

## Shaping youth policy in practice

A capacity-building project for strengthening youth policy



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Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

#### **Youth Partnership**

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





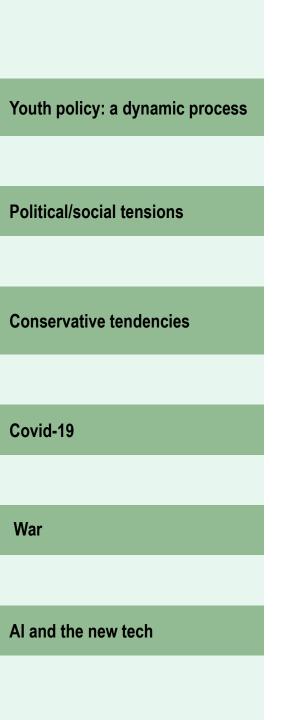
# Current social-political context and its influence on shaping (youth) policies

- Keynote speech -

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## Who are 'young people'

Youth policy: a dynamic process

Political/social tensions

Age, gender, location, class, ethnicity, education, (dis)ability etc urban vs. rural → degrees of urbanisation

Conservative tendencies

Crisis of representation 'organised' young people as 'representative'

...hard to reach, privilege, creaming, tokenism?

Covid-19

War

How are the absent voices framing policy making processes? How can CEE and EaP (re)shape the understanding of youth policies?

Al and the new tech

## ... and how are they seen?

'Problems to be fixed/ controlled'

Political/social tensions

'The future'

Conservative tendencies

Covid-19

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Al and the new tech

'A resource' (for whom?)

'A social group in its own right'

policy-making approaches: regulation  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  emancipation

prevention  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  intervention

proactive ←→ reactive

problem oriented  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  opportunity focused

paternalistic ← → open (Williamson & Hofmann-van de Poll, 202

What cultural regimes on youth are at play in your country?

#### Political/social tensions

**Aim**: to create conditions for **learning**, **opportunity** and **experience** (Youth Partnership, 2018).

#### **Conservative tendencies**

#### Challenges:

- Good policy requires powerful states (see the tax revenue losses)
- Institutional home?
- Youth mainstreaming: overly-ambitious/ unrealistic?
- Short institutional memory in youth organisations. CB

Covid-19

War

Al and the new tech

## Make other sectors aware they DO youth policy

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Youth policy: a dynamic process

Political/social tensions

Education, employment, health, housing, civic participation.

'Youth guarantees' (Williamson, 2022)

Young people claim a say in:

Conservative tendencies

climate, energy & environment, justice, countering corruption, AI, urbanisation, transport, de-colonisation movements.

War

Covid-19 Extension, but also revision/ interrogation of policy discourses:

'More jobs'

() Iniversal Designation

'Universal Basic Income'

Al and the new tech

'Labour force' → YP as economic subjects (focus on skills)

WEF in Davos declared 2023 "the year of the polycrisis": **the coming together of multiple crises** 

Climate, energy crisis, populism, revived Russian militarism, social unrest, financial instability, food insecurity, social justice concerns.

Political/social tensions

Conservative tendencies

Do young people in CEE have a different agenda?

F4F not that present & a different profile in CEE

Industrialization and the Western growth model

Increased concern for political integrity and transparency from decision makers, core-periphery dynamics.

'pollution havens' + exploitation of timber by Western logging companies (Chiodi and Epis, 2022)

Covid-19

War

Al and the new tech

Euroscepticism, polarisation of the political and social space, economic crisis and precarity Youth policy: a dynamic process Low trust in political institutions, disengagement. Political/social tensions Decline in youth participation in institutional politics Civic spaces threatened by illiberal trends Conservative tendencies Grassroots activist organisations in increasingly illiberal environments Donor-driven agendas Covid-19

Decline in the state of democracy, shrinking space for civil society,

## Mission drift from advocacy & watchdog roles → service-provision (Deželan et al., 2023). War

What types of activism are CEE and EaP countries willing to Al and the new tech accept?

Political/social tensions

Conservative tendencies

Covid-19

War

Al and the new tech

Each country has its own mixture of conservative tendencies: misogyny, racism, antiypsism and other forms of intolerance.

- Diversity as a contentious issue
- Covid-19 strengthened conservative values
- Gender norms & fractured the emancipatory routes outside family,

experimentation with independent living.

- Education, NGOs expansion of horizons of possibilities -> conventional routes available in the close family & community
- Strengthened of social class inequalities
- Worldwide, 1 in 5 girls are married before 18 (UNICEF, 2022).

Cultural traditions & youth policy making. An uneasy relationship

## Impact on the young people

Youth policy: a dynamic process

Political/social tensions

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Covid-19

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Educational but also societal losses.

Health transitions: How healthy are today's young people?
Enabling circumstances for health – focus on choice

- Silent angers, increased stress and poor health outcomes
- established narratives: victimization OR celebration of resilience
  - Immobility turn (Cairns and Clemente, 2023)

Al and the new tech

How we can use Covid-19 as a window for bringing health transitions closer to the youth policy agendas?

# Impact on the youth sector

Recovery plans: service-provision

Diluted notion of disadvantage

Rights-based approaches

Brain drain & NGO's survival

Orientation towards 'Covid topics' (Deželan & Yurttagüle, 2020)

Youth policy: a dynamic process

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Al and the new tech

Speaking the language of rights increases legitimacy when

standing for young people.

Political/social tensions

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Al and the new tech

- Young people have complex relationships with war (as victims, fighters, survivors, refugees, concerned observers, peace activists, humanitarian aid volunteers).
- Expectation from the youth sector to engage with direct and indirect traumas
- War as a generational and intergenerational experience (children of those fighting today)
- Support young people from Ukraine and the young activists in Russia and Belarus
- NGOs from under-resourced countries learning on the go
- The youth sector to resist the *normalization* of war and propaganda

Calls for youth policies to integrate young refugees, in countries without such experiences.

	Deterministic approach: Al as an external reality. Robots coming.
Youth policy: a dynamic process	But Al and tech are policy-mediated
	Al and tech as <b>enablers</b>
Political/social tensions	Policies lag behind
	YP want policies holding big tech companies accountable, increased transparency and ethics
Conservative tendencies	The online as <b>substitute</b> of physical interaction → dangers for
	democracies
Covid-19	Online, but need for <b>physical spaces</b>
	Gamification is cool, by YP need to speak the policy language
War	Beware <b>tech-solutionism</b> or solution driven policies.
Al and the new tech	The social impact of AI is too high to be left to engineers alone.

#### **Resources:**

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