

# Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



EUROPEAN UNION



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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## POOL OF EUROPEAN YOUTH RESEARCHERS (PEYR)

### 2ND ANNUAL MEETING

*Bureau International Jeunesse  
18, Rue du Commerce, Brussels  
5-6 March 2012*

REPORT

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[NB: This is a report of the EU-CoE youth partnership team and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the partner institutions](#)

Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> of March

Arrival of participants

- 13:00 Welcoming lunch buffet
- 14:00 Opening of the meeting and welcome by the European Commission and the Council of Europe
- 14:10 Marta Medlinska, Coordinator of the EU-CoE youth partnership:
- First year of PEYR
  - EU-CoE youth partnership developments in 2011
  - Presentation of the EU-CoE youth partnership Work Plan 2012
- 14:30 Tour de table – brief update from PEYR members
- 15:00 News from the European Commission
- Preparation of EU Youth Report 2012
  - Update on the Dashboard of EU Youth Indicators
- Finn Denstad, DG EAC, Youth Policy Unit, Policy Officer
- Discussion: Are you satisfied with the Commission's evidence-based approach to youth policy? How can it be improved? How can the European Commission further expand its work on youth indicators? In what ways can the Commission best promote an evidence-based approach in Member States, including developing and applying indicators?*
- 16:30 Coffee break
- 17:00 News from the Council of Europe
- Ulrich Bunjes, Head of Youth Department, Council of Europe*  
Due to absence replaced by Marta Medlinska, Coordinator of the EU-CoE youth partnership and Hanjo Schild, External Relations Co-ordinator, EU-CoE youth partnership
- Discussion: How can PEYR help the CoE in pursuing evidence-based approach to its youth policy? How can the work of PEYR be promoted toward different actors within the CoE?*
- 18:30 Closing of Day 1

20:00 Dinner out at Le Rugantino

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1000 BRUXELLES (VILLE)

Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> of March

09:00 Activities of DG Research & Innovation in research on youth and dissemination of findings

Marc Goffart, DG Research & Innovation, Science Officer  
Louisa Anastopoulou, DG Research & Innovation, Science Officer

- Examples of recent research projects on youth supported by DG Research & Innovation through FP7
- Guidelines for communicating research results to policymakers developed by Research & Innovation DG
- Short presentation of the Commission's proposal for "Horizon 2020"

10:00 "Evidence-based Policy Review on Youth and Social Inclusion" (presenting research projects supported by the Commission under FP 7), to be released by DG Research

Ewa Krzaklewska, PEYR  
Presentation followed by questions.

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 Stock-taking – first year of PEYR activities – and looking ahead to 2012

Hanjo Schild, External Relations Co-ordinator, EU-CoE youth partnership  
Srd Kisevic, Research and Youth Policy Officer, EU-CoE youth partnership

*Tour de table of PEYR members and interaction with EU-CoE youth partnership: How do you see the internal structure and functioning of PEYR? How do you see the information flow toward and within PEYR? How would you increase the visibility of PEYR and its members? Which events in 2012 can you attend and contribute to? How can PEYR interact with EKCYP and CoE Pool of Trainers?*

13:00 Lunch buffet

14:00 Open Space Technology session

(presentation of research results and ideas, sessions with coffee break included, sharing of results)

Share research you conducted or research that caught your attention. Suggest new activities for PEYR and other stakeholders. Discuss with your colleagues.

A number of topics can be expected to be raised by the participants, such as:

*Members' research projects*

*Young people's participation and economic crisis?*

*Youth and (un)employment*

*Volunteering*

*Tolerance and diversity*

*Etc.*

18:30

Conclusions of the meeting and closing

# Report

## 1. Participants

### PEYR Members:

Manfred ZENTNER (Austria), Filipp COUSSEE (Belgium), Siyka KOVACHEVA (Bulgaria), Dunja POTOČNIK (Croatia), Marti TARU (Estonia), Bence SÁGVÁRI (Hungary), Jón SIGFUSSON (Iceland), Maurice DEVLIN (Ireland), Barbara Giovana BELLO (Italy), Ilze TRAPINCIERE (LATVIA), Charles BERG (Luxembourg), Lihong HUANG (NORWAY), Ewa KRZAKLEWSKA (Poland), Magda NICO (Portugal), Sladjana PETKOVIC (Serbia), Robert THOMSON (Switzerland), Ozgehan SENYUVA (Turkey), Kateryna SHALAYEVA (Ukraine), Barry GOLDSON (United Kingdom).

Members of the Pool who apologised for their absence: Leena SUURPÄÄ (Finland), Beatrix NIEMEYER (Germany), Mireille GEMMEKE (Netherlands), Carmen PANTEA (Romania), Elena OMELCHENKO (Russian Federation) and Erik ÅMNA (Sweden).

### European Commission:

DG EAC, Youth Policy Unit: Finn DENSTAD

### Council of Europe:

Apologies for absence: Ulrich BUNJES, Head of the Youth Department

### EU-CoE youth partnership team:

Marta MEDLINSKA, Hanjo SCHILD, Srd KISEVIC, Philipp BOETZELEN

## 2. Welcome and Opening

Finn Denstad welcomed the participants on behalf of the European Commission. He gave a positive evaluation of the first year of the Pool's activities by underlining the involvement of PEYR members in various expert assignments for the EC; such as the EU Youth Report 2012, the EU-China Youth Year 2012 and DG RTD's Review of FP7 projects on social inclusion of young people.

Marta Medlinska welcomed the participants on behalf of the EU-CoE youth partnership. She recapped the main milestones in the first year of PEYR (the first meeting of PEYR, the creation of Terms of Reference, the start of activities) and referred to a good use of PEYR members by various stakeholders. During the first year, 19 out of 25 PEYR members were contracted for a total of 48 activities / assignments. A slight majority of these assignments were performed for the EU, in comparison with the CoE. There was an increase in the number of activities towards the end of the year. She welcomed the participation of PEYR members in several research symposia and workshops organised by the EU-CoE youth partnership, as well as in the Expert Group on Recognition of Non-formal Learning and

Youth Work. PEYR members have equally contributed to the production of the partnership's publications in 2011. Marta Medlinska concluded by presenting the Work Plan of activities for 2012.

The introductory session finished by a *tour de table* of all participants, in which PEYR members briefed shortly other colleagues on their recent research projects and future activities.

### **3. News from the European Commission**

Finn presented the news from the EC. He briefed the participants on the current state of play regarding the production of the EU Youth Report. He particularly underlined that the EU-CoE youth partnership (both PEYR and EKCYP) had made valuable contributions to the Report. He further briefed the participants on the development of EU Youth Indicators. Following the Expert Group on EU Youth Indicators in November 2011, there are now a total of 41 indicators which are publicly available on the Commission's Europa-website and the Eurostat website. On the latter website, all Eurostat-indicators are broken down by country, age groups and gender where available.

Finn went on to inform about the Flash Eurobarometer 319 (in two parts: A and B) conducted in January/February 2011, with results released in May 2011. PEYR members who are interested in obtaining raw data from this and other Eurobarometer surveys can do so via this website: [www.Zacat.gesis.org](http://www.Zacat.gesis.org).

Finn mentioned two studies the EC has commissioned in the youth policy field. The study on youth participation is being undertaken by the London School of Economics, with the final report presented in June this year. The second study, on the value of youth work in the EU, is not yet started up, but the result of this study should be ready in spring 2013.

Finn also informed that the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) will continue to assist the Commission in the field of evidence-based youth policy in the future. Therefore, youth policy is being added to EACEA's mandate EACEA has also established a roster of experts - a network of experts who can be contracted with special tasks and assignments. Finn encouraged PEYR members to apply to become part of the EACEA's expert pool via the Agency's website ([http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/call\\_experts/call\\_experts\\_2007\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/call_experts/call_experts_2007_en.php)).

In the discussion which followed his presentation, Finn stressed that attention to youth issues have probably never been higher on the EU agenda than now, and that policy areas such as youth employment, participation and social inclusion are very likely to be prioritized in the years to come.

PEYR members described the EU Youth Indicators as a valuable development, but stressed the need to provide qualitative analysis and interpretation of the indicators, in the absence of which some indicators can be misleading. The voiced opinions argued that the role of the 'generators of statistics' in youth policy needed to be carefully incorporated into the policy triangle (policy-makers / youth workers / researchers). Finn stressed that the Commission absolutely shares this concern, and that one of the main roles of the EU Youth Report is exactly to provide analysis for all the EU Youth Indicators in the dashboard.

The PEYR members referred to the topic of indicators also in their discussion on the second day. It was stressed that further indicators might be needed to better understand the reality on the ground (for example in the case of the housing situation of young people). It was equally stressed that cultural differences played a role in interpreting indicators (for example in the case of children taken out of/away from their families by social services) and that national dissemination of indicators necessarily leads to different interpretations. It was argued that the need of policy makers to address the challenges posed by indicators could be satisfied perhaps through 'action research' methodology.

#### **4. News from the Council of Europe**

In the absence of Ulrich Bunjes, Hanjo Schild and Marta Medlinska presented the news from this institution. They gave an overview of the new structures of the Council of Europe and various activities that are planned in 2012.

A question was asked if any involvement of PEYR members was foreseen for the 2012 Council of Europe Conference of Ministers in charge of youth, due to take place in St Petersburg. It was agreed that this question should be raised by the PEYR representative at the CDEJ meeting of the Council of Europe .

PEYR members expressed satisfaction with the national youth policy reviews conducted by the CoE.

#### **5. Presentation of the Activities of DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission in the support of evidence-based policy making**

Marc Goffart, Science Officer at DG Research & Innovation presented examples of recent research projects on youth supported by DG Research & Innovation through FP7. He equally gave a presentation of the Commission's proposal for "Horizon 2020", the proposed framework program which will succeed FP7.

Louisa Anastopoulou, Science Officer at DG Research & Innovation, focused her presentation on the guidelines for communicating research results to policymakers developed by this DG.

Ewa Krzaklewska, PEYR member, presented the challenges surrounding the Policy Review of Youth and Social Inclusion research projects supported under FP7 framework.

The challenges identified by Ewa Krzaklewska and other Pool member participating in the discussion included: finding a right structure for the document which would serve different target groups according to their needs, the challenge for the writer to avoid taking implicitly political stands in the policy debate, the challenge of writing recommendations with financial consequences in times of budgetary cuts, the challenge of avoiding to be instrumentalized in a lobbying process including the problem of self-lobbying (e.g. inserting into recommendation a request for further research), the challenge of ethics on communication of research (for example, not communicating certain topics because of their political sensitivity), the challenge of flexibility (openness to look outside the current political contexts into what might be arising in the future). Suggestions were voiced that it would be good to include policy-makers in the production of such reports.

## 6. Stock-taking of First Year of PEYR Activities

PEYR members expressed satisfaction with the overall development of the Pool. Following a good start, the Pool has now entered the stage of consolidation, where main issues that arise involve visibility, internal transparency of procedures and identification of good practices.

The Members suggested to address the low visibility of PEYR in the national context. One measure to this extent could be the organisation of a joint meeting with EKCYP correspondents. Members also supported using the journal Forum 21 to improve visibility (especially by inviting young people to contribute to it, but also to feature inside articles on issues that are in the limelight of the policy-makers). Some members expressed the wish to enlarge the Pool by opening it up to involvement of further researchers. This would be beneficial also in the sense of attracting researchers with expertise portfolios that are currently lacking (such as media experts). The EU-CoE youth partnership expressed the wish of the partner institutions to keep the Pool unchanged until the end of the current partnership framework (2013), but kept open the possibility of forming additional, informal circles around the main Pool's membership.

It was agreed that transparency in the selection process of experts is important and needs to be developed further. Members voiced clear preference for increasing the number of open calls to all members of the Pool, as opposed to targeted communication. PEYR representatives to various statutory meetings should be selected following an open call, which can be a single call for all such meetings issued at the beginning of the year. Wherever possible, PEYR should be represented by more than one member.

Members are satisfied with information mailings they receive. They agreed to submit information on their work to the partnership for further dissemination.

Concerns were raised that youth research is being cut back in the European Youth Foundation and that the researchers are placed financially in an unequal position compared to trainers. Often the researchers' involvement requires more working days of preparation than what they are actually being remunerated for.

Communication with the Pool of Trainers of CoE might be beneficial and should be explored.

## 7. Open Space Workshops

### Main research Priorities

This workshop focused on employment and the NEETs (young people not in employment, education nor training). The central question posed is - are labour market measures working? There are not enough impact studies to measure their effects. It is however evident that current high youth unemployment is not caused by educational deficiencies of young people, but rather by problems in the labour market. The focus should therefore not be on studying how to educate young people for the labour market, but rather how does the labour market create jobs for the young people. Entrepreneurship, publicly funded jobs, career guidance and vocational education are some of the interesting venues for research. A potential topic for youth research is equally – where does the current situation leave the young people who 'skilled up' in the hope of employment and are now left in the 'cold'.



Mobility and structure of the labour market (with its issues of demographics and fertility) are equally relevant, and so is the changing concept of family in Europe, with its new categories (e.g. Skype families, euro-orphans, 'baby maybe' generation).

The exclusion and marginalization of young people in the economic crisis is a further important topic for research. The task of the researchers is not just to react to the political agenda, but also to inform policy-makers of the agenda that is emerging from the research.

### Improving PEYR

Forum 21: New concept of the Forum 21 should focus on the output of PEYR, by publishing the results of peer-reviewed papers of PEYR members, their book reviews etc. (PEYR members are invited to send to EU-CoE youth partnership a paragraph on their peer reviewed papers). F21 could become a worthwhile instrument for reaching out to policy makers. Outside researchers interested in PEYR could become involved through F21.

Internal structure and transparency: there was no agreement among Pool members on whether the Pool should have an internal structure or not. Hanjo Schild informed the Pool members that partner institutions do indeed have a stated policy on this: they do not want PEYR to become a separate structure with its own chairperson or leadership – its role is to provide input for the institutions, not to organise itself as an independent body. In further discussion, it was concluded that members can however organise themselves informally and work between them on issues as they find appropriate. Members who have ideas for an activity can share them with others independently or through the internal mailing. Open calls should be made for expert assignments whenever possible, and the representative(s) of the Pool at statutory events should be chosen following an open call.

Internal communication: Urgent information (calls, events information etc) can be sent by members directly to others on the list, other information will continue to be distributed via the partnership mailing.

External communications: It is important to reach out to the national level. PEYR members are not national representatives and there is a need for members and the partnership to include other researchers in their work through an external circle of researchers. Members should update their interests and profiles online and communicate it to the partnership and PEYR.

### Knowledge Transfer

This group focused on the knowledge transfer and how researchers can influence policy. The triangle (policy – research – practice) can be viewed as a 'body of evidence' with a 'head'(what kind of evidence? how to collect it?) and a 'tail' (how to use this evidence?) The proposed dashboard of indicators cannot alone tell us where to go in youth policy. Synergy between PEYR and EKCY is an important tool that can provide quantitative, as well as qualitative data (analysis) that can be of service to the Member States in interpreting the indicators. The Pool can also help by using research to promote new issues for policy agenda ('horizon initiatives'). These considerations can be put in practice by increasing cooperation between PEYR and EKCY in collecting knowledge on a) Youth in the World and b) Knowledge-based youth policy. The EU-CoE youth partnership should also consider sending out an information letter to national ministries in charge of youth on PEYR

(reminding them at the same time who their EKCYP correspondents are). PEYR should also try to produce an input for the next EKCYP meeting.

### Evaluation of Youth Work Practice

The group discussed several core issues that take significant place in quality evaluation research:

- Good evaluation does not ask research questions directly from young people or from representatives of other stakeholders and does not draw conclusions based on that data. It is the researchers' task to develop an appropriate and sound research method that would suit finding answers to particular research questions;
- Good evaluation, when using survey methods, pays attention to sampling and selecting respondents. It is important to be aware of the effects of (pre-)selection;
- Researchers need to take into account that they can measure only those features that they already know before setting out for gauging youth work effects. However, participation in youth work activities might lead to other and/or additional outcomes;
- Where there are different groups, also different viewpoints are present. Young people, instructors, teachers, ... might paint a rather different picture when they are asked to describe, summarize outcomes of participation in a certain activity;
- There is no easy way to distinguish effects of youth work participation from the effects of other actors and factors. Nevertheless the group believed that certain features of youth work exist that make it effective (there is a good practice of youth work) even if there are very limited methods for evaluation, analysis that would enable to understand how exactly participation in a certain activity influenced a young person, a group, an organisation, a community or a society at large.

The thoughts expressed in the group did not create optimistic views about finding possibilities and methods how to link youth work participation to its outcomes. However, the group still believed that it makes sense to move toward establishing standards of good evaluation.