



Shadow report

on the implementation of the two first priorities of the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field, Information and Participation

Foreword

The publication of the European Commission White Paper on Youth in 2001 was greatly anticipated by youth organisations in Europe, at the time of its adoption. Following the consultation period, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) were glad to see that the role of young citizens and youth organisations was finally recognised at the European Union level and the need to create EU youth policy was affirmed by the college of European commissioners.

2002 saw the launch of the EU Open Method of Coordination in the youth field. Even though the Union itself did not have competence in the youth field, the Member States identified the need for youth policy cooperation in a form of voluntary political strategy work and unanimously committed themselves to establishing and implementing common youth policy objectives through the Open Method of Coordination.

In 2006, the time has come to evaluate what the first set of these youth policy Common Objectives - Participation and Information - have brought with them. In accordance with the Council Resolution of November 2003, the Member States committed to provide their reports on the implementation of the Common Objectives by the end of 2005. In order to give voice to youth organisations, the European Youth Forum launched a process to produce its own Shadow Report. In addition, it should be noted that with few exceptions, the national reports from Member States will remain secret and only a synthesis report, composed by the Commission, will be publicised - as the Member States were not ready to share the results of their work. With this Shadow Report, the European Youth Forum wants to contribute to the otherwise shortfall in transparency of the Open Method of Coordination.

This report presents the reality of the youth organisations working on a daily basis with youth participation and information. Through publication of this report, the European Youth Forum wants to remind decisions makers working on the implementation of the Open Method of Coordination of the commitments made. In the report, youth organisations ask for a stronger partnership with decision makers in order to make the EU youth policy framework have a real impact on the lives of young people in Europe. Now it is time to make it happen!

Table of contents

Introduction	6
Six years of EU Youth Policy?	8
Implementation of the first two priorities at the EU level	8
Implementation of the horizontal issues of the June 2002 Council Resolution	13
Austria - ÖJV	16
The implementation process	16
Information	16
Participation	17
Finland - Allianssi	18
Implementation of the process	18
Information	19
Participation	19
General on participation	19
Youth participation in civil society	19
Youth participation in democratic structures	20
Non-organised youth and their possibilities to participate decision making	20
France - CNAJEP	21
The implementation process	21
Contact with governments	21
Information	22
Understanding of the process	22
Measuring implementation	22
Results	24
Participation	24
Youth participation in local life	25
Results	25
Germany - DBJR	26
General Appraisal	26
The national situation at the time of passing common objectives in the field of participation and information.	26
Participation and laws	26
The role of children's and youth organisations	27
Actions realized on national level since the passing of the common objectives with reference to each of the three objectives and action lines	28
Shape participation - "Project P - get involved"	28
Encroaching in politics of integration	29
Implemented actions to determine the existing knowledge with reference to the participation information and taking all useful actions to complete, update and facilitate access.	30
Get along!	30
Participate in the parliamentary elections for the Bundestag 2005	30
Modalities of consultation of youth concerning the implementation of common objectives and devising the report	31
Difficulties of the implementations of the objectives and action lines on national level	31
Our demands for more participation of young people	31

Lithuania - LIJOT	393
The consultation process for the implementation	33
Youth information	34
Youth participation	35
The main obstacles met during the implementation of the common objectives on youth information and participation	38
Luxembourg - CGJL	39
Implementation of the White Paper Process (general)	39
Information	40
Some concrete examples on Information	41
Participation	43
Formal bodies of participation	43
Voting right	44
Some concrete examples on participation	44
The Netherlands - Jeugdraad	46
The implementation process	46
Information	46
Understanding of the process	46
Measuring implementation	47
Results	47
Participation	47
Understanding of the process	47
Tools/measures	47
Results	48
Malta - KNZ	49
KNZ's input in the implementation process - Contact with government/Understanding the process	49
Information Common Objective	51
Participation Common Objective	52
2004: Local Youth Councils	52
2005: National Youth Parliament	53
2005: Local Youth Councils	54
Follow-up to the European Youth Pact	54
Portugal - CNJ	57
Information	57
Participation	59
Implementation process	59
Characterization/measures/implementation	59
Slovakia - RMS	61
The implementation process	61
Contact with government	61
Information	62
Participation	64
The process of implementation	64
Tools	66
Results and conclusion	67
Spain - CJE	68
The implementation process	68
Contact with government	618

Understanding of the process	618
Information	69
Participation	70
Sweden - LSU	72
Positives aspects	72
Negative aspects	72
Aspects to be followed up	73
United Kingdom - BYC	75
The White Paper and UK Young People	75
Government and the National Youth Council	75
BYC's vision for building a vibrant network of local youth councils	76
Youth Councils and their reach	76
Identified need	77
Programme for building a network of vibrant youth councils	78
Policy Developments: Information and Participation	81
Connexions: information, advice and guidance	81
Every Child Matters	82
Youth Matters	83
Citizenship Education	83
Children's Commissioners	83
Education Bill	83
Quality assurance	84
Education and training of those working in the field of youth work	84
Improve the link between information and counselling	85
Promote the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels	85
Participation by young people in information	85
Youth Volunteering	85
Young people and political engagement	86
Norway - LNU	88
Contact with Governmental structures, an evidence of mainstreaming?	88
Information	88
Participation	89
Results and conclusions	93
Annex 1: Guidelines for the Shadow Report	94
Annex 2: Guideline questions for the shadow report	97

Introduction

Following its involvement in the design of the European Commission White Paper *A New Impetus for European Youth*, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) followed carefully the drafting and the adoption of the Council Resolution regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field in June 2002. This Resolution established a new tool for youth policy - the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field (OMC) - and the four priorities¹: Information, Participation, Voluntary activities and Greater Understanding of youth. The European Youth Forum continues to be a key actor in the shaping, implementation and review of those priorities, and as the time has come for an initial review of the implementation of the first two priorities - Participation and Information - the YFJ has asked its Member Organisations, with special emphasis on the National Youth Councils from EU Member States, to share their own evaluation of the implementation process at the national level. In conjunction, the YFJ has also produced an analysis of the process management at the EU level, and an evaluation of the work achieved at the EU level.

Throughout the White Paper process, the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations had been consulted, both at national and European levels. Nevertheless, the end of the process was greeted with disappointment, in view of the fact that important issues were featured in the annex of the Paper and then not considered as essential in the development of European youth policies.

When it came to the definition of the priorities (Information and Participation), the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations were also widely consulted. The consultations which took place throughout 2002/2003 however, already revealed the difficulties of such an exercise. At that time, National Youth Councils (NYCs) highlighted some fissures and weaknesses within the process - such as the time allowed for the processing of questionnaires itself. They clearly identified a lack of transparency, as no dialogue took place regarding the results of the questionnaires; and furthermore, no information was given on the contributions sent to the European Commission. This process already highlighted the weaknesses regarding the genuine and effective participation of youth organisations. Thus the YFJ undertook an evaluation in 2003², based on the NYC reports, which showed clearly that the consultations were not as transparent and as inclusive as expected.

Reaching the stage of evaluating the first phase of the OMC implementation, it clearly appears that the strategy on youth policy initiated with the White Paper and then the Open Method of Coordination raised a lot of expectations within youth organisations. In fact, some Member States established committees specifically for the consultations, which gathered the different stakeholders, including youth organisations³. Unfortunately, the trend of establishing committees and developing partnerships was not followed in most Member States and once the initial consultations ended, the

¹ See Chapter one *Recent youth policy development in Europe* of the European Youth Forum Youth Report "Education, Employment and young people in Europe". This gives a clear, detailed overview of the European Youth Forum understanding of the whole process.

² See the Synthesis report of the National Youth Councils reports on the consultations on the questionnaires within the Open Method of Coordination, produced in early 2003 (0108-03).

³ Some committees had already been established for the consultations on the White Paper, and their work then continued on definitions of the OMC and the common objectives for the priorities

committees were no longer used - whether for dialogue, or for shaping proposals to implement the Common Objectives. Therefore, monitoring of the implementation was almost non-existent and led to much disappointment in terms of results - as is reflected in most of the National Youth Council reports.

Six years of EU Youth Policy?

In 1999, the European Commission took the initiative to launch a process for “a new impetus for the European youth”. The European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations actively supported this process, advocating for the recognition of the role of youth policy in the European Union. By adopting the White Paper and the 2002 resolution establishing framework for co-operation in the youth field, the European Commission and the Council showed a clear vision and ambition for youth policy. The YFJ sincerely hopes that the current Commission will maintain the same impetus, not only on the Open Method of Coordination, but also on the necessity to have a coherent and cross-sectoral European framework of policies affecting youth. We expect Commissioner Jan Figel’ to be focused on the OMC, and encourage him to continue to work together with the Member States to strengthen the process.

Having said that, the implementation phase and its first review give the opportunity to express the YFJ’s will to see the European Commission taking a more courageous stance towards Member States, encouraging them to implement more efficiently the political commitments made concerning youth policy - both on the OMC and the cross sectoral approach to youth policy. The YFJ also hopes that the Commission will take a more proactive role - in partnership with youth organisations and other stakeholders - in implementing the Common Objectives at the European level, and thus lead the implementation process by example.

In order to propose and design better policies, which are more focused and which directly answer the needs of young people, there is a real need to increase knowledge on local and municipal youth bodies as well as youth organisations - how they work, what kind of policies/activities they run, etc. With regards to the content of the European Commission Communications related to the OMC, but also to youth policy more generally, there will be a real need to include examples of good and bad practice from Member States’ reports. Sharing this information will provide a more concrete and realistic picture of what is happening across Europe.

Implementation of the first two priorities at the EU level

Participation

Regarding the expectations raised by the YFJ and its Member Organisations throughout the entire consultation period, and also the results achieved after one and a half years, the European Youth Forum presents here an analysis of the implementation process. Based on the shadow reports received from NYCs; input from Member Organisations; the expectations raised in 2002; and experience of using the process, the YFJ has identified some *main tools and processes to foster participation*:

- Consultation with the European Youth Forum on policies
- EU level meetings
- Training and education on active participation

According to these main tools and processes, the YFJ identified three areas of analysis: the consultation process; meetings at the EU level; and the Youth Programme - as an instrument used by the European Commission.

1. Consultation

With respect to the consultation in 2003, National Youth Councils and International Non-governmental Youth organisations both expressed clear disappointment regarding the design of the objectives of the priorities Information and Participation. This disappointment related specifically to the fact that no clear information was provided on how the consultation, and the comments made therein, would be taken into account in the final answers sent to the Commission.

Regarding the implementation evaluation reports, expected to be delivered by Member States by the end of December 2005, YFJ Member Organisations regretted that these reports were not made public and not openly shared with the different stakeholders who had participated in the implementation process.

There were real improvements with respect to consultation at the European level between the European Youth Forum and its different institutional partners, reflecting the fact that it is being increasingly recognised as a crucial partner when it comes to devising policies that affect young people. However, the YFJ hopes to be more frequently and more immediately heard when it comes to various issues such as the employment of young people. Yet even if improvements did occur, the lack of any formal structures for the consultation with youth stakeholders leads, however, to a process which is not monitored on a partnership basis. This creates a gap between the stakeholders and affects the coherence of the process.

2. European Events

The *Presidency Youth Events*, which gather young people at the EU level every six months, did not influence the implementation of the OMC. This was despite the fact that they were launched at the same time as the White Paper process, and that some even focused specifically on OMC priorities, such as voluntary activities (Luxembourg, April 2005), and participation (Rotterdam, November 2004).

This is seen as a genuinely missed opportunity. As the Events had been used extensively to feed the debate and the reflections on the definition of the White Paper and the OMC priorities - ensuring real consultation at all stages, and definition of the priorities and objectives in an inclusive way - youth organisations expected that they would also be used as a monitoring tool for the implementation. On the contrary, while the link between the Youth Events and the definition of youth policy strategy seemed to be quite effective, the implementation phase was not envisaged with a proper follow-up. The subsequent Youth Events were used then more as single elements rather than as part of a coherent process.

One of the main actions taking place at the European level has been the European Youth Week, organised by in December 2003 and 2005 the European Commission. Also, in 2005, a European conference *Youth Takes the Floor* was organised as part of the Youth Week, with the aim to gather young people from all over the EU in order to hear from and consult with them on the future development of European youth policy. Should the event had been of political nature, the YFJ and its Member Organisations felt that the conference should have brought together young people involved in youth

policy development and youth organisations should have been equal partners in defining the programme and content of the event.

As the participants were invited mainly through YOUTH programme projects and not because of their involvement in youth policy, and the agenda was limited in terms of time for content debates, the Youth Takes the Floor did not meet its full ambition and potential from the European youth organisations' point of view. As in any European level youth event, the results and actions arising from the conference are still to be seen. Given that we have now entered the follow-up phase, the YFJ expects that the input received will be accorded the proper consideration

The European Youth Forum sees that an European event promoting EU Youth programme - but also equally other forms of youth engagement - can be foreseen also in the future , but such an event should not been seen as a major political event or as a form of representative consultation of young people in youth policy matters.

Such European Events could also potentially serve as a good opportunity for decision-makers to dialogue with both National Youth Councils and international youth organisations, at the European level. In order to achieve this, the European Commission should actively encourage Member States to cooperate with National Youth Councils, as the main interlocutors on youth policy. For example, Member States are directly asked to send delegates to either the Youth Week or the Presidency Youth Events: they should delegate this responsibility to their respective National Youth Councils. This would firstly enhance cooperation between the different actors at the national level, but would also be a great opportunity to hear what youth organisations and young people have to say, and what their concerns are, directly at the European level. Currently, youth organisations can only note with regret that their role is constantly questioned when different events are set up.

3. YOUTH programme

At the EU level, the YOUTH programme run by the European Commission is seen as the main tool to promote and facilitate the participation of young people. For the YFJ and its Member Organisations, the YOUTH programme is a very good and useful tool to promote European values and ideas across Europe; however it cannot be identified as a policy tool, but rather, as a tool to fund projects.

Nevertheless, when it comes to monitoring the programme, the participation of young people can be improved. As the YOUTH programme is a tool for youth organisations and young people, they should be involved in its structures; thus being actors not only clients. As representatives of young people, youth organisations should be included in the management structures of the National Agencies and also in the selection of projects.

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is one of the most well know Actions of the YOUTH programme. This encourages and facilitates the mobility of young people mainly across Europe - strengthening their active citizenship and giving them the opportunity to acquire new skills and competences. Nevertheless, the EVS should not been seen as the only and main participation activity in Europe.

Youth organisations have, at several times, expressed their feeling that the European Commission provides more support to National Agencies than to youth organisations. In addition, they feel that the main focus is placed on individuals, not on support for youth organisations (both financially and politically). With regards to this trend, there is the fear that young people, as individuals, simply become receivers, whereas within youth organisations, an emphasis is placed on the full and broader participation of all young people. Even if the YFJ and its Member Organisations recognise the EVS scheme and the work achieved through the YOUTH programme, an individual's involvement in a project, over several weeks or months, does not compare to the work and the participation achieved within youth organisations. The learning process is much more efficient within the latter.

Information

In its contribution to the implementation of the Common Objectives on Information⁴, the YFJ insisted on different issues related to access to information, the quality of information and the involvement of youth organisations and young people in the design and the diffusion of the information

1. Access to information

At the European level, meta-frameworks and networks can be set up when it comes to access to information. The European Commission set up the Eurodesk network which provides information in 20 languages for young people in all EU countries. This network is also one of the main information sources for the tool put in place by the European Commission to offer equal access to European information for young people - the European Youth Portal.

Tool: European Youth portal - <http://www.europa.eu.int/youth>

In 2003, the European Commission established the European Youth Portal. From its establishment until now, many improvements have taken place yet some technical obstacles still exist - such as the need to translate information into 20 languages.

A range of information is available, both technical (e.g. on studying and working across Europe) and political (e.g. the latest developments in youth policy). In December 2005, a discussion forum, monitored by the European Youth Forum, was also established to allow young Europeans to exchange their opinions and views on various issues.

Despite these important facets, the European Youth Portal could provide more tools to be used and translated for the different National Youth Portals. The YFJ could ensure their effective diffusion through National Youth Councils and its other Member Organisations.

Some National Youth Portals have been developed by National Youth Councils themselves, or in close cooperation with national or local public bodies, and some very

⁴ *ibid*

good practices and tools have been developed. The direct involvement of youth organisations ensures more tailored and targeted information that meets the realities and needs of young people. In terms of accessibility, the involvement of youth organisations in the National Youth Portals facilitates and widens the impact and the spread of the information; it also allows better feedback on the information provided. Gathering all these experiences and using them at the European level, as far as is possible, would indeed, be of great value, both simply by replicating good practice more widely, and also by helping to implement existing practices more effectively.

2. Quality of information

Providing information is as important as having information which respects standards of quality; indeed, when it comes to information for young people, this is crucial. There is thus an important need to develop criteria to determine information quality. Young people may not necessarily possess a critical approach, or may still be developing their abilities to use information effectively, thus, information with an assurance of quality is needed.

The network of National Youth Portals, which needs to be reinforced, showed, in 2005, its willingness to work on such quality standards. The different information networks, such as Eurodesk, ERYICA or EYCA are now working on such a Charter. The European Youth Forum fully supports and is contributing to this initiative, and encourages the European Commission to accompany and emphasise it.

3. Active participation in the information process

At the beginning of the implementation phase of the Common Objective on Information YFJ Member Organisations demanded that systems be “developed for youth organisations and young people to participate in the development and implementation of youth information strategies[,] as well as to be involved in the provision of information services and in the dissemination of information.”⁵

Even if the European Youth Portal is a useful tool which interests more and more young people, as reflected in figures on its usage, the European Youth Forum insists on the need to involve young people and youth organisations in the design of the information presented. Therefore, the European Youth Forum proposes that the European Commission and EU Member States organise training for representatives from youth organisations who want to be involved both in the design and the spread of the information. We truly believe in the multiplier effect of such training which would give young Europeans the tools and methods to reach their peers more easily⁶.

There is a strong overall impression that the Open Method of Coordination has, mainly due to a clear lack of resources and of instruments contributing to heightening

⁵ As stated in the YFJ Position Paper on Implementing Common Objectives to enhance the participation of young people and improve information for young people, adopted by the Council of Members in April 2003 (0304-03)

⁶ Young people shall have the opportunity to participate, in appropriate ways, in different stages of youth information work, at local, regional, national and international levels. These can include, among others: identifying information needs, the preparation and delivery of information, managing and evaluating information services and projects, and peer group activities - Point 13 of the European Youth Information Charter adopted in November 2004 by the 15th General Assembly of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)

accountability, been slowly sidelined by national governments - with attention becoming increasingly focused on the last European Youth policy development, the European Youth Pact. The European Youth Forum clearly and undoubtedly fully supports the European Youth Pact and the need for its full implementation, but recalls the need to devote resources to the policies tackling the active citizenship of young people. The active participation of young people in the decisions and actions that affect them is essential if we are to build democratic and prosperous societies. Citizenship and participation should not remain theory; young people should also get the opportunities to realise them.

Implementation of the horizontal issues of the June 2002 Council Resolution

While not envisaged as part of this evaluation, the European Youth Forum would also like to take this opportunity to outline its views on the implementation of the horizontal issues of the June 2002 Council Resolution; drawing on the latest developments in youth policy, such as the European Youth Pact, to enhance the evaluation.

The Council Resolution of June 2002 also confirmed that the cross-sectoral character of youth policy should be taken into account by considering youth in other policies and programmes - both at the national and the European level. This is in line with the priorities outlined in the White Paper (education, lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, combating racism and xenophobia, autonomy). The Council also called on the Commission to explore the ways in which young people could be taken into consideration in its proposals and in Community programmes and initiatives.

The Commission has not proposed a plan on how this will be effected in a coherent way and how the Youth Forum will be involved in the process. However, work is being done in this area regarding social inclusion, youth employment and non formal education. Indeed, this is the field in which the European Youth Forum believes it is important to make progress.

The YFJ and its Member Organisations want to reiterate that if the process is followed through properly, with strong political commitment from the Member States and strong and tight coordination from the European Commission, the obligations and therefore the results may be higher.

The European Youth Pact adopted in March 2005 took on board some of the horizontal issues, such as education and employment. However, the autonomy of young people and also housing, remain crucial issues which need to be tackled - even if they are not directly part of any implementation strategy.

Autonomy

Youth autonomy⁷ emerged as an issue of major importance from the White Paper consultations. Since the Council resolution in June 2002, only expert work has taken

⁷ *Autonomy is the situation where young people have the necessary support, resources and opportunities to choose to live independently, to run their own lives and to have full social and political participation in all sectors of everyday life, and be able to*

place. The European Youth Forum deeply regrets such a shortcoming in the implementation of the political commitments, even if it is fully aware of the difficulties posed by different national realities.

take independent decisions. From the European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Youth Autonomy adopted at the European Youth Forum Council of Members in Brussels, Belgium, 2004.

National Youth Councils contributions

Austria - ÖJV

The implementation process

In the beginning of 2002 the national counselling committee for the implementation of the White Paper was founded by the Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection (BMSG). The following institutions were formally invited to take part in the committee:

- BMSG
- Federal States
- Youth Information Centres
- Austrian National Youth Council (ÖJV)

ÖJV sent two representatives to the meetings.

We consider this committee to be an appropriate form for involving the different actors in the field of youth policy and youth work. Questionnaires, reports and measures were developed together.

With great regret we recognize that the last meeting of the national counselling committee was held in the middle of 2005. The committee had a good start, but it seems there was not much effort made to pursue the process.

The representatives have not been consulted on the evaluation of the implementation of the Common Objectives. Also, the final evaluation report on the Common Objectives “Information and Participation”, written by BMSG, was not submitted to the committee before it was sent to the European Commission.

We have got a notion that more priority is given to the implementation of the European Youth Pact than to the implementation of the White Paper. From our point of view youth policy should integrate both, White Paper and Youth Pact, and the committee on the White Paper must not be replaced by the “inter-ministerial working group” on the Youth Pact. The implementation of the Youth Pact is followed by an inter-ministerial working group, which consists of representatives of different ministries, Austrian federal states and representatives of ÖJV.

As mentioned, the committee indeed fulfilled its function in the beginning. It was also a good opportunity to discuss and work on youth topics in general. We also think that the involvement in the consultation process strengthens ÖJV in its role as representative of the interests of young people.

Information

In Austria, the federal states (“Länder”) are responsible for youth information. Therefore it is not the competence of the ÖJV to give a detailed report on the topic of Information.

The Youth Information Centres (there is one in every Federal State) already existed prior to the White Paper process. The constitution of “Jugendinfo.cc”, the National Youth Information Agency, marks an improvement in information-affairs. This was advanced by the implementation of the White Paper in a significant way. As an umbrella association of all Austrian Youth Information Centres its financial means are provided by BMSG. “Jugendinfo.cc” supports joint projects of the Austrian Youth Information Centres, such as the national training course for youth information, national publications or joint appearances at youth events.

Participation

For implementing the Common Objectives the national counselling committee was set up and had a workshop. There a catalogue of measures has been developed.

We think that measures would have been realized in any case, also without the White Paper.

As far as we know the measures were not evaluated in the committee, and that shows once more that the process is stuck before its completion.

As described in the first part of this Shadow Report the committee involved the different actors in the field of youth policy and youth work. The regional authorities, who have a very strong role in youth policies in Austria, were integrated from the beginning (in form of the Youth Information Services of the Federal States). The BMSG also tried to incorporate the local perspective in the development of questionnaires and information events.

Concrete measures like a new funding system, new programmes or a stronger support to youth organisations were not taken in the implementation process. According to our opinion broad and sustainable changes in the structures of Austrian youth policy would be more than necessary.

The White Paper process was a good support in the beginning - but more in a symbolic way than with an effect on structures and institutions. Structural changes would only be made possible by sustainable funding.

The plans often remained abstract and did not reach the local level of youth information and youth work. Therefore the implementation could have brought more innovation to youth politics in Austria.

Finland - Allianssi

Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi organised on November 9th 2005 an open event for member organisations and other experts in the youth field to tell their views on the implementation of the White Paper concerning Youth Information and Participation. In working groups participants were mostly discussing developments that have occurred during past two-three years, but also in longer perspective.

Implementation of the process

Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi is part of national working group following the implementation of the White Paper. We have two members in that working group. Allianssi organises every year events and hearings to member organisations and other actors in the youth field about issues concerning the White Paper.

Allianssi and the national youth information network have been very well involved in the implementation of the White Paper in Finland. We have taken part since the beginning to the drafting of all the national reports for White Paper, and we have had our representatives in the WHITE PAPER working group of the ministry. We have also arranged joint seminars with the network and the ministry about the development of youth information.

Now Common Objectives for Information and Participation were evaluated and it seems that there have been many things that have improved. Financial support to youth organisations and projects has increased a lot. White paper is used as reference document to almost all issues concerning youth.

Information about White Paper has not reached the grass root level still. Progress is rather slow despite all efforts. It would be important to reach all levels of the youth field.

Best practices: examples of concrete actions taken.

- financial support to youth organisations has been stabilised and increased
- participation projects for young people (local youth councils, open future workshops, pupils' and students' unions and councils)
- EU Youth Programme has been very good example of actions that encourage unorganised youth for participating more.
- youth workshop activities and social employment programmes are good example of Finnish participation model
- For example, when talking about local youth councils, it would be better option to give a particular amount of money, and power to decide upon that money is up to young people. If local youth councils are just making statements and giving opinions but do not have "real" possibilities for decision making, it discourages active youth.
- more inclusive and culture sensitive youth work has developed
- National coordination of youth information established

Information

Since the publishing of the common objectives in the field of youth information in 2003, there has been a rapid development of youth information services in Finland. This development has mainly happened due to the fact that the Ministry of Education has taken the youth information as one of its priorities in the youth field and due to the recognition of the importance of youth information given in the White Paper. Also in the new youth law (valid since March 1st 2006), the youth information is mentioned as one of the important services for young people.

The youth information services in Finland are mainly offered by the municipalities. In 2003, there were 26 youth information centres or other services, and today the number is about 120. The ministry has issued a recommendation and given funding for municipalities to develop these services. The international coordination (ERYICA membership) is at the national youth council, Allianssi, but there has been a lack of national coordination. In January 2006 however, the ministry decided, on the recommendation of the national youth information network and Allianssi, to establish a national coordination in Oulu. In future, this coordination will help new municipalities to set up youth information services, arrange trainings, produce materials, etc.

Participation

General on participation

In Finland young people have good opportunities to participate in decision making, structures are really functioning and there are many possibilities. Especially in the local level young people have activated recently and there are many good examples of local youth participation and initiatives.

In general youth is seen as subject, not as object. In Finland there is also high level of membership in organisations; many young people belong to one or several organisations. Finnish people do a lot of voluntary work in NGO's, political parties and sport associations etc.

Though good situation in general there is a gap between young people that participate in many kinds of organisations and then young people who are completely excluded from all participation to decision making and activities.

It is important to encourage young people for participatory activities and here the government and organisations play a crucial role. In general participation has increased but it is harder to measure because forms of participation have changed

Youth participation in civil society

Youth participation has been supported by government:

- by giving money to different projects, especially networking and co-operation projects
- problem is that big and well- established organisations get support easier than small ones (this is mostly due to lack of information and human resources)
- new thing is that municipalities are more active in supporting youth organisations though this also varies from place to place

- municipalities lack of financial resources
- national youth organisations are better funded now than in years

Participation of young people with special needs:

- EU Youth Programme is good tool for young people with fewer opportunities
- New law on equality gives more emphasis on the issue, also youth policy is based on equality and equal opportunities
- in smaller towns there are more prejudice towards youth with special needs

Evaluation of youth participation:

- There should be open and transparent ranking of countries according how they carry out the white paper priorities and youth policy development, same way than education is ranked in OECD countries by the PISA- study
- co-management should be horizontally practised, it is still mainstream only in issues concerning youth directly
- different levels of participation should be defined
- important is also personal growth and meaning of participation in individual level

Youth participation in democratic structures

Obstacles for young people to participate in democratic structures:

- One biggest obstacle is lack of resources for local youth and pupils' councils
- For immigrants without knowledge in Finnish it is almost impossible to participate in decision making
- Voting and activity in elections, why young people do not vote, though they are interested in society? Party politics does not attract young people, political activism is seen as too restricting and narrow style of influencing, and it does not appeal to youth.
- Is activity in elections inherited? Schools should be equalising the development.
- Youth don't see the results of voting, it is not tempting to wait for years if something changes
- Youth want to see the results faster than nowadays
- There is too much bureaucratic policies and less democratic movement and initiative

Non-organised youth and their possibilities to participate decision making

- Do open youth forums reach the un-organised young people better? We are not convinced but trust on the attraction of youth organisation
- How to reach young people, who have dropped off the circle of activity
- EU Youth Programme works very well for un-organised youth's benefit
- Youth workshop activities and social employment programmes are good example of Finnish participation model
- Slowness of democracy and bureaucracy discourage youth easily, participation has to be made more effective and results need to be seen faster
- Youth councils should have power to decide upon youth sector's money, possibility to give grants for youth initiatives and groups

France - CNAJEP

Beforehand, CNAJEP wishes to stress its interest in and total support of the European Youth Forum's initiative. The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) applied in the context of the White Paper had indeed raised many expectations among youth organisations and French associations. Today we are forced to notice that the expected dialogue with the Ministry has not taken place. This is where the OMC's limit lies, in the sense that it essentially depends on the good will of the Member States. Once again, it is important to underline that in the fragile social context, the French associative movement is experiencing a heavy crisis in terms of relationships with the State: crisis of confidence, crisis of reason which leads us to rethink our action and relations with the public sphere.

The implementation process

Contact with governments

As the National Youth Council of France, CNAJEP had contributed to the elaboration of the European Commission's White Paper 'A new impetus for European youth', through position papers and hearings. This contribution was more or less regularly followed-up in the framework of the definition of the common objectives. CNAJEP has regretted a certain lack of cooperation at the national level during the answers to the questionnaires or during the process's follow-up; two essential elements came to somehow spoil this cooperation, i.e. the time and conditions favourable to the elaboration of a real reflection on the one hand, and the full transparency of the answers formulated by the French State to Europe on the other hand.

Although the implementation phase of the common objectives on participation and information has been launched for more than two years, CNAJEP can but deplore a manifest lack of dialogue and transparency between the Ministry and the associations. As far as CNAJEP knows, there has been no consultation process around the public policies implemented by the State in order to answer the Common objectives on information and participation.

During the encounters with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Associative life, the topic of the White Paper was evoked only once: on 8th December 2004, a meeting between CNAJEP's Europe Group and a representative from the *Bureau des Echanges internationaux* - BEI (*International Exchanges Office*) - Direction for Youth, Associative life and Popular Education was organised.

The meeting aimed at taking stock of CNAJEP's European activities, and exploring how a better cooperation between BEI and CNAJEP could be born, amongst other things regarding the implementation of the Common Objectives on voluntary activities and a greater/better understanding and knowledge of youth, but above all for the evaluation of the implementation of the Common Objectives on Participation and Information. During that meeting, both parties agreed to assert that '*A constant dialogue between the Ministry and CNAJEP is essential on that topic; [and that] it would be good to have more transparency on the final reports, and more meetings during the whole evaluation process.*' This wish has remained unfulfilled.

Finally, concerning France's final report on the evaluation of the implementation of

the Common Objectives Participation and Information, CNAJEP was indeed contacted by the government. However, this consultation did not aim to discuss and bring our contributions/remarks on the public policies implemented by the State to answer the COs, but rather to ask us in what terms, us, National Youth Council, we had been implementing activities corresponding to the COs.

Seen the context prevailing in France, we had deemed inappropriate to give any follow-up to this request while explaining our position.

As a conclusion, CNAJEP was not invited to any possible consultation on the State's public policies, the French final report is not public, and the only appeal of the Ministry consisted in asking us to talk about our activities and not about those of the State itself. Hence the difficulty for us to mention a consultation process at all. However, it is important to remind the peculiarity of the French situation where two structures similar to a National Youth Council are coexisting: CNAJEP, non-governmental organisation founded in 1968, gathering more than 70 associations, and member of the European Youth Forum; and a second structure (CNJ) created in 1999, chaired by the Minister of Youth who elects its 200 members and facilitated by the services of the Ministry.

We are forced to acknowledge that since 2004, CNJ has occupied a more and more important place close to the government and it has even asked for membership to the European Youth Forum.

The point here is not to criticize CNJ but rather the position of the government which refuses any meeting between CNAJEP and CNJ, and all the more, excludes CNAJEP from various national actions and European events.

Information

Understanding of the process

The question of youth information is a recurrent topic at the European level; what information to what public and under which form? At the French level, there exists a network of institutional places, the 'Youth Information' Network (coordinated by the CIDJ) the action of which can hardly be assessed on the French territory. There is indeed a big diversity in those places, a lot of which often hardly targeted, badly situated, etc. The youth information policy is mainly based on employment, health, citizenship, and associations are not much represented. Besides, it is to be noted that the CIDJ's services are payable for associations! Hence the information is not being perceived the same way at the governmental level and at the associative level. According to us, information for less privileged young people should be a priority, it should include general and well thought-out information on different topics (training, citizenship, employment, commitment, associations, etc.). The government's information policy doesn't really seem to have progressed since the publication of the White Paper, at least not significantly. It used to exist, with its defects and imperfections, notably regarding the link with the associative world, and in that sense things have not really improved.

Measuring implementation

Youth information in France gathers several structures, most of which existed before

the White Paper:

- 1 national centre : CIDJ (Youth Information and Documentation Centre) in Paris
- 30 CRIJ (Youth information regional centres)
- 265 BIJ (Youth information Offices)
- 1374 PIJ (Youth information Points)
- 22 Youth information buses (itinerant service)

Each year, the French youth information network welcomes around 5 million visitors (figures of the Youth and Sports Ministry). They are open to young people but also to parents, teachers, social workers, etc. on topics like education, vocational training and professions, employment, housing, rights, health, leisure activities, etc. Being labelled by the Youth Ministry - regional and departmental youth and sports direction, the youth information structures accomplish their mission conformingly with a youth information charter.

In this way, most of these structures existed before the White Paper. In the context of the Common Objectives, the Youth Ministry implemented several actions, notably a **youth portal** (www.jeunesse.gouv.fr) created in May 2005 which gathers different information on studies, work, health, Europe, etc. Unfortunately, its update is irregular and sometimes inappropriate as regards current events (for e.g. in November 2005, during the revolts in France, no information was available on the topic). It has to be said that there exist other youth portals in France: Ville de Paris, the site of the youth rights, teenagers-justice, etc. most of these sites having been created independently from the White Paper.

Apart from that, several actions also exist such as the **Summer Jobs Operation**: each year the CIDJ and CRIJ, in collaboration with the ANPE (Employment Agency) organise the Summer Jobs days to enable young people to have access to employment offers in lots of activities' areas. Since 2004, the system has been complemented by a European strand, and employment offers from other European countries are also being proposed.

Finally, a project linked to the **cyb points - youth digital spaces** was to be implemented in 2005. It was about training for employment adaptability financed by the Youth, Sports and Associative life Ministry. They were supposed to train 350 youth workers until June 2005. The trainings were to focus on workshops facilitation (creation of web pages, web sites, posters, PAO, ...), use of free software, guiding young people in the creation of projects (artistic, cultural, etc.), network maintenance, the internet right (legislation and responsibility for the spaces), etc.

Although the youth information strand seems one of the government's priorities, the question of funds is more problematic. It is effectively difficult to answer that question without analysing the preliminary budget of the Youth Ministry for 2005 which was not yet available at the time of writing this report. However, it seems that a big part of the Ministry's unfrozen funds has gone to governmental plans in which youth associations are not or little involved. It is important to notice the reduction in the Ministry subventions granted to associations in 2005; which leads to the reduction of projects and to major functioning difficulties for the associative world.

Once again, in terms of information, one can talk of a will to act or of CRIJ which also

play local, the problem residing in the quality of these systems and in the public they succeed in reaching.

As far as we know, the government has not mentioned the Common objectives of the White Paper in the implementation of measures for youth information. Besides, as seen before, drastic budget cuts have taken place without taking the White Paper into account.

Results

Things do not seem to have changed radically. Of course, there are new actions (Will to act, Youth Portal, Youth Challenges, etc.) which started *a priori* around 2000-2001 and there is no doubt that the White Paper fostered the Ministry to carry these actions until the end. Nevertheless, one of the major obstacles to this process is the lack of consultation of the associative world and youth actors. In that sense, the objectives have only been half reached, some places and devices have been created but they only concern a minority of young people and not those who were most in need of them. Lots of things could have been done if the government and youth organisations had worked together for a youth policy in terms of information, but this also goes for participation and for all youth sectors. The youth situation in France is extremely harsh: poverty, unemployment, housing problems, precariousness, etc. Today the government is calling associations to try and 'fix' the broken link in the areas... but it is impossible to dress a wound for every single crisis, it is necessary to consult each other, to think of what needs to be done together and with young people. No one has the solution but together there might be a hope.

Participation

According to CNAJEP, the participation of 'young people' is perceived as the one of actors of European society and not as the one of a separate category. Concerning this, young people do not have as mere vocation to consider the questions directly affecting them but rather to deal with all the questions related to the social, economic, cultural and political functioning.

The challenge is to enable organised and non-organised individuals to express themselves differently than through a vote (representative democracy). It also is to create spaces within which an intergenerational dialogue can be established.

Participation should implement processes that can influence public policies, avoiding instrumentalisation logics and processes such as 'complaints books'.

Participation spaces are conceived as spaces for collective elaboration which favour the intergenerational (accompaniment) and the social mixity. Participation is a collective apprenticeship.

Various modes and forms of participation need to be taken into consideration (new modes, new forms).

Implementation process

CNAJEP has not been invited to take part in any implementation process of the Common objectives on participation. Does it mean that nothing has been done? In terms of youth participation in local/national life, it seems that the main actors concerned and contacted are youth councils. As was said at the beginning of this report, CNJ is not new and it is not the White Paper which enabled or incited its

creation. Nevertheless, it was asked to propose a few measures in order to foster youth participation (see below for measures).

Tools/measures

It is difficult to compare the common objectives and the actions implemented by the government because only a few things have been done, the government having based itself on what already existed.

Youth participation in local life

Since the beginning of the 80ies, local communities including a few youth organisations have taken the initiative to implement participation incentives for children and young people in the public decision-making. The Ministry has always supported those actions, notably from 1991, through its partnership with the National Association of Children and Youth Councils (ANACEJ, member association of CNAJEP) which gathers 450 local communities and 9 youth and popular education movements.

Since 1998 the Ministry has also implemented a National Youth Council and Departmental Youth Councils, the latter having a very variable activity according to the departments. According to the State services themselves, 1/3 function quite well, 1/3 are struggling along and the remaining third are not functioning anymore. However, it is important to stress that the functioning can vary from one council to another, and that the same goes for the representativity of their members. Hence if several councils function very well in terms of proposals and reflections, others are being strongly manipulated in their choices and decisions.

CNJ has forwarded several proposals regarding youth participation in local life such as the creation of an official network of Youth Councils, the implementation of a Charter of Youth Councils, the reinforcement of the Departmental youth councils, etc. Youth councils represent the core of the government action in matter of participation.

Seen the fact that associations have not been involved in a reflection process on youth participation by the government nor by CNJ, due to the cuts in grants and to the difficulties to meet our interlocutors at the Ministry, CNAJEP can not say more than this as regards the White Paper.

Results

Although it is impossible to say if things have changed for the last two years as regards participation, it is to be noted that participation of youth associations in the government's decisions has significantly decreased. Once again without negotiation nor consultation processes, things can only hardly evolve.

Germany - DBJR

General Appraisal

The German Federal Youth Council has actively accompanied the White Paper process since 1999 and contributed numerous proposals for more cooperation in youth policy within the European Union. Hence the German Federal Youth Council has expressly welcomed the final passage of common objectives for participation and information of youth by the EU-youth ministers on the 25th of November 2003.

The activities that have been induced by the EU and the Member States after the objective's passage are by far not sufficient to lastingly and decisively extend the opportunities for participation of youth and fail to live up to the expectations that have been raised among young people. Many activities and actions on both national and European level had been agreed on already before the passing of the 2003 resolve and so far a true surplus value is not in sight.

In Germany too, there are numerous visible hindrances, that are opposed to a more extensive and effective participation of youth. Particularly in the arena of politics there are plenty of reservations against a stronger inclusion of youth. Since 2003 opportunities of participation are even being restricted and reduced in some areas with reference to corresponding EU guidelines in the area of joint decision making in financial matters.

The national situation at the time of passing common objectives in the field of participation and information.

Participation and laws

Participation had become contractual by legal provisions in many areas of our society before the passing of the common objectives in 2003.

Below is an overview of the guidelines

The pillar of participation of youth and children in international law rests upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Germany too, the participation of children and youth is firmly rooted in the law. The Law for Children and Youth Welfare (Volume Eight - Social Code - SGB VIII, Child and Youth Services Act) factors in the involvement of young people in the shaping of measures concerning help for children and young people, including for example local job opportunities for youth. The law stipulates "to involve children and young people, according to their stage of development, in all decisions in public youth welfare concerning them" (§ 8, subsection 1 SGB VIII). Furthermore their "growing abilities and the increasing need (...) to self-sufficient, responsible acting as well as the respective special social and cultural requirements (...) have to be taken into consideration." (§ 9 subsection 2 SGB VIII). This point also refers to the handling of financial means and resources, or to express it in legal terms, financial aid planning (for more information look up § 36 subsection 1 SGB VIII). There the law prescribes. "Young people have to be involved already in the demandoriented planning of measures" (§ 80 subsection 1 subparagraph 2 SGB VIII). Concretely this means that there shall not be such a thing as an allocation of money and other resources "from above" to the youth associations, but young people should be able to plan and work independently in this area.

Not brushing aside the importance of transnational and national guidelines it is still vital to adjudge young people their rights. The German Federal Youth Council highly welcomes therefore that some states have written down the participation of children and youth in their municipal codes.

A very specific opportunity to participate is naturally to take part in elections. The right to vote and be elected (active and passive suffrage) is a matter of age, among other things. Thus, age is a major legal aspect concerning the involvement of young people in politics and matters of society.

The role of children's and youth organisations

Already before 2003 in Germany, children's and youth organisations were active on all levels. These are the experimental theatres for young people's participation. It is there that they are equipped with everything necessary for a self-determined political life and not in theory through complicated papers and lectures but indeed through learning by doing. The willingness and ability to articulate one's own interests, ways and means to enforce these as well as handling conflicts are integral parts of this. Children and youth learn in teams and in organisational work to group together with peers and find compromises. Cooperation counts and orders from "above" are being scrutinized. At the same time children and youth gain a deeper understanding for taking responsibility for others, as well as wielding "power" responsibly.

This enumeration comprises core areas of political learning. Active co-shaping of all areas is foregrounded. Hence, youth organisations do not only offer opportunities to participate in given structures but also demand to be part in the active shaping of democracy. Democracy becomes part of everyday life as living together in leisure time and in organisations are shaped according to democratic principles. Through this children and young people learn the forms of communication in a democratic society. One important area in this learning process is the election of representatives to speak for the members of the group. The advantages of such a "structure of representatives" are directly experienced by the young people. Success in ones objectives is enormously facilitated through closing ranks with cooperating partners in neighbouring communities, states, nationwide or international and by acting united and speaking with one voice. It is in groups that young people learn to recognize their own role within a group and to fill in this role. And with that young people and children learn to use the abilities of the individual for the benefit of the group and learn to assign tasks to people according to their abilities and skills. In short, youth organisations offer the chance for youth to put into practice democratic cooperation in various fields from a decision on group activities to opinionforming in political matters.

The initiatives in the field of a extended participation of youth taken by the European Commission are by no means sufficient support for the work of children's and youth organisations. The initiatives are marked by a pseudo-participation in the form of youth conferences, short-notice youth events and similar non-recurring events. Likewise, the half-year national and European youth conferences held on occasion of the Presidency of the Council for the European Union have to be interlinked much closer with existing structures if a lasting effect is to be achieved.

Actions realized on national level since the passing of the common objectives with reference to each of the three objectives and action lines

A differentiation of the various activities, projects and actions according to the three objectives and action lines makes little sense in the view of the German Federal Youth Council if the issue is the depiction of emphasised activities in this field. Two issues of these focal points are of special interest for the German Federal Youth Council and its member organisations.

Shape participation -“Project P - get involved“

Come in Contract

“Come in Contract“ is the German Federal Youth Council's contribution to the federal initiative “Projekt P - Misch dich ein“(„Project P - get involved“). The “P“ stands for politics and participation. Youth initiatives and participation projects are generated, are included into networks, empowered and are made visible. Behind “Project P“ stand apart from the German Federal Youth Council the Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as well as the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung).

The central thought of “Come in Contract“ is the obligatory participation of youth in society and politics by entering conventions with persons in key positions. Young people start projects on topics they are interested in such as social justice, education, violence, environment, international issues, protection of minorities. Then, young people get to know processes of decision and are accordingly trained and qualified to approach persons responsible to help them realizing their objectives and wishes. The pivot here is the mutual agreement between young people and the decision makers. Through the conventions both “parties“ commit themselves to implement the agreed objectives. The contract constitutes the inventive, obligatory and motivating element and aims at a new form of participation.

These contracts are sign by both young people and political instances at federal, state, or municipal level (p.ex. Members of Parliament of a certain constituency) as well as other decision makers (p.ex. from the economical sector). These contracts have the following features: they are useful, concrete, realistic, mutual, checkable and effective. They are true to life and effective for a wider circle than the parties of the contract. The contracts can be implemented in a reasonable time frame and have a realistic chance for success.

Young people formulate their wishes and demands to politicians and decision makers well thought out and concisely phrased. The politicians and decision makers in turn offer their competencies and authority for the implementation of the objectives.

“Come in Contract“ is taken up with great interest by the youth and group leaders. Many very creative projects were generated by very unusual approaches to the subject of participation in politics and changes of politics. Thanks to the chances for financial funding within the framework of “Project P“ many of these projects started. The 100 initiatives successfully effected or still being in effect have held negotiations with politicians and persons in administration key positions and have done so partly for the first time or have continued and enforced an already successful dialogue of recent years.

The spectrum of the German Federal Youth Council's member organisation's projects that have taken place in 2004 and 2005 range from negotiations with politicians concerning the amending of laws, negotiations for more space in community facilities to counselling the ministry for environment by youth environmental organisations, the organisation of a youth policy week in the Landtag (legislative assembly of a German State) and to mentoring young women as well as the creation of new jobs through pertinacious negotiations and a charity football tournament.

Other projects base their focal point on publications, websites or brochures for the use of other youth groups and organisations in which "Come in Contract" and its entire spectrum is promoted. The resulting support material based upon the projects put into effect have the advantage that they were made by youth for youth. The material supports the continuity and transferability of the effected participation projects. A list of projects with a short description of their aims can be found on the homepage of "Project P": www.projekt.p.de .§

It is also an aim of "Project P" to give participation of youth and its support a broader public through the media. Thus broadsheets have been placed in magazines for young people and in 2005 a nationwide poster campaign was launched with the motto: Powerplay - with the Essen young Christian workers group and their project "Kohlenkick".

"Come in Contract" is promoted largely through the homepages and magazines of the member organisations and young farmers clubs. A well devised concept for communication led to articles and information about "Come in Contract" on youth servers of the states as well as in periodicals on political education and youth welfare. The support for work on participation through specifically created programs and initiatives proves to be positive and motivational. However, without the existence of structures for youth work and organisational work that enable a punctual and thematic work on projects, "Come in Contract" could not have been put into effect. Therefore a linkage to these structures is absolutely indispensable. All in all the nationwide "Come in Contract" projects are important pillars of the "Project P - get involved" campaign. This democracy- and participation-fostering concept of contract negotiations fits in very well into the entire concept of the both qualifying and initiative promoting measures of the project partners.

Encroaching in politics of integration

Youth organisations open to youth with migrational backgrounds

From 2003 on a new orientation of youth organisation's work towards an intercultural opening can be observed as a reaction to the demographic development. Already in October 2001 the German Federal Youth Council had decided to systematically enforce the process of intercultural opening in youth work. On occasion of the plenary meeting in December 2004, the German Federal Youth Council has discussed the weak points in the integration of children and young people with migrational background within youth organisation's structure. The German Federal Youth Council has incited internal processes for the enforcement of intercultural competence. It is to be emphasised that the German Federal Youth Council does not consider migrant's organisations a

competition but partners for cooperation and existing umbrella organisations and youth councils intend to open to migrant's organisations in order to cooperate with them.

To support youth organisations in the opening process for young people with migrational background and their organisations, an intensive cooperation between the German Federal Youth Council and the staff of the commissary for integration of the Deutsche Sportjugend (German Sports Youth) and the IDA e.V.

Implemented actions to determine the existing knowledge with reference to the participation information and taking all useful actions to complete, update and facilitate access.

Get along!

Participation with a method - Ideas for youth projects with examples in practice, tips and methods.

In 2004 a helping hand for participative, democratic methods and tips for small project management correlating to political and social participation was published within the framework of "Come into Contract". A CD-ROM with high surplus value was developed. On the CD-ROM "Come in Contract - participation with a method" there are successful examples from project practise within the framework of "Come in Contract". The idea of a contract as the motor for one's own project is supported here. Successful projects should serve as inspiration for others.

The focal point is of the CD-ROM however, is on collecting methods and tips for practise, so as to get interesting projects of one's own going. A selection of methods, games and tips are described in detail. These are suitable for groups, initiatives or project teams to democratically plan, that is with a maximum of participation, objectives and actions.

In addition legal bases for youth participation, depictions of different forms of social and political participation, a checklist for successful project management, tips for good public relations and ideas for contacting politicians. This is supposed to stimulate youth to get active. Each tip and each description is supported by illustrative material. There are contracts between youth and politicians, clippings of project documentaries, pictures and visualizations of theoretical descriptions, numerous links and an extensive literature list, referring to more successful projects and initiatives that expand the sound texts.

Participate in the parliamentary elections for the Bundestag 2005

Young people count - if they cast their votes!

The German Federal Youth Council and its member organisations launched numerous actions prior to the parliamentary elections on the 18th of September 2005 in order to raise awareness for the needs of children and young people as well as helping top make a decision.

A newsletter informed on current developments, activities and positions with respect to youth policies. An interactive database contained offers and activities of and for youth organisations for the parliamentary elections. The brochure “Jugend w(z)ählt - Forderungen des Deutschen Bundesjugendrings zur Wahl des 16. Deutschen Bundestags” (“Youth counts and votes - demands of the German Federal Youth Council for the parliamentary elections of the 16th German Bundestag) sums up numerous demands of children's and youth organisations on the political parties. A poster titled “Misch dich ein - auch bei der Bundestagswahl” (“Get involved - in parliamentary elections too”) was printed and was used at member organisation's events to motivate youth to cast their vote.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) offers once again a so-called “Wahl-O-Mat” (“Vote-O-Mat”) on its website to offer youth an insight into important political questions through simple theses. Many of the young editors have a youth organisation background. The German Federal Youth Council co-operated as a media partner.

Many member organisations tried to reach young people by means of election spots, appeals to vote, information for young voters, postcards in order to convey information on the elections.

Modalities of consultation of youth concerning the implementation of common objectives and devising the report

The German Federal Youth Council was informed about the implementation of the objectives within the framework of the task force for European youth policy by the ministry for family, senior citizens, women and youth.

Special consultations whose subject was expressly the implementation of the agreed objectives were not held. At the moment a proposal how the consultations within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination and the formulation of national reports can be ameliorated is in discussion.

Difficulties of the implementations of the objectives and action lines on national level

Still there are many hindrances in the implementation of the objectives, particularly in the field of political participation. The German Federal Youth Council has, on occasion of the parliamentary elections on the 18th of September 2005, formulated demands that can contribute to better opportunities for co-operation:

Our demands for more participation of young people

No representatives: Wherever it is possible the children themselves should be directly involved - and not adults representing the children! We demand direct rights to involvement and decision-making competencies, attuned with guide-lines of youth welfare, for young people.

Act locally: On municipal levels young people as well as the independent supporters with youth welfare planning have to be involved at an early stage. It is the only way

the obligation proscribed by the Child and Youth Services Act can be implemented actively and youth work is provided with a sound financial and content basis.

Lower the voting age: Young people know very well what they want. And they reach decisions far more frequently and independently than did the generation of their parents. Still they are on democracy's waiting list - entry only 18 and above. We demand the lowering of the voting age to at least 16. We are opposed to a surrogate voting right, which means parents cast a vote for their children: Young people are very well able to fill their role as citizens.

Knowing what's up: Children and youth have to be taught about their rights to participate - by appropriate media as well as text books. "Children's rights" should be part of every syllabus as are maths and German. It is also the obligation of adults to get information on the rights of young people and to respect and promote them.

Have fun participating: Curiosity in young people is aroused only if they feel they are directly addressed. It is therefore imperative to be close to the circumstances of young people's lives, to develop offers according to their age and to offer attractive opportunities for participation. It is also important that young people can comprehend all steps of operational and organisational structure and procedures - it is the only way to learn how an idea becomes reality.

Participation with an impact: Wherever children and youth are involved their effort should have a visible impact. The basis for this is that there are substantial opportunities or decision-making behind the label „participation“. Genuine participation is more than deciding on the list of beverages for the next youth club party...

Detected and expected effects

Direct effects of the passing of the objectives are, in the opinion of the German Federal Youth Council, visible to a very low extent. Neither the European Commission nor the majority of the Member States have raised the necessary awareness for the resolved objectives nor have they developed mechanisms for an extended participation in the implementation on the respective levels. It is to be hoped that these deficits can be remedied until the next national report is formulated. National conferences on the development of national frameworks of action, regional conferences on the evaluation of the implementation of the framework of action and a continuous information and communication of the responsible ministry of youth with independent supporters on all levels can make a valuable contribution to this process.

Clues as to which action lines were more or less useful, which were easier or more difficult to employ, as well as proposals which action lines should be added, neglected or changed.

At this point of time a finalization is too early. It is necessary on both the European level as well as in the member nations to adopt mechanisms that see to youth and their organisations being appropriately consulted before and after a passing of objectives. Financial means for information campaigns on backgrounds, contents and further steps after the passing of objectives by the EU-youth ministers are absolutely indispensable. These financial means have to be provided on all levels.

Lithuania - LiJOT

The consultation process for the implementation

One of the main actions to identify the existing knowledge of young people and youth organisations about the youth information and participation was the research of the Lithuanian youth situation in 2004 ordered by the State Council for Youth Affairs. This research presented the youth situation and youth opinion about youth policy, youth participation in various organisations and non-formal groups, representing youth interests, point of view of the Lithuanian situation, labour etc. Besides, such research of the Lithuanian youth situation was made in 2005, where the main attention was paid to youth opinion about participating in different youth organisations, non-formal groups, leisure time, financing of youth programmes, citizenship, religion, values of youth and changes in overall Lithuanian situation during the year. According to these research results strategic action plans in the field of youth policy is prepared and submitted to responsible institutions.

Lithuanian youth council (LiJOT) together with the Ministry of social security and labour and the State Council for Youth Affairs organised a “National youth conference 2005” on the 3rd - 4th of November 2005. For the first time it gathered more than 200 young people coming from all over Lithuania, both representatives of youth organisations and individuals. As well mayors from all Lithuanian municipalities and municipality youth coordinators were invited. During the plenary sessions participants were presented the relevant information and documents concerning youth issues on national and European level. In order to receive youth opinion, feedback, proposals, their needs and expectations efficiently working groups on participation, information, entrepreneurship, employment, volunteerism etc. were performed. Afterwards young people not only presented working groups’ results with the proposals about the further development of the youth policy, but appealed with resolution asking for the national agreement on the development of the youth policy, that would allow long-term actions to improve youth situation in Lithuania. The event was also attended by the Minister of social security and labour, the Minister of the interior affairs and the Minister of education and science.

Municipality youth coordinators are responsible for the youth affairs and implementation of the regional youth policy in the municipal administrations. They perform the following functions:

- Compile, systemise, analyse and generalise information, prepare informational reports about the youth situation in the municipalities;
- Provide different information about youth rights protection and implementation of youth policy in the municipality to all persons interested;
- Inform local youth organisations about the programmes of the State council for youth affairs, European Union programme “Youth” and other programmes;
- Provide consultations to youth organisations, non-formal youth groups and single individuals about preparing programmes supported by State Council for Youth Affairs, Agency of International Youth Cooperation (National Agency), other foundations and municipalities.

Various ministries, their departments, other governmental institutions are implementing different programmes for youth and also apply methods to guarantee

consultations for young people on the implementation of the common objectives on youth information and participation. They organise discussions, trainings, consultations, seminars, conferences with governmental, municipal institutions and representatives from youth sector; analyze youth situation, their needs as well as results of the programmes targeted for youth; order researches; provide different information for young people and those working with young people; spread good practise examples of the youth projects and ideas. Nevertheless all gathered and analyzed data about young people from various institutions is not collected and kept in one place in order to ensure the whole overview of the youth situation.

Implementation of the common objectives

Youth information

Major actors providing information to young people are non - governmental youth organisations and various institutions, while promoting certain values and services. Youth organisations are responsible in a way to organise and motivate young people for participation. Youth situation research made in 2004 showed that two fifths of young people are not aware of even a single youth organisation. Majority of such young people belong to the youth aged 25-29 living in rural areas or small towns. According to the youth situation research in 2005 almost 20% of young people aged 14-29 are not participating in youth activities, but would like to. There are municipality youth coordinators who are responsible for youth information and other issues in all municipalities. Their primary role is to involve young people and inform about various activities, projects, relevant documents on youth on regional, national and European level.

Eurodesk Lithuania is Eurodesk national partner. Eurodesk is a European network of information services in 27 countries providing a unique access to European information for young people and those who work with them. Eurodesk Lithuania is responsible for delivering a range of public European information services at national and local levels, which include:

- free enquiry answering - by phone, visit, e-mail, fax, etc;
- advice and help to enquirers;
- publications and resources;
- events, conferences, seminars etc.;
- internet access to European and national information;
- training and support services.

National partners of the Eurodesk cooperate with over 500 local information providers (local partners) aiming to increase the volume of information offered by the Eurodesk. Eurodesk activities in Lithuania are coordinated by the Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT).

There are four local partners in Lithuania, regional associations of youth organisations, the Round tables.

During the last years many governmental institutions applied modern systems of information and communication aiming to ensure equal opportunities for young people to access information without discrimination. In addition, nearly all

municipalities have the space for the youth in their websites. There young people can find municipal normative legal acts related with the local youth and publishes other youth relevant information. Practically speaking their websites should provide constant updates of information for the youth, some has also developed space for discussions and for the exchange of information, however sometimes the websites are not user-friendly, usually information is not often updated. Starting from 2005 till 2007 the State Council for Youth Affairs implements the programme “Strengthening the potential of the Lithuanian youth organisations”. This programme supports youth organisations, associations and regional youth organisations with technical office and organisational equipment (computers, printers, fax and copying machines). The aim of the programme is to increase the potential of the Lithuanian youth organisations in implementing the national youth policy.

There were some information materials published (Lithuanian youth situation research 2004, Guidelines for municipal youth policy, Informative - educational material for the youth in a digital format “Youth activities: from theory to practice” etc).

Representatives from the Ministry of social security and labour, the State Council for Youth Affairs, Lithuanian Youth Council and other relevant youth organisations are working together in developing program for creating Youth information centres and their activity plan in Lithuania.

The State Council for Youth Affairs implements the programme for youth participation in creating knowledge society. Such kind of projects aims to implement innovative methods and ideas to solve youth related issues with the help of information technologies. However the number of appliers for this programme is almost the least comparing to other programmes.

Youth participation

Youth situation in Lithuania research in 2005 has shown that less than 30% of young people aged 14-29 are participating in the activities of different youth organisations or associations. Comparing to the youth situation research performed in 2004 the number of young people participating in youth organisations has slightly risen. The most active in various activities defined studying young people. Young people especially in regional level note that they don't receive enough information about possibilities to participate in work and various activities of youth organisations. They think that more active youth participation could be encouraged by special information campaigns for youth and people working with youth.

Young people become more and more active in political and social levels (though high voting age, age requirements for the elections into state institutions etc limit their possibilities).

Aiming to ensure active youth involvement into different structures in Lithuania exist co-management structure that function at the national level since 1996. State Council for Youth Affairs (VJRT) the co-management structure, consisting of equal number of people representing Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) and different Ministries official dealing with youth issues (Education, Culture, Social Security and Labor, Education and Science, Justice and Chancery of the Government of Lithuania). These structures

were transferred afterwards to the regional level. Were in most of the cases they are present and functioning for the benefit of young people. Lithuanian youth organisations have co-operative approach to the State and the political system. Youth organisations and especially Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) are working hard developing networks, building confidence and in this way representing youngsters. Various proposals, supports and programs are supervised and thoroughly analysed by the State Council for Youth Affairs, which then prepares and present proposals to the government. In this effectively working system and through the process of representation youth's ideas, projects, expectations and problems are placed for consideration. This structure gives a lot of benefits for the young people as they have the direct access to the decision-making processes, they are able to form and implement the priorities for the youth policy. Nevertheless, there are problems related even to this type of structure. These problems are related to the political weight given to the decision that structure takes, difficulty of ensuring real co-operation between various ministries, finally a lot depends on the funding annually given for youth organisations. These are the challenges that are constantly faced by the co-management bodies and surely this is the reality that we live in and we have to counteract to.

The Municipality councils for youth affairs work based on the Law youth policy framework, and also are formed on the principle of parity for the members of municipality council, administration servants, and youth (organisations) representatives. These councils are open for young people who do not necessarily need to be active in local youth organisation. The long term aim of such local council for youth affairs is to ensure youth participation in decision making processes. A special attention is paid to the regional council of youth organisations (Round tables) which unites several or more than ten local youth organisations. There should be around 40 such Municipality councils at present.

Municipality councils for youth affairs are responsible for:

- Preparing offers and general information regarding youth policy implementation to the mayor, council, municipality administration etc;
- Preparing municipality programmes targeted for youth, gives recommendations regarding financial support for the project activities;
- Analysing youth issues and demands;
- Analysing foreign experience on youth policy issues;
- Gathering information about activities of youth NGOs and municipality institutions targeted for youth;
- Initiating sociological and statistical researches in the municipality youth situations;
- Assisting youth NGOs in finding premises for their activities.

On the national and local levels State Council for Youth Affairs aims to strengthen youth organisations and implements nine programmes:

- Institutional support and potential development of youth organisations;
- Prevention of youth drug abuse and other forms of dependence, delinquency and psychological crises (suicides);
- Promotion of youth initiatives;
- Development of youth coordinative activities and youth policy;
- Improvement of quality of youth activities;

- Youth participation in development of knowledge society;
- Development of regional youth activities and amplification of potential of regional councils of youth organisations;
- Youth education by means of sports activities;
- Civic education of rural youth and the occupational programme “Youth for countryside”.
- Some educational materials prepared by Council of Europe for youth were translated into Lithuanian language. An issued CD “Youth activities: from theory to practice” includes important information about the implementation of youth activities in Lithuania:
 - contacts of youth organisations;
 - educational materials: techniques to moderate discussions, how to make most effective decisions, how to behave with the audience etc;
 - NGO accountancy;
 - NGO management: effective management, team work, communication of the organisation, project management, applications, fundraising, introduction methods, icebreaking methods, warming-up methods etc;
 - all relevant information regarding youth policy and legal acts;
 - research resume: graduates in the market, youth integration into the labour market.

The other important sphere - possibility for young people of school age to participate in students' self-government bodies. According to the law, each school should make facilities for students to have their self-government organ. School council or university self-government organ should involve an equal number of students/students' representatives, their parents and educators. The school council activities can also be attended by a representative of the local authorities. Each school should have these students' self-government organs operating: students' conference (which is summoned once a year and delegates representatives to the school and students' councils) and the students' council. The students' council is a continuously operating students' self-government organ of 5-15 members; its structure and work rules are defines by the students' conference.

A big attention to non-formal education was placed since 2004 while organising a conference “Do young people need non-formal education?” Unfortunately, in Lithuania there is no unanimous conception about the non-formal education. During the conference the following issues were discussed: legal status of the non-formal education of the youth, problems and perspectives in youth policy, what link is with the business sector and the professional sphere, role of the non-formal and formal education in life of a young person. Lately some methods of the non-formal education are used in the formal education system. Lithuanian youth organisations and some governmental institutions while implementing various actions for youth, aim to ensure non-formal education processes in the leisure time of young people.

According to one of the principles of implementation of the Law on youth policy framework - inter-institutional coordination which binds over the state and municipality institutions and agencies discuss and cooperate in considering youth related issues - the dialogue between the structures on the national, regional and local levels is developed. Such cooperation encourages youth initiatives and common civil activities on national and especially local level. Some municipalities have

foreseen money for running projects for youth and with youth. In 2005 53 municipalities allocated funding for youth initiatives

The efficient work, flow of information and active participation of youth can be ensured by:

- the youth coordinators working in every municipality;
- regional councils of youth organisations which unite youth organisations operating on municipal level and also represent their interests;
- Lithuanian Youth Council voluntary union of non-governmental youth organisations and regional unions of youth organisations.

The main obstacles met during the implementation of the common objectives on youth information and participation

Several obstacles were met during the implementation period, though the biggest obstacle appeared to be the existing communication, information and participation gap between the national level and local levels. The main reasons why the situation became so severe quite quickly were based on lack of particular programmes for the regions, information politics as well as absence of certain organisations and activities, because of the quick change of young people in the regions and that influenced the lack of required skills and competence required for running the organisations, activities and on the whole working in the regions. Such situation led to creating inappropriate environment in different regions for Round tables and sections of national youth organisations working on regional level.

The other followed reason is lack of communication, coordination and cooperation between the public institutions and organisations that are dealing with youth issues in the regions. Insufficient attention to the development of the integrated youth policy led to invisibility and misrecognition of main problems that youth and youth organisations face every day. It was of the main importance to distribute the model of integrated youth policy and to work on local recourses and potential governmental financing, foundations to support development of youth activities and as well as regional youth policy.

State Council for Youth Affairs in Lithuania (VJRT) was working to prepare, test and adjust the model of an integrated youth policy in various municipalities. During the 2003 and 2004 the pilot projects were launched in several municipalities (Kaunas, Šakiai, Utena). Nonetheless still some problems were existing and despite considerable progress the regions still lacked the common and basic understanding of the essential youth policy goals and tasks. One of the main reasons stated by the State Council for Youth Affairs of such stagnation is the absence of practical models of youth policy implementation in the local level.

Luxembourg - CGJL

Implementation of the White Paper Process (general)

The « Conférence Nationale de la Jeunesse Luxembourgeoise (CGJL) », the National Youth Council of Luxembourg has been involved in the implementation of the White Paper from the start.

The consultation process of the White Paper in Luxembourg started during the European Culture Year in 1995. During that year, the Ministry responsible for Youth, as well as the CGJL and other youth organisations, crossed the country with a caravan and stopped in several schools and youth houses in order to discuss Europe in general and their needs with young people. The result was a publication of a national action plan “1ère lignes directrices: Pour les Jeunes! Avec les Jeunes!” in 1996.

The second consultation of young people in Luxembourg took place in 2000. As a result of this consultation, the government published an intermediary national report on the “situation of young people in Luxembourg” in 2001. This report was revised by a group of experts of the Council of Europe. The conclusion of this revision was taken into account and integrated in the final version of this national report.

Due to these new developments in the Youth Field (the OMC at an EU level and the CoE report), the Ministry of Family and Integration, responsible for Youth issues, decided to re-evaluate their national action plan.

The Ministry contacted therefore once more the CGJL and other relevant organisations working in the youth field to collaborate in a big consultation process, which should lead to a new orientation of the future Youth Policy in Luxembourg.

In 2002, the CGJL organised a national forum whose aim was to define the priorities of the youth policy in Luxembourg and to elaborate concrete proposals for the implementation of the key ideas of this policy.

During the period of 2003-2004, the CGJL consulted its member organisations about this project.

The Ministry proposed then a first draft which was discussed and amended by the actors of this consultation process. Finally on February 7th 2004, the new national action guidelines “deuxièmes lignes directrices pour la politique jeunesse” were presented to the public.

The ideas expressed in the Luxembourg guidelines for Youth Policy follow the same direction as the action lines of the European Commission.

The Luxembourg guidelines stress the importance of the quality of information given to youngsters, the involvement of young people in the realisation of information as well as the creation of structures to facilitate the flow of information for young people. For the Luxembourg government it is also essential to collaborate with youth organisations on a local, regional and national level. Therefore the government planned to create training centres for young people in order to support the development of the necessary competences, to the dissemination of information for young people.

The CGJL and the Ministry of Family and Integration have always enjoyed excellent relations and they meet several times in a formal as well as in an informal way. The

Luxembourg Youth Council still today is regularly consulted when it comes to Youth issues.

The real obstacle which was identified during the consultation process of the White Paper was a lack of interest of young people in European topics. A conclusion event took place in the city of Luxembourg, where the results were presented to the public, but unfortunately very few young people were present on that occasion.

Another point, which is important to mention, is that very often young people who participate in our activities are already involved in a political movement or a youth organisation anyway.

Information

Youth information is mentioned the first time by the government in a law in 1998, whose field of application also regulates the functioning of information, consultation and counselling centres for young people.

Article 5 of the Grand-Duchy law of the 28th of January 1999 mentions more specifically a Youth information centre, as a place where the rights and the responsibilities of young people are maintained and bloom.

Information for young people is the responsibility of different ministries. A big part of youth information, as well as the information structures and specialized consultation are realised at a national level, but with the help of regional structures.

The Service National de la Jeunesse (SNJ) coordinates the activities which are decided by the Ministry of Family and Integration.

At a local level, general information is guaranteed by Youth houses, which depend on the Ministry of Youth.

Concerning the dissemination of information about a specific topic, a considerable number of actors are very active at national, regional and local levels.

Several ministries as well as many associations which are active at a national, regional and local level work on topics dealing with youth.

Young people have the possibility to get information not only at the Youth Information Centre (CIJ) at a national level which is based in the capital city, but also at different Local Information Points (PIC= Point Information Communal), which are usually located in Youth Houses.

At the moment, the government is also working on improving the national youth portal which will be launched in 2006, <http://www.youth.lu>.

Since the White Paper process no special funding for Youth Information has been introduced, but the different existing structures for Youth Information have been reinforced financially.

Some statistics

The SNJ website: www.snj.lu was visited in 2002 by 1000 persons per month and in 2005 by 2000 visitors.

The Youth Portal: www.youth.lu was visited by 2000 persons per month in 2002 and by approximately 3000 in 2005.

The SNJ newsletter is subscribed by 46 young people, 190 Youth organisations and 34 teachers.

In 2003 the CIJ website: www.cij.lu was visited by 27 711 visitors and in 2005 no number of visitors are available, because the website was converted and therefore less visitors had the possibility to get information.

Between October 2003 and November 2005, 264 000 flyers with Youth Information were distributed at different Information points through the country. During the same period, the CIJ has published 11 newsletters at 7500 copies.

Finally, the CGJL has also some numbers to reveal. Our website www.cgjl.lu was visited in December 2004 by 658 persons and in November 2005 by 2885 visitors. We didn't have a real website before 2004, therefore we don't have any earlier numbers to compare them to, but we created the website www.jonkwielt.lu for our project on the national and European elections in May/June in 2004 which was visited by 1676 persons.

Our CGJL newsletter, as well as our presidency newsletter was distributed 1500 times. They were sent to different youth organisations, schools, ministries, deputies, and were distributed during different fairs.

Our "guide for young citizens" was published 25 000 times and distributed at this time to 20 000 young people throughout the country.

Some concrete examples on Information

Campaign "jonk wielt"

Within the framework of the legislative and European elections, the CGJL realised from the 14th to the 28th of May 2004, a national campaign to inform and sensitize young people on these issues.

The key elements of this campaign were "political fairs", which were realised in different schools throughout the country. These fairs consisted of round tables discussions and debates, with the participation of representatives of different political parties and young people, but also of information stands from the different political parties, and finally by an Internet webpage: www.jonkwielt.lu.

The objective of this campaign was:

- to contribute to the active citizenship of young people
- to give young people an easier access to the political debate
- to inform young people about the different political electoral programmes
- to try to increase youth participation

This campaign was a real success, because many young people really participated in these discussions, which took place mainly during their free time, i.e. in breaks or after school. They had the opportunity to inform themselves about the elections, by questioning the candidates and by getting information at the information stands.

The only problem we were confronted with was a certain lack of co-operation from some school establishments.

Campaign "Jonkzielt"- project "citizenship"

The “citizenship” project was one of the projects the CGJL was particularly fond of. It is composed of three campaigns, all dealing with the democratic rights and responsibilities of today’s citizens.

Firstly, the creation of a **“guide for the young citizen”**.

This guide included useful and practical information about Europe, notably on the referendum on the European Constitution, on the national elections, as well as information about “what means being a citizen”! This guide was a real success and was distributed in schools, in youth houses, in local authorities (communes) and to young people during different fairs.

However, it was difficult for the CGJL to distribute its guide to young people in Luxembourg due to logistical and financial problems.

Secondly, an **information campaign** on the European Constitution.

Its aim was to go to different schools in Luxembourg and provide young students with information on the European Constitution.

The difficulty here was a lack of participation and enthusiasm of certain member organisations of the CGJL.

Thirdly, a **national Youth Convention**.

It took place on the 13th of May 2005 at the national parliament and dealt with three current topics, i.e. the national referendum on the European constitution on the 10th of July 2005², the European Youth Pact, and dual citizenship. This youth convention was a real success! Young people from all over the country participated in this convention and discussed actively with other young people about their fears, hopes and expectations about Europe’s future and their hopes for their own future. Some members of the European Parliament and the national parliament, who also attended this convention, had to answer the sometimes tough questions of the young electorate.

Campaign “Jonk schwätzt”

In the framework of the local election, the 9th of October 2005, the CGJL gave the possibility to record an audio conversation on our website to young candidates less than 35 years old. The candidates presented themselves and their objectives for the election. The audio conversation was accompanied by a picture and a small written presentation.

The CGJL wanted to give young people the possibility to have an internet webpage, where they could find all the information they needed about the candidates of their locality. It was the first time in Luxembourg that such a website was created.

Unfortunately, due to very low interest of the young candidates, the project failed! It was really difficult for us to motivate the candidates to do such an audio contribution. A second reason for the failure of this project was the lack of internal communication in the different youth sections of all the political parties, which didn’t pass the information on to their electoral candidates.

Today!

As a conclusion we can say that a lot of things have changed in the last few years and we have agreed on saying that it is probably due to the recent development of youth policy at European level.

Thanks to these developments, the youth field in Luxembourg achieved a better visibility. Furthermore, the youth field gets more financial and human resources from the government in order to work better and more efficient with young people!

Today in Luxembourg, the youth policy is oriented by the 2nd national action guidelines (2e lignes directrices pour la politique de la jeunesse) published in 2004, as well as by the ERYICA Charter.

Participation

Formal bodies of participation

There are various ways in which young people can actively participate in Luxembourg. The permanent structures consist of consultative youth commissions established at a community level, pupils' committees in schools and the national student committee at a national level.

The representation of pupils committees in schools is defined by a law from the 1st August 2001 and the representation of the national students is enshrined in the Grand-Duchy law from the 12 of March 1998.

It is also important to notice the crucial role of the associations. Different organisations are active at a local, regional and national level, like the Guides and the Scouts, the political youth parties, cultural associations... etc. At the national level, the CGJL with his 23 member organisations takes the role of the National Youth council.

It is also important to mention the work realised by youth houses, which help to reach young people as well as non organised youth and youngsters from a disadvantaged background at a local level.

At a local level, only a few youth councils or parliament have been organised. These councils play a consultative role in the administration of the community for all issues affecting children and young people. These councils are composed by children between 9 and 12 years.

In 1997, the Ministry created the project "Youth Community Plan", which was designed to help the communities to elaborate local action plans for youth policy. This project envisaged the participation of youngsters in the elaboration of these actions lines. To realise this participation at a local level, the Ministry responsible for youth organised together with the local authorities a Youth Forum.

Local Forums for young people are normally a one day event, where young people from the same town or village discuss and work together on their needs, concerns and own projects. During a round table discussion with the political decision-makers, these young people have the possibility to confront them with their points of view and to present their projects. If youngsters and decision-makers agreed on a project, this engagement from both sides will be concluded by a contract.

The Superior Council for Youth is an organ which gathers youth representatives and youth organisations at a national level, plus representatives of all the state administration, who have to deal with youth issues in their sphere of activity. In this manner, the youth representatives have a possibility to influence projects and programmes concerning youth! The CGJL is also a member of this Superior Council for Youth.

The CGJL thinks that all these formal bodies of participation, like Superior Council of education and Youth, National students committee, or the local forum only fulfil their role partially, but the CGJL considers that there is a lot of potential in these bodies.

Voting right

In Luxembourg the obligation to vote applies to all Luxembourg residents from 18 years onwards. The possibility to vote for a foreigner depends on the residence time in the country. A foreigner has to have lived in Luxembourg for at least 5 years to be allowed to exert his active democratic right. This condition is also valid for non European citizens for local elections.

The CGJL is of the opinion that if there wasn't the obligation to vote for all Luxembourgian in the local and parliamentary elections, the level of participation wouldn't be any better as in its neighbour countries. The participation of young immigrants in the elections in 2003, as well as for elections where the vote is not obligatory, remained very low.

Some concrete examples on participation

National Youth Convention

The Youth convention 2005, which took place in the framework of our "citizenship" project, took place on the 13th of May 2005 in the Luxembourg Parliament and was realised by the CGJL.

More than 80 young people from all over the country found their way to the national parliament. This number is a really success, considering that the previous year only 30 youngsters came to this event. The young people were mainly interested in the discussion about the referendum on the EU constitution. This convention has shown us the interest of young people for current topics. Young people themselves took the initiative to come to this event, which took place during their free time.

In the morning young people worked in different workshops on the 3 topics of the convention, the EU constitution, the European Youth Pact and the double nationality.

In the afternoon they had the opportunity to ask questions to members of the European and national Parliament, all from different parties.

At the end of the convention, the member organisations of the CGJL had the possibility to present their standpoints on the referendum.

The aim of this event was to make youngsters more aware of the topic discussed at this convention and make them have a more responsible vote. We noticed that they were really interested, because they actively participated in the discussions.

However, we observed that very often, it was the same young people who took to the floor, who were already engaged in a political movement or another representative organisation.

The CGJL had several activities, whose aims were to promote youth participation, like the campaign “jonk wíelt” or our project “citizenship”, including our “guide for young citizens”, which I already described in my shadow report on Information.

The Luxembourg Youth Council also promotes the participation of young people in European and international meetings and events. However it is difficult for the CGJL to reach young people and send them to these conferences, due to a lack of knowledge of the topics discussed at these meetings, as well as a certain lack of motivation from the youngsters to participate.

Today!

The CGJL is very pleased to see that youth issues are finally on the top of the political agenda. We are filled with hope and satisfaction with regards to the White Paper process, the Youth in Action programme and more recently the European Youth Pact and its mention in the revised Lisbon strategy.

We realise of course that we still have a long way before decision-makers take young people, their needs and their proposals more seriously, but as we see in the recent development of youth policy at European and national level, our statement is confirmed.

In Luxembourg, the CGJL wishes to continue working with the government and more importantly with young people. Therefore we need more than political statement. We need concrete actions, as well as the necessary financial and human resources to be able to provide all young people in Luxembourg with the information they need to become responsible and active citizens in our society.

The Netherlands - Jeugdraad

The implementation process

Contact with governments

The Dutch National Youth Council (Dutch NYC) has been involved in the consultation process of the White Paper from the beginning. A working group has been set up for implementation of the consultation consisting of the Ministry for Youth, NIZW-IC (National Youth Agency, also responsible for some work on the international monitoring function in the White Paper) and Dutch NYC. This working group coordinated the consultation on the evaluation of the first two Common Objectives. During the past 6 months, the working group met 3 times. The Dutch NYC was fully involved in this. NIZW-IC implemented the consultation among welfare Institutions involved in youth work/participation/information. The Dutch NYC consulted the youth organisations; sending the questionnaire to all 30 member organisations and all local and regional youth council's active in the country (around the 60 organisations).

NIZW-IC has received approximately 24 completed questionnaires from the respondents. The Dutch NYC received 10 completed questionnaires from the initial youth organisations approached. Various youth organisations participated, like regional youth councils, political youth organisations, etc.

The low turn out was due to the unclear and general formulated questions in the questionnaire. For this reason it was difficult for most youth organisations to comprehend the questionnaire at all. Despite the clear introduction written by Dutch NYC, it was still difficult for most youth organisations to relate to the questions and topics raised. Therefore two persons of Dutch NYC called all organisations to explain the purpose of the questionnaire, consultation and the White Paper. It is a general problem of consultations around the OMC that you almost need to be an expert to be able to answer the questions. The Dutch NYC tries to make a translation, but this remains fairly difficult. The way the OMC on youth is formulated and dealt with should be closer to the lifeworld of young people.

After all responses were received, a meeting was held on the 6th of December 2005 at the Ministry with all stakeholders and organisations that participated in the consultation. In total 20 persons were present at the meeting, which was chaired by the Dutch NYC. The cooperation and contact with the government increased because of the process. But no other issues than the evaluation of the Common Objectives on participation and information were discussed.

Information

Understanding of the process

The Dutch NYC's perspective on the topic of information is that disseminating information should happen on peer level, for and by youth. This is the most effective way in having an impact and best outreach to young people. Besides that, information is a prerequisite for effective participation. The government does not have a strategy or policy on youth information, before the White Paper nor since the White Paper. A general understanding of the topic of information is lacking by the organisations

working in the youth field. While there are many things happening and there many examples of best practices.

Measuring implementation

The National Government did not develop new tools on youth information or does it have a strategy on national level to ensure that young people get or have information on youth issues. However it supported a central telephone information number (0900-Jeugdraad) developed by the Dutch NYC, where young people can get all kind of information on youth participation. Some local and regional governments have developed youth portals or other tools. But there is no coordination, monitoring or support on youth information on national level. From the Common objectives it was also clearly indicated that this coordinating role is found necessary and at this moment missed. There is no concrete funding for youth information, however many local authorities support Youth Information Points (YIP's) and libraries to develop these central information points for young people. But these support for the YIP's are not a result from the common objectives, but are initiatives that already exist for many years. The White Paper did not prevent budget cuts or a reduction in local youth information initiatives. The government is not collecting data on how many people are attending youth information centres. Nor did they fund/organise infrastructures for coordinating youth information centres.

Results

Many things have changed over the past two years; some in positive, many in negative sense. And this is not because of the White Paper. Our government has its own line of thinking, which is not a result of the white paper and the common objectives, but still some elements are in line with these common objectives. The most important obstacle for the implementation is that on information there is no coordination on national level. Many governmental organisations and Ministries are involved in youth information, but there is no coordination in this field. This makes youth information fragmented. This obstacle can be overcome by assigning youth information to one single Ministry for the coordination on national level, and on local level there's coordination and cooperation between the libraries, youth information points (YIP's), municipality, etc .

Participation

Understanding of the process

One of the main obstacles is that the government doesn't have a clear understanding or definition of participation. It doesn't see youth participation as a goal in itself, but only as a means to accomplish other things as active citizenship, employment, etc.

Tools/measures

Due to a new funding system the support for national youth organisations has been cut for large parts. Youth organisations now mainly get funding for projects, there is almost no funding available anymore for organisational costs. The effectiveness of

youth participation projects is the main criteria for the government to continue funding or to cut back funding when on projects of which they do not consider effective. The Dutch NYC does not always agree with this judgement.

A new policy of the Dutch Government is named 'Operation Young'. This is an interdepartmental working group between the different ministries. The working group aims to enhance better communications between the ministries involved in youth policy. Priority within this policy is the development of a preventive approach towards different youth "problems", such as young people dropping out of school, being unemployed, etc. The Dutch NYC considers this an important effort, but it is too one-sided. "Operation Young" only focuses on the negative things that happen to young people and it is not about positive alternatives like youth participation. If you want to prevent young people from being a drop out in society you need a broad scale of things young people can be active in. Youth organisations play an important role in this and they are not included or supported in relation to Operation Young. The view of the government is that they do not have to look at active young people, because they can make it on their own. But if youth organisations are supported less, less young people will be active and will activate less young people. The Dutch NYC likes the interministerial approach of operation young and it is important to keep young people from dropping out, but to accomplish this you need a positive alternative: youth participation.

Results

One of the main obstacles on the issue of youth participation is that the government considers a local level the best place to foster and stimulate youth participation. Therefore youth participation is mainly a responsibility of local authorities on institutional level. On national level, the government's priority is youth welfare. But there's no coordination to the local communities, so participation is dependent on the willingness of local officials. And there's no monitoring on what local authorities do. The Dutch NYCs experience is that local authorities, if they're involved in youth (participation), its on youth welfare and participation of young people dropped out from school, employment and not on positive youth participation. These obstacles could be overcome by having a more coordinative role by the national government, and having the rights tools to support local authorities to develop knowledge, actions and strategies on youth participation. And this is quite frustrating for the whole OMC process, because for the process a coordinating national government is necessary, and the Dutch Government is leaving this more to the regional and local authorities. That's why the Dutch NYC doesn't see the added value of its involvement in the consultation process of the White Paper.

Malta - KNŽ

Introduction

The National Youth Council of Malta (hereinafter referred to as KNŽ) was pleased to have been involved in the consultation phase when the Ministry was preparing its own official report to be submitted to the European Commission. Such consultation focused mainly on the projects by KNŽ, aimed at encouraging and promoting youth participation and the European Youth Pact. Such projects are described in more detail in this shadow report and outlined as best practices. However, KNŽ notes that it was not presented with the final version of the report before it was submitted to the European Commission.

Therefore in this sense, KNŽ is satisfied that such a report was based on the contribution of KNŽ as an autonomous NGO playing a leading role in Maltese civil society, that of representing the interest of its members, the youth organisations of Malta.

Furthermore, even though KNŽ was involved through its contribution in the production of the official national report, KNŽ is still providing its input to European Youth Forum or *Youth Forum Jeunesse* (hereinafter referred to as YFJ) so that the latter may prepare its own shadow report to the one produced by the European Commission.

To this effect, KNŽ actively participated in all the Information and Networking Days organised by YFJ. In addition, KNŽ also has its own representative in the YFJ EU Affairs Commission (EUACOM).

This shadow report has been produced taking into consideration, as far as possible, the questions outlined in the Guideline Questions document issued by YFJ - document 0807-05 Youth Policy in Europe.

KNŽ's input in the implementation process - Contact with government/Understanding the process

Informal contact and communication took place between KNŽ and the government, through the Ministry responsible for Youth and the relevant Youth Section, which served as a means to follow-up the White Paper and the OMC process. However, KNŽ believes that the lack of formal communication in the implementation of the common objectives may have hindered the full implementation of the Common Objectives.

Taking everything into consideration, all in all, one may state that the cooperation between the government and KNŽ increased thanks to the White Paper process, and such increase in cooperation is indeed commended. Furthermore, this enabled the government and KNŽ to discuss other issues which were of strategic importance to the National Youth Council as outlined in the Council's yearly work plan/s.

Furthermore, KNŽ believes that the White Paper was also an important step for Malta, particularly after the re-formulation of the National Youth Policy in 2004. Participation of young people in designing, drafting and implementing a national youth policy was indeed a prerequisite for an effective and meaningful plan of action when the revised National Youth Policy was published in 2004. It is important to note that the National

Youth Policy was written after wide consultation with KNŽ, and the same policy recognises KNŽ, an active full member of the European Youth Forum, as an autonomous body that represents youth organisations. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Ministry responsible for Youth, is not only responsible for the promotion and implementation of the National Youth Policy, but should also consult, on a regular basis, and in collaboration with the National Youth Council, the Maltese Association of Youth Workers, the Youth Studies Programme at the University of Malta, youth organisations and other stakeholders in order to revise such policy, and should also organise a National Consultative Meeting for this purpose at least once every three years.⁸

KNŽ has also devoted its resources in order to push forward the implementation of the National Youth Policy in its entirety. An important aspect in relation to this is the setting up of a National Agency, which is an important structure for the promotion of youth development within society since it will increase the resources devoted to youth as well as increasing the work done in this sector. KNŽ is pleased with the outcome of discussions held related to its setting up in that it is awaiting important developments in this area early in 2006.

KNŽ notes with satisfaction that it has engaged in dialogue with the government, through its participation in various committees and commissions, particularly the National Youth Advisory Committee, the Youth Support Programme Board and the National Consultative Forum for Local Government Actors.

Furthermore, KNŽ is also an active member of the civil society committee at the MCESD (the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development).

On the other hand, KNŽ was not really involved in the European Youth Week preparations and related local initiatives.

Regarding the European Youth Pact, KNŽ was very pleased to note that its campaign to promote the European Youth Pact in Malta was supported by the Ministry responsible for youth. Also, upon KNŽ's specific request, the European Youth Pact and the government's commitment to such initiative towards youth, were also outlined in the National Reform Programme document vis-à-vis the Lisbon objectives.

⁸ Youth Information Handbook 2004, Ministry for Youth and the Arts
National Report on Youth Policy in Malta 2003, Ministry for Youth and the Arts

Information Common Objective

Measuring Implementation/Results

KNŽ notes with satisfaction the establishment of the National Youth Information Centre (hereinafter referred to as NYIC) as an important improvement in information affairs. Although not particularly involved in its establishment and/or structures, KNŽ believes this is a very important tool set up by the Ministry responsible for youth, as a follow up to the White Paper.

Such information centre, the first in Malta, is collaborating with KNŽ especially in reaching out to more young people, and non-organised young people. The centre falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment and is strategically placed at MCAST - the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology - Malta's vocational centre. The government is in fact organising the infrastructures for coordinating such an information centre, particularly because prior to the establishment of the NYIC, the 'information' aspect was handled by the Youth Section within the Ministry responsible for youths. Such a situation was not sustainable, particularly due to the lack of resources within the same section.

KNŽ believes that although the NYIC is still in its early stages of development, it is strategically an integral part of a nationwide effort to ensure that everybody has information on youth issues. A lot of information is indeed focusing on the National Youth Policy, its promotion, active participation of young people and opportunities available to youths and their respective organisations.

Furthermore, KNŽ is pleased that the NYIC is indeed assuming an active role in society. A recent case study shows that the National Youth Council (KNŽ), the National Youth Information Centre (NYIC), the Youth Section within the Ministry of Education, Youth & Employment, and the Commissioner for Children joined forces to organise National Youth Day 2006.

KNŽ is not aware and/or informed if the government is collecting any data on how many young people are attending the youth information centre, and if not, it would recommend that such compiling of data is initiated. KNŽ also recommend that the NYIC is not just an office for the dissemination of information, but it should actively engage in youth friendly marketing campaigns to disseminate information that is of interest to youths through media channels used by young people, including internet. Such information should also include the promotion of youth organisations.

Finally KNŽ is also pleased that the national youth portal, <http://www.youthmalta.org>, is continuously being developed and strategically linked to the European Youth Portal.

On a concluding note, KNŽ believes that thanks to the White Paper process, things have indeed changed and improved in the past 2 years.

Participation Common Objective

Process of Implementation/Tools & Measures/Results

KNŽ notes that thanks to the White Paper process, the participation theme has been given its due importance in the Maltese context particularly in the last couple of years. KNŽ particularly notes that its projects were the most notable methodology used in the implementation phase.

Therefore, KNŽ boasts that it has played a vital role in promoting active participation and active citizenship. The projects organised by KNŽ that are outlined as best practices in this document are:

- the *Local Youth Councils* project;
- the *National Youth Parliament* project, and
- the *Commonwealth Youth Forum* project.

KNŽ, whilst acknowledging the support of the government, also wishes to point out that more promotion from the government side can make such projects more effective. For instance, if all local councils in Malta and Gozo were bound to take a local youth council initiative on board, then surely such a project would be more effective. Furthermore, KNŽ recommends more non-formal education to encourage youth participation.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Introduction of this document, KNŽ was involved in structured dialogue between itself and the authorities. This is particularly important when it comes to funding through the Youth Support Programme (co-managed between the government and KNŽ), which seems to be gaining more momentum, although more promotion could do to better inform young people and their organisations of the programme's existence.

The descriptions hereunder give a detailed explanation of the projects organised by KNŽ in the last couple of years

2004: Local Youth Councils

KNŽ's major project in 2004 was the launching of the Local Youth Councils. After an initial meeting for mayors and representatives of all local councils of Malta and Gozo was held in March, eleven (11) of the sixty-seven (67) local councils applied to participate in this pilot project.

KNŽ believed that it was its duty to promote the greater participation of young people and emphasise the need for the voice of young people to be heard at the decision-making level. Even though KNŽ acts mainly as a representative body of youth organisations on the national level, it recognised the need to instil a sense of participation among non-organised youth, especially at the local level. The Council also wished to organise a project which would cater specifically for young people in the 14-18 year old age bracket. These are the factors which contributed to the launch of the Local Youth Councils pilot project in June 2004. KNŽ presented a detailed yet flexible proposal outlining the establishment and function of the local youth councils and invited the eleven (11) local councils to use these ideas in their locality. KNŽ was

aware that the success of its proposal depended almost entirely on the commitment of its localities.

KNŽ also presented its project at a conference on National Youth Councils and non-formal education organised in June by CNAJEP, the National Youth Council of France. The primary aim of the project was in fact an educational one. The principles followed in the project were:

- *Active Citizenship*: to foster young people's interest in the life of their locality and adopt a pro-active role in its development;
- *Participation in the democratic process*: to help young people become aware of how democracy works with the participation of everyone through the sharing of ideas and discussions, leadership, decision-making and consultation;
- *Dialogue*: to raise young people's awareness as to how important dialogue is in the democratic process and how they, as citizens, have the right to express their ideas to their elected representatives;
- *Leadership*: to provide an opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills;
- *Recognition*: to promote the recognition of the role and input of young people at both local and national level; and
- *Equality*: to help young people appreciate that in a democratic society everybody has the right to voice one's opinion.

2005: National Youth Parliament

The last time the National Youth Parliament (NYP) was organised was back in 2001, and so, after a four-year gap KNŽ was hoping to revive this event and to make a success story out of it in the hope that future executives would permanently place such event on their agenda. A subcommittee was immediately set up and discussions commenced regarding the number of parties to be established, the selection of participants, as well as the programme of the parliamentary sitting. The subcommittee was very eager to ensure that the NYP was a parliament with a difference: hence the idea that four (4) political parties should be formed instead of the conventional two (2). Also, the subcommittee took great care in ensuring that as many participants as possible were able to have their say during the sitting. Participation forms were distributed to all youth organisations and local councils, and adverts on national media were issued in order to encourage overall youth involvement in this initiative. Prospective participants were also encouraged to submit the topics which they wished to be discussed during the actual sitting. The final participants were selected in such a way so as to ensure that a balance was struck amongst their different experiences and backgrounds. Participants also attended meetings addressed by MPs regarding parliamentary procedures.

The second edition of the National Youth Parliament was held on the 15th September 2005 at the House of Representatives, at the Presidential Palace. This was an opportunity wherein youths aged between 16 and 25 years experienced Parliament in its full effect through a simulated session, presided over by the Hon. Speaker, and also well-attended by several other Members of Parliament. The 57 participants in this project, nominated by various youth organisations and local councils, were grouped into 4 "political parties", namely the Harmony Party, the Progressive Party, the

Visionary Party and the Party for a Better World. Each party was given a series of themes which were discussed within the party, and ultimately in Parliament, according to normal parliamentary procedures. The themes discussed were; Women, Work and the Family, the Better Use of the Maltese Heritage, Housing, and Education. During the sitting each party had a chance to present its motion and to reply to the motions presented by the other parties, meaning that the Speaker was kept very busy controlling time limits! All participants were very prepared and well-versed in the subjects chosen and this was one of the keys to the event's success. At the end of the session the participants were received by H.E. the President of the Republic of Malta.

Later in the month of October the Executive Committee awarded certificates of participation to all those involved as well as prizes to the best two speakers.

2005: Local Youth Councils

This Local Youth Councils project was organised for the second year running. This project's aims are the participation and the empowerment of youths, since participants obtain a direct experience towards the procedure followed by the local councils.

With this project, the participants were all the time becoming aware of the problems that exist; of how difficult it is at times to solve them and also of the processes there exist for a decision to be taken. This project is also a means of how young people are being trained for the future, as they are acquiring skills which, will not only help those youths who aspire for a political career, but also other youths who without any doubt will find their way in other sectors of society.

In May, KNŻ held two (2) informative meetings for all local councils whilst in July, KNŻ held another meeting for the fifteen (15) participant local councils. Each local council held its own General Assembly for the participating youths, aged between 14 and 18 years old. After the Local Youth Council executives were elected, the executives submitted their proposals to the Mayor and Councillors within their own locality. Furthermore, a General Assembly was also organised by KNŻ with the support of the Local Councils Department, for which the Local Youth Councils and the persons in charge in each locality were invited. The aim of this meeting was for the youths to realise that there are other youths who are working simultaneously with them in different localities. The persons in charge of the projects were also asked to discuss what they were experiencing and came up with very valid suggestions.

KNŻ considers this project important as apart from voicing young people's ideas and opinions, it also gives youths the opportunity to acquire the skills needed in managing and improving the locality in which they live. Furthermore, this allows youths who have not reached the age of 18, the opportunity to participate in the democratic process and voice their opinions.

Follow-up to the European Youth Pact

An important, recent development for European youth is the adoption of the European Youth Pact by the European Council held on the 22nd and 23rd March 2005. This document was established in light of the Lisbon Strategy and the White Paper 'A new impetus for European youth', which proposes "*giving the 'youth' dimension a higher*

profile in all policy areas". Maltese youth will thus benefit as EU Member States are expected to take action in the targeted policy areas.

KNŽ took part in discussions related to the local implementation of the Youth Pact. Following constant pressure by KNŽ, the European Youth Pact was included in the National Reform Programme Consultation Document. KNŽ immediately released two documents; its reaction to the European Youth Pact, and guidelines to an information campaign.

So much so, that, by a proposal of the Executive and approved by member organisations, KNŽ embarked on a National Information Campaign related to the European Youth Pact throughout the month of October 2005. A working group was immediately set up to coordinate the campaign in its totality. A corporate image was designed for the campaign, aimed at creating synergy between all mediums used for the campaign, from the leaflet to information spots, and from conference backdrops to adverts. This gave a professional and organised look to this National Campaign.

There were five chosen media forms through which the message was disseminated to practically all Maltese youths. A leaflet, produced by the working group containing the most important information on the European Youth Pact, was distributed in academic institutions, particularly at the University of Malta, and in places of leisure. Leaflets were also distributed to the European Youth Forum, which in various occasions praised the work done by KNŽ with regards to the promotion of the European Youth Pact.

The leaflet was also summarised into a four-part series and published on *The Sunday Times of Malta* in a series of information spots. Apart from this, public figures working in areas related to youth and EU affairs, including the President of the European Youth Forum, the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Malta and the Acting Head of the Malta-EU Information Centre, were contacted and they contributed towards our information campaign by writing feature articles on the European Youth Pact. Appearances in television programmes with a youth theme were also set up to boost our information campaign.

Finally, the one-month campaign ended with a one-day National Conference entitled '*The European Youth Pact - A Commitment to European Youth*', held on the 22nd October 2005 at the Corinthia Palace Hotel. The conference included keynote speeches on the three main themes of the European Youth Pact, and other presentations and speeches. The conference was promoted as much as possible, including adverts on newspapers, invitations and e-shots.

Conclusion

KNŽ remains highly committed to the follow-up of the White Paper and the OMC process in Malta.

This said KNŽ will continually to voice its concerns on the Information and Participation Common Objectives. Not only, but KNŽ would also remain to be actively involved in their implementation through its own projects. The work plan for the KNŽ Executive for 2006-7 not only places top priority to structured dialogue with

government, particularly through the setting up of the National Youth Agency, but also outlines other important initiatives.

These include the third edition of the Local Youth Councils Project, the third edition of the National Youth Parliament, an International Seminar entitled 'Active European Citizenship', and a national seminar on the revision of the National Youth Policy.

Finally, KNŽ will also remain committed to the other common objectives, namely the third common objective - voluntary activities, and the fourth - greater knowledge and understanding of youth.

Portugal - CNJ

This report will focus on Common objective Information and Common objective Participation, and will express our evaluation on the implementation of these two common objectives in Portugal, our concerns expectations and proposals.

Portuguese National Youth Council was actively involved in the White Paper Consultation process, having participated in the different moments of preparation of this document at national and international level (meetings, conferences - Santa Maria da Feira, Paris - during the French Presidency of EU ...).

Although the European Commission has invited Member States to involve youth organisations fully in the preparation of Member States national reports on how they have implemented the Open Method of Coordination Common Objectives, youth Organisations and particularly the Portuguese National Youth Council was not invited to participate in preparation of the national report.

It is important to remark that from 2001 to 2006 Portugal had 4 different Secretaries of State responsible for Youth that obviously originated instability at youth policies level, with permanent changes on priorities, programmes and also on the relation between Government and youth organisations. In our opinion this had negatively effects on the implementation of the Common objectives, not allowing the definition and implementation of a medium-long term strategy on youth policies.

In Portugal the main players and stakeholders in youth field are:

- Governmental: Secretary of State for Youth and Sports
Portuguese Youth Institute (national and regional delegations)
- NGOs: National Youth Council
National Federation of Local youth organisations
Youth organisations
Students organisations

Information

We agree and believe on the importance to improve the information available for young people as a tool to increase youth participation in civic life and to the development of an active citizenship. We support the overall sub-objectives of the common objective on information: promote access for young people to information services, ensure quality information and increase participation by young people in information.

Before the adoption of the main objectives, it was in study phase the implementation of a new Youth portal and it was in its last phase of deactivation the Youth Information station. It was working the Information Services of the Regional Delegations and the central services of the Portuguese Youth Institute.

After the adoption of the common objectives we can stress out the following implemented actions on Information level:

- 1) Opening of the regional Delegations of the Portuguese Youth Institute, 19 Shops "Ponto Já" - spaces of youth information with high speed Internet spots.

2) Implementation and development of the new youth portal:
www.juventude.gov.pt

These two measures were clearly developed to create integrated information services, coherent and coordinated and accessible to youth, what contributes to promote the access of youth to the information services. Although it's important to refer that there is still allot of Portuguese youngsters without access to the new Technologies and without knowledge of programmes and instruments of youth support, because of economical, educational or even geographical reasons. This way we think over the great importance of the opening of the "Ponto Já" spots in different places than the ones where it already exists and to facilitate the youth access to the information technologies. In other hand, it is important the enlargement of the Youth Portal to other areas of interest, having in consideration that it is an important tool of easy, fast and economical way of communication.

If the Youth Portal was created at the national level, nothing has been developed at the regional or local level; a clear lack of Youth information systems exists at the local level.

In the education and formation spectrum there is a need for the ones who work and develop activities in the Youth information areas. There is a need of an articulated strategy of training not just for the workers of the IPJ, but as well for municipality and youth organisation workers.

There is no strategy to "improve the link between information and counselling, with the aim of encouraging a learning and capacity-building process among young people on how to obtain, select and evaluate information in order to become informed users of information".

About promoting the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels, particularly those most frequently used by young people such as internet, mobile phones, video films and cinema, it is being doing only through internet.

There is not concrete and specific funding for youth information.

The 3rd Sub objective of youth participation in the information is it far away to be achieved; any action plan was put in practice till now. Nothing was done to involve the youth organisations or general youth in the preparation and implementation of strategies of youth information as predicted in the lines a), b) and c) of this sub-objective.

As a conclusion we can say that big steps were given in the sense of improving the information available from the government to the youth, essentially through the new Portal e and the "Ponto Já" spots. In other hand there is no articulation with the municipalities and with the youth organisations to develop one strategy of promotion of the youth information networks in a local level; it was not even promoted the participation of the youth organisations and the youth in information creation and dissemination.

Participation

Implementation process

The Portuguese National Youth Council is not informed of the creation or even, was not invited to participate, in any committee or workgroup, to follow, or to implement a common objective about participation. It is still important to refer that the White Paper, the open method of coordination and the common approved objectives are not, still, well acknowledged, especially in the local authorities' level.

Characterization/measures/implementation

After the adoption of the common objective about participation we should stress the following measures:

- 1) Re-activation in 2005 of the Consultative Youth Council, organ of Government consultation, where the national youth organisations participate. This organ is predicted in the Legislation since 1996 but it was not active since 4 years.
- 2) Approving of the law that defines the juridical status of the Portuguese Youth Council in 2005
- 3) In 2005 the elaboration of the process of a new law took place. This law will regulate the youth associativism in Portugal, as well the rights and duties of the youth leaders and ways of finance.
- 4) In 2006 the National Youth Programme was started. This programme objective is to receive contributions from the youth organisations, students and specialist, through debates, journeys and conferences, in the sense to define a Youth action plan 2007 / 2013.

Besides the Youth Consultative Council, in Portugal the Youth are represented by the youth organisations in the National Youth Council and in the Local Youth organisations Federation. Still there is the Consultative Council in Madeira and Azores.

In terms of the sub objective "Participation by young people in civic life", promoting the youth involvement in the organisations, encouraging the YNGO's and local councils work; increasing the projects development that involve directly the youth in a local and regional level; the clear identification of the obstacles in the youth participation of less opportunity youth groups, almost nothing was done. It was not created a new financial system, it was not increased the financing to support youth associativism (the opposite was done, still this year the Youth Council's financing was decreased in 13%). In other hand, with the exception of new volunteering programmes, any strategy, programme was defined to increase the youth participation in active civil life, in school, work or in organisations.

In the sub objective "Participation in representative democracy" we have to refer:

- The local and regional Councils, practically don't exist, any strategy was defined in its' implementation.
- Rarely the youth organisations are involved in the definition of Youth Policies in local and regional level.
- Still, there is no regular, defined and structural dialogue between the State entities and the youth Organisations. There is still a lot to be done in the sense

of the youth representative structures, especially CNJ, in the participation in the definition and implementation of the policies that affect the Youth in general. It still exists, a paternal vision over the youth and its' organisations.

Lastly in relation of the sub objective "Support various forms of learning to participate" we should register the good example of the "Hemiciclo" programme, that interconnect the formal education and the promotion of a civic conscience, but it was existing even before the White Paper and the general objectives. Besides those programmes nothing else was done.

In conclusion we can say that in the participation level, the recently taken steps are barely connected with the White Paper and that there is still allot to be done to increase the civic participation, to increase the youth participation, through its representative structures in the decision making processes and to structure a regular dialogue between them and the local and national bodies.

We believe that for a real implementation of the objectives of the White Paper, it is important:

- The creation of a national committee to follow and to implement the Common Objectives in which National Youth Councils should be involved.
- Government to be obliged to assume the responsibility of engaging the Municipalities in order to get the Common objectives implemented at a local level.

Slovakia - RMS

Youth Council of Slovakia has issued the Shadow Report on implementation of common objectives on information and participation. The main impetus was a guideline from the European Youth Forum (YFJ) as recommendation to National Youth Council to develop its shadow report independent from official national report on participation and information.

The Shadow Report is structured to three thematic circles:

- a) The implementation process
- b) Information
- c) Participation

The implementation process

Contact with government

The Youth Council of Slovakia (RMS) is an umbrella organisation associating children and youth organisations. The state competence for „Youth“ field is mainly in hands of Ministry of education of the Slovak republic. In 2001 Ministry of education has recognized RMS as its official partner for area of youth policy. In that way RMS has become a subject which should be counted at making, realization and implementation of decisions coming from public sector.

The year of 2001 also means a big change for youth policy in Slovakia. The concept of State Policy related to children and youth has expressed that change exactly. The concept has been based on principles of White Paper of European Commission - New Impetus for European Youth. RMS has fundamentally participated on making and commenting of the document and many of our comments and views were accepted and adopted.

In 2005 new conditions of Ministry of education on recognition of national youth council status were adopted. In accordance to them the umbrella organisation has to apply for the status every three years. RMS achieved this status for period of 2006-2008. Besides defining of the criteria of recognition, Ministry of education does not set any right and duties arising from the status of national youth council. This is the main reason why status of national youth council is defined by its own practice.

We perceive the consultation process as one of possibilities for joining public matters and decision-making. During last years the youth policy issues were narrowed to area of Ministry of education only. Other ministries (such as employment and social affairs, environment, regional development) deal with youth issues to smaller extent. Therefore the consultation process as a part of open method of coordination was realized mainly in relation to Ministry of education.

The consultation process is realized through **comments and discussions to documents** of different type. Giving of concrete formulated initiatives and drafts to proper document is the main aim of this type of consultation. RMS is often invited to this type of consultation especially to documents with non-legal and non-binding character. Regularly, RMS is invited to giving comments to Action plan of concept of State policy toward children and youth. The Action plan is a document with supra-department

character prepared by Ministry of education and it is actualized annually. The other important document is also the Draft Implementation of European Youth Pact in Slovak Republic.

Other usual type of consultation is realization of **working sessions with representatives of government, local and regional authorities and non-governmental sector**. The main aim of working sessions is to create space for collecting of ideas, knowledge, experience and good practices or to avoid negative phenomena. Results of the sessions are mostly useful for formulating of concrete ideas and documents. RMS is still giving a chance, recommending and encouraging its member organisations to take an active part in this kind of sessions.

Next type of consultation is realization of **small working sessions** between deputies of RMS (mostly staff members or members of the board) and deputies of Ministry of education. There are many of them during the year and they are realized through personal contact, telephonic or internet communication.

Other type is **direct participation** on decision-making, which is mentioned below.

Diversity of types of consultation with governmental institutions should be main precondition for increasing of the consultation process. As for relation to Ministry of education, RMS see moderate improving comparing to the past times (before 2000). Ministry invites RMS to consultations through Department of children and youth. It is often done by official invitations, letters and formal notices. As for relation to other ministries, we can speak about long-term stagnation caused by lack of information on youth policy and youth policy issues, its documents. Governmental ministries and institutions see public matters only through their view of competence and do not want to see them as cross-sectoral.

The question of the first contact is mostly in hands of state. Although RMS has initiated some of consultation meetings and has given statements to some of youth policy issues, there are still possibilities to improve active attitude to the consultation process. In the future RMS wants to do that especially toward Ministry of education as a crucial ministry for youth policy now, and toward Ministry of employment, social affairs and family.

As for information and information-consulting activities for young people, government has not adopted any concept or such document. Currently the Slovak Republic realizes project „Infovek“ focused on informatization and providing internet in elementary and secondary schools. Also Action plan for project „Minerva“ counts with informatization of the whole society. But the strategy for spreading of information aimed on specific topics related to young people is still falling behind. So providing and spreading of information is realized by non-governmental organisations and government (ministry of education) is only in role of supporter. But there is no advanced governmental network of centres for information and consulting and also there is not any governmental information portal.

Information

According to European Charter on information for young people, information and consulting services are provided by some institutions in Slovakia. Despite of lack

+governmental network, Ministry of education has the competence and it is realized by its organisation Iuventa and Institute of information and prognosis which is also engaged in youth research.

The main non-governmental actor is Association of Youth Information and Consulting Centres (ZIPCEM) as a member of ERYICA - European Youth Information and Counselling Agency. ZIPCEM associates 19 youth information centres. Its goal is to provide information and consultation services in specific areas for young people according to European Charter. Year to year there is slight increasing number of the centres and also their quality is improved. ZIPCEM uses different ways of providing information: directly, by a phone hot line and by internet database.

Information centres are situated mainly in some bigger towns and cities. We consider it as a lack because information should be spread and provided to all young people. Many young people find alternative sources of knowledge in schools or in the street.

RMS is also active in the field of information. RMS uses for this purpose its own publishing tools: internet portal and ZOOM-M magazine for youth and workers with youth.

Information and consulting activities are covered by financial sources from Ministry of education as the only support program for information and consultation in Slovakia. Every year the sum of about 50.000 Euro is divided among ZIPCEM and youth information and consultation centres for their running costs and projects.

It is very low support from regional and local authorities. There is no systematic support, but only occasional and one-time used. The main initiative is in hands of youth information centres still having to fight for their support. It is very sad that local and regional authorities do not accept and do not want to understand the value of information for young people.

Other kind of financial support for spreading information is expressed in national youth council subsidies. The subsidies are used for running of internet portal www.mladez.sk containing information from direct work with youth, offers and opportunities for young people to participate in domestic or foreign activities, support of mobility, European and world cooperation, database of contacts of youth organisations, database of leisure time activities. The information is free for spreading and accessible to young people. Actually RMS is preparing new design of the web-page to provide separately information service and institutional service.

Eurodesk is the other portal which should be also very important in the field of youth information. RMS has expressed its distress that despite great support Eurodesk does not fulfil its main goals on functioning and access to information for young people. During recent time the functions of Eurodesk have slightly improved but on the other side information provided by the portal are still like copies from European youth portal. Therefore RMS has stressed that government and responsible institutions have to secure efficiency of Eurodesk.

As mentioned above, the internet portal www.infovek.sk is also interesting tool for support of providing information to young people. The project „Infovek“ is aimed on internetization of schools. Besides of formal learning by electronic means which is quite innovative, the portal contains information services about domestic and

international projects realized by schools. The portal also gives an opportunity for self-realization in different activities such as publishing of e-magazines.

Contemporary society is rightly called „information society“. Globalization and its factors show increased need to educate children and young people how to carefully work with information because the influence from media and internet to young people is very intensive. In spite of importance of mentioned facts, the government has not issued a specific conceptual document on information. The support for information is still declared in Action plans and in the concept of state policy toward youth. The information area needs to be extra attended. This purpose should be done by effective and concrete governmental information concept for youth.

Participation

The process of implementation

Among the basic goals of the Youth Council of Slovakia's strategic plan is the support of youth participation in Slovakia. But RMS does not have the interest to do this artificially and for any price. RMS fulfills this goal in praxis in two particular ways:

- a) By direct representation in consultation, decision-making and coordination bodies;
- b) By active engagement in negotiations with the possibility to present its viewpoint and discussion.

Ad 1: RMS use this possibility e.g. in governmental advisory bodies (Governmental Council for children and youth, Governmental Council for NGOs) and within Ministry of Education (Resort coordination group, Evaluation commissions for financial support)

Ad 2: This possibility is used frequently mainly towards the Ministry of Education. The discussions are followed out in form of round tables or in form of bilateral negotiations. In relation to other resorts and institutions there is the possibility of participation used only in single cases. We can although mention Committee of National Council for education, science, youth and sport, Ministry of labor, social issues and family, diverse working committees and advisory boards, whose specialization is aimed at youth policy.

The council focuses on a bottom up approach to participation by enabling representatives from its member organisations and other children and youth organisations to take part in discussions on all levels. Supporting to them is RMS staff working, whose work aim is oriented to this problem. Until nowadays RMS didn't develop the strategy of involvement of non-organised youth into the process of consultation on national level.

On the regional level, RMS initiated founding of the Regional Youth Councils as reaction to the process of decentralization and public administration reform. These councils serve as umbrella organisations for children and youth organisations on the regional level (There are 8 administrative regions in Slovakia, which were not created naturally). Moreover, they insure the function of partners of Regional Councils and regional authorities in the field of youth policy. Currently, there are eight Regional Youth Councils in Slovakia, which are legally independent from RMS. They are

members of RMS and from that they have all rights and obligations following from the membership.

The situation in the single regions is different. In some of the regions is the cooperation between regional youth council and regional authority very well, others has to face the unwillingness of recognition, or have their own problems with its existence and actual work contents. To illustrate a positive example, regional councils in Žilina and Trnava Self-Governing Regions have established a successful cooperation with regional authorities. Žilina Self-Governing Region adopted a draft proposal of the Conception of Policy towards Youth on the regional level which also includes regulations of children and youth NGOs financial support via grant schemes. A similar document has been adopted by the Trnava Self-Governing Region authorities. As a positive example can be considered, experience from Bratislava region, where the regional youth council has successfully organised regular meetings with deputies and clerical workers at local and regional self-governing and with representatives of the capital city.

In spite of the positive experience from the regions we have to make a statement that the organisation of similar activities and the initiative by itself are in hand of few individuals - volunteers and enthusiast. Involvement of non-organised youth is a sporadic phenomenon as well. Systematic support and conception from the state is missing. It is written nowadays only in form of non-obligatory declarations formulated in annual action plans of the Ministry of Education.

The effort to influence the public issues in youth field, regional youth councils should show more interest to be involved in participative structures, mainly in advisory bodies of the regional self-government (commissions focused on youth issues). It is wished, that youth will be a part of decision making processes as in the meaning of the European charter on participation of young people in local and regional life. The fact, that this is all based in hand of few individuals makes a contra-productive impact.

However, one has to add that Regional Youth Councils must function in a situation where there is no single partner on the part of regional authorities. This situation stems from the fact that regional self-governments have functioned for only four years in Slovakia.

On the local level, the relationship between youth NGOs and local authorities is very diverse since there are app. 3.000 municipalities and towns in Slovakia. Nevertheless, one may state that towns offer young people more opportunities for self-realization and participation in the life of community than smaller municipalities. In this way the possibilities of development and support of the youth participation are growing.

RMS has the intension to support and activate local governments in order to create conditions and supporting measures for young people and their participation into public issues. RMS makes an effort to be the partner of Association of cities and villages of Slovakia, which is the umbrella organisation of local self-governments. The partner relationship between RMS and the Ministry of Education is shown as a good example and as a way of youth involvement into consultative and decision processes on local level.

Differences among local self-governments in Slovakia are also reflected in the available mechanisms of support for youth participation. Municipalities often put “youth issues” into the categories of education, culture or sport without a clear link between them. So there is the problem of resortism and missing transsectoral coordination. In this context, there are several examples of youth participation at the local level:

- **Youth Parliaments** that function either independently or at high schools and their members are usually between 13 and 18 years old. The main goal of these parliaments is to create a platform for discussion, statement of opinion and formulation of initiatives. However, the real power of Youth Parliaments often depends on their acceptance by local authorities. In this sense, independent youth parliaments or parliaments representing various schools have greater chances for formal acceptance. For instance, Youth Parliaments in Prievidza and Košice function as official partners of local self-governments (which are confirmed in a contract signed by the two sides).
- **Local Youth Councils** represent local NGOs and other organisations that work with children and youth. Although there are only few examples of such Councils, they managed to create a functional relationship with local authorities. The main aim of such Councils is to influence youth policy on the local level and serve as partners of local authorities in this field.
- **Representatives of Young People** whose role is to represent and defend the interest of young people in different advisory bodies and discussion forums on the local level, e.g. in committees of Local Assemblies, projects evaluation committees, grant commissions etc.

Similar to national level, there are no known strategies on local level for supporting participation of non-organised youth. The support in this area is reduced to co-organisation of the activities for the non-organised youth, but without their actual participation.

In the field of youth participation are the self-governments des-orientated, despite of positive good examples which already exist in Slovakia. As we already mentioned above, the term “participation” and its true meaning in the practice is still rather new in Slovak society. That’s why it is important to spread the information, to provide trainings for workers from self-governments and to create a support mechanism from the state for diverse recommendation and guides (creation of manual). The state, similar as at regional level, reduces itself just to declarations, which point the directions but the final realization is not visible.

Tools

At the State level, RMS has a single partner - the Ministry of Education which proposes concrete measures and tools such as financial support and program support.

In the field of financial support the Ministry of education subsidizes on a quite high level the functioning of national youth council, regional youth councils, and youth and children civic associations (youth organisations). This kind of support can be seen as stabile for functioning and working of mentioned organisations. During the last 3 years has the subsidy a rising trend. For instance, in 2005 the Ministry supported youth participation via its grant program “Participation of youth of 15-26 years of age” directed at youth NGOs and municipalities (13 projects received support). A similar

financial support on the regional or local level is possible but not obligatory; it is not set by law, which means that it depends solely on the good will of regional and local authorities.

The State aims its programmes towards formulation of the objectives, mostly defined in diverse documents, action plans and conception. The Ministry of Education declares annually in the action plan tasks for remaining resorts in the youth field, recommendations for self-governments and for non-governmental organisations. RMS although has noticed that the ministry doesn't provide enough capacity and control tools to evaluate and to give sanctions for not fulfilling the tasks following from action plan. More than once happened that RMS addressed the need of youth law (RMS did the analysis of the legislative environment and subsequently youth law), but until now there was no law adopted and the waiting in the youth field starts to remind us on the famous "Waiting for Godot" play.

Results and conclusion

From the year 2003 RMS noticed that many changes have been done and the orientation is set in a good way. Participation, which was relatively a new term 3 years ago, is talked about more often and it is a common thing that it is out in the context with regional and local level. RMS considers as a very positive the financial support in form of a new programme Participation. As positive could be considered also organisation of discussion forums, conferences and round tables, where participation is often the discussed topic.

On the other side, only declared regulations are not enough for implementation of the measures towards support of the participation. In Slovakia, is the term of participation not a rooted term, especially among young people. The low level of organised youth and significant passivity and lack of interest for public issues give many appeals to RMS, regional councils and youth organisations work and create stimulus for the state and self-governments. Therefore RMS focuses its activities on spreading information about the importance of youth participation in public affairs and tries to decrease the passivity of young people and increase their interest in the life of their local communities. Since many young people do not even know their rights and duties in relation to local authorities, RMS published a kind of a handbook on participation written in youth-friendly language.

Spain - CJE

The Implementation Process

Contact with governments

CJE was invited by the INJUVE in August of 2002 to respond to the first questionnaires about the situation of the participation and the information in Spain. CJE distributed this questionnaire among its organisations and collected their answers. Since it was August and our MOs were in vacation during that month we did not get as many answers as expected and INJUVE, told us that our contribution had not been as useful as they first thought.

After the European Commission elaborating the joint report, we held several meetings to decide the most suitable form to organise this co-operation process, being the proposal of the CJE the creation of a joint working group composed by representatives of the CJE and the INJUVE.

Nevertheless, we finally did not take any decision on how to organise this process. We continued to maintain periodical meetings on the process of the OMC and the implementation of these objectives (among other subjects), but they were informative meetings, and not decision-making.

CJE was invited to participate in the writing of the final report to the Commission, in the same status as the regional governments.

CJE has meetings very often to discuss a wide range of issues with the government.. The OMC was just one more issue to be informed, but not something co-developed. We cannot say that our co-operation did not increase in any case because of the OMC.

Regarding the questionnaires, INJUVE contacted CJE. However, after that, it has always been us asking meetings to get information on their work.

Understanding of the process

We understood this process at first as a co-managed method. We thought they planned to develop certain policies as results of the OMC. Their perspective was that OMC settled the basis on some themes, but we have already reached those basics. We presume that their position on our participation in this process was that we could give our contribution on those areas where they needed some information, but the process was their responsibility and therefore it was under their control.

The new government entered in this process when the objectives had been already approved and they faced the challenged of implementing them. This government has developed a new perspective of youth policy through the “Youth Plan”, which is a holistic approach to youth policy, very close to a youth Mainstreaming initiative.

This Plan consists of a package of measures, which are aimed to be the basis for youth policies in the different regions of the country. These measures have not been implemented yet.

Although the OMC was mentioned in the preface of this Plan, as one more step of youth policy, we cannot see a clear connection between this Plan and the OMC process. Both initiatives follow the same path and share objectives, but we cannot see the relation cause-effect between the Plan and the OMC.

Information was not included in none of the previous strategies for your policy. Now, it is included in the Youth Plan, but these measures have not been implemented yet.

Information is a regional competence, and therefore, the national government can only co-ordinate the work of the different bodies working on this field. There is a working group on youth information, which is the co-ordinating body for youth info, composed by professionals on youth information from different regions and areas. Right now, they are developing some tools, such as a thesaurus.

Information

Measuring implementation

The working group on youth information is developing some tools such as a thesaurus. INJUVE changed its webpage in order to improve the quality of the information they provide to young people, and the same did some regional governments. But we have no data to say exactly how this was improved. Again, we do not see the connexion between these changes and the OMC.

Youth information is funded at the regional level. We do not have the info on how many regions provide specific funding for youth information, but generally, there is no funding for that. Any activity dealing with information is covered with funding for youth activities in general.

As we mentioned above there is no overall strategy for information. It remains a regional policy co-ordinated by national government through this working group.

Except for the preface of the “Youth Plan” we have not seen any references to the OMC nor the White Paper in any policy or initiative undertaken.

We do not think that information on White Paper and OMC has reached the local level, meaning that it did not have nor a positive nor a negative impact.

The government is not collecting data on how many people are attending youth information centres. Maybe regional governments are doing so, but we do not have information on that. At the national level, there is very few information on the number of youth centres and on their activities.

We do not have information on any infrastructures coordinating youth information centres.

Results

Things have slightly changed. Internet is being more and more used at the local level, and this is improving the access to youth information services. We have also perceived an improvement of the quality of information provided.

However, we cannot see any link between this and the objectives. There is no mention to the OMC in any document of this field and the improvement has no relation with the European level. We believe that this would have happened in any case, even without the OMC.

First obstacle that we identify is decentralisation of competences. Even though this brings closer the information services to the citizenship, there is no co-ordination at the national level, and even for some cases, there is no information on what they are doing at the regional and local level.

The second obstacle is the lack of financial resources to implement the objectives. There has been no especial funding to fulfil the requirements of the OMC, nor from the Commission nor from the national governments. Therefore, regional administrations cannot improve their services without additional resources (even though they have not implemented neither those objectives that did not imply any additional expenses)

Probably this would have been different if, as we suggested several times, OMC included some evaluation indicators, so that Governments would have been pressed to do so.

Participation

Process of implementation

As explained before, we do not see any clear implementation of the OMC. For this report, we are using the “Youth Plan” as the main initiative from the government in the field of youth policies, but there is no clear link between this Plan and the OMC.

The “Youth Plan” process was very innovating even in the way of designing it. There was a consultative process, which lasted almost one year. CJE was fully involved in the process and closely co-operated with the INJUVE in the designing of all measures, as full members of the committee created within the INJUVE for this Plan.

Apart from that, there was an open on line consultation for young people, a publicity campaign and a “Youth Forum” (three days seminar) gathering 200 young people.

CJE, out Member Organisations, non-organised youth through on line consultation and working groups, regional governments, several ministries, and other governmental decision making bodies were involved in the design of the Youth Plan.

But the OMC was not mentioned in the process.

Tools/measures

We consider the consultation process for the Youth Plan as an important step forward in the structured dialogue with youth, as proposed in the OMC. It means also that we take an active part in the designing of youth policies and that have strong support.

Last year, for the first time, CJE took part in the selection process for funding youth organisations.

Nevertheless, we cannot say the same for the regional governments, some of which have interfered in the work of their regional youth councils (in some cases even legally suspending them) in the period from the objectives approval and now.

For us, the key was that our MOs should know about the OMC and the objectives and use this information towards their regional administration. We distributed lots of information on this and even organised an explanatory seminar in 2004 where we explained again the WHITE PAPER and OMC process and debate possible ideas to implement the objectives. Very few people attended the seminar and this information was not considered relevant for MOs.

Results

Again, we don't think that changes are due to OMC process. At the national level the situation has improved significantly, but there has been no link with the OMC.

The OMC, from our point of view has been perceived as extra work to do for the European level, but not something that we had to integrate in our national and regional policies.

For the situation of regional youth councils, for some of them, the situation has improved or remains the same, but for some others it is much worse. We have witnessed two cases of regional youth councils (in Spain they are ruled by regional laws) dissolved by regional governments, which is something worrying for us.

For this objective, we don't see the obstacle in funding. The main obstacle has been, most probably, the lack of information on the objectives and the OMC process, as well as the flexibility of the objectives (they were not pressed to follow them, they were not compulsory).

Last, we would like to stress the need to distinguish which of the actions undertaken by governments are a result of the OMC and which of them simply occurred. Even though these actions may share objectives and follow the same working line, the OMC has been a very long and resource-consuming process (human, time, and economic resources) and we need to separate clearly which initiatives are due to this process and which not.

Sweden - LSU

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) is hereby giving input into the evaluation of the first two objectives Participation and Information. While LSU doesn't have the resources to follow up the wide aspect (local, national and regional) of the implementation of the Common objectives (CO's) of the Open method of coordination (OMC) we have narrowed it down to the impact that the process has had on LSU, and our member organisations.

Positives aspects

- After the launch of the open method we have experienced that there has been an improvement of the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Culture responsible for youth affairs and the youth organisations regarding political issues concerning youth on the European level (Council of Europe as well as the European Union). Before the OMC there was cooperation between youth organisations, LSU and the Ministry, but with the OMC the cooperation has been structuralised and improved. This has gained LSU and our MO's a better insight into how the Sweden works towards the EU, meaning that we also could see how we can influence the processes in the best way.
- Open hearings has been used to discuss the different aspects and gather the input from youth organisations and youth outside the organisations. These meetings has been of big value, while at one hand you spread the information about the OMC and on the other hand get input on the different issues that are discussed.
- Sweden considers itself as well organised country with a strong youth policy, but the OMC has given Sweden food for thought, mainly in the part about information and voluntary work. LSU thinks that one of the most positive effects from the OMC is the sharing of best examples from the different countries. The best examples or the information about other ways to work with an issue has been of good use to inject the debate about how you can improve and change the youth policy. Many new aspects have come into use when drafting a new youth policy in Sweden. Today we have a line about information, something that hasn't been mentioned before and also the European level as well as the global level is stated much stronger than before.
- We used the goals in the OMC to highlight issues that we thought lacked in the drafting of the new Youth Policy a couple of years ago.
- The implementation has also given LSU the possibility to meet our colleagues through the presidency meetings and through the YFJ information and networking days. This has helped LSU to gain new perspectives and has helped us to widen our knowledge of the possibilities of doing things in another way, both internally (organisational development and leadership) and external (youth policy and advocacy).

Negative aspects

- The Common objectives in the OMC are wide and vague and hard to measure. It's obvious that you can interpret them in many different ways, while it's in the eye of the beholder to translate the meaning of the text. Who has the right to be the judge which translation of the CO's and the OMC is the right one?

This means that no matter LSU says the government can say that their way of interpretation of an objective and the implementation is of another kind. Maybe we should look at the good example stated by the United Nations World Programme Action for Youth (WPAY) where measurable indicators have been used

- Obviously the different states within the EU have a hard time reaching strong and measurable objectives targeting the challenges that young people are facing in Europe. Why not at least then let the young civil society and the different countries see the answered questions that each of the countries have done in the beginning of the process. This could be of very big value both for the NYC and the government in order to read about challenges, best examples and get inspired to improve the youth work in a country.
- There has been a lot of things happening in Sweden in different areas (information and participation), but LSU are convinced that most of the process haven't been triggered by the CO's or the OMC, with other word they would have happened anyway, without the CO's.
- We have invested millions and millions in this process, presidency meetings, info and networking days and all the national consultations and many other meetings. We have to ask ourselves what the investment in time and money gives to the young people of Europe? If we don't have a simple and measurable answer we shouldn't be surprised if young people start questioning the European Union and the work done on the European level. This aspect is clear when you get down to the local level, where many of the young people now about the national youth policy but very, very few have heard about the OMC or the CO's. Are the CO's only for national level, in order for the government to improve the national youth policy? Or do we want the local level to use the CO's to support the local level? An important question is if the results and the know-how gained though the whole process (best practice, challenges, consultations) could be made accessible through an creative guide on how you can work with youth policy and how things look like in different parts of Europe.

Aspects to be followed up

- Isn't youth one of the groups that have best access to information in the society though using IT and other means such as magazines etc? Shouldn't youth be the one spreading the knowledge about how to use information in order to find information about the things that are of interest for a person? When you read through objectives, you can read between the lines on different places, a feeling of seeing youth not as a resource but rather a group that has to learn about how to practice democracy. We would like, if possible the researches to go through the text and in depth analyze the values behind each objective. Does the text in the objective see the youth as a resource for revitalizing democracy or a group that should learn how to practice democracy? Herein you can also find one of the greatest challenges for the cooperation within the EU, is the EU for the citizen or the citizen for the EU?
- Since the Swedish evaluation of this OMC brought up processes that were launched long before the OMC started, and that is basically what makes it look pretty good, we believe it will be interesting to see the next evaluation if the

same goals will be used in a new round. Assuming they cannot report the same data all over again, a new round might put pressure on the government to come up with new ideas. This is a good reason for letting the same goals have a new round.

United Kingdom - BYC

Introduction

The British Youth Council (BYC) is the national youth council for young people aged under 26 in the UK.

BYC represents and involves a unique coalition of young people through their involvement as individuals or through their youth organisations.

We bring young people together to agree on issues of common concern and encourage them to bring about change through taking collective action.

BYC aims to

- Provide a voice for young people;
- Promote equality for young people;
- Help young people be more involved in decisions that affect their lives;
- Advance young people's participation in society and civic life.

The White Paper and UK Young People

In 2002 BYC participated in the UK consultation on the EU White Paper on Youth Policy, acting as a gateway to young people, youth fora and other youth groups. The consultation was conducted on behalf of the Children and Young People's Unit's (CYPU), Inter-departmental and International Affairs Team.

BYC sent out over 500 questionnaires to BYC member organisations and other bodies. Organisations included Young Voice in Wales, the Young European Movement, Labour Students, the Southeast Millennium Volunteers Youth Forum and NUS Scotland. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and in a hard copy. Just over 100 questionnaires were returned. As much of the information was new to the organisations, a seven page briefing prefaced the questionnaire, providing background information on each section of the questionnaire, the European Union and the White Paper itself.

Some organisations conducted group workshops, enabling young people to come together and discuss issues around the questionnaire. Others forwarded hard copies of the questionnaire to young people involved in their organisation, for them to complete independently.

If BYC were to conduct a similar exercise now, which would test the knowledge and understanding of the White Paper, we believe that the awareness levels amongst the organisations asked wouldn't be much higher than they were in 2002 and similar levels of briefing materials would need to be distributed.

Government and the National Youth Council

BYC has enjoyed an increased role with the UK government over the last few years. This has largely been due to the increased recognition of the involvement of young people in decision making and emphasis on the participation agenda.

BYC has collaborated with government on a number of consultations with young people and currently supports the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) *Youth Board* in partnership with a children's NGO. The Youth Board was set up to advise the Minister for Children, Young People and Families on issues and policy affecting children and young people.

The relationship between government and BYC has become closer over the last few years and there is an increased awareness of BYC's role as the national youth council. This is due to the increased emphasis on young people's participation from government which has resulted in increased partnership working with BYC.

There is still work to be done in developing this relationship and BYC is lobbying to be officially recognised as the national youth council for the UK.

BYC has pushed for this recognition through the organisational response to the government's green paper *Youth Matters*. BYC is also pushing for the recognition of local youth councils in local authorities. The section below outlines BYC's position on official recognition from government and also describes the current situation for local youth councils and their relationships with local government.

BYC's vision for building a vibrant network of local youth councils

"Young people should be involved at a local level to allow them to be represented and to make their voices heard. Young people must have the right to scrutinise service providers to ensure they get a fair deal". BYC Youth Manifesto 2004

The importance of youth involvement in decision-making is recognised across all levels of Government. As *Every Child Matters* cites: *"Real service improvement is only attainable through involving children and young people and listening to their views."*

This paper outlines a programme of action to strengthen the involvement of children and young people in local decision-making by developing a vibrant network of representative youth councils. BYC has long promoted and supported meaningful involvement of young people in local decision-making, predominately through youth councils. This is increasingly being recognised across Government as an important part of ensuring that services meet the needs of young people and helping to create cohesive communities. It is therefore vital that the work and role of youth councils is highlighted in the Youth Green Paper.

Youth Councils and their reach

Youth councils are community, voluntary forums that represent the views of young people at a local level. They give young people a voice, enabling them to make their views heard and have an influence within their communities. (BYC, Youth Agenda: Local Youth Councils, 1999). Youth Councils can also be called Youth Forums and in this form they are often more issue based.

BYC promotes and support local youth councils as a model for young people to come together, discuss issues of importance to them and to engage in local action to address these issues. Our vision is to support a vibrant and resourced network of independent youth councils which would:

- Effectively represent and communicate the views of local young people
- Empower and encourage greater involvement of young people in local communities
- Provide a consistent and recognised approach to involving young people across all local authorities.
- Provide a mechanism for young people to influence the work of Children's Trusts and the Every Child Matters local change programmes
- Ensure that young people can be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of local services, governance and strategic planning
- Enable young people's needs to be more fully and accurately assessed and ensure that services meet those needs
- Share information and build links with other strategic bodies
- Provide a support network for smaller youth-led community groups e.g. local young carer's groups, young refugee groups and enable these groups to influence local decision making,

There is a general perception that youth councils and forums are well-resourced groups of articulate young people associated with the local authority. This may be true of a small minority; but the majority of youth councils are established by young people in response to a local need and as such have very limited local support or resources. Amongst BYC's network only 16% of youth councils have some form of staff support.

There are often several councils and forums in a locality but because of limited resources they may not be aware of the other groups or are able to collaborate. Lack of resources including, staff, funding and appropriate expertise, also means that these groups are often not able to actively reach the harder to reach young people and may, in many cases not be aware of what groups of young people are in their areas. Therefore, youth councils may miss the views and involvement of groups of young people who are more marginalized.

This lack of support for youth councils and forums undermines the positive impact they have and weakens the level of youth involvement in local decision-making.

Identified need

Evidence suggests that there is a clear need to develop more effective youth involvement in local decision-making and that youth councils would be the ideal mechanism through which to make this happen:

- A recent study of how statutory and voluntary organisations involve children and young people in public decision-making revealed that although there are positive views towards participation amongst statutory and voluntary organisations, there are considerable variations in approach and effectiveness between different types of statutory sector organisations. There are also strong messages about the need to adequately resource this work and importantly, for children and young people to be supported in order to avoid tokenism. One of the most popular approaches for involving young people included youth councils or forums. (DfES Research Report No.584)

- Research into the pathfinder Children's Trusts found that processes to enable parent and carer involvement are more advanced than arrangements to engage children and young people's involvement (40% of substantial involvement compared to just 28% for children and young people). ('National Evaluation of Children's Trusts', Phase 1 Interim Report, Dec 2004)
- Young people's responses to Every Child Matters showed support for the role of youth councils. When asked '*how do you think you should have a say in what your local council does to make things better for children and young people?*' the third highest response was youth councils. The first two responses were 'consultations and surveys' and 'open meetings and forums', which are mechanisms for involvement, which youth councils use. (Every Child Matters ... and young person: What you said... and what we're going to do, DfES, 2004).
- Feedback from young people during the course of BYC's work also supports the view that youth councils are an effective tool to encourage greater youth involvement.

The current focus on local youth participation, the changes taking place locally as part of Every Child Matters and the proposals coming out of the Youth Green Paper and the Russell Commission [see Youth Volunteering], provide an ideal opportunity to strengthen the support and development of youth councils and the section below details how this could be achieved.

Programme for building a network of vibrant youth councils

BYC has 450 local youth councils and forums, across England, in our network. For more than 20 years, BYC has supported young people to create, develop and sustain their youth councils and forums. BYC's wide-ranging support to youth councils and forums currently includes:

- Information on grants and other sources of funds to groups starting up councils and forum, as well as established youth councils and forums (work with YouthBank of which we're a partner);
- Training for young people on a range of skill sets through our National Training Programme;
- A dedicated newsletter *Voices*, which is circulated to youth councils and forums throughout the UK;
- Sharing practice and through our *Voices* newsletter, as well as e-group;
- An annual training and practice sharing residential event for young people in local youth councils and forums;
- Practical publications such as our *Essential Guide (BYC's youth council handbook)* and our *How 2 Series*, which includes: *How 2 Manage a Budget*, and *How 2 Write a Constitution*.

What young people running youth councils need is support and recognition for their work from government to enable the vision of a vibrant network of young people led councils to become a reality. Government can make this happen by supporting a programme of work that will ensure:

- The creation, in every locality, of an independent youth council, recognised by the local authority.

- Youth councils represent the needs of young people in their area by:
 - Promoting ways of working and resources to support young people's involvement in local decision-making, such as BYC's Every Young Voice⁹ and *In Touch*¹⁰. Every Young Voice provides youth councils with resources to help them widen the range of young people they involve in the decision-making and activities;
 - Engaging in regular consultation with young people
 - Developing partnerships with local organisations with particular emphasis on those working with marginalised young people such as homeless young people and young refugees and asylum seekers, as well as organisations that oversee the provision of local services, e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships;
 - Holding open forums for young people to come and voice their concerns.
- Children's Trusts will link with the youth council when developing/reviewing policy affecting young people or commissioning services for young people.

The British Youth Council can make this happen through investment in its current activities to expand the organisation's programme of support to local youth councils and forums. This investment will enable the delivery of this programme at both a central (strategic) level as well as local (operational) level.

Central (Strategic) Support

The programme's long-term effectiveness in developing a national network of vibrant youth councils needs to be supported by a strong and responsive centre where a core staff team will oversee the rollout of the programmes' activities. They will ensure that youth councils are informed of developments in the national agenda concerning young people and their continued involvement in decision-making.

Activities co-ordinated at the network's centre would include:

- Sharing practice amongst youth councils;
- Producing a dedicated national newsletter;
- Holding a National Youth Council Convention - an annual training and networking event for young people involved in youth councils;
- Promoting and raising awareness of local, regional and national issues concerning and affecting young people;
- Developing and overseeing the rollout of new initiatives that support young people's involvement in decision-making, such as *In Touch*;
- Enabling grant-making facilities to support youth councils through partnership working with YouthBank UK.
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the work across the country and ensuring milestones for development are met.

⁹ Every Young Voice enables local youth councils (LYCs) to strengthen their ability to be representative forums of young people's views, influence local decision-makers and participate in the wider agenda of social exclusion and community cohesion.

¹⁰ The *In touch* programme aims to put young people in touch with decision-makers at a local level, providing them with resources and materials to support their engagement in local life, whether as decision-makers, service users or citizens.

Local (Operational) Support

In order to provide strategic and adequate support at the local level, the deployment of an outreach team, located in the English regions will provide young people and youth councils with dedicated regular support to supplement or add to the existing support they currently receive in their area. The Outreach Team will consist of **Youth Council Support Officers** and **Outreach Training Officers**.

The **Youth Council Support Officers** will be responsible for the delivery of Every Young Voice, linking with Children's Trusts, Local Strategic Partnerships, grant assessments, assisting in staff recruitment, assisting setting up new youth councils, and bringing local organisations together.

The **Outreach Training Officers** will be responsible for rolling out a National Training Programme, consisting of a number of courses, as well as other bespoke training courses including Youth at the Table, which is focused on increasing young people's involvement in civic life.

Strategic and Operational Outcomes:

The delivery of this co-ordinated programme would ensure that:

- Youth councils can access resources to enable them to employ staff with the necessary skills to involve young people in the local area and be responsive to the particular needs in relation to the demographics of the area with the right staffing complement;
- There are resources to enable youth councils to engage a broad range of young people where the condition of funding does not affect the youth council's independence and ability to scrutinise;
- Young people engaged with youth councils are provided with the necessary training so they can effectively engage with local decision-making and represent young people's views;
- Young people who need extra support to become engaged with the youth council are able to access training and personal development support appropriate to their needs.

National Outcomes

- An effective and sustainable network of local youth-led organisations;
- Consistent youth involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of local services, participation in governance and strategic planning;
- Services meet the needs of children and young people locally;
- Stronger partnerships between local youth-led groups and key partners;
- A diverse cohort of active young citizens;
- Positive peer-led activity and participation.

Building an effective, vibrant network of local youth involvement would in the long term:

- Strengthen and create more cohesive communities;
- Tackle social exclusion;
- Ensure a holistic approach to the needs of children and young people.

Policy Developments: Information and Participation

Since the White Paper government has addressed the issue of youth information in a variety of settings. Particularly of note is the development of the Connexions services

Connexions: information, advice and guidance

Connexions is the government's support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England. The government aimed to bring together all the services and support young people need during their teenage years and offer differentiated and integrated support to young people through Personal Advisers (PAs). For some young people this may be just for careers advice, for others it may involve more in-depth support to help identify barriers to learning and find solutions brokering access to more specialist support, e.g. drug abuse, sexual health and homelessness. PAs work in a range of settings including schools, colleges, one-stop shops community centres and on an out-reach basis.

The government is also able to collect information concerning young people through the Connexions service, particularly around NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Connexions is delivered through 47 local partnerships (<http://www.nacp.co.uk/partnership-search.htm>) working to national planning guidance. However, over the last few years there has been recognition that this service is not fulfilling all the needs of young people.

The UK government has made a move to address this issue in legislation coming out of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters documents [addressed below] and are currently undertaking a review of online provision for young people (websites and telephone helplines), the aim of which is to improve and rationalise what is currently available so that young people can have easy and immediate access to the information they need, when they want it and in a way that best suits their needs.

The review will report in early 2006 and will inform the Government's response to Youth Matters. The government is currently developing the specification for a project to develop quality standards for young people's Information Advice and Guidance. We expect to see a final draft of the standards in November 2006. These will then be put out for consultation and the standards will be published in April 2007.

BYC surveyed over 500 young people, to find out their views on services that provide them with information, advice and guidance.

Currently the most popular places to access Integrated Advice and Information services are:

- The internet (69%),
- Friends (55%),
- Parents (49%)
- School (49%).

When asked where they would ideally like to access services:

- 60% said that the internet would be the ideal place to for Integrated Advice and Guidance services,
- 47% said school
- 39% said local youth club.

The majority of the young people said they would like to access additional advice and information on how to cope with teenage life, bullying, how to avoid debt, information about being gay, crime and bullying. They would like to receive this information through the Internet, youth advice centres and youth clubs, very few mentioned school.

BYC will be encouraging the government to take this on board over the next few months.

Every Child Matters

In 2003, the Government published a green paper called Every Child Matters. The green paper prompted a debate about services for children, young people and families. There was a wide consultation with people working in children's services, and with parents, children and young people.

Following the consultation, the Government published Every Child Matters: the Next Steps, and passed the Children Act 2004, providing the legislation for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

These five outcomes mean that the organisations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups - should be working in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life. Children and young people will have far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively.

Every local authority should be working with its partners, through children's trusts, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it. They should involve children and young people in this process, and when inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they have a mandate to listen especially to the views of children and young people themselves.

Youth Matters

In July 2005, the Government published the Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters. The Green paper, aimed to build on Every Child Matters, *Youth Matters* aims to re-shape services for young people.

The Green Paper set out a comprehensive package aimed at improving outcomes for all young people, with a particular emphasis on those who are disadvantaged.

The Government received over 19,000 responses from young people, 1,000 responses were also received from professionals, parents and organisations. In addition the government collected views through consultation with 'hard to reach' young people and their parents and through regional events involving local partners.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education was introduced into the schools curriculum in 2003, which ensures that all young people in school receive information about: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.

Children's Commissioners

In March 2005, the first Children's Commissioner for England was appointed - Professor Al Aynsley-Green, to give children and young people a voice in government and in public life. The Commissioner will also look to gather and put forward the views of the most vulnerable children and young people in society, and will promote their involvement in the work of organisations whose decisions and actions affect them.

Professor Aynsley-Green's appointment resulted in all the UK's nations having a Children's Commissioner. Wales appointed Peter Clarke as Children's Rights Commissioner in March 2001. Nigel Williams, Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, took up post in October 2003 and Scotland's Commissioner, Kathleen Marshall, began her job in April 2004.

Whilst each Commissioner is the primary independent advocate for children's rights in their nation, the Children's Commissioner for England has a coordinating role for UK-wide issues between all the Commissioners.

Education Bill

Legislation is expected in the Education Bill early in 2006, which will place a statutory duty on upper-tier Local Authorities to secure access to positive activities for young people.

The government presented its Schools White Paper entitled *Higher Standards; Better Schools* in October 2005. The White Paper intended to provide more choice for parents and pupils; its main elements were,

- Developing a new school system, whereby every school can acquire a self-governing Trust.

- Improving choice and access for all - to be achieved through provision of better pre-admission information for parents, extending rights to free school transport to children from poorer families, as well as banding.
- Promoting personalised learning.
- Improving behaviour in schools through clear school policies, supported by a “clear and unambiguous right for teachers to discipline pupils.
- A new role for local authorities (formerly local education authorities), essentially based around the concepts of ‘champion’ of users and ‘commissioner of services’. A Schools Commissioner will be appointed at national level to support and challenge local authority plans.

BYC’s main criticism and serious concern is that this white paper only mentions involving young people once throughout the entire document and this is through a small section on School Councils UK. We believe that children and young people should have greater say and be able to make informed decisions about which school they attend and how the school is governed.

However, the paper does say that Local Authorities will now have a statutory duty to consult schools on their Children and Young People’s plan and schools will need to regard this plan when creating their own school development plans.

The White paper puts forward recommendations from the Steer Report around discipline in schools. Not only does there not seem to be any mention of involving young people in schools to deal with the problem, but the white paper also outlines the Steer report recommendation to punish bullies - this is not supported by any evidence or materials that have been produced to deal with bullying.

Quality assurance

Education and training of those working in the field of youth work

In 2002, the DfES published its specification for ‘an excellent youth service’. It continues and refines the government’s ‘modernization’ attempts to locate youth work within its Connexions strategy.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) in the UK welcomed the renewed emphasis on 14-19 learning, formal and informal. It strongly encouraged youth work involvement in what the Agency saw as the Government’s two key priorities for youth work intervention - social inclusion, and the development of learning about and active participation in citizenship.

The NYA was commissioned by the DfES to run a residential event with 30 young people to consult them on key elements of Transforming Youth Work, the Connexions Service and the Youth Service Standards Fund. The young people presented directly to representatives of the DfES their insights and views about what might be done, why and how.

In addition, to this the Green Paper, Youth Matters, outlined a number of policies to look at improving the education and training of those working in the field of youth information.

Improve the link between information and counselling

As a result of the consultation, with young people and youth organisations around the government Green Paper - Youth Matters, the DfES are currently establishing integrated targeted support pathfinders in a small number of Local Authority areas. The selected areas have been asked to redesign their targeted support services for teenagers, as envisaged by Youth Matters, and discover, record and feed back what is working, what barriers there are and how these might be overcome. Some of the pathfinders will take on a wider remit looking at how they can better support and intervene early with 'at risk' young children and their families to help prevent a range of possible poor outcomes.

Through the pathfinders we hope to explore how Local Authorities can deliver effective integrated targeted support; and to develop a change management toolkit and case studies which other local areas can use when approaching service and role redesigns.

Promote the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels

In addition to the work around Connexions, a number of activities, including Millennium Volunteers, Year of the Volunteer 2005, the Frank drugs campaign have used a range of information channels to get messages out to young people.

BYC surveyed over 500 young people and found that they want information about where they would ideally like to access information on issues such as sex, relationships, health and family:

- 53% said that friends would be their ideal place to go to get this type of advice
- 48% said the Internet.
- 39% said youth club,
- 32% said parents
- 23% said school.

Participation by young people in information

The DfES have involved young people in the development of the five outcomes for Every Child Matters, in the Green Paper - Youth Matters consultation, and often commissions organisations to consult with young people to find out their views in certain issues - but rarely actually involves them in developing the strategies and in the production of information materials on a national level.

Youth Volunteering

The Russell Commission was established in May 2004 by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. Two advisory groups were set up to assist Ian Russell and the Review Team with the consultation - an Independent

Advisory Group that included representatives from the voluntary sector, business and the media and a Youth Advisory Board that was made up of young volunteers and non-volunteers.

Following extensive research into the current volunteering landscape, both within the UK and abroad, the Commission launched a nation wide consultation in October 2004.

The Commission engaged a wide range of stakeholders including young people, the voluntary sector, business and the media, receiving over 700 responses from voluntary and community sector organisations, and a further 6,000 responses from young people.

‘A national framework for youth action and engagement’ was published by the Russell Commission on Wednesday, 16 March, 2005.

The Report details the Commission’s recommendations for delivering a step change in youth volunteering in the UK - a step change in diversity, quality and quantity. In its report, the Russell Commission responds to the clearly expressed desire of young people to find meaningful ways of contributing to their communities. It addresses current inconsistencies and weaknesses in provision, which prevent the full potential of youth volunteering opportunities from being realised, as well as identifying ways to engage more young people from disadvantaged and under-represented communities. Additionally, the Commission proposes measures to significantly improve the range and quality of activities for which young people can choose to volunteer.

In addition to this, the government supports and funds a number of voluntary organisations and initiatives in the UK, including the British Youth Council, School Councils UK and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP),

2005 was the Year of the Volunteer, a year long campaign co-ordinated by the Home Office to celebrate of the amazing work volunteers do and a call to action to get more people volunteering.

Young people and political engagement

The Electoral Commission and the Department for Constitutional Affairs run a number of programmes and conduct research to examine young people’s involvement in the political processes.

The government is keen to re-engage young people in the political process and believes that the introduction of citizenship into the school curriculum will help to achieve this.

However, the UK has a long way to go - only 37% of 18-24 year olds voting in the 2005 general election, compared to 51% in 1997.

We know that many young people currently feel disengaged from national politics because they are not able to vote. Not letting 16 and 17 year olds express their political views through the ballot box gives the impression to young people and to society that young people’s views are not valid, or not as valid as the views of older citizens.

One of the key issues for young people is the lack of consistency - they can leave home, leave school, work full time, pay taxes, I join the armed forces and receive social security benefits all at 16, but are not vote. Young people feel that by receiving the vote at 16, politicians will be recognising the valuable contributions that young people make in society.

BYC policy, determined by young people within our membership, states that BYC would like to see the age of majority for all political and social rights, including the right to vote, lowered to 16. BYC have been campaigning to lower the age of voting to 16 for two decades.

BYC conducted a survey of 10,000 young people between the ages of 15-24 in 2001. 52% of young people said that they would or would like to be able to vote in a general election. The report, BYC 'Listening to the Unheard' also highlighted that young people feel they should be given a say at the ballot box at an earlier age

The British Youth Council believes that the age of voting, should be lowered to 16 and is currently campaigning to ensure this is included in the Electoral Administration Bill, currently passing through parliament.

Norway - LNU

Since Norway's request to be part of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the youth field was denied by the Council of ministers, OMC is not a topic within the youth structures in Norway. However, the Norwegian Youth Council has nominated the undersigned into the structures of YFJ to follow the process and bring best practice back to Norway. The main aim of *this* report is however to bring some experience from Norway back to YFJ, and hopefully also add some ideas to further demands when it comes to implementation of the Common Objectives Information and Participation. Therefore this report will focus far lot more on what IS achieved than what is lacking and not achieved. However there are still a lot of challenges to ensure children and youth with targeted information and fulfil their rights to participate in Norway.

Contact with Governmental structures, an evidence of mainstreaming?

The Norwegian Youth Council (LNU) is an umbrella organisation for 71 children and youth organisations. The ministries working most on children and youth issues are the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, the ministry of Social and Health Affairs, the ministry of Culture, the ministry of Knowledge and the ministry of Children and Equality. The ministry of Children and Equality is the coordinating ministry on Children and Youth Affairs, while the ministry of Culture is the coordinating ministry when it comes to state policy towards NGOs.

There are several contact points between LNU, the member organisations and some of the ministries. Every year LNU hosts a meeting between the member organisations and the different ministers (ministers of Culture, Knowledge, Foreign Affairs, Development Assistance, Local Governments and Regional Development and Health). The ministers are invited one at a time, and we meet them in the office of LNU with one of the board members of LNU chairing the meeting.

The ministry of Children and Equality invites all the organisations for an annual Contact Conference. Half a year before this conference LNU is invited to give input on the agenda. LNU and some of the member organisations (dependent on the topics) are also invited to the annual Contact Conference for the responsible for children and youth in the municipalities. There are also two contact lunches a year for the staff of LNU and the staff in the ministry working on Children and Youth Affairs. Often representatives of LNU are chairing processes in both these conferences.

Information

Statement: Norway has improved on communicating with youth during the last years, but there are great challenges, especially when it comes to communicating public information to ethnic minorities.

General Youth Information: Ung.no

In Norwegian "young" is "ung". The web site ung.no was put up by the Directorate of Children and Youth two years ago to provide young people with useful information.

The site has several quality standards, amongst them a demand for the information to come from non-commercial actors like governmental structures and NGOs.

The site provides information on everything from education, pregnancy and children's rights till how to get a driving license, how to influence your municipality or the government and on the work of different children and youth NGOs. The web site content is strictly targeted at youth, and close to 60 000 users (the population of Norway is approximately 4,5 million) visit the web site on a monthly basis. Ung.no is unfortunately only available in Norwegian.

Youth Information Centres

17 municipalities in Norway have initiated youth information centres, put up by the government and run with young employees in cooperation with children and youth structures as local and regional youth councils. Young people can drop by with questions about everything from cultural activities, their rights as students, information on different schools, inspiration for holidays or help to write an application for a job. A Youth Information Centre has been put up in Karasjok to provide information in sapmi, the language of Norway's indigenous people.

Information on the rights of children and youth

Norway ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child January 8 1991, and since then the rights of children and youth have been an important issue for the Government as well as LNU. The ministry provides the Convention itself in all the languages anyone asks for it. There is also information targeted at municipalities, kindergarten staff, teachers, leaders in youth organisations and everyone else involved in work with youth.

Clear message in

A new Government's web site is currently under construction and will get an interactive structure to ensure that everyone can access the decision makers.

Participation

Statement: Youth participation in Norway is in general a lot better taken care of on the international level than on the national level.

Global level

LNU is seen as the natural recruiter of youth representatives to the UN General Assembly (our highest ranked representation since 1971), and other UN Bodies as UNESCO and UN-Habitat. Children and youth representatives appointed by LNU are also given status as advisors in delegations to UN Conferences as the UNGA Special Session of Children and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In the UNGA the Youth Delegates are the only non-governmental representatives in the 90 people large delegation with the right to speak on behalf of the Norwegian government. LNU is now working on providing the youth delegates to the UNGA with the right to negotiate on behalf of Norway on youth related issues.

By demand from LNU the ministry of Foreign Affairs covered the expenses for youth delegates from Norway's main cooperation countries to the UN-Habitat World Urban

Forum in 2004 and Governing Council in 2005. As it is important to LNU that youth cooperation is equal and mutual, LNU in cooperation with the local Youth Information Centre in Oslo got the former minister of Local Governments and Regional Development to take part in café dialogue discussions with the different youth representatives on World Urban Forum 2006. This way we provided the governments present with methods for working with children and youth in local, regional and national planning processes.

The Norwegian youth delegates were also trusted as negotiators on the UN-Habitat Youth Strategy, which was adopted at UN-Habitat Governing Council 2005. For 2006 LNU is demanding that the ministry of Foreign Affairs covers the expenses for the UN General Assembly.

LNU is permanently represented in the national UNESCO Commission and also in the delegations to UNESCO's General Conference.

LNU has so far not been able to convince the Government that youth expertise is needed in the delegation for World Trade organisation meetings, but during the last negotiations LNU covered the expenses of two member organisations sending representatives to Hong Kong. During the negotiations the youth NGO representatives gave the Norwegian delegates lessons in children's and youth's rights and the relations to and consequences of the negotiations.

European level

The ministry of Children and Equality always invite LNU to send an observer to the European Steering Committee for Youth within the Council of Europe. The ministry is also actively supporting the co-management structure working on youth within the Council of Europe.

The Ministry of Local Governments and Regional Development invited LNU as one of two representatives from Norway till the launching of the Council of Europe Democracy Forum. Norway was the one country to bring a youth representative, even though all Member States were encouraged to invite representatives from civil society.

Nordic level

At the moment two structures are put up to ensure youth participation during the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. A working group is providing the Ministers responsible for gender equality with a white paper on equality issues, while a youth panel is put up to evaluate the Nordic welfare states and give recommendations for development of these. In both these structures youth are given the initiative in developing new policy, rather than the usual hearing institution where youth structures are invited to react to already developed policy papers from the Government.

The Nordic Youth Committee is put up by the co-management principle, and the LNU representative and the governmental representative have one vote each. The influence is more linked to money than to political decisions.

National level

The minister of Children and Equality opens the General Assembly of LNU every year (she has just cancelled a meeting in Switzerland to keep this tradition alive also in 2006). The LNU GA is named “Barne- og ungdomstinget” (the Norwegian Parliament is named “Stortinget”), and the minister’s presentation of the Government’s policy regarding children and youth is followed by a debate with the children and youth organisations.

In 2003 the former minister of Children and Family Affairs invited LNU to put up a concept for a co-management structure, and she promised that the Government would be ready to consider it. The same invitation has been repeated from the Government, the member organisations of LNU have however not seen the need for such a structure so far.

Hearings - written and committee hearings: The hearing institution is strong in Norway. When a new law is adopted, the proposals are sent on hearing, often both from the responsible ministry and from the Parliament. Written response is then expected and taken into account by the decision makers- often also attached and used in the background documents for the new law. LNU and member organisations are also often invited to hearings in the Parliament to present our view on the proposals.

When there are proposals so controversial that the member organisations of LNU can not agree or allow LNU to represent their view, LNU is sometimes asked to invite organisations with different views to meet the parliamentarians or the ministry.

LNU can also choose what committee hearings it wants to participate in during the parliamentary work on the national budget.

The formal hearings in the Parliament are however more a “marketing” of the competence of the youth organisations and more symbolic than all the informal work and cooperation carried out in between the meetings. Children and youth organisations are by more and more decision makers seen as representatives of the one group of citizens without the right to vote and therefore important contributors to the Norwegian democracy. Therefore access to the Parliament and Government is within reach of the organisations with competence on different policy areas.

Committees: New policy areas in Norway are often approached by the Government appointing a committee to deliver white papers. These days the youngest committee of this kind ever is working (average age of 34). LNU has two (out of eight) representatives in the committee, which shall evaluate the State support policy for children and youth organisations and come up with ideas on how to improve the funding systems and the rest of the policy area. One member organisation is represented in the committee and there are also other representatives with strong relations to LNU. LNU sees this as an acknowledgement of the knowledge gained in children and youth organisations. However 21 % of the population in Norway is below the age of 30, and only 3 % of the representatives in committees appointed by the government is below 30.

Election projects: The election rate for the Parliament elections in Norway are decreasing. To raise interest in the formal participation structures and raise the election rates, the youth organisations were challenged to form campaigns to make

more young people vote. Several of LNU's member organisations and LNU had election projects during 2005 before the elections in September. The projects were sponsored by the ministry of Local Governments and Regional Development. LNU used the opportunity to make the member organisations challenge young politicians and spread the challenges, the methods, the answers and campaign material amongst the member organisations.

The Parliament and youth: The Parliament has own web sites targeted at youth (tinget.no), where young people find information about processes related to youth and also advice on how to lobby the parliamentarians. The lobby part is in general produced by LNU with contributions from the undersigned. The Parliament also invites to a "Summer Camp" in the Parliament every Summer where young people from all over Norway get training in lobby work and introductions to politics.

After the 2005 elections, 17 out of 169 parliamentarians are below the age of 30.

Really bad example: Youth Panel put up by the Ombudsman for Children: In 2005 the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children realized he had little competence on youth issues and decided to put up a Youth Panel. However the participants were recruited from the area of Oslo only, and the Ombudsman tried to avoid the organised youth. This undermines the role of young people's organisations and also excludes a lot of knowledge. Both LNU and the new Minister of Local Governments and Regional Development have sent critical letters and pressured the Ombudsman in the media, and he is now trying to recruit broader geographically and also inviting organised youth into the panel.

The national campaign committee for "All different - all equal": The national campaign committee for "All different - all equal" has representatives from both governmental bodies and youth organisations. The committee is chaired by LNU's representative.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee: LNU has so far not been able to convince the Parliament President that a youth representative is needed in the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.

Local and regional youth participation structures

- Nothing about us without us? Yeah, right...: More and more municipalities in Norway are putting up children and youth structures to ensure children and youth participation. The slogan "Nothing about us without us" has become popular within the ministries and the local governments. However 1/3 of the civil servants responsible for children and youth in the municipalities (all municipalities in Norway have to appoint a civil servant with the responsibility of ensuring children's and youth's rights in local planning processes) have reported that the children and youth councils never really influenced the policy making in the municipality. This is results from a survey undertaken 6 years ago, and there is a need for more research on youth participation in Norway. LNU's attitude to the local and regional children and youth structures is that involving children and youth without empowering them is a waste of resources and abuse of young people.

Democracy projects in kindergartens and schools: Several kindergartens are now working on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the everyday work. Schools have for a long time had democratic structures for their students, but only lately the students' councils have been empowered and are able to work on the issues that really mean something to the school students. Both these fields have to be subject for more research.

Results and conclusions

The Convention on the Rights of the Child: Norway never became part of the OMC. However something else happened in 2003: Norway implemented the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the national law. This strengthened the rights of children and youth and put it even higher on the agenda in Norway. LNU and other organisations use the Convention as a strong lobby tool. This has further strengthened the focus on the rights of children and youth.

Distance paradox: The paradox is however that the work is better the further away from the grass root level we go. Norway is by my opinion far better at including and involving children and youth in the work towards the UN institutions than the work in most municipalities in Norway. This has to be dealt with from now on. Children and youth are experts as being young people.

Trust: If young people are not trusted at the local level, they do not realize that they have the capacity to change the world. They will get this trust in youth organisations but so far they do not meet this absolutely necessary trust in many of the local and regional children and youth councils.

Hopefully the campaign "All different - all equal" will address these challenges in 2006 and 2007.

Annex 1: Guidelines for the Shadow Report on the first two Common Objectives: information and participation

Following the commitment taken in the November 2003 Council Resolution, the Member States will produce a national report on the implementation of the first two common objectives. They are expected by 20 December 2005.

The European Youth Forum, in close cooperation with its member National Youth Councils, and based on their input, will produce its own report in order to balance the official results which will be released by the European Commission as a synthesis of the national reports at the beginning of 2006.

This process of shadow reporting is crucial for the European Youth Forum and its member organisations as it provides the opportunity to express concerns about the implementation of the common objectives to which Member States committed themselves. It is also important to demonstrate the involvement of National Youth Councils and youth organisations in the political process on youth policy. This shadow report, combined with a study that the European Youth Forum will undertake on the evaluation of the OMC process, is also a way to take a step forward and to suggest new proposals.

Member States have been given guidelines for their national reports by the European Commission, and have been asked to produce a report on the implementation of each common objective (CO); essentially, one on information and one on participation.

In order to synchronise our work and to facilitate comparison, the European Youth Forum is proposing that its National Youth Councils produce a single document, with the first part dedicated to the CO Information and the second to the CO Participation.

Proposed Guidelines for Member Organisations on the compilation of the Shadow Report

What are the national evaluations?

- All European Youth Forum member organisations are invited to start to work on their own shadow reports on implementation of the OMC Common Objectives. This work should involve those responsible for national youth policy development as well as strong contributions from their member organisations.
- While the contributions from International Youth NGOs are important to evaluate the implementation of the OMC Common Objectives at the European level, it is crucial that National Youth Councils commit themselves to producing their national evaluations as the whole OMC process is very much a national one and decision-makers need to see the reality of implementation at the member state level.

How to set up the process?

- The European Youth Forum has produced framework and guideline questions

for production of the evaluations. The format will follow that used by the European Commission and the member states to enable the comparison of the “official truth” and the reality of youth organisations (see attachment).

- National Youth Councils and international youth organisations should provide spaces for their members to debate their experiences on using the White Paper results in youth policy development and use the conclusions from these debates when preparing their evaluations.
- The national preparations for the European Youth Week/États Généraux could be used to debate the national implementation of the White Paper and the Youth Pact. These debates should be of high quality and involve all stakeholders in the processes: youth organisations, youth researchers, the public sector, the relevant ministries and decision-makers.
- The entire report should not be shorter than 5 pages and exceed 15 pages
- The deadline for submission of MO contributions is the end of November. The deadline has been chosen so that we can react in advance of the member states whose deadline is the end of December.

National Youth Councils' role in the official member states' reports

- The European Commission has invited member states to involve youth organisations fully in the preparation of member states' national reports on how they have implemented the OMC COs.
- The European Youth Forum suggests that these reports should be based on contributions from youth organisations and all other relevant stakeholders and should be compiled through strong cooperation between youth organisations and the national ministries responsible for youth. The National Youth Councils should contact ministries in their countries and propose such a methodology. The evaluation produced by the NYCs in the framework of the YFJ shadow report may well be used as the basis for the official member state report.
- Even if the National Youth Councils are fully involved in producing the official national report, it would still be very valuable for all NYCs to provide the YFJ with their input. Our shadow report needs to reflect the realities of all member states and moreover, the point of view of our shadow report can be different from the official member states' reports.

The role of European Youth Forum

- The European Youth Forum will support all member organisations involved in evaluation by providing guidelines and information, organising Information and Networking Days and, if needed, providing political support by participating in different events organised by member organisations.
- The European Youth Forum will also produce an evaluation on the implementation of the OMC that will concentrate on the implementation of the

Common Objectives at the European level. This evaluation will be based on the contributions from member organisations and the expertise of the EU Affairs Commission.

- The European Youth Forum Shadow Report on the implementation of the White Paper will be published at the beginning of 2006. The Shadow Report will be a key tool for our advocacy work for effective, cross-sectoral youth policy in Europe that will be based on the knowledge of youth organisations and the reality of European young people.

Proposed structure for the Shadow reports

1. The **consultation for the implementation**: how the National Youth Councils/youth organisations were able to be involved in the implementation process; at the national level and also at the local level.
2. **Results of the implementation**: did the implementation of the Common Objectives lead to any developments in youth policy? Comparison of the action lines adopted by the Council to the actual actions taken.
3. The **obstacles** met during the implementation phase.
4. **Best and worse practices**: examples of concrete actions taken.
5. The **state of affairs** concerning the COs Information and Participation.

Support material for the Shadow reporting

- The European Youth Forum Guideline Questions (document 0807-05), produced in order to help MOs work on the shadow report. This document also contains the points of the Council resolution.
- A special issue of the European Youth Forum “e-Youth Opinion” electronic newsletter on EU Youth Policy, to disseminate the information to different actors within Member Organisations.

Annex 2: Guideline questions for the shadow report on the implementation of the common objectives on information and participation

1. The Implementation Process

Contact with governments

- How involved was the NYC in the consultation process of the White Paper?
- Has the government/NYC cooperation increased because of the process; did you meet to discuss other issues?
- Did the NYC first contact the government or did the government first contact the NYC? Was this in a formal or informal context?

Understanding of the process

- Note the difference between the government perspective and the NYC perspective on information.
- What do you understand under 'information'?
- Member States have chosen those guidelines, because they have already been connected
- Did the government have a strategy or policy on youth information, before the White Paper? Since the White Paper?

2. Information

Measuring implementation

- Please compare the Common Objectives agreed by the Member States with the actions taken in your country/at the European level to implement them:
 - Did the governments develop new tools?
 - Is there concrete funding for youth information?
 - It may be a local competence, but national governments should assume the responsibilities that they have agreed on guidelines. There should be a basic strategy at the national level to ensure that everybody has information on youth issues.
 - If they took initiative, did governments refer to the Guidelines and Common Objectives?
 - Did the White Paper prevent budget cuts or a reduction in local youth information initiatives?
 - Is the government collecting data on how many people are attending youth information centres.
 - Did they fund/organise infrastructures for coordinating youth information centres?

Results

- Do you know if things have changed over the past 2 years? If yes, is it because of the White paper? What do you think are the obstacles for the implementation? Do you have ideas on how these obstacles could have been overcome? (N.B. this is very important.)

Annex of the Council Resolution adopted 25 November 2005

Measures for achieving the common objectives for information for young people
In the light of the actual circumstances and the priorities of each Member State, the following non-exhaustive list of lines of action may be pursued:

INFORMATION

1. Access for young people to information services

- a) promote, at the appropriate levels, the development in Member States of comprehensive, coherent and coordinated information services which take account of the specific needs of young people and are as youth friendly and economically accessible as possible;
- b) facilitate equal access of all young people to information, while avoiding any form of discrimination or exclusion based on economic, social, gender, cultural or geographical grounds;
- c) encourage the development of national, regional and local youth portals linked to the European Youth Portal.

2. Quality information

- a) monitor the quality of youth information, taking existing instruments into account (e.g. good practices and the ERYICA's European Youth Information Charter);
- b) improve the education and training of those working in the field of youth information;
- c) improve the link between information and counselling, with the aim of encouraging a learning and capacity-building process among young people on how to obtain, select and evaluate information in order to become informed users of information;
- d) promote the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels, particularly those most frequently used by young people, such as the Internet, mobile phones, video films and cinema.

3. Participation by young people in information

- a) promote the participation of youth organisations and people working in the area of youth information at European, national, regional and local level in the preparation and implementation of youth information strategies;

- b) promote involvement by young people in the preparation of understandable, user-friendly, targeted information products, so as to improve the quality of the information and access for all young people;
- c) encourage greater involvement by young people in the dissemination of information and advice (particularly in youth information centres, schools, youth organisations and the media), in order to help all young people to access information.

3. Participation

Process of implementation

- What kinds of structures/methodologies were used for the implementation (e.g. committees, etc...)?
- Who was involved?
- Were regions and local authorities involved in the process?
- Were any bodies established to specify in more detail the common objectives?

Tools/measures

- Please compare the Common Objectives agreed by the Member States with the actions taken in your country/at the European level:
 - Were any concrete measures taken?
 - e.g. a new funding system;
 - new programmes;
 - stronger support to youth organisations?
- How can youth organisations best adapt to these changes?

Results

- Do you know if things have changed over the past 2 years? If yes, is it because of the White paper? What do you think are the obstacles for the implementation? Do you have ideas on how these obstacles could have been overcome? (N.B. this is very important.)

Annex of the Council Resolution adopted 25 November 2004

Measures for achieving the common objectives for information for young people

In the light of the actual circumstances and the priorities of each Member State, the following non-exhaustive list of lines of action may be pursued:

PARTICIPATION

4. Participation by young people in civic life:

- d) promote the involvement of young people in participatory structures, for example NGOs, associations, voluntary work, local youth councils, and encourage the activities of youth NGOs, while respecting their independence and autonomy;
- e) encourage the development of activities, initiatives and projects intended to involve young people directly at regional and local level;
- f) publicise and show greater recognition of the outreach work done by parents, youth workers and other persons;
- g) identify more clearly the obstacles in the way of participation by specific groups and by disadvantaged young people and encourage measures and mechanisms capable of overcoming those obstacles, in particular by making allowance for their diversities and priorities (cultural or ethnic background, disabilities, socio-economic factors, gender, etc.);
- h) examine qualitative evaluation methods of participation for young people

5. Greater participation by young people in the system of representative democracy

- a) Encourage and develop, [...] at all appropriate levels, a regular, structured dialogue between the public and/or government authorities and young people and their representative structures (national, regional and local youth councils, youth organisations, the European Youth forum, etc.);
- b) ensure that such dialogue can also include young people who are not members of organisations and that their concerns are taken into account;
- c) promote and develop this dialogue, so that young people can be more involved in public life;
- d) identify more clearly and study the obstacles in the way of participation by young people in the system of representative democracy and encourage measures and mechanisms conducive to the inclusion of all young people in all their diversities (cultural or ethnic background, disabilities, gender, socio-economic factors, etc.);

6. Support various forms of learning to participate

- a) further develop and extend training for participation within formal education systems (in conjunction with the objectives approved under the open method of coordination as applied to education);
- b) encourage the development of activities in the field of non-formal and informal education that promote the active participation of young people;

- c) further develop interaction between formal, non-formal and informal education
- d) foster the development of experience of participation where young people live their lives: in particular within the family, at school, in youth organisations, at university, at other places of education or training and at work, in sporting and leisure time contexts;
- e) recognise the important role of persons working with young people and facilitating their learning to participate and develop training actions in this field;
- f) promote and increase awareness of the benefits to all of the participation of committed young people and combat prejudices against young people which prevent them from playing an effective part;
- g) analyse more carefully the phenomena which lead to the civic exclusion of certain groups and encourage approaches focused on prevention.