



## **Conference on the Future EU Cooperation in the Youth Field**

12-14 September 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden

---

# **KEY MESSAGES**

**14 September**

## Outcome from workshop

### Workshop 1 : Education – empowering young people

#### Background discussion (written by facilitators)

Education is important, not only for access to the labour market but also for self development and full participation in civic life for young people in Europe. This raise certain questions; Is education accessible for all young people? Do young people decide on their education process by current consultation processes, or are full democratic structures needed? What role do non-formal education have in the education structure? In the working group we looked closer at these issues and also the possibilities of non formal education to achieve the objective of full, accessible education for all youth. The situation looks very different in each European country, and for example was the way youth can influence their own educational process a topic where different experiences was exchanged as well as the issues around equally accessed education.

#### Key Messages

- Recognition of non-formal education (NFE) through inclusion of NFE providers in educational, employment and youth field policy making processes *and* providing adequate resources for young people participating in NFE and for NFE actors.
- Promotion of NFE through awareness campaigns (for example a movie), creating an interactive database of NFE providers at all levels *and* a Europe-wide network of NFE providers for cooperation and best practices exchange.
- Fostering the cooperation of formal and non-formal education through recognition of NFE by the formal educational system *and* conducting research on the possibilities of interaction and interconnection of NFE and formal education.
- Empower youth to influence their education process by improving youths influence and ensure democratic structures at all levels *and* support the development and protection of learners' rights.
- Expand Youth In Action program to make resources and cooperation projects more available for local and national non-formal learning.
- Improve self-determination of youth by providing full access to information (on formal and non-formal education) *and* adequate carrier guidance for discovering one's full potential, by supporting youth actors at all levels.
- Foster cooperation between schools and NGOs, in particular to target disadvantaged youth of all kinds.
- Facilitate free access to high quality education on all levels.
- Mobility programs for teachers *and* increased and improved in-service training for teachers at all levels. Teachers' performance evaluated by the students and experts.

## Workshop 2: Employment and Entrepreneurship – tackling the challenges ahead

### Background Discussion (written by facilitators)

The workshop had a positive approach towards the topic. We focused on finding smart and innovative ideas for measures and actions on how the EU can 1) support young peoples' development an entrepreneurial and creative mindset, 2) support young entrepreneurs, both start-ups and experienced ones, 3) get young people into jobs. The discussion showed that the Communication from the Commission and the proposals on employment are very satisfying. We encountered the following open questions and obstacles: the need for data on existing number of small enterprises in the EU led by young entrepreneurs as well as their specific challenges; the need for an economical perspective on the market situation for small enterprises (demand, number, limitations); the question on how to increase security for young entrepreneurs (e.g. how to support young entrepreneurs starting and having a family). Relating to the institutional aspects, the question remains how to design flexible structures that can react to sudden needs and innovative ideas (flexible mindsets and methods vs. bureaucratic structures).

### Key Messages

- **Strengthening administrative capacity for youth:**  
There should be a Youth Commissioner responsible for all youth affairs and a Youth Department in DG Enterprise. The European Commission should create new programmes, but also develop existing ones in order to support young entrepreneurs.
- **Legislation changes:**  
The European Commission should recommend the Member States to reduce taxes for young start-up entrepreneurs and ensure that fair minimum wage legislation exists for young employees.
- **Policy recommendation:**  
When revising the Lisbon Strategy, the European Commission should recommend that Member States support mentor programmes for young entrepreneurs. Also, EU programmes and funds should be revised to put forward a youth entrepreneurial and employment perspective e.g. European Social Fund, Youth in Action, ERASMUS, COMENIUS, etc. The European Commission should gather knowledge and support research on youth unemployment. Actions and measures taken should be evaluated and improved.
- **Strengthening inter-sectorial cooperation (between Member States, EU, enterprises, entrepreneurs):**  
The EU should encourage the Member States to provide incentives for companies that employ first-time job-seekers. Youth workers' competences should be present in labour administration. The European Commission should support the creation of an inter-generational assistance service (e.g. retired business persons teach the inexperienced young entrepreneurs). The European Commission should support a European umbrella organisation for national organisations of young entrepreneurs. Member States should also support organisations for young entrepreneurs.
- **Publicity, visibility and exchange of best practices:**  
The European Commission should initiate different contests to increase interest among young people in entrepreneurship, e.g. a college competition where EU students create a business/company that has a European dimension; or a youth business plan contest. The prize could be funding, mentoring, publicity, etc.
- **Website/award/informative literature on entrepreneurship:**  
The European Commission should initiate the creation of a European website which displays in an accessible format, the opportunities that already exist in the EU (e.g. business

simulation, internship programmes, competitions, best practices, information, legal advice, etc.).

The European Commission should set-up an awards ceremony where prizes would be presented to successful young entrepreneurs (this could be a yearly event).

The European Commission can develop and spread informative literature, such as leaflets and posters on supporting structures for young entrepreneurs.

- **Services and concrete actions:**

The EU can play a central role in creating a business environment that is inviting and accessible young entrepreneurs and their potential. Courses should be provided by the European Commission on self-development for young entrepreneurs (e.g. practice possibilities). The European Commission should propose the creation of business centres/incubators that provide necessary financial support (loans with low or zero rate), advisory boards, mentorship, connection with other Member States, facilities).

The EU should encourage companies to provide a set number of internship placements to young people in another EU Member State.

The European Council and Member States should encourage and fund a start-up of local and regional entrepreneurship clubs for youth. These clubs should have a national or/and European umbrella organisation.

The European Commission should initiate the development and spreading of resources like website, brochures, etc. informing about existing support for young entrepreneurs.

Official recognition of voluntary activities as previous working experience, e.g. by using Youth Pass and enhancing it beyond the Youth in Action programme.

### Workshop 3: Equal Opportunities and non-discrimination – a win-win approach

#### **Background discussion** (written by facilitators)

Revolved around European horizontal anti-discrimination legislation, as well as societal norms and attitudes leading to discrimination and unequal opportunities for young people. The discussion was rooted in the participants' expertise of equality issues and their personal experiences as young people and government workers.

In addition to the different grounds for identity-based discrimination, the group also acknowledged the effects of economic disadvantage for young people. The group compared the importance of changing legislation and working with societal norms and attitudes with regards to anti-discrimination efforts. Several approaches were proposed, including empowering young people to combat stigma and discrimination, and ensuring targeted support reaches young people with fewer opportunities.

### Key Messages

#### **UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES:**

- Leaders and policy-makers should understand discrimination to be based on varied grounds, explicitly including gender and gender identity; 'race' and ethnicity; age; physical and mental ability; religious background or belief; sexual orientation; and economic disadvantage. Different grounds for discrimination can have an effect individually or in combination with one another (multiple discrimination).
- **Anti-discrimination and equality concerns should be mainstreamed into the future cooperation in the youth field at all levels of youth policy-making, including at the European, national, regional and local levels.**
- The EU occupies a central role in upholding equality principles and human rights for young people throughout Member States:

- a. One key means to achieve equality is via European legislation, e.g. via the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, and/or the enforcement of relevant European laws. Additionally, the Commission should encourage Member States to legislate on anti-discrimination and to secure equal opportunities.
- b. Another key means to achieve equality is engaging with youth NGOs to empower young people, and encourage a critical consideration of societal norms. This should mainly happen through the structured dialogue and EU cooperation in the youth field.

#### **PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY WORK BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATES:**

- Education is central to an effective implementation of anti-discrimination policies. Key educational tools for anti-discrimination work and equal opportunities include: school curricula; teacher education; educational exchanges; and non-formal education.
- **The European Commission should support, and the European Parliament encourage, Member States to work towards social diversity among young people in all sectors of society. In particular, social diversity perspectives should feed into education, labour market, housing and culture provisions.**
- The European Commission should support, and the European Parliament encourage, Member States to provide, and increase access to, information for young people about their rights and opportunities. For example, through national information campaigns on equality and human rights, and support for youth NGOs developing such campaigns.
- **The European Commission should encourage the continuation of existing European campaigns, and provide funding for new European campaigns, in the field of anti-discrimination. This should be done in close partnership with organisations run by and for young people.**
  - a. Future European campaigns against discrimination and for equality should address discrimination against and among young people, support the social inclusion of young people, and promote equal opportunities for young people.
  - b. Existing campaigns reaching out to young audiences in time-honoured frameworks such as schools, youth and sports clubs, family organisations and youth NGOs should be continued. Future campaigns should also target audiences outside of these conventional frameworks; in particular, they should address non-organised and/or isolated young people. For example, this can be done by exploring new and social media as a way to reach out to young people.
  - c. Examples of good practice for European campaigns include the Council of Europe's *All Different All Equal* campaign, and the European Commission's campaign for passenger rights in European airports.

## WORKSHOP 4: European Youth Pact - 2.0, new and improved?

### Background Discussion (written by facilitators)

The discussion took off from looking at the benefits, possible improvement and missing parts in the European Youth Pact. Based on those reflections the group decided to create several political messages looking at the current Pact, the common issues with the youth strategy and the ideas for future.

The potential range of issues in the Youth Pact can address and the directions the message could take, is very wide, the group prioritised six concrete proposals aimed at the Heads of states and the member states, including the participants of the Conference. The group also expressed a great importance of taking sustainability into consideration when considering the renewed European Youth Pact.

### Key Messages

- **Message to the Heads of states of the member countries**  
Focusing on young people and empowering is the only way to ensure that the EU reaches its objectives... We should, each at every single level, persuade the Heads of states to place young people as one of the priorities of the strategy.
- **Cross sectoral cooperation**  
For the implementation of the European Youth Pact it is crucial to increase the exchange of best practices among all stakeholders: young people, politicians, organizations, youth ministries and other ministries. More structured dialogue about appropriate tools at the European, national, regional and local level is also important. A catalogue of examples of national implementation plans should be a part.
- **The member states have to assure the implementation of the Youth Pact by establishing a transparent monitoring and evaluation system together with all stakeholders and by giving full public access.**
- **The Council Resolution on a new EU strategy should call for further developing the European Youth Pact in the future post-Lisbon strategy. Complementarily of the EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Pact should be ensured avoiding overlapping.**
- **Member states should call on:**
  - The European Council has to reconfirm the benefits from a set of policies for young Europeans as an integrated part of the post-Lisbon strategy.
  - The reconfirmed Youth Pact aims to further improve employment, non-formal and formal education, mobility, integration and social inclusion of all young Europeans.
  - There is also a need to further facilitate reconciliation of working life and family life while supporting the autonomy of young people's decent working conditions.
- **The priorities, which were defined in the Youth Pact, have to be maintained, renewed and reinforced. Those are:**
  - Employment, integration and social advancement improving mobility in youth labour market
  - Education, training and mobility. Improving non-formal education and its social recognition
  - Reconciliation of working life and family life
  - Nevertheless if the renewed Lisbon strategy will increase more areas we want that the new Youth Pact highlight the aspects of:
    - Information, participation and citizenship
    - Health and well-being
    - Equal opportunities

- World-wide international dimension
- Earlier intervention (in the age of children)

## **WORKSHOP 5: Health and Well-being – a good life**

### **Background Discussion** (written by facilitators)

The discussions in the health and wellbeing workshop went in two directions, covering the broad topic. One of the directions was defined by the participants of the workshop, after mapping their knowledge of the topic:

- Sharing good practices (tools, projects and policies);
- And knowing the challenges which are faced in different parts of Europe;

The other direction of the discussion was framed from the questions that were developed from the key messages from the Czech presidency youth event, health and sports workshop, assuring the continuation of the work done in Prague.

The workshop group were stressing the importance of cross-sectoral approach in European policies and developed practical recommendations.

The main discussions went on in small groups of three-four people. A variety of methods tackling different learning styles and involving everyone to participate were used.

### **Should build on already existing EU strategy on the “White paper” Together for Health: A strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013, health in all policies “Prospects and potentials”**

Important areas of health that should always be regarded are the following three:

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Mental health
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle

## **Key Messages**

- Institutions dealing with health and wellbeing issues in EU member states should have a clear vision and reachable goals on youth health and wellbeing, and cooperation between them should be developed.
- The EU member states have to recognize the social responsibility of stakeholders outside the health sector (including the private sector) for both reaching and securing health objectives.
- European communication on national cross-sectoral policies for promoting youth's health and wellbeing with help of NGO's should be developed.
- The new framework of cooperation in the youth field should promote the ability of participation in the labor market and in the community life.
- Young people should be consulted in developing cityplanning and infrastructure.
- At national level equal access to information and consultation on health and wellbeing should be created, possible tools as websites or hotlines, free of charge, were young people can get direct answers to their questions by experts should be developed.
- Already existing facilities in European member states for young people need to be more youth friendly. And specific knowledge of young people and NGO:s should be used.
- A common concept of Healthy schools should be developed in the EU member states, with health and wellbeing of young people as an objective.

## WORKSHOP 6: Participation – for better decision making

### Background discussions (written by facilitators)

The process of formulating key messages was participatory in itself. The group has identified the questions *how* participation is defined and *by whom* it is defined as a crucial ones. The need of new ways to recognize and measure participation was identified.

To improve the situation of youth participation a. structures for participation have to be open and accessible, b. young people have to be prepared and motivated to participate and c. barriers for participation have to be reduced or eliminated.

### Key messages

- Participation should be the underlying principle of EU Youth Strategy
- The EU Youth Strategy should be focused, specific and prioritized.
- Various forms of Youth participation should be better recognized and promoted. More knowledge on participation is needed.
- Youth organizations are the key actors promoting and supporting youth participation.
- We are calling for sustainable, easily accessible and youth friendly legal and financial support to ensure better outreach to young people.
- Make better use of existing structures making them more open, accessible and using creative ways to involve more young people. Youth opinion should be taken into account in all areas and be worked on in a cross-sectoral way;
- A Youth perspective has to be mainstreamed into all political and civic processes. We call for structured dialogue with young people on all levels and dimensions;
- We call for age-appropriate preparation for participation from an early age through peer education, non-formal education and revised formal education curriculum.
- One-stop services about various forms of participation of/for young people and youth organizations on the national level have to be provided and promoted;
- A Communication strategy should be created to promote positive image of participation to young people and promoting success stories of youth participation to the whole society;
- Extra efforts have to be made to outreach to less involved young people and youth groups.
- Member states have to share good practice on participation of young people.

## WORKSHOP 7: Youth and the world – a global perspective

### Background discussions (written by facilitators)

Starting the day with an open discussion, the group members shared their questions, ideas and thoughts about the action. Inputs like; “*Coming together, exchanges ideas and gain mutual understanding*” and “*We need to get out of the European bubble and see the rest of the world*” were some of the thoughts shared among the participants.

After lunch the group went on, summarizing the discussion from the morning. Step by step, by putting together notes and ideas from the discussion they found a number of red threads. Threads that worked as guidelines when the group later formulated main topics to discuss. The topics were: “Solidarity & Global citizenship and responsibility”, “Peace and Human Rights” and “Sustainable Development – Development and Environment”. As a last part of the process, the group came up with concrete proposals on how to work with these issues in concrete ways.

### Key messages

#### Introduction:

We welcome the proposal of the European Commission to introduce this new field of action. As we face the challenges of the globalised and interdependent world (such as human rights & peace, environment & sustainable development), we consider solidarity as a precondition for cooperation between young people.

- Foster mutual understanding among young people from all over the world through dialogue and communication organizing actions such as training courses, exchanges, youth meetings and volunteering activities as well as providing funding possibilities.
- Raise awareness of young people about sustainable development, human rights and cultures in the world through formal and non-formal education.
- Share knowledge, best practices , technology and know-how through building equal partnerships and promoting mobility.
- EU member states in cooperation with the European Commission should support young people to participate in green volunteering and globally sustainable jobs.
- Young people should advocate and lobby to decision-makers for implementing higher environmental standards.
- Young entrepreneurs should be encouraged to invest in environmental technologies.
- Highlight the human rights based approach as the transversal concept and action in the development of the new framework of cooperation in the youth field, especially the European Youth Pact. This can be achieved using the post-2010 Lisbon agenda, the ILO decent work agenda and other human rights based international instruments, processes and campaigns.
- Use the concept of human security (UNDP Report 1994) to invest in the promotion of peace and defeating youth vulnerabilities keeping in mind that peace is not just an absence of war, and that human security promotes an integrated approach and creates social cohesion. Youth organizations should be supported in their efforts to achieve this goal
- The new framework should integrate and participate in the UN programmes devoted to children and youth and other relevant international institutions, especially focusing on the relations of the EU with other regions of the world.

## **WORKSHOP 8: Youth workers – everyday heroes**

### **Background discussion** (written by facilitators)

Group on Youth work discussed the existing definitions of youth work and have come to the conclusion that we have different understandings of youth work. We need a common understanding. By using the term “youth work” in this document we understand both voluntary and paid work with children and young people. Recognizing the importance of youth workers participants gathered ideas on how EU and member states can support them financially, infrastructurally, mentally and politically. Visibility and recognition of youth work were identified as key elements, which can be achieved through political promotion (high level officials awarding youth workers having made significant contribution) and European wide campaigns.

### **Key messages**

- EC should facilitate the process to reach common understanding of what youth work is and who youth workers are through a bottom-up approach in order to define common core competences of youth workers to be then recognized by the member states.
- EC should conduct an EU wide study on social-economic impact analyzing added value of youth work and use the study to ensure communication of youth work.
- EC and member states should stimulate and foster dialogue and cooperation between youth workers from different sectors on all levels through mobility programs for youth workers and networking.
- EC should open Youthpass to all kind of youth work and not only Youth in Action programme and open it as a chapter in Euro Pass, member states should promote and use it actively.
- EC and member states should improve visibility of youth work in order to enhance social recognition, motivation of and financial sources for youth work.

- EC and member states should ensure easier access to EU programmes and structural funds (adequate priorities in calls, lowering bureaucracy) for youth NGOs and individuals.

## **WORKSHOP 9: Structured Dialogue – Getting There Together**

### **Background discussion** (written by facilitators)

The importance of this workshop is that it is addressing a concrete proposal by the next SP-BE-HU presidency trio, which was presented for the first time during this conference. The proposal for the following 18 months was very well received, by all the participants, as a good structure for the future organisation of the Structured Dialogue, not only for the following 18 months but also throughout the period of 2010 – 2018. The actors in the structured dialogue are the Young people and Youth organisations, EU institutions, the European Youth Forum, the Member States, the National Youth Councils, National Agencies and Youth Researchers.

The key question in this workshop is “how could we guarantee an actual dialogue within this proposed structure” and which mechanisms can be used. In order to answer this question the group looked into other questions such as:

How the dialogue can be made as inclusive as possible?

How to ensure continuity and coherent follow-up of the dialogue?

How can a structured dialogue at local and regional level be supported and developed?

How can a structured dialogue with young people and their organizations also be encouraged in other policy fields than youth policy (cross-sectoral)?

In answering the questions this workshop focused on how the dialogue could be better linked to the priorities of the EU and EU cooperation. The proposal emphasizes the importance of on-going assessments, consultations and the parallel structure of the thematic cycle in which a general common theme is agreed upon for the duration of the 18 months trio, while each presidency addresses this theme according to national priorities. Through which the proposal ensures a coherent and consistent continuity that is up to date with EU priorities.

During the workshop the discussion was about specific mechanisms of participation including consultations, cross-sectoral approach, inclusiveness, thematic cycles, evaluations that would reflect both quality and quantity, and ensure a certain level of flexibility that would reflect the current reality of young people when deciding on the thematic cycles. Emphasize the importance of using the conferences as a contribution to the on-going political discussion process and realities by using the outcomes.

### **Key messages**

- The participants of the Swedish EU Youth Conference endorsed the proposal and call upon all Member States and the EU Commission to organize the Structured Dialogue as outlined in the proposal of the SP-BE-HU presidency trio. This model should be applied throughout the entire period of the new Framework on EU-cooperation in the youth field.
- Member states in cooperation with National Youth Councils are advised to create an appropriate structure, for example the National Working Group, to strengthen involvement of local/regional/national youth organizations.
- We urge the Member States to guarantee a level of quality and continuity in the implementation of the framework, the process and on-going assessment measures that would ensure a genuine inclusive dialogue using the structure proposed by the next presidency trio.
- There is a need for an evaluation mechanism at the end of each thematic cycle (18 months) that involves all actors to ensure continuous improvements and a level of relevance to the needs of young people.

- We urge that National Working Groups - to be set up - to guarantee adequate preparation of the delegates taking part in youth conferences by providing them with the necessary and relevant background information and briefings about the outcomes of the national dialogue and the issues to be discussed during the EU Youth Conferences.

## **WORKSHOP 10: Better knowledge -the key to change**

### **Background discussion** (written by facilitators)

The working group on better knowledge selected three main questions to work on:

1a. What can be done to strengthen the cooperation in the knowledge triangle . What can we do to improve structures that already exist? New ideas?

1b. What is the role of young people in this process. What needs to change?

2. Why do we want indicators/knowledge? How can indicators help in policy implementation?

3. What are the hidden living conditions of young people's life?

The challenge was that we were speaking about policymaking at both EU, national, regional and local level and that countries have developed different systems of implementing youth policies on the different levels.

### **Key messages**

- Governments need to recognize democratic and representative National Youth Councils (or similar structure) as autonomous and full partners in the knowledge triangle at the national level. They are encouraged to strengthen their cooperation taking into account the real needs of young people at the local level and in line with their National context.
- The European cooperation can reinforce the triangle cooperation at the National Level by giving examples of good practice. The communication between EKCYP, EUNYK and the European research Network should be improved in order to consider possible cooperations. Information in their work should be disseminated to all partners of the triangle at National Level and Regional level. Meeting points between European Research Projects, YFJ and the Commission should be established.
- Enhance knowledgebase in the specific areas of the youth sector at the European level (youth work, volunteering, mobility etc) to support the Member States in implementing the new framework.
- The dashboard should include those indicators most relevant to young people's life to support youth policy development. The development of new descriptors (light indicators) is dependant on establishing commonly agreed purpose(s)
- In addition to qualitative and quantitative indicators and knowledge obtained by those means we need to know more about use and impact of new media, communication technologies on young people, their addictions, their dreams, their pluralistic values, tolerance and awareness.
- More information to form the youth policy has to be found for which we need additional research tools such as qualitative research and surveys, participatory research, focus groups and trend panels/trend scouts.

