

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union
Union Européenne

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

REPORT ON THE SYMPOSIUM ON YOUTH POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS

Odessa, Ukraine

14-15 July 2011

[NB: This is a report of the EU-CoE youth partnership team and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the partner institutions](#)

Programme

Wednesday, 13 July 2011

Arrival of participants, registration, informal evening

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Thursday, 14 July 2011

08h45 **Registration**

09h00 **Welcome and Introduction**

Chair: Hanjo SCHILD, Coordinator of EU-CoE youth partnership

Opening remarks by Mr Ravil SAFIULLIN, Chairman of the State Service for Youth and Sports of Ukraine

Opening remarks by Mr. Eduard MATVIYCHUK, head of the Odessa State Administration

Welcome addresses by representatives of partner institutions:

Jose Manuel PINTO TEIXEIRA,
Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Ukraine and Belarus

Vladimir RISTOVSKI, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Kyiv

Ms Elena PANOVA, Deputy Country Director, UNDP Ukraine

10h00 Press event

10h30 **European Youth Policies, Part I**

EU Youth Strategy: Sergej KOPERDAK, Head of the Youth Policy Unit, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Council of Europe youth policy: Ralf René WEINGAERTNER, Director of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe

11h00 Coffee break

11h15 **European Youth Policies, Part II**

Priorities of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU: Klaudia WOJCIECHOWSKA, Ministry of Education, Poland

Representative of the European Youth Forum – Guoda LOMANAITE: “Young people and Youth organizations in Eastern Europe and Caucasus”

11h45 **Keynote speeches: How does European Youth Policy Impact National Youth Policies?**

Presentation of the Belgian case: objectives and practices

Jan VANHEE, Deputy Director of the Division of Youth, Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Belgium

Discussion

Presentation of the Ukrainian case: objectives and practices

Igor KHOKHYCH, Director of the Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sports

Discussion

13h00 Lunch

14h30 **State of Youth Policy in the EECA Region**

Chair: Evgeniia PETRIVSKA, National Project Manager UNDP Ukraine

EU-CoE youth partnership and related activities: Hanjo SCHILD, EU-CoE youth partnership

Summary Presentation of the Results of National Studies Commissioned by the EU-CoE youth partnership on Youth Policies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia

Areg TADEVOSYAN, Researcher and Correspondent of European Knowledge Center for Youth Policy

Discussion

16h00 **Thematic Working Groups: Expectations and Needs in Eastern Europe and Caucasus Countries**

Working group 1

Theme: Participation and Civil Society development

Working group 2

Theme: Health and well-being

Working group 3

Theme: Learning mobility

Working group 4

Theme: Employment and vocational education and training

18h00 Closing of the 1st day

18h30 Dinner

20h00 Cultural event

Friday, 15 July 2011

9h30 **Plenary session: Reporting back from Working Groups**
Chair: Karin LOPATTA-LOIBL, Youth Policy Unit, European Commission

Rapporteur WG 1 (15 minutes)

Discussion (20 min)

Rapporteur WG 2: (15 minutes)

Discussion (20 min)

10h40 Coffee break

11h00 **Plenary session: Reporting back from Working Groups, continuation**
Chair: Srd KISEVIC, EU-Council of Europe youth partnership

Rapporteur WG 3: (15 minutes)

Discussion (20 min)

Rapporteur WG 4: (15 minutes)

Discussion (20 min)

12h30

Lunch

14h00

Plenary session: Cooperation and Participation of EECA Youth in European Youth Programmes: What Is and Can Be Done Until 2013?

Chair: Mariana BURUIANA

Andriy Pavlovyh and Tomek Bratek, SALTO EECA, Youth in Action Programme (20 minutes)

Questions (20 minutes)

14h45

Plenary session: Short Conclusions and Follow-up

Sergej KOPERDAK, Head of the Youth Policy Unit, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Ralf René WEINGAERTNER, Director of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe

Igor KHOKHYCH, Ministry of Science, Education, Youth and Sport of Ukraine

15h30

End

19:00

Dinner

Saturday, 16 July 2011

Departure

REPORT

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Background Information

The partnership programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth has included among its priority areas of activity the countries of the Eastern Partnership program and the Russian Federation. The aim of the partnership in this region is to support evidence-based youth policy and stimulate exchanges of best practices between these countries and the rest of Europe.

In order to better understand the current situation with regards to youth and youth policy in the region, the EU-CoE youth partnership launched in 2010/11 a series of reviews of national youth policies in the EECA countries. The national review process followed the same standards that were previously employed elsewhere in Europe. The commissioned national experts had to rely on official data and consult all concerned stakeholders in the youth field when producing their reports. In order to get a wider picture of the region, and to better understand any commonalities that there might exist between the countries, a special regional report summarizing all the national reports was also commissioned.

These reports paved the way for the EU-CoE youth partnership to organise its Symposium on Youth Policy in Eastern Europe and Caucasus, which was held on 14-15 July 2011 in Odessa, Ukraine. The symposium was organised in cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and the EU's SALTO Resource Centre for Eastern Europe and Caucasus, which supports co-operation between Programme and Neighbouring Partner Countries from Eastern Europe & Caucasus within Youth in Action Programme.

The venue and the timing of the event connected well to the ongoing political processes. The Ukrainian chairmanship of the CoE Committee of Ministers (May-November 2011) created an important political momentum to mobilise efforts in the region within the field of youth policy. This was made even more pertinent by the priorities of the Ukrainian chairmanship, notably the strengthening of human rights, particularly children's rights, the rule of law and local democracy. Similarly, within the EU, the upcoming Polish Presidency (July-December 2011) placed Eastern Partnership among its general priorities and identified the area *Youth and the Word* as a specific priority for youth field. The choice for such priority was motivated by the wish of the Polish government to increase youth mobility and awareness about youth policy within the EECA region.

Purpose of the Symposium

The purpose of this symposium was an exchange of youth policy models, practices and experiences in the EU, the Council of Europe and in particular the Eastern European and

Caucasus countries. It also aimed at presenting and discussing youth policies at European level of both, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Last, but not least, the symposium was the occasion to present the first results of national studies on youth policies in the region of Eastern Europe and Caucasus conducted in 2010/11 by experts from the region on behalf of the EU-CoE youth partnership.

Symposium: Introductions and Case-Study Presentations

At the opening of the symposium, introductory words were delivered by Hanjo Schild, Coordinator of the EU-CoE youth partnership; Ravil Safiullin, Chairman of the State Service for Youth and Sports of Ukraine; Dmitry Voloshenkov, Deputy Head of Odessa State Administration; Ambassador Pinto Teixeira, Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine and Belarus; Vladimir Ristovski, Head of the CoE Office in Kyiv and Elena Panova, Deputy Head of UNDP Ukraine.

In his introduction, Mr Safiullin underlined the importance of this seminar in the context of UA's way to democratisation and referenced a project fighting youth unemployment. Later, at the margins of the symposium, UA authorities invited EU, CoE and UNDP representatives to a separate meeting on this project for which they asked the international institutions' support¹.

A number of case-study presentations were made:

- EU Youth Strategy, presented by Sergej KOPERDAK, Head of the Youth Policy Unit at the Directorate-General for Education and Culture in the European Commission.

In his presentation (PPP enclosed), Sergej Koperdak presented the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018, whose field of action "Youth in the World" was a basis for this symposium. While the Strategy aims at more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the labour market as well as at active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity, its 8 fields of action are: education & training, employment & entrepreneurship, health & well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world and creativity & culture. Sergej Koperdak referenced the Structured Dialogue with young people, youth work, the Strategy's cross-sectoral policy approach and research and evidence-based youth policy. He informed about activities of the EU trio Presidency

¹ In this separate meeting, the UA authorities presented a preliminary project idea "YOUTH SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY AND PROMOTION OF VOLUNTEERING". The concept of this project is based on the Youth Social Inclusion for Civic Engagement Project, implemented successfully since 2008 by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in partnership with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports. The proposed project aims at bridging the gap between skills demanded by the labour market and the ones acquired by young people through formal education. It was agreed in this separate meeting that the UA partners would submit shortly after the symposium a concept paper which could serve for further consultancy by international experts.

Spain, Belgium and Hungary on its priority topic "youth employment" and also referred to the current trio Presidency Poland, Denmark and Cyprus, which focuses on "youth participation" from different perspectives. He also mentioned the Europe2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the Move" and the Youth in Action Programme. At the end of his presentation Sergej Koperdak showed two videos about the EU Youth Strategy and youth work. Current videos can be consulted on <http://europa.eu/youth> The full presentation of Mr Koperdak can be found online on the EU-CoE youth partnership website: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/regional_cooperation/easterneuropeandcaucasus.html

- Council of Europe youth policy, presented by Ralf René WEINGAERTNER, Director of Youth and Sport at the Council of Europe.

Ralf René Weingaertner stressed that the symposium was taking place at an important time for Council of Europe, in view of its internal restructuring. He highlighted that there was an in-built closeness of the new structures to the current CoE key priorities in the field of youth: Human Rights and Democracy, Social Inclusion of Young People and Living together in Diverse Societies, as they were laid down in the final declaration of youth ministers on the future youth policy of the organisation - "Agenda 2020". He stressed that cooperation of civil society and governments is at the heart of the positive example of co-management in the CoE youth sector, which could also serve as a role model for other sectors in and outside the organisation. He described the EU-CoE youth partnership as an important tool for the implementation of actions and priorities of the CoE, in the region and beyond, particularly in terms of capacity building and knowledge building, as is for instance demonstrated in the EKCYP, the recently launched studies and this symposium.

- Priorities of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, presented by Klaudia WOJCIECHOWSKA, Head of the Youth Policy Unit, Ministry of Education, Poland

Klaudia Wojciechowska presented "Youth in the World" as a specific priority of the Polish Presidency in the youth field. She presented the following main goals of the Polish presidency of the EU in the youth field in relation to this region:

- Lobby for better use of the existing programs for EECA youth, as well as for inclusion of EECA youth in any other relevant EU programs;
- Push for a quicker launch of the currently discussed Eastern Partnership programme aimed at youth;
- Promote research and information on EECA youth in the Council working party, inform it about the conclusions of the Odessa symposium and encourage all EU Member States to participate in EECA cooperation;
- Enable EECA youth to take part in the EU Youth Conference in Warsaw;
- Lobby for further development of existing instruments active in the EECA region such as the EU-CoE youth partnership, the SALTO Resource centre.

Finally, she presented the upcoming EU Youth Conference, taking place 5-7 September 2011 in Warsaw. She mentioned that two representatives from each EECA country would be invited to attend at the costs of the Presidency.

The full presentation can be found online on the EU-CoE youth partnership website: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/regional_cooperation/easterneuropeandcaucasus.html

- “Young people and Youth organizations in Eastern Europe and Caucasus”, presented by Guoda LOMANAITE from the European Youth Forum

Guoda LOMANAITE presented the work of the European Youth Forum, its mission, priorities and the situation of its members, particularly national youth councils in the region. The full presentation can be found online on the EU-CoE youth partnership website.

- Presentation of the Belgian case: objectives and practices, by Jan VANHEE, Deputy Director of the Division of Youth, Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Belgium

Jan Vanhee gave a presentation of youth policy in Belgium and Flanders, including an overview of the decision-making structures and a set of best practices. He particularly highlighted the topic of Youth Work and its practice in Flanders. Speaking on the development of the Flemish Youth Policy Plan, he provided a set of useful guidelines on how to prepare, execute and evaluate a national youth policy.

The full presentation can be found online on the EU-CoE youth partnership website: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/regional_cooperation/easterneuropeandcaucasus.html

- Presentation of the Ukrainian case: objectives and practices, by Igor KHOKHYCH, Director of the Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sports

Igor Khokhych presented the main pillars of youth policy in Ukraine, as well as the priorities for its future development. He stressed importance of regional and international cooperation as a means for achieving better youth policy.

- Andriy PAVLOVYCH and Tomek BRATEK, from SALTO Resource Centre for Eastern Europe and Caucasus, presented the work of this Resource Centre and the Youth in Action Programme in the EECA region.

Andriy Pavlovych and Tomek Bratek gave an overview of the development of the Youth in Action Programme and provided statistical data for the activities supported by SALTO in the region. For the European Voluntary Service in 2010, the number of volunteers from Programme and Partner countries that were hosted in the EECA region was 452; while the number of young volunteers from the region going to Programme and Partner countries was 339. In 2007-2010 period, in total 341 projects were supported covering

youth exchanges and training & networking activities. The most popular themes of the projects within the Youth in Action Programme in the region are: European awareness, Social inclusion, Art & culture and Strengthening civil society / active citizenship. At the same time, the main challenges in the region identified by SALTO were: visa barriers, language barriers, social inclusion, recognition of Non-Formal Learning, recognition of youth work and financing limits (co-financing required for EU grants).

The full presentation can be found online on the EU-CoE youth partnership website:
http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/regional_cooperation/easterneuropeandcaucasus.html

Summary Report for the EECA Region

Summary Presentation of the Results of National Studies Commissioned by the EU-CoE youth partnership on Youth Policies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russian Federation

Areg Tadevosyan presented his Synthetic Report for the EECA Region, based on national reports prepared by various authors from five countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and a draft report submitted for Russian Federation. The main part of his presentation at the symposium focused on youth policy development. He outlined the following main points for the region:

- Youth policy documents mostly date back to 1990's and largely rely on old, Soviet-times structures and models.
- Youth work is largely unrecognized and undefined, with some notable exceptions
- Youth research component is missing and the field is often confused by policy-makers with youth information
- There is a great variation between the countries when it comes to amount of legislation on youth (from no legal documents at all to those with several dozen such documents), cross-sectoral approach to youth policy and inclusion of European and international dimension.
- The roles of the EU and CoE are much appreciated by all the countries concerned
- Youth participation is missing in the planning and evaluation of youth policy/programs and allocation of available funds

Main recommendations coming out of the report:

- There is a need to strengthen and/or create real co-management structures in the countries of the region that would involve the youth
- Introduce real monitoring and assessment of budget allocated for youth
- Stop political segregation in the field of youth between 'politically correct' and 'opposition-protesting' youth
- Strong need to develop youth research
- Need to support youth entrepreneurship and employment programs

- Youth information schemes need to be developed (taking into consideration modern technologies)
- Attention must be paid to youth work
- Involve non-formal education
- Coordinate donor activities and channel them to youth activities (make youth their priority)
- Ensure that all parts of the countries are covered, without skipping whole areas
- Train civil servants on youth policy principles
- Ensure existence of pluralistic and qualified national youth umbrella organisations
- Support YNGOs and local self-government dialogue
- Set national priorities in the field of youth by using research and evidence
- Raise awareness among general population on youth policy issues
- Accumulate and share best practices from the region

Areg Tadevosyan further called on the EU-CoE youth partnership to take its involvement in the region further after the completion of the study and expressed the view that the information gathered in the report could be valuable also for EU policies, such as Eastern Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy. In his opinion, international institutions should not limit themselves to cooperation with governments, but work also with the NGO sector in these countries in order to ensure continuity independent from political changes.

In the ensuing debate, most participants welcomed the report as a useful and comprehensive basis for discussion. Some critical voices were raised concerning the objectivity of the report and its underlying facts, the perceived only negative referencing to Soviet youth policy models and the process itself of drafting of national reports. The organisers and the reporter clarified that the national reviews were launched over a year ago and that all national reports were sent for prior approval and input to national ministries in charge of youth. The synthetic report in that sense had to rely on the situation as described in the national reports and did not undertake any independent research of its own. It was stressed that the report constituted only a first step in the process of larger discussion on the needs and expectations of the youth and youth policy sector in the region. The participants agreed that not all youth policy models used in the previous Soviet system were negative, although some felt it important to stress that the intention behind these models was not always the desired one (youth manipulation instead of youth participation). Some participants welcomed the positive trend in the region of increased youth political participation and others highlighted the positive examples of youth information centres and recognition of voluntary activities.

Working Groups Conclusions

WG on Participation and Civil Society Development

The group stressed the importance of raising the overall ‘culture of participation’ (citizenship education, training for trainers etc.) in the society. It was considered equally

important to educate adults who work with young people and also civil servants, to better communicate with young people. Special manuals should be made on how to involve young people in decision-making. A more theoretical manual should be written for experts and actors in the youth field and a youth-friendly simple version for general audience. The importance of non-formal education for the development of young people's skills for participation was equally stressed.

The group highlighted the potential role of the new media that are attractive to young people (such as computer games) for raising interest among youth for participation. An idea was floated for an online environment in which young people could meet and create common projects with the help of software that would guide them through the realization of their ideas step-by-step.

WG Health and Well-being

This was a smaller working group, which focused mainly on presenting and discussing the data on health and well-being in Eastern Europe and Caucasus. High levels of sexually transmitted infections, substance abuse, as well as inappropriate nutrition and low physical fitness levels feature among the most worrying issues. It was stressed that young people's perception of the value of their own health, as well as of the main risk factors, was very low and needed urgent addressing. The group did not discuss its own recommendations, but rather endorsed those prepared in an earlier report by Mr. Andriy Mishyn, which can be found in the annex.

WG on Learning Mobility

The group highlighted the issue of visas as an example of a practical horizontal obstacle to learning mobility. Although the main issue here remains travel between the EU and non-EU countries, there are also a number of obstacles to free travel between the countries in the region. Most of these are due to political conflicts and political will therefore remains crucial in solving them. Decision-makers in the region need to be better informed on the value of learning mobility and youth work in particular. It was further mentioned that most of the mobile young people still come from privileged backgrounds and that more attention must be paid to people with fewer opportunities, especially those coming from rural areas. An example from Georgia was quoted where the issue of learning mobility was linked to the wider themes of *democracy* and *participation*, which are a political priority for the country. Such an approach allowed for useful referencing to political documents from the Council of Europe and other international organisations in this field.

WG on Employment and Vocational Education and Training

The group discussed the causes of youth unemployment in the region that they perceived and did not link to the overall economic situation, such as a mismatch between skills obtained in education and those required by employers and the disparity between professions preferred by young people and those sought in the labour market. The group considered reforms of educational programs necessary as well as establishing better links between educational institutions and employers. The group also highlighted the value of practical experience, obtained through apprenticeships and job-shadowing schemes. Recognition of non-formal learning needs to be promoted, and in particular among

employers. Non-formal education is also a good method of equipping young people with 'soft skills' they need for succeeding professionally. Career counselling was mentioned as example for guiding young people in choosing their professions.

Main Conclusions of the Symposium

The participants welcomed the symposium as the first opportunity for the national youth policies in the EECA region to be presented and discussed in an international setting, combining both a regional and a European dimension. The publication of the reports and participation of experts were seen as an important contribution to raising the overall knowledge base on youth policy in the region.

The regional participants particularly welcomed the contribution and support of international actors. In this sense, the high profile given to the event by the EU and the Council of Europe through the participation of their ambassadors and senior youth policy officials was perceived as very beneficial.

With regard to national youth policies in the region, most participants stressed the need for developing modern youth policies that would respond better to current national realities. Youth policies in region date mostly from 1990's and have witnessed few changes.

In connection to this, many participants saw the need for more and better targeted research as a key precondition for better policy-making.

The regional cooperation was perceived by everyone to be important and beneficial. The countries face many similar issues and there are best practice examples that can be readily shared between them. Some participants felt that it would be useful to *regionalise* the existing structures (such as European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy, or European Youth Centres) in order to create focal points for intraregional youth policy-making. The issue of language was particularly highlighted as an important obstacle to bringing external best practices and research findings to local policy-makers. The participants called on the EU and the Council of Europe to support them in establishing regional cooperation.

The symposium has equally played an important role by providing an opportunity for the main stakeholders in the region to get to know each other better. A number of fringe meetings took place, where further cooperation and bilateral projects were discussed.

Following the final exchange between the participants, the following main follow-up activities were proposed:

- The symposium should grow into an annual event as part of a larger process of cooperation in the youth field in the region;
- The EU-CoE youth partnership should continue playing an active role in this process.

- Special attention needs to be given to the language of communication, as the linguistic barrier remains an important obstacle to bringing knowledge on youth to the stakeholders in the region.

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SYMPOSIUM ON YOUTH POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS

Odessa, Ukraine
14-15 July 2011

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