

Youth Partnership

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



Social inclusion of young people in Europe: Trends and policy measures

Summary report on the
2013/14 social inclusion country templates

by Maria-Carmen Pantea (PEYR)

Disclaimer: A document commissioned by the EU-CoE youth partnership. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official views of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Reproduction is authorized provided the source and author are quoted.

Revised version spring 2015

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The socio-economic situation of young people.....	5
3. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion	8
3.1. Policy measures addressing the medical needs of young people at risk of social exclusion.....	8
3.2. Policy measures ensuring access to decent housing of young people at risk of social exclusion.....	10
3.3. Policy measures addressing issues of employment and training for young people at risk of social exclusion.....	12
3.4. Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities	14
4. The contribution of youth work and third sector to the social inclusion of young people	16
4.1. The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people	16
4.2. Participation of youth organisations and other NGOs in policy-making processes on the social inclusion of young people	18
4. Research on social inclusion.....	21
Conclusions	24
References.....	27

1. Introduction

In general, social exclusion refers to processes that prevent individuals, groups or communities from accessing the rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration; responsible for social exclusion are often structural forces, such as: laws, public policies, institutional practices, organizational behaviors, and prevailing ideologies, values and beliefs¹. Although social exclusion tends to be associated to poverty alone, it is a wider phenomenon than material deprivation, as it refers to more complex processes of social disintegration of individual's relationships with society. Besides economic deprivation, it encompasses individuals and groups' inability to fully exercise social, economic and political rights.

Social inclusion is a multidimensional concept that sits at the core of youth policies for both the EU and the CoE. The EU defines social inclusion as *'a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. Social inclusion also ensures that vulnerable groups and persons have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and that they can access their fundamental rights'*². Social inclusion is one of the eight policy areas underlining the cross-cutting approach of the EU Youth Strategy. It was also the overall thematic priority in the youth field for the period from January 2013 to end of June 2014 (during the trio Presidency: Ireland, Lithuania and Greece). Social inclusion was also a key priority of the Youth in Action programme and the subsequent Erasmus + programme as well as an indirect goal of the 'Youth Guarantee' approach. The more recent Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the field of youth brings forth a novel approach that introduces diversity alongside inclusion. The underlying rationale is that both social inclusion and diversity are equally important and a dual focus is necessary; not only on including young people but also on strengthening the knowledge skills and behaviors needed to support a both diverse and cohesive society.

The Council of Europe works with the concept of social cohesion, seen as *'society's ability to secure the long term well-being of all its members, including equitable access to available resources, respect for human dignity with due regard for diversity, personal and collective autonomy and responsible participation'* (CoE, 2005: 23). Social cohesion is considered essential for the fulfillment of the Council of Europe's core values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Agenda 2020 situates social inclusion as one of the three key priorities for future policy and action of the Council of Europe in the youth field. The Council of Europe created a comprehensive

¹The Institute of Social Exclusion, Adler School of Professional Psychology.

² European Commission (2010) *The European Social Fund and social inclusion*. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=166&langId=en>.

methodological instrument for the development of social cohesion indicators³. It defines the main concepts and approaches, proposes tools for developing questions and indicators and creates the link between measurement and policy action.

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY) is supported by a European wide network of 44 correspondents designated by the national ministries responsible for youth policy. They draft country templates on youth-related topics (including *Participation, Information, Voluntary Activities, a Better Understanding of Youth, Social inclusion*). This summary report provides a synthesis of the responses to the EKCY questionnaires ('Country templates') on *Social inclusion* that have been submitted to the EKCY. It reflects the data in 21 countries/ regions as of March 2015. The objective was to produce knowledge related to social inclusion of young people in Europe and the measures taken at the national level in order to secure the social inclusion of young people. The country templates were structured according to four main areas: 1. The socio-economic situation of young people; 2. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion; 3. Research on social inclusion and 4. Examples of practice.

Overall, the questionnaire was concerned with identifying the emerging risks faced by young people, especially in the context of the crisis, the measures addressing the (new) forms of exclusion and the main actors involved in this process. It also aimed to retrieve data on the situation of 'hard to reach' youth, that escape the conventional data collection processes. Besides the information on the actions taken by national governments, the questionnaire solicited responses on the impact of youth work and the available research. It sought both quantitative and qualitative information. Whilst to some extent the country templates provide information that is comparable, they also elicit data that may be of interest for those looking for country-specific information (e.g. concrete measures, available research and online resources, examples of policy responses and projects). Interested readers are invited to look into the country templates on social inclusion of young people (<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/web/youth-partnership/social-inclusion>).

This Summary covers the following countries:

- EU member states: Austria, Belgium (Flemish community), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden;
- EFTA: Liechtenstein, Norway;
- EU candidate countries: Serbia;
- Non-EU countries: Armenia.

Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional concept and by its very nature, the questionnaire covered only a part of this complex area. The overrepresentation of countries from the EU (14 out of 17) might have inclined the analysis towards specific policy priorities. Inevitably, the Report could not reflect completely the extremely large variety of situations, policy responses and actions that were reported or which took place

³CoE (2005) *Concerted development of social cohesion indicators. Methodological guide*. CoE Publishing. Strasbourg Cedex.

in the countries included. As this Summary is grounded exclusively on the data presented in the questionnaires, it is highly dependent on their level of detail and impartiality.

2. The socio-economic situation of young people

This section will provide information on the situation of youth and present the main dynamics and tendencies in the recent period. Whilst the list of the groups that can be qualified as 'socially excluded' can be extended almost indefinitely, this section will focus on the impact of the current crisis on young people, including the emergence of new disadvantaged groups.

The country templates confirm that social exclusion intersects young people's lives at many levels, including, but not limited to: economic, social, political, cultural. Whilst poor education and unemployment tend to be the main determinants of social exclusion, concerns rise also to young people's transition to family life, their health, housing and political participation. The country templates validate the **persistence of several major predictors of social exclusion** for youth:

- The socioeconomic situation of parents (work status, financial resources, education, single parenthood, including the absence of family support). Following a relative confidence in the potential of social mobility, the intergenerational transmission of poverty is returning as a major concern, as Europe is witnessing the second or even the third generation of people disconnected from the conventional forms of participation. Whilst it is hazardous to predict causal relations between the socioeconomic situation of parents and the social exclusion of youth, still, the strong correlation between the two persists.
- The ethnic-cultural background, often in combination with religion (especially given the general context of rising discrimination, racism, xenophobia and antigypsism)
- Young people's own educational attainment
- Disability, chronic illness, substance misuse, early pregnancy/ motherhood and sexual orientation.

The country templates indicate that several groups continue to be at disadvantage: young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), young people with disabilities, youth offenders, young people abusing drugs, immigrants and adolescent mothers. There are also several categories that emerged as extremely vulnerable in the context of the economic crisis: young people with severe disabilities, survivors of trafficking, refugees, internally displaced young people and asylum seekers (including 'unaccompanied minors'), girls at risk of genital mutilation, homeless youth, young people leaving care. They may experience forms of extreme poverty, discrimination and increased disengagement from the potential sources of support.

Although promoting **gender equality** has long been on the policy agenda, country templates seem to indicate that gender-based discrimination and repression of sexual diversity continue to affect several areas of young people's lives and are more acute for minority groups. Evidence on practices of genital mutilation among minority girls in Europe starts to accumulate. Also, Roma girls' poor healthcare and their risks of early motherhood continue to be a challenge (Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia). Besides the pervasive disadvantages faced by young women and girls in their families, communities and institutions, the hazards involved in stereotypical masculinity remain often unquestioned. LGBT sexuality is still a taboo in certain segments of immigrant communities (Belgium, Germany). This makes it difficult for immigrant LGBT youth to declare and to experience their sexuality. The taboo status may lead to a lack of understanding and opposition subsequently followed by verbal and physical aggression.

Housing can be a risk factor for social exclusion, although in different forms. In countries with large metropolitan areas, young people living in inner cities undergo higher risks of social exclusion. The questionnaires suggest correlations between urbanization and crime, risk behaviors and drug consumption. A more recent process of in-country migration towards more affluent cities started to generate a stratum of young people at risk of social exclusion in Poland. In Italy the regional disparity between North and South increases. A group of mainly Eastern European countries (Estonia, Bulgaria, Poland, but also Portugal) report greater challenges for the young people in rural areas (e.g. underdeveloped infrastructure, weak economic resources, isolation, low mobility, absence of meaningful networks of social inclusion, conservative social norms).

Country templates indicate that overall, **young people have hard times in securing affordable accommodation**. The shortage of housing provision for young people has been correlated with the high costs of homes, young people's low incomes and unavailability of housing also given the residential concentration of poverty (Sweden, Bulgaria). Besides conventional indicators of housing exclusion (e.g. overcrowding, affordability, residential segregation), the Sweden country report warns on the increase of (i) the number of young people among the homeless group and (ii) the number of evictions among young people.

Labor migration generated different types of risks for social exclusion in home and destination countries. In receiving societies, young immigrants lacking language skills face social and economic difficulties, accentuated by increased racism, xenophobia and extremism. In home-countries, young people with parents who migrated for work need to deal with psychological challenges of the long term separation, decreased interest in school and poor social support (Bulgaria, Latvia Lithuania, Poland).

With the economic crisis undergoing, it is, nevertheless difficult to appraise its effect on young people. Depending on their specific economic position, different European countries experienced the start of crisis at different times, often with accumulating consequences for young people. Although in some countries, the impact of crisis upon young people has been relatively small (Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg), the high rates of youth unemployment and poverty remain a challenge in most European countries. With very few exceptions (e.g. Germany), **youth poverty rate** is higher than the one of the general population. Nutrition deficits have been reported for

Greece and Slovak Republic. The severe material deprivation among young people rises in Italy. Poland is one of the few countries where child and youth poverty rate has been declining since 2005, but it remains higher than for the general population.

An increasing number of young people are neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET). Whilst the concept is new in several countries (Estonia, Serbia), the prevalence of this situation is bringing young people in this situation closer to the policy concern. In the countries included in the analysis, the share of NEET increased a lot in the first phase of the crisis and then remained stable. An exception is Italy, where this group continues to increase. Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Turkey are among the very few countries whose NEET population decreased or remained stable during the global recession. In Norway, the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is significantly lower than the average percentage in OECD or EU countries. In Italy, men are more represented in this category, than women. Overall, there are several characteristics of youth unemployment that can be inferred from the EKCYP country templates and which are discussed at length in Krzaklewska (2013):

- Youth unemployment affects young people with low education attainment, but also those with higher education, but without previous employment experience;
- The length of remaining unemployed tends to protract for young people;
- Youth unemployment tends to remain higher than of the overall adult population;
- Unemployed young women have higher qualifications and still, face higher risks of long term unemployment;
- The labor market seems to undergo a divide between a segment that provides stable, indeterminate contracts and a more precarious section, characterized by temporary contracts, little advancement perspectives and poor social benefits. Whilst in many European countries, short term contracts fall 5 years after graduation, in some others, young people continue to be trapped in temporary jobs longer (in Poland, 66% of young people 15-24 and 90% of those 15-19 work on temporary contracts, cf. Krzaklewska, 2013);
- There is a growing trend towards underemployment (e.g. young people occupying part-time jobs despite desiring full-time work, or being overqualified for the requirements of the job);
- There is a less visible, emerging category of the 'working poor': young people who are employed, but face problems in sustaining themselves with their salaries. The in-work poverty risk is higher for young people than for older age groups.

An apparent increase in the percentage of young people feeling age-based discriminated at the workplace (simultaneous with a decrease in the discrimination felt by those over the age of 50) has been noticed in Finland. As the information on the experiences of young people not in work is missing, this finding may call for further research.

Young people's weak labor market inclusion interferes with more complex processes of community development and affects their capacity to settle long term goals.

The proportion of young people who think that they have every opportunity to engage in political activities and political decision making, tends to decrease. In this way, the crisis is not only economic, but also political and social in nature.

Overall, there are indications of the **emergence of a 'class apart'** of young people: largely characterized by precarious parental and institutional support, living in households with low work intensity, having a poor capacity to settle long term goals and experiencing high uncertainty. The new patterns of exclusion (discrimination, bullying, oppression of sexual diversity, racism, xenophobia and extremism) hinder their access to social rights and deepen their economic insecurity.

3. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion

This section will examine the governmental measures for young people at risk of social exclusion in relation to health, housing and employment & training. It will also examine the measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities.

3.1. Policy measures addressing the medical needs of young people at risk of social exclusion

Generally, young people tend to face fewer medical problems than other age groups and their mortality rate is decreasing in recent years, globally (WHO, 2014). However, they face health risks that are strongly connected with their identity as young people, or embedded in a set of hazards specific to their social position. According to World Health Organization (2014), suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds, after road injury. Country templates indicate a concern over several health-related risks in many European countries. There is, for instance, a high youth suicide risk (indicated in France and Sweden, but it is a problem in other Member States, as well). Other health concerns referred to are anorexia (especially among young women), alcoholism, addictive behaviours, sedentary lifestyles and excessive weight. The Cyprus country template, for instance, indicates the increased demand for counseling and support services from young people and families with young people. However, in many countries there is no special provision of medical care and psychological support for young people at risk of social exclusion (Estonia, Slovak Republic) or, the support is being reduced in the context of the crisis (Cyprus). Hence, psychological and counseling services might be perceived as a 'luxury' and not as a necessary provision (Cyprus). An exception is Sweden:

In [Sweden](#), certain health services are targeted more specifically at young people. Young people's health clinics - *Ungdomsmottagningar*, are open in

various municipalities for those seeking advice on physical, mental and sexual health. The clinics are also accessible via Internet. In addition, young people can access *UMO.se*, a national web-based youth friendly clinic for young people aged 13 to 25 years. The purpose of the site is to make it easier for young people to find relevant and qualified information about sex, health and relationships. UMO is developed in co-operation with young people in Sweden, youth clinics, school health services, NGOs and professionals working with young people.

In a similar way, Latvia's Ministry of Health opened up its website to young people, by creating a section for youth. A compulsory 'health education' module is envisioned to be included in Latvia's schools from year 2015/ 2016. In Norway, 350 health stations for young people (*helsestasjoner*) provide free of charge and minimal waiting time for young people aged 13-20 (some age extensions may apply).

In [Finland](#), the City of Helsinki Sports Department's initiative based on the government's Youth Guarantee, makes physical exercising more accessible to disadvantaged young people, by providing free sport facilities. Primarily the programme is aimed at the unemployed young people between the ages of 17 and 29. It runs from 2013-2016 and encourages young people to pay more attention to health, wellbeing and physical exercising.

The country template for Poland reports that **young people with disabilities** are a group affected by weak medical assistance. Following the reform of the mental health care for adults, the Flemish Government is undergoing the reform of the mental health care for children and young people. There are also major projects for providing out-reaching support and customized care for young people with multiple problems, autism, severe disorders.

Bulgaria and Slovakia have networks of **Roma health mediators**. Their work is focused on addressing the poor health conditions found in Roma communities (e.g. increase vaccination rates, help clients obtain identification and insurance documents, provide health education to Roma children and adults, create links with the medical system etc). Whilst the professional development opportunities of health mediators remain a challenge, in Bulgaria, two medical universities are now accredited for providing training. Also, there are four mobile consultation rooms promoting reproductive health among young Roma women from isolated communities of Bulgaria. In Belgium, community health centers in disadvantaged neighborhoods are being strengthened and expanded in order to decrease the health gap between high and low income groups.

Table 1 presents the legal provisions on medical assistance for the young people, including those with fewer opportunities in the countries included in the Report. Nevertheless, the legal provisions do not reflect the quality of assistance actually provided. As the country templates indicate, there is a huge variety among the countries that have similar healthcare regulations. For instance, according to some country templates, healthcare may be free to all below 18, but practically not always available or

of adequate quality. Conversely, in some countries, a tax-payer-funded system may require very small contributions from patients, be of high-quality and able to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people.

Table 1. Legal provisions on medical assistance for young people, including the disadvantaged

Free-of-charge to all young people bellow 18	Varying levels of co-payment	For some disadvantaged groups, tax exempts may apply
Austria Poland Bulgaria Estonia Germany Italy Latvia Norway Luxembourg	Cyprus Flanders France Greece Liechtenstein Portugal Serbia Sweden Slovakia	Lithuania Armenia Finland

3.2. Policy measures ensuring access to decent housing of young people at risk of social exclusion

There is a large inter-country variation in terms of the measures to **ensure access to decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion**. In many countries, housing policies are rather loosely regulated and young people at risk of social exclusion risk falling through the nets of support. Poland, for instance, lacks a definition of ‘social housing’. Portugal, Lithuania, Serbia and Estonia have no specific support measures for housing directed at young people at risk of social exclusion. They are eligible for the same measures of support directed at the general population. In Estonia, social housing service is targeted to elderly; young people (18-24) make less than 5% of the total number of service users. At the other end are countries where housing policies integrate the needs of young people at risk of social exclusion as a matter of priority (Finland, Norway, Belgium):

A 2007 decision of the [Flemish Government](#) calls social housing providers to give priority to young applicants. There is also an association of residents of social homes (*Vivas*, or *Netwerk sociale huurders*). This is an important deliberation forum, which looks after the interests of the residents of social rented homes. One of the focus points of *Vivas* is the inclusion of certain groups of renters, such as young people, immigrants and people living in poverty.

Various countries introduced **state subsidies** for young people when buying or building a house. These measures are not targeted to young people at risk of social

exclusion, however. There is a 10-15% subsidy for apartment purchase in Poland and a program granting a 50% discount to a number of 1400 ‘young specialists’ in Armenia. A universal rent guarantee in France, gives access to private rental accommodation for those who cannot ensure their financial solvency. A Flemish Renting Bonus assists individuals and families that have been waiting for five years for a social rented home. Subsidies for covering part of their housing expenses are available for disadvantaged families and individuals (including young people). Actions to prevent and tackle homelessness are being considered/called for in various countries.

Young people leaving foster care or socio-therapeutic centers, refugees and asylum seekers may receive support or protected housing (Armenia, Bulgaria, Finland, Poland). Major reforms in state care take place in Bulgaria and Slovakia. These countries plan the gradual closing of large child protection units and the development of family-like, alternative care. In Slovakia, the measures involve prolonging the time young people can remain in state institutions, when needed for the transition to independent living. Assisted living for teenage mothers or for young parents with mental illness is provided in Germany in close cooperation with the NGO sector:

Foyers for young people at risk of social exclusion are available in [Germany](#). Similar to hostels, foyers offer affordable accommodation and assist young people who are homeless, or in housing need in their transition to independent life. They help young people in the process of gaining personal confidence and self-reliance, when completing their training and apprenticeships, or arranging personal matters etc. Depending on the individual needs and competencies, young people may stay from several weeks up to three years. Foyers involve extremely personalised development work. Germany has extended networks of foyers, specialized in assisting young people in different life situations.

Since 2008, the Finnish government is running an ambitious programme aiming to reduce long-term homelessness (including youth homelessness). It concentrates on producing more affordable housing and in providing integrated services for young people experiencing homelessness, based on the collective expertise of municipalities, NGOs, and churches. Table 2 presents a comparative overview of the policy measures related to housing, according to the information available in country templates.

Table 2. Comparative overview of the policy measures related to housing, based on the country templates

Country	Availability of social housing	Assistance for payment of the rent or heating/ electricity	Allowance for housing (re)construction/ modifications	Crediting facilities for young people buying a house	Transitional housing for young people leaving care/ refugees	No special measures targeting young people at risk of social exclusion (with the	Young people are given priority in the allocation of a social rented home

						exception of residential or foster care)	
Armenia	X			X			X
Austria							
Bulgaria	X	X			X		
Cyprus							
Estonia	X				X	X	
Finland	X		X		X		X
Flanders	X	X			X		X
France	X	X					
Germany		X		X	X		
Greece							
Italy				X			
Latvia					X	X	
Liechtenstein						X	
Lithuania	X		X				
Luxembourg	X				X		X
Norway	X	X	X	X	X		
Poland	X	X		X	X		
Portugal							
Serbia						X	
Slovakia		X	X				
Sweden	X	X	X		X		

3.3. Policy measures addressing issues of employment and training for young people at risk of social exclusion

Country templates indicate a strong policy commitment for **increasing young people's employability**: career guidance, validation of competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings, provision of training, internships and apprenticeships. More rarely, however, the country reports mention measures addressing the broader circumstances associated to young people's exclusion from the labour market (such as age discrimination against young people, intersectional discrimination affecting minority young mothers seeking employment, availability of child care, workplace flexibility in view of work-life balance, the quality of employment etc).

Most countries apply partial salary compensations and financial **incentives to employers** hiring individuals from disadvantaged groups (Armenia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland). Youth guarantee measures are applied in Armenia, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden, among others. Norway's youth-guarantee scheme for long-term unemployed young people dates back to 1979 and it has been gradually extended. A recent evaluation indicates its effectiveness in rising programme participation and in increasing the transition rate into employment (Hardoy et al. 2006). A growing number of countries (including Greece, Italy, Poland and Portugal) start to develop measures for supporting youth entrepreneurship (tax facilities, counseling, grants for youth cooperatives and social enterprises, micro-crediting).

Unemployment benefits are available in all countries reviewed. However, there is a wide range of provisions that go from many young graduates being *de facto* ineligible, to being subject of assistance without delay. For instance, the conditioning of unemployment benefits by previous working history, excludes many young people in Poland and Estonia⁴. In Germany, on the other hand, anyone under 25 who applies for unemployment benefit has the right to be placed without delay in an apprenticeship, a job or a training course. Belgium has tailored supporting measures for young people between 18-25 and those above 25.

Prevention of indebtedness started to be incorporated in policy measures in Germany and Belgium. The underlying principle is that excessive indebtedness can push people into poverty and aggravate their initial vulnerability. Several projects have been developed in the Flemish community of Belgium in order to increase the awareness of the dangers of excessive crediting. Since 2010, 'financial education' is being incorporated transversally in the curricula.

The **educational measures** addressing young people at risk of social exclusion aim at improving the quality of the second-chance education and the VET system. Belgium, Italy, Norway and Portugal strengthened their measures for preventing early school leaving and tackle bullying as a major dropout risk factor. Norwegian government initiated in 2013 a coordinated service approach for increasing successful completion of upper secondary education and training. Sustainable mechanisms for linking the VET system with the business sector are envisaged in Bulgaria and Cyprus, whilst improvements in second chance education are foreseen in the Flemish community of Belgium. The NEET concept is novel in Estonia, Latvia, Armenia, Serbia but the problems of young people covered by the term have long been a policy concern.

Germany has a major support programme for optimising the transition to work of the most vulnerable young people. It involves creating *educational chains* based on the voluntary contribution of retired specialists and a strong company responsibility for training preparation. Besides assisting the young people who need additional support, the measure strengthens intergenerational solidarity:

At the end of 2008, in [Germany](#), the *Senior Experten Service (SES)*, one of the leading voluntary organisations for retired specialists and executives - created the *VerA* initiative in cooperation with central associations of German industry, skilled crafts and liberal professions. *VerA* offers to support young people who experience difficulties during their vocational training and who consider dropping out. Upon young people's request, the SES connects them with Senior Experts: retired specialists who are prepared systematically for their task and who work as tutors on an honorary basis. *VerA* is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as one of its 'education chain' programmes.

⁴ In Estonia, young people without previous working experience, are eligible to apply for an 'unemployment transfer', which consists of a fixed sum per day (2.11 Euro in 2011), for 270 days. Despite the absence of any special measures for fighting youth unemployment, young people in Estonia are among the most active users of the support measures available to the general population.

There are also structural measures addressing other, highly disadvantaged groups. In Belgium a new system of temporary home schooling allows young mothers to continue their education. In Lithuania, all young persons with disabilities, enrolled in a university, receive financial support. Italian leading universities launched masters and specialization courses aimed at improving the skills of teachers on the autistic syndrome, the mental and maturation delay, on the ADHD syndrome and sensory disabilities. In Poland, each major university has an office supporting young people with disabilities, whilst France and Italy are working to bring the higher education establishments and schools (Italy) up to the accessibility requirements for people with disabilities.

3.4. Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities

All European countries signed the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (2007) and most of them embarked in processes of modifying their internal laws and in adopting strategies. EKCYP country information templates confirm that young people with disabilities experience far more difficulties (including discrimination) than young people without disabilities. The differences are greatest concerning education, labor market and health. Whilst in some countries, important steps have been taken for meeting the needs of young people with disabilities, several other states work on the basic enabling circumstances for participation (e.g. provision of study materials, accessible educational spaces).

By and large, depending on the severity of the disability, policy measures are designed for two groups: (i) young people with severe behavioral and emotional problems (who may need additional residential places with specialized staff) and (ii) the young people who can live at home and may need strengthening their home situation (e.g. by increasing their capacity of the mobile/detached services). However, at the policy level, young people with disabilities are not always considered a distinct group with specific needs.

Within [Latvian](#)-Swiss cooperation programme in 2011 a programme for promotion of life quality and motivation of children and young people with disabilities was implemented. One of the results of the program was the creation of an interactive social site www.sniedzroku.lv, which is a new concept in rehabilitation of children and young people with disabilities. It provides practical advice, promotes youth self-advocacy, independent living and empowers the family as a whole.

The measures for the social integration of young people with disabilities are largely dependent on countries' economic development and social work models. In most countries, the measures are centered on ensuring **economic security**. They include: (i) allowances/ tax facilities (for personal assistance, purchase of equipment, transportation,

housing modifications) and (ii) **active measures of labor market integration**, in particular: (i) financial incentives for employers providing training and hiring (young) persons with severe disabilities (Bulgaria, Germany); (ii) protected workplaces (Luxembourg, Slovakia); (iii) allowances to persons with disabilities in self-employment (Greece, Slovakia). A renewed Discrimination and Accessibility Act came into effect in Norway (2013), whilst Luxembourg elaborated a national action plan following the adoption of the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In Bulgaria and Slovakia, among others, tackling social exclusion involves structural measures linked to institutional reform: inclusive education, combating the overrepresentation of Roma in special schools, as well as a major de-institutionalisation in childcare:

[Bulgaria](#) is undergoing a major process of de-institutionalising the children and young people with disabilities. The project "Childhood for all" aims to replace all large residential institutions with alternative forms of care, until 2014. This involves building 149 new centers of family type accommodation, 1 Day care center for children with disabilities, 8 new centers for Social Rehabilitation and Integration and 36 Sheltered Housing. The project will be addressed to 2 797 children and young people. Currently, 8 municipalities have contracts concluded but they have not yet started concrete activities, 6 municipalities have started a procedure for public procurement, 66 municipalities are in process of housing construction and in 14 municipalities the construction activities have finished.

One can observe a tendency to move from an exclusive focus on caring and providing for people with disabilities (or at risk of becoming disabled), toward their **self-determined participation in society** and on the elimination of barriers to equal opportunities. Yet, the participation of young people with disabilities in policy making processes is still difficult. In Sweden, there are increased concerns over the need for policy measures addressing the higher incidence of stress-related symptoms among young people with disabilities and their exposure to harassment and violence. There are very few spaces for meaningful social engagement and political participation. Very often, however, the country templates indicate the assumption that the social integration rests mostly on young people's labor market integration.

The shift toward **increasing personal autonomy** is visible also in the move toward individual financing, for enabling customized support (see Belgium's Personal Assistance Budget, used by people with disabilities in order to organize and finance their assistance at home, school or work). At the community level, there is an increase in integrated housing (e.g. 'supervised living residencies' in Belgium and Greece). They foster participation and social interaction by involving residents' peers and family members in the treatment process and by enhancing residents' social skills.

4. The contribution of youth work and third sector to the social inclusion of young people

This part will comment on the contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people, as reflected in the country templates. A second section will consider the participation of youth organisations⁵ and other NGOs in policy-making processes on social inclusion. Where available, information on the political and financial support for enabling participation will be included. This part will integrate examples of practice in promoting the social inclusion of young people, in particular, governmental measures for fostering participation in youth work.

4.1. The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people

By definition, youth work is highly decentralized and its contribution to social inclusion, hard to ascertain. There are also, several longstanding dilemmas linked with the scope of youth work, in relation to social inclusion. Country information templates suggest an 'enormous impact' of youth work in addressing social exclusion in Portugal, increased governmental endorsement and additional founding in Serbia, Latvia, Belgium, Finland but also a weak capacity to respond to the real needs of the most disadvantaged young people in Bulgaria.

Lithuania is expanding its network of local open youth centers providing a friendly environment for leisure and personal development. In Cyprus, there are over 100 Youth Clubs, coordinated by Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization (CYCO). Their aim is to support opportunities for young people to develop their physical, social, cultural, emotional, and cognitive abilities. In Luxembourg, a voucher system guarantees cost free and cost reduced participation of all children bellow 12 in extra-curricular activities. It creates preconditions for later youth work participation for disadvantaged groups. There is a deliberate policy for making this form of work with youth available for young people in their residential environment (including the disadvantaged neighborhoods). In Portugal, several youth organisations develop projects that involve the participation of young refugees and other young people at risk.

In 2014, the [Flemish Government](#) issued a policy letter stating several strategic goals in regard to the social inclusion of young people. The Government explicitly aims to expand its knowledge on youth work and to monitor it through quantitative and qualitative research. A strategic goal is to introduce the concept

⁵ The terms *youth organisations* and *NGOs* are used. We are, nevertheless, aware of the diversity of organisations and terms for denoting the 'non-governmental', 'non-profit' or 'third' sector.

of 'youth movement' in multicultural schools. Increased financial support is being allocated for strengthening the experimental, innovative function of youth work. The budgetary allocations for the participation of disadvantaged young people in youth work will be doubled.

In [Estonia](#), a program started in 2006 addresses the need for equipment and supplies for youth work activities. 'Granary' is a program which enables youth centres to borrow supplies and equipment for running youth work activities. It creates the preconditions for small scale organisations to carry out activities, without allocating financial resources for the purchase of equipment they need occasionally. Also, the program creates better horizontal links between organisations, as they can borrow necessary supplies and equipment from a nearby 'granary'. The program is financed from the national budget.

The level of involvement from the non-governmental sector in **promoting the social integration of young people with disabilities** varies greatly. In Estonia, the needs of young people with disabilities are organised and taken care of by state institutions and less by youth organisations and other NGOs. There, some youth projects may focus on young people with disabilities, but, overall, there are no specific support measures in youth work.

In Armenia, the inclusion of young people with disabilities is a mandatory requirement for NGOs applying for governmental grants. Many NGOs are supporting the social inclusion of young people with disabilities in Greece and Latvia. However, the collective participation of young people with disabilities as a distinct group of people with disabilities requires more structural measures of support in Poland, among others.

Most questionnaires commented on **Youth in Action** contribution on drawing attention to the particular situation of young people with fewer opportunities and in imagining creative approaches to address social inclusion. Following involvement in YiA projects, many youth work organisations worked to improve accessibility. In Poland and France, youth work seems proactive in involving 'the hard to reach young people' by contacting young people in their own environment and by offering alternative forms of support and leisure (e.g. by the street pedagogy methods). These approaches prove to be helpful because they are grounded in a bottom-up methodology and because they value the knowledge and experiences of the disadvantaged youth people themselves.

Estonia, Italy, Norway and Serbia have recent measures for **developing the quality of youth work** by increasing training opportunities for youth workers (including the development of a youth work quality assessment system). In Italy, an online course on social inclusion is available to professionals working with young people. A large scale training programme for 600 youth workers was carried out in Norway (2010-2012). In Sweden, there are calls for increased recognition and status, whilst in Belgium and Serbia, the professionalization of youth work received high governmental endorsement.

In Estonia, a recent ESF project (with 15% state contribution) aims to bring a contribution to increasing the professional competences in youth work. The project

aimed, among others, to provide training in youth work and to develop the youth work quality assessment system at municipal level and youth monitoring system at national level. These are valuable developments, likely to advance the potential of youth work.

To a certain extent, the country templates suggest a continuous trend towards the **'compartmentalisation' of youth work**⁶. This tendency may be perceived as likely to increase the divides between various areas of youth work and, implicitly, between young people in different life situations. As a consequence, there is the possibility for young people with fewer opportunities to be 'clustered' in *social* youth work, and less in the youth work activities aiming to the young people not perceived to be 'at risk'. In France, there is a distinction between *general youth work* (focused on universal provisions) and *specialized associations* (which are part of a network looking to assist more specific target groups by detached youth work). In Finland, the *outreach* youth work/ *street* work or *mobile* youth work, connect disadvantaged young people with the public sector services that are available. Whilst youth centres are not specifically mentioned as a tool to battle social exclusion, in Finland, it is up to each municipality and essentially youth centres themselves to implement the programme as they consider necessary. In Slovakia, *social youth work* emerged as a branch of youth work: it uses the principles of non-formal education and social work in order to reduce the impact of social exclusion for particularly vulnerable groups. Social youth work arose from the need to work with youth at risk of exclusion, but fails to meet the conditions for inclusion in the system of social care services.

In the context of the economic crisis, there is a tendency for youth work to be interpreted mainly as a **tool for enhancing young people's employability**. Several country templates called for an increased emphasis on civic competence and social participation, also in light of the rising threats to cultural diversity and implicitly, to minority groups (e.g. Islamophobia, anti-Gypsyism). In Belgium and Germany (among others), youth work integrates openness towards homosexuality and transgenders and the improvement of tolerance with regard to LGBT among Muslim youth. These projects aim to give progressive voices in the immigrant communities, the opportunity to express their views and to challenge conventional notions of masculinity. They resonate with broader calls for incorporating gender diversity in the policy of schools, colleges and universities.

4.2. Participation of youth organisations and other NGOs in policy-making processes on the social inclusion of young people

Participation of NGOs in youth policies addressing social inclusion cannot easily be differentiated from participation in youth policies in general. In many countries (Armenia, Estonia, Poland, and Slovakia), the **engagement of young people and youth organisations** in shaping youth policy is still an area that calls for more proactive state

⁶ For a critical analysis of the concept, see Coussée (2010).

efforts. There are diverse reasons for the variable levels of youth NGOs participation in policy making processes on the social inclusion of young people. In some countries, the very mechanisms of consultation are built in a way that leaves little place for organisations' involvement in the early stages of policy making. For instance, in Poland, NGOs (including youth organisations) have the possibility to comment on the law proposals, including the ones on social inclusion, but they are not given any special role in such consultations. Other countries did not develop a separate social inclusion policy directly for young people (Latvia and Slovakia). Ultimately, the financial and political support measures for civil society organisations to be involved in the policy making process on social inclusion may be weak or inexistent (Estonia). Nevertheless, one may also consider some features inherently linked to the profile of youth organisations, such as high turnover and short institutional history that may limit their capacity to influence policy making processes in a meaningful way.

The Swedish government is drafting a new youth policy in which the youth organisations have been very active. The youth organisations and other civil society actors that work in the area of social inclusion are often consulted, but not always part of drafting the policies at the first stage. In Serbia, there is high involvement of youth organisations in the process of developing strategic documents concerning youth issues.

Notwithstanding the forms of participation at the central level, there are indications of very active forms of **youth participation at the local and regional level**. Young people have the opportunity to influence decisions through municipal youth councils and local-specific forms of participation (e.g. creation of local social inclusion partnerships). In this respect, there are signs that the policy making process evolves towards increased involvement of young people (Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovakia). The Youth Act in Finland requires all local projects on youth social inclusion to consult with young people at some point in the decision making process.

All 60 municipalities in [Lithuania](#) have prepared long-term (2013-2018) strategic documents on youth policy followed by medium-term (2013-2015) action plans, together with monitoring and control systems for implementation. All these documents were prepared in collaboration with young people (aged 15- 29), who made out 28% from the 6800 participants in the working groups that prepared the documents. The EU funds and two projects founded by the Lithuanian Government were essential in this large scale process.

A good example of practice is the governmental support for organisations working in neighborhoods with low levels of associational engagement in Sweden:

Engagement guides is a [Swedish](#) government initiative to support the civil society in their work with inclusion. Since 2010, civil society organisations working in neighbourhoods with low levels of organisation/ association engagement are eligible for state grants. The annual reports show that the projects are successful

not only in increasing association's engagement, but also in enhancing the participation of local communities.

A recent Flemish Youth Policy Plan has been developed in cooperation with the non-governmental sector and has been endorsed by the Flemish Government and the Flemish Parliament. The Plan has been based on research and consultations and was developed in working groups composed of both governmental and non-governmental representatives.

An apparently growing number of organisations arrange **informal meetings between young people and politicians**, in the form of participation cafés, roundtables with officials (Estonia, Latvia and Liechtenstein). These projects are grounded in the understanding that young people – especially those with fewer opportunities- need support in articulating their voice and an enabling environment for expressing their views. Whilst such projects are indeed, innovative and responsive to young people's needs, one cannot overlook that they are rarely paralleled by similar initiatives from the political side.

Greece embarked in a comprehensive national dialogue with youth organisations concerning social exclusion, extremism, racism, xenophobia, oppression of sexual diversity, isolation and unemployment. A recent program addresses the needs of young people in conflict with the law:

“Youth Legal Aid” is a program in [Greece](#), providing free legal counseling and services to socially disadvantaged adolescents and young people up to 35 years of age, who face the Law. The services are delivered by young lawyers up to 35 years of age. Cases may refer to Criminal, Civil, Public and Labour Law. The Programme advantages are twofold. It has a strong social character, by offering legal protection to young people in need. It also has a strong developmental character, by offering young Lawyers job opportunities and training for defending youth on various cases. The programme is being realized in collaboration with Bars Associations having signed a relevant contract with the General Secretariat for Youth.

Organisations' capacity to participate in policy-making processes on the social inclusion of young people is highly dependent on the resources available. Several country templates report **cuts in public spending on youth** as a consequence of the economic crisis. In several countries (Estonia, Liechtenstein) there were no major reductions and the projects in youth work and non-formal learning that started before the crisis were carried out. In Belgium and Finland the financial allocations for certain youth work activities were, in fact, increased. However, in many countries, the reductions of budget were more substantial.

The **Structured Dialogue cycle III- ‘Social Inclusion of young people’** provides the enabling circumstances for youth consultation and participation in policy making in EU

countries. **On-line consultations and E-participation tools** are increasingly promoted and used in the process of advocating for youth-inclusive policies. Several country reports called for more innovative tools in order to have a wider outreach, likely to incorporate the views of young people with fewer opportunities. An online platform is available on the European Youth Portal to facilitate participation in the consultations undertaken in the context of Structured Dialogue.

The overall thematic priority of the 4th cycle of Structured Dialogue focused on "Social Inclusion Young People" and led to thorough discussions between young people and policy-makers throughout the 18-months cycle. An overview of social inclusion of young people was established, on the basis of which possible actions for social inclusion were identified by young people and policy-makers. This led to the formulation of joint recommendations for fostering the social inclusion of young people, which were reflected in a Council Resolution concluding the cycle.

In addition to the general discussions on social inclusion of young people, each of the three Presidency countries (Ireland, Lithuania, Greece) set national priorities to contribute to the overall thematic priority of social inclusion: quality youth work (Ireland), raising opportunities for NEETs (Lithuania), youth entrepreneurship (Greece). The outcomes of the Structured Dialogue on "Social Inclusion of Young People" thus made a significant contribution to four Council documents adopted during the 18-months cycle:

- Council Conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (16 May 2013)
- Council Conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (25 November 2013)
- Council Conclusions to promote youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014)
- Council Resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014)

4. Research on social inclusion

This section will discuss the extent to which issues of social inclusion have entered research. Based on the information available in the country templates, it will highlight the main topics of study as well as several weakly represented and emerging topics. The extent to which social inclusion of young people has entered research is highly dependent on countries' political priorities in regard to youth, on competing research priorities and on the research infrastructure available. The extent to which the interdisciplinary field of Youth Studies receives academic recognition nationally, also has an influence.

Whilst several states have an established practice of *panel surveys* (data collection over time from the same individuals or families), others rely mainly on *cross-*

sectional data collection (information gathered at a defined time). Longitudinal research on the cumulative nature of disadvantage (intergenerational transmission of poverty) has been carried out in Flanders, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway and Poland. In Finland, a longitudinal survey focused on young people's health status, also collects information on their living conditions and the medical care needs; youth barometers are carried out since 1994. Yet, no longitudinal research seems to be available in Armenia, Cyprus, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden. In few countries, where there has not been any major research directed on youth social exclusion, indirect information on youth can be gathered from other studies (Latvia, Lichtenstein, Serbia).

Transition from school to employment is almost an invariable research topic. Increasingly, the young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) gain a distinct research status. At the other end of the spectrum, an emerging body of research increases the awareness at the risks of over-education/ underemployment at the start of career⁷ (Belgium). Sociology started to gather (quantitative and qualitative) data on youth entrepreneurship, only very recently. Traditionally, entrepreneurship has been studied by Business and Economy and almost never through generational lens. Whilst the policy developments accumulated very fast, the research community lags behind. Often, the notion of entrepreneurship in sociological research is more likely to reproduce the model of an adult (often male) entrepreneur and to miss some of the major barriers in youth entrepreneurship faced by young people, for instance. One example is the tendency to overlook the sometimes powerful generational barriers and bias in relation to young (women and men) entrepreneurs. These experiences still call for consolidated research (Pantea, 2015).

The impact of immigration status upon social inclusion continues to attract extensive research. Besides the countries with established scholarship in this area, research on this topic started to be produced in regions that experience recent immigration (Poland, Slovakia). Several aspects of migration that entered research are: (i) perceived discrimination and (re)ethnicisation among young immigrants (Germany); (ii) education of second generation migrants; (iii) youth discrimination in employment (Cyprus, Flanders, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia).

Besides the statistical analysis, there is a legitimate sociological **interest in young people's subjective experiences of exclusion**. This stream of research responds to the need to gain a better understanding of the way young people understand and navigate social exclusion (France, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden). It looks into the impact of diversity and social exclusion upon different aspects of young people's lives (leisure, school security, general wellbeing) (Flanders, France). The country template from Finland strengthens the need for qualitative research, in order to better understand the experiences of young people, not accessible through surveys (young people facing substance abuse or mental health problems, for instance).

⁷ Baert S., B. Cockx and D. Verhaest (In press), "Overeducation at the Start of the Career: Stepping Stone or Trap?", *Labour Economics*.

Qualitative research is better positioned to describe **emerging patterns of exclusion**. Several socially marginal groups are getting closer to the center of the social research: young people leaving foster care (Latvia, Norway, Slovakia), Roma, young people who are homeless or live in chronic poverty, young people with learning difficulties (Latvia, Serbia). With very few exceptions (Sweden), the opportunities and barriers faced by young people on the housing market remain unaddressed. Recent research indicates increasing rates of depression, anxiety disorders and substance abuse among young people (France, Sweden). A recent qualitative research in Germany (Sinus Institute, 2012) explored young people's values, professional orientation, their views on policy and society, media use, religion and voluntary involvement. The research used a mixed methodology (in-depth interviews, ethnography and photo-elicitation). Ultimately, it reflects the wide range of methods that can be used in order to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings young people attach to the situations they are living in.

Research also highlights a **geographical impact of the crisis**, and suggests that the disadvantage accumulates in certain areas: disadvantaged neighborhoods, remote rural areas or the Southern region in Italy. An emerging topic of research refers to rural youth from remote or underdeveloped regions (Armenia, Latvia, and Slovakia). Young people living in socially deprived urban neighborhoods have long been a topic of research.

A growing body of qualitative research probes **young people's experiences of intersectional discrimination**. This refers to the multiple forms of oppression that integrate race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability⁸. Increasingly, research indicates LGBT youth experience demeaning treatment, violence and harassment. There is also increasing evidence on the health implications of their marginal social position (e.g. poor mental health, alcohol and drug abuse). Against the backdrop of the crisis, the research on young people's lifestyle started to go beyond the culture of consumption and to incorporate the subjective perceptions of poverty among youth, in a more consolidated way (France, Slovakia, and Sweden).

For some themes, research started to accumulate recently, but it is still, underdeveloped (e.g. youth extremist movements, hate speech, the perception of the general population on young people at risk of social exclusion, the social and economic situation of young people returning to their home countries after experiencing unemployment abroad). Roma women's reproductive health, young mothers and teen pregnancy are emerging topics that may gain terrain, although for the moment, they remain represented rather in local case studies. The life paths of young people growing up in foster care are increasingly represented in research, although more in organisational reports than in empirical studies with a sound methodology (Latvia, Slovakia).

⁸ The concept was generated in the 1990s during the North American Black Feminist Movement. The well-known 'Traffic Intersection Metaphor' argues that the intersection of gender, race, class and other categories generate oppression (Crenshaw, 2003). Marginalized women are situated at the crossroads, where several categories (traffic lines) intersect. Intersectionality warns against identifying discrimination against women with gender discrimination alone, while ignoring ethnicity (Kocze with Popa, 2009).

In terms of the infrastructure for making research available, there is an inventory of youth research in Flanders and a national youth monitoring yearbook on youth exclusion in Estonia. Finland has a *Youth Living Conditions Yearbook*, a publication which collects research and statistics on a youth-related topic, each year. Systematic longitudinal research on work, lifestyle and health is carried out in Norway. Youth Institutes across Europe start to make available research on the situation of young people against the backdrop of the crisis.

The German Youth Institute gathered and analyzed statistical and empirical data on the life situation of young people in Europe, with the purpose of informing social and youth policy making. An initial analysis of the available data suggests that, particularly in the tripartite school system (such as the one in Germany), young people with an immigrant background tend to be channeled at an early stage into educational courses from which the transition to training and employment tends to be quite difficult.

Increasingly, local NGOs are involved in conducting studies on the social inclusion of young people. Whilst different perspectives on the vulnerable groups are welcome, it is important to ensure quality in the conduct and reporting of research (e.g. avoidance of overgeneralisation and bias in the selection of participants, the tendency to highlight examples of 'good practice', at the expense of an impartial presentation including also the interventions that did not work).

Conclusions

The country templates validate the persistence of several major predictors of social exclusion for youth: the socioeconomic situation of parents, the ethnic-cultural background, educational attainment, disability, early pregnancy/ motherhood and sexual orientation. Besides the groups that continue to be at disadvantage (young people with disabilities, youth offenders, young people abusing drugs, early school leavers, teen mothers), there are also several categories that emerged as extremely vulnerable in the context of the economic crisis (young people with severe disabilities, survivors of trafficking, refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, girls at risk of genital mutilation, homeless youth, young people leaving care). Increases in the number of young people among the homeless group and in the number of evictions among young people have been occasionally reported.

Youth unemployment and the situation of young people 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training' (NEET) attracted the highest level of policy and research concern. However, there seems to be a less visible, emerging category of the 'working poor': young people who are employed, but face problems in sustaining themselves with their salaries. There is, thus, a need for advancing workers' rights and for tackling structural constraints that maintain exclusion.

The crisis is not only economic, but also social and political in nature. The proportion of young people who think that they have every opportunity to engage

themselves in political activities and in decision making, tends to decrease. Although promoting gender equality has long been on the policy agenda, country templates seem to indicate that gender-based discrimination and repression of sexual diversity are still posing barriers in several areas of young people's lives and are more acute for minority groups. However, the policy measures for social inclusion are often concentrated on issues of the labor market and poverty and leave little room for other forms of social exclusion (e.g. access to education, school segregation of Roma, health, social protection, housing, young mothers, LGBT).

Overall, there are indications of the emergence of a 'class apart' of young people: largely characterized by precarious parental and institutional support, living in households with low work intensity, having a poor capacity to settle long term goals and experiencing high uncertainty. The new patterns of exclusion (given by discrimination, bullying, oppression of sexual diversity, racism, xenophobia and extremism) hinder their access to social rights and deepen their economic insecurity.

Projects and measures seem largely based on a 'fitting young people in' approach. They tend to focus on strengthening young people's capacity to articulate their concerns in the political arena (and less at encouraging politicians to initiate a dialogue with young people); on training people for being more 'employable' (and less on the generational barriers and prejudices that keep young people at the margins of the labour market).

Young people are not often considered a specific group in the policies regarding housing and disability. In terms of housing policies, there is a large inter-country variation: from young people trying to navigate loosely-regulated housing policies, to situations where young people at risk of social exclusion are assisted as a matter of priority. In what concerns young people with disabilities, there is a tendency to move from an exclusive focus on caring and provision, toward increased self-determination. However, many policy measures seem grounded in the assumption that social integration rests mostly on young people's labor market integration.

Overall, the country templates suggest a continuous trend towards the so-called 'compartmentalization' of youth work (Coussée, 2010). This tendency becomes visible in the distinction between 'general youth work' and more 'socially-oriented youth work', addressing particular vulnerable groups. In the context of the economic crisis, there is a tendency for youth work to be interpreted mainly as a tool for enhancing young people's employability. Several country templates called for an increased emphasis on civic competence and social participation, also in light of the rising threats to cultural diversity, such as extremism. The more recent focus on diversity alongside social inclusion in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy for the youth field is, thus, both timely and necessary.

The crisis seems to bring young people closer to the center of the research interest. Transition from school to employment is almost an invariable research topic. Increasingly, the young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) gain a distinct research status, also in countries where the concept is new. There is, however, a growing interest in young people's subjective experiences: perceptions of exclusion, personal strategies to navigate poverty, issues of identity and minority status. Research

started to accumulate, but it is still, underdeveloped for themes such as: youth extremist movements, hate speech, the perception of the general population on young people at risk of social exclusion, the social and economic situation of repatriated youth, youth entrepreneurship. In several of these areas, research is, for the moment, behind policy-making developments.

References

- Baert S., B. Cockx and Verhaest, D. (2013), "Overeducation at the Start of the Career: Stepping Stone or Trap?", *Labour Economics*. 25(C): 123-140.
- Council of Europe (2005) *Concerted development of social cohesion indicators. Methodological guide*. CoE Publishing. Strasbourg Cedex.
- Coussée, F. (2010) 'The history of youth work – Re-socialising the youth question?' In Coussée, F. et al (Eds) *The history of youth work in Europe - Volume 2. Relevance for today's youth work policy*. Council of Europe Publishing.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. (2003). 'Traffic at the Crossroads: Multiple Oppressions' in *Sisterhood is Forever: The Women's Anthology for a New Millennium*, edited by Robin Morgan. Washington Square Press.
- European Commission (2010) *The European Social Fund and social inclusion*. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=166&langId=en>.
- Hardoy et al. (2006): *Ungdomsgarantien for 20-24-åringer: Har den satt spor?* Oslo: ISF. <http://www.samfunnsforskning.no/Publikasjoner/Rapporter/2006/2006-004>
- Krzaklewska Ewa (2013). *Visegrad Youth. Comparative review of the situation of young people in the V4 countries*. Council of Europe. Warszawa. Available at: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017993/5099101/Visegrad+youth/d09e2d8a-5359-4350-9b8c-3ba379550abf>
- Kocze, A. with contributions from Raluca Maria Popa. (2009). 'Missing Intersectionality: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in Current Research and Policies on Romani Women in Europe.' Budapest: Center for Policy Studies, Central European University.
- Krzaklewska, E. (2013). *Visegrad Youth. Comparative review of the situation of young people in the V4 countries*. Council of Europe. Warszawa. URL: <http://www.msmt.cz/file/29056/download/>
- Pantea, M.C. (2015) On entrepreneurial education: dilemmas and tensions in nonformal learning in *Studies in Continuing Education* (IFirst).
- Sinus Institute (2012) *Sinus Jugend-Studie „Wie ticken Jugendliche?“* URL: <http://www.sinus-institut.de/sinus-news/year/2012/month/03/backPid/67/news/vorstellung-der-neuen-sinus-jugendstudie-am-28-maerz-in-berlin.html>
- Thys, R., De Raedemaecker, W. & Vranken, J. (2004). *Bruggen over troebel water. Is het mogelijk om uit de generatie-armoede te geraken?* Leuven/Voorburg: Acco.
- WHO (2014) Suicide Fact sheet N°398. URL: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs398/en/>