies comprises issues like equal opportunities, cultural diversity, fight against racism and xenophobia, combating radicalisation and discrimination, crime, everyday life and gender-based violence. All these topics are of high importance in many documents, even if under different priority settings and focus. Counteracting racism, intolerance and all forms of discrimination at all levels and the promotion of solidarity with and among all young people as well as intergenerational solidarity, gender equality and protection of children play a rather

important role. The same is true for intercultural awareness and intercultural dialogue, dialogue between civilisations, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. Addressing discriminatory practices faced by young people is key, multifaceted identities and intersectionality of discrimination should be a focus. To prevent and eradicate poverty, discrimination, violence, and exclusion faced by young people the universality and indivisibility of human rights needs to be kept in mind. The suggested measures range from the provision of competencies through training of youth workers and capacity-building of European youth organisations, strengthening diversity within youth work organisations and administrations, facilitating access of all young people to information and counselling services, empowerment of young people to promote cultural diversity, global solidarity, intercultural dialogue, and conflict prevention.

5. Education, training, lifelong learning & mobility

As a related policy field education, training, lifelong learning and mobility are seen as complementary areas to youth work, certainly with different concepts and approaches, but with similar aims, namely, to promote active citizenship and inclusion, to foster emancipation and autonomy, to develop personal, professional and life skills and intercultural competencies. While acquired skills in formal education are largely recognised, validated, assessed, and certified the complementarity between formal and non-formal education and learning remains a challenge; recognition of activities in youth work and in voluntary activities as environments for non-formal education and learning still struggle to find a proper place in the lifelong learning agenda.

This leads to the question of how quality standards in non-formal education and learning environments can be assured and assessment and validation procedures established. Despite many positive developments over the past years with regards to instruments, tools, and procedures a major challenge seems to remain the issue of political and social recognition of non-formal learning in youth activities. Mobility plays a particular role under this heading, since the youth field provides its own mobility schemes, especially in relation to cross-border volunteering.

6. Employment, Entrepreneurship

The strategies against (long-term) youth unemployment should start with the improvement of education and vocational training systems (especially apprenticeships) and the reduction of the number of young people leaving these systems prematurely. The creation of more and equal opportunities for all young people in the labour market, the support of young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship and the stimulation of their integration in and access to the labour market, e.g., through the promotion of entrepreneurship education, quality internships and apprenticeships are highlighted as key priorities. Developing life skills is of equal importance in helping young people to determine and forge their futures. Digital literacy and other 21st-century skills play a crucial role in young people's independence, social inclusion, employability, and daily lives. The improvement of the living conditions of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods by providing free, accessible, affordable, and youth-friendly public services and other measures in employment and occupation should be a priority of youth policies to facilitate all young people's access to rights more effectively. In general, stable, and meaningful employment should be ensured. The role of the youth work community is to engage with other political sectors and to foster cross-sectoral as well as horizontal cooperation in multidisciplinary structures, networks, and bodies. It is crucial to support young people in establishing businesses, enterprises, and co-operatives and to encourage experimentation by young people with social economy, community initiatives or co-operatives.

7. Health and well-being

Young people must be enabled to be architects of their own lives, to support their personal development and growth to autonomy, and to build their resilience. The support for young people's health and well-being, including mental health, is, therefore, a key area; their equal access to decent living conditions and to cultural, sporting, and creative activities as well as their equal access to rights as a prerequisite for personal development and access to autonomy must be ensured. Young people should be equipped with life skills to cope with a changing world and encouraged to foster youth fitness, physical activity, sports, and healthy lifestyles. The concept of all-round health and the dynamics of community life as well as the value of peer-to-peer education in promoting healthy lifestyles are underlined even if the latter is a controversial issue in research. Sex education and offering information on sexuality, relationships, sexual methods, and family planning play an additional and important role. Negative consequences of precarious life situations on the well-being and safety of young people and the insufficient capacity of social and healthcare services need to be tackled and in particular, the living conditions of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be improved by providing accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services and other measures, amongst health, sports and leisure activities. Free, comprehensive health care, including mental health care and psychological support and free advice and information about rights and responsibilities need to be provided, especially for minority groups.

8. Creativity & culture

Even if it is acknowledged that youth work helps young people to discover their talents and develop the capacities and capabilities to navigate an ever more complex and challenging social, cultural, and political environment, the issue of creativity and culture plays only a minor role in the analysed documents. The crucial contribution of young people to social and cultural innovation is emphasised, linked with the rather general demands to support the development of creativity, to widen quality access to culture and creative tools, to emphasise the importance of creativity, culture, and the role of young people, to acknowledge the links between culture and creativity and youth policy. In terms of actions and measures, it is asked to improve access to culture in all its forms and to promote possibilities for creative activities including in new fields allowing them to become cultural actors. Youth work should support delivering leisure and recreational activities and promote partnerships between the creative sectors and youth organisations. It can also facilitate and support talent and entrepreneurial skills and promote knowledge about culture.

9. Youth and the world

Youth policy and youth work have a global, European, national, regional, and local dimension. Regarding the issue of 'youth in the world' youth work should raise awareness about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights and encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities, promote intercultural dialogue and peace and engage in solidarity. The issue should also be addressed in education curricula or in youth policy strategies and opportunities for young people to exchange views with policymakers on global issues should be enhanced. Empowerment, with a special focus on active citizenship within and outside the EU, combating radicalisation and marginalisation of youth, equipping young people with resources to become agents

of solidarity and positive change, mediation, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, intercultural dialogue, and dialogue between civilisations are corresponding items in youth policy and youth work.

10. Other relevant subjects on the youth front: public spaces (housing, urban and rural environments, habitat, transport), sustainable development and environmental protection, digital era, innovation

a. Public spaces

Issues like *housing, urban and rural environments, habitat, and transport* could be summarized under the heading *public spaces*. The topic is not very high on the political agenda, even if issues of homelessness and financial exclusion, decent and affordable housing for young people, and regenerating areas suffering from multiple disadvantages have been occasionally addressed. The CLRAE Charter on youth participation requests several issues around the topic of ‘public spaces’, e.g. to take account of residents’ social, and intercultural realities in housing (renovation) programmes, to ease access to public transport, in particular, in rural areas, to reflect and address the special needs of young people living in rural areas. Other documents stress that young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are motivated to contribute to the improvement of their own situations and those of their communities and that they and their organisations can play a positive role in social cohesion. Improving the living conditions of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and breaking down segregation while promoting meaningful participation in planning and management of living environments and recognising non-formal education and learning, and youth work, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are highlighted as appropriate strategies, besides improving gender equality of young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, preventing all forms of violence and ensuring access to welfare benefits, accommodation and an adequate standard of living for disadvantaged groups such as young refugees.

b. Sustainable development and environmental protection

Raising awareness of and promoting *sustainable development and environmental protection* and drawing up programmes for a harmonious environment was already the subject of consideration in the year 2003. It took a couple of years until further action was taken by encouraging young people to participate in ‘green volunteering’ and ‘green’ patterns of consumption and production. Again eleven years later, in view of the continuously increasing relevance of sustainable development and the engagement of mainly young people in environmental matters, in particular around the year 2021, environmental issues got a greater emphasis with the recommendation to support the engagement of young people for sustainable development, to promote the social dimension of a sustainable green Europe and to consider effects of climate change on inclusion, followed by the demand to support volunteering activities that make a contribution to tackling climate and environment-related challenges and the encouragement of young people to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

c. Digital era

Challenges and opportunities of the *digital era* for youth work, youth policy and young people have been addressed as of 2017 with the intention to make use of digital media and technologies and create conditions for smart youth work. Amongst others, the development of competencies relevant to smart youth work, including information and data literacy as well as safety in digital environments through diverse approaches in teaching and learning have been prioritised. The strategy aimed at contributing to the innovative development of youth work in Europe and at providing opportunities for young people to enhance their digital competencies.

d. Innovation

Even if *innovation* is rather an instrument or a tool than a topical priority it is included here since it also plays a role in combination with several thematic areas (as the before mentioned digital era). Regarding young people, it suggests supporting their contribution and capacities for social and cultural innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as uncovering and developing their talents focusing on the use of innovative approaches in youth work practice. In youth work the development and strengthening of its quality must be promoted through investment in the innovation of existing youth work approaches, methodologies and practices, and the promotion and support of the design and development of new tools to be used in youth work, including new and alternative forms of democratic participation. The capacities of youth workers for innovation and the creation of flexible spaces and opportunities for experimentation, trial and error must be enhanced and new competencies needed by youth workers must be identified to develop adequate education and training modules. Smart youth work may contribute to the innovative development of youth work in Europe, linked to experimental, innovative approaches and cooperation models for digital youth work. Furthermore, new trends and alternative dimensions and formats of volunteering need to be explored. Innovation and cooperation in and between youth work, youth policy and youth research are essential while striving towards maintenance and development of the good structures and practices that already exist including spaces for innovation and looking for new expressions of youth work as new challenges arise. Mental health, the creation of resilient youth work structures and a culture of innovation regarding smart work and green youth work have been seen as priorities.

Priorities regarding methods and instrument

To complete the picture that has been collected in the mapping exercise the following list of instruments can be summarized as methodological categories regarding the implementation of activities and measures under the ten clusters:

Initiatives in the specific youth sector

Open method of coordination in the youth field (EU); multi-annual work cycles, priority, and objective setting for each cycle
 Consultations, structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations; co-management, involvement of young people in decisions
 Monitoring, evaluation, progress reporting, dissemination of results; exchange of information and good practices, mutual and peer learning; platforms for exchange and networking; expert groups
 Mobilisation of European programmes and funds (cf. Erasmus +, European Youth Foundation); support for youth work, e.g. funding, resources, or infrastructure
 Education and training of youth workers, youth leaders and trainers; educational material
 Reviewing and further developing existing instruments; peer reviews, studies, conferences, and seminars; publications
 Informal Directors-General for Youth Meetings (EU); Intergovernmental cooperation
 Using existing spaces such as Youth Wiki, European Youth Portal, EKCYP, European Youth Centres
 Co-operation with other international organisations and in particular between EU and CoE
 Service to member states (CoE), international reviews of national youth policies, advisory missions
 Studies and Research; Knowledge building, collection, dissemination, and translation of information

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Taking more account of youth in other policies; mainstreaming initiatives across policy areas; evidence-based policymaking, youth research and knowledge of youth

4. HOW DO THE YOUTH POLICY DOCUMENTS RELATE TO THE TEN CRISES/CHALLENGES?

This chapter first summarizes the often adverse circumstances that young people (and youth policy and youth work) are facing as identified in some relevant political documents of the two European institutions, both, the Council of Europe and the European Union. Then, the ten crises/challenges as elaborated by Howard Williamson in his paper 'Youth Work in a New Europe' are mirrored with the issues identified in the policy documents. This will be done by locating these issues within the ten crises/challenges. The purpose of this exercise is to analyse whether or not both institutions have met, implicitly or explicitly, the ongoing challenges and needs experienced by young people in Europe and to see where further needs exist.

The Council of Europe

Looking back at the last 25 years of youth policymaking in Europe, the circumstances faced by and the needs of young people (and therefore implications for youth policy) as identified by policymakers have changed quite substantially. In the *Council of Europe*, the Ministers responsible for Youth met regularly at Ministerial Conferences and adopted Final Declarations which also highlighted concerns, challenges and needs⁷. After 2012 no Youth Ministers conference took place; therefore, we need instead to look at the most recent Resolution of the Committee of Ministers on the youth policy of the organisation.

The 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Bucharest in April 1998 titled "*Active citizens in a future Europe. Human Rights-Participation-Solidarity*" gathered for the first time 41 member states of the Council of Europe and at that time six States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. In their final Declaration ministers considered it urgently necessary to adapt the priorities and aims of youth policy in the organisation to a *new social and geopolitical context*, marked by the enlargement to new democracies and the emergence of new patterns of European solidarity on a continental scale and by far-reaching political and cultural changes in European societies. This concerned particularly the *new technologies* and the different ways in which the changes affected different regions, the changes which have taken place in the *social, cultural and economic situation* of young people, in *behaviour and lifestyles*, in individual and collective *values and patterns of political involvement*, and the effects of the changes on the *functioning of democracy*. The fact that the *integration* of young people into *working life* is an essential component in their *integration into society* and that the *skills and qualifications* they acquire from informal education enrich traditional models of education needs to be underlined. Ministers stressed also the need to meet these new challenges in the youth policy of the Council of Europe.

Four years later, the 6th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth meeting in November 2002 in Thessaloniki on the theme "*Young people building Europe*", stressed in a final Declaration their concern about the consequences of the increase in the number of *terrorist attacks and violence* impacting *democratic stability*, the *freedom of persons*, the *defence of human rights* and the *fight against* all forms of *discrimination*. Aware that some countries or regions are still subject to *open conflicts*, and concerned by the difficulties with which young people from these countries and regions are confronted and aware of the considerable differences with regard to the *socio-economic situation* of young people in the world, and that *unequal opportunities* between *genders* still exist, ministers underlined that *access to fundamental rights, to education, the labour market, health care, culture, technological*

⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/ministerial-conferences#%7B%2238711402%22%3A%5B%5D%7D>

innovations and the possibility to enjoy *decent living conditions*, is a prerequisite for the active participation of young people in society. They called upon the international community to make stronger efforts to prepare young people to adopt lives of *active democratic citizenship* and to work against every extreme action or propaganda; particular attention should be paid to recent, existing, or latent *conflict areas* in Southeast Europe and in the Caucasus.

The Declaration of the 7th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth held in Budapest in 2005 on “*Human dignity and social cohesion: youth policy responses to violence*” underlined the increased concern about the *manifestations of violence* and its consequences on *human dignity and social cohesion*, in particular for young people, both as victim and as perpetrators of violence. All *forms of violence* be it gender-related, homophobic, against children and young people, young disabled, young immigrants, refugees, internally displaced persons from conflict regions and minority groups, or motivated by racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia or any other form of intolerance, expressed through a physical act but also through words, attitudes and ways of thinking need to be addressed. The social and economic factors, such as *unemployment, poverty, failure at school and the lack of perspective, problems with the family, and a loss of bearing or stress* need to be borne in mind when tackling those phenomena of violence. Young people, youth leaders, youth workers and their organisations play a key role as protagonists of *violence prevention*.

The 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in Kyiv in 2008 on “*The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020*” did not identify major and concrete challenges young people face; it just considered as challenges *greater opportunities* offered to them as well as *increased risk of precariousness*.

The 9th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth “*Young People’s Access to Rights: development of Innovative Youth Policies*” in Saint Petersburg in September 2012 did not achieve a final Declaration; instead, the final conclusions of the chair closed the conference without identifying potential challenges. Despite an agreement among member states on most of the content of a draft declaration, it proved impossible to arrive at a consensus due to a veto of the host country. The controversial point was whether or not to include explicit references to ‘*sexual orientation*’ and ‘*gender identity*’ in the list of reasons for discriminatory practices against young people.

In the last eleven years, no further Conference of Youth Ministers, which could have identified the challenges young people are facing, took place. However, the most recent Resolution on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in January 2020 addresses the issue by considering the persistent challenges young people face, both in terms of the *lack of opportunities* offered to them and an *increased risk of precariousness*.

The European Union

In the *European Union*, the White Paper on Youth, adopted in 2001, paved the way for further policy cooperation: It states that despite highly divergent situations young people largely share the same values and the same ambitions, but also the same difficulties. The current system of European cooperation in the field of youth is considered to be in danger of no longer being able to respond to new challenges young people are facing, namely

- *demographic and social change*, making relations between the generations more complex
- *widening gap between young people and public affairs* at all levels, with a risk of a ‘*citizenship deficit*’
- *quality of the debate on the future of the European Union*, as a democratic imperative.

The White Paper identifies five key challenges: *demographic trends and ageing societies; changing youth in terms of sociological, economic and cultural aspects; involving young people in public life; 'taking on board' young people as active partners European integration; mixed relationship between young people and globalisation.* Regarding the topic 'changing youth' factors such as demographic changes and changes in the social environment, individual and collective behaviour, family relationships and labour market conditions are highlighted. First, under pressure from economic factors (such as questions of employability, and the scale of unemployment) and socio-cultural factors, the age of 'youth' lasts longer, affecting the end of formal education, the start of employment, moving to independent living, and starting a family. Second, paths through life are becoming less linear: as societies no longer offer the same guarantees, non-linear paths through life are increasing; and it is now more possible simultaneously to play different roles. Third, the traditional collective models are losing ground as personal pathways are becoming increasingly individualised.

Another key document in European youth policy cooperation is the Council Resolution of November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018). The Council states that young women and men have a crucial role to play in meeting the many *socio-economic, demographic, cultural, environmental and technological challenges* and opportunities facing the European Union and its citizens today and in the years ahead. Although most of today's young Europeans enjoy good living conditions, there are still challenges to be met such as *youth unemployment, young people not participating in employment, education or training (NEETs), poverty among youth, low levels of participation and representation* of young people in the democratic process and various *health problems. Economic downturns*, such as the one which began in 2008, tend to have a significant negative impact on young people and the effects risk being long-term.

In the Council Resolution of May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 the Council recognises that the *(economic) crisis* has presented *new challenges* for youth policy and that there is a need for reinforced cooperation in the youth field at EU level to adequately deal with these challenges.

The following Council Resolution of December 2015 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 reconfirms that the *crisis* has continued to have a deep and disproportional *impact* on young people in Europe and their *transition into adulthood*.

The Council Resolution of December 2018 on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 stresses that young people experience several typical *transitions in their personal life and environment*, from education to work, living on their own, partnerships or starting a family life. Many face *uncertainties about their future*, as a result of *globalisation and climate change, technological change, demographic and socioeconomic trends, populism, discrimination, social exclusion and fake news* with yet unknown effects on jobs, skills or the way our democracies work. *Socioeconomic exclusion and democratic exclusion* go hand in hand.

Grouping of identified challenges under the ten crises as elaborated by Howard Williamson

The challenges facing young people in contemporary Europe as identified in the conceptual notes by Howard Williamson are *Democracy* (shrinking civic spaces, democratic backsliding), *Learning and Earning* (education, employment, economy), *Climate* (global warming, environmental protection), *Technology* (digitalisation, artificial intelligence), *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO, pace of life), *Energy and Cost of Living* (poverty, housing, homelessness), *Security* (Ukraine war, conflicts, violence), *Identity and*

Belonging (intersectionality, blocked opportunities), *Mobility and Migration* (living together, meeting each other), *Health* (covid recovery, mental health).

Subordinating under these categories the issues that had been identified over the past 25 years in the political framework of the *Council of Europe*, the picture is as follows:

- Democracy: changes in the functioning of democracy, patterns of political involvement, access to fundamental rights, defence of human rights, fight against discrimination, democratic stability
- Learning and Earning: integration into working life and into society, unemployment, access to education and the labour market, failure at schools, living conditions, social cohesion
- Climate:
- Technology: new technologies, access to technological innovations
- Fear of Missing Out: a loss of bearings, stress, lack of perspective
- Energy and Cost of Living: risk of precariousness, poverty
- Security: terrorist attacks, violence, regional conflicts, open conflicts in countries and regions,
- Identity and Belonging: greater *and* lack of opportunities offered to young people; changes in behaviour and lifestyles, individual and collective values, unequal opportunities
- Mobility and Migration: all forms of intolerance
- Health: access to healthcare.

Issues that cannot easily subsumed into one of the categories due to their cross-cutting nature are *regional disparities* and the rather general *changes in the socio-economic, social, cultural, political and economic situation* of young people.

Doing the same exercise of subordination under these categories, the challenges as identified over the past 22 years in the political framework of the *European Union*, the following picture is shown:

- Democracy: a gap between young people and public affairs, risk of a 'citizenship deficit', the role of young people for the future of the European Union and European integration, involving young people in public life, low levels of participation and representation of young people in the democratic process
- Learning and Earning: labour market conditions, economic factors such as employability, unemployment, youth lasting longer impacting the end of formal education, start of employment, starting a family, young people not participating in employment, education or training (NEETs)
- Climate: environmental challenges and opportunities
- Technology: technological challenges and opportunities
- Fear of Missing Out:
- Energy and Cost of Living: poverty among youth, Economic downturns, and economic crisis
- Security:
- Identity and Belonging: personal pathways becoming increasingly individualised and less linear, traditional collective models are losing ground, changing individual and collective behaviour, the possibility to play simultaneously different roles, changing family relationships
- Mobility and Migration: mixed relationship between young people and globalisation
- Health: various health problems.

As before, issues that cannot easily subsumed into one of the categories due to their cross-cutting nature are in general *changes in the socio-economic, social, cultural, political and economic situation* of

young people. Also, *demographic and related social change, demographic trends and ageing societies, intergenerational relationships and solidarity* are issues of particular relevance in the European Union.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS, GAPS AND UNDERVALUED ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRIORITY SETTING AND ACTIONS

The circumstances and issues affected and faced by young people in Europe, as summarized in the previous chapter, do not necessarily correspond with the suggested actions and measures in the political documents, either in terms of quantity and quality. Therefore, a better picture might be achieved when looking now at achievements, gaps and undervalued items in these documents and drawing some conclusions or, arguably even better, recommendations for future priority setting and potential actions. The recommendations follow the categorisation of clusters as developed in Chapter 3. Wherever possible and appropriate they are addressed at different levels, local, regional, national, or European and/or at various stakeholders. As far as possible the recommendations consider the discussions and exchange in two meetings of the European Advisory and Resonance Group. The results of the five editions of the ‘Youth in Europe: Offenburg Talks’ 2018 – 2022 build another source for these recommendations. Again, these sources have not explicitly been labelled in quotes. Other sources have been the declarations of the three European Youth Work Conventions, the paper “The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020” by the German Youth Institute and Howard Williamson’s context paper “Taking Stock – Where Are We Now? Youth Work in contemporary Europe”.

Regarding achievements, it is self-evident and logical, or even a truism, that two overriding themes lie at the core of all the documents that have been the focus of this analysis, namely ‘European youth policy cooperation’ and the ‘promotion and support of youth work’.

‘European Youth Policy Cooperation’

‘European youth policy cooperation’ includes actions in the specific field of youth and taking more account or mainstreaming of youth in other policies. Youth work must be seen as a resource for youth policy development and participatory approaches are imperative. What needs (still) to be done?

- A European impetus towards youth work policy⁸ can help to frame and support national, regional, and local youth work development; and, vice versa, the national, regional, and local traditions of practice with young people need to be woven into the European youth work-space.
- Actions in the specific youth field seem to be in general broad and well-covered. But youth policy needs to remain open to new and innovative initiatives in the youth field and give appreciation, support, and respect for a real diversity of initiatives of young people and youth organisations. A corporatist approach that obstructs new initiatives from entering the youth work sector contrasts with a pluralistic, comprehensive model for youth work.
- With a rather self-critical look at underlying political concepts and strategies youth policy should question the imperatives of continuous and rapid economic growth accompanied by concepts of increased mobility, rampant acquisition of competencies, acceleration and compression of innovation. Youth policy should also help develop alternative, sustainable concepts for a better youth work ‘praxis’ that helps young people in building resilient identities and a sense of belonging.

⁸ “Youth policy understood as a robust, solid structured approach of governments to create optimal conditions for youth work to develop and to strengthen its potentials, needed on all government levels” as Guy Redig put it on the occasion of the European Resonance Group meeting in October 2023

The issue of ‘the right to play and to have fun’ figures here since ‘playing’ cannot easily be functionalised for other purposes.

- Regarding partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation youth policy should first look at the diversity of civil society and human rights organisations in order to find allies in promoting values of democracy, solidarity and social cohesion, in protecting civic space and pushing back authoritarian trends and the attempt of populists to gain cultural hegemony in public discourses. This includes alliances with progressive and democratic forces in related social and political spheres, including the youth climate movement.
- Regarding partnerships with other sectors and potential partners outside the youth field with an impact on young people’s lives, cross-sectoral cooperation needs to be strengthened and existing frameworks and cooperation structures within the European youth field be fostered. However, stronger interference strategies in other sectors must be developed in order to achieve a real impact and change.
- The new Europe and related crises don’t change the core tasks of youth work and its basic principles are still valid. But youth (work) policy needs to create conditions under which youth work can build on critical citizenship, democracy, human rights, solidarity and inclusivity.

‘Promotion and support of youth work’ through policy

Regarding ‘*promotion and support of youth work*’ the most relevant items seem to be covered by including all kinds and forms of youth work, through non-formal ~~and informal~~ education and learning, mobility schemes, and voluntary activities as key priorities. The relevance of activities in cooperation with culture and sports in relation to leisure time could deserve more attention. As already stressed the ‘right to play and to have fun’ in youth work activities can be considered being an undervalued item, sometimes even denied and forgotten. Also, the link and relationship of youth work to social work need to be looked at; the potential of closer cooperation with, for example, street work, school social work, community work, youth employment assistance needs to be further explored.

- As a matter of fact, in principle youth work is and should be open to all young people. However, the reality shows another picture, especially in youth work at the European level, where young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds play only a marginal role. Urgent action and resources are needed to reach out to more young people at all levels. Youth policy can provide opportunities for youth work to develop and can create possibilities for new youth work initiatives, aiming young people in exclusion, with fewer opportunities and lesser entrance to existent provisions in leisure time.
- The recognition of youth work and its value for individuals and society remains, at all levels, a priority. This includes showing its added value for democracy as well as its economic relevance in terms of investments and workforce, increasing its visibility, but also continuously supporting its further development and innovation and investing in youth workers competence development and their well-being.
- In this respect, the question of shrinking, growing, or changing spaces is also a result of the recognition of youth work as a social, cultural and educational practice. Youth work must make its underlying values, identity, and goals more visible, including human & universal rights, democracy, solidarity, participation, advocacy and mentoring, without losing its crucial values of autonomy, a unique environment of enjoying being young together.
- Collecting the narratives of young people, giving them space to tell stories of their daily lives, providing opportunities to express themselves and giving them a voice should be a key dimension

in youth work practice as well as in youth research. This is particularly relevant for young people with fewer opportunities and coming from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

- Youth work should provide relevant horizontal initiatives, universal skills and competencies for young people to organise themselves, become resilient and find their place in society, also in view of various crises, and to cope with contemporary and future challenges. But young people also need to have fun which underlines the importance of play and leisure in youth work.
- The ‘professionalisation’ of youth work, provided by paid and volunteer youth workers, should be seen as something positive, particularly in terms of quality development. However, it is important to provide sufficient resources and support for ‘professionalising’ volunteer youth work. Paid and volunteer youth workers and initiatives need training, coaching as well as opportunities to exchange experiences and training.

The thematic clusters

Looking now at the challenges and thematic clusters and the results of the analysis of policy documents, the following items can be defined as most relevant in these documents: ‘Human rights, democracy, Europe’; ‘participation and active citizenship’; ‘social integration and social inclusion’; ‘living together in diverse societies’; ‘education, training, lifelong learning and mobility’; ‘employment and entrepreneurship’ (learning and earning).

Items around the topic of ‘security’ are rather frequently mentioned in the challenges, but rarely covered in any actions and measures with the exemption of peace education, mediation, and conflict solution.

The issues ‘health and well-being’; ‘creativity and culture’; ‘youth in the world’; ‘mobility and migration’ (mixed relationship between young people and globalisation); ‘energy and cost of living’ (poverty among youth, economic downturns and economic crisis); ‘public spaces’ (housing and transport); ‘sustainable development and environmental protection’ (climate); ‘innovation’ and ‘digital era’ (technology, technological challenges and opportunities) can be seen as less relevant, even if the three latter items gain in significance in the last years.

Other topics play only a minor or at least no extraordinarily important role, e.g., the right to play and to have fun in youth work or children’s rights, even if the latter is quite often mentioned but without concrete suggestions for action. In particular, the Council of Europe protects and promotes in its documents the human rights of children, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, through the European Convention on Human Rights and other legal standards. It is however remarkable that at least in the youth policy documents of the organisation there is a gap between rhetoric and specific measures.

The topic ‘identity and belonging’ plays a particular role when underlining that personal pathways are becoming increasingly individualised and paths through life less linear, while non-linear paths are increasing, traditional collective models are losing ground, individual and collective behaviour and family relationships are changing and the possibility to play simultaneously different roles are increasing. However, the relevance given to these phenomena when identifying challenges is not mirrored in the suggested actions. This plays a particular role when looking at the topic ‘Fear of Missing Out’ and related phenomena such as stress or mental health and well-being which are nearly invisible in the analysed documents, even if these are no new phenomena.

Having said all this, it is also relevant to underline that the quantity of emphasising and highlighting certain challenges, needs and priorities does not necessarily correspond with the quality and effects of suggested and implemented actions and measures. This becomes obvious when looking at subjects like (un)employment, quality education, social in- or exclusion, poverty, minority rights, racism and xenophobia, discrimination etc. which have been prioritised (and sometimes even scandalised) over the years but did not show the impact that was desired and envisaged.

'Human rights, democracy, Europe'

In terms of thematic priorities, the topic *'Human rights, democracy, Europe'*, including creating more democratic communities and a democratic Europe, needs to be put highest on the political agenda. Shrinking of civic spaces, populism, 'illiberal' democracies, fake news, crisis of trust, growing violence and inequalities and divided societies are subjects that endanger political everyday life and ask for urgent action as already underlined in the youth policy paragraph.

- Youth work must and can contribute to fostering, protecting and further developing democracy while encompassing and strengthening political participation, debates, deliberation, and political competencies. Youth work must make visible its basic democratic and social values, including intercultural understanding and human rights and it can play a crucial role in countering anti-democratic ideologies.
- Youth work also must uncover violations of democratic rules and norms and take to the streets to show that our societies are indivisible.
- Youth work must create, provide, and defend its pedagogical environments as spaces of understanding, contradiction and discussion in a playful, creative atmosphere; youth work as a 'laboratory for democracy' creates opportunities and offers coaching to young people to construct their own standpoints and choices.
- Youth work should make the concerns of young people a subject of joint reflection in public, thus providing alternative narratives.

'Participation and active citizenship'

'Participation and active citizenship' remain key issues while the challenge to reach out to all young people, in particular those excluded, needs serious answers and appropriate strategies, in youth work and in other areas relevant to the lives of young people. In this respect,

- Youth work must have an emancipatory vision and see young people as fully-fledged co-owners of activities while guiding them towards autonomy and actors of their own future and providing spaces for critical thinking.
- Youth work should play a stronger role at the local and regional level, in community and neighbourhood action, in short 'La vie associative', including activities in topics such as public spaces, housing, schools, public transport, culture, living together, environmental development, urban-rural.
- It is essential that youth work is not reduced to solving problems but to contribute to giving young people in communities, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods a voice and providing a safe space, to foster their cultural expression and to implement models in the local community and experiment with democracy.

'Social inclusion and social integration'

The challenge to reach out to all young people and to foster social inclusion and social integration is particularly relevant in policy areas like employment, education and training, public life, justice etc. It is necessary to go beyond theoretical reflections and rhetoric claims towards real inclusion strategies.

- Youth work needs to develop appropriate strategies for cross-sectoral cooperation and where necessary interference in other policy areas while also playing an advocacy role. Youth work at all levels must therefore reach out more widely and deeply into the youth population but it must also strengthen its reach into the corners and corridors of decision-making.
- Youth work must be inclusive and reach out to all young people coming from diverse backgrounds and social statuses; a variety of youth work practices must be offered, satisfying different interests and needs and providing sustained dialogue with young people, particularly with those at risk of exclusion and with 'difficult' target groups.

'Living together in diverse societies'

The connotation of *'Living together in diverse societies'* is diverse and can include plenty of everyday issues, such as migration and mobility, identity and belonging, well-being, cultural awareness, variety of life courses and intergenerational dimensions, protection of children, cultural diversity, prevention of racism and xenophobia, radicalisation, discrimination, crime, and violence, including in everyday life and gender-based violence etc. Youth work has to deal with all these items and to organise its everyday practice within them, in particular at the local level.

- If youth work is open to all young people, the issue of migration and mobility has a direct impact since it needs to engage with young migrants and refugees and offer opportunities for participation; at the same time, it must organise a dialogue with mainstream society. The issue has also an indirect impact because of the rise of right-wing ideology as a reaction to refugees and migration; youth work must deal with these phenomena which includes a dimension of providing young migrants safe spaces as well as offering young people with right extremist orientation ways of return.
- Today, social, economic, cultural, and political realities become more complex, so building up a stable identity or gaining a feeling of belonging demands much more effort, why many young people are struggling with these items. For young people, the sense of belonging is often jeopardised by intersectionality and multiple conflicting identities and surroundings have a negative influence on the construction of a stable and positive identity. Youth work must and can offer young people a unique opportunity to experiment with identities and to create a sense of belonging.
- Regarding the already mentioned issue of social acceleration in our living conditions, leading to disaffection, supported by a speeding up the pace of life and social alienation, marked by permanent change of locations, increased number of social, but short-term and superficial contacts via social media, hindering the development and maintenance of 'resonance relationships' (Hartmut Rosa) with the world and our social environments, it seems to be urgently needed to take a self-critical look at current political concepts and strategies including in youth work. Youth work should help develop sustainable concepts helping young people build resilient identities.

'Education, training, lifelong learning, mobility'

The areas 'education, training, lifelong learning & mobility' as complementary areas to youth work with similar aims, for example, the promotion of active citizenship and inclusion, or the development of personal, professional and life skills and intercultural competencies can be seen as natural and prominent partners and allies for cross-sectoral cooperation.

- Youth work must especially aim at fostering recognition and validation of its activities as complementary to formal, non-formal and informal education and learning and to find a proper place in the lifelong learning agenda.
- Besides the further development of quality standards in non-formal learning environments and assessment and validation procedures as well as instruments, tools, and procedures a major challenge remains political and social recognition of non-formal learning in youth activities and why youth work must enhance its visibility.
- Youth work needs also to invest in the provision of second chance schools and alternative apprenticeship schemes for young people from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds, in school social work to avoid school dropouts.

'Employment and Entrepreneurship'

The strategies in the field of *'employment'* are manifold when looking at the variety of suggested actions against (long-term) youth unemployment in political priority settings over the past years, starting with the improvement of education and training systems, the stimulation of the integration in and access to the labour market, the support of young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

- However, the general impact of those strategies and measures cannot be described as success stories, when looking at the percentage of youth unemployment in European countries. Further reinforced efforts are indispensable in this regard and the reactivation and implementation of a real and new Youth Guarantee should be considered, going beyond the 'old' rather ineffective youth guarantee.
- Youth work can and should support and back up actions and measures in the field of employment and vocational education and training, also in political terms by scandalising the fact of continuously high youth unemployment. The youth work community needs to engage with relevant other sectors and foster cross-sectoral as well as horizontal cooperation in multidisciplinary structures.
- Developing life skills is of equal importance in addressing the economic, political, social, and human costs arising from high youth unemployment; youth work and non-formal and informal learning are strong instruments in providing life skills of different natures.
- Digital literacy and other 21st-century skills play a crucial role in young people's independence, social inclusion, employability, and daily lives and the further development and support of smart youth work provides plenty of opportunities for developing digital skills.
- The issue of youth entrepreneurship can be considered over-valued since the impact seems to be little compared to the constantly high number of young unemployed people. In contrast, the potential of social economy, community initiatives or co-operatives could get higher on the strategic agenda.
- Support of young people in establishing co-operatives and encouraging experimentation with social economy and community initiatives can be crucial strategies; the Charta on youth participation in local and regional life proposes in this regard some remarkable actions that should be reactivated including programmes for a harmonious environment and a real solidarity between generations, for housing (renovation) programmes, and access to public transport, in particular in rural areas.

'Health and Well-being'

Young people's health and well-being, including mental health as well as identity building, is an increasingly key area while decent living conditions and access to cultural, sporting and creative activities are a prerequisite for personal development, healthy lifestyles, identity building and achieving a sense of belonging.

- Youth work must offer young people physical in- and outdoor as well as sports activities to enable them to maintain youth fitness.
- Youth Work should also provide broad information on the risk of drug abuse, sexuality, relationships, sexual methods and family planning, gender inequalities, LGBTQ rights etc.
- Youth work must support the improvement of living conditions of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and rural areas by contributing to the provision of accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services and other measures, amongst health, sports and leisure activities.
- As a cross-sectoral issue youth work needs to promote free, comprehensive health care, including mental health care and psychological support and free advice & information about rights and responsibilities.
- Youth work must be involved in community action and engage in strategies for living together in diverse societies (as shown before) in order to provide spaces of well-being, development of a sense of belonging for young people and solidarity action.

‘Creativity and culture’

As a matter of fact, youth work helps young people to discover their talents and develop capacities and capabilities to master their lives. Creativity and culture are elements to support this process why youth work should generally widen its approaches and methods in this respect.

- Youth work should support the development of creativity, widen quality access to culture and creative tools, emphasise the importance of creativity, and culture and promote possibilities for creative activity allowing them to become cultural actors.
- Youth work should deliver leisure and recreational activities and promote partnerships between the creative sectors and youth organisations, facilitate and support talent and entrepreneurial skills and promote knowledge about culture.
- Youth work should work with (sub)cultural elements that are attractive to young people and help express their experiences, feelings and messages in a youth-friendly manner while performing in public spaces to make these messages visible to broader audiences in local communities.

‘Youth in the world’

The notion of ‘Youth in the world’ has a global, European, national, regional, and local dimension and for young people today globalisation and digitalisation appear as natural facts. The slogan ‘think global, act local’ expresses best the idea of being able to cope with both dimensions. At the same time an increased number of young people gains comprehensive cross-border, transnational mobility experiences, be it as volunteer or traveller or as migrant.

- Despite the growing number of volunteers not every young person has access to mobility opportunities; youth work should support young people in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in cross-border activities in Europe, and where appropriate, abroad.
- Youth work should raise awareness about global issues such as sustainable development & human rights and encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities, promote intercultural dialogue and peace and engage in solidarity.
- Youth work should empower young people to become agents of solidarity and positive change, mediation, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, intercultural dialogue & dialogue between civilisations.

‘Public and private spaces’

Public and private spaces are relevant for both, young people and youth work. Youth work needs private and public spaces to play, to develop, to find own cultural expressions, to encounter. And young people act and live in public and private spaces which are impacted by issues like housing, urban and rural environments, habitat, and local transport, also by homelessness, (financial) exclusion and poverty in disadvantaged areas or by the special needs of young people living in rural areas.

- Youth work needs to provide spaces for development and encounters, physical environments like youth centres and youth clubs but as well open spaces for experimentation and growth
- Youth work must support young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to contribute to the improvement of their living situations and those of their communities and breaking down segregation while promoting meaningful participation, e.g. in planning & management of living environments.
- Youth work can play a prominent and driving role in community development and should liaise with other structures in the neighbourhoods building strategic partnerships for real change.
- Outreach youth work especially in rural areas and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is an appropriate tool in reaching out to young people.

‘Sustainable development and environmental protection’

Climate and environmental issues are not something new to youth work but a significant feature of its practice and history. Raising awareness of and promoting sustainable development and environmental protection amongst young people and drawing up programmes for a harmonious environment have got a prominent place in youth work in recent years, strengthened through the engagement of mainly young people for environmental matters.

- Youth work should continuously promote the social dimension of a sustainable green Europe, support volunteering activities which tackle climate and environment-related challenges and encourage young people to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Youth work should tackle climate justice as an equally relevant issue as other concerns with equality and social justice.
- Youth work needs to inform and debate with young people about the interdependency of the natural world and about relationships with the earth, nature and living creatures.
- Youth work should liaise with environmental (youth) movements and build alliances with other organisations active in the field.

‘Digital era’

The digitalisation of all spheres of life provides many extra opportunities, but it is also another element in an already long listing of risk factors in the lives and prospects of (young) people. Challenges and opportunities of the digital era for young people have been identified in recent years as relevant issues for youth work. Making use of digital media and technologies in youth work and creating conditions for smart youth work are two sides of the same coin.

- Youth work should support the development of (digital) competencies relevant to smart youth work, including information and data literacy as well as safety in digital environments.
- Youth work can play a key role in helping young people take a critical look at digital technologies as well as the content they deliver.

‘Innovation’

The topic '*Innovation*' has gained momentum in recent years in youth policy and youth work and must be seen as a cross-cutting issue in all thematic areas as in youth work in general. While it has many positive connotations (capacities for social and cultural innovation, creativity, uncovering talents, alternative forms of democratic participation, quality development of practices, methods and approaches, and tools), it can also be seen with a critical eye regarding the main motivation to speed up everyday life and to functionalise youth work for economic purposes.

- Nevertheless, the capacities of youth workers for innovation and the creation of flexible spaces and opportunities for experimentation, trial, and error (amongst the right to play!) must be enhanced and new competencies needed by youth workers must be identified to develop adequate education and training modules.
- Digital, smart and/or green youth work may contribute to the innovative development of youth work in Europe, linked to experimental, innovative approaches and cooperation models.
- New alternative dimensions and formats of youth work and of volunteering need to be explored while striving towards the maintenance and development of the good structures and practices that already exist.
- As a matter of principle youth work must develop innovative forms of working with minority groups and excluded or 'hard-to-reach' young people. Amongst others, it is necessary to engage in the education and training of youth workers stemming from these groups.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

The analysis of the political documents in the field of youth over the past 25 years shows a rich and broad picture of youth policy, youth work and youth work policy covering all aspects of young people's lives. It confirms the interlinkage between the relevance of topical items and political developments in the respective times. The strategies and priorities also demonstrate continuities regarding themes, such as democratic citizenship, participation, social inclusion, access to decent living conditions (education, work, health) and living together in diverse societies. Other themes (culture, youth in the world, smart and green youth work, security, violence, public spaces) seem to pop up only in view of political urgencies but don't show a larger consistency. A third category of topics builds items which are undervalued and lack attention, such as demographic developments and ageing societies, intergenerational solidarity, children's rights, and the right to play in youth work.

However, the complexity of young people's lives today needs comprehensive and holistic answers without ignoring the need to find appropriate strategies on the ground. Necessarily, political statements at the European level remain often abstract while at the local level, concrete answers and solutions are requested. In this respect youth (work) policy and youth work in Europe need further development, taking the suggested priorities and actions seriously while going beyond rhetorical and theoretical statements. The areas of equal and better opportunities in education and in the labour market, access to rights, and social inclusion are keywords needing urgent action in view of the long-lasting and persistent problems many young people are facing.

It should not be forgotten that in a contemporary Europe the 'new normal' is characterized by a complex reality which threatens and intimidates (not only) young people. Whether new or old phenomena, not only the ten crises/challenges and related problems as identified by Howard Williamson draw an alarming picture. Keywords are shrinking civic spaces, democratic backsliding and populism, failure of education, lasting unemployment, global warming, digitalisation, increased pace of life, poverty, homelessness, security, wars and other conflicts, violence, intersectionality, blocked opportunities, enhanced mobility, and forced migration, Covid recovery, and mental health problems. The list could, no doubt, be extended.

The German social scientist Klaus Hurrelmann observes in his recent study 'Youth in Germany' symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in society after the Covid recovery, with medical, psychological and social effects and the feeling of losing control and being exhausted.

It seems that a way back to the 'old normal' is barricaded and, like any previous generation, there is no alternative but to find new strategies for coping with this new reality. While populists take advantage of the existential crises by providing simplistic answers to complex questions, the trust of people, including the young, in democracy and in the capacities of states to find appropriate solutions is shrinking. Youth (work) policy and youth work must contribute to the fight for democratic ways of mastering the challenges we are facing, for solidarity and cohesion, including the substantial social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological changes that are needed to arrange decent living conditions for all generations.

Annexes

ANNEX 1: Relevant analysed European Youth (Work) Policy Documents 1998-2023

EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission white paper - A new impetus for European youth

Author: European Commission

Date & Document N°: 21 November 2021 – COM (2021) 681 final

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/white-paper-on-youth.html>

Council Resolution on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth

Author: Council of the European Union and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council

Date & Document N°: 14 February 2002 - 2002/C 50/02

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2002:050:FULL>

Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 20 November 2008 - 2008/C 319/03

[EUR-Lex - 32008H1213\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:03)

Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18)

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 27 November 2009 - 2009/C 311/01

[EUR-Lex - 32009G1219\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2009:311:01)

Council Resolution on Youth Work

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 04 December 2010 - OJ C 327

[EUR-Lex - 42010Y1204\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2010:327)

2012 Joint Report on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18)

Author: Council of the European Union and European Commission

Date & Document N°: 20 December 2012 – OJ C 394

[EUR-Lex - 52012XG1220\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2012:394)

Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 20 December 2012 - 2012/C 398/01

[Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:01)

Council Conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 14 June 2013 - OJ C 168

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02))

Council Resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 20 May 2014 - 2014/C 183/02

[EUR-Lex - 42014Y0614\(02\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Council Conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies

Author: Council of the European Union

Date and document N°: 23 May 2015 - 2015/C 170/02

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2015:170:FULL>

Council Resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 15 December 2015 - 2015/C 417/01

[EUR-Lex - 42015Y1215\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Council Conclusions on promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people

Author: Council of the European Union

Date and Document N°: 15.12.2016 - OJ C 467

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016XG1215%2802%29&qid=1686573841107>

Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life

Author: Council of the European Union

Date and Document N°: 15 June 2017 - OJ C 189

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017XG0615%2801%29&qid=1686574631319>

Council Conclusions on smart youth work

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 07 December 2017 - OJ C 418

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1207\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1207(01))

Council Resolution on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 18 December 2018 - 2018/C 456/01

[EUR-Lex - C:2018:456:FULL - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Council Conclusions on education and training of youth workers

Author: Council of the European Union

Date and Document N°: 09 December 2019 - 2019/C 412/03

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1209\(01\)&rid=7](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1209(01)&rid=7)

Council Conclusions on Digital Youth Work

Author: Council of the European Union

Date & Document N°: 10 December 2019 - 2019/C 414/02

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1210\(01\)&from=GA](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG1210(01)&from=GA)

Council Resolution on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda

Author: Council of the European Union
Date & Document N°: 01 December 2020 - OJ C 415
[EUR-Lex - 42020Y1201\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy Work Plan 2022-2024

Author: Council of the European Union
Date & Document N°: 14 December 2021 - OJ C 504
[EUR-Lex - 42021Y1214\(02\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union

Author: Council of the European Union
Date & Document N°: 05 April 2022- 2022/C 157/01
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0411%2801%29>

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Final Declaration of the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth

Young people: active citizens in a future Europe: Human Rights - Participation – Solidarity
Bucharest, 27-29 April 1998
<https://rm.coe.int/16807072dd>

Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

Author: Committee of Ministers
Date & Document N°: 16 April 1998 - (98) 6 / 628th meeting
<https://rm.coe.int/native/09000016804e22e9>

Final Declaration of the 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth

“Youth constructing Europe”
Thessaloniki, 7-9 November 2002
<https://rm.coe.int/16807072de>

Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

Author: Committee of Ministers
Date & Document N°: 29 October 2003 - Res(2003)7 / 859th meeting
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805deaab

Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life

Author: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe
Date & Document N°: 21 May 2003 – 10th session – Recommendation 128
<https://rm.coe.int/168071b4d6>

Final Declaration of the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth

“Human Dignity and Social Cohesion: Youth Policy responses to violence”
Budapest, 23rd -24th September 2005
<https://rm.coe.int/16807072e6>

Final Declaration of the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for youth

Kyiv – 10-11 October 2008

“The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/16807072ea>

Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

Author: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 25 November 2008 - CM/Res(2008)23 / 1042nd meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d2245

Conclusions of the chair of the 9th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth

“Young people’s access to rights: development of innovative youth policies”

St Petersburg, 23-25 September 2012

[https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/ministerial-conferences#\[%2238711402%22:\[0\]\]](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/ministerial-conferences#[%2238711402%22:[0]])

Recommendation on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights

Author: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 21 January 2015 - CM/Rec(2015)3 / 1217th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c46f7

Recommendation on young people’s access to rights

Author: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 28 September 2016 - CM/Rec(2016)7 / 1266th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806a93e2

Recommendation on youth work

Author: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Date & Document N°: 31 May 2017 – CM/Rec(2017)4 / 1287th meeting

[1680717e78 \(coe.int\)](https://rm.coe.int/1680717e78)

Recommendation on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood

Author: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Date and Document N°: 24 April 2019 - CM/Rec(2019)4 / 1344th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016809416e1

Resolution on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030

Author: Committee of Ministers

Date & Document N°: 22 January 2020 - CM/Res(2020)2 / 1365th meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998935

Recommendation on Roma youth participation

Author: Committee of Ministers -

Date and Document N°: 5 April 2023 - CM/Rec(2023)4 / 1462nd meeting

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680aacef2

OTHERS

1st European Youth Work Convention - Final Declaration

Author: Participants of 1st European Youth Work Convention / *Date:* 2010

<https://go.coe.int/nIMal>

2nd European Youth Work Convention – Final Declaration

Author: Participants of 2nd European Youth Work Convention / *Date:* 2015
[2nd European Youth Work Convention - Youth Partnership \(coe.int\)](#)

3rd European Youth Work Convention Final Declaration - Signposts for the Future

Author: 3rd European Youth Work Convention / *Date:* 2020

[3rd European Youth Work Convention Final Declaration - Youth Partnership \(coe.int\)](#)

ANNEX 2: Abbreviations

CLRAE = Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

CoE = Council of Europe

E+ = Erasmus + Programme

EC = European Commission

EDC = Education for Democratic Citizenship

e.g. = exempli gratia, for example

EQF = European Qualification Framework

ESC = European Solidarity Corps

etc. = etcetera

e&t = Education and Training

EU = European Union

EYC's = European Youth Centres

EYF = European Youth Foundation

HRE = Human Rights Education

incl. = including

ICT = Information and Communication Technologies

MS = Member States

NGO's / ngo's = Non-Governmental Organisations

v.a. = voluntary activities

VET = Vocational Education and Training

y.w. = youth work

y.p. = young people