

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Resolution Res(2003)7 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 October 2003.
at the 859th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers,

Referring to the various instruments formulated by the Council of Europe in the youth field and to the work of the North-South Centre on youth matters, and stressing the importance of their implementation in all member states;

Taking into account the far-reaching changes in European societies, and the new trends in the situation of young Europeans;

Having regard to the Final Declaration of the 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, which was held from 7 to 9 November 2002 in Thessaloniki, Greece, on the theme of Youth Constructing Europe, and to the resolutions adopted by ministers on the priorities of the youth sector and on the situation of young people in conflict areas respectively;

Convinced that youth policies need to be as comprehensive as possible, taking into account the overall needs of young people, and recognising their diversity and their many facets and resources;

Bearing in mind the importance the Council of Europe attaches to partnership between governments and youth organisations and networks in drawing up and implementing its youth policy;

With a view to young people's deeper commitment to European unity, to the preservation and development of the Council of Europe's achievements and to the furtherance and dissemination of its values and standards,

I. In order to make more of the potential offered by young people, the objectives of the Council of Europe youth policy shall be:

- to help young people to find ways of meeting both the challenges facing them and their own aspirations;
- to encourage young people to be active in the process of bringing about a closer European unity based on the principles and values of pluralist democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
- to empower young people, through non-formal education/learning and participation methods, to play an active role in the strengthening of civil society in Europe;
- to promote and support the development of youth policies in Europe.

II. In the light of the above objectives and the means available to the Council of Europe, the following shall be regarded as thematic priorities for the years ahead:

a. the promotion of intercultural dialogue and peace, with special emphasis on:

- the promotion of mediation, peace-building and conflict resolution;
- intercultural dialogue and the dialogue between civilisations;

- the training of youth leaders and capacity-building of European youth organisations, based on the intercultural learning methodology;

b. human rights education and the promotion of human dignity, and social cohesion, with special emphasis on:

- the fight against racism, intolerance and all forms of discrimination;
- the development of social cohesion;
- the fight against social exclusion of young people;
- the fight against violence in everyday life.

c. participation and democratic citizenship, with special emphasis on:

- the training of young democratic leaders, and young people able to play the role of “multipliers”;
- the support to and the development of non-governmental democratic youth organisations and networks;
- young people’s participation in and access to democratic institutions and processes, in particular those from disadvantaged and minority groups;
- the reduction of barriers to youth participation, at local, regional, national and European levels;
- the establishment and proper functioning of democratic youth bodies representing young people and non-governmental youth organisations, at local, regional and national levels.

III. The overall programme of the youth sector should be implemented taking into consideration the following two strategic priorities, which constitute the common ground of the Council of Europe’s action in the youth field:

a. support to the setting up and development of appropriate youth policies, concentrating in particular on:

- the comparative analysis of national youth policies, including the development of tools and evaluation criteria at national level, and the exchange of good practices in this area;
- support to the development of national youth policies, notably in the new member states of the Council of Europe;
- the elaboration of national strategies for youth, and appropriate legislation;
- relations between youth policies and childhood policies;
- policies for the most vulnerable young people;
- the recognition of non-formal education/learning and its complementarity with formal education;
- information and advice to young people;
- the contribution of young people to social and cultural innovation;
- environmental education;
- the promotion of partnership between governments and youth organisations for the definition, implementation and evaluation of youth policies.

b. taking into consideration, to a greater extent, the youth dimension in other activity sectors of the Council of Europe.

This action implies in particular:

- the participation of representatives of the statutory bodies of the youth sector in a number of steering committees and other working structures of the Council of Europe;
- the consultation of the Advisory Council by the Committee of Ministers or by subordinated intergovernmental committees, regarding draft standard-setting legal texts which have a specific impact on young people;
- the convening of regular meetings of the Secretary General’s Co-ordination Group on youth questions;
- the active participation of the youth sector in the integrated and multidisciplinary programmes of the Council of Europe.

IV. These objectives and priorities shall be implemented through the following methods:

- a multidisciplinary and intercultural approach;
- closer involvement of young people in decisions which affect them and in the management of programmes and resources (co-management);
- adapting and opening up programmes and structures to the changes in society;
- developing research into the problems of greatest concern to young people;
- stimulating young people's creativity and critical sense;
- the exchange of experiences and good practice in the area of training (for example, through the European network of youth centres), and in the administrative and legal domains.

In implementing its priorities, the youth sector should also strengthen its co-operation with other international organisations (for example, Unesco, Unicef) and, in particular, with the European Union, through agreements. This co-operation should focus on training youth workers, research in the area of youth and information and documentation. Co-operation with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations should also be further explored.

V. With regard to resources, the following guidelines should be followed:

- coherent presentation and optimum use of human, financial and other resources should be ensured through programming based on specific objectives and clearly defined evaluation criteria;
- additional sources of financing, including from the non-governmental sector should be sought.