

Youth Partnership

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



Advocacy kit for youth work development and communication about the European Youth Work Agenda

Concept note

Background:

The Youth Partnership works on promoting, developing, and strengthening quality youth work and the social, political, and formal recognition of its contribution to youth participation and social inclusion of young people. In 2024-2025, it will continue strengthening its role and stepping up its activities on youth work development, building on the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) and following four main directions:

- Supporting the 4th European Youth Work Convention (Malta, May 2025);
- Fostering the dialogue within the youth work community of practice;
- Building the capacities of the youth work community of practice;
- Researching to support youth work development in Europe.

As a part of these efforts, an advocacy kit, including a new set of tools will be developed to build the capacities of the youth work community of practice to promote, communicate and advocate successfully for youth work development.

Context and rationale of the project

The related work of the Youth Partnership and other stakeholders

The outcomes of the [Visible Value symposium: Growing youth work in Europe](#) in 2023, as well as the two [regional seminars on youth work development in 2022](#) and [2023](#), and other consultations with the community of practice have highlighted a strong need for supporting advocacy for youth work development. Therefore, building on the accumulated experience and existing knowledge, such as the

[Insights into developing the youth work environment](#), the report of the [Symposium](#) on youth work in 2023, the [Visible value handbook](#) and [e-library](#) on recognition and the Youth Work Strategies Manual (draft), the Youth Partnership will develop and disseminate a set of practical tools for advocacy to be used by all actors in the youth field. The offline and online tools will build on the main European policy frameworks and standards, such as the EU Council Resolution on the [European Youth Work Agenda](#) and the Council of Europe [Recommendation on youth work](#) and focus on the impact and benefits of developing youth work on national level and on raising its visibility. The advocacy kit will be created in formats adaptable to countries' particular contexts.

Apart of the examples above, other good practices on the European level will be taken into consideration when developing the advocacy kit. The [European Training Strategy](#) for Youth work, a strategic framework for the development of youth worker education and training in Europe under the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes also identifies Networking and advocating as one of the nine key competence areas for youth workers. The Council of Europe [Youth Work Portfolio](#) considers advocacy as a necessary skill within competence area 'Co-operating with others to shape youth policies.' The European Youth Forum also published an [Advocacy handbook](#) meaningful advocacy action primarily aimed at its member organisations. Some Strategic National Agency Cooperations also focus on promotion, advocacy for and development of youth work. The [Changemakers kit](#) was developed in frame of the Europe Goes Local cooperation project.

Guidelines on youth work development policies

The [About time!](#) reference manual points out that a great deal of policy projects are initially piloted on a relatively small scale, but it is not just size that is relevant. New initiatives usually carry strong political championship and advocacy, which can diminish over time. It also presents the "dynamics" – the "D"s – of youth policy development, that may also apply to youth work development policies and measures.¹ As it is described, these „can can start or stall at any point. Local projects have been known to attract wider interest and become the blueprint for national and indeed international initiatives. Professional advocacy for particular measures can sometimes win political hearts and minds. Learning from existing practice may alter the shape and format of subsequent policy formulation. Equally, changes in the political climate, the public administration or the professional environment (when other priorities take precedence) can stop the pace of development of youth policy in its tracks.”²

Research on practice architectures of youth work shows that youth work is at various stages of development, recognition and embeddedness in different countries, yet constant advocacy for the values, impact and use of youth work remains a must. Therefore it is important that a future advocacy kit offers tools that can be used by any actors in the youth field in any particular contexts, and at any stage of the dynamic process of youth work development. It should also build on existing good practices and be applicable in any particular situations and environments.

The study [European youth work policy goals analysed](#) suggests that “It is advised to provide support to national and European networks of youth workers to create ground for networking, youth work development, advocacy initiatives for work conditions and labour rights of youth workers and

¹ [Policy clock dynamics](#) poster

² [ABOUT TIME! A reference manual for youth policy from a European perspective - Youth Partnership \(coe.int\)](#) by Howard Williamson, Max Fras and Zara Lavchyan. Edited by Tanya Basarab and Howard Williamson. P. 32 and p. 158.

exchange of good practice.”³ These are also key aspects to consider for the development of the advocacy tool, and they are in line with the relevant European policy documents.

The Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work⁴ and the European Youth Work Agenda⁵ both provide comprehensive guidelines for youth work development on national levels. The Recommendation “calls on member States to adopt a strategic approach pro-actively supporting the development of youth work based ... (...) and to create, within their sphere of competence, the conditions in which all young people can access a positive youth work experience regardless of their background, gender or location, and in which they can be supported to participate in civic dialogue and in the shaping of the decisions that impact their lives”.⁶ The Report on the review of the implementation EU Council Resolution of Recommendation five years after its adoption, however, adds that the Recommendation may have different importance for member states where a youth work system is emerging and member states with an established and legally anchored youth work system.⁷ Meanwhile, it is important to mention that the EU Council Resolution specifically invites member states to support youth work development with regard to national circumstances, integrate youth work into youth policy strategies and to inform all relevant actors about the Agenda.⁸

Therefore, the future advocacy toolkit should be adaptable to different contexts (countries with emerging or well-established youth work structures), and that a specific attention must be paid to the promotion of the EYWA and a participative public dialogue about its implementation, in line with the principles described in the above-mentioned European policy documents. The new resolution on youth work policy that is currently being prepared under the Belgian EU Presidency may also provide valuable input for the project.

³ [European youth work policy goals analysed: The role of the EU-CoE youth partnership in the interplay between the European Union and the Council of Europe](#) by Ilona Evelyn-Rannala, Jelena Stojanovic, Marko Kovacic P. 17.

⁴ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4) on Youth Work

⁵ EU Council Resolution on the European Youth Work Agenda 2020/C 415/01

⁶ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4) on Youth Work. IV. A vision for youth work in Europe: Point 20.

⁷ Report on the review of the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4) on Youth Work five years after adoption. (CMJ(2023)4.) by Dr. Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll and Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez : “Turning towards national developments, the review shows, and this is a fourth conclusion, that the Recommendation has relevant contents, but its importance depends on the existing or non-existing momentum as well as the different national contexts. What was highlighted in particular in the review is the different importance of the Recommendation for member states where a youth work system is emerging and member states with an established and legally anchored youth work system. The Recommendation is particularly important as a guideline for member states with an emerging national youth work system.” p. 24.

⁸ “Invite the member states in line with the subsidiarity principle and at the appropriate levels with due regard for their specific national circumstances, to: 25. Integrate youth work into existing and future youth policy strategies and their implementation at all administrative levels in order to facilitate greater innovation, improve quality and increase recognition of the field, with a particular emphasis on action at local level in shaping and developing the Agenda... and... 27. Inform all relevant actors at national, regional and local level within the youth work community of practice about the Agenda and its implementation and ensure there is an appropriate dialogue with and among them.”

Aims and objectives:

The advocacy kit on youth work development aims to offer a set of offline and online practical tools built on the main European policy frameworks and standards to be used by all actors in the youth field.

Its specific objectives include:

- Developing the competences of the youth work community of practice in advocating for youth work development and its recognition in their countries, to ensure more and better youth work offers for as many young people as possible;
- Offering tools adaptable to national level advocacy work and thus contributing to youth work development in a number of countries in need for strengthening dialogue with decision makers on structural improvements in youth work;
- Creating links with and raising the visibility of related policy instruments of the partner institutions and of the Youth Partnership's existing tools.

The format of the advocacy kit is to be decided as a part of the overall concept – it may include communication/information materials and leaflets, a handbook, action maps and posters, online support materials and videos, presentation template visual aids.

Expected outcomes and timeline

2024:

- **Online expert meeting** – development of the concept of the Toolkit. *(25 April 2024)*
- **Expert seminar and preparatory meeting** – work on the content and format of the advocacy kit, and with consultants and with experts from the community of practice, representatives of countries interested in using such an advocacy kit, to identify and discuss the needs, and to collect ideas for the tool's development. *(17-18 June 2024, European Youth Center Budapest)*
- **Development of communication/information kit on advocacy for youth work development** – including written and audiovisual, offline and online materials, such as short educational and informative videos/animated videos adaptable to national languages on why and how to develop youth work. The future users of the tool will have to implement those adaptations in the form of subtitles or translation of the text. *(June 2024-January 2025)*
- **Presentation of the draft toolkit** – presentation and collecting feedback from participants of the Youth Partnership's regional seminar on youth work. *(29-30 October 2024)*
- **Instructions for how each tool can be adapted and used**, respecting the communication and rights for use of the material.

2025:

- **Workshop at the 4th European Youth Work Convention** – promotion of the advocacy kit and providing guidance on how to use and adapt it to the contexts of specific countries. *(28-30 May 2025, Malta)*
- **Promotion and dissemination of the advocacy kit** in different events and activities of the Youth Partnership, and of the youth work community of practice.