

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK in MALTA

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1. Context of youth work

Youth work in Malta had its antecedents in the work of the Catholic Church and its voluntary organisations such as the Society of Christian Doctrine, Catholic Action and the Salesians, all established in Malta at the beginning of the 20th century. The British presence brought about the Malta Scout Association, which applied for membership of the British Scout Movement in 1908. Following on the gaining of independence in 1964, the Maltese Catholic Scout Association became a member of the World Scout Conference in 1966. The Girl Guides were established in 1923 and proved to be one of the most active and widespread voluntary organisations in Malta.

Up until the 1990s, youth work in Malta was the preserve of the voluntary sector with the state playing little or no role. However, the decade was to usher in a number of significant changes in the state's attitude to youth work.

In 1992, the University of Malta established an Institute of Youth Studies (now the Department of Youth and Community Studies) to provide training for those who wished to pursue a professional career as youth and community workers. The first group of graduate students founded the Maltese Association of Youth Workers (MAY) in 1998, which subsequently published a code of ethics for youth workers in 2001. Following on a national youth conference, the first of its kind in Malta, the National Youth Council was established in 1992.

In 1993, a new Ministry for Youth and Arts was established and published the first document on youth policy. Malta's first National Youth Policy (1993) was followed by others in 1999, 2004 and 2010.

Malta's accession to the European Union in 2004 was to have significant consequences for youth work. Membership of the European Union provided youth work with new sources of funding, through Youth in Action, as well as a new and expanded policy horizon, through the Youth Working Party and the Council of Youth Ministers. The momentum generated at both national and European level culminated in the establishment in 2010 of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, the National Youth Agency, which opened a new chapter in the history of youth work in Malta.

- Teuma, Miriam (2014), "The development and implementation of youth policy in Malta" in *Global Perspectives on Youth Work*, Sense Publishing, Rotterdam.

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

The national youth policy *Towards 2020 – A shared vision for the future of young people*, which focuses on all 13 to 30 year olds, and which is being implemented by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ over the period 2015-2020, has two related aims:

- to effectively support and encourage young individuals in fulfilling their potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns; and
- to effectively support young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of the nation and Europe.

The policy is being implemented through two specific but interdependent strategies that complement the two policy aims. Each of the two strategies has a number of designated Action Plans under which specific actions are being undertaken and implemented over the six-year timeframe 2015-2020.

- Strategy 1 – Youth work and services for young people
 - Action Plan – New spaces at local community level for young people and youth organisations
 - Action Plan – Awareness raising, listening to and supporting the voice of young people
 - Action Plan – Initiatives for the active engagement, empowerment and participation of young people and youth organisations
- Strategy 2 – Cross-sectoral supports for young people
 - Action Plan – Education and training
 - Action Plan – Health and well-being
 - Action Plan – Employment and entrepreneurship
 - Action Plan – Arts and culture
 - Action Plan – Social inclusion
 - Action Plan – Voluntary and community activities
 - Action Plan – Sport and recreational activities

Resources and support are also being further developed and expanded with the twin objective of building the human and physical capacities of the youth sector, including the voluntary youth sector, and providing it with the skills and competences to support the development of young people.

The policy also includes a research programme that will help ensure that it continues to be both evidence-based and outcome-focused.

The implementation of the policy is being monitored on an annual basis and at the end of the period 2015-2020, an independent evaluation will be conducted on the overall impact of the policy and the benefits accruing for young people, the voluntary youth sector and the wider society.

Youth Work Profession Act

The Youth Work Profession Act 2014 gives formal professional recognition and status to youth workers, as well as regulating the profession and determining the qualifications and conditions under which youth workers can acquire such recognition.

The Act provides for a Youth Work Profession Board that regulates the practice of and eligibility to practise youth work. The Youth Work Profession Board is an independent statutory authority under the provisions of the Act.

The Board promotes professional youth work standards and development and keeps and publishes a register of all recognised and warranted youth workers.

As provided under the Act, the Board also drafted a Code of Professional Ethics for youth workers.

The Act defines youth work as follows:

“Youth work” in Malta is a non-formal learning activity aimed at the personal, social and political development of young people. Youth workers engage with young people within their communities, including the voluntary sector, and support them in realising their potential and address life’s challenges critically and creatively to bring about social change. Youth work takes into account all strands of diversity and focuses on all young people between 13 and 30.

3. Recognition

Youth work is politically and formally recognised through the Youth Work Profession Act 2014. This Act stipulates the requirements to practise youth work in Malta. The Act established the Youth Work Profession Board, which is charged with giving recommendations to the Minister responsible for youth to issue a professional warrant to prospective youth workers.

The validation of any non-formal or informal learning processes is regulated through the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) set up by the Education Act.

The general process of validating informal and non-formal learning (VINFL) consists of:

- identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual
- documentation to make visible the individual's experiences
- formal assessment of these experiences
- certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

4. Funding youth work

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ receives an annual budget that amounted to €1.11m in 2018. It also derives funding from other sources, primarily from the ERASMUS + programme, that amounted to some €0.2m in 2018.

The voluntary youth sector derives its funds primarily from ERASMUS + through the European Union Programme Agency and other funding schemes from the Council of the Voluntary Sector.

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

5.1 State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ (the National Youth Agency) was established under the provisions of the Public Administration Act and commenced operations in February 2011 under the Ministry for Education and Employment. Ms Miriam Teuma was appointed as Chief Executive Officer.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's mission is:

to mainstream youth-related issues and further develop youth services, programmes and initiatives that help young people achieve their potential; promote and safeguard the interests of young people and manage and implement national youth policy.

Since its establishment in 2010, Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ has put in place administrative structures and operational procedures for the promotion and implementation of youth work practice and youth-related services in Malta. The agency's staff expanded from six in 2011 to 79 (full-time and service contract staff) in 2017.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's office and premises at Santa Venera, which it moved into in early 2015, enables it to house most of its staff and services on the one site. The new site also houses the Youth Village, which provides space, facilities and support for young people and youth NGOs to organise events and initiatives. A youth residential centre and a sports facility are also being developed on the site.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also operates and provides a wide range of programmes, projects and initiatives in youth empowerment, contemporary arts, social drama, literature, local democracy, music, volunteering and support for further study to address and help meet young people's needs and aspirations. New spaces at local community level for young people have been opened including youth activity centres at Villa Psaigon and Marsaxlokk, youth cafes at Qawra, Msida, Cottonera and Kirkop, and youth hubs in MCAST, Junior College and Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School.

A range of support, including financial support and the hiring of equipment and facilities, is also provided by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ for voluntary youth organisations and other organisations working for and with young people.

Outreach and detached youth work services are also being developed, to cater for the needs of socio-economically excluded and hard-to-reach young people, as well as local youth community centres.

An interactive web portal [Youth Information Malta](#) was set up in early 2011 and is updated on a regular basis while [Kellimni.com](#) provides an online personal support service for young people.

There is a strong focus on engaging with and consulting young people on their views, concerns and aspirations and in promoting their democratic participation and intercultural and social awareness.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also promotes and supports the development of professional youth work as provided for under the Youth Work Profession Act 2014.

Co-operation at European and international level is also prioritised and promoted. Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ represents Malta on the EU Youth Working Party, the twice-yearly Youth Conference and the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Youth. The agency also contributes to, participates in and attends other youth-related international fora and events organised by the EU, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth, the UN and other international organisations.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is also an active member of the EU/Council of Europe youth partnership, ERYICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency) and EKCYP (European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy).

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is also a member organisation of the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), which offers discounts on a wide range of products and services relating to culture, travel, accommodation, shopping and other services that are of interest to young people. In 2017, there were 6 700 Youth Card holders in Malta.

Structured Dialogue, an EU-wide instrument to actively involve young people in debates and policy-forming dialogue in relation to the European agenda, is also promoted and managed by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is committed to ongoing research on the lives of young people in Malta and ensuring that youth policy is evidence-based and outcome-focused. The agency has published a number of reports and surveys relating to the lives of young people as well as contributing to the EU Youth report and other international reports.

5.2 National or local youth councils

The National Youth Council (KNŻ) is:

- a voluntary and autonomous NGO
- a leading actor in Maltese civil society
- a forum for dialogue for young people, organisations and youth in general
- a channel of information and opinions between young people and decision makers
- a representative body of young people's interests

The Council comprises an Executive Board of 13 members including a President and Vice President and some 40 organisations who are either full or associate members.

5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs

Maltese Scout Association

Girl Guides

Zghazagh Azzjoni Kattolika (ZAK) – Catholic Youth Action

5.4 Other relevant actors

European Union Programme Agency (EUPA)

6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

Services for Young People and Youth Organisations

Youth Activity Centre at Marsaxlokk and Villa Psaignon

Youth activity centres provide ideal spaces and facilities for youth organisations, agencies, associations and groups to organise live-ins, exchanges, seminars, meetings/workshops, daily group sessions and indoor and outdoor activities.

Kellimni.com

Kellimni.com, a collaborative project between Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, SOS Malta, the Salesians of Don Bosco and Aġenzija Appoġġ, offers one-to-one online support services to service users, mainly young people experiencing social exclusion, abuse, neglect and/or psychological difficulties and/or who are in need of emotional, moral and practical support.

This project provides young people with the opportunity to voice their hopes and concerns, as well as to express and realise their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, online.

This service is available 24/7 and young people are provided with professional support through smart messaging, e-mails and chat. All services are free of charge and confidential.

Eurodesk

Eurodesk encourages young people to participate and provides them with a wide range of opportunities for learning mobility, including voluntary work, internships, studying abroad and much more.

Eurodesk operates in 34 countries across Europe, including Malta, through Eurodesk centres in each country that aim “to raise awareness among young people on learning mobility opportunities and encourage them to become active citizens”.

What services does Eurodesk provide?

- information on education and training opportunities for young people across Europe
- essential information on study opportunities in over 30 European countries
- opportunities under the Erasmus + programme in education, training, youth and sport
- practical information on living, working and studying in another European country
- information on available and low-cost accommodation across Europe
- accessing the European Health Insurance Card
- accessing job opportunities, traineeships and internships.

European Youth Card Association

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is a member organisation of the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), which offers discounts on a wide range of products and services relating to culture, travel, accommodation, shopping and other services that are of interest to young people.

EYCA comprises 38 organisations in 36 different countries across Europe and over 4 million young people make use of the card annually. In 2017, there were 6 00 Youth Card holders in Malta.

The Youth Card is available to young people aged from 13 to 30, and young people who make use of the Youth Card benefit from discounts in hostels, hotels, museums, restaurants, shops, stores and other retail outlets. The card can be used in all 36 member countries of the EYCA. Young people visiting any of these countries either for study or holiday can benefit from around 60 000 discounts on goods and services.

Youth.inc

Youth.inc is an education and learning programme for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 who wish to continue to build on their educational experience and gain more knowledge, values and skills to either enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue further education and training.

Youth.inc is based on the idea that success can be achieved by young people if they are engaged and motivated to participate actively in an applied learning environment which is practical in its approach. One of the key attractions of this type of learning is that young people are given the opportunity to apply their learning in the context of real life and work situations and challenges.

Youth workers, employed by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, act as mentors and ensure that the young people on the programme are actively involved in the learning process. The youth workers are also responsible for supervising the validation of the young people's learning.

Youth.inc is currently offered as a full-time programme over a one- to three-year period at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 of the Maltese Qualifications Framework. In 2017/18, 132 young people commenced the programme at Levels 1, 2 and Level 3. On 6 October 2017, more than 100 young people received their certificates from the Minister for Education and Employment at the annual Award Ceremony which was hosted at the Youth Village in St. Venera. 2017 also saw the first cohort of young people who successfully completed the Level 3 programme.

Funding for youth organisations and groups

A4U Scheme – Assistance for you

The A4U scheme provides financial support to help youth organisations/groups develop and increase resources, improve premises and facilities and develop and deliver training for their current and prospective leaders. The maximum grant available for each initiative is €1 500.

Be Active: Developing ideas together

The Be Active scheme aims to provide youth organisations/groups with financial support to develop projects/initiatives for their respective service users and the community in general. Organisations/groups are invited to develop a project in respect of priority areas. The maximum grant available for each initiative is €2 000.

Musical Tuition for Young People in Band Clubs

Band clubs in various localities around Malta and Gozo provide young people with the opportunity to learn and develop their musical skills.

The aim of this scheme is to provide financial assistance to local band clubs to develop initiatives and proposals which encourage young people to learn how to play a musical instrument and/or improve the learning services that are already being provided. They can also submit sustainable and innovative initiatives to develop and/or upgrade their current teaching facilities and services.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, in collaboration with Għaqda Każini tal-Banda and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations, manages the project.

Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme (YSSS)

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, in collaboration with APS Bank, supports young people who want to further their studies abroad or through distance learning under the Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme (YSSS).

Young people between the ages of 18 and 30 may apply for support under the scheme. Financial support is conditional on no equivalent academic course covering the same academic field being available in Malta.

Preference is given to those students who wish to pursue further education and studies in the following areas: aerospace, health and biotechnology, digital games production, environment, agriculture and marine studies, youth work, sport, nature conservation, the arts and specialised restoration.

Community and Outreach Services

Kottonera Youth Service

AZ@K is a schools- and communities-based youth service. The service aims to support the implementation of the national youth policy in Kottonera, having regard to the particular needs and aspirations of young people attending school in the community.

The aims of the service in schools is to:

- identify and respond to the needs and aspirations young people in school

- provide opportunities where young people can learn and exercise influence over their own lives
- create co-operative and collaborative initiatives in schools
- support young people at risk
- keep young people informed about opportunities and services available to them.

The services that AZ@K provide to schools adopt a whole-school approach and include providing mid-term break activities, detached/outreach services and youth information, and organising student councils, youth fairs, day activities and student visits.

AZ@K also provides a range of programmes in schools, including filming (focused on teamwork and co-operation); image theatre/shadow puppets (self-image and public speaking); making crafts (creativity and motor skills); entrepreneurship (being aware of personal skills and capacities); life skills (co-operation/ communication/awareness).

Weekly sessions are also organised to provide further support/advice for young people who are struggling or having difficulties in school. In some instances, group sessions are organised to foster mutual support.

AZ@K adopts an interagency and community-based approach in supporting young people. It has also established expected outcomes (personal and social) for young people as well as quality indicators.

Gozo Youth Service

Gozo Youth Service operates at Gozo College and in the sixth form of Sir Michelangelo Refalo.

A youth worker serves as a youth information point promoting Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's projects, initiatives and activities for young people on Gozo. The aim of the youth work service in schools is to work with school management to provide non-formal learning opportunities for young people.

At Gozo College, students can benefit from youth and social clubs in both the middle and secondary schools during the mid-day break under the supervision of youth workers in co-operation with the middle school council and school management.

At Sir Michaelangelo Refalo, a Youth Hub is open twice a week during school term. The Youth Hub offers an informal and recreational space in which the youth worker can work with young people to develop projects, initiatives and activities that enhance their personal and social skills and facilitate their educational and employment prospects.

Detached Youth Work Services

Detached youth work aims to make contact with and be available to young people where they gather and congregate – in the street, park, locality – with a view to supporting them in gaining knowledge, recognising new opportunities and engaging positively with the world around them.

Youth workers make contact with and work in environments such as street corners, playgrounds, parks, amusement arcades, shopping centres, cafes etc. Detached youth work projects, initiatives and activities take their lead from young people themselves and take account of what their needs might be, and establish goals for themselves.

Youth Cafes

Youth Cafes are places for young people aged between 13 and 18 and offer a space:

- which is relaxing and attractive, with internet facilities and interactive games
- where young people can socialise and develop good relationships with peers and adults
- where information, advice and reference for further advice/support are available, particularly where young people are experiencing personal problems.

Youth Cafes provide a youth-friendly space where young people can come together in a safe, supervised and relaxing environment. Youth Cafes offer alternative sources of entertainment where young people can spend their leisure time and explore their talents while developing the personal and social skills essential in adult life and work. Youth Cafes also provide opportunities for young people to access mentoring and support from youth workers, who assist with school to work transitions, issues with families and relationships and personal development.

Youth Hubs

Youth Hubs are a non-formal educational service provided by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ in a formal education setting. They offer an informal and recreational space where young people can develop projects and initiatives that enhance both their personal and social skills and improve their level of educational attainment and employability prospects.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ has Youth Hubs at MCAST, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School (GCHSS), Youth.Inc and Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form on Gozo.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also collaborates with LGBTI+ Gozo and MGRM's Rainbow Youth Support Service to run a youth hub session one evening a month in Gozo and twice a week in St Venera.

Programmes and Initiatives for Young People

Artivisti

Artivisti, a joint project between Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and Arts Council Malta, identifies some of the best young artistic talent in Malta and provides them with the necessary training, mentoring and networking to develop their creative potential.

Who is it for? Young people eligible for support should be aged from 18 to 27, show outstanding talent, and wish to pursue a career in the arts.

Taħżiż

Taħżiż, a joint project between Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and Għaqda tal-Malti Università', is a creative writing programme in Maltese for emerging young writers. It explores various writing forms and styles, participants are supported in developing their writing and creative skills, and a collection of the best work of the participants is published.

Who is it for?

Taħżiż is for young people aged from 16 to 35 who have an interest in and flair for writing in Maltese. Applicants must submit:

- an introduction and motivation letter
- a CV written as a short story
- a recently written poem or short story.

Malta Youth Film Festival

The Malta Youth Film Festival, a collaboration between Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and the Malta Film Foundation, is a competitive platform for young film makers to encourage them to enter their films for awards under the following headings:

- Best script
- Best direction
- Most original concept
- Best actor
- Best cinematography
- Best overall film.

Films submitted for awards can cover any topic and should not be more than 10 minutes in duration. A specialised jury will select the award winners and at Awards Night clips from all the nominated films will be screened. The general public can also vote for their preferred film through a Public Choice Award.

Who is it for?

The Malta Youth Film Festival is for young film makers aged from 16 to 30. Submissions are accepted from individuals and groups.

Model European Parliament (MEP)

Model European Parliament is an opportunity for young people to participate in a simulation of the European Parliament. As the representative of MEP Europe in Malta, Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ organises national selections to choose the best delegates to represent Malta for upcoming international MEP sessions which are held twice a year in different European

countries. National selections include training and information workshops followed by a simulated European Parliament session which discusses and debates topics of current interest of controversy. Those young people deemed the best contributors in debates have the opportunity to take part as Maltese delegates to the following international MEP session.

Who is it for?

MEP is for young people aged from 16 to 19 who are interested in politics and wish to develop their skills in public speaking and political debate.

Shifting Contexts

Shifting Contexts, a joint project between Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and Spazju Kreattiv, is a youth arts project that explores the critical role of art in responding to a rapidly changing world. It encourages young artists to creatively approach the familiar from a completely novel perspective. The best works are presented to the general public in a collectively curated exhibition at which the best exhibit is announced.

Who is it for?

The project is aimed mainly at emerging young artists aged from 19 to 30.

Music Quest

Music Quest offers space to emerging young artists and bands who would like to break into the music scene. Music Quest invites interested applicants to submit an original demo song to participate in a competition that will choose the best record and two runners-up. Successful applicants also receive support in individualised/group music management, songwriting, recording and techniques for stage and social media presence from an experience mentor in the music field.

Who is it for?

Young artists or groups aged from 13 to 30.

7. Quality standards

The Youth Work Profession Act 2014 gives formal professional recognition and status to youth workers, as well as regulating the profession and determining the qualifications and conditions under which youth workers can acquire such recognition.

The Act provides for a Youth Work Profession Board, which regulates the practice of and eligibility to practise youth work. The Youth Work Profession Board is an independent statutory authority under the provisions of the Act.

The Board promotes professional youth work standards and development and keeps and publishes a register of all recognised and warranted youth workers.

A Code of Professional Ethics for youth workers is in place under the Act.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also implements a good practice guide for the protection, safety and well-being of young people, a data protection policy, and provides for performance management, regular feedback and training for all staff.

8. Knowledge and data on youth work

Towards 2020, the national youth policy, provides for the following:

Research and Knowledge Building

The government is committed to ensuring that youth policy is evidence-based and outcome-focused. Priority will continue to be given to research as it believes that this provides all those working with and for young people with an invaluable tool and source of relevant and up-to-date information. The research programme for the period 2015-20 will target the main areas that concern young people today such as education (including the digital divide and skills gaps), employment, environment, rights and responsibilities, health and well-being, and justice.

The research programme for 2015-2020 has included the following:

- regular surveys of young people (based on representative national sampling) on such issues as education, employment and lifestyles;
- dedicated research on specific topic areas related to the lives of young people, including:
 - use of leisure time
 - democratic participation
 - detached youth work
 - vulnerable young people
 - learning mobility.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also publishes an annual report and a monthly NewsUpdate and YouthUpdate for young people. Through its interactive media it is also able to access the views and concerns of young people on a regular and consistent basis.

9. European and international dimension of youth work in the country

Youth co-operation, participation and contribution to policy making at European and international level are promoted and conducted by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, in co-operation with the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

At European level, Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ represents Malta on the EU Youth Working Party, the twice-yearly Youth Conference and meeting of Directors General, and the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ). The CEO of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is the current chairperson of the CDEJ. The agency also contributes to, participates in and attends other youth-related international fora and events organised by the EU, Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and the UN and other international organisations.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is also an active member of the EU/Council of Europe youth partnership, ERYICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency) and EKCYP (European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy).

Malta also plays an active role at regional level – the Mediterranean region – in co-operation with the European Commission/Council of Europe Partnership in the youth field, the North/South Partnership and NGOs such as the Anna Lindh Foundation, and at global level through the United Nations and the Commonwealth. Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ represents Malta in co-operation initiatives under the Commonwealth Youth Programme, by promoting the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and its strategic policy framework, the Commonwealth Youth Civil Activism Network and initiatives to professionalise the youth work sector.

Malta's Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Malta held the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first time between January and June 2017. In the field of youth, the Maltese Presidency focused on two related and interdependent themes:

- reaching out to and supporting young people, including those at risk of marginalisation – NEETs and young people with a migrant or refugee background – in acquiring essential life skills to strengthen their concept and understanding of democratic life, its rights and responsibilities, and its recognition and respect for cultural diversity; and to ease the transition to adulthood and working life;
- promoting the formal recognition of quality youth work as a means of non-formal learning in acquiring such life skills.

Three significant Council Conclusions and one Council Resolution in the youth field were adopted during the Maltese Presidency:

- Council Conclusions on Investing in Europe's Youth with particular regard to the European Solidarity Corps;

- Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills to facilitate their transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life;
- Council Conclusions on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018
- Council Resolution on the Structured Dialogue and the future development of the dialogue with young people in the context of policies for European co-operation in the youth field, post 2018.

The Youth Conference, which took place in Malta in March 2017, marked the conclusion of the fifth cycle of the Structured Dialogue process under the Presidency Trio of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta with the overarching theme of Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe – Ready for Life, Ready for Society.

The Maltese Presidency also hosted a number of conferences on youth-related issues:

- The conference on "Youth for Tomorrow's Europe" focused on five main themes: Young Europeans and Identity; Young Europeans and Social Inclusion; Young Europeans and Participation and Leadership; Young Europeans and Sustainable Development; and Young Europeans and Rights and Responsibilities.
- "Beyond and Above", a peer learning activity, focused on how innovative youth work approaches, working with vulnerable young people in particular, can be further recognised and accredited and support young people's smooth transition to adulthood and working life.
- A "Democracy, youth and sport" seminar focused on cross-sectoral approaches for the active participation and engagement of young people in civic and democratic life through sport and attracted a number of practitioners from across Europe.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Youth Forum is held every five years, in parallel with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the last of which was held in Malta in November 2015. The parallel programme is to facilitate and encourage constructive dialogue between young people and heads of government in addressing youth-related issues.

The overall theme of the Youth Forum was "Adding Global Value...#WhatNext?" The Commonwealth *YouthCan* Network was officially launched on 26 November 2015, following the conclusion of the Commonwealth Youth Forum.

In 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat planned and implemented a 35-country baseline survey on progress in the recognition of youth work in selected Member States. Malta was one of the 35 Member States of the Commonwealth selected to participate in the baseline survey.

The report of the baseline survey, *Youth Work in the Commonwealth – A Growth Profession*, was published and presented at the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting in Kampala, Uganda, in August 2017.

In November 2018, Malta hosted "Crosscurrents – Steering a course for youth work as a growth profession in the Commonwealth and in Europe". The conference addressed youth work across the Commonwealth and Europe, examining, connecting and looking to strengthen the status and standard of practice. It also included exploration and discussion of professionalisation, its place, the potential and actual development of its meaning and contextual relevance globally.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also organises events for International Youth Day as well as engaging in initiatives that focus on developing young people's sense of identity and respect for other people's identities such as the *No Hate Speech Campaign* and *Youth Upbeat*.

10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

The present national youth policy, *Towards 2020*, will soon conclude and a new national youth policy will be developed over the period 2019-2020 with a view to implementing it over the period 2021-2027, to coincide with the new EU Youth Strategy, 2019-2027.