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**Analysis of national reports submitted by the Member States concerning participation
by and information for young people**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In its resolution of 25 November 2003, the Council of European Ministers, in the context of applying the open method of coordination (OMC) in the field of youth, defined three common objectives to strengthen participation by young people:

- increase participation by young people in the civic life of their community;
- increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy;
- provide greater encouragement for various forms of learning to participate.

It also identified three common objectives for developing information for young people:

- improving access for young people to information services;
- ensuring the provision of quality information to young people;
- encouraging participation by young people in information.

The Member States undertook to provide reports by the end of 2005 on the progress made with these common objectives in the period 2003–2005, and the European Commission was given the task of drawing up an analytical report providing a general overview of the implementation of these priorities, and enabling best practices to be disseminated.

Very few of the national reports reached the Commission on time, and this analytical report incorporated information from the national reports as and when they arrived in the course of the entire first quarter of 2006. It draws on elements contained in the two times 22 reports provided in one of the Commission's working languages, and on the verbal observations concerning participation which were made at the informal meeting of Ministers for Youth in Bad Ischl.

At the request of the Directors and Directors-General for Youth, the Commission proposed a common structure for these national reports which was endorsed by all parties. This structure provides the overall framework for the reports, but the content of each of the seven chapters differs from one country to another, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The differences between these various contributions meant that a detailed comparative approach was not possible.

Each of the "participation" and "information" priorities for young people is dealt with here using the same arrangement of three main headings: the first summarises how the priority concerned is being implemented, with examples of a selection of good practices; the second looks at the types of obstacles encountered; and the third draws conclusions geared to the common objectives and lines of action for each of these priorities.

By way of general conclusion, consideration is given to the questions, common to both priorities, of knowledge and governance which tie in with the implementation of the common objectives and the preparation of these reports at national level.

2. PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1. State of implementation of the "participation by young people" priority

When the common objectives were adopted, the situation differed between the countries with a long-standing tradition of encouraging participation by young people and those countries, in particular some new Member States, for which this priority was relatively new.

There is, however, a recognisable general trend towards developing genuine national policies to encourage participation, even if the degree of leverage applied by the authorities varies from one country to another.

This support from the public authorities encompasses legislative, institutional or resource-allocation measures which benefit participatory structures and are also of direct benefit to projects.

Support for the participatory structures has led to a new climate of consultation with young people and their organisations, whilst the assistance granted to projects and initiatives run by young people themselves has led most countries to make greater provision for building on young people's sense of commitment.

2.1.1. A stronger legislative or legal framework

The Member States have clarified or strengthened the legal rules governing participation by young people. Where a legislative framework existed already, new laws or regulations have been added to it. Elsewhere, this legislative framework has been erected immediately, in line with the common European objectives.

In many countries, these new legislative provisions are concerned with legal recognition of local youth councils, or of the powers devolved to national youth councils.

These new provisions often lay down a requirement to inform and consult with organisations representing young people. The signing of memorandums between youth organisations and the public authorities also demonstrate this trend towards a more formalised partnership between young people and those in positions of responsibility or elected officials. In some cases, these partnerships are at the level of the municipalities, which sometimes are even required to offer material assistance (premises or equipment) or advice to youth NGOs.

Alongside this, a number of Member States have made participation by young people a national priority through the adoption of annual or multiannual strategic plans, which also draw on the recommendations of the White Paper on Youth and the aims of the OMC. Even if this is the first time that some countries have really given shape to their concept of youth policy, all countries have increased the number and enhanced the status of bodies concerned with young people, such as special parliamentary committees, or advisory and expert committees.

The reports also show that young people are being taken more into account in the legal instruments in other fields, with the beginnings of interministerial collaboration in the field of youth becoming apparent, even if there is an emphasis on the difficulty involved and a condemnation of the fact that the field of youth does not get a better hearing or enjoy greater recognition.

The public authorities, sometimes with the assistance of specialised research institutes, have also drawn up numerous texts and reference documents (white papers, guides, contracts, publications, etc.) setting out national priorities and lines of action to improve participation by young people.

The strengthening of the legislative or legal framework has taken different forms including, for example, the adoption of youth legislation in **Ireland**, a definition of the concept of youth policy in the **Czech Republic**, the implementation of a national programme of reforms for young people in **Portugal**, support for youth organisations and structures in **Belgium**, or even legislation on voluntary community service in **France**. Some countries, such as the Baltic States, have even drawn up specific action plans for the next few years (Youth Employment Strategy in **Estonia**, Youth Policy Programme in **Latvia**), **Slovakia** has drawn up an annual plan for education through citizenship and participation by young people, **Finland** has a programme for learning to participate, and the **United Kingdom and Ireland** have programmes for education in citizenship.

2.1.2. Support for the development of participatory structures

In all Member States, a general spread of youth councils at different levels is discernable: national, regional, municipal or local councils currently provide closer-knit coverage and involve an increasing number of young people. The national councils' membership of the European Youth Forum helps to maintain an interaction between the various levels, from local up to European level.

All the countries also have representative structures in schools and universities and, increasingly, children's or youth parliaments, which meet more intermittently and serve to introduce young people to parliamentary democracy. The tasks and powers of these bodies vary from one country to another, however.

The public authorities have encouraged the development of these structures, sometimes by a fairly consistent and continuous increase in funding, and sometimes by offering material or technical assistance (premises, help in launching Internet sites) or human resources.

Most of the national reports refer to regular meetings being organised between youth delegates and ministerial officials, MPs or even persons elected to regional bodies. National youth councils are sometimes invited to submit an annual report to the highest authorities in the country (President, Prime Minister) or to Parliament. Events bringing together parliamentarians and youth representatives to discuss subjects of common interest are also organised, or youth representatives are invited to sit in various official bodies (committees dealing with road safety, health, university exchanges, etc.). In some instances, this strengthening of the dialogue with young people even goes as far as bilateral contracts with the authorities setting out objectives, such as plans for the renewal of urban areas.

Some Member States have taken other interesting initiatives, such as the appointment of a principal contact partner providing an interface between young people and the public authorities, or the appointment of an *ombudsman* (mediator) with the specific task of acting as a point of contact and of passing information between decision-makers and young people.

Finally, youth conferences and forums have been organised, generally on the initiative of the relevant ministries, coupled in some cases with small or larger-scale information campaigns

on the opportunities opened to participation by young people. These initiatives seek to raise young people's awareness of the various ways in which they can become committed and involved as citizens, especially if they do not belong to any organisations. They also invite young people to participate more in the system of representative democracy and as elected representatives or electors.

Alongside this, awareness-raising campaigns for young people on the importance of voting have been launched by the public authorities with a view to new elections falling due, in which young people are encouraged to enter their names on electoral registers and exercise their right to vote, with provision sometimes being made for young people to be entered automatically on the electoral register once they reach voting age. However, it would seem that these measures are still fairly intermittent, and that no significant advances have been made in setting up a more structured and less sporadic dialogue involving traditional representative structures and young people.

Most countries have encouraged the creation of structures enabling young people to get involved in community life at local or national level. For example, we could mention the creation of a youth parliament in **Cyprus**, advisory committees for young people and local councils in **Luxembourg**, youth services in **Spain**, the creation of participatory structures involving young people in disadvantaged areas in **Germany**, the funding of participatory structures in **Greece**, or the obligation to set up advisory youth councils in Dutch-speaking **Belgium**. Also of note are the Danish experiment of supporting youth councils within football clubs, as well assistance and advice provided to youth projects in **Austria**. As regards student councils, these already exist almost everywhere.

In addition, young people in a number of Member States may contact a reference person with regard to any issues affecting them, such as the youth mediator (ombudsman) in **Finland**, the youth correspondent in the **United Kingdom**, or the municipal youth coordinators in **Lithuania**.

Finally, as regards the public authorities' support for participation by young people in the system of representative democracy, mention can be made of the measures to encourage young people (aged 25–35) to stand on electoral lists in **Italy**, the organisation of parallel elections for young people in the **Netherlands**, the lowering of the voting age to 16 for local municipal elections in **Finland**, automatic registration of young people on electoral lists upon reaching the age of 18, and the lowering of the age of eligibility for certain functions in **France**, or the possibility of voting via the Internet in certain circumstances in the **United Kingdom**. In **Belgium** and the **Netherlands**, the Internet also serves as a medium for regular consultations with young citizens. Finally, almost all the Member States have launched campaigns to encourage young people to vote.

2.1.3. Support for participatory projects and initiatives run by young people

The support of the public authorities for young people's projects and initiatives is generally subject to the proviso that the young people must be the main initiators of their participation. The principle of "learning by doing" is thus underlying, irrespective of the field of activity to which the project belongs (community, cultural, sport, etc.).

The authorities' involvement thus consists in providing back-up and support for young people's initiatives, in building on their sense of commitment, and in recognising more

effectively the role of relay persons, who occupy a key position between young people and the public authorities with regard to the actual running of projects.

Aid for projects is not only financial, but also involves easing administrative procedures, or offering advice and expertise to young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged or most isolated geographically.

Some countries give prominence to providing and distributing practical guides to existing opportunities, or informative booklets, both in schools and community centres, in agencies or on Internet sites; others arrange for speakers from community bodies, including former volunteers, to share their experience with young people.

The media are also used to disseminate information on possible ways of involvement, and a number of countries have modified their school curricula to include teaching on how to organise a community project.

These steps went hand in hand with an increased recognition of voluntary activities by young people, either in projects focusing more on individuals or professions, or in projects of general interest (environment, international/European/local solidarity, etc.).

Involvement in the European Voluntary Service is encouraged and is a source of inspiration for other voluntary measures at national level. More and more often, certificates, prizes and diplomas are being awarded to young volunteers, and the experience gained through voluntary work is better recognised: in some countries, it is regarded in the curricula as valid training experience, and in other countries it may allow access to higher education or to civil-service entrance examinations.

At the same time, educators and youth workers, who are the key relay persons in generating interest and motivation among young people to do voluntary work, are better trained for these tasks and generally enjoy more recognition, even though these persons and the associations on the ground still suffer from a lack of regular public funding.

Similarly, informal education settings, such as leisure or holiday centres, cultural or sports clubs, have been more directly involved in efforts to promote voluntary work.

It is in this field that actions at European level and complementary to the policy of OMC – youth programme or youth weeks – have had the greatest knock-on effect on national policies.

Examples here are the *Envie d'agir* [Desire to act] project or the citizenship festival in **France**, that for young country people in **Lithuania**, the campaign to build on non-formal education in **Belgium**, the social partnership programme in **Ireland**, the integrated models for pilot projects in **Estonia**, the support for involvement in projects in rural areas in **Poland**, or the bilateral contracts between the public authorities and young people for urban renewal projects in **Germany**.

The pilot projects on participation supported at European level in 2003 and 2004 are also examples of good practices. Call DG EAC 43/03 (for "pilot projects in favour of youth participation") was mainly concerned with participation projects at local level involving either four local or four regional partners. 31 projects were selected. Call DG EAC 10/04 (for the "networking of pilot projects for youth participation") enhanced the transnational dimension

of projects concerning participation. Each project had to involve various types of partner (municipalities, NGOs, associations, schools, etc.) and include at least one local project in five different countries and three different partners in each local project. 16 projects were selected.

2.2. Obstacles to implementing the "participation" priority

The difficulties encountered by the Member States are due to various factors which can be grouped into three categories: those arising from lack of adequate resources in the youth sector; those resulting from the lack of interest and motivation on the part of some young people; and those stemming from other sectors' failure to seek synergies between their own actions and youth policy measures.

2.2.1. Obstacles arising from the relative financial weakness of the youth sector

It is not really surprising that the first obstacles mentioned stem from the lack of adequate public funding, which means that only a limited number of actions or projects can be financed.

All the countries currently agree that the youth sector is a fragmented field of activity, comprising some groups with particular characteristics and needs; there should thus be a combination of actions aimed at young people as a whole, together with a more specific focus on certain groups.

The national reports refer to continued disparities between young people, especially between particular age-groups, young people in towns and those living in the country, those with training and qualifications and those without, those from immigrant families, etc.

In this connection, decisions on the allocation of funds must take account of variable factors which require complex choices to be made, such as giving priority to actions with a high profile or to their impact on participation by young people as a whole, or on particular groups; in the latter instance, the decisions are also taken in the light of other funding provided at national or regional level, most often pursuant to cohesion, social or regional development policy.

For example, in some rural areas, lack of funding for better transport and communication networks is mentioned as one of the obstacles to young people meeting, organising themselves, or even gaining access to the Internet.

As regards the youngest age-groups, before the question of funding even arises, there is a possible dilemma – or even a conflict – between, for example, legal provisions on the protection of minors and the exercise of rights regarding participation in the community in fields such as mobility, financial or legal liability, the right to vote, etc.

Achieving a degree of coherence as regards decisions on the allocation of resources between various levels also comes under the broader question of how the aims and priorities at European, national, regional and local level interconnect and interact:

- in countries where a youth policy was already firmly established, the old programmes have not always been modified in line with the common objectives, and the new priorities have been tagged on to the old structures;

- it also happens that initiatives taken at local level to encourage participation are out of step with national or European objectives regarding participation.

In more general terms, the allocation of powers, and the overlapping of the various levels of responsibility between the State and the regions or local authorities, has sometimes been portrayed as a hindrance to coordination between the various levels.

2.2.2. *Lack of commitment among young people*

The Member States note with regret that, more than their elders, young people have a certain distrust of becoming involved in traditional politics or trade union activities, or even of commitment of any kind, and of the adult world in general. This may in fact hide a fear of not being taken seriously, and most Member States recognise that much still needs to be done so that the existing participatory structures and representative bodies are made more accessible to young people.

In the case of disadvantaged or marginalised young people, it must be recognised that participation is generally not their main concern, which tends to suggest that participatory measures under social inclusion policies should be strengthened in order to complement the measures to open up existing structures and bodies to participation by young people.

As regards other young people, some national reports see their lack of commitment as going hand in hand with consumption-orientated and individualistic attitudes disseminated by the televisual media in particular, which leads to material concerns taking precedence over the idea of helping others.

When they take on commitments, young people prefer to work within fairly flexible and unrestricting structures, such as NGOs, associations, clubs or committees, in which any commitment is of a more precise nature and focused on a specific subject; this preference on the part of young people for "flexible commitment" would explain why the increased number of young people actively involved in the field of participation, as referred to in some of the national reports, was for time being only ascertained for these types of structures.

The variety of possible forms of participatory commitment is a positive factor, but the downside to this is the considerable instability of young people's associations; the national reports stress that many in fact tend to disappear soon after they have been created, whilst some in positions of responsibility resign during their term of office. It is more difficult to establish and maintain relations with these organisations under such conditions.

Lack of available time, which is a common argument used by young people and also the authorities in charge of the youth sector to explain the difficulties involved in community and voluntary work, is most frequently attributed to the working patterns and workload imposed on young people in education systems (schools and universities).

Another brake on participation by young people stems from the time needed to set up and implement participation projects, or from the necessary "waiting period" before an action or initiative shows any results; changes in young people's status or circumstances reinforce the negative impact of these delays and present an obstacle to sustained commitment.

The high turnover rate of youth NGOs, and of their members and those in charge, means that the development and pursuit of genuine strategies for reaching a higher proportion of young

people is a complex and uncertain undertaking. Tackling the problem of becoming accessible to non-organised or marginalised young people is now felt by all key players to be essential, as has been emphasised many times, to increasing participation by young people.

There is a strong consensus among the Member States that the efforts to open up youth NGOs and other representative structures to young people should be accompanied by a policy aimed at building on and recognising young people's commitment. It is in this field that public intervention can and must play a key role in encouraging young people to actively participate.

2.2.3. Political and institutional inertia of other policies relevant to participation by young people

Those responsible for youth policy at national level report that cooperation between ministries has not always been ideal; it varies from one country to another, depending on the proximity, in organisational terms, between departments in charge of youth policy and those in other fields, and on the importance at national level of the other policies of relevance to young people, such as employment and education.

These policies are generally allocated more funding than youth policy, and they are managed by a set of key players, and using long-standing procedures, firmly anchored to national policy.

From the point of view of those in charge of the youth sector, these policies' long standing has made for the accumulation of experience and traditions, also in the context of dialogue and partnership, but has sometimes also created encumbrances which prevent synergies and complementarities with the field of youth which it would be useful to have.

Unfortunately, this problem exists at all levels, from European and national down to local level; encouraging initiatives, also at local level, aimed at breaking down barriers between actions and key players, and devising new means to achieve synergies, is one of the avenues of reflection proposed by the Member States to combat this trend towards inertia. At national and European level, back-up policy measures in the fields of non-formal education, lifelong learning and, more recently, life-cycle or intergenerationally based approaches may also be conducive to a culture of participation in which young people would have an important role to play.

Finally, another of the difficulties mentioned in some reports concerns continuing prejudices about young people: some people in positions of responsibility are hesitant about placing trust in young people and giving them responsibilities. Young people sometimes feel discriminated against because of their age-group, especially when their partners in participation are perceived as being their hierarchical superiors (teachers or employers). This imbalance is often attributed to the image – conveyed by society as a whole and too often blown up in the media – of irresponsible young people.

2.3. Conclusions regarding the participation of young people

It can be seen that participation by young people is clearly confirmed as a policy priority in all the national reports. All of them stress as well that the basic concern of policy on participation is to strengthen the community activities of young people in terms of what they contribute to democratic life, and towards their integration within society.

In this respect, active participation by young people as a constituent element of the OMC would appear to be a precious asset in that it is a priority common to various public policies which is valid at national, regional and local level, and in that it is associated with realistic objectives.

When the "participation" priority was adopted in 2003, the Member States agreed on three common objectives (increased participation by young people in the civic life of their community; increased participation by young people in the system of representative democracy; provision of greater support for various forms of learning to participate), which are referred to either explicitly or implicitly in the national reports. Some countries consider that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between two lines of action, particularly when implementing them, but no countries question the usefulness of this approach.

2.3.1. Participation by young people in the civic life of their community

The lines of action are as follows:

- a) promote the involvement of young people in participatory structures, for example NGOs, associations, voluntary work, local youth councils, and encourage the activities of youth NGOs, while respecting their independence and autonomy;*
- b) encourage the development of activities, initiatives and projects intended to involve young people directly at regional and local level;*
- c) publicise and show greater recognition of the outreach work done by parents, youth workers and other persons;*
- d) identify more clearly the obstacles in the way of participation by specific groups and by disadvantaged young people and encourage measures and mechanisms capable of overcoming those obstacles, in particular by making allowance for their diversities and priorities (cultural or ethnic background, disabilities, socio-economic factors, gender, etc.);*
- e) examine qualitative methods of evaluating participation by young people.*

The first two lines of action advocate support for structures and projects. In terms of results, it is incontestable that these two lines of action have brought about the greatest advances, not only in relation to the number of actions and structures, or increases in budgets, but also in terms of the impact on participation by young people, regarding which some countries note a reversal of the trend.

The next line of action recommends greater recognition of youth work, and the efforts of the Member States have therefore essentially been focused on the legislative field. However, interaction between the key players in the fields of formal and non-formal education is still often inadequate, if not problematical.

Finally, the last two lines of action – clearer identification of the obstacles in the way of participation, and the development of evaluation methods – are proving difficult to analyse purely from the point of view of this specific objective. It thus seems more realistic to deal with these two points together on the basis of an expert opinion and in combination with the

priority concerning "better knowledge of the youth field"; this also enables policy measures to be realigned and focused on the other three lines of action.

2.3.2. *Increased participation by young people in the system of representative democracy*

The lines of action are as follows:

- a) *encourage and develop, [...] at all appropriate levels, a regular, structured dialogue between the public and/or government authorities and young people and their representative structures (national, regional and local youth councils, youth organisations, the European Youth Forum, etc.);*
- b) *ensure that such dialogue can also include young people who are not members of organisations and that their concerns are taken into account;*
- c) *promote and develop this dialogue, so that young people can be more involved in public life;*
- d) *identify more clearly and study the obstacles in the way of participation by young people in the system of representative democracy and encourage measures and mechanisms conducive to the inclusion of all young people in all their diversities (cultural or ethnic background, disabilities, gender, socio-economic factors, etc.).*

In terms of results, there has been a strengthening of the dialogue with organisations in the youth field alongside the increase in representative bodies for young people; there has also been a positive development as regards the opportunities for debate, even if only when these national reports were being drawn up. As regards the topics covered by this dialogue, or which are the subject of consultations, it should be possible to make a sound start towards a more cross-sectoral approach, especially through the impetus provided by the European Pact for Youth.

The overall results of the measures taken by the Member States to increase the number of young people becoming involved in electoral processes are mixed. Even if good practices are in place, the impact of the measures taken is not enough to counter the tendency among young people to feel disillusioned about elections. The only positive, albeit modest, results concern the number of young members of municipal or regional councils, which has increased in some instances, especially as regards electoral lists at local level.

The reports do not make any mention of possible developments concerning the opening-up to young people of representative bodies such as political parties or trade unions; nor do they deal adequately with the question of building on work in representative bodies and its possible impact on participation by young people.

Finally, to the extent that the obstacles encountered do not seem to be distinguishable from those concerning Objective 1 and that they call for the same response, this question is dealt with in general terms in the national reports.

2.3.3. *Support for various forms of learning to participate*

The lines of action are as follows:

- a) *further develop and extend training for participation within formal education systems (in conjunction with the objectives approved under the open method of coordination as applied to education);*
- b) *encourage the development of activities in the field of non-formal and informal education that promote the active participation of young people;*
- c) *further develop interaction between formal, non-formal and informal education;*
- d) *foster the development of experience of participation where young people live their lives: in particular within the family, at school, in youth organisations, at university, at other places of education or training and at work, in sporting and leisure time contexts;*
- e) *recognise the important role of persons working with young people and facilitating their learning to participate and develop training actions in this field;*
- f) *promote and increase awareness of the benefits to all of the participation of committed young people and combat prejudices against young people which prevent them from playing an effective part;*
- g) *analyse more carefully the phenomena which lead to the civic exclusion of certain groups and encourage approaches focused on prevention.*

Among these lines of action, the Member States have mainly focused their efforts on the first three (training for participation within formal, non-formal and informal education, and the strengthening of links between the two systems of learning which enables them to set out a certain number of good practices in this field).

It is nevertheless too early to assess the impact of such measures, especially since this approach has not yet produced tangible results at local level (line of action on learning to participate where young people live their lives, particularly at school).

As regards the lines of action concerning the training of relay persons and promoting a sense of commitment, they are hardly touched on in the national reports' consideration of the "participation" priority in the context of the OMC; the particular reason for this is that, since they depend to a large degree on other policies, the youth sector has not developed a global view of these issues.

2.3.4. *General conclusion on the priority concerning participation by young people*

In more general terms, the Member States readily admit that the official adoption of participation by young people as one of the priorities of the open method of coordination has lent considerable impetus to policies at national level. Indeed, this development has led to the public authorities and those responsible for the youth sector planning their strategies more

effectively, and has enabled these objectives, adopted by all the Member States, to be translated into policies and actions on the ground; it has thus increased the need for coordination between authorities at national, regional and local level.

Finally, it has also made for the promotion of young people's involvement in participatory structures, and for the beginnings of a more regular and better-structured dialogue between young people and the public authorities.

However, a number of Member States consider it still too early to really be able to assess the impact of the measures taken, and some of them would also have preferred an evaluation at a later stage. No doubt this is why the national reports contain relatively few data allowing such an evaluation to be made, with most of the details provided consisting of factual descriptions of the measures undertaken.

Nevertheless, the methodology used here as an analytical checklist for the national reports could be used as the basis for establishing indicators which take account of the degree of leverage applied in any intervention by the public authorities in relation to each of the three objectives of the "participation" priority.

With regard to good practices, these can be used to assess the path taken by a national policy, but also as models which could be used in other countries in order to achieve the common objectives.

3. INFORMATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1. State of implementation of the priority « information »

The national reports on the implementation of the common objectives demonstrate the diversity of approaches in the EU regarding youth information.

Within each Member State, the implementation of the common objectives is organized at national, regional or local level depending on how competences on youth issues, youth information or even on general information policy are distributed.

Thus, the national reports in some cases present the implementation of the common objectives through a single national policy; in other cases a national report presents several regional information policies or a mix of both national and regional.

National or regional authorities tend to organise their information structures and network in a similar way. National authorities, in Member States where “youth information” policy is under the remit of the regions, tend to play a role of coordinator or to complement the regional level.

In most Member States, youth information is established through legal acts or administrative provisions concerning the public bodies in charge of youth issues.

National reports identify three main instruments for the implementation of the common objectives: youth information offices, youth websites, and youth call centres.

The detailed analysis is based on the common objectives and, for each, on the different action lines.

3.1.1. *Common objective “Access for young people to information services”*

- a) *Promote at the appropriate level the development in Member States of a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated information services which take account of the specific needs of young people and are as youth friendly and economically accessible as possible*

Improved provision of youth information is generally accompanied by improvements in the quality of the information. Many different actors in a variety of fields are active in providing youth information. *Internet*

Online information seems to be commonest way of providing information to young people.

The most notable progress in youth information is related to the use of information technologies, in particular the development of internet portals, which genuinely allow for the establishment of comprehensive, coherent and coordinated information services.

These portals not only give information, they are in general also designed as an advice tool. In a limited number of cases the most advanced youth portals also provide personal on-line counselling.

The main difference between Member States relates to the level of development of this tool. Most of the national reports highlight the fact that on-line information for young people is constantly updated and that the portals are continually evolving. They particularly highlight youth information provided by internet, as this is clearly becoming the main tool to disseminate information. It also seems to be the instrument from which more developments and improvements can be expected.

Information on:

The national reports do not refer explicitly to the degree of progress made since the adoption in 2003 of the common objectives. However, a number of Member States have enlarged their information network centres or have modernized them. The main objective is to facilitate the access to information by young people. Some regions have also adopted legislation in order to ensure develop information centres in medium-sized municipalities where information centres were not previously required.

The information offices are the most traditional structures of information for young people, with networks developed to a greater or lesser extent in all Member States. They can be found in urban areas and schools, and are in general public bodies, or may be private ones which benefit from public funding. Young people use these centres to get information on all relevant activities or policies addressed to them, as well as to ask for personal advice.

Telephone information services

Some Member States refer to the availability of information and counselling services by telephone. These services are very specialized and are related mainly to health/sexuality issues.

In the **UK**, Connexions Direct (CXD), the national online advice, information and support service for young people was rolled out nationally in April 2004. The service offers young people advice by telephone, text message, adviser on line and email. CXD is fully integrated with local Connexions partnerships to enable quick and easy referral of young people who need face-to-face advice from a local personal adviser. 6,000 young people contact the service every week, and 64,000 young people visit the website every week (the average length of stay on the site is 19 minutes).

To improve access to information specific initiatives have been put in place such as in **Denmark** where the Danish Parliament launched a new website for young people – www.ungtinget.dk. It contains information for young people about the Danish Parliament, Danish politics and democratic processes in general. It also contains a debate forum for young people, relevant links, a lexicon, archives and a monthly interview with a young Danish politician.

Some Member States consider this action line in relation only to the policies that are implemented directly by the Ministry in charge of youth issues. Other Member States have adopted a “holistic approach” and consider that this line of action relates to all information that is relevant to young people, as well as to all the institutional actors (other ministries, regions and local authorities) in charge of the youth information.

Both approaches can be coherent with the line of action, however those Member States which have adopted a “holistic approach” are more likely to have defined an information strategy that could meet the interests of all young people.

In the case of Member States which reported exclusively on the information related to policies and activities developed within the remit of Ministries in charge of youth, it seems clear that cooperation with other actors could be improved. In this context, it is important to note that the European youth portal provides, for some Member States, a greater scope of information than the national portals.

Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Netherlands, Czech Republic present youth information strategies which tend to be comprehensive, coherent and coordinated, encompassing the national, regional and local levels and all main policies interesting young people.

- b) *Facilitate equal access of all young people to information, while avoiding any form of discrimination or exclusion based on economic, social, gender, cultural or geographical ground.*

Analysis of the national reports show that equal access to information is a priority of Member States.

Most Member States identify geographical particularities as a major obstacle to equal access to information, the difficulty being to provide information offices in all geographical areas, in particular rural areas or smaller municipalities.

Some Member States are enlarging their network of youth information offices, to improve the access for all young people. In some cases specific legislation at national or regional level is adopted in order to provide youth information centres in a larger number of municipalities, or to give municipalities responsibilities for youth information.

In order to ensure that most young people could have access to information, some Member States give priority to setting up information offices in schools.

Certain Member States point out that in terms of access to information certain categories of young people deserve a specific attention, for example, disadvantaged young people, or young people living in deprived areas who for instance have a very limited access to internet facilities. The development of mobile youth information offices is seen as a way to reach young people living in more remote areas, disabled young people or young people with an immigrant background. However, the majority of national reports do not give enough information to understand the real dimension of this issue.

Slovenia offers an example of how to address youth information to a specific target group. Youth information and counselling centres concluded an agreement with the association promoting Romany culture, on the integration of the practice of youth information and counselling among Romany population.

In **Cyprus**, in order to reach and provide information and counselling to young people in rural areas, and young people with fewer opportunities, the youth board has been finding sponsors for the creation and operation of mobile units. Three mobile units will begin to operate in 2006 with information collection, free internet access and counsellors. These units will be visiting schools in rural areas as well as youth events, concerts, football matches, festivals and any other happenings which youngsters seem to attend.

In **Spain**, the “informabus” provide similar services to rural areas.

In conclusion, Member States are indeed concerned about ensuring equal access to all young people. Good geographical provision of information offices is considered as the solution to facilitate access for all young people, as well as providing this information free of charge.

The access to information of young people with fewer opportunities is seen by only a limited number of Member States as an issue, although it is likely to be one of the most relevant issues related to equal access.

- c) *Encourage the development of national, regional or local youth portals linked to the European Youth Portal*

Most National Reports refer to the establishment of new portals at national or regional level, demonstrating that the development of information services depends ever more on the use of IT. Different models can be identified.

The first model concern youth portals that focus more or less exclusively on youth policies and activities implemented by the Ministry in charge of youth (e.g. Voluntary activities, free time...).

The second and more advanced model concerns portals implemented by public services in charge of youth which cover a large spectrum of information, such as education, employment, training, health/sexuality, rights, housing, mobility and free time. Finally, other youth portals have adopted an even more holistic approach, giving access to information related to music, movies, travel, computer, art etc. These youth portals present in a user-friendly way the different policies or activities even if they do not depend on the youth ministries. Furthermore, links to other specialized web sites are also available so young users can easily access those policies and activities that are especially relevant for them.

Since 2003, Member States have been developing or creating new youth portals. The following list present a selection of portals managed directly by the authorities in charge of youth or supported by them. regional authorities also have or support youth portals:

www.jugendinfo.at (**Austria**)

www.jongereninformatie.be (**Belgium**)

www.cidj.be (**Belgium**)

www.icm.cz (**Czech Republic**)

www.netzcheckers.de (**Germany**)

www.uvm.dk (**Denmark**)
www.injuve.mtas.es/ (**Spain**)
www.hm.ee (**Estonia**)
www.neagenia.gr (**Greece**)
www.nuoret.info (**Finland**)
www.cidj.com (**France**)
www.portaledeigiovani.it (**Italy**)
www.cij.lu (**Luxembourg**)
www.bm.gov.lv (**Latvia**)
www.youthinfo.gov.mt (**Malta**)
www.overheid.nl (**Netherlands**)
www.juventude.gov.pt (**Portugal**)
www.mladinskiportal.si (**Slovenia**)
www.need2know.co.uk (**United Kingdom**)

Some Member States indicate that the European dimension of the national or regional portals is provided through links to European web sites such as the European youth portal or others portals of interest for young people such as Ploteus¹ and Eures². Links to ERYICA³, and EURODESKS⁴ (a network supported by the Youth programme) are also referred to in most of the national reports.

The establishment of the European youth portal in 2003 and its links with national portals has proven to be very successful. The conference on 'Youth portals and young people' organised by the Commission in June 2005 gave an overview on the development of youth portals in Member States and underlined the importance of the links and networking among existing portals. It was recognized that the development of portals in Member States has helped improve cross-ministerial cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth information which did not exist before.

¹ Ploteus: <http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp>

² Eures: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/home.jsp>

³ ERYICA: <http://www.eryica.org/webportal/DesktopDefault.aspx>

⁴ Eurodesk <http://www.eurodesk.org/>

In the **Netherlands**, the municipality of Amsterdam has sponsored a youth portal called “Youramsterdam.nl”. This website contains a wide range of information on many issues that affect young people. Forum discussions, opinion polls and news make the site attractive to young people. Users are asked their views on the site’s appeal and accessibility three times per year.

The implementation of this line of action is particularly interesting as it also promotes cooperation at European level among practitioners, thus providing a potential leverage effect.

3.1.2. *Common Objective «Quality information»*

- a) *Monitor the quality of youth information, taking existing instruments into account (e.g. good practices ERYICA’s European youth information charter)*

The majority of Member States use or tend to use the European youth information charter⁵ to ensure that the information provided by youth information services obey a minimum of quality standards.

This charter, which was reviewed in November 2004, and which comprises 16 guidelines for general youth information work (delivered by youth information centres or through youth information services in other structures, or using electronic and other media), seeks to guarantee the right of young people to information.

In some Member States, youth information centres are required to comply with the guidelines of the charter to be eligible for financial support from public bodies. In other Member States, youth information services must also comply with additional quality standards defined by national or regional authorities.

The specific line of action concerning quality of youth information has proven to be one in which Member States are the most interested in exchanging good practices, as well as in developing new methods to improve quality standards.

It is worth recalling that in early 2005, the three European organisations involved in different aspects of youth information work (**ERYICA**, **Eurodesk**, and **EYCA**⁶) organised a European seminar on quality matters relating to information for young people. The seminar involved people responsible for or directly involved in quality assessment and development in their organisations. It was organised as a part of the work which the three organisations are undertaking together to contribute to the implementation of the Common Objectives.

The first “result “of the seminar was a “**Compendium of quality initiatives**”, containing 50 examples of initiatives or projects designed to improve the quality of youth information services or actions. After the seminar, ERYICA, EURODESK and EYCA decided to create a joint web-site on which the Compendium of quality initiatives, with a view to sharing experience and methods as widely as possible (www.eryica-eurodesk-eyca.net)

Apart from applying quality standards, some Member States also use evaluation methods to ensure a regular monitoring of the quality of youth information. In particular “customer

⁵ See ERYICA’s Charter in the annex

⁶ EYCA : <http://www.eyca.org>

feedback” systems are often used by Member States to ensure that youth information corresponds to the needs of young people. In more limited cases, there are also independent bodies which are in charge of the quality monitoring of information structures as well as awarding quality labels to these structures.

From the national reports, it can be said that Member States are concerned about quality issues and that progress has been made in the development of instruments to ensure quality. It is also noticeable that the three European networks (EURODESK, ERYICA and EYCA) together with their national partners make a strong contribution to the development of quality standards that can be recognized across Europe.

b) Improve the education and training of those working in the field of youth information

The national reports identified different situations.

First of all, although education and training are considered as a key element to ensure quality in youth information and counselling, there is no organised and no formal profile for youth information workers’ training in most Member States.

The training scheme that appears to be most common concerns training courses or seminars organised “in-house” by the public bodies in charge of youth for their staff. In some cases these training schemes can become compulsory for staff working in information structures subject to an agreement from the Ministry in charge of youth.

In a rather limited number of Member States, youth information workers must have a specific qualification or even a university degree in youth information to work in this area.

The role of networking is also seen as essential to improve the skills and qualification of youth information workers. In fact, know-how in most of the cases is updated by participating in national and European seminars where best practices can also be shared between practitioners.

The European networks such as EURODESK and ERYICA play a crucial role in the development of training courses for their members.

Different approaches to training are adopted, for example:

In **France**, youth information centres funded by the national authorities have their own training structures which ensure the training of their own staff. These training structures are available to the staff of other information offices which have been labelled by Youth Ministry.

In **Spain**, the university of Salamanca confers degrees in youth information services. This is an online postgraduate course on new information technology, research techniques, planning and evaluation and social communication.

This action line is considered as essential to improve the quality of information. The European dimension of training is also an important element that promotes the dissemination of good practices.

- (c) *Improve the link between information and counselling, with the aim of encouraging a learning and capacity building process among young people on how to obtain, select and evaluate information in order to become informed users of information*

Regarding the link between information and counselling, most of the national reports do not refer to this line of action. Only a limited number of Member States stress that the structures that provide information combine it with counselling, and that nowadays there is no real border between both aspects.

Information offices generally provide some kind of counselling along with the information provided; this seems to be also true for information provided through telephone services.

However, regarding the use of internet, so far only a limited number of youth information portals have the possibility to provide personalized advice.

Counselling is considered as one of the qualitative aspects of information, as it is the way to match information with the very specific needs of individuals. Although in the context of traditional information offices it seems that a real distinction cannot be made between information and counselling, it is also clear that, where internet youth information is concerned, individual counselling is only starting to be developed.

In **Hungary**, youth information and counselling offices are operating in the larger towns and provide tailor-made, client oriented services information and counselling.

In **Finland**, youth information centres also act as counselling centres as every local centre has a youth worker to answer young people's questions.

- d) *Promote the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels, particularly those most frequently used by young people, such as the Internet, mobile phones, video films and cinema.*

This line of action has not been really explored within the National Reports, however the questions that might fall under this line of action were most often treated in the first common objective "access for young people to information services".

To avoid risks of overlapping with other lines of action, it would be appropriate to redraft this line of action in order to focus on the use of innovative approaches in youth information

In **Finland** in the province of Lapland, a suggestion box and mobile services for young people have been established in order to enable young people to receive information and news of interest to them through a free browser. Young people can also suggest initiatives using their mobile phones and home computers.

3.1.3. Common Objective « Participation by young people in information »

The action lines are as follows:

- a) *Promote the participation of youth organisations and people working in the area of youth information at European, national, regional and local level in the preparation and implementation of youth information strategies*

- b) *Promote involvement by young people in the preparation of understandable, user-friendly, targeted information products, so as to improve the quality of the information and access for all young people;*
- c) *Encourage greater involvement by young people in the dissemination of information and advice (particularly in youth information centres, schools, youth organisations and media), in order to help all young people to access information*

This common objective is the one which has been least developed by Member States. In general, national reports refer to it without reference to the specific 3 lines of actions.

Different approaches can be identified. The majority of Member States consider that youth information has primarily to be developed by professionals. Young people and youth organisations are in that case involved or consulted at the policy level when information strategies are been discussed.

Surveys and evaluation processes are also considered by certain Member States as an indirect way to take into consideration the opinions of young people concerning information.

The participation of young people or youth organisations in the direct design of youth information is more limited, however there are also indications that there is a strong potential that remain to be developed.

This common objective has created expectations and across Member States seminars have been held to discuss this issue with young people and youth organisations. The participation of young people in the development of the national youth portal has been pointed out as an example of how young people can be involved in this area.

At European level, EURODESK, ERYICA and EYCA are working closely on this issue as it is considered as a quality aspect of youth information work.

The following examples illustrate the way youth people could participate in information:

In **Estonia** the preparation and implementation of youth information strategies are organized through different consultative bodies, in which both young people and youth information workers and do participate.

In **Luxembourg**, the Youth National Service which implemented the national youth portal (www.youth.lu) has worked with youth NGO's in order to incorporate their contributions.

In **Slovakia**, youth information centres (YIC) cooperate with volunteers. Their participation in the youth information system is considered the most natural form of dissemination of youth information in schools, universities and other places.

This common objective has different dimensions which deserve to be better identified. To some extent, the national reports indicate that young people or youth organisations can in some cases be involved directly through consultation in the design of the information strategy of the Member State. In some other cases, they can be involved through professionals in the development of information. Also, as customers of information, young people are involved in the improvement of information services.

The fact that most Member States have treated this common objective as a whole without reference to lines of actions can indicate that these are far too specific to ensure an effective monitoring. The European Commission will propose a new action line : enhance participation of young people in information strategies developed by public authorities and reinforce the role of youth organisations in the promotion of youth information.

3.2. Obstacles met in the implementation of the objectives and lines of action at the national level

Most of the Member States have faced difficulties in the implementation of the common objectives and their lines of action. These difficulties can be categorised as follows:

3.2.1. Methodology

The first one concerns the methodology used to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the common objectives and their impact. Some Member States found it particularly difficult to define a starting point from which the process should be measured. The same difficulty occurs regarding the identification of indicators to establish a follow-up of the progress made, or even a standard definition for “information”, “specific information”, “general information”, “information services”. Furthermore, the period covered is very short - the common objectives were adopted at the end of 2003 and the national reports cover only two years, and much of the information collected concerning the year 2005 will only be available during 2006.

3.2.2. Coordination between actors

The fact that the implementation of common objectives depends very much on the role played by different institutional actors at national, regional and local level is seen by most Member States as a difficulty in clearly identifying progress or even to promote the implementation of the common objectives.

Improving the coordination of different actors is therefore pointed out as a major obstacle to a proper implementation of the common objectives.

3.2.3. Resources

The lack of resources or funding is identified in most reports as an obstacle for the implementation of the Common Objectives, . particularly at local level. This implies that youth information services may not cover all Member States completely, and that the access to information to all young people is therefore not ensured.

3.2.4. Impact

For most of the Member States, it is still too early to assess the impact of the implementation of the common objectives, although their development is seen as promising.

Some Member States consider also that their national priorities for information are confirmed by the common objectives and that European policy cooperation is a valuable tool to improve and develop those priorities. In general terms, despite difficulties, cooperation with ministries and other actors responsible for information policy has been strengthened.

3.3. Conclusions for youth information

It can be deduced that for some Member States, this exercise has been an occasion not only to assess the implementation of the common objectives but also to have an in-depth evaluation and analysis of their youth information policy and of the different instruments used to implement that policy.

Those Member States which are starting to develop a “youth information” policy are clearly using the common objectives as guiding principles. In those cases it is easier to evaluate the progress made. Other Member States which have well established information policies confirm they are in line with the Common Objectives.

Member States consider that the Common Objectives and the lines of action are adequate and they do not suggest changes. However, from the analysis of the different national reports the Commission considers that some lines of action could be modified in order to avoid possible overlapping and to have them more policy focussed and less instrument focussed.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSION

4.1. A better knowledge and understanding of youth participation and information

4.1.1. Background

In their Resolution of 15 November 2004, Member States committed to report to the Commission on steps taken to develop a better understanding of youth participation and information within their national reports for participation by and information of young people.

The same exercise will be done in 2006 for voluntary activities and in 2008 for other priorities confirmed in their Resolution of 24 November 2005 as being the issues raised in the European Pact for Youth. This latter report will also be the occasion for a more comprehensive feed back on all the common objectives adopted under the better knowledge priority.

4.1.2. Interim results

Most Member States have undertaken studies in the field of youth participation since 2003 in order to further develop their knowledge and thus better respond to young people’s needs and expectations. Studies on youth information have however been scarcer.

Some Member States have started country scale mapping exercises to find out about the wealth of knowledge in their country and identify the main studies in the field. On the bases of the gaps identified they are planning to undertake further research. This has however mainly been done for participation.

Only very few countries reported having developed tools to make existing knowledge available in an organised manner and to facilitate access to it. Those who have made steps in this direction mention the elaboration of CD’s, publications of books and reviews as well as the setting up of national data bases for youth knowledge. Generally references to studies are quite incomplete and no indication is given as to where they can be found.

Even though most Member States have nominated correspondents for the European Knowledge Centre of Youth Policy (EKCYP), only a small minority of Member States refer to it in their national reports. For those who do, the EKCYP is seen as a valuable entry point for core data on youth priorities and as an interesting tool to stock research results as well as seminar or conference conclusions.

Member States recognise that collecting and organising existing information as well as making it available can be done more easily if national networks are set up allowing a better flow of information between researchers, policy makers and young people. Such national networks could facilitate and improve ministries', researchers' and Youth organisations' work. They could further provide invaluable support for EKCYP correspondents. Member States however acknowledge that work still needs to be done in that direction in order to see the emergence of an organised knowledge area in the youth field.

4.2. OMC Governance⁷ through participation and information priorities

4.2.1. Consultation of young people in the elaboration of the national reports

Within the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field, youth organisations are expected to be consulted on the national reports. However, it is not always clear in some National Reports to what extent this consultation has been carried out, especially what have been the roles played by the national or regional Youth Councils.

What can be deduced from the National Reports is that Member States associate youth organisation in different ways.

Some Member States have organised extensive consultations, involving youth organisations together with the national youth councils. In these specific cases, the establishment of the National Report has been also an opportunity for the development of a structured dialogue with young people, through the organisation of conferences and seminars.

It is also interesting to note that some Member States applied evaluation methods through "questionnaires" to have a feed back on the implementation of common objectives. However, some national reports refer to the lack of interest of some youth organisations in participating in the consultation exercise.

Other Member States have asked for the opinion of their youth national or regional council, in a more traditional way.

4.2.2. Consultation as a governance principle

The success of the OMC is reliant upon the way young people are involved in its implementation. Young people and their organisations are for instance to be consulted in the preparation of the National Reports.

This first reporting exercise shows that Member States have not consulted young people and their organisations in a systematic way and an effort could thus be made for a better structured dialogue with young people. This means systematically consulting a representative sample of

⁷ Council doc.13997/04, 15.11.2004, not published

young people in the youth OMC reporting exercise. Co-drafting with a limited number of young people or merely informing young people of the content of the report can thus not be considered as the most appropriate way of consultation.

Involving young people at all levels in policy development and implementation is fundamental for sustainable policy making and participative democracy. That's why the Commission proposes in its Communication to reinforce consultations with young people, both at the national and at the European level, with the view to set up a structured dialogue.

ANNEX

EUROPEAN YOUTH INFORMATION CHARTER

adopted in Bratislava (Slovak Republic) on 19 November 2004 by the 15th General Assembly of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)

PRÉAMBULE

In complex societies and in an integrated Europe that offers many challenges and opportunities, access to information and the ability to analyse and use information is increasingly important for young Europeans. Youth information work can help them to achieve their aspirations and can promote their participation as active members of society. Information should be provided in ways that enlarge the choices available to young people, and that promote their autonomy and empowerment.

Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the right of all young people to have access to complete, objective, understandable and reliable information on all their questions and needs. This right to information has been recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in the Recommendation N° (90) 7 of the Council of Europe concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe. This right is also the basis for youth information activities undertaken by the European Union.

Introduction

Generalist youth information work covers all topics that interest young people, and can include a spectrum of activities: informing, counselling, advising, guiding, supporting, befriending, coaching and training, networking, and referral to specialised services. These activities may be delivered by youth information centres, or through youth information services in other structures, or using electronic and other media. The principles of this Charter are intended to apply to all forms of generalist youth information work. They constitute a basis for minimum standards and quality measures which should be established in each country as elements of a comprehensive, coherent and co-ordinated approach to youth information work, which is a part of youth policy.

Principle:

The following principles constitute guidelines for generalist youth information work, which seeks to guarantee the right of young people to information:

1. Youth information centres and services shall be open to all young people without exception.
2. Youth information centres and services seek to guarantee the equality of access to information for all young people, regardless of their situation, origin, gender, religion, or social category. Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged groups and to young people with specific needs.

3. Youth information centres and services should be easily accessible, without any appointment being required. They should be attractive for young people, with a friendly atmosphere. The operating hours should meet the needs of young people.
4. The information available shall be based on the requests of young people and on their perceived information needs. It should cover all topics that could interest young people, and should evolve in order to cover new topics.
5. Each user shall be respected as an individual and the response to each question shall be personalised. This shall be done in a way that empowers users, promotes the exercise of their autonomy, and develops their capacity to analyse and use information.
6. Youth information services shall be free of charge.
7. Information is given in a way that respects both the privacy of users and their right not to reveal their identity.
8. Information is provided in a professional manner by staff trained for this purpose.
9. The information offered is complete, up-to-date, accurate, practical and user-friendly.
10. Every effort is made to ensure the objectivity of the information provided through the pluralism and verification of the sources used.
11. The information offered shall be independent of any religious, political, ideological or commercial influence.
12. Youth information centres and services shall strive to reach the largest possible number of young people, in ways that are effective and appropriate to different groups and needs, and by being creative and innovative in their choice of strategies, methods and tools.
13. Young people shall have the opportunity to participate, in appropriate ways, in different stages of youth information work, at local, regional, national and international levels. These can include, among others: identifying information needs, the preparation and delivery of information, managing and evaluating information services and projects, and peer group activities.
14. Youth information centres and services shall co-operate with other youth services and structures, especially in their geographical area, and shall network with intermediaries and other bodies that work with young people.
15. Youth information centres and services shall help young people both to access information provided via modern information and communication technologies, and to develop their skills in using them.
16. Each source of funding for youth information work should not act in any way that prevents a youth information centre or service from applying all the principles of this Charter.