



# A contribution to youth work and youth policy in Europe

REPORT OF THE BELGIAN  
EU PRESIDENCY YOUTH  
1/7/2010 – 31/12/2010



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# Foreword

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The success of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union has been unanimously acknowledged by all of the Member States. Also in the area of Youth Policy, an exciting and challenging trajectory has been completed. Belgium may take great pride in seeing the first ever European Resolution on Youth Work adopted within our Union. This Resolution is the most notable aspect of my Presidency, as it were, the crowning glory of our endeavours.

By making the right strategic choices, we precisely defined the direction that we wished to travel, and what we wished to achieve with the Resolution. When you just have a mere six months to complete your journey, you should not try to deal along the way with all of the topics at the same time. The various stages we did complete along the road clarify what this Presidency considers important in the European Youth policy.

I am reiterating below the most important and significant moments.

- The 1st European Conference on the history of youth work and youth policy brought about a broad consensus within Europe about the historical place of youth work within Europe and its future role.
- The 1st European Youth Work Convention emphasizes the importance of youth work and led to the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, which constituted a significant step in the actual realisation of the Resolution and was the starting point of a new policy procedure around Youth Work within the European Union.
- The structured dialogue on the topic of youth and employment highlights the pressing problems that exist in this area and the attention that the Union is devoting to them today. That the voice of youth must not be left unheard in the debate about access to employment is due to the efforts of European Youth Work. Under this Presidency, that proposition was given forceful impetus and illustration.
- The document that Belgium delivered about harmonisation between the European and international agendas on children's rights met with wide-ranging resonance and response. This is, in effect, the first document ever to enumerate what kinds of initiatives exist within the European Union and how these have been organized, and an important step towards the future harmonisation of the diverse visions and policy choices within the Member States.



In addition, there are a number of memorable moments I would like to highlight. The fact that during the meeting of the European Youth Council two representatives of Youth Work were allowed to take the floor and address the gathering is an occasion bound to remain deeply imprinted upon my memory and, no doubt, upon the memory of all those present. It is my fervent hope that with this a trend was created towards greater future participation of the young themselves in the European project. Likewise the attention paid to youth in urban centres is in line with the quest for greater participation. Europe is ageing, but our cities are greening. Youth in these urban centres are precisely the least effective and capable, the least participative, the least active within our Union. If it is indeed our wish to see the recommendations of this Presidency for more economic, cultural, and social emancipation become reality, these youngsters too - and perhaps they in particular - will have to become integrated as part of our future Europe.

**Pascal Smet**

*Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels Affairs*

# Showing you the way through the Belgian EU Presidency Youth

2010 was an important year for the development of youth policy in Europe. Many matters demanded our attention and on-going processes created new opportunities. The following developments inspired in particular the Belgian EU Presidency Youth:

- the 'Renewed EU Framework for Cooperation in the Youth Field'
- the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon
- the Communication 'Europe2020' and the 'Youth on the Move' flagship initiative
- the European Year of Combatting Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) and the upcoming European Year of Volunteering (2011)

The Belgian Presidency Youth took the initiative to play a role in further implementation of these European developments and seized the moment by putting forward 3 priority themes:

- youth work
- youth and employment
- European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights

The results of the different discussions, activities and conferences are brought together in this report. It shows you how the Belgian EU Presidency Youth addressed the different priorities, without forgetting the other Presidency activities on the calendar. All Presidency Youth activities were consciously linked to the EU Council Youth. Therefore, the chapter detailing the preparation and achievements of the EU Council Youth is the corner stone of this report and of the Belgian Presidency Youth.

We hope this report gives you a feel of the intensity, the pleasure and the youthful enthusiasm that were central elements of those six months of Belgian Presidency.

**Happy reading!**

## ■ DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING YOUTH WORK

Youth work contributes more to society than it often is credited for. That's why youth work is worth reflecting on and investing in. The first **European conference on the history of youth work and youth policy** (p. 7) set out to find a shared youth work identity and mission, analysing the concept of youth work from different perspectives. The first **European Youth Work Convention** (p. 14) showed the

diversity of youth work in Europe and asked the question: "How can we create the conditions for youth work to grow and prepare itself for the future?" Delegates from all over Europe developed the **Ghent Declaration** addressing issues in nine fields (p. 15) which was a stepping stone towards the **Council Resolution on Youth Work** (p. 22). This resolution sets the policy agenda for the coming years to recognise and further develop youth work in Europe.

## ■ STRUCTURED DIALOGUE ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Nothing about them without them. That's why the EU Member States and the European Commission set up a process of 'structured dialogue' in which youth representatives discuss important issues with policy makers. The Trio Presidency of Spain-Belgium-Hungary chose to take on youth employment. The **EU Youth Conference in Leuven** (p. 31) focussed on eight important topics related to youth employment and came up with a list of **recommendations** in this field (p. 33).

## ■ EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY AGENDAS ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Many different policy initiatives have been taken in the field of children, youth and children's rights, but they sometimes overlap or lack coherence. The **'Europe de l'Enfance' expert meeting and conference** addressed this issue (p. 41). By integrating the 'Europe de l'Enfance' meeting in the youth activities of the Presidency, the Belgian Presidency created bridges between the often separated worlds of children and children's rights on the one hand, and the youth sector on the other.

The Presidency note about this topic contributed to the **Council Conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights** (p. 48).

## ■ COVERING A WIDE SPECTRUM OF YOUTH (WORK) ISSUES

The Belgian EU Presidency Youth also took a whole deal of youth related issues and meetings under its wings. A sneak preview:

- Putting young people positively in the spotlights on **International Youth Day** (p. 52).
- The **Director-Generals for Youth Affairs** focussed their meeting on structured dia-

logue and knowledge-based youth policy (p. 53).

- The **heads of the national agencies of the Youth in Action programme** gave their view on the future Youth in Action 2.0 programme (p. 55).
- Putting urban youth on the European agendas through an **Urban Youth and Europe day** (p. 57).
- A seminar made the point that **mobility is not a luxury**, but a right for all young people, also those with fewer opportunities (p. 59)

#### ■ ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE COUNCIL

The Belgian EU Presidency Youth took on the challenge to root the work of the **European Council of Ministers** in the recommendations and messages from the different conferences. Many of the conference and seminar results were stepping stones for these **Council Conclusions and Resolutions**:

- Resolution on Youth Work
- Council Conclusions on access of young people to culture
- Council Conclusions about the international and European policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights
- Contribution to Council Conclusions on the Youth on the Move initiative

#### ■ BEHIND THE SCENES

As Youth is a decentralised competence in Belgium, devolved to the Communities, it was Flanders who was assigned to take the leading role in the preparations of the Youth part of the Belgian EU presidency and to chair the EU Youth Council and the German Speaking Community was assigned spokesperson for Belgium.

The preparations started already at the end of 2007, in close cooperation with the three Communities of Belgium. From the beginning the competent authorities, the Youth in Action national agencies and the youth councils of the three Communities in Belgium were actively involved. And so was the European Commission (EC), the EU Council Secretariat, the Youth Partnership between the CoE and the EC and the European Youth Forum. An important role was reserved for youth researchers to support the preparations with regard to content. As the Belgian Presidency Youth didn't want to have a Europe at two speeds, the Council of Europe (CoE) was also invited.

The Belgian EU Presidency Youth had the great pleasure to receive hundreds of youth workers, youth representatives, staff of the YiA national agencies and youth administrations during many different conferences and events. The Belgian Presidency team worked hard together with the colleagues in the Youth Working Party in the preparatory meetings of the Youth Council and with the Trio Presidency Spain-Belgium-Hungary.

You can read the results of this fruitful cooperation on the following pages.

# Youth work on the European policy agenda



# The time was ripe

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■ A set of events over the previous time built up the momentum for youth work and youth policy:

- In November 2009, the renewed EU framework for cooperation in the field of Youth<sup>1</sup> highlighted the need to ‘support and develop youth work’. For the first time in an official document of the Council, a considerable amount of attention was dedicated to youth work as it is described as “a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people” and an initial agenda is mentioned. The renewed framework also challenges the member states and the European Commission to think about the role of youth work related to the 8 fields of action.
- At the same time, the European Commission wanted to organise a conference for youth workers<sup>2</sup> as part of its Youth in Action work plan.
- The Council of Europe had adopted the ‘Agenda 2020’ about ‘The future of the Council of Europe youth policy’ in 2008<sup>3</sup>.

Add to this, that the 3 Communities of Belgium have a long tradition on youth work and youth work related policy, keep it high on the political agenda and are always eager to share their experience at European level.

These auspicious developments thus led the Belgian EU Presidency Youth to seize the opportunity and make ‘youth work’ a priority of its presidency activities, resulting in organising two conferences and proposing an resolution.

However, the Belgian Presidency chose not to tackle everything at once, but to focus on the essence of it all: youth work itself, using the renewed framework as a guiding frame. The aims were to learn from the past, to discuss the relevant issues for the present and to show the diversity of youth work. This in order to find common ground within the diversity and start new (policy) processes in Europe. Thus leaving the discussions about the role of youth work related to the 8 fields of action to future presidencies.

And as a two speed European policy wasn’t an option, the presidency also chose for a pan-European approach, inviting all 50 countries that signed the European Cultural Treaty to the two youth work events organised in Ghent.

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1 Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01).

2 In European policy texts the phrase commonly used is ‘youth workers and youth leaders’


3 Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2008 at the 1042nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies) and The 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Kyiv, Ukraine, 10-11 October 2008 ) “The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020”




# 1st European Conference on the history of youth work and youth policy - Relevance for youth work policy today


## FACT SHEET

 Cultural Centre Vooruit, Ghent, 5-7 July 2010

 250 representatives of youth ministries, youth research and youth work

 Historical insights inspire current youth work debates. They build bridges between past and future, policy and practice, East and West and North and South.

 Key note speeches, 3 talk show debates and 20 workshops

 Key messages and conclusions from the workshops

### ■ YOUTH WORK IN TIMES OF CHANGE

In many European countries, the definition, position and social recognition of youth work have been under discussion in recent times. These debates have to be situated against a background of fundamental social, cultural and political transformations. In the reframing of our societies into a global 'risk society', the moral and educational role of youth work has been firmly re-emphasised. The reaction of many youth workers has been one of suspicion and rejection. Youth workers do not want to inscribe themselves uncritically into policy agendas that focus on the smooth integration of young people into a competitive labour market.

In former state socialist countries, the question seems to be totally different than in Western European welfare states, but in fact the youth work question there looks quite similar to other parts of Europe. In all countries youth workers have to rethink their function and position in the social, cultural, economical and political integration of young people. In Southern European countries the situation is still different, albeit in the end it is pretty similar. A distinct, professional youth work practice never developed in those countries. A broad voluntary sector does exist, but is not necessarily recognised as 'youth work'. In other countries, such as the UK and the Scandinavian countries, there is a growing gap between the professional youth work practice and the voluntary youth sector.

All these differences do not hide the fact that obviously there is a clear set of shared values and principles across that huge diversity of youth work practices between and within countries. As the social and political context is changing, youth work has to reflect on its identity and its relation to the state and to other socialisation institutions and environments. These fundamental questions have led to a reevaluation of historical consciousness in youth work practice, policy and research. History can not show us the one and only way to shape or reshape youth work's identity. However, it is important to realise that the road that youth work has taken was not inescapable. It followed an own internal logic. Youth work evolutions are a matter of social, cultural and political debate. It is important to identify the underlying concepts to that debate, as these concepts structured and very often still structure the youth work debate. Even though they are currently often invisible and no longer open for discussion, they do define what is possible and what seems impossible (Lorenz 2007).

### ■ INVESTING AND EMPOWERING

These new challenges are clearly set out in the new EU strategy in the field of youth: Investing and Empowering. The Belgian EU Presidency, like the whole youth field, has welcomed the new strategy. At the same time however many youth workers called for the recognition of the huge diversity of youth work practice and argued against a one-sided approach of making youth work instrumental to labour market strategies.

In a context of rapid social, political and economical transformations, policymakers seem to demand an even more flexible youth work. They want youth work to go further down the road of professionalisation and to respond to 'new challenges'. They try to connect youth work to the educational system, the labour market, social work... This means that youth work has to discuss - as Howard Williamson put it - which sacred cows need to be slain and which cherished values still need to be passionately defended.

The Belgian EU Presidency decided to take youth work as one of its priorities and to or-

ganise a 1st European Youth Work Convention celebrating the diversity and social value of youth work. Historical consciousness was recognised to be an indispensable aspect of actual youth work debates. Therefore it was decided to organise a 1st European Conference on the history of youth work and youth policy. The history conference ran from 5 to 7 July 2010 and formed the ideal run-up to the 1st European Youth Work Convention later that week (7 to 10 July 2010).

### ■ THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF YOUTH WORK

The growing interest in youth work's history has recently been taken up by the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union. It had found its way to Belgium already in 2008 when an expert seminar on 'youth work history and its relevance for youth work policy today' was organised in Blankenberge (Verschelden et al., 2009). Participants from all over Europe and from different corners of the youth field enjoyed this seminar and the report received a warm welcome from different stakeholders. In 2009 a second expert seminar was organised, again in Blankenberge (Coussée, et al., 2010) and it was felt that the Belgian EU Presidency should continue and validate these activities. This finally led to the organisation of the 1st European Conference on the history of youth work and youth policy as the opener of the 'European Youth Work week'.

This conference aimed to support the ambition of the Belgian EU Presidency to highlight the diversity in the youth work field. At the same time, it stimulated the search for elements that bind all these practices together. To assure that the diversity would get the stage, the conference focused on youth work's history from different perspectives: a regional one, a thematic one and a methodical perspective. All three perspectives were introduced to the participants on the first evening by three concurrent 'talk show debates'. On the second day, the three strands unrolled in many different workshops. Each workshop was introduced by a researcher, practitioner or policymaker. The participants came from all over Europe and formed a mix of policymakers, researchers, civil servants and practitioners.

#### A regional perspective

As prof. dr. em. Hugh Cunningham (UK) illustrated in his introductory key note speech, the history of youth work has to be seen against the background of how society deals with its young people. Contextual insights in social, political and cultural situations enable youth

workers to define their distinct role in mediating between the interests of different partners, not the least those of children and young people themselves.

In the two previous expert seminars in Blankenberge, speakers presented an overview of different 'youth work histories' throughout Europe (France, Germany, England, Wales, Ireland, the three communities of Belgium, the Netherlands, Malta, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Russia, ...). The regional strand of workshops this conference was a sequel to the earlier seminars. One workshop was dedicated to Serbia and Austria, another one focused on Greece and Portugal. Central questions for the workshops and the introductory panel debate concentrated on:

- the birth of youth work (when, why and how?);
- the nature of youth work (agency-driven, social movement, state education?);
- the purpose of youth work (citizenship education, prevention, leisure time organisation, ...?);
- the methods of youth work (outreach, centre-based, sports, open youth work, ...) and
- the principles of youth work (voluntary association, group work, learning by doing...).

The workshop discussions addressed the (desired) relationship between youth work and the state (enabling, controlling, supportive, independent, laissez-faire, imposing, ...) and the consequences for the relationship between youth workers and young people. The IARD study distinguishing between different welfare regimes (liberal, social democratic, corporatist...) functioned as a stepping stone into the discussion. Youth workers, researchers and policymakers also discussed what they thought to be key questions in youth work: accessibility, effects, autonomy, budget and recognition.

#### A thematic perspective

In this strand the discussion was introduced from 'outside'. Prof. dr. David Hansen (US) came to tell 'his story' of positive youth development in the USA. He revealed how many themes in youth work are recurrent through history. Sometimes they are introduced as brand new, at other times we deliberately fall back on things that have stood the test of time. Youth work evidences have a long history. They are carried by policymakers, researchers, youth workers and other social professionals and of course by young people themselves and their parents. Youth work evidences structure our practices rather implicitly

and therefore they are not always open for discussion. In this strand was thrown a light on 'the life story' of central themes in the new EU strategy in the field of youth, but also in different national youth strategies (see Williamson, 2002; 2008). The introductory speakers dealt with the themes of inclusion and exclusion, professionalism and professionalisation and the relation between youth work, youth movements and youth culture.

There was a tendency identified in current policies to neglect the complex 'social nature' of youth work and to impose a more structured, individualised, professionalised and outcome-focused youth work, especially with regard to vulnerable young people. Therefore many discussions tackled the themes of accessibility, voluntary participation and outcomes of youth work.

### A methodical perspective

Many practitioners, researchers and other policymakers agree that the needs of children and young people are expressed in a variety of ways, depending on their gender, ethnicity, class, region... Therefore, methodical differentiation is in the interests of all these different young people in all their diverse contexts and living situations. However, youth work's diversity is also a weakness or a threat. Therefore, youth work has always been both a contested and at the same time a powerful practice. It seems a very polyvalent, and thus ambivalent, practice. Youth work as a form of informal education seems to serve many masters:

- Many adults, especially youth policymakers, see youth work through a lens of 'socialisation': it contributes to the individual development of children and young people and it is instrumental to the 'formation of good citizens'. In that sense, youth work adds to the educational interventions supposed to be coming from family and school.
- Many young people, especially those participating in youth work, see youth work as practice of 'socialising', of being young together. It supports their emancipation and in that sense, it liberates young people from the grip of family and school.
- Bringing these two - seemingly contradictory - perspectives together, many youth work stakeholders define youth work as a 'social' practice: it supports the integration of young people into society, whilst at the same time it strengthens their view and voice on the conditions under which this integration has to take place.

So youth work has to connect to policy and research, but it needs a well defined identity,

which at the same time leaves room for the needed flexibility and versatility. If not, the so-called magic triangle between policy, research and practice could as well be a restrictive triangle, forcing youth work into a subordinate position.

In this respect, the workshops investigated very different types of youth work with a long standing tradition: the working class kids circles, the student movements, uniformed youth organisations, open youth work, youth information work and detached youth work. In the workshops the connections between different methods were discussed. What makes us different, but above all: what binds us together?

### CONCLUSIONS

The historical insights helped us to discuss youth work identity starting from a shared mission and position for all youth work forms, with respect to the dialectical tension between diversity and universality. In doing so the Belgian EU Presidency hopes to inspire current youth work debates and to build a bridge between past and future, policy and practice, East and West and North and South.

One of the key messages was that youth work fulfils different functions which can not be disconnected from each other:

- **Educational:** Youth work contributes to the individual development of young people. They acquire much needed competencies in our market societies based on risk and choice. Youth work offers biographical and institutional competencies to young people. But let's not forget, what is often forgotten in more formal learning institutions: you can not educate young people, without learning from them!
- **Social:** That is an underlying principle in youth work. Youth work contributes to a more just society, by strengthening the voice of young people in shaping our democracy, especially the voice of the most marginalised young people.
- **Economical:** Youth work is partly professionalised and gives many young people the chance to work as a professional youth worker. But there are also other economic aspects:
  - The impact of the volunteers in youth work is strong and makes a huge contribution to our society by fulfilling functions that would otherwise be a huge investment for our welfare state.
  - Youth work is also a field in which young people acquire the competences they need to find their place on the labour market.

Interwoven with these functions, youth work undeniably has both a recreational and a political nature.

- **Recreational:** Playing and having fun was called 'a royal vehicle' for all other youth work functions. Young people learn by playing, they meet friends, explore society and different roles and above all: they get access to activities and experiences they would not find at home or at school.
- **Political:** Youth work is an instrument for young people's self-organisation, but at the same time, it is an instrument for young people's smooth integration. This positions youth work between system and life world: an ambivalent position that makes youth work inevitably a contingent and variable practice. At the same time, it is this position that makes up the core of its identity.

This complex social identity of youth work has as a consequence that youth work has become a very diverse field of practice. This diversity should be cherished and should lay the foundations of the social recognition of youth work. This message was clearly stated in both this History Conference and the Youth Work Convention.

A reporting team headed by Howard Williamson, Griet Verschelden, Tineke Van de Walle and Filip Coussée summarised the discussions and gathered some key messages from the different workshops. The final concluding message was launched on the third day of the conference:

Youth work reflects the society it is situated in. There is no such thing as the ideal society. Society is a never ending search for the answer how to live together, well knowing that there is no hard and fast answer to that question. Youth work is part of that process. Through history we observe recurring shifts in the relationship between the existing society and young people. History shows that youth work itself has been an imaginative and enduring response to some of the dilemmas such a relationship throws up. Consequently, we see that youth work has always been positioning itself in relation to

questions of individual discovery and social engagement; formal learning and informal leisure time.

In an enduring attempt to accommodate the diverse needs of an heterogeneous population of young people in diverse living conditions, youth work developed into a diverse field of practice. History shows how neglecting or even destroying this diversity inevitably leads to reinforcing processes of marginalisation and exclusion.

There has always been a strong need for enabling policies to guarantee what exists and to create experimental frameworks to accommodate new dynamics in youth work, to recognize new youth cultural and peer group practices and to identify new dynamics of social exclusion. History shows that we need to think beyond our own sacred youth work territories and structures. We need to forge alliances with other actors. For instance: collaborating with municipalities on the design of youth spaces and places. Especially in times of crisis, this is a hard needed, but difficult engagement. Not only for policymakers, but also for youth workers.

Organisational professionalisation sometimes seemed and seems to undermine occupational professionalism. Especially in the work with 'hard-to-reach' young people, the engagement of professionals is emphasised as a building stone for a stronger practice. The impact of volunteers however can not be neglected. They are the key factor, together with young people themselves, in making youth work a living and attractive practice, preventing youth work to become an institutionalised, formalised and less attractive place for young people. In that sense, there is a strong plea for professionalisation, going hand in hand with professionalism. And let's be serious: the fun aspect of youth work keeps the tensions and dilemmas in youth work practice bearable, even turns them into a productive force. All the more it is important not to forget our histories.

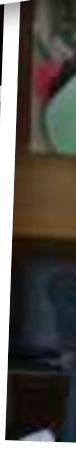
A more comprehensive report will be published in 2011 under the aegis of the report team, the Belgian EU Presidency team and the EU-CoE Youth Partnership.

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# 1st European Youth Work Convention


## FACT SHEET

 Cultural Centre Vooruit, Ghent,  
7-10 July 2010

 400 youth workers, researchers, policy makers, civil servants, national youth councils

 Showing the diversity of youth work in Europe, Finding common ground within the diversity and starting new (policy) processes in Europe, preparing youth work for the future

 Plenary inputs, 25 discussion groups on 9 themes, 28 good practice workshops, 18 local project visits

 Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention

## ■ A FOCUS ON YOUTH WORK

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention wanted to show the diversity of youth work, but also to create the conditions for youth work to grow, to become stronger and prepare itself for the future. Therefore finding common ground within the diversity, in order to gain political, social and professional recognition for youth work and its impact on other policy fields, was important. As was starting off new (policy) processes on youth work on a European level, taking into consideration existing processes.

### A programme worthy of youth work

The Belgian Presidency didn't want to 'reinvent the hot water' (as the Dutch phrase goes). It built onto existing processes, knowledge and networks, both on national and European level. European and national experts identified a number of transversal youth work themes to be discussed during the convention.

The programme of the Youth Work Convention was based on a set of principles. The Convention should highlight and allow space for:

- the different national realities in Europe
- the different types and formats of youth work
- the different methods and approaches used in youth work
- the different target groups youth work aims at

These principles were implemented at all lev-

els of the Convention: in the content, in the composition of the delegations of participants, in the organisation of workshops, etc. And as is the case in youth work itself, all five senses were stimulated through captivating and playful methods.

### From preparation to implementation

For the preparation of the Convention participants, an extra edition of the Coyote magazine<sup>4</sup> was published. This youth work magazine introduced readers to the discussion topics and background of the Convention. For the occasion, Coyote got a whole new 'youth work' look and feel, tickling the five senses...

- The Youth Work Convention itself started with an interactive discovery of the building, the participants and the topic. Different environments and activities got the participants in the mood and had them running up and down the different rooms in the building.
- Youth workers, researchers and policy makers took the floor in a number of plenary sessions. They gave a state of play on different youth work topics or had a look at them from a different angle to inspire the on-going discussions.
- Twenty-five thematic discussion workshops invited participants to reflect, discuss and formulate recommendations on nine youth work related topics.
- Twenty-seven 'Youth Work in Action' workshops gave the floor to a big variety of practitioners and experts from all over Europe to show the diversity of youth work and to learn from each other's realities.
- In the same line of thought, participants could visit eighteen local youth work practices in Ghent.

### Connecting Europe(s)

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention brought together official delegations from all 50 countries that have signed the European Cultural Convention. Around 400 people attended the Convention amongst which a many youth workers, besides researchers, policy makers, civil servants, members of national youth councils, etc. It was the first time ever that such a variety of delegations from all over Europe met to discuss youth work and its future in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> Coyote is the magazine of the Partnership on Youth between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. It is available from [www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)



Both the European Union and the Council of Europe teamed up with the Belgian Presidency for the European Youth Work Convention. By being partners for this event, both European institutions acknowledged the importance of youth work and expressed their intention to stimulate its development. The Convention definitely was an event that connected different stakeholders around youth work in Europe.

## ■ THE MAKING OF A DECLARATION

The Belgian Presidency conceived the European Youth Work Convention to be the start of a new process to put and keep youth work on the political agenda in Europe. Parallel to the Convention, the Presidency team laid the basis for a European Council resolution on youth work.

### Feeding back and feeding forward

The Convention goers had the opportunity to voice their opinions on the themes put forward for the future resolution. Overall some thirty facilitators and rapporteurs were trained on the spot in Ghent to generate and capture the ideas of the thematic discussion workshops. The facilitators were responsible for getting as much feedback as possible from the participants. The rapporteurs wrote down the conclusions and key messages, including a priority ranking given to them by the group.

Each report was sent to the team of general rapporteurs who had extensive experience as youth worker, researcher or National Agency of the Youth in Action programme: The Presidency team had asked Julie Godfroid, Danijela Juric, Hans-Georg Wicke and Howard Williamson to write a declaration based on the outcomes of the thematic discussion workshops and inspired by the 'Youth Work in Action' workshops and the plenary sessions.

### The voice of the people

In writing the declaration, the general rapporteurs were asked to respect what participants pointed out as important (the key messages and conclusions from the thematic discussion groups). The general rapporteurs received the reports of the different working groups and sat down together to work their way through all the material. They started discussing, rearranging the available material and created their own process of how to get to a declaration. Work went on until late after midnight to arrive at the final version of the declaration, while the participants were having a great party at Vooruit.

The last day of the event, the general rapporteurs presented the results of the European Youth Work Convention to the delegates to take back home to their country. From their side, the Presidency team would take the declaration forward to the youth working parties of the European Council, inviting the member states to put forward the elements they deemed important to come to the Council resolution on youth work.

## ■ DECLARATION OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION

### Preamble

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention took place under the Belgian EU Presidency in July 2010. Nine years after the European Union launched the White Paper on Youth under the previous Belgian Presidency, the youth work and youth policy community came back to Ghent. For the first time, the focus was exclusively on youth work. The Convention sought to connect the past, present and future thinking and practice of youth work. Over 400 participants from 50 countries took part in an intensive and robust debate – through plenary sessions, 'youth work in action' workshops, visits to local youth projects and thematic discussion groups over three days. The Convention was preceded by a conference exploring the history of youth work in Europe, a third such event following two previous seminars in Blankenberge, Belgium. This Declaration is addressed to the Ministers responsible for Youth from the 50 member states of the European Union and of the Council of Europe, to the European Institutions, to the political structures dealing with young people at national, regional and local level, and of course to the youth work field and to the young people themselves.

### History

There are many histories of youth work in Europe as well as a more recent history of European-level youth work. Youth work history is characterised by diversity, tension and development. Youth work has been inspired and carried out in many different ways: in the shape of social movements, youth organisations or associations, run by faith groups, the non-governmental sector or as part of national, regional or local youth policy. Youth work has engaged with different groups of young people, often distinguished by social class, religious belief, political affiliation or cultural interests. It has been organised in different ways, sometimes led by adults, in other cases co-managed or self-managed by young people themselves.

## Youth work today

Youth work is often misunderstood because of its complexity. However, it does two simple things: On the one hand, youth work provides a space for being together, for activity, dialogue and action. On the other hand, it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood.

In today's Europe, youth work is guided and governed by the principles of participation and empowerment, by the values of human rights and democracy and by anti-discrimination and tolerance. It is framed by a range of policies and research knowledge. Youth work is delivered both by volunteers as well as paid workers. It is established through a voluntary relationship with young people. It is financed and managed in a variety of ways. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, taking place between young people and the societies in which they live. Youth work has to deal with a range of tensions generated by this social dynamic. For instance, it needs to reconcile youth research, policy and practice, it has to make sense of different youth policy agendas (on European, national, regional and local level), it needs to position itself in cross-sectorial cooperation, it has to deal with issues of training, competences and recognition, as well as further developing pedagogical, relational and methodological approaches to youth work practice.

'Youth work' is defined in the Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018) as:

*a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sports and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of 'out-of-school' education as well as specific leisure time activities, managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation.*

At the Convention, 'youth work' was defined more briefly as the provision of 'space and opportunity for young people to shape their own futures'. Whatever the definitional debate, people agree that different forms of youth work engage with different young people, use different methodologies, address different issues and operate in different contexts. Within this frame of groups, methods, issues and contexts, youth work practice adapts, evolves and develops over time.

The focus of the Convention was on contemporary youth work and youth work in the

future – learning from the lessons of the past. In the context of the changed and changing life contexts of young people, numerous questions were raised about whether or not youth work needed to change, about the relationship between youth work and youth policy and about the contribution of youth work to the wider circumstances of young people. The debates raised some specific challenges, such as the role of youth work in addressing youth unemployment, issues of quality and qualifications in youth work and the type of youth work required for living together in diverse societies. Participants invested significant energy in issues such as the accessibility of youth work, youth work standards, recognition of youth work, the resources needed and the impact of youth work.

## Youth work and policy priorities

There remains a relatively limited understanding and engagement between youth work on the one hand and politics and (youth) policy on the other. Politicians need to gain better knowledge of youth work, but youth workers also have to get a better insight of how policy is made.

Authorities have tended to follow their own priorities and agendas when developing policies, rather than those of youth work and those of young people. Greater links between 'top down' and 'bottom up' priorities are needed. Youth workers should be involved in policy-making discussions in broader policy fields which affect the lives of young people; they should also be consulted on policies that may have more indirect effects on young people. It is important that policy makers in the youth field, but also in other fields engage both with organised and less organised young people. Youth organisations play a significant role in these processes.

Youth workers and young people should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of youth policy. Specific initiatives in the youth field should be taken based on the principles and values of youth work: rights-based, opportunity-focused, with a positive orientation, and based on equality of access and involvement.

The 'structured dialogue' and the dialogue with national, regional and local youth councils as well as the European Youth Forum and the Advisory Council of the Council of Europe, are both illustrations of the progress that has taken place in recent years. However, such processes need to be strengthened in the future through a broader base for this dialogue and an increased application of co-management practices.

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### **Position and cross-sectorial co-operation**

In the past youth work seems to have operated in isolation. It is now increasingly expected to engage in far greater professional collaboration within a broader framework of cross-sectorial policy development in the youth field. Cross-sectorial co-operation takes different forms: between educational sectors, between agencies and policy domains affecting young people (such as health, employment or justice), between funding sources and at different levels of administration. Many would agree that more communication, co-ordination and co-operation is required. Youth work might be reticent to join such processes, because it challenges its identity and could instrumentalise youth work. Youth work is concerned about the erosion of its distinctive contributions to young people's lives.

Such policy co-operation opens the door for sharing good practice and developing more collaborative practice. Youth work is, of course, well-placed to connect to and interact with young people. It can, however, feel that its privileged relationship with young people can be compromised through collaboration with agencies such as the police or vocational training providers, even if ultimately the agencies and young people share the same goals. The trust and credibility that youth workers enjoy with young people can be rapidly undermined, unless the 'rules of engagement' are carefully negotiated on an equal basis and based on mutual respect.

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### **Information, impact and effect**

Precisely because of the diversity of youth work, there needs to be an equivalently diverse approach to identifying the contribution youth work can make both to young people and to society. Classical evaluation tools need to be supplemented with the dissemination of good practice which can inspire others in the field. There is a relatively thin knowledge base on youth work. Next to the development of the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy, other forms of collection, dissemination and translation of information on youth work principles, policy and practice are required. Not all youth workers can read English. Information resources at a European level exist, but there is a need for a better guide to their location and accessibility: [youthwork.eu](http://youthwork.eu) represents a promising start.

The impact of youth work can only be better understood, disseminated and evaluated, if better information and knowledge about youth work is available. Both quantitative and qualitative 'evidence' needs to be collected, collated and analysed.

The objectives of such information gathering are to promote the visibility of youth work, to foster quality in practice and thereby to enhance the credibility of youth work. At another level, it is important to gather evidence based information on the living conditions of young people which could serve as a basis for strategic and operational thinking about youth work and youth policy. Both youth surveys and youth monitoring are relevant to this need. Through these and other mechanisms, youth work can really 'start from where young people are at'.

In relation to the outcomes and impact of youth work, the proclaimed 'triangle' of youth research, policy and practice needs to be enlarged into a square incorporating youth organisations and young people. Perspectives from all sides need to be taken into account when measuring impact. A mapping exercise or inventory of the types and volume of youth work in member states is urgently required, both to understand and disseminate current examples of good practice and to establish the strategic direction for youth work in the future.

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### **Youth work for all and in diversity**

Diversity in youth work is linked to accessibility for all. The Convention stressed the importance of 'low threshold' youth work practice that provides an open door for all young people. However, youth workers need more advanced training in and commitment to universal values in order to face the rapidly changing demands of diverse populations of young people. The training proposed must move beyond the mere understanding of the need for tolerance into the acquisition of knowledge and competencies around cultural diversity. Furthermore, diversity within youth work organisations and youth work administrations should be strengthened so that they act as a role model.

Youth work should avoid seeing any group of young people solely as targets for inclusion and participation but it should rather consider them partners in activism for the promotion of diversity in society. In the context of new inter-faith and intercultural conditions in Europe, some older forms of youth work such as community development and community action need to be reflected on and adapted to new times.

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### **The quality of practice**

Youth work is an unusual professional practice in that it is delivered both by voluntary and paid workers. There is no clear division of tasks in the roles played by either. Indeed, both can be found in virtually all arenas of youth work's diverse activities. Their relationship is often complementary and mutually

supportive. However, because of their differences, there have been particular challenges around issues of quality, competences and recognition. This has often resulted into a clash between professionalisation and professionalism. It is a complex debate, in which concerns prevail about exclusivity if a certain level of qualification becomes the sole threshold of professionalism. There is no doubt that there is a growing cluster of knowledge, skills and attitudes for doing many aspects of youth work, for example about policy, ethics, risk, management, budgeting and practical engagement with young people. Still, these competences have often been acquired by those with a long experience of voluntary practice. Routes to individual validation through the accreditation of prior learning must therefore be established and respected. This can be achieved by setting quality standards and identifying generic competencies. Such a framework could be developed at European level and applied through national structures, delivered through flexible education and training systems, as well as in a self-regulated way through a professional code of ethics governing the behaviour of youth workers in their contact with young people.

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### **Competences, training and recognition**

Though there may be no need for an homogeneous training system for youth workers, there still is a need for a competence-building framework. This framework could be based on different approaches to learning such as developing theoretical understanding, practice supervision (and co-supervision), coaching, e-learning, peer learning, observation and assessment. These need to be available over time and granted appropriate reflection and follow-up. Just as for young people themselves, youth workers need to engage in recurrent learning in order to deal effectively with the changing circumstances in which they are working. Youth work practice is being increasingly carried out in other sectors as a result of cross-sectorial developments. To increase understanding of these practices, there is a need for youth workers to learn more about other youth research, policy and practice environments. In short, training needs to be flexible, appropriate and incremental. Where possible, the European dimension of training should be intercultural, transnational and linked to a European programme, both physically and methodologically.

Not only do the necessary resources need to be provided for such provision, there also has to be stronger recognition of youth work, both within and outside youth policy structures. This will generate a virtuous circle of quality, competence and improved practice. There

is an argument for having strategies for the recognition and validation of youth work at European, national and local, and sometimes organisational level. Yet, whatever tools and instruments for accreditation, certification and recognition are developed, key questions remain about their use, units and credibility. These need to be explored and weaknesses acknowledged and addressed where necessary. It is likely that such a process requires dialogue with those from other sectors of the public administration, with different levels of youth policy and practice and with the private sector.

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### **Mobility and networking**

Exchange between youth workers and young people from different cultures, backgrounds and youth work experiences is important for quality development, for learning and support, for knowledge transfer and for extending opportunities to develop and implement youth work at international level. Though the possibilities for exchange have been enhanced over recent years, obstacles such as finances, language and personal and professional status remain. There was a call for mobility as a right for all. Therefore, mechanisms for dealing with various obstacles need to be developed.

To improve networking and exchange, practitioners from across Europe in all sectors of youth work should have the means and opportunities for dialogue, contact and co-operation with each other. For those working in particular areas of youth work, there should be more specific possibilities to come or work together. There was also a call for stronger international mobility opportunities for youth workers. The Youth in Action programme goes some way to address these issues, but these need to be taken further. To that end, there should be more discussion on the value of face-to-face contact through international mobility, though there is already a strong consensus that such experiences have a key impact on youth work.

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### **Sustainable support and funding**

There is a strong need to develop a legal framework for youth work that ensures a core budget. This budget should guarantee the sustainability of infrastructure, projects and youth work development. This legal framework could require the development of local youth work action plans, which identify the resources needed from different levels of funding for delivering the activities. Different funding sources should be attributed to different levels of youth work provision and should not be played off against each other. There should be clear and transparent criteria for the funding of youth work. Both established and

new youth work initiatives and organisations should have equal chances of securing these resources.

National governments were held to be primarily responsible for the funding of youth work. European funds play a triple role in the development and implementation of youth work. First, youth programmes at European level – such as the Youth in Action programme - represent an increasingly critical provision, for social inclusion, youth mobility and active citizenship. Secondly, their distinctive contribution to the lives of young people and youth workers and to the conceptualisation of youth work itself is important in framing, shaping and supporting new kinds of practice. Thirdly, the programmes remain invaluable in ‘kick starting’ support for youth work activities and demonstrating its value in areas where there is little tradition or understanding of such practice. Guaranteeing funding for Europe’s young people is essential for achieving the objectives of the European strategies within and beyond the youth field by 2020. Youth work will, however, also have to explore broader sources of funding and youth workers will need improved competences in income generation.

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### Next Steps

The European Youth Work Convention recognised the responsibility of youth workers themselves to contribute where possible to the agendas outlined above, but they also need to be allowed to politically and financially. At European level, a range of political initiatives and actions in the youth field (and beyond but still affecting young people, youth work and youth policy) are taking place over the next year. The content of this Declaration should therefore be taken into account in those debates. The Declaration aims to encourage to take youth work and young people into account within these policy debates. These include:

- Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship project ‘Youth on the Move’
- The foreseen Recommendation of the Council on the Promotion of Mobility
- The foreseen Recommendation of the Council on the Recognition of Non-Formal Learning
- The new generation of programmes that will follow Youth in Action in 2013
- The ongoing debate that will inform the design of the future EU ‘youth’ programme
- The further development of non-formal learning dimensions of Europass
- The new Pathways 2.0 on the validation and recognition of non-formal learning
- The new training strategy on youth work in Europe within the Youth in Action programme

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention, from which this Declaration has emerged, has started the debate on youth work in Europe. The Convention asks that these recommendations should be taken on board within the existing youth policy frameworks of both the European Union and the Council of Europe:

- The renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field
- The Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

The Convention requests that, on the basis of this Declaration, the European Union, the Council of Europe, their member states and the current and next trio Presidencies of the EU should build up an agenda, an action plan and the necessary resources for putting it in practice. The agenda should culminate in a 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention. To conclude, this Declaration also looks forward to the content and subsequent deliberations of the Resolution on Youth Work of the Council under the Belgium Presidency.







# Resolution on youth work<sup>5</sup>

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■ With this Resolution, the Belgian Presidency is trying to flesh out the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) as adopted by the Council of 27 November 2009. This Resolution more specifically tries to determine a specific course for the European agenda concerning youth work for the next 9 years. The recognition of youth work and further development of youth work

make up the two mainstays of the Resolution's content. In the frame of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion a paragraph is dedicated to the access to youth work for the poorest children and young people.

A link is made to the role that youth work can play in the 8 fields of action of the renewed framework.

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<sup>5</sup> Council resolution on youth work (2010/C 327/01)



## I

*(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)*

## RESOLUTIONS

## COUNCIL

**Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work**

(2010/C 327/01)

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL:

RECALLING THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THIS ISSUE AS SET OUT IN THE ANNEX, IN PARTICULAR THAT:

- (1) The Treaty provides that EU action is to be aimed at encouraging the development of exchange programmes for young people and socio educational instructors (hereafter called 'youth workers and youth leaders') and the participation of young people in democratic life.
- (2) The European Parliament and the Council adopted the Youth in Action programme by Decision No 1719/2006/EC <sup>(1)</sup>. This programme, which has been increasingly successful in all the Member States, contains an important component devoted to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field.
- (3) The Council adopted a Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) on 29 November 2009. Supporting and developing youth work are regarded as cross-sectoral issues within the framework.
- (4) The conclusions of the European Council of 17 June 2010 where the European Council looks forward to the presentation of the other flagship initiatives before the end of the year <sup>(2)</sup>.

IN THE LIGHT OF:

The 1st European Youth Work Convention of 7-10 July 2010, Ghent (Belgium), which highlighted the importance of youth work.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 30.

<sup>(2)</sup> Doc. EUCO 13/10.

AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT:

- As outlined in the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (hereafter the 'renewed framework'), the objectives in the youth field are:
  - create more and equal opportunities in education and in the labour market, and
  - promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.
- The renewed framework outlines eight fields of action <sup>(3)</sup> in which cross-sectoral youth policy initiatives should be taken and where youth work can contribute. Other important action fields in this regard are human rights and democracy, cultural diversity and mobility.
- The Council agreed that under this renewed framework 'youth work' is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people.
- A number of guiding principles should be observed in all policies and activities concerning youth work, namely the importance of promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination, respecting the rights and observing the principles recognised, inter alia, in Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, taking account of possible differences in the living

<sup>(3)</sup> The eight fields are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, creativity and culture.

conditions, needs, aspirations, interests and attitudes of young people due to various factors and recognising all young people as a resource to society.

- The fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the key commitments of the European Union and its Member States. Social exclusion damages the well-being of citizens and hampers their ability to express themselves and participate in society. The fight against poverty and social exclusion is to be pursued both within the European Union and externally, in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

#### ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- In all the Member States, countless children and young people, youth workers and youth leaders coming from different backgrounds, participate in, benefit from or are active in a rich and diverse range of youth work activities. These activities can take place in many contexts, addressing different issues that affect their lives and the realities in which they live.
- Youth work takes place in the extra curricular area, as well as through specific leisure time activities, and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation. These activities and processes are self-managed, co-managed or managed under educational or pedagogical guidance by either professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and can develop and be subject to changes caused by different dynamics.
- Youth work is organised and delivered in different ways (by youth-led organisations, organisations for youth, informal groups or through youth services and public authorities) and is given shape at local, regional, national and European level, dependent, e.g. of the following elements:
  - the community, historical, social and policy contexts where youth work takes place,
  - the aim of including and empowering all children and young people, especially those with fewer opportunities,
  - the involvement of youth workers and youth leaders,
  - the organisations, services or providers, whether they are governmental or non-governmental, youth-led or not,
  - the approach or method used taking into account the needs of young people.
- In many Member States local and regional authorities also play a key role in supporting and developing local and regional youth work.

#### RECOGNISE THAT:

- Young people are an integral part of an increasingly complex society. They are shaped by a variety of different influences and environments, the home, school, the workplace, peers and the media. In this context youth work can play an important role in young people's development.
- Youth work — which complements formal education settings — can offer considerable benefits for children and young people by providing a wide and diverse range of non-formal and informal learning opportunities as well as appropriate targeted approaches.
- Youth work invites young people to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions by giving them an active role in its development and implementation. Youth work can provide a comfortable, safe, inspirational and pleasant environment, in which all children and young people, either as individuals or as part of a group, can express themselves, learn from each other, meet each other, play, explore and experiment.
- In addition to this, youth work should provide the opportunity for young people to develop a wide range of different personal and professional skills, free from stereotypes as well as key competences that can contribute to modern society. Therefore it can play an important role in developing autonomy, empowerment and entrepreneurial spirit of young people.
- In transmitting universal values regarding human rights, democracy, peace, anti-racism, cultural diversity, solidarity, equality and sustainable development, youth work also can have added social value because it can:
  - promote social participation and responsibility, voluntary engagement and active citizenship,
  - strengthen community building and civil society at all levels (e.g. intergenerational and intercultural dialogue),
  - contribute to the development of young people's creativity, cultural and social awareness, entrepreneurship and innovation,
  - provide opportunities for the social inclusion of all children and young people,
  - reach young people with fewer opportunities through a variety of methods which are flexible and quickly adaptable.
- Youth work therefore plays different roles in society and can contribute to youth related policy areas, such as lifelong learning, social inclusion and employment.

- Youth work, whether it is undertaken by volunteers or professionals, has a considerable socio-economic potential — as it can produce economic activity, provides infrastructure, create economic benefits and increases (youth) employment. The labour market can benefit from the personal and professional skills and competences acquired through youth work by both participants as well as youth workers and youth leaders. Such skills and competences need to be sufficiently valued and effectively recognised.
- The Youth in Action programme provides an important contribution to the quality of youth work at all levels, as well as the development of competences among youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work, by providing learning mobility experiences and networking for youth workers and youth leaders.

ACCORDINGLY AGREE THAT:

The following principles should be taken into account in implementing this Resolution:

- young people, youth organisations, youth workers and youth leaders, youth researchers, policymakers, other experts in the youth field should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of specific youth work initiatives at all levels,
- the roles and responsibilities of any actors involved within their respective spheres of competences, should be respected,
- better knowledge and understanding of youth work needs to be gathered and shared,
- instruments mentioned in the renewed framework should be fully used to integrate a youth work perspective and to implement specific youth work initiatives,
- youth work should pay particular attention to the involvement of children and young people in poverty or at risk of social exclusion.

AND THEREFORE INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- Promote different kinds of sustainable support for youth work, e.g. sufficient funding, resources or infrastructure. This also implies removing barriers to engaging in youth work and where appropriate create strategies on youth work.

- Support and develop the role of youth work in implementing the renewed framework, especially the contribution of youth work to the objectives in the different action fields.
- Involve, where appropriate, local and regional authorities and actors to play an important role in developing, supporting and implementing youth work.

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

- Develop a study to map the diversity, coverage and impact of youth work in the EU and to have a follow-up on youth work in the EU Youth report.
- Support European youth NGO as well as smaller initiatives to stimulate a strong European civil society and further youth participation in democratic life.
- Enhance the quality of youth work, the capacity building and competence development of youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work, by providing learning mobility experiences for youth workers and youth leaders.
- Develop and support the development of user-friendly European tools (e.g. Youthpass) for both independent assessment and self-assessment, as well as instruments for the documentation of competences of youth workers and youth leaders which would help to recognise and evaluate the quality of youth work in Europe.
- Provide sufficient and appropriate European platforms such as databases, peer-learning activities, and conferences for the continuous exchange on innovative research, policies, approaches, practices and methods.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE TO:

- Create better conditions and more opportunities for the development, support and implementation of youth work at local, regional, national and European level.
- Fully acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society.
- Enable youth work to further develop its quality.

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- Support the development of new strategies or enhance existing ones for the capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders and to support civil society in the implementation of appropriate forms of training for youth workers and youth leaders.
  - Identify different forms of youth work, competences and methods that youth workers and youth leaders share, in order to develop strategies for enhancing the quality and recognition of youth work.
  - Promote the employability of youth workers and youth leaders and their mobility through a better knowledge of their qualifications and the recognition of the skills acquired from their experiences.
  - Promote and support research in youth work and youth policy, including its historical dimension and its relevance for youth work policy today.
  - Make sufficient information on youth work available and accessible via mechanisms like for instance European and national campaigns on youth work, and to enhance synergies and complementarity between initiatives of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other actors on local, regional, national and European level.
  - Promote opportunities for exchange, cooperation and networking of youth workers and youth leaders, policymakers and researchers at local, regional, national, European and international level.
  - Within the context of youth work, promote, where appropriate, the development of a systematic assessment of skills and competences required for any form of training aiming at acquiring knowledge and upgraded skills.
- ENCOURAGE CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH TO:
- Increase the accessibility of youth work for all children and young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities.
  - Promote diverse forms of training of youth workers and youth leaders active in civil society in the field of youth in order to guarantee the quality of youth work.
  - Evaluate existing youth work approaches, practices and methods and to continuously invest in their innovative development through new initiatives and activities based on the real life experiences of children, young people and youth workers and youth leaders.
  - Exchange information and good practices, cooperate and network at local, regional, national and European level.
- STRESS THE IMPORTANCE:
- In the context of the implementation of a competitive, inclusive and sustainable Europe 2020 Strategy:
- of recognising the crucial role of youth work as a provider of non-formal learning opportunities to all young people,
  - of ensuring that youth work is fully incorporated into the Youth on the Move initiative as well as other programmes/policies that will equip all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities, with the relevant skills and key competences needed for the society and economy of 2020 and beyond.
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## ANNEX

**Political background**

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, on Social Inclusion of Young People <sup>(1)</sup>.

Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments, meeting within the Council, of 14 February 2002 on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth <sup>(2)</sup>.

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 28 May 2004 on the Social Integration with regard to Young People <sup>(3)</sup>.

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field <sup>(4)</sup>.

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 22 May 2008 on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

Council recommendation of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union <sup>(5)</sup>.

Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) <sup>(6)</sup>.

Council Decision 2010/37/EC of 27 November 2009 on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011) <sup>(7)</sup>.

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty <sup>(8)</sup>.

Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting Lifelong Learning and the 'new skills for new jobs' initiative <sup>(9)</sup>.

Communication from the Commission 'Europe 2020' — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <sup>(10)</sup>.

Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe <sup>(11)</sup>.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 374, 28.12.2000, p. 5.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 50, 23.2.2002, p. 3.

<sup>(3)</sup> Doc. 9601/04.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 168, 20.7.2006, p. 1.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 8.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ L 298, 7.11.2008, p. 20.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ L 17, 22.1.2010, p. 43.

<sup>(8)</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, p. 1.

<sup>(9)</sup> OJ C 135, 26.5.2010, p. 8.

<sup>(10)</sup> COM(2010) 2020 Final.

<sup>(11)</sup> Resolution CM/Res (2008)23. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2008 at the 1042nd Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.



# A structured dialogue on youth employment

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# Implementation of the structured dialogue

■ *Consultations and structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations: The structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field, should be pursued and developed.*

*The themes of the dialogue should be aligned with the overall objectives of European cooperation in the youth field and the priorities for each work cycle. Clear objectives and realistic procedures should be established for each cycle of dialogue in order to ensure continuity and follow-up. The dialogue should be as inclusive as possible and developed at local, regional, national and EU level and include youth researchers and those active in youth work. Structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other policy fields should also be supported. The implementation of the structured dialogue is further outlined in Annex III.<sup>6</sup>*

## ■ RENEWED EU YOUTH CONFERENCES FOR A RENEWED FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

The 'renewed framework of cooperation in the youth field' mentions the structured dialogue as one of the instruments to bring the objectives of this Council Resolution to live. The EU Youth Conferences are an essential part of the structured dialogue process.

Are they old ideas parading as new ones? After all, EU Youth Conferences and the EU Youth Events before that, are already for a long time part of a presidency youth programme. It is a moment during a presidency, in which young people get the chance to voice their opinion on certain matters to policy makers. Over the years, many youth events took place, each with their own merits and results. But often points of criticism were risen: participants were selected randomly, or they were not well prepared. Youth events were good for visibility but no real dialogue took place.

The Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies pioneered the so-called Trio Presidency. This novel approach was an exquisite opportunity to do things differently and strike the right

note from the beginning.

Representatives from ministries, Youth in Action national agencies and youth councils of the Trio countries started the preparatory work together with the European Youth Forum and the European Commission already at the beginning of 2009. It was the embryo of the European Steering Committee, which was officially convened in January 2010. The members of the European Steering Committee agreed on the practical implementation of the structured dialogue: e.g. guidelines, task division and a timetable for the 18 months of the Trio Presidency.

The overall thematic priority for the period from 1 January 2010 till 30 June 2011 was youth employment (See Annex I of the Council Resolution on a 'renewed framework for cooperation in the youth field'). The Belgian Presidency focussed on youth work as a contribution to the overall priority of youth employment.

## ■ A LONG-TERM PROCESS FOR LONG-TERM POLITICAL IMPACT

Spain set the ball rolling with a first round of national youth consultations and an EU Youth Conference in Jerez de la Frontera. The participants identified priority challenges regarding youth employment in different working groups.

The Belgian Presidency took over the torch from Spain and continued the structured dialogue process on youth employment in a qualitative way. This way, the Belgian Presidency aimed to raise the political awareness about the structured dialogue. The EU Youth Conference in Leuven allowed to define joint recommendations on youth employment.

Other strategic goals which were put forward:

- Wrapping up the result of the different (national) consultations
- Providing a solid base for strong and clear conclusions that lead to political action
- Investigating how youth work can contribute to the issues raised during the structured dialogue process

The third phase of the Structured Dialogue aims at turning these results into a political outcome, based on a new round of national consultations and the discussions during the Hungarian EU Youth Conference in Budapest.


<sup>6</sup> Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01)





# An EU Youth Conference in Leuven


## FACT SHEET

 University Hall, Leuven & Louvain-la-Neuve, 2-4 October 2010

 250 youth representatives, Youth in Action national agencies and representatives of the Ministries responsible for youth

 Develop strong and clear recommendations for political action on youth employment and investigate how youth work can contribute to the issues around youth and employment.

 Thematic workshops, meeting of Director Generals for Youth, plenary presenting the results

 Joint recommendations of the EU Youth Conference on Youth Employment

## ■ WORKING TOWARDS STRONG CONCLUSIONS

The scene of the EU Youth Conference was not by coincidence Leuven. Leuven is a student city where many young people are confronted with the theme of this conference: the transition from education to the labour market, a first (student) job, recognition of competences, participation in (social) dialogue...

About 250 participants brought the European discussion on these issues to Leuven, from 2 to 4 October 2010. The delegations were composed by representatives of young people who contributed in the national consultations, civil servants from the ministries and staff of the Youth in Action (YiA) national agencies from the different EU member states and YiA programme countries.

The EU Youth Conference started with a welcoming plenary session, after which the Director Generals, the youth representatives and the staff from the YiA national agencies split into different workshops. The facilitators gave them the space to discuss their role and expectations towards the conference and they explained the process and the desired outcome.

The next day, participants spent the whole day together in thematic workshops, in which they tried to come to a shared result, with respect of their different roles. A team of experienced facilitators, key note speakers and rapporteurs worked hard to come to strong conclusions. Each workshop was supported by an international facilitator coming from the support

structure of facilitators and a Belgian one. This support structure was established as a pool of 9 facilitators which are the core group throughout the 18 months and during the 3 EU youth conferences complemented with facilitators from each presidency country. It is their task to give methodological support and ensure continuity in the organisation of the structured dialogue at the EU level. It is also in charge of communicating the methodology to the other EU Youth Conference facilitators and gives technical and practical support to the programme organisation.

The results of the workshops were presented in the closing plenary on the last day by the general rapporteur.

## ■ EIGHT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TOPICS OF IMPORTANCE

In most of the EU member states, national youth consultations on the theme of youth employment were organised prior to the EU Youth Conference in Leuven. The results of these national consultations were compiled into background documents for the eight different workshops and served as the starting point for the discussions in the workshops.

The eight topics were:

### 1. Information, guidance and support for young people

How to improve information, guidance and support for young people to ease their access to the labour market as an employee or an entrepreneur?

### 2. Recognition of competences

How to ensure the recognition of the competences gained from non-formal education and mobility experiences?

### 3. Social protection

How to prevent young people from entering into precarious situations and ensure their access to social protection measures?

### 4. Transition from education to the labour market

Which measures should be taken to ensure a smooth transition from education to the labour market, including through quality internships?

### 5. Combating discrimination

How to combat discrimination in accessing quality jobs, support programmes and information?

### 6. Participation of young people in social dialogue

How to ensure the participation of young people in the social dialogue processes?

#### **7. Reconciliation of private and working life**

Which measures should be taken to help reconciling private and working life?

#### **8. Role of youth work**

How can youth work contribute to the implementation of the measures in the field of youth employment?

### **■ STRIKING THE POLITICAL CORDS**

The Belgian Presidency had the ambition to make a clear link between the work done in Leuven and the political translation of the conclusions in the European Council meeting. Therefore the recommendations of the EU Youth Conference were formulated in such a way that they can serve as a clear basis for the further work in the European Council.

To achieve this ambitious tangible outcome, a clear and transparent report system needed to be developed. The organisers developed a system that reflects the opinions and the decisions of the working groups, without (over) interpretation from the reporters' side.

An opinion square, halfway through the thematic workshop day where participants get introduced with the work done in the other workshops, tried to iron out any contradictions and inconsistency in the final compilation of recommendations.

The ultimate responsibility for the final outcome was in the hands of an editing team. This team was composed of the two facilitators who facilitated the opinion square, the European Youth Forum, the Belgian Youth Councils and Dr. Howard Williamson as general rapporteur. It was their task to edit the recommendations and to make the final text consistent. The general rapporteur presented the result in the closing plenary of the EU Youth Conference, assisted by participants from each workshop.

The closing plenary was attended by Commissioner for Youth Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Employment Laszlo Andor and Pascal Smet, Flemish minister of Youth and chair of the European Council on Youth during the Belgian Presidency. Many other VIPs and policy makers attended to listen attentively to the recommendations. Both commissioners and the minister gave their feedback on the process and the outcome of the structured dialogue and the EU Youth Conference. They expressed their respect by inviting a representative of the participants to the European Council meeting on Youth to transmit the results directly to their colleagues from all EU member states.

The seed for better youth employment was sown.

# Joint Recommendations of the Belgian Presidency EU Youth Conference on Youth Employment

■ The EU Presidency Trio Spain-Belgium-Hungary together with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum took up the challenge to develop a structured dialogue on youth employment between young people and policy makers, for the period January 2010- June 2011.

In the frame of the Structured Dialogue, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU organised an EU Youth Conference in Leuven from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2010. This EU Youth Conference is the second one in a series of three Youth Conferences at European level.

Previous to the Youth Conferences, the Member States set up national working groups to consult young people and youth organisations at local, regional and national level. The results of the national consultations are brought together at the EU Youth Conferences, organised in turn by the three Presidencies, and the next steps in the process are prepared.

The EU youth conference in Leuven built upon the process and the results previously achieved under the Spanish Presidency. During the Spanish EU Youth Conference, youth delegates and political representatives jointly defined priorities on youth employment. These priorities feed into the process of structured dialogue between young people and the institutions under the Belgian and Hungarian presidencies. Before the EU Youth Conference in Leuven a new round of national consultations in the 27 EU Member States was organised to identify concrete recommendations on youth employment. The results of the consultations have been compiled before the Leuven Conference and served as a starting point for the workshop discussions.

The conference in Leuven brought together young people, (representatives from) Directors General for youth affairs, representatives of the National Agencies for the Youth in Action Programme from the different member states and representatives of European Institutions

All the participants worked together in thematic workshops with the objective to fine-tune the recommendations from the national consultations and to address them towards the appropriate level or institution (EU, Member states, young people and their organisations,...) and to investigate what the contribution of youth policy can be.

During its EU Presidency, Belgium will submit

the interim results of the structured dialogue process to the EU Council which will free the way to political results during the Hungarian Presidency in the first semester of 2011.

These joint recommendations identified in Leuven by young people and policy-makers are the following:

## ■ INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Formal education institutions should promote cooperation with the private sector and the employment agencies to ensure that its provision is reflecting current labour market trends.
2. Existing EU information dissemination tools (e.g. Eurodesk, Eures, Eryica, Euroguidance, ...) should coordinate their work on European and national levels to provide comprehensive employment information for young people.
3. Youth workers and career advisers should have a more important guidance role in informing and supporting young people on labour market issues through the use of non-formal education and with the help of new exciting tools, information and support structures.
4. EU and Member States should enable formal education curricula to promote and support creative thinking and entrepreneurial skills in young people.
5. EU and Member States should better target financial resources to ease the access of young people to the labour market, especially for long-term unemployed, first-time job seekers and disadvantaged young people.

## ■ RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES

1. EU and Member States should promote the formation of national task forces to ensure the recognition at national level of competences gained through non-formal education and mobility experiences.
2. Member States, in collaboration with youth NGO's and others active in the youth field, should develop an information strategy in the formal education system to raise awareness among young people about the benefits of all forms of non-formal education.

3. As the major providers of non-formal education, there needs to be a concrete focus on the sustainable long-term financial support for youth organizations, with increased collaboration between the EU and Member States .
4. EU and Member States should ensure a legal framework for volunteers and voluntary service providers, applicable in all EU Member States, that includes social security, health insurance, duties, rights and responsibilities.
5. EU, Member States and youth organisations should simplify access to mobility opportunities by removing obstacles of a social, cultural, and political nature (e.g. lack of information, visa problems,....) and particularly by supporting young people with fewer opportunities.

### ■ SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. EU and Member States should increase and improve control mechanisms to prevent violation of labour rights and possibly through training programmes in schools assure that young people are aware of these rights.
2. EU and Member States should use fiscal leverage to make precarious working arrangements more expensive and incentives for hiring young people under quality and stable conditions.
3. EU and Member States should establish a European framework on labour contracts in full agreement with the social partners.
4. Member States should ensure a rights based approach to social protection to achieve autonomy for young people such as those in volunteer work, on short term contracts and who are self employed or (long term) unemployed.
5. The EU should establish a quality framework for internships to enhance educational experiences.

### ■ TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET

1. Member States and educational institutions should ensure that career-oriented training and guidance is integrated at all levels of education in preparation for career search, both for employment and entrepreneurship for all young people.
2. The right of young people to access social security benefits (e.g. 6 months) on leaving education if they undertake internships should be recognized.
3. Internships should be based on an agreed contract outlining the rights and responsibilities, and the aims of the internship, its

relevance and how it will benefit the intern.

4. Member States and educational institutions should consult with social partners to ensure curricula which enable youth's self-development and equip them with relevant knowledge and with transferable skills gained *inter alia* through practical experience in various fields.
5. Member States should cooperate with the EU to establish a "social guarantee framework" which provides all unemployed and willing young people with opportunities to be employed, to pursue further qualifications or, for those seeking to be self-employed, with financial and technical support.

### ■ COMBATING DISCRIMINATION

1. Existing tools should be used and strengthened to promote competence-focused mobility experiences for disadvantaged and unemployed young people through the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes and the European Social Fund.
2. In order to avoid collective discrimination, the public sector must be required to provide employment for people with fewer opportunities (e.g. work, internships) and to combat individual discrimination individual rights have to be reinforced (e.g. using a clear and adapted language, taking into account the specific needs of young people, and using mentorship to guide and support disadvantaged young people).
3. Ensure, monitor and assess the implementation of anti-discrimination laws in Member States to achieve equality for all the groups and identify best practices.
4. Human Rights education should be implemented in both formal and non-formal education systems by using all existing tools at national and European level and methodological approaches (e.g. Youth In Action and Lifelong Learning Programmes) to achieve more visible and a decrease in discrimination in a long term.
5. Effective policies combating discrimination in the formal and non-formal education and training field, especially that which is gender based, and multiple discrimination, should be sustainably and adequately funded to deliver a full scope of rights, with a focus on young people, youth work and youth policies and managed by young people and policy makers.

## ■ PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOCIAL DIALOGUE

1. EU and Member States should ensure young people equal spaces, by providing them possibilities for participation, in public debates and existing communication channels relating to employment and social policies.
2. EU and Member States should ensure the participation in social dialogue of National Youth Councils and other youth organizations and young people through a strengthened and sustainable structured dialogue (through e.g. creating youth advisory councils) on all levels and in all processes related to employment and social policies.
3. EU, Member States and civil society should pay special attention to the inclusion of non-organised youth and young people with fewer opportunities in social dialogue through wider dissemination of information in their own environments, using various methods (e.g. non-formal education and focus groups in youth representation structures).
4. A broad and active participation of young people in the social dialogue can be achieved through comprehensive education and empowerment, awareness raising programmes and campaigns, a legal framework that ensures the equal access of young people to formal democratic processes and by lowering the voting age for all elections.
5. Member States should provide the conditions for young people to influence social dialogue, public debate and policy outcomes through education for global citizenship and active student democracy in formal education institutions.

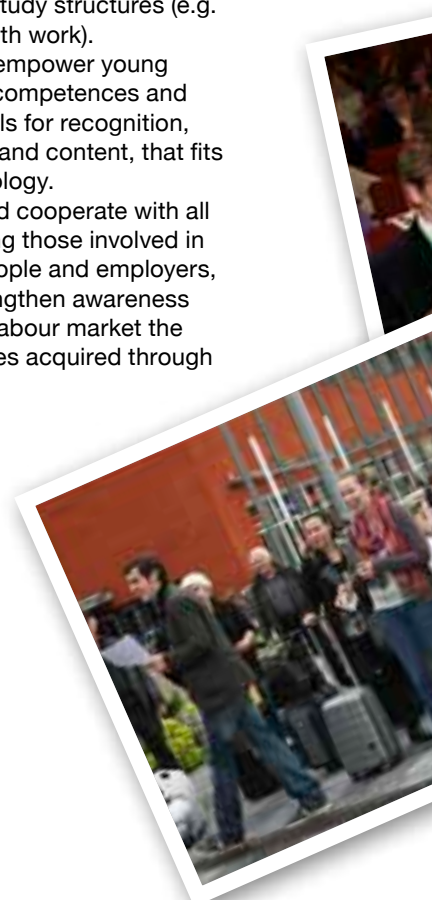
## ■ RECONCILIATION OF PRIVATE AND WORKING LIFE

1. EU and Member States should ensure sufficient, available quality child care facilities, adapted to the needs of children and parents (e.g. services available at places of work and study, matching working times).
2. EU and Member States should identify and publicize good practices in the reconciliation of private and working life to stimulate employers and trade unions to implement them.
3. Member States should provide better access to information and advice specifically about social support, family benefits, health care options and working legislation (e.g. through a one stop information and counselling service).

4. EU and Member States should encourage flexibility and security (flexicurity) in working conditions (e.g. work in various teams, job-sharing, working at home, (international) mobility at work, part-time work, educational leave, sabbatical leave, combination of work and voluntary work).
5. EU and Member States should develop standards on paternity leave and promote the use of parental leave by fathers (to ensure that the father really takes up the non-transferable period of parental leave).

## ■ ROLE OF YOUTH WORK

1. Member States should involve youth workers and youth organisations in the development and implementation of all measures on youth employment.
2. To better represent the interests of young people and to provide creative solutions for societal problems such as youth unemployment, the quality of youth work and participation opportunities should be enhanced through developing and supporting training possibilities and peer learning.
3. The educational institutions should recognise the added value of youth work through credits and accreditation and allow time flexibility in study structures (e.g. taking time off for youth work).
4. Youth work needs to empower young people to voice their competences and provide them with tools for recognition, with a clear structure and content, that fits labour market terminology.
5. Member States should cooperate with all stakeholders, including those involved in counselling young people and employers, to raise visibility, strengthen awareness and recognise in the labour market the skills and competences acquired through youth work.















# European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights



# Getting an overview of different policy agendas

■ In recent years, a number of policy initiatives dealing with children, youth and children's rights have been developed in different international fora. The Belgian Presidency Youth felt that it was important to raise awareness of these different policy agendas, even though these issues are not always dealt with by Youth Ministers.

Youth and children's rights have gained momentum, as they are mentioned in the recent 'Treaty on the EU' and the 'Charter on the Fundamental Rights of the EU'. All EU member states have also ratified the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child'. Furthermore, the Council resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field stipulates that a children's policy dimension should be considered in all appropriate fields of action: *"taking into account that the life and future prospects of young people are significantly determined by the opportunities, support and protection received during childhood"*.<sup>7</sup>

There is a need to get an overview and insight in the different policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. Therefore, the Belgian EU Presidency Youth provided the Council a document about the state of play in this field, which will allow to explore the possibilities for creating greater coherence and synergies between the different policy areas. This is the reason why the Belgian EU Presidency put 'Europe de l'Enfance' on the agenda of the EU Council Youth.

In addition, it is important for the EU Member States to take note of the enforcement of the new provisions on the rights of the child in the Treaty on the EU<sup>8</sup> and the specific provision on the rights of the child contained in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union<sup>9</sup>. Both entered into force on 1 December 2009 - 20 years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>10</sup>, which was ratified by all EU Member States and nearly all UN Member States.

That is why the significance of these provisions for the EU law and of the *acquis communautaire* should not be underestimated. So far the main EU policy document on children's rights has been the Communication from the European Commission of 4 July 2006 entitled "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" but a new Communication was scheduled to be adopted by the European Commission by the end of 2010. This has been postponed, probably till March 2011.

7 Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01)

8 Consolidated version of 2008, Art. 3.3(2)


9 Art.2

10 New York, 20 November 1989


# Expert meeting and conference “Europe de l’Enfance”


## FACT SHEET

 HETPALEIS, Antwerp, 8-10 September 2010

 ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ experts from 23 EU member states and 110 additional governmental and nongovernmental experts on youth and children’s rights (9 September)

 Overview and coherence of the different European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights

 A mix of closed expert meetings and a conference open to experts in the field contributing to key messages and conclusions regarding European and international policy agendas for children, youth and children’s rights

 Key messages from the Belgian EU presidency of the expert conference “Europe de l’Enfance”

## ■ DISCUSSING THREE TOPICS

Twice a year, ministers and/or high-level officials responsible for childhood policies meet informally at the initiative of the EU Presidency in the ‘Permanent Intergovernmental Group Europe de l’Enfance’.

The Belgian Presidency Youth organised an ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ expert meeting and conference about the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights from 8 to 10 September 2010 in Antwerp.

On 8 and 10 September the ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ group gathered in a closed expert meeting. Almost all EU member states were represented: 23 out of 27, which is very exceptional for this informal group. Next to the representatives of the EU member states and the secretariat of ChildONEurope, some other organisations were present as observers: the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, UNICEF, the European Network for Ombudspersons for Children, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Secretariat of the EFTA countries and Norway as EFTA country. The European Commission was excused.

On 8 September, the Belgian EU Presidency presented a draft Youth Note on the European

and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights. The different stakeholders present were invited to comment upon it.

On 9 September, youth policy officials, ombudspersons for children and other experts on youth and children’s rights issues expanded the ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ meeting into an (open) conference, discussing three priorities:

1. The conference gave an overview of the different European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights. It provided a space to discuss the analyses and comparisons regarding agenda-setting in these policy areas.
2. Experts discussed the preparation of the upcoming European Commission Communication concerning an EU strategy on the rights of the child.
3. The participants at the conference exchanged views about criteria for early childhood education and care services in the framework for European co-operation in education and training (‘ET 2020’)

At the same time, the conference gave special attention to child poverty.

The priorities above were introduced in plenary and deepened in working groups. Each working group came up with a set of key messages.

On 10 September, the ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ expert meeting was challenged with following:

- The feedback on the draft Presidency Youth Note regarding the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights. The results of those reflections were reported to the Council Working Party on Youth.
- Key messages from the Belgian EU Presidency based on the output of the working group sessions which took place at the ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ expert conference on 9 September 2010.

In follow-up of the Antwerp meeting, the Belgian Presidency of the permanent intergovernmental group ‘Europe de l’Enfance’ made a contribution to the European Commission regarding the development of a new Communication on an ‘EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child’. It did so on the occasion of the European Forum on the Rights of the Child held on 14 October 2010.

At the same time, the key messages of the Antwerp meeting and conference served as input for the Declaration<sup>11</sup> of the 'Permanent Intergovernmental Group Europe de l'Enfance', which met on 16 November 2010 in Brussels. As a result, this Declaration focused on the same priorities as the Antwerp conference.

The 'Europe de l'Enfance' group welcomed the fact that this meeting and conference had provided the first real opportunity to exchange about comparisons and possible synergies between the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. The group welcomed the information provided in the document "*The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights, a Belgian EU Presidency Youth Note*". It was considered a very useful reference document for further policy development. The 'Europe de l'Enfance' group decided to mention explicitly the EU decisions and legislative instruments on education, culture and youth in their terms of reference.

Other recommendations encourage the Member States, the EU and other international institutions to carry out the following:

- to explore and exchange good practices and improve synergies across the different policy areas and organisations
- to promote activities which strengthen the knowledge and action on children's issues
- to reinforce the cooperation with the youth sector, building upon shared thematic priorities of participation, poverty and social exclusion at national, European and international level
- to continue to support measures to fight against poverty
- to support the development of child well-being indicators
- to take into account the concluding observations and general comments of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child towards the Member States in the framework of the implementation of the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights

Concerning the upcoming Communication of the European Commission about the 'EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child', the 'Europe de l'Enfance' group supports in its Declaration the contribution of the Belgian Presidency to the European Commission.

Finally, several recommendations concerning

<sup>11</sup> *The terms of reference of the permanent intergovernmental group "Europe de l'Enfance" states: "The group cannot adopt binding declarations, as Europe de l'Enfance does not have official status"*

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services were adopted.

## ■ KEY MESSAGES FROM THE BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY OF THE EXPERT CONFERENCE "EUROPE DE L'ENFANCE"

### Introduction

The "Europe de l'Enfance" expert conference welcomed the fact that experts in the fields of children's rights and youth had a first real chance to meet and exchange. An interesting mix of policy makers, practitioners and researchers enriched the conference.

The following key messages are the outcome of both the plenary sessions and the working groups on the three priority themes identified by the Belgian EU Presidency:

- the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights
- the upcoming EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services

### The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights: comparison and possible synergies

The expert conference welcomed the draft document of the Belgian EU Presidency Youth "*The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights: State of Play*", as well as the study of the Flemish Children's Rights Knowledge Centre "*The European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights: comparison and possible synergies.*"

#### 1. Deconstructing images of children and young people

The participants identified a rupture between the social constructions of 'children' and 'young people'. We must be aware that children are often portrayed as dependent beings, whereas young people are in general seen as autonomous agents, responsible for their own acts. This dichotomous view is also reflected in the European Union policy agendas to a certain extent: the policy agendas on children's rights tend to overemphasise a protectionist perspective, while the youth policy agendas focus on participation of young people. These one-sided approaches should be nuanced and counterbalanced, especially given the fact that this rupture sometimes causes

a problematic transition when turning 18, the legal age limit of childhood.

## 2. What knowledge do we need?

The increased focus on evidence-based policy is welcomed, but at the same time it raises the question about what kind of knowledge is actually gathered and needed. The quest for evidence-based policy increases the will to measure, to monitor, to predict and to control the ideal development of children and young people's lives. This explains the eagerness to base our policies on a set of indicators. The problem, however, is that there seems to be a tendency to collect information on ill-being of children and young people rather than on their well-being. A more balanced combination of evidence is needed. This implies the need to identify indicators grounded in the lived realities of children and young people in all their diversity. Policy should not start from the abstract adult perspective on the ideal outcomes.

## 3. The need for exchange and cooperation

The study of the Flemish Children's Rights Knowledge Centre shows that the policy areas of children, children's rights and youth share a number of thematic priorities and means of implementation. There are also commonalities between the policy levels of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The participants showed great enthusiasm to reflect further on the possibilities to exchange experiences and to increase cooperation across the different policy areas and organisations. On top of that, the conference emphasised the need to guarantee more coherence between all policies in different domains, also within one intergovernmental organisation. The conference highlighted the good practices such as the 'Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth' and the 'Ad Hoc Working Group on Child and Youth Participation' of the Council of Europe.

## 4. The fight against child poverty: parental support or social change?

Poverty is a common thematic priority of the European and international policy agendas on both children's rights and youth. The fight against poverty is too often confused with caring for children living in poverty. Poverty is essentially a structural and economic problem, which should be addressed through social change. Poverty is a lack of resources to live a decent life, whereas the attention seems to shift to an understanding of poverty as a lack

of parental care. More parental support will not solve the problem of poverty.

## 5. Participation starts where children and young people are

The conference expressed the need for a more comprehensive view on the participation of children and young people. It was stressed that participation is not the same as consultation. Fundamental aspects of meaningful participation were said to include child-friendly information prior, during and after the participation process. It should use a diversity of methods of participation which should be adapted to the specific context, age and living conditions of the children and young people concerned. Participation in the broader sense of the word also refers to the alertness of policy makers to ask themselves the question whether children and young people recognise themselves in the conducted policies.

Finally, it was acknowledged during the debate that children's rights are not the same as child policies. Children's rights are a framework of reference against which to evaluate all policies that affect children (rights-based approach).

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### Communication of the European Commission on the Rights of the Child (2011-2014)

1. The conference welcomed the initiative of the European Commission to draft a new communication on the Rights of the Child.
2. The European Commission gave an overview of the state of affairs of the drafting process of the new strategy.
3. A panel with representatives of NGOs came up with various critical and useful reflections. In contrast to the high expectations, the panel members expressed their disappointment about the methodology of the consultation process. It was said that the timing was unfortunate, the questions were difficult, preparation was lacking and there was no child-friendly version of the consultation document. As regards content, the importance of mainstreaming was emphasised, as well as the need to shift the focus from the protection perspective to a more comprehensive view which also takes provision and participation into account. Moreover, the need for learning from and cooperating with the youth sector was stressed. Reference was made to the structured dialogue in the field of youth, the renewed open method of coordination, the 'Partnership between the European Union and the



Council of Europe in the field of Youth', the co-management system in the field of youth within the Council of Europe. Finally, it was clearly stated that the mapping study of the Belgian EU Presidency Youth can be a very useful reference document for further policy development.

4. In addition, the Conference would like to stress the need to clearly distinguish in the communication between four levels of policy making in the field of children's rights at EU level:
- policies to be implemented by the European Commission with respect to its internal functioning (mainstreaming, coordination and cooperation between the different DGs)
  - policies to be implemented by the European Commission in their support to the Member States
  - policies to be implemented by the Member States internally
  - EU external policy

Last but not least, the processes of impact assessment should be strengthened.

### Early Childhood Education and Care Services

The parental freedom of choice is very important. The creation of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services is part of a wider integrated policy that connects parental leave and global family policies. Measures are to be taken to make ECEC services really accessible, giving parents the freedom to choose whether or not to make use of them. Exceptions should be made for situations in which competent authorities, pursuant to applicable laws and regulations, decide otherwise in the best interest of the child.

The following key messages concern political measures and efforts to provide Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to support and encourage early childhood development for all children from the moment they are born. Such ECEC services are aimed at all children and their families without distinction as regards to both the family environment and the services providing education and care for young children and their families. ECEC services refer to formal and regulated childcare in group and family settings.

The policy covers the period from 2010 until 2020.

The policy takes the perspective of the child and its family.

#### 1. Right of childcare

All children should be guaranteed access to high-quality, diversified and integrated ECEC services.

#### 2. Quantity of places in childcare

The participants of the working group agreed the following:

- Policies should be oriented to the well-being of children and be considered an investment for the future. Therefore they should aim to commit 1.0% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to ECEC for children under three years old.
- Policy makers should commit to develop enough high-quality education and care services, taking due account of the real situation in all EU Member States.
- Policies should guarantee enough places in ECEC within a state-regulated framework, based on a pluriannual development plan with progress indicators.

#### 3. Quality of ECEC

The participants agreed that quantity is not separable from quality.

Participants agreed:

- about the need for a range of interconnected initiatives and integrated policy, ensuring educational, social and economic functions of ECEC
- to develop high quality ECEC services regulated, controlled and even funded by the public authorities, enforcing requirements regarding infrastructure, the adult to children ratio, the staff qualifications and the size of groups
- to guarantee the quality of all facilities involved in the provision of ECEC services through a pluriannual plan which should include progress indicators
- to develop qualification criteria, educational systems and other learning frameworks in view of recommendations regarding professionalisation.
- to contribute through these measures to more social promotion of ECEC services and to a more balanced gender mix

#### 4. Accessibility

The participants of the working group agreed to take measures to guarantee cultural and financial access and guidance for all children and their families to ECEC services, and particularly for children with special needs and children from families in vulnerable situations or living in poverty. Investing public funds in ECEC services must go hand in hand with the assurance of accessibility.

#### 5. Monitoring and evaluation every 5 years at least on the level of the EU and in each Member State

The participants agreed:

- to define necessary conditions for high-quality ECEC and to gather data
- to develop research and to support networks

- to support evaluation processes relating to the quality of services including public debate









# Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights<sup>12</sup>

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■ In order to provide a comprehensive overview, the Belgian Presidency prepared an EU Presidency Youth Note about the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. The Note takes into account the following four main points:

1. It focuses on those policy agendas that are primarily oriented towards children, youth and/or children's rights.
2. The analysis is limited to policy agendas that aim to influence government policy.
3. The policy agendas scrutinised are those of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.
4. The Note concerns those policies relating to the EU Member States' internal policies, thus excluding EU external policy from its ambit.

It should be noted that the European and international agendas on policies regarding children, youth and children's rights are not always entirely clear to the Youth Council. Therefore, these (European and international) agendas need to be clarified. With its Youth Note, the Belgian EU presidency makes a contribution in this direction. On several occasions Member States were asked to complete this information. A publication has been made from the final version<sup>13</sup>.

At the EU Youth Council meeting, short conclusions were drawn up against this background. They seek to encourage Member States to engage with the on-going intergovernmental work in this field.

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<sup>12</sup> Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights (2010/C 326/01)

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<sup>13</sup> The European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's rights, a Belgian EU Presidency-Youth Note. Brussels, 2010.



## IV

*(Notices)*

## NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

## COUNCIL

**Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights***(2010/C 326/01)*

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

## 1. RECALLING:

- Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- The Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) which states that where appropriate, a children's policy dimension — having regard to their rights and protection taking into account that the life and future prospects of young people are significantly determined by opportunities, support and protection received during childhood — should be considered,
- The Communication from the European Commission of 4 July 2006 'Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child' <sup>(1)</sup>.

## 2. TAKES NOTE:

- Of the information provided by the Presidency on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights <sup>(2)</sup>.

- Of the measures taken in the youth field in order to promote the right of children and young people to participate in the decision making affecting their lives.

## 3. UNDERLINES:

- The crucial importance of work undertaken in the area of children, youth and children's rights.

## 4. WELCOMES:

- The European Commission's intention to adopt a new Communication in this area setting off a strategy for the EU on the rights of the child.

## 5. ACCORDINGLY ENCOURAGES:

- Member States to cooperate and take an active role in this field and in future international meetings at both expert and ministerial level dealing with children's rights.

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<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2006) 367 final.<sup>(2)</sup> Doc. 14855/10.



# Fruitful soil for youth: covering a wide spectrum of youth (work) issues

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# International Youth Day: young people in the spotlights

## ■ THE UN AND THE BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY YOUTH: ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

On 18 December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming the year commencing on 12 August 2010 as the 'International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding'. This 'youth year' did not only coincide with the 25th anniversary of the first international youth year in 1985 on the theme of participation, development and peace, but also with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.


*"Youth should be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making of local, national and global levels."* With this quote, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasised some of the key ambitions that the EU Trio Presidency of Spain, Belgium and Hungary has put forward. He continued his speech on 12 August 2010 saying that recent economic crisis had struck young people at their core: *"The global economic crisis has had a disproportionate impact on young people; they have lost jobs, struggled to find even low-wage employment and seen access to education curtailed."*

The Belgian EU Presidency Youth has pointed out the importance of young people participating in youth work and the importance of its recognition by organising two conferences and presenting a Council Resolution on youth work. The Belgian Presidency also emphasised the need for structural solutions in the field of youth and employment. Together with the EU Trio Presidency colleagues, a structured dialogue was set up as a rolling agenda during the Trio's 18 months of European Presidency. This structured dialogue was to tackle the issue of youth and employment. Again, Belgium highlighted the role of youth work and its possible contribution.

## ■ PICNIC EUROSTATIC

### FACT SHEET

 Royal Park, Brussels, 12 August 2010

 250 young people and youth workers gathering in the park, a cooperation effort of the three Belgian youth councils, together with

the European Youth Forum and the Flemish Support Centre for Youth

 Celebrating the International Youth Day within the Belgian EU Presidency Youth, showing the positive commitment and enthusiasm of young people.

 Picnic, music and photo project in the park

 Pictures and messages from the picnic were shown at the EU Youth Conference.


With both the EU and the UN agendas tackling today's global challenges in the field of youth, the Belgian EU Presidency was eager to launch the International Year of Youth in Europe's capital: Brussels. *"The voice and public perception of young people in Europe are an important priority for the European Union. Accordingly, the 12<sup>th</sup> of August is the ideal day to start the International Year of Youth in a festive manner,"* says Jan Vanhee, coordinator of the Belgian EU Presidency Youth. The three Belgian youth councils were given the opportunity to set up an event to celebrate the International Youth Day within the official program of the Belgian Presidency Youth. The three Belgian youth councils (Vlaamse Jeugdraad, Conseil de la Jeunesse, Rat der deutschsprachigen Jugend) cooperated to organise the 'Picnic Eurostatic'. The Flemish Support Centre Youth and the European Youth Forum joined and effectively supported the Belgian Youth Councils in the celebration of the International Youth Day.


Young people and youth workers from Belgium and all over Europe gathered in the Royal Park in Brussels for a picnic with fair-trade products. At this 'Picnic Eurostatic', about 250 young people and youth workers savoured fair-trade drinks and enjoyed the musical accompaniment provided by DJ Sonar and other artists. With this event, the Belgian youth councils wanted to put young people's positive commitment and enthusiasm in the spotlights. During the 'Picnic Eurostatic', pictures of young people and their positive message were recorded and shown later during the EU Youth Conference in Leuven.


As the organisers put it: *"We hope that Picnic Eurostatic is the start of an international tradition to organise picnics for, by and with young people on yearly International Youth Day."*

# Meeting of the Director-Generals for Youth Affairs


## FACT SHEET

 University Hall, Leuven,  
2 and 4 October 2010

 Director-Generals for Youth Affairs or their representatives from the 27 EU member states  
Invited guests: the Council of Europe, the EU-CoE Partnership on Youth and EFTA countries

 Inform about the structured dialogue. Contribute to knowledge and evidence based youth policy. Overview of the latest developments in youth policy in a European context

 Two sessions, speakers introducing youth policy topics and exchange of views

 Contribution to knowledge and evidence based youth policy

The Director-Generals (DGs) for Youth Affairs (or their representatives) of the 27 European Union member states held their traditional meeting during the EU Youth Conference in Leuven. Also the Council of Europe, the Youth-Partnership and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries were invited for the occasion.

## ■ BRINGING STRUCTURED DIALOGUE TO LIVE

The first main point on the agenda was the 'structured dialogue'. The DGs were introduced to a number of issues regarding the structured dialogue:

- the implementation process of the structured dialogue and its critical points
- the outcomes of the national consultations in this second phase
- the next steps in the process
- the role of the DGs for Youth during the EU Youth Conference

The Belgian EU Presidency warmly invited the DG representatives to participate in the joint discussions with the youth representatives during the EU Youth Conference.

## ■ ROOTING YOUTH POLICY IN KNOWLEDGE

Another part of the meeting focused on tools and mechanisms for knowledge and evidence based youth policy development. Knowledge and evidence based youth policy is gaining importance. The 'renewed framework of cooperation in the youth field' states that effective policy implementation depends on instruments that support a dual approach. On the one side, there is a need to implement specific initiatives in the youth field. On the other side, youth policy should take a cross-sectorial approach and support the mainstreaming of a youth perspective in other related policy fields.

Knowledge and evidence based youth policy is one of the instruments of effective policy implementation, but it can be complementary and linked to other approaches: such as mutual learning, progress reporting, dissemination of results and monitoring of the process.<sup>14</sup> Four speakers treated different aspects of the subject.

- An introduction was given by Dr. Howard Williamson, professor of European Youth policy at the University of Glamorgan (UK). He gave an overview of youth research and its place in the contemporary European youth policy context.
- Hanjo Schild shared his experience regarding youth policy development as coordinator of the Partnership for Youth between the European Union and the Council of Europe.
- The European Commission gave a state of play of the development of EU indicators in the youth field.
- Finally, the role of the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres and the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme in respect to youth policy was highlighted.

It was the ambition of the Belgian EU Presidency to deepen the discussions and move on the crucial issue of knowledge and evidence based youth policy in Europe.

Traditionally, the DG Youth meeting is the place to give and get an overview of the latest youth policy developments in a European context. The DG Youth meeting delegates contribute to the agenda-setting in the youth field and exchange views on these matters. The Director-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, Jan Trusczyński, presented some

<sup>14</sup> Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01)



important European flagship initiatives such as 'Youth on the Move'.


The upcoming Hungarian EU Presidency, of course, also was given the floor to introduce their priorities and planned activities for the next six months.





# Business Meeting of the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme


## FACT SHEET

 Bütchenbacher Hof, Bütchenbach,  
19-22 October 2010

 50 representatives of the Youth in Action National Agencies

 Develop and communicate a common vision for the successor of the Youth in Action programme (2014 and beyond)

 Discussions on the aims and objectives of the future youth programme, as well as the start of (re)designing the actions of the new programmes and the needed management features

 Concrete proposals and ideas (below) from the network of National Agencies for the future EU youth programme

The heads of the National Agencies (NAs) of the Youth in Action (YiA) programme meet twice a year, once under each presidency of the EU council. These Business Meetings allow the network of NAs to work together on specific developments of the YiA programme. From 19 to 22 October, under the Belgian EU Presidency, the three Belgian NAs (Jugendbüro, BIJ and JINT) invited their colleagues from 33 National Agencies to cosy Bütgenbach in the German speaking Community of Belgium.

### ■ CONCRETE NA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE EU YOUTH PROGRAMME

The current Youth in Action programme runs from 2007 till the end of 2013, so it is half-way in 2010. Now is the time to start thinking about the next EU youth programme, to succeed the Youth in Action programme in 2014. Several proposals regarding the aims and objectives of this future EU youth programme were compiled beforehand. The Business Meeting in Bütgenbach started its discussions based on these proposals to come up with common recommendations from the network of National Agencies for such a 'Youth in Action 2.0' programme.

One major outcome of the NA Business Meeting is the proposal below on the 'Aims & objectives of Youth in Action 2.0'. The discussions went further than only the 'aims and objectives': Suggestions were made for new or modified actions within the 'Youth in Action 2.0' programme, as well as for some tools to support these actions. The meeting also touched upon transversal values of the future youth programme, but these discussions will need to be carried on during the Hungarian Presidency in the beginning of 2011.

### ■ AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF YOUTH IN ACTION 2.0: A PROPOSAL OF THE NETWORK OF YIA NATIONAL AGENCIES

#### Fundamental characteristics of the Programme

The YiA 2.0 programme builds on the experiences of previous programmes in the youth field that support mobility and non-formal learning. It supports the fundamental values and rights of all young people in Europe by promoting mutual understanding and recognising the need for responsibility of all people in Europe for its future. The Programme contributes to the efforts to strengthen European awareness, especially among young people in Europe. At the same time, YiA 2.0 provides opportunities for co-operation with other parts of the world in order to strive for global solidarity and the adequate development of youth policies in an interdependent globalised world.

The Programme endeavours to have a hands-on supportive approach. Therefore, a network of National Agencies close to young people and youth organisations is essential.

#### Aims of the Programme

The YiA 2.0 programme aims at:

- developing and improving the competences of young people;
- contributing to specific and transversal youth policy that supports young people in all aspects of their life;
- promoting active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity of young people, while creating equal opportunities for all of them.

The YiA 2.0 programme does so by:

- supporting and recognising non formal learning, learning mobility and voluntary activities of young people;
- supporting and recognising youth work and the development of its quality;
- developing European policy cooperation and research in the youth field.

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### **Objectives of the Programme**

#### **For young people in Europe**

- to foster the development of young people's key competences, of their personal, social and professional skills, of their social capital;
- to support young people's development of European awareness and of a European identity; to enhance their knowledge about Europe and their capacity to act as European citizens and to build up a civil society in Europe;
- to foster young people's intercultural learning, their sense of solidarity and tolerance and their understanding of cultural diversity;
- to support the participation of young people in politics and society; to allow them to learn to participate and to give them the opportunity and space for self-organised and self-initiated citizenship engagement, also outside youth organisations;
- to foster social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- to create an attitude of active citizenship for young people, to motivate them to engage themselves in the organisation of civil society and to contribute to society also after participating in a project;
- to develop a sense of global solidarity and awareness through projects with partner countries in Europe and beyond;
- to support young people's employability; to inspire their creativity and innovation; to develop their spirit of entrepreneurship and to discover their skills and competences in their own initiatives, which might help in entrepreneurial activities.

#### **For youth policy in Europe**

- to contribute to the implementation of the different aims and objectives of the EU Strategy on Youth and give impetus to a cross-sectorial approach towards youth policy at all levels;
- to contribute to active citizenship and policy initiatives at all levels through young people's own actions;
- to further develop the concept of non-formal education in Europe and in the EU member states, which puts the young person in the centre of the non-formal learning activity;

- to develop instruments and strategies for the recognition of learning outcomes in non-formal learning activities;
- to build a triangle of cooperation between youth work, youth policy and research and to contribute to the construction of evidence-based youth policy;
- to facilitate Structured Dialogue as a model of participation of young people and youth work, in order to build European youth policy through a bottom-up approach.

#### **For youth work in Europe**

- to contribute to the development of youth work (including voluntary youth work) on local, regional, national and European level;
- to contribute to the social and political recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning;
- to support the internationalisation of youth organisations and of youth work organisations and to help to build or maintain sustainable partnerships and international networks between organisations, young people and youth workers;
- to foster a better perception of youth work, the exchange of experience and good practice in youth work, the cooperation between youth workers of different fields, the dissemination and exploitation of results; to learn new methods and tools;
- to support the professional development of youth workers, by offering opportunities for capacity and competence building for youth workers through transnational learning mobility experiences and different kinds of training activities, seminars and conferences;
- to build up and contribute to the development of different kinds of youth structures to support, carry out or further develop youth work in Europe and in the EU member states.

# Urban Youth and Europe

## ■ TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES

School drop outs, poverty, social exclusion and ethnic tensions are just a few of the challenges that today's (urban) society in Europe is confronted with. Changes are driven primarily by the response of the labour and housing markets to widespread economic restructuring. Many of the new service jobs that replace traditional jobs in manufacturing and craft activities are low paid and insecure.

As more and more of Europe is being transformed into urban communities, large European cities prove to be challenging for local, national and European policy makers. As society in general is furthermore aging, cities on the other hand tend to attract a younger generation.

For example, 1.712.255 young people between the age of 15 to 34 live alone in the urban core of Madrid, Brussels and Budapest, some of the big cities of this Trio Presidency. This number is calculated based on data by Eurostat for the period 2003-2006. When looking at the calculations from previous years, we can only conclude that urban youth in Europe is rapidly growing<sup>15</sup>. Relying on the same data, we calculate that roughly 30% of the population in European capitals is between the age of 15 and 34.

Economic developments produce a whirlwind of social and cultural change, leading to a loss of personal and collective identity, family breakdown, public welfare dependency and, inevitably, the social exclusion of certain groups and people. Young people sometimes find themselves on the wrong side of the divide. Bridging these rifts requires rebuilding the social and cultural foundations for mutual trust, as well as viable economic alternatives and considerable time and resources.<sup>16</sup> European youth policy makers need to be aware of their increasingly important role in these matters.

15 *Brussels: 122.143; Madrid: 348.355; Budapest: 197.446 between the age of 15-24 and Brussels: 172.524; Budapest: 303.954; Madrid: 567.833 between the age of 25-34; <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setup-ModifyTableLayout.do>, 19.01.2011*

16 *Note 15093/10, Council of the European Union, JEUN 45 SOC 678, 25 october 2010*

## ■ STRATEGIC OUTLINES OF THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY


The Belgian Presidency seized the opportunity as chair of the Council of the European Union to highlight this issue and put the subject of urban youth on the European youth policy agenda. The Belgian Presidency wants to kick off a long-term commitment to Europe's urban youth. It has the ambition to show that young people from deprived urban areas are among the most creative in today's society. The Presidency wants to give them the chance to express themselves and show Europe a positive image of metropolitan life. The general strategy is to give young people from a metropolitan context a voice in the European youth policy agenda and to acknowledge their contribution regarding the eight themes of the 'renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field':


- education and training
- employment and entrepreneurship
- health and welfare
- participation
- volunteering
- social inclusion
- youth and the world
- creativity and culture


The Belgian EU Presidency wants to initiate this project and stimulate policy makers, European institutions, academics and NGOs to examine the possibility to set up a long-term strategy.


## ■ URBAN YOUTH AND EUROPE DAY


### FACT SHEET

 Théâtre National & KVS, Brussels, 27 November 2010

 150 young people, youth workers, press, academics, European and national policy makers

 Kick-off of a long-term commitment to contribute to a solution to the challenges of Europe's urban youth

 Workshops and debates on themes related to urban youth

 The Flemish Minister for Youth, Pascal Smet, put the issue of urban youth on the agenda of the EU Council Youth and committed to host an international conference on the topic in 2013

The two Belgian communities confronted with urban (youth) population in major cities - Flanders and the French Community - cooperated within the framework of the Belgian EU Presidency to organise the 'Urban youth and Europe day' in Brussels on 27 November 2010. Flemish minister Pascal Smet, chair of the EU Council on Youth, and Evelyne Huytebroeck, Minister of Youth in the French Community, both gave their full support for this day. Local youth NGOs from Brussels, from Flanders and from the French Community worked together with the two national agencies of the Youth in Action programme to put the theory into practice. The objectives of this day were:

- To present young people from metropolitan cities in a positive light and to make the challenges they are facing debatable.
- To provide a platform where young people from different districts and neighbourhoods receive the opportunity to express their creativity, and to reveal how "Europe" shows young people from a metropolitan context in a positive and artistic light.
- To give young people from a metropolitan context a voice in the European youth policy agenda and to acknowledge their contribution regarding the eight themes of the new framework for European cooperation in the youth field (education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and welfare, participation, volunteering, social inclusion, youth and the world, and creativity and culture).

As Paul Soto Hardiman and Frédéric Lapeyre state in their article<sup>17</sup>: *"One of their [urban young people's] first demands is for respect, to be listened to, for the right to be different [...]."* Learning about one another is one of the first steps towards respect. Youth workers, press, academics, European and national policy makers came together in workshops to listen, debate and learn about 'the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work', 'participation of young people in urban public spaces', 'leadership training', 'the African community in Brussels' and 'Brussels' youth organisations'. Hardiman and Lapeyre add: *"For many the prospects are of a lifetime of insecurity, humiliation and drudgery. In contrast, there is the immediate gratification and kudos they can get from their peers on the street or the informal economy."* The key questions are both 'how to build an environment of mutual respect?' and 'how to offer tangible ways out of their problems?'

and 'how to offer tangible ways out of their problems?'

These questions were subject of the two debates at the closing of the 'Urban youth and Europe' day. What should a future policy for Brussels' youth look like in order to increase their opportunities for development and participation? How can Brussels' policymakers establish bridges between various policy domains and urban practices? Brussels was the stage and focus of this 'Urban youth and Europe' day, but the questions are the same in European cities in general. In addition, the debate stressed the importance of building international bridges and focus on the European dimension. What should be Europe's role in tackling and solving the common urban issues and challenges young people are facing everywhere in Europe? How can Member States shape a European urban youth policy in a structural manner?

#### ■ 2010- 2013- ...-2020


Minister Smet answered to these challenges by committing himself and his administration to host an international conference on urban youth issues in 2013. As chair of the EU Council Youth, he took the initiative to put this subject on the agenda of the Ministerial Youth Council on 19 November 2010 in the framework of the Belgian EU Presidency. Opportunities can be found in the Youth in Action programme of the European Commission. A rock-band from Madrid, a hip hop/breakdance collective from Warsaw and a group of young artists and directors from Budapest showed Europe on 27 November 2010 in Brussels that young people from deprived urban communities can do great things with a little European support. With this initiative, the Belgian Presidency wants to highlight its determination and long-term commitment to contribute to a structural solution for the challenges young people in metropolitan areas are facing in Europe. With the 'Urban youth and Europe' day, the Belgian Presidency wanted to initiate a long-term engagement to contribute to a more social Europe by 2020.


<sup>17</sup> Based on Paul Soto Hardiman & Frédéric Lapeyre (2004). *Youth and exclusion in disadvantaged urban areas: policy approaches in six European cities. Trends in social cohesion No. 9. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.* [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Trends/Trends-09\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Trends/Trends-09_en.pdf)



# Young people and mobility, a luxury? Mobility projects, a right for all young people


## FACT SHEET

 Perron de l'Ilon & Hotel Leonardo, Namur, 9-12 December 2010

 80 young people & youth workers and 60 institutional representatives

 Mobility projects: a right for all young people

 Plenary inputs, interactive workshops on 7 themes, video presentations

 Watch the video results of the workshops and the final film of the seminar at <http://www.youthmobility.sitew.com>

## ■ MOVING...

Disadvantaged young people are often very dependent on their family or social context. However, quite some of those young people run away from home, move out to live on the streets or even resort to violence. So it could be that young people want to leave behind the context they are living in and 'move on'.

Quite some young people want to change their life and discover 'new things out there'. 'Out there' can be just around the corner or further afield. 'New things' can be new opportunities, another perspective on things, another way of living, different symbols and habits or seeing new places. That's why there are many types of mobilities: in young people's heads, in society, on the labour market or across borders.

## Youth mobilities, a step by step approach?

Mobility isn't an easy option. Making the move. Crossing borders...

These are the stages of mobility that were identified by young people, youth workers and institutional partners at a preparatory symposium for this event in June 2010. The symposium gathered the reflections of several round tables on mobility, organised by the 'Bureau International Jeunesse' (international youth office) of the French Community of Belgium, in partnership with the 'Réseau wallon de Lutte contre la Pauvreté' (Walloon network against poverty) and other actors from the field.

Young people hardly ever decide to 'make the move' overnight. On the contrary, it usually is a long process, before young people feel ready to make the move (whatever type of move that is). A similar long process of preparation (with the round tables and preparatory symposium) took place in the run up to this Belgian Presidency seminar: "Young people and mobility: a luxury?"

## ■ THE MOBILITY SEMINAR

One of the priorities of the Belgian Presidency of the EU is youth work. Mobility (in all its forms) is a key element of youth work. Youth work helps to 'get young people moving': in their minds, in their local districts, in their towns as well as abroad. Most youth and social workers are convinced that mobility projects are beneficial for young people. However mobility programmes and projects do not seem very well suited to young people at risk or living in difficult situations. That led to the central question of this Presidency seminar: what kind of interventions can support young people's mobilities?

The seminar explored different ways of setting up mobility projects, at local or international level, to counter disadvantage experienced by many young people. The intention was not to talk about mere 'transportation' (geographical mobility) but about 'true projects' that impact the lives of young people with fewer opportunities. The three day programme allowed for exchange and reflection in the following areas:

- Young people and youth workers expressed their views on obstacles to mobility projects and came up with various positive and innovative solutions to counter those obstacles.
- The participants at the seminar shared different practices and approaches of a variety of mobility projects, at local or international level.
- Representatives of the institutions and National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme exchanged good practices from different countries towards mobility projects and non-formal education with young people with fewer opportunities.
- These discussions led to suggestions to improve both the existing youth programmes and the new generation of programmes.

### Nothing about us without us

An important characteristic of this seminar was that it actively involved the young people and the youth workers that the seminar talked about. This avoided that the institutional representatives talked about them without them. Besides the 80 young people and youth workers, 60 representatives of the European Union member States, the Council of Europe, the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the European Youth Forum and other international institutions and NGOs took part in the seminar. The delegations came from 33 European countries as well as Canada (Québec) and China.

The participants were divided into workshop on seven different themes. The debates and discussions in those working groups were enriched by short movies and testimonies from young people and through the contributions of inspiring speakers and experts. Each workshop was facilitated by a team of a Belgian and an international trainer. Since the topic of the seminar was youth work, the facilitators also used creative non formal education methods to work towards statements and suggestions for the different institutions (Member States, European Commission, Council of Europe, youth work...).

### Seven workshops on seven topics

1. Mobility – not an easy option
2. Making the move
3. Crossing borders
4. Learning and giving back
5. Discovering new practices
6. Autonomy and youth employment: innovative partnerships
7. Motilities: networking of the public services and structures

### Capturing the ideas

The main suggestions and statements from each workshop were turned into a short video clip with the help of young film makers. This made the final presentation of the results creative, dynamic and easily accessible for all (also those with less verbal or English skills).

The overall report of the seminar was made by Howard Williamson and Camelia Nistor. Their task was to run from one workshop to another and catch the essential words and ideas expressed by participants in order to compile them in the overall report which was shortly presented during the closing session.

### Reflections from the seminar

Mobility has many dimensions: Psychological, Cultural, Social, Occupational, Geographical, Digital... People 'move' in many different ways. Mobility is also: escape, challenge, fun, enriching, splendid, cool, wandering, magic...

#### Messages from the video clips:

- We've got something in our heads.
- Networking between organisations, at local or international level is crucial.
- You need to learn to be sociable and network (on a personal level, but also on a political level).
- Whether we like or not: some people are active and others are not. In a mobility project we focus a lot on activities. So what happens to those that don't like doing things?
- Communication is very important, before but also during a mobility project.
- Mobility turns leisure time into action instead of mere consumption.
- Mobility needs support: information, support and coaching are crucial.
- Mobility brings about confidence (in ourselves, in others, in the youth worker, in the institutions) and personal growth, as well as new social skills.
- Mobility creates self-determination and helps to keep motivation and a positive attitude on a longer term.
- Mobility is inspiring!

#### Hence:

- Mobility helps to shift from personal interest to social change and community engagement, but also to personal growing and autonomy.
- Social value emerges from personal commitment and motivation

#### Memorable statements in Namur:

- "The precondition to move is desire"
- "Don't be afraid, make a bold step"
- "You have to keep the fire alive"
- "If you don't move, staying in the same place makes no sense"
- "There is no creativity in easiness"
- "If mobility is such an easy 'bargain', why doesn't everybody do it?"
- "How much happiness can you stand (mobility as pleasure or pain)?"
- "The change happens when you go back home"
- "I tended to believe I knew everything – but when I started travelling, I learned how things can be different and how important asking questions is"
- "When the project is over, it's not over! It's an ongoing process"

**Ideas from the institutional workshops:**

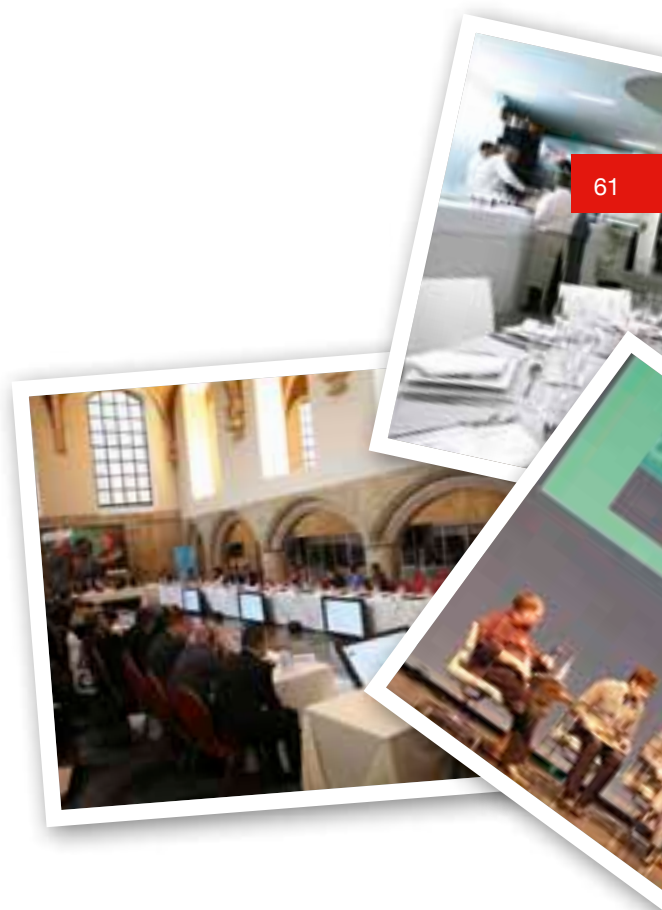
The discussions in the workshops for institutional representatives stressed the following **important elements**:

- partnerships between schools, employers and public authorities should be encouraged
- there should be a balance between hard (formal) and soft (non-formal or informal) skills
- the skills acquired through mobility experiences should be better recognised
- beyond or within Erasmus, EVS and YiA: a dedicated mobility program for disadvantaged young people?
- peer learning, information and support are crucial
- an individualised approach towards young people with fewer opportunities is necessary
- involving NGOs and families in the preparation and follow-up should be envisaged when appropriate and/or possible
- more localised programmes, bilateral cooperation, approach towards proximity measures should be fostered

**Clearly identified tensions and challenges:**

- Enabling young people to realise their mobility project (give them autonomy) or ensuring the realisation of a mobility project by too much support (“because it is good for you”)?
- Weakening the barriers and strengthening the bridges between different actors, who, sometimes, place themselves in a position of competition (local vs international, public vs NGO, or in the NGO sector itself).
- Can you travel without having roots? Local projects should work on this.

*“When the mind has been expanded by new experiences, it can never return to its former dimensions” (Kurt Hahn)*













# All roads lead to the Council



# The Council of the European Union in a nutshell

## ■ A SINGLE BODY IN DIFFERENT CONFIGURATIONS

The governments of the 27 member states of the European Union are represented in the 'Council of the European Union', also called 'Council of Ministers' or simply 'the Council'. The Council is responsible for decision-making and co-ordination. The Council, together with the European Parliament, carries out legislative and budgetary tasks. This concretely means that the Council has to approve all legislation proposed by the European Commission and has to give the green light to each proposed EU budget. It is through the Council that the national governments can influence the European Union.

The Council is a single body, but for reasons relating to the organisation of its work, it meets – according to the subject being discussed – in different “configurations”, which are attended by the Ministers from the Member States and the European Commissioners responsible for the areas concerned. All conclusions are filed as 'Conclusions of the Council of the European Union'.

In practice, there are ten different Councils according to their composition. The European Council on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport is one of them. Besides the Councils on the ten different policy domains, there is also the European Council composed of heads of state and government. This European Council does not have a legislative task, but sets out the general policy directions of the European Union.

The three consecutive EU presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary work together as a 'Trio Presidency'. They developed a common policy programme that they will carry out when presiding the Council of the European Union. Spain held the EU presidency from 1 January till 30 June 2010, Belgium from 1 July till 31 December 2010 and Hungary will take over the EU presidency from 1 January till 30 June 2011.

## ■ THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

This Council meeting will take place during two consecutive working days. The work of the Councils is governed by strict rules and agreements and the formal Council meetings

follow a strict format. The Council Secretariat is an important player to reach the best possible results. Before a dossier is approved by the Council, it has already travelled a long way. On the basis of the preparations, the Belgian EU Presidency drew up some draft proposals for a resolution and conclusions. These are “soft” legislation at European level in which the 27 member states reach a consensus about a text and declare their commitment and are therefore in no way binding. The draft proposals were then discussed in different meetings of the Youth Working Party. This is a meeting in which officials of the 27 member states prepare work for the Council. On 5 November 2010, COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives) discussed the draft proposals on youth matters. The permanent representatives of the 27 member states of the European Union are members of the COREPER. They are like ambassadors who defend the political interests of their countries. COREPER approved the documents without any modifications. Therefore, they could appear on the agenda of the Council of the European Union.

During the Belgian EU Presidency, the Council meeting took place on 18 and 19 November 2010. The Ministers responsible for Youth worked through their part of the Council meeting agenda on 19 November in the afternoon. Before their meeting, they gathered for an informal lunch to discuss the recommendations of the EU Youth Conference. This informal lunch is a high level meeting between ministers and the commissioner and represents an ideal occasion to discuss certain topics at the highest possible level. Besides the Trio Presidency, Poland was also invited as part of the next Trio Presidency. Besides the Ministers for Youth, youth delegates of the EU Youth Conference also joined, as well as the European Youth Forum, the European Commissioner and Prof. Howard Williamson, the general rapporteur of the EU Youth Conference.

The agenda of the formal Council on Youth of 19 November 2010 contained different points. All points were fed with the results of the past European conferences organised by the Belgian EU Presidency. For instance:

- Feedback about the intermediate results of the structured dialogue and the 40 recommendations from the EU Youth Conference was presented and explained at the Council meeting by a representative

of the European Youth Forum together with a representative appointed by the three Belgian youth councils.

- The Resolution on Youth Work was introduced with a documentary about youth work: a production made possible by European Commission funding. The aim of the documentary is to give as many people as possible a clearer idea of what youth work actually is and how important it is for thousands of young people and youth workers in Europe.
- There was the adoption of the Council Conclusions about young people's access to culture, based on a European Commission study.
- Last but not least, there was the adoption of the Council Conclusions about the international and European policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights.

New in this approach was the fact that both the resolution and the conclusions were based on European conferences organised by the Belgian EU Presidency Youth. This actually created ownership and active participation in the policy work by both Member States and relevant European players, such as youth NGOs and young people themselves.

Traditionally, the ministers use the Council meetings to exchange about some current policy issues or hot topics. This exchange of thoughts was centred on the situation of young people in (sub)urban areas. For the first time in European policy making, the attention of the ministers was focussed so explicitly on these young people: Who are they? What are their questions, needs and longings? In what way does European policy address these? Through this debate, the situation of urban youth was put on the European agenda and the ministers were invited to consider these young people in future policy making.



# Young people's access to culture

■ 'Young people's access to culture' is a multi-faceted issue. The question does not only arise at local or regional level, it is also on the agenda of the European Union. The Youth Unit of the Directorate-General Education and Culture of the European Commission commissioned a research on the topic<sup>18</sup>. Since young people's access to culture is an important matter in Belgium, the Belgian EU Presidency Youth enthusiastically took the opportunity to react on this study. This resulted in Council conclusions, accepted on 19 November 2010.

## ■ A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO CULTURE

The researchers carrying out the Commission study based their definition of 'access to culture' on a 1976 UNESCO recommendation<sup>19</sup>. They described it as follows: "Access to culture means that concrete opportunities are available to everyone, in particular through the creation of appropriate socio-economic conditions, for freely obtaining information, training, knowledge and understanding, and for enjoying cultural values and cultural property."

In the Commission study, 'access to culture' is understood as the fundamental right of young people to participate in society, as members with full rights and responsibilities. The concept of 'culture' includes all types of cultural and artistic activities: performing arts, visual and plastic arts, music, cultural heritage and architecture, literature... The target group of the Commission research is young people aged between 15 and 24.

'Young people's access to culture' can be seen from two angles:

- young people as users, buyers, consumers, audiences
- young people as active participants and creators of arts

## ■ THE ESSENCE OF THE MATTER

The main conclusions of the Commission study on young people's access to culture are the following:

- Young people are not a homogeneous

- group and need a differentiated approach.
- Young people's access to culture is attracting a growing interest at all policy-making levels.
- Money, geographical constraints and time remain the main obstacles.
- Family and social environment are fundamental elements to encourage cultural participation.
- Digitalisation can be used as a motor of cultural participation.
- Better knowledge on youth participation and access to culture should be developed.
- There is a need to evaluate what young people themselves consider important and what their expectations for the future are.
- The image of young people portrayed by the media should be improved.
- Access to information should be further explored.
- Volunteering is an important part of cultural participation.

## ■ RECOMMENDATIONS TO TAKE ACTION

Based on these conclusions, recommendations were addressed to the European Institutions, to the EU Member States and to Civil Society.

The European Institutions should take initiative in the following areas:

- exchange of information regarding young people's access to culture;
- involvement of EU stakeholders in initiatives in this field;
- improve access to other cultures;
- better knowledge about young people and their access to culture.

The Member States are invited to take the following action:

- include 'access to culture' as one of the important priorities in all policies regarding young people;
- develop normative and legislative tools regarding the young people's access to culture;
- develop sustainable and long-term policies related to young people's access to culture;
- take affirmative action in reducing obstacles for young people to access culture;
- encourage and support education, training and capacity-building;
- promote visibility and knowledge of youth cultures;

<sup>18</sup> *Interarts. Acces of young people to culture, final report. EACEA/2008/01 (OJ 2008/S 91-122802)*

<sup>19</sup> *UNESCO Recommendation on the Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and Their Contribution to it (1976)*



- promote access to culture as part of the strategies related to social inclusion, anti-discrimination and equality;
- promote the use of ICT and new technologies for cultural purposes among all young people;
- support research, knowledge building and information exchange.

Civil Society, from their side, should address the following challenges:

- Cultural institutions should create enabling and supportive environments for young people to access culture and creative expression.
- Youth organisation and all those working with young people should play an active role in promoting young people's access to culture.

### ■ THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY'S MOVES THE MATTER FORWARD

The Belgian EU Presidency presented its draft Conclusions regarding young people's access to culture. These Conclusions took into account the Conclusions of the EU Council of 27 November 2009<sup>20</sup> and were at the same time a reaction to the European Commission's study into the matter. The Conclusions were prepared in the Council Working Group on Youth, in close cooperation with the colleagues of the Cultural Affairs Committee. The cooperation was one of a kind. The final text puts a special focus on important issues from the perspective of young people and youth policy. The Conclusions were instrumental to put 'young people's access to culture' more clearly on the European agendas for youth and culture.

The Conclusions, in line with the European Commission study, mention the two important aspects of young people's access to culture: young people as consumers of culture, but also as producers of culture. By specifying these two elements, it becomes clear for policy makers that young people's access to culture takes more than just handing out entrance tickets or opening the hidden door of some museum. Both aspects of young people's access to culture are essential preconditions for their full participation in society, because access to culture gives young people an increased awareness of our common cultural heritage and contributes to their active citizenship and their openness to the world. When young people are involved in cultural activities, they can channel

their creative energy, they further their personal development and they increase their feeling of community.

The European Commission and the EU Member States are invited to take on board these important recommendations and take relevant action. One of the recommendations is to enhance capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders, of artists and others working in the field of arts, of teachers and other stakeholders related to young people's access to culture. The European Commission and the Member States are invited to use the full potential of the existing programmes, instruments and networks to carry out the aforementioned recommendations.

### ■ SEEDS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

It is clear that 'young people's access to culture' is currently high on the European Agenda. Both the European Commission and the 27 EU Member States will now have to indicate which measures they will take, today and in the future. But for it to take root in the daily reality of youth workers, in the cultural sector, in education and in the policy field, different stakeholders will have to cultivate a fertile soil. Therefore, All parties are warmly invited to water and feed this 'access to culture' seedling with the documents, ideas and outcomes produced, so that 'young people's access to culture' can grow into a beautiful and strong plant.

<sup>20</sup> *Conclusions of the European Council of 27 November 2009 about promoting a creative generation: developing the creativity and the innovative power of children and young people through cultural expression and access to culture (2009/C 301/08)*

## Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on access of young people to culture

(2010/C 326/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

### 1. RECALLING:

- the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, helping integrate culture in all learning activities in schools, youth organisations and training institutions,
- the Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture <sup>(1)</sup> and its strategic objectives, as well as the conclusions of the Council on the Work Plan for Culture 2011-14 <sup>(2)</sup>,
- the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18) which states that young people's creativity and capacity for innovation should be supported through better quality access to and participation in culture and cultural expressions from an early age, thereby promoting personal development, enhanced learning capabilities, intercultural skills, understanding and respect for cultural diversity and the development of new and flexible skills for future job opportunities,
- the Council conclusions of 27 November 2009 on promoting a creative generation: developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and access to culture, including six priorities.

### 2. WELCOMES:

- further knowledge on youth and culture, such as the study commissioned by the European Commission about access of young people to culture <sup>(3)</sup>.

### 3. UNDERLINES:

- that access of young people to culture comprises two main aspects: young people as users, buyers, consumers and audience; and young people actively involved as active participants and creators of arts and culture,
- the importance of this for good cooperation between the field of youth and the field of culture,

- the importance of the knowledge, promotion, visibility and use of new information and communication technologies, including digitalisation of cultural content, for the purpose of increasing the access of young people to culture,

- that access of young people to culture is also about an experience of self-expression, personal development and confidence, innovation and creativity, enjoyment, and having an open mind to other cultures, including Europe's cultural heritage,

- the importance of the lifelong development of cultural competences of young people and all relevant stakeholders because it interlocks with other key competences,

- the relevance of culture as a means of promoting social inclusion, equality and the active participation of young people, as well as combating discrimination and poverty.

### 4. ACCORDINGLY INVITES AND ENCOURAGES THE COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATES WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE, TO:

- take into consideration all the recommendations of the above mentioned study,

- facilitate access of all young people to culture, reducing related obstacles as contained in the study (e.g. financial, linguistic, time and geographical constraints), taking into account the role of cultural and art education and training for all young people from an early age, in a lifelong learning perspective and by using targeted programmes,

- promote the development of long-term coordinated policies for access of young people to culture on all levels, with a clear youth perspective, for example by stimulating partnerships and contacts between the creative sector and stakeholders in the fields of youth, education and other relevant fields,

- deepen the knowledge on the access of young people to culture (e.g. via the Eurobarometer in the EU Youth report) and to support research in the field of youth cultures, creativity and cultural citizenship. In this context, it is important to define the needs of young people regarding their access to culture and to identify the evolution of cultural practices of young people,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> To be adopted on 18 November 2010.

<sup>(3)</sup> Interarts EACEA/2008/01 (OJ 2008/S 91-122802).

- 
- exchange and promote experiences, practices and information of all relevant stakeholders on all levels related to access of young people to culture, e.g. by stimulating learning mobility for all young people and youth workers and youth leaders, and through the use of ICT and the media,
  - support quality education, training and capacity-building of youth workers and youth leaders, artists and other cultural workers, teachers and all other relevant stakeholders involved in the access of young people to culture,
  - promote access of young people to culture as a means of promoting social inclusion, equality and the active participation of young people, as well as combating discrimination and poverty,
  - promote the six priorities set out in the Council conclusions of 27 November 2009 on promoting a creative generation,
  - make best use of existing relevant programmes, instruments and European networks (e.g. European Youth Card Association), including the European structural funds, in order to promote the above aims.
-

# Youth on the Move, a flagship initiative as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy

## ■ BACKGROUND

Five million young Europeans are looking for a job. Many of them do not find a job, because they lack the right qualifications or experience. The European Commission has launched Youth on the Move, a new flagship initiative aimed at helping these young people to gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to make their first job a reality. Part of the EU's new Europe 2020 Strategy, Youth on the Move proposes 28 key actions aimed at making education and training more relevant to young people's needs and encouraging more of them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country. This will increase young people's employability and access to the labour market.

Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said the following about this matter: *"The measures we are presenting today are aimed at raising the quality of education and training in Europe so that our young people are properly equipped for today's job market. We want to reduce the number of early school leavers and increase the share of young people in tertiary education so that they reach their full potential. The EU needs even more young people who are highly skilled, knowledgeable and innovative if it is to prosper in the future."*

Mr László Andor, the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, added the following to this: *"Finding a job is what millions of young Europeans are most concerned about. Youth on the Move will create new momentum at EU and national level to improve support for young people so that they can find a job, make a living and pursue their own plans."*

### It's time to act...

At present, too many young people leave school early and too few enter higher education, which jeopardises Europe's future skills base.

Youth on the Move will be instrumental in achieving the Europe 2020 headline targets of reducing the share of early school leavers from 15% to 10% and increasing the share of young people with tertiary education or equivalent from 31% to at least 40% in 2020. Youth on the Move actions will also help Member States reach the headline EU target for 75% employment over the next ten years by helping to ensure that young people have the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow. Commission studies

show that 35% of new jobs will require high-level qualifications by 2020 and that 50% will require medium-level qualifications.

The economic and financial crisis has made it harder for young Europeans to enter the labour market. The number of young people looking for a job has increased from 4 to 5 million since the onset of the financial turmoil, with EU youth unemployment now at nearly 21%.

These challenges call for concerted action and robust policy coordination to identify action at EU level and in Member States. The Commission will support Member States in designing policies to support those most at risk of unemployment, to do more to encourage young entrepreneurs and to address legal and administrative obstacles to learning and working mobility.

Independent studies show that more than 40% of employers attach importance to the experience gathered from study and work abroad, which not only enables young people to improve their language abilities but also to acquire other skills that are highly valued. The Commission already has a long tradition of supporting mobility through the grants it provides from Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Marie Curie. Youth on the Move aims to extend opportunities for learning mobility to all young people in Europe by 2020.

### Top 10 actions

Youth on the Move is a flagship initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union, which puts young people at the centre of a framework agenda for the EU. The Youth on the Move strategy includes the following targeted actions:

- Launch of a dedicated Youth on the Move website, which will provide a single point of access to information about opportunities to study or gain work experience abroad, including advice about EU grants and individual rights. This action will build on existing initiatives such as the Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space (PLOTEUS).
- A pilot project "Your first EURES job" will provide advice, job search and financial support to young jobseekers who want to work abroad and to companies – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. The project will be managed by EURES,

the European network of public employment services, and will be operational in 2011.

- A mobility scoreboard will benchmark and measure progress in removing legal and technical obstacles to learning mobility.
- The Commission is examining, in cooperation with the European Investment Bank, the creation of a European student lending facility to support students who wish to study or train abroad.
- It will publish the findings of a study to test the feasibility of a multi-dimensional global university ranking system, to provide a more complete and realistic picture of higher education performance than existing rankings.
- It also plans to develop a Youth on the Move card, which would provide benefits and discounts for young people.
- A new European Vacancy Monitor will provide an intelligence system on labour market demand across Europe for jobseekers and employment advisors.
- The Commission's new European Progress Microfinance Facility will provide financial support to help young entrepreneurs set up or develop their businesses.
- It will encourage Member States to introduce a youth guarantee to ensure all young people are in a job, training or work placement within four months of leaving school.
- The Commission will propose a European skills passport, based on Europass (European online CV), to allow skills to be recorded in a transparent and comparable way. Launch: Autumn 2011.

relevant Council formations play their full part in the Europe 2020 Strategy, notably by providing regular input to the European Council on progress towards the EU headline targets.

#### ■ COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS OF 19 NOVEMBER 2010 ON THE 'YOUTH ON THE MOVE' INITIATIVE – AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES YOUNG PEOPLE FACE

These conclusions were introduced in the education part of the council figuration. Youth did a contribution with the above mentioned paragraphs. This was important, seen the cross sectoral approach of the Youth on the Move initiative.

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#### **How can we, as actors involved in youth affairs, anticipate this to the maximum extent possible?**

The question also arises as to how the structured dialogue on youth employment which was set up by Spain, Belgium and Hungary can contribute to this. Furthermore, the Council Conclusions contain two paragraphs that are of vital importance for us to be able to realise this contribution as actors involved in youth affairs:

- The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines provide a framework for coordinated policy actions, the majority of which fall within the responsibility of Member States. Through appropriate monitoring, peer learning and the preparation of input to the European Council, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council should play a key role in implementing the Youth on the Move initiative and the broader Europe 2020 Strategy, including the specific task of achieving the EU headline target in the field of education and training.
- Ensure that the EYCS Council and other



**Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the 'Youth on the Move' initiative — an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face**

(2010/C 326/05)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

HAVING REGARD TO:

1. the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', which sets ambitious objectives for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth to be met over the coming decade, highlighting in particular the need for action to improve education levels, increase employment rates and promote social inclusion, and which identifies a specific EU headline target relating to education <sup>(1)</sup>, as well as others relating to employment <sup>(2)</sup>, social inclusion <sup>(3)</sup> and research and innovation <sup>(4)</sup>;
2. the Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') <sup>(5)</sup>, which remains the basis for such cooperation and which complements the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' in emphasising the crucial contribution that education and training have to make in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe today, and which establish four strategic objectives <sup>(6)</sup> aimed at ensuring sustainable economic prosperity and employability, as well as the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;
3. the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field <sup>(7)</sup>, which recognises that promoting the social inclusion and professional integration of young women and men is an essential component in reaching the objectives of Europe's strategy for growth and jobs, at the same time as fostering personal fulfilment, social cohesion and active citizenship. It is of vital importance to enable all young women and men to make the best of their potential. The Resolution therefore

<sup>(1)</sup> The target concerns two areas: to reduce school dropout rates to less than 10 %, and to raise the share of 30–34 year olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40 %.

<sup>(2)</sup> To bring to 75 % the employment rate for women and men aged 20–64, including through the greater participation of youth, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants.

<sup>(3)</sup> To lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.

<sup>(4)</sup> To improve the conditions for research and development, in particular with the aim of bringing combined public and private investment levels in this sector to 3 % of GDP.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

<sup>(6)</sup> Objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; Objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; Objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; Objective 4: Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ C 311, 19.12.2009.

calls for specific initiatives in the youth field — i.e. policies and actions specifically targeted at young people in areas such as non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility and information, social inclusion, culture and health. It also calls for mainstreaming initiatives — i.e. initiatives to enable a cross-sectoral approach between youth policies and other relevant policy areas.

4. Within the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', Member States and the European Union should implement reforms aimed at smart and inclusive growth, i.e. growth driven by knowledge and innovation which enables maximum participation. These should aim at improving the quality of education and training, at strengthening research and at promoting innovation and knowledge transfer throughout the EU. They should encourage entrepreneurship and help to turn creative ideas into innovative products, services and processes that can create growth, quality and sustainable jobs, territorial, economic and social cohesion, and address more efficiently and more effectively European and global societal challenges

WELCOMES:

the Commission communication 'Youth on the Move: An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union' <sup>(8)</sup>, which puts young people at the centre of a framework agenda for the EU,

WHILST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

considering the proposals contained in the initiative, which comprises key new actions as well as the reinforcement of existing activities, both within the Member States and at European level, with a view to helping young people to respond to the many socio-economic challenges they face and to succeed in the knowledge society,

RECOGNISES THAT:

1. While Europe's prosperity depends to a large extent on its young people, too many of them still face considerable difficulties in realising their potential and making their contribution to society: too many leave school without qualifications or with insufficient skills, fail to secure employment and find themselves at risk of social exclusion, which in turn engenders high costs for the individual as well as for society as a whole. Remedying this situation requires a

<sup>(8)</sup> Doc. 13726/10.

more integrated, cross-sectoral approach towards education and training, youth, employment and social policies which builds on current strengths and develops effective new measures.

2. The implementation of national lifelong learning strategies and instruments, which are key to enabling not only young people, but also adults, to acquire, maintain and develop knowledge, skills and competences throughout their careers, remains a challenge for many Member States. In particular, more flexible learning pathways are required which will allow men and women at different stages in life to move between different education and training systems, as well as between formal and non-formal and informal learning environments, and which can attract non-traditional learners.
3. In the coming years increasing numbers of jobs will require high-level qualifications <sup>(1)</sup>, yet the EU currently has a lower percentage of people with a tertiary or equivalent level qualification <sup>(2)</sup>, as well as a lower share of researchers, than its competitors. In addition, Europe's innovation capacity will require knowledge partnerships and stronger links between the worlds of education and training, research and business in order to enhance the knowledge triangle. This will also provide a means of ensuring that those in low-skilled employment are better able to adapt to the changing demands of the labour market.
4. In addition to meeting personal and socio-economic objectives, learning mobility can provide a useful way of strengthening employability and of acquiring or enhancing professional, pedagogical, linguistic, interpersonal and intercultural competences. It can also contribute to improving the quality of, and cooperation between, educational institutions. Although EU programmes and policy instruments have made a significant contribution in this area, there remains considerable untapped potential for learning mobility, which all too often remains the exception. Learning mobility opportunities within a formal educational context should be actively encouraged for groups such as young adult learners, teachers, trainers and educational staff. Young adults should also be able to benefit from such opportunities within non-formal or informal learning environments. In addition, new innovative forms of such mobility, including virtual mobility, need to be explored, while access to it should be broadened, paying particular attention to disadvantaged groups and gender.

THEREFORE AGREES THAT:

1. When working towards the aims of the 'Youth on the Move' initiative, the European Commission and the Member States

<sup>(1)</sup> The share of jobs requiring high-level qualifications will rise from 29 % in 2010 to about 35 % in 2020 (Cedefop estimations).

<sup>(2)</sup> The share of people in the EU with tertiary or equivalent level education attainment was 32,3 % in 2009 (Eurostat).

should cooperate within the overall context of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', whilst ensuring consistency with existing arrangements, in particular those made under the 'ET 2020' strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, the European employment strategy and the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. The implementation of actions, monitoring and reporting procedures should all be carried out within these frameworks and in accordance with their respective overall principles and objectives. Actions need to be closely coordinated, with the involvement and cooperation of the relevant stakeholders at every level, including through the structured dialogue.

2. The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines <sup>(3)</sup> provide a framework for coordinated policy actions, the majority of which fall within the responsibility of Member States. Through appropriate monitoring, peer learning and the preparation of input to the European Council, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council should play a key role in implementing the Youth on the Move initiative and the broader 'Europe 2020 Strategy', including the specific task of achieving the EU headline target in the field of education and training.
3. Additional efforts are needed to help young people to meet the many socio-economic challenges they face. However, at a time of budgetary constraint, such efforts should focus on optimising and rationalising policy objectives and investments, by linking these more closely to the aims of Europe 2020 and the priorities of the 'ET 2020' strategic framework.
4. While their scope extends beyond that of the Youth on the Move initiative, existing EU programmes such as the Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action programmes clearly have an important contribution to make towards achieving the aims of this initiative, as well as those of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' in general. Both the broad scope of the programmes and their contribution to the initiative should be acknowledged when designing the next generation of programmes.
5. Greater mobility should be actively encouraged, including mobility with third countries and candidate countries, using the appropriate programmes and mechanisms. Learning mobility should also have a qualitative dimension, and be based on well-developed cooperation between

<sup>(3)</sup> Proposal for a Council Decision on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States: Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines.

education and training institutions. With a view to raising the quality and diversity of mobility, the potential offered by other existing forms of cooperation should be explored. However, mobility should not be regarded as an aim in itself, but rather as a means to enhance the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences and to meet personal and social challenges.

FURTHER AGREES THAT:

In order to address the challenges outlined, measures are needed both within the Member States and at European level which — while fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity — will contribute to achieving the broader objectives and headline targets of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', as well as its associated flagship initiatives.

In the framework of the 'Youth on the Move' flagship initiative, the following lines of action should be considered:

With specific regard to the field of education and training:

- promoting the full implementation of integrated lifelong learning strategies,
- ensuring the acquisition of the key competences that every individual, in particular those with a disadvantaged background, needs for success in a knowledge-driven society,
- increasing participation in tertiary or equivalent education,
- enhancing the quality and attractiveness of education at all levels, particularly in higher education and vocational education and training,
- promoting the benefits of learning mobility in terms of increasing knowledge, skills and experience.

With specific regard to the field of youth:

- promoting a cross-sectoral approach between youth policies and other relevant policy areas,
- reinforcing both the quality and the quantity of mobility for all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities, in non-formal and informal learning environments,
- promoting non-formal and informal learning outcomes and improving their recognition, in order for young adults to

have easier access to formal education and training and to the labour market,

- encouraging youth participation in democratic life.

With specific regard to the field of employment:

- education and training, youth and employment policies should cover in a well-coordinated manner the sequence of steps which young people need to take in the transition from education to work, employment policies should contribute to reducing youth unemployment and to improving youth job prospects, as a key contribution towards the employment target of 75 % set out in the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' for jobs and growth.

ACCORDINGLY INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES:

To fully implement existing actions and develop future policy initiatives aimed at achieving the broad objectives of the 'Youth on the Move' initiative within the broad context of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', as well as at meeting the EU headline target that specifically relates to education and training.

When doing so, Member States and the Commission should:

1. ensure close collaboration between all related policy areas, in particular education, youth, social affairs, employment, research and innovation, with a view to exploring the possibility of common objectives;
2. ensure that the EYCS Council and other relevant Council formations play their full part in the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', notably by providing regular input to the European Council on progress towards the EU headline targets;
3. rationalise and ensure full and efficient use of EU programmes and budgets, including — where appropriate — by linking these to national and regional resources and by considering use of the European structural and cohesion funds and the European Investment Bank;
4. seek to maximise the potential of other and possible new sources of funding for the promotion of learning and employment mobility;
5. consider the implications of these conclusions for the next generation of EU programmes and the next EU Financial Framework.

# An exchange of view on urban youth and Europe

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■ Based on a background paper of the Belgian Presidency, the Council of Ministers discussed the social inclusion of young people from disadvantaged urban areas.

Ministers were kindly invited to reflect on either of the two following questions:

- How does the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) reflect the issues that are of concern for urban youth in Europe? How can Youth on the Move be an added value for them?
- For many young people, growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is a stigma that conditions their chances of social inclusion. Which good practices in your urban areas and cities (youth initiatives or youth organisations/NGO's) are being developed and prove to be hopeful activities for these young people?

Policy makers and other stakeholders went into debate with each other aiming for the following results:

- to discover and learn about existing youth initiatives;
- to find out how we can involve urban young people more and better in the architecture of European youth policy;
- to get a better understanding of their needs, questions and expectations;
- to stop seeing big cities as problem areas

but to consider them experimental grounds for new initiatives in the fields of housing, employment, youth work, community life, etc.;

- to create links with organisations that are active in (sub)urban areas, such as networks of detached youth workers, street workers, etc.;
- to see how existing European initiatives for urban young people can be improved and replicated.

The ministers emphasised that 'urban youth' has been hit particularly hard by the crisis which is characterised by high youth unemployment. To help these young people, measures have to be taken to counter early school-leaving and to make the transition from education to work easier. Besides this, the ministers mentioned the positive results of leisure and sports projects benefiting these young people!

In short, the aim was to set the European agenda for the coming years. For instance, Flemish Minister for Youth, Pascal Smet, already announced a European conference about young people in (sub)urban areas that will take place in the second half of 2013. This conference will focus on how youth work can play a meaningful role for these youngsters. At the same time, this conference will also be part of the efforts undertaken to support and develop youth work

# Press release 3046<sup>th</sup> council meeting Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

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■ After the Council meeting, the most important results are distributed in a press release.







**COUNCIL OF  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

3046th Council meeting

**Education, Youth, Culture and Sport**

Brussels, 18 and 19 November 2010

Presidents      **Ms Fadila Laanan**  
Minister of the French-speaking Community, in charge of  
Culture, the Audiovisual Sector, Health and Equal  
Opportunities  
**Mr Philippe Muylers**  
Flemish Minister for Finance, the Budget, Employment,  
Town and Country Planning and Sport  
**Mr Pascal Smet**  
Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities  
and Brussels Affairs

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### **Main results of the Council**

*The Council officially designated **Mons in Belgium as European Capital of Culture 2015.***

*The Council also established a regular **dialogue between representatives of sports movements and EU policy makers.** The first such informal meeting is scheduled for early December 2010.*

*The Council also reiterated the need for member states and the EU to **coordinate their positions in meetings of the World Anti-Doping Agency** and formalised coordination arrangements.*

*In the context of the European Year to combat poverty and social exclusion 2010, ministers addressed the **roles of education, sport, culture and youth policy as instruments for social inclusion.***

## **YOUTH**

### **Youth work**

The Council adopted a resolution on youth work, set out in [14847/10](#). The text recognises the crucial role of youth work as a provider of non-formal learning; it encourages member states to create better conditions and more opportunities for youth work at all levels. The resolution also invites the Commission to develop a study to map the diversity, coverage and impact of youth work in the EU. In this context, the Commissioner announced her intention to propose during 2011 a Council recommendation on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

### **Access of young people to culture**

The Council adopted conclusions on access of young people to culture, see [14849/1/10 REV 1](#). The conclusions invite member states and the Commission to facilitate access of all young people to culture and to develop long-term coordinated policies to that effect.

### **International policies on children, youth and children's rights**

The Council took note of information from the presidency about the policy agendas of the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations on children, youth and children's rights.

It also adopted conclusions encouraging member states to take an active role in the ongoing intergovernmental activity in the field of children, youth and children's rights, set out in [14846/10](#). The text also welcomes the Commission's intention to propose an EU strategy on the rights of the child.

### **Social inclusion of inner-city youth**

The Council debated the social inclusion of young people in deprived inner-city areas.

Ministers highlighted that urban youth was particularly hard hit by the economic crisis, with high levels of youth unemployment. To help them, measures must be taken to combat early school leaving and to facilitate the transition between education and the workplace. In addition, ministers reported positive results from projects offering leisure and sporting activities to urban youth.

In this respect, EU funding programmes such as the lifelong learning and Youth in action programmes were cited as contributing positively to national initiatives.

The presidency will hold a special conference on this issue on 27 November in Brussels so as to listen to the ideas of young people and their representatives.







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# What's next?

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■ Lots of hard work has been carried out over the last few months and years. Currently, a big number of reference documents have been tabled. These can help Member States and the European Commission to implementation a European youth policy. Just to mention a few of these reference documents:

- The 'Agenda 2020' Resolution on the future of the Council of Europe youth policy (November 2008)
- The Renewed EU Framework for Cooperation in the Field of Youth (November 2009)
- The Resolution on Youth Work (November 2010)
- The Council Conclusions about young people's access to culture (November 2010)
- The Council Conclusions about the international and European policy agendas regarding children, youth and children's rights (November 2010)

The consensus reached in these fields, set standards and indicates the direction in which the EU Member States should orient and develop their policies. Member States are invited to take the necessary steps to move in those directions. Moreover, they can seize the opportunity to share good practices with other Member States and analyse what policy initiatives are feasible and desirable in their countries. These actions should increase the

quality of youth policy. The Belgian EU Presidency warmly invites all stakeholders to put the paper into practice.

The European Commission has been asked to guide the process and draw up a timeline from now till 2018. They could be helpful in formulating common goals and come up with corrections and suggestions where needed.

The advantage of all this is that we are not alone anymore to carry out this task. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The Belgian EU Presidency showed the added value of cooperating with different relevant stakeholders in order to reach thought through and socially relevant results.

In the meantime, the structured dialogue has become part and parcel of the European Council meetings on Education, Youth, Culture and Sports. An informal meeting or lunch with representatives of the Trio, the European Commission, the Council Secretariat, the European Youth Forum and youth delegates should become a standard element preceding the Council - as the Council Secretariat put it. During this lunch meeting, all participants reflect about the results of the EU Youth Conference and the next steps to take to make youth policy and youth work even better in the future.

# This Belgian EU Presidency Youth would not have been possible without you

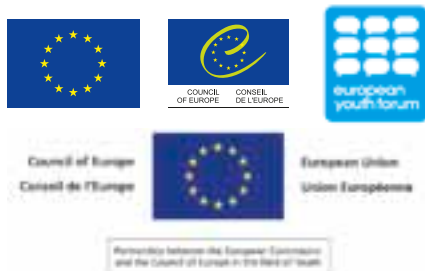
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The Belgian EU Presidency programme in the field of youth is the result of close cooperation between the Presidency and ...

## European institutions and organisations:

European Commission (EC), Council Secretariat, Council of Europe (CoE), Partnership in the field of youth between the EC and the CoE, European Youth Forum, Advisory Council on Youth of the CoE, European youth researchers...



## Belgian Presidency cooperation partners from the 3 Belgian Communities:

Ministries for Youth of the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities: their administrations and cabinets, Youth in Action National Agencies (Jint, BIJ, Jugendbüro), National Youth Councils of the 3 Belgian Communities, Belgian youth researchers...



## The colleagues from:

The Trio Presidency Spain-Belgium-Hungary, the Youth Working Party and the Permanent Presentation

## A big thank you to:

The hosting cities of the different events, the general rapporteurs, rapporteurs, facilitators, key note speakers, moderators, all the organisations and resource persons that contributed, event organisers, photographers and technicians...

## And especially all the helping hands from the partners above!

## Last but not least

This Presidency would not have been possible without all participants of our events and conferences, youth representatives, youth workers and officials from all different Member States.

## Many thanks for your presence, enthusiasm and contributions!

The Belgian Presidency team made it through a long period of preparation. The Presidency itself was intense, but we look back with a feeling of satisfaction. We are happy that we could contribute a few stones to the great building of youth (work) policy in Europe. We hand over the torch to the future presidencies and are confident they will continue the work in the best possible ways.





# Colofon

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