



**Flanders**  
State of the Art

FOLLOW-UP OF THE BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY-YOUTH NOTE OF 2010

THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY AGENDAS ON  
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

**STATE OF THE ART – UPDATE 2018**

DEPARTEMENT OF  
CULTURE, YOUTH & MEDIA

[cjm.vlaanderen.be](http://cjm.vlaanderen.be)

**FOLLOW-UP OF THE BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY-YOUTH  
NOTE OF 2010**

**THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY  
AGENDAS ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS**

**STATE OF THE ART – UPDATE 2018**

**Colophon****Authors**

Ellen Van Vooren

Children's Rights Knowledge Centre ([www.keki.be](http://www.keki.be))

**Editorial team**

Jan Vanhee, Lien Wyckmans, Amoury Groenen and Joost Van Haelst

Flemish Government, Department for Culture, Youth and Media

**Publisher**

Flemish Government, Department for Culture, Youth and Media

**Depot Number**

D/2019/3241/068



Dear reader,

The Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010 – 2018) stipulates that the following general initiative should be considered in all the fields of action identified:

*“including, where appropriate, a children’s policy dimension, having regard to their rights and protection taking into account that the life and future prospects of young people are significantly determined by the opportunities, support and protection received during childhood”.*

However, it should be noted that the European and International agendas on policy in respect of children, youth and children’s rights are not always entirely clear to the Youth Council. Therefore, the overview of these (European and international) agendas need a regular update. With this publication we make a renewed contribution to this.

With a special thanks to KEKI, the Children’s Rights Knowledge Centre! ([www.keki.be](http://www.keki.be))

# Content

- 1. Introduction ..... 2
- 2. European Union ..... 4
  - 2.1. Children and youth in general European Policy ..... 4
  - 2.2. EU policy agenda on children('s rights) ..... 5
    - 2.2.1. Legal basis..... 5
    - 2.2.2. Decision-making body..... 6
    - 2.2.3. Historical overview ..... 6
    - 2.2.4. Main policy document ..... 7
  - 2.3. EU policy agenda on youth ..... 8
    - 2.3.1. Legal basis..... 8
    - 2.3.2. Decision-making body..... 9
    - 2.3.3. Historical overview ..... 9
    - 2.3.4. Main policy document ..... 11
- 3. Council of Europe..... 16
  - 3.1. Council of Europe policy agenda on children('s rights)..... 16
    - 3.1.1. Legal basis..... 16
    - 3.1.2. Decision-making body..... 17
    - 3.1.2. Historical overview ..... 17
    - 3.1.3. Main policy document ..... 18
  - 3.2. Council of Europe policy agenda on youth..... 19
    - 3.2.1. Legal basis..... 19
    - 3.2.2. Decision-making body..... 20
    - 3.2.3. Historical overview ..... 20
    - 3.2.4. Main policy document ..... 21
- 4. United Nations ..... 24
  - 4.1. UN policy on children('s rights) and youth ..... 24
    - 4.1.1. Historical overview ..... 24
    - 4.1.2. Main policy document ..... 24
  - 4.2. UN policy on children('s rights)..... 28
    - 4.2.1. Legal basis..... 28
    - 4.2.2. Decision-making body..... 30
    - 4.2.3. Historical overview ..... 30
    - 4.2.4. Main policy document ..... 31
  - 4.3. UN policy agenda on youth..... 31
    - 4.3.1. Legal basis..... 31
    - 4.3.2. Decision-making body..... 32
    - 4.3.3. Historical overview ..... 32
    - 4.3.4. Main policy document ..... 32

## Executive summary

Various policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights have been adopted at the European and international level. This study offers an inventory of the main policy agendas of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations in which children and youth are the focus and are aimed at influencing government policies. The text updates the note 'The European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights', issued by the Belgian EU Presidency in 2010. The analysis focuses solely on those policies to be taken into consideration by the European Union Member States internally and thereby excluding EU external policy. Furthermore, most of the analysed policy agendas are characterized by their non-binding character.

Children and youth are identified in the renewed social agenda of 2008 as one of the priorities within European Union policy. Within the scope of the adopted Europe 2020 Strategy children and youth are no longer identified as a primary priority but are focussed upon in policy initiatives for education, employment and poverty reduction. The Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2008), which entered into force on 1 December 2009, states for the first time that the European Union shall promote the protection of the rights of the child. In order to fulfil this, the European Commission put in place an 'EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child' (2011-2014), focusing on promoting child-friendly justice and safer internet, protecting children from violence and addressing discrimination and social exclusion. Although the Commission underlines that it will continue the process of coordinating and mainstreaming the rights of the child, a clear general and comprehensive framework for EU action on the rights of the child is currently lacking.

EU competence in the field of youth is enshrined in Article 6 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2008). In November 2018, the European Union Council of Youth Ministers adopted a Resolution on the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, based on the European Commission's Communication of May 2018 'Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy'. EU youth cooperation fosters youth participation in democratic life, in line with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It also supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society. During the last cycle of the Structured Dialogue with youth in 2017-2018, 11 European Youth Goals were developed. They reflect the views of European youth and represent the vision of those active in the Structured Dialogue. The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people by mobilising EU level policy instruments as well as actions at national, regional and local level by all stakeholders.

At the level of the Council of Europe, the Warsaw Declaration of 2005 expresses the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe to eradicate violence against children, whereas the Warsaw Action Plan lists as one of its goals 'Building a Europe for Children'. Consequently, the programme 'Building a Europe for and with children' (2006-2011) was launched, with two interconnected objectives: promoting

children's rights and protecting children from violence. The third Strategy within this programme, the 'Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child' (2016-2021), also known as the Sofia Strategy, prioritizes equal opportunities, participation, freedom from violence, child-friendly justice and children's rights in the digital environment for all children.

With respect to the Council of Europe policy agenda on youth, the Warsaw Action Plan of 2005 includes the objective of 'developing youth co-operation'. Typical of the Council of Europe is the system of co-management in the field of youth policy. This means that representatives of youth organizations and government officials formulate policy proposals together, which are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers. In November 2008, the Committee of Ministers adopted a new resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, with as general objective *"to provide young people ... with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competences to play a full part in all aspects of society"*.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its three Optional Protocols – the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000) and the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (2011) – offer a comprehensive normative framework to assess the policy agendas on children (and youth). The four key principles of the Convention are non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. After 'A world fit for children' (2002), the United Nations have not adopted a new policy document exclusively on children or children's rights. For 15 years, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a guiding force on many issues affecting the lives of children, young people and their families. With the passage of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September of 2015, world leaders have set a transformational course for the future of human development with references to youth as well as children's rights policies.

In 1965, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. In 1995, the United Nations strengthened its commitment toward young people by adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The Programme of Action *"focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society"*. A Supplement to the Programme of Action was adopted in 2007, including five additional priority areas.

## 1. Introduction

The first issue of ‘The European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children’s Rights’, was conducted under the Belgian EU Presidency in 2010. The study provides an overview of the main policy agendas on children (’s rights) and youth of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The publication was updated in 2012, 2014 and 2016. In this report we provide a state of the art of the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights, that set out the beacons for the current and future policy on children(’s) rights or youth of the organization concerned.

The object of this study is demarcated in five ways.

1. First, focus is on the current agendas where a policy towards children, youth and/or children’s rights is a primary objective.
2. Second, the analysis is restricted to agendas that aim at influencing government policies, in providing guiding principles.
3. Third, the study concerns those policies to be taken into consideration by the European Union Member States internally, thus excluding EU external policy.
4. Fourth, the selected policy agendas are those of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>
5. Finally, only policy agendas formally adopted before the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 are included.

It must be stressed that the scope of this study is limited, because only those agendas where children and youth are the main focus are included in the analysis. Such a restriction obscures the fact that there has been attention for children and youth issues in other policy areas, such as migration, poverty (e.g. at European Union level) and education (e.g. within UNESCO<sup>2</sup>). Put differently, by only paying attention to *policy*, the initiatives taken at the various *vertical policy levels* with respect to children, youth and children’s rights remain hidden. This entails the risk of an imbalanced assessment of the actual attention for the interests and rights of children and youth within the three organizations.

The personal field of application of the policy agendas is based on the criterion of age. At the three levels, children are coherently defined as human beings ‘below the age of eighteen years’, in accordance with Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>3</sup> With respect to youth, the age limit varies. The concept of ‘youth’ is respectively defined as comprising young people from 13 to 30 years (European Union youth

---

<sup>1</sup> Not included are, for instance, the initiatives of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. More information: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education>

<sup>3</sup> UN Doc. A/44/49.



programmes – no common definition in policy documents)<sup>4</sup>, from 13 to 30 years (Council of Europe)<sup>5</sup> and from 15 to 24 years (United Nations)<sup>6</sup>.

The discussion of the different policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights follows a similar structure:

- Legal basis
- Decision-making body
- Main policy document
  - Institution responsible for (monitoring) implementation
  - Time frame
  - Objectives of the policy agenda on children/youth
  - Agenda – Thematic priorities
  - Approaches, methods and instruments
  - References to policies on children('s rights)/youth respectively

Where relevant, a brief historical overview is included

---

<sup>4</sup> The definition of 'youth' varies among Member States of the European Union. As an instrument for implementing the EU Youth Strategy and according to Article 6 (2) of Decision 1719/2006, the Erasmus+ programme targets "*young people from 13 to 30*".

<sup>5</sup> Council of Europe Glossary on Youth (<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary>) For the purposes of European youth policies the age 13 to 30 years is used by the European Commission and Council of Europe. References: Council of Europe and European Commission Research Partnership: Report of the Research Seminar 'The Youth Sector and Non-formal Education/Learning: working to make lifelong learning a reality and contributing to the Third Sector', Strasbourg 28-30 April 2004.

<sup>6</sup> For statistical purposes, the UN defines persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth, without prejudice to national definitions. This definition was made during preparations for the International Youth Year (1985), and endorsed by the General Assembly (see A/36/215 and resolution 36/28, 1981).

## 2. European Union

The European Union is an economic and political partnership between 28 European countries, with as central objective to provide peace, prosperity and freedom for its citizens in a fairer, safer world. The Union is founded on the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and the principles common to the Member States.<sup>7</sup> The action of the European Union is limited by the principle of conferral of competences; at the same time the use of these competences is governed by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Those competences not conferred upon the Union in the Treaties remain with the Member States.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.1. Children and youth in general European Policy

Changing social realities in Europe (technological advances, globalization, an ageing population, etc.) resulted in a public consultation launched by the Commission in 2007, in order to deliver direct and concrete results for the citizens of Europe. In 2007, this consultation resulted in the Communication '**Opportunities, access and solidarity: towards a new social vision for the 21st century Europe**' (also called Social Vision Communication)<sup>9</sup>. This communication provides an overview of changes in European society and drafts a new vision on how to respond to these issues. In particular this communication calls for more investment in children's education and welfare, and for more resolute action in promoting equal opportunities and guaranteeing access to basic social services, like education and health care. The European Commission adopted a Communication on a '**Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe**' in July 2008.<sup>10</sup> The Commission published a broad range of proposal in the '**Social Package**' on 2nd July 2008, built around this 'Renewed Social Agenda'. The 'Renewed social agenda' completes the Lisbon Strategy<sup>11</sup> for the period 2008-2010 and was intended to enhance wellbeing and quality of life, create opportunities, provide access and demonstrate solidarity. It covers not only "traditional" social policy domains (employment and social protection) but covers a wide range of policy areas including education and youth, health, immigration and intercultural dialogue. One of the seven priorities<sup>12</sup> of the renewed social agenda is '**Children and Youth – Tomorrow's Europe**'. Children and youth are thus considered together here. The following initiatives are listed as part of the renewed social agenda:

- a Communication from the Commission on 'Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools'<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2008) art. 6

<sup>8</sup> Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2008) art. 5

<sup>9</sup> COM(2007) 726 final

<sup>10</sup> COM(2008) 412 final.

<sup>11</sup> The Lisbon Strategy proposes an integrated approach with a view to responding to transformations in the employment market and European society, [http://ec.europa.eu/archives/growthandjobs\\_2009/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/archives/growthandjobs_2009/index_en.htm)

<sup>12</sup> The six other priorities of the renewed social agenda are: (i) investing in people, more and better jobs, new skills; (ii) mobility; (iii) longer and healthier lives; (iv) combating poverty and social exclusion; (v) fighting discrimination; and (vi) opportunities, access and solidarity on the global scene.

<sup>13</sup> COM(2008) 425 final

- a Green Paper on 'Migration and Mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems.'<sup>14</sup>
- a Communication from the Commission on developing the open method of coordination on youth: 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities'. (see below)
- a comprehensive approach to child poverty, based on quantitative targets, inspired by the European strategy on inclusion and social protection

On 6 May 2009 The European Parliament proposed a resolution on the Renewed social agenda. This considers *“that there should be a better link at the EU level between economic, environmental and social policies, with a reaffirmation of the original Lisbon Strategy goals and the need to ensure that economic and employment policies actively contribute to the eradication of poverty and social exclusion”*. The Renewed Social Agenda, including its actions, is revised in 2010, together with the Lisbon strategy<sup>15</sup>. The successor of the Lisbon Strategy is the 'Europe 2020 strategy'. The 2010 Communication '**Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**' (Europe 2020 strategy) envisages a Europe where children will have a better education and access to the services and resources they need to grow up. Although children, youth and/or children's rights are not a primary objective, the strategy does focus on children and young people when tackling different objectives, such as poverty reduction and development of policy initiatives for education and employment.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2. EU policy agenda on children('s rights)

### 2.2.1. Legal basis

Article 24 of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** of 2000 is devoted exclusively to children's rights, and reads as follows<sup>17</sup>:

1. Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.
2. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.
3. Every child shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both his or her parents, unless that is contrary to his or her interests.

Furthermore, Article 32 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibits the employment of children. The Charter gained binding legal effect (equal to the Treaties) after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009. The Lisbon Treaty put an end to the many years of debate on whether the European Union had any competence in the field of children's rights. Pursuant to Article 3 (3) para. 2, the European Union *“shall combat*

---

<sup>14</sup> COM(2008) 423 final

<sup>15</sup> SEC(2010) 114 final

<sup>16</sup> COM(2010) 2020 final

<sup>17</sup> Article 14 (3) of the Charter guarantees the respect for *“the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions”* (emphasis added).

*social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and **protection of the rights of the child***.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.2.2. Decision-making body

EU Member States develop their own national policies on children and children's rights. Nonetheless, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012 consolidated version) includes two explicit references to children. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, are competent to adopt measures for:

- combating trafficking in persons, in particular women and children<sup>19</sup>
- establishing minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the area of, among others, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of women and children.<sup>20</sup>

At European Union level, decision-making in relation to children('s rights) is in principle linked to the substantive field in which measures are taken, such as asylum and migration or education. A compilation of EU law and policy documents relevant to rights of the child and children is available on the European Commission website, on the EU action on the rights of the child page.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.2.3. Historical overview

In its Communication on **Strategic Objectives 2005-2009**, the European Commission recognized children's rights as a main area of concern: *"A particular priority must be effective protection of the rights of children, both against economic exploitation and all forms of abuse, with the Union acting as a beacon to the rest of the world"*.<sup>22</sup> In March 2006, the European Council asked the Member States that all children with different social backgrounds would be given equal opportunities and that child poverty would be rapidly and significantly reduced.<sup>23</sup> In July 2006, the European Commission issued the Communication **'Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child'**.<sup>24</sup> The communication was accompanied by an impact assessment<sup>25</sup> and a preliminary inventory of European Union action affecting children's rights.<sup>26</sup> In November 2009, a state of play of the implementation of this strategy was drawn up.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Emphasis added. According to Article 3 (3) para. 5 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2008) the Union shall in its relations with the wider world contribute to "the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child." However, as noted in the introduction, EU external policy is not included in this study.

<sup>19</sup> Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2008) art. 79(2)(d).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., art. 83(1)

<sup>21</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/euacquisandpolicydocumentsontherightsofthechild\\_update.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/euacquisandpolicydocumentsontherightsofthechild_update.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> COM(2005) 12 final

<sup>23</sup> Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22-24 March 2006 (7775/06), para. 72

<sup>24</sup> COM(2006) 367 final

<sup>25</sup> SEC(2006) 888

<sup>26</sup> SEC(2006) 889

<sup>27</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/children/docs/children\\_state\\_of\\_play\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/children/docs/children_state_of_play_en.pdf)

The Communication '**An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child**' was adopted on 15 February 2011.<sup>28</sup> The actions proposed were to be carried out within different time frames, until 2014 at the latest. The purpose of the EU Agenda is to reaffirm *"the strong commitment of all EU institutions and of all Member States to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of the child in all relevant EU policies and to turn it into concrete results"*. This EU Agenda includes eleven concrete actions in four areas where the EU can bring real added value. These areas are child-friendly justice<sup>29</sup>, the protection of children when they are vulnerable<sup>30</sup>, children in the EU's external action<sup>31</sup> and child participation and awareness raising<sup>32</sup>. Review on the progress made in the implementation of the EU Agenda is included in the **Commission's Annual Reports** on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights from 2011 until 2014<sup>33</sup>.

The Communication '**An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child**' was adopted by the European Commission on 2011. In the resolution of 27 November 2014 on the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>34</sup>, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to present '*an ambitious and comprehensive child rights strategy and action plan for the next five years*'. The Council conclusions on children's rights were adopted on 4-5 December 2014<sup>35</sup>, and called on the Commission to develop a renewed EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child in line with Better Regulation principles<sup>36</sup>. The Commission confirms to *"continue the process of coordinating and mainstreaming of rights of the child in all EU legislative proposals, policies and financial decisions, in particular through the inter-service group on rights of the child, training on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, inter-service consultations, and other bilateral and ad hoc means. In this context, the Commission is reflecting on the appropriate follow-up to the action plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014)"*.<sup>37</sup> There has not been a new EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child.

#### 2.2.4. Main policy document

There is no recent EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child.

#### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION*

Within the European Commission's **Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers**, Unit C2 'Fundamental Rights Policy'<sup>38</sup> of Directorate C 'Fundamental Rights and Rule of Law' is primarily responsible for children's rights (see Annex 1). The **Directorate-General for Justice** has a coordinating role on the rights of the child among the Commission's services. The European Commission coordinator for the Rights of the Child cooperates with other

---

<sup>28</sup> COM(2011) 60 final

<sup>29</sup> See study and in particular policy brief, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/friendly-justice/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/friendly-justice/index_en.htm)

<sup>30</sup> See 10 principles for integrated child protection systems, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/protection-action/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/protection-action/index_en.htm)

<sup>31</sup> External EU policy falls outside the ambit of this study

<sup>32</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/child-participation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/child-participation/index_en.htm)

<sup>33</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights/application-charter/annual-reports-application-charter\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights/application-charter/annual-reports-application-charter_en)

<sup>34</sup> C 289/57

<sup>35</sup> 17016/14

<sup>36</sup> Better regulation for better results — An EU agenda, COM(2015) 215 final, 19.05.2015

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2015-005691+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>

<sup>38</sup> Formerly Unit C2 Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child

services, including through an inter-service group, to ensure that the Rights of the Child are duly considered in all relevant policies and actions, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The European Commission set up an **informal expert group on the Rights of the Child** in 2013<sup>39</sup>. Its objective is to establish closer co-operation, through exchange of information, experience and good practice, between the Commission and Member States on various issues relating to the protection and promotion of the Rights of the Child.

The **European Forum on the Rights of the Child**<sup>40</sup> is an annual event for the promotion of children's rights, which was established after the adoption of the 2006 Communication 'Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child'. The Forum is composed of a diversity of members, namely Member State representatives, Ombudspersons for children, EU institutions, international organizations, civil society, academics and practitioners. The 11<sup>th</sup> European Forum on the Rights of the Child took place in Brussels on 6-8 November 2017 and was dedicated to the topic of '**children deprived of their liberty and alternatives to detention**'. This topic was chosen in the context of the upcoming 'UN Global study on children deprived of liberty'<sup>41</sup> and the communication on the protection of children in migration in 2017.<sup>42</sup>

#### *APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS*

Three general principles should ensure that EU action is exemplary in ensuring respect of the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with regard to the rights of children. These principles are:

- Making the rights of the child an integral part of the EU's fundamental rights
- Building the basis for evidence-based policy making
- Cooperation with stakeholders.

## 2.3. EU policy agenda on youth

### 2.3.1. Legal basis

Europe has a limited legal basis for taking action in youth policy (and youth work). Since 1992 youth is included as a policy area, following the signing of the **Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Maastricht)**<sup>43</sup>. In the chapter

---

<sup>39</sup> For more information: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2884>

<sup>40</sup> For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item\\_id=128349](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=128349)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx>

<sup>42</sup> COM(2017) 211 final

<sup>43</sup> [https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europa.eu/files/docs/body/treaty\\_on\\_european\\_union\\_en.pdf](https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europa.eu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf) Signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992

'Education, vocational training and youth', Article 126, §2 encourages *"the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors"*.

Article 32 of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** of 2000 differentiates between the rights of children and the rights of young people: whereas the employment of children is prohibited (see above), *'the minimum age of admission to employment may not be lower than the minimum school-leaving age, without prejudice to such rules as may be more favorable to young people and except for limited derogations'*. Young people must have *'working conditions appropriate to their age and be protected against economic exploitation and any work likely to harm their safety, health or physical, mental, moral or social development or to interfere with their education'*.

The **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**, as entered into force since 1 December 2009, enshrines EU competence in the field of youth in Article 6, which states:

The Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. The areas of such action shall, at European level, be: (e) education, vocational training, youth and sport.

Article 165, 2 of Title XII on 'Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport' specifies that Union action shall be aimed at *'encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors'*, as already included in the Maastricht Treaty. However, it is added that Union action shall also aim at *'encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe'*.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.3.2. Decision-making body

Youth policies are in the first place developed at national level by the different EU Member States. At European Union level, a framework for co-operation has been established. The main decisions in this respect are taken by the Council of Youth Ministers. The meetings of the Council are prepared by the Youth Working Party<sup>45</sup>, which brings together representatives from the ministries of youth of the EU Member States, and by COREPER<sup>46</sup>.

### 2.3.3. Historical overview

The first youth mobility/exchange programme was introduced in 1988. Until 2001, the activities of the European Union in the youth field consisted mainly in the implementation of specific programmes. In 2001, the European

---

<sup>44</sup>As regards vocational training policy, Union action shall aim to "facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people." Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2008) art. 166, 2.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/youth-working-party/>

<sup>46</sup> COREPER is composed of the 'permanent representatives' from each member state and coordinates and prepares the work of the different Council configurations, ensures consistency of the EU's policies and works out agreements and compromises which are then submitted for adoption by the Council. More information: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/coreper-i/>

Commission issued the **White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’**, which incorporated the results of a wide consultation exercise within the EU.<sup>47</sup> The White Paper proposed a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field, based on two approaches: first, the application of the **open method of coordination** in the specific field of youth, and second, taking more account of the ‘youth dimension’ in the development of other relevant policies, such as education, lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, and combating racism and xenophobia. For the application of the open method of coordination, the European Commission suggested four thematic priority themes: participation, information, voluntary service among young people, and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. In its Resolution of 27 June 2002, the European Council endorsed the Commission's White Paper.<sup>48</sup> Common objectives on participation by and information for young people were in 2003 adopted by the European Council.<sup>49</sup> In 2004, the European Commission similarly proposed common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth<sup>50</sup> and for voluntary activities among young people.<sup>51</sup> In the years thereafter, the European Council issued various resolutions on the implementation of these common objectives.<sup>52</sup>

In March 2005, the European Council adopted the **European Youth Pact**, as an instrument to contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon goals of boosting jobs and growth. The Pact<sup>53</sup> focused on three areas:

- employment, integration and social advancement
- education, training and mobility
- reconciliation of working life and family life.

Among the measures to reconcile working life and family life, the improvement of child care facilities is explicitly mentioned. In November 2005, the **European framework for cooperation in the youth field** was updated to take the European Youth Pact into account.<sup>54</sup> This framework of cooperation was set to expire in 2009.

In 2005 the Council of Youth Ministers adopted a resolution calling upon Member States to develop ‘**structured dialogue with young people and their organizations on policy actions that affect them, with the involvement of researchers in the youth field**’. From 2007 to 2013, the **Youth in Action programme**<sup>55</sup> aimed at ‘*active citizenship,*

---

<sup>47</sup> COM(2001) 681 final.

<sup>48</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2002/C 168/02). For an evaluation, see Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of 24 May 2005 meeting within the Council on the evaluation of activities conducted in the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2005/C 141/01).

<sup>49</sup> Council resolution of 25 November 2003 on common objectives for participation by and information for young people (2003/C 295/04). See also COM(2003) 184 final.

<sup>50</sup> COM(2004) 336 final

<sup>51</sup> COM(2004) 337 final

<sup>52</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of 24 May 2005 meeting within the Council on implementing the common objectives for youth information (2005/C 141/03); Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship (2006/C 297/02); Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 16 May 2007 on implementing the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people (2008/C 241/01) and Corrigendum (2008/C 292/06).

<sup>53</sup> Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22-23 March 2005 (7619/05), Annex 1.

<sup>54</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on addressing the concerns of young people in Europe — implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship (2005/C 292/03). See also COM(2005) 206 final.

<sup>55</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/success-stories/youth-in-action\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/success-stories/youth-in-action_en)



*solidarity and tolerance and involving young people in shaping the future of the European Union*'. The Youth in Action programme, is now enclosed in the **Erasmus+ framework** for 2014-2020<sup>56</sup>, and targets young people between 13 and 30 years. It promotes mobility, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people.

In April 2009, the Commission presented a Communication entitled '**An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities**'.<sup>57</sup> This Strategy was in line with the goals set out in the **renewed social agenda** published in 2008. (see 1.1.1.) Creating more opportunities for youth in education and employment, Improving access and full participation of young people in society and fostering mutual solidarity between society and young people were identified as primordial. The Communication proposed a strategy for future youth policies in Europe, and invited Member States and the Commission to cooperate in the youth field through a **renewed open method of coordination**. As an objective it proclaimed that '*youth work should be supported, recognized for its economic and social contribution and professionalized*'. Adopting a cross-sectoral approach, it is mentioned that youth policies can contribute to delivering results in areas such as '*child and family policy, education, gender equality, employment, housing and healthcare*'. After the publication 'Investing and Empowering', the Council of Youth Ministers adopted the Resolution on a Renewed Framework for Cooperation in the Youth Field 2010-2018<sup>58</sup>.

The Commission proposed to review and develop the Youth cooperation in its Communication May 2018 '**Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy**'.<sup>59</sup> The main proposals have been endorsed in the Council resolution of 26 November 2018.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, in December 2016 the European Union launched a new mobility programme '**European Solidarity Corps**'<sup>61</sup>, to create opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. The Council reached a position on a proposal for a Regulation on the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 in November 2018.<sup>62</sup> The actions of the European Solidarity Corps shall be consistent with and complementary to the relevant policies, instruments and programmes at Union level, with in particular the Erasmus programme.

#### 2.3.4. Main policy document

The European Council of Youth Ministers' resolution of 26 November 2018 on the '**EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027**' (hereinafter; EUYS).<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+' the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC.

<sup>57</sup> COM(2009) 200 final.

<sup>58</sup> 2009/C 311/01

<sup>59</sup> COM/2018/269

<sup>60</sup> COM(2018)269

<sup>61</sup> For more information please visit [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en)

<sup>62</sup> COM (2018) 440

<sup>63</sup> COM(2018)269

#### INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) comprises a Youth unit within Directorate B (Youth, Education and Erasmus+). Unit EAC.B.3 is in charge of youth policy aspects, European Solidarity Corps, the Youth chapter of Erasmus + and the Traineeship Office.

#### TIME FRAME

The renewed framework aims to cover the period 2019 - 2027.

#### OBJECTIVES

The EUYS creates a framework capable of responding to the challenges faced by young people throughout the EU, while investing in a **common and coherent Union response**, complementary to the Member States' efforts and initiatives in tackling these present challenges. In line with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the EUYS aims to **increase social and civic engagement** and **participation in democratic life** for all young people.

The Strategy strives to:

- Enable young people to be architects of their own lives, support their personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope with a changing world;
- Encourage and equip young people with the necessary resources to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change inspired by EU values and a European identity;
- Improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education, health and social inclusion;
- Contribute to the eradication of youth poverty and all forms of discrimination and promote social inclusion of young people.

#### AGENDA – THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The Council agrees on **working on effective, focused and joined-up implementation within and across sectors while tackling core areas of the youth sector through engaging, connecting and empowering:**

- (a) *Engage* means that there should be meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people in the development, implementation and assessment of policies that concern them, such as the EU Youth Strategy and national youth strategies. The EUYS requests to support and foster (new and alternative; digital forms of) **inclusive democratic participation, active involvement** of young people and youth organisations in the development, implementation and evaluation of policy, support for the **creation and development of youth representation**, investing in and following **the EU Youth Dialogue** and developing **learning opportunities** around participation for young people.
- (b) *Connect* focusses on creating **solidarity** within the European Union and on building the European Union's future development through mobility and exchanges, cooperation, and cultural and social activities at European level. This means that young people and youth workers should gain access to

**volunteering in civil society**, solidarity activities, support schemes, etc. and share best practices and further develop **effective validation systems** and **recognition of skills and competences** acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

- (c) *Empowerment* implies that young people feel encouraged taking their lives in their own hands. The EUYS emphasizes that Youth Work delivers a non-formal learning setting with unique benefits to empower young people. Quality, innovation and recognition of youth work should be further developed and implemented, further synergies with the work of the Council of Europe should be encouraged, the quality of youth work development on all levels (local, regional, national and European) should be supported and easily accessible contact points for young people should be established.

The Council resolution acknowledges the European Youth goals<sup>64</sup> identified in the dialogue process and underlines that the EUYS should contribute to realising this vision of young people. Following non-binding goals were identified:

- connecting EU with youth;
- equality of all genders;
- inclusive societies;
- information and constructive dialogue;
- mental health and wellbeing;
- moving rural youth forward;
- quality employment for all;
- quality learning;
- space and participation for all;
- sustainable green Europe;
- youth organisations and European programmes.

#### *APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS*

In order to achieve the objectives of the EUYS, all policies and activities concerning young people should be firmly anchored in the international system of human rights and should follow the principles of **equality and non-discrimination, inclusion and participation**. The lives of young people are shaped by policies rooted in various policy areas and determined at different levels of implementation. In order to ensure durable impact of youth policy, the **global, European, national, regional and local dimension** needs to be interlinked and policies should aim to tackle youth-relevant issues by **mainstreaming initiatives across policy areas** and by **supporting specific initiatives in the youth sector**.

---

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.youthgoals.eu/>

For the effective implementation of the framework of cooperation, the following methods and instruments are proposed:

- (a) *Evidence-based policy making and knowledge building in the youth field.* A deeper understanding of the needs of young people through continuous research, knowledge development and outreach to young people and youth organisations with the support of the Youth Wiki, youth research networks and cooperation with international organisations.
- (b) *Mutual learning and dissemination.* Mutual learning between Member States, the European Commission, expert groups and relevant stakeholders as a basis to further youth policy in core and cross-sectoral areas.
- (c) *Participatory governance.* Involvement of young people and their representative organisations in the different phases of implementation of the EUYS through an EU Youth Strategy Platform.
- (d) *Mobilising EU programmes and funds.* Effective use of EU programmes and funds, such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, etc.
- (e) *Monitoring of EU funding,* by monitoring spending on youth through using existing mechanisms as appropriate.
- (f) *Communication* on the purpose and the content of the EUYS in a comprehensive way and youth-friendly language.
- (g) *Future National Activities Planner (FNAP)* will allow Member States to share their priorities (in line with the EUYS) on a voluntary basis, to increase transparency in the implementation of youth policies at regional, national and EU level and identify appropriate partners for mutual learning activities and responding to individual needs of Member States.
- (h) The *new EU Youth Dialogue* aims to include more decision-makers and young people, especially those not-listened-to and/or with fewer opportunities, to foster their engagement and political participation. Furthermore, more regular exchange between EU Youth Dialogue National Working Groups and the European Commission should be facilitated.
- (i) *An EU Youth Coordinator* to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation, knowledge development and exchange on youth issues within the European Commission services.
- (j) *Equal access to quality Youth Information services and platforms,* including inter alia the European Youth Portal, notably with the support of European-wide organisations and promoting young people's rights, opportunities, youth services and EU programmes.
- (k) *The EU Work Plans for Youth will present priorities and actions for triennial working periods* within the EUYS, drawing on the guiding principles and priorities of the EUYS. The Council will set these EU Work Plans together with the Commission, beginning with a work plan for 2019-2021. The plans will allow addressing youth issues in other Council configurations and their preparatory bodies in other areas.
- (l) *Monitoring, reporting, evaluation.* The Commission will report on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy every three years, based on information provided by Member States and the Youth Wiki. Progress will be monitored in the EU Youth Strategy Platform, with the assistance of youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders. The Dashboard of EU Youth Indicators can be used to monitor the

overall situation of young people in Member States. A policy review of EU funded research projects should be conducted from 2019 on to extract relevant findings for the youth policy area.

(m) *Mid-term Review* of the EUYS by the Council on the basis of an evaluation report of the Commission by 31 December 2023. It shall review as appropriate this Resolution in the year 2024, in order to adjust it to possible new developments and needs.

#### *REFERENCES TO CHILDREN(S RIGHTS) POLICIES*

The EUYS does not contains explicit references to children's (rights) policies. The Council does explicitly emphasize that all actions undertaken within this EUYS should affirm the international standards of human rights, and thus specifically **children's rights. Equality, non-discrimination and participation** are underlying requirements for all policies and activities concerning young people.<sup>65</sup> These general requirements are also guiding principles within the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The EUYS also emphasizes that young people should have equal access to quality **youth information on their rights**.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> COM(2018)269, p. 4

<sup>66</sup> COM(2018)269, p. 13

### 3. Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is composed of 47 member countries, covering almost the whole European continent. Its basic objective is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the whole of the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

#### 3.1. Council of Europe policy agenda on children('s rights)

##### 3.1.1. Legal basis

The **European Convention on Human Rights** (ECHR) of 1950 sets out civil and political rights and freedoms. The rights of children are not specifically mentioned in the Convention. However, pursuant to Article 1, the Convention applies to everyone within the jurisdiction of the States Parties, thus also to children. In an increasing number of cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights, issues of children's rights have been addressed.<sup>67</sup>

The **European Social Charter** (ESC) was adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996. The Charter complements the ECHR by guaranteeing social and economic human rights. In the revised Charter, two provisions exclusively address children's rights, namely Article 7 (the right of children and young persons to protection) and Article 17 (the right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection). The European Committee of Social Rights monitors compliance by the States Parties with the ESC.

The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was adopted in 1987. Other **Council of Europe conventions** address particular aspects of children's rights, namely:

- European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock (1975)
- European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions concerning Custody of Children and on the Restoration of Custody of Children (1980)
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996)
- Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003)
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007)
- European Convention on the Adoption of Children (Revised) (2008)
- Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2011).

In the **Warsaw Declaration** of 2005, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe declared their commitment to '*eradicating violence against women and children, including domestic violence*'.<sup>68</sup> The **Warsaw**

---

<sup>67</sup> All the Court's judgments and a large selection of decisions, information on communicated cases, advisory opinions, press releases, legal summaries and Commission decisions and reports are published in the HUDOC database:

[https://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw&c=#n14597620384884950241259\\_pointer](https://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw&c=#n14597620384884950241259_pointer)

<sup>68</sup> CM(2005)79 final.

**Action Plan** states as regards the strengthening of human rights in the information society, that *‘the Council of Europe shall ... continue its work on children in the information society, in particular as regards developing their media literacy skills and ensuring their protection against harmful content’*. Also and more importantly, one of the goals catalogued under the third main task of the Council of Europe of ‘Building a more humane and inclusive Europe’ in the Warsaw Action Plan is ‘Building a Europe for children’. The Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe stated:

*“We are determined to effectively promote the rights of the child and to fully comply with the obligations of the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child. A child rights perspective will be implemented throughout the activities of the Council of Europe and effective coordination of child-related activities must be ensured within the Organization. We will take specific action to eradicate all forms of violence against children. We therefore decide to launch a three year programme of action to address social, legal, health and educational dimensions of the various forms of violence against children. We shall also elaborate measures to stop sexual exploitation of children, including legal instruments if appropriate, and involve civil society in this process. Coordination with the United Nations in this field is essential, particularly in connection with follow-up to the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography”.*

### 3.1.2. Decision-making body

The decision-making body of the Council of Europe is the **Committee of Ministers**, which is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all Council of Europe Member States or their permanent diplomatic representatives in Strasbourg. The Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) guides the intergovernmental work in the area of the rights of the child and operates under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Its current Terms of Reference are valid from 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2019. The Committee is composed of representatives of all 47 member States. Other participants and observers include observer States to the Council of Europe, Council of Europe bodies and committees, other international organisations and NGOs.<sup>69</sup>

### 3.1.2. Historical overview

As a response to the Warsaw Declaration and Action Plan, the programme **‘Building a Europe for and with children’** was launched, with two interlinked aims: the promotion of children’s rights and the protection of children from violence. Since 2009, this has been guided by three consecutive Strategies on the Rights of the Child. The first one, the **Stockholm Strategy** for the years 2009-2011, was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 November 2008.<sup>70</sup> The second one, the **Monaco Strategy**, was adopted on 15 February 2012, for the years 2012-2015. The third one, the **Sofia Strategy** 2016-2021, was adopted on 2 March 2016 (see further).

---

<sup>69</sup> CM(2015)171-final. See also <http://www.coe.int/en/web/children/cahenf>

<sup>70</sup> CM(2011)171 final.

### 3.1.3. Main policy document

On 2 March 2016, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the '**Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)**', also referred to as the **Sofia Strategy**, as the third policy cycle of the programme 'Building a Europe for and with Children'.<sup>71</sup>

#### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION*

The **Children's Rights Division**, which falls under the Directorate-General Democracy (DG II), is responsible for the implementation of the Sofia Strategy. The Head of the Children's Rights Division is also the Council of Europe Coordinator on the Rights of the Child. The coordination is ensured through the organization's Inter-Secretariat Task Force on the Rights of the Child, where representatives of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights and approximately 30 other operational entities in charge of steering and expert committees, monitoring bodies and the relevant institutions and bodies participate. The Task Force meets regularly with a view to encouraging exchange and update on progress and challenges within the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the **Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF)** supervises the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

#### *TIME FRAME*

The Sofia Strategy contains the programme objectives for six years, from **2016 until 2021**.

#### *OBJECTIVES*

The aim of the Sofia Strategy is to remedy the gaps in children's legal protection, and even more between law and practice. Strong political commitment paired with the allocation of sufficient resources and a broad societal awareness of the rights of the child are needed to ensure that children are seen and treated as full rights-holders.<sup>72</sup>

#### *AGENDA – THEMATIC PRIORITIES*

The Council of Europe's work on the rights of the child is based on the UNCRC and in particular its four general principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to life, survival and development and the right to be heard.<sup>73</sup>

The **five strategic objectives** of the Sofia Strategy are:

- equal opportunities for all children
- participation of all children
- a life free from violence for all children
- child-friendly justice for all children
- rights of the child in the digital environment

---

<sup>71</sup> CM (2015) 175 final.

<sup>72</sup> CM (2015) 175 final, para. 11.

<sup>73</sup> UN Doc. CRC/GC/2003/5, §12



## APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The Council of Europe intends to deliver this Strategy through a continued focus on implementation of existing standards, partnerships, communication and evaluation. The programme's working methods will serve following objectives:

- making the standards work for children
- involving all relevant stakeholders
- communicating children's rights
- evaluating performance

The budget is composed of the Council of Europe's ordinary budget and member states' voluntary contributions. A mid-term evaluation with the possibility for adjustments will be carried out after three years. The Secretariat will report every two years to the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of this Strategy. The first implementation report<sup>74</sup> gives an overview of the activities, developments and achievements under each thematic area, from the Strategy's adoption date up to June 2017. Progress of the 6-year Strategy will be evaluated against the objectives, with reference to the expected impact, outcome and output set out for each priority area, based on a set of indicators.<sup>75</sup>

## REFERENCES TO YOUTH POLICIES

The Sofia Strategy also refers to the youth sector. As such, the **radicalization of children and youth** is mentioned as an issue of concern that calls for more investments into education for tolerance and intercultural dialogue. As part of the strategic objective of promoting child participation, it is stated that *'action will be undertaken to facilitate exchange of experiences on rights-based child participation in co-operation with the Council of Europe youth sector, child and youth organizations, ombudspersons for children and child advisory bodies'*.

### 3.2. Council of Europe policy agenda on youth

#### 3.2.1. Legal basis

In the **Warsaw Action Plan of 2005**, the third principal task of 'Building a more humane and inclusive Europe' includes the objective of 'developing youth co-operation'. The Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe declared in this respect:

*"We will intensify our efforts to empower young people to **actively participate** in democratic processes so that they can contribute to the promotion of our core values. The Council of Europe Youth Centers and the European Youth Foundation are important instruments to this effect. **We will integrate a youth perspective in all Council of Europe activities**. To promote diversity, inclusion and participation in society, we decide to launch a Europe-wide youth campaign, in the spirit of the "European Youth Campaign against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance" (1995). **The Council of Europe will further develop its unique position in the youth field**. It will continue to assist member states in developing national and local policy instruments and actively promote youth exchanges and youth mobility in Europe."<sup>76</sup>*

<sup>74</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/1st-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-strategy-for/1680765420>

<sup>75</sup> CM (2015) 175 final, para. 75

<sup>76</sup> Emphasis added

### 3.2.2. Decision-making body

Typical of the Council of Europe, and unique at the international level, is the system of co-management employed in the policy field of youth, with the aim of enhancing youth participation. Such **co-management** implies that representatives of **youth organizations and government officials** think together about the priorities for the youth sector and formulate policy proposals. The Committee of Ministers then adopts these proposals. Concretely, the following decision-making bodies may be distinguished (see Figure 1):

- *The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)* is composed of government officials, who represent the state institutions responsible for youth matters in the 50 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention;
- *The Advisory Council on Youth* consists of 30 representatives of youth organizations and networks, who give input with respect to all youth sector initiatives of the Council of Europe;
- *The Joint Council of Youth* brings the CDEJ and the Advisory Council on Youth together in a co-decision body to agree on the priorities, aims and budgets for the youth sector;
- *The Programming Committee on Youth* brings together eight members each of the CDEJ and the Advisory Council on Youth in a “subsidiary co-decision body”, to decide and follow up on the activities of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation.



Figure 1: The Council of Europe system of co-management in the youth field<sup>77</sup>

### 3.2.3. Historical overview

The Council of Europe has already been active in the youth field for a long time. In 1972, the European Youth Centre was established in Strasbourg. In 1998, the Committee of Ministers adopted a resolution on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe.<sup>78</sup> On 25 November 2008, the Committee of Ministers adopted a new **resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe**.<sup>79</sup> This resolution takes account of various prior documents, namely the Warsaw Action Plan, the Final Declaration adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Kyiv (Ukraine) in October 2008,<sup>80</sup> and the Recommendation of the Parliamentary

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/co\\_management\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp)

<sup>78</sup> Resolution CM/Res(98)6 on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe. See also, among others, Recommendation 1585 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on Youth policies in the Council of Europe.

<sup>79</sup> Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe.

<sup>80</sup> Final Declaration: “The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020”, adopted by the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Kyiv (Ukraine) on 10 and 11 October 2008.

Assembly of 2008 on 'Refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe'.<sup>81</sup> On May 2017 the Committee of Ministers adopted the new Recommendation to the Council of Europe member states on youth work.<sup>82</sup> The recommendations set out in this document are aimed in advancing youth work, *'in providing sufficient resources, particularly at the local level and supporting the exchange of good practices and promoting equal access to youth work.'*

#### 3.2.4. Main policy document

On 25 November 2008, the Committee of Ministers adopted a new **resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe**.<sup>83</sup> This resolution takes account of various prior documents, namely the Warsaw Action Plan, the Final Declaration adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Kyiv (Ukraine) in October 2008,<sup>84</sup> and the Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of 2008 on 'Refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe'.<sup>85</sup>

##### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION*

The Youth Department, which forms part of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Directorate-General of Democracy (DGII) of the Council of Europe, is responsible for the implementation of the Council of Europe youth policy (see Annex 1). The Youth Department *'elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels'*.

##### *TIME FRAME*

The time frame of the new Council of Europe youth policy is not strictly determined; the resolution of the Committee of Ministers sets out the beacons of youth policy 'for the coming years'.

##### *OBJECTIVES*

According to the 2008 Resolution, the general objective of the Council of Europe's youth policy is *'to provide young people – girls and boys, young women and young men – with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society'*. The cross-sectoral dimension of youth policy as well as the importance of participation of young people in the formulation, implementation and follow-up of such policy are emphasized.

##### *AGENDA – THEMATIC PRIORITIES*

The priorities of the Council of Europe youth policy and action are:

---

<sup>81</sup>Recommendation 1844(2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on Refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe.

<sup>82</sup> CM/Rec(2017)4

<sup>83</sup>Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe.

<sup>84</sup> Final Declaration: 'The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020', adopted by the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Kyiv (Ukraine) on 10 and 11 October 2008.

<sup>85</sup>Recommendation 1844(2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on Refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe.

- Human rights and democracy, with special emphasis on
  - o ensuring full enjoyment of human rights promoting young people's active participation in democratic processes and everyday life;
  - o implementing gender equality and preventing gender-based violence;
  - o promoting awareness education and action on environment and sustainable development.
  
- Living together in diverse societies, with special emphasis on
  - o empowering young people to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
  - o preventing and counteracting racism and discrimination;
  - o supporting initiatives with regard to conflict prevention and management, as well as post-conflict reconciliation;
  - o supporting youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons;
  - o encouraging sub-regional youth co-operation in Europe and beyond;
  - o encouraging young people to promote global solidarity and co-operation.
  
- Social inclusion of young people, with special emphasis on
  - o supporting the integration of excluded young people;
  - o ensuring young people's access to education, training and working life, particularly through the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning ;
  - o supporting young people's transition from education to the labor market ;
  - o supporting young people's autonomy and well-being, as well as their access to decent living conditions ;
  - o ensuring young people's equal access to cultural, sporting and creative activities ;
  - o encouraging intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

#### *APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS*

To implement these priorities, the following approaches, methods and instruments are proposed:

As regards youth policy development and co-operation:

- Intergovernmental and international co-operation
- Service to countries
- Co-operation with the European Union
- Partnerships with other stakeholders
- Co-management.

As regards youth work, education and training:

- Multilateral youth co-operation
- Working with multipliers and supporting quality youth work
- Intercultural learning
- European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundations.

As regards youth research and knowledge of youth:

- Youth research and co-operation between youth researchers and policy makers in order to promote evidence-based youth policies
- Carrying out of studies and production of publications
- Development of European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

The Joint Council on Youth adopted the programme of the youth sector for the period 2010-2012 and 2012-2013 'Developing European youth co-operation through youth policy, youth work and non-formal education/learning', which was composed of the following projects:

- Project N°1: Human rights and democracy: youth policy and youth work promoting the core values of the Council of Europe

- Project N° 2: Living together in diverse societies: youth policy and youth work promoting intercultural dialogue
- Project N° 3: Social inclusion of young people
- Project N° 4: Policy approaches and instruments benefiting *young people and children* (concerns mainly intergovernmental co-operation).

The three programme sectors outlined in the 2014-2015 priorities are Democratic Governance and Innovation; Diversity and Participation, each of which is composed of different programmes (five in total). The three strategic priorities for 2016- 2017 focus on supporting young people and member States in increasing the participation of young people in democratic processes; supporting member States and youth NGOs in the implementation of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation<sup>86</sup> on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods to social rights and supporting the promotion of inclusive and peaceful societies, especially through the extended No Hate Speech Movement and the Roma Youth Action Plan.<sup>87</sup> The three strategic priorities in 2018-2019 are access to rights, youth participation and youth work and inclusive and peaceful societies. For every project, the Joint Council on Youth establishes the priorities to be applied each year, which are available online.<sup>88</sup>

#### REFERENCES TO CHILDREN('S RIGHTS) POLICIES

The 2008 Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe contains two explicit references to children('s policies). The preamble states that a dynamic youth policy is needed, '*which includes children as well as young people*'. Moreover, the Committee of Ministers resolves that '*co-ordination between child- and youth-related activities should be further enhanced*'.

---

<sup>86</sup> CM/Rec(2015)3

<sup>87</sup> For more information see [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe\\_youth/Youth\\_sector\\_priorities\\_2016-2017\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe_youth/Youth_sector_priorities_2016-2017_en.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> For 2010-2012: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/Priorities\\_2010\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Priorities_2010_en.asp); for 2012-2013:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/Priorities\\_2012\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Priorities_2012_en.asp); for 2014- 2015:

[https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe\\_youth/Youth\\_sector\\_priorities\\_2014-2015\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe_youth/Youth_sector_priorities_2014-2015_en.pdf); for 2016- 2017:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe\\_youth/Youth\\_sector\\_priorities\\_2016-2017\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe_youth/Youth_sector_priorities_2016-2017_en.pdf) and for 2018-2019:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/priorities>.

See also:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-the-access-of-young-people-from-disadvantaged-neighbourhoods-to-social-rights>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-the-participation-of-young-people-in-local-and-regional-life>

[https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/compendium/-/asset\\_publisher/w5n18hASPL/content/recommendation-on-the-participation-of-children-and-young-people-under-the-age-of-18?inheritRedirect=false](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/compendium/-/asset_publisher/w5n18hASPL/content/recommendation-on-the-participation-of-children-and-young-people-under-the-age-of-18?inheritRedirect=false)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter?desktop=true>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/new-recommendation-to-the-council-of-europe-member-states-on-youth-work>

## 4. United Nations

The United Nations is an international organization composed of 193 Member States, committed to maintaining international peace and security and promoting better living standards and human rights.

### 4.1. UN policy on children('s rights) and youth

#### 4.1.1. Historical overview

In 2000, world leaders adopted the **United Nations Millennium Declaration**<sup>89</sup>, which called on the full implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols and set out a series of time-bound targets to be achieved by 2015, known as the **Millennium Development Goals**.<sup>90</sup> For 15 years, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a guiding force on many issues affecting the lives of children, young people and their families. During this time, progress was made in reducing preventable child deaths, getting more boys and girls into schools, reducing extreme poverty and ensuring more people have access to safe water and nutritious food. However, progress was uneven and many of the most pressing issues for the world were not adequately covered in the MDGs. The Millennium Declaration and the associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) essentially shaped a social service delivery agenda of primary relevance to developing countries.

#### 4.1.2. Main policy document

In September 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution<sup>91</sup> entitled '**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**', also called the post-2015 development agenda (hereafter 2030 Agenda or SDGs), at the UN Sustainable Development Summit. The 2030 Agenda<sup>92</sup> adopts a general and comprehensive set of universal Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The 2030 agenda is the result of an intensive public consultation, including opinions of governments, civil society, the private sector, academics, the UN system and concerned individuals.<sup>93</sup> The SDGs are people-centered, transformative, universal and interlinked. Implementing the SDGs requires collaboration and partnership between developing and developed countries, but also between governments, NGO's, private and public sector, academics and society in its whole.<sup>94</sup>

#### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION*

The implementation of this Agenda and its Goals and targets will be followed- up and reviewed until 2030 on a voluntary and country-led basis. Monitoring and evaluating of the progress on the implementation of the Goals

---

<sup>89</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/55/2.

<sup>90</sup> For more information : <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

<sup>91</sup> This resolution is not legally binding, in order to prevent legal obstruction and complexity.

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/agenda2030/>

<sup>93</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/70/1. (see also: A/68/970 and A/68/970)

<sup>94</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/70/1

and actions are primarily focused on a **national level**, and organized by the **governing bodies of the Member States**. Complimentary monitoring also exists on a regional and global level. The United Nations **High-level Political Forum** on Sustainable Development (HLPF)<sup>95</sup>, is the main platform with a central role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the SDGs on a **global level**. The establishment of the HLPF was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document *'The Future We Want'* of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).<sup>96</sup> The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days.<sup>97</sup> It provides for the full and effective participation of all States members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies.<sup>98</sup> In addition, **United Nations Children's Fund – UNICEF** monitors the SDGs so that it delivers for all children globally.<sup>99</sup>

#### *TIME FRAME*

The Resolution **'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'** was adopted on 25 September 2015 and is valid until 2030.

#### *OBJECTIVES*

The SDGs want to build further on the outcome of the MDGs. Member states aim to **end all forms of poverty**, and to ensure that 'no one will be left behind'. The SDGs address the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It seeks to realize the human rights of all, and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. World leaders further reaffirmed their vision of a *'world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation'*.<sup>100</sup>

#### *THEMATIC PRIORITIES*

The SDGs set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets that are based on five pillars (5 P's): People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. It is important to note that all SDGs are integrated and indivisible and should be understood as such. The achievement of the Goals and targets will have a beneficial influence on children and young people. Furthermore some of the Goals and targets are explicitly directed towards children and young people and their rights:

### **People**

---

<sup>95</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/67/290.

<sup>96</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> The format and organizational aspects of the Forum are outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/290.

<sup>98</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/70/1.

<sup>99</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index\\_introduction.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_introduction.html)

<sup>100</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/70/1.



- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere  
*Target 2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions*
  
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  
*Target 1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round*  
*Target 2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons*
  
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages  
*Target 2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births*
  
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all  
*Target 1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes*  
*Target 2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*  
*Target 4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship*  
*Target 5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations*  
*Target 6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy*  
*Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all*
  
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
*Target 1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere*  
*Target 2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation*  
*Target 3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation*  
*Target 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*

## Planet





### Prosperity



- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
  - Target 5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*
  - Target 7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms*
  - Target 8.b: By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization*
  
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
  - Target 7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities*

### Peace



- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
  - Target 2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children*
  - Target 9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration*

### Partnership



APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The Goals and targets of the SDGs will be followed up and reviewed using a **set of global indicators**. The 2030 agenda mandates the UN Statistical Commission to set a global SDG indicator framework for following and reviewing SDG goals and targets. The Statistical Commission established an Inter-Agency & Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG)<sup>101</sup> in order to outline this framework. The Statistical Commission approved an official list of global SDG indicators in March 2017 and was adopted by the General Assembly in July 2017.<sup>102</sup> It has classified the 232 global indicators based on methodological development and data availability. Several indicators must be broken down according to relevant categories such as gender, age, geographical location, etc. For some indicators there is already broad methodological agreement, while for others further work is needed. Countries will need to develop a set of national indicators that align with this set framework and build upon existing monitoring methods used by the national statistical office or system. The Resolution states that the indicator framework will be adjusted annually and reviewed comprehensively by the Statistical Commission in 2020 and 2025, and that it will be completed by regional and national indicators developed by Member States. The IAEG meets twice each year to review progress and challenges associated with implementing the global indicator framework.

In §39, the Resolution explains that “(t)he scale and ambition of the new Agenda requires a revitalized **Global Partnership** to ensure its implementation. We fully commit to this. This Partnership will work in a spirit of global solidarity, in particular solidarity with the poorest and with people in vulnerable situations. It will facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of all the Goals and targets, bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources.”

## 4.2. UN policy on children(’s rights)

### 4.2.1. Legal basis

Already in 1924, the League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations, adopted the **Geneva Declaration** of the Rights of the Child. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 paid attention to the particular needs of children, providing in its Article 25 that ‘[m]otherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance’. In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the **Declaration on the Rights of the Child**, which consisted of ten principles.<sup>103</sup>

At the thirtieth anniversary of this Declaration, on 20 November 1989, the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) was adopted by the General Assembly and opened for signature.<sup>104</sup> The CRC is a legally binding instrument, setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. As of June 2012,

---

<sup>101</sup> The IAEG comprises of 28 member states representing all regions of the world, with regional and international agencies as observers. A rotating mechanism is put in place. The UN Statistical Division acts as the secretariat and coordinates inputs from the UN system.

<sup>102</sup> UN Doc./A/RES/71/313

<sup>103</sup> UN Doc. A/4354.

<sup>104</sup> UN Doc. A/44/49.

there were 193 States Parties to the CRC, turning it into the most universally ratified human rights convention. In 2000, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) were adopted.<sup>105</sup> In 2011, the General Assembly approved a third Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (OPIC).<sup>106</sup>

#### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION*

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols. The Committee clarifies its interpretation of the provisions contained in these instruments by issuing 'general comments'.

#### *TIME FRAME*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989, its first two Optional Protocols in 2000. The third Optional Protocol was adopted on 19 December 2011 and opened for signature on 28 February 2012. It entered into force on 14 April 2014.<sup>107</sup>

#### *OBJECTIVES*

The four core principles of the CRC are non-discrimination (art. 2); the best interests of the child (art.3), survival and development (art. 6) and respect for the views of the child / participation (art. 12).<sup>108</sup>

#### *THEMATIC PRIORITIES*

In its general guidelines regarding the form and content of initial reports<sup>109</sup> and periodic reports<sup>110</sup> to be submitted by States Parties, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has grouped the articles of the Convention into seven clusters:

1. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6)
2. Definition of the child (art. 1)
3. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)
4. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, 13-17 and 37 (a))
5. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9-11, 18, paras. 1 and 2; 19-21, 25, 27, para. 4 and 39)
6. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29 and 31)
7. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32-36, 37 (b)-(d), 38, 39 and 40).

#### *APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS*

---

<sup>105</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/54/263.

<sup>106</sup> A/RES/66/138

<sup>107</sup> According to article 19(1) OPIC, the Protocol enters in force three months after the deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2018, countries that have ratified the Optional Protocol are: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Mongolia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay

<sup>108</sup> UN Doc. CRC/GC/2003/5, §12.

<sup>109</sup> UN Doc. CRC/C/5.

<sup>110</sup> UN Doc. CRC/C/58/Rev.1.

States Parties undertake to submit to the **Committee reports** on the measures they have adopted to implement the rights protected by the CRC, initially within two years of the entry into force of the treaty, after that every five years.<sup>111</sup> The Committee gives its feedback to the States Parties in the form of concluding observations. On the basis of the third Optional Protocol on a communication procedure (OPIC), the Committee is able to consider individual complaints (or communications) from children and their representatives concerning alleged violations of the CRC and its first two Optional Protocols. In addition, OPIC also provides for inter-state communications and inquiry procedures. In its sixty-second session (14 January – 1 February 2013) the Committee adopted rules of procedure.<sup>112</sup>

Two conventions of the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) address the issue of child labour: ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973) and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999). In a new report, the ILO warned that progress in putting a halt to the worst forms of child labour is slowing down, and that renewed energy must be invested.<sup>113</sup> In response, at the Global Child Labour Conference in May 2010, more than 450 delegates from 80 countries agreed on a roadmap, which characterizes the effective abolition of child labour as a “moral necessity”. In November 2010, the Governing Body (the executive body of the ILO) endorsed the Global Plan of Action for achieving the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016, which includes the aforementioned roadmap in annex.

#### 4.2.2. Decision-making body

Within the United Nations system, the General Assembly is the main policymaking organ. It comprises all 193 Member States of the United Nations.

#### 4.2.3. Historical overview

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted (see above). At the **World Summit for Children** of 1990, two policy documents were adopted: The World **Declaration** on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a **Plan of Action** for implementing this Declaration in the 1990s.<sup>114</sup> The political leaders committed themselves to a ten-point programme to safeguard the rights of children and improve their living conditions, around ten action points.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> CRC, art. 44, 1.

<sup>112</sup> For the rules of procedure see:

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/62/3&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/62/3&Lang=en)

<sup>113</sup> Accelerating action against child labour. Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, 99th session, 2010, ILO/10/19.

<sup>114</sup> UN Doc. A/45/625, Annex

<sup>115</sup> (1) Promoting ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (2) Enhance children’s health, (3) Take measures to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and famine, (4) Strengthen the role of women, promote maternal health and family planning, (5) Work for respect for the role of the family, (5) Provide basic education and reduce illiteracy, (7) Ameliorate the plight of children in especially difficult circumstances, (8) Protect children during armed conflicts, (9) Work for common measures to protect the environment, (10) Work for the alleviation of poverty and the revitalization of economic growth.

In 1996, a mid-decade review of the progress on implementation of the World Summit Declaration and Action Plan was carried out.<sup>82</sup> In 2001, the Secretary-General presented its report 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children'.<sup>83</sup> Some 155 countries had drafted national programmes of action aimed at implementing the goals of the World Summit for Children, and more than 100 states had carried out monitoring surveys.

At the special session of the UN General Assembly on children in 2002, the document '**A world fit for children**' was adopted. For the decade 2002-2012, world leaders stressed their commitment to complete the unfinished agenda of the World Summit and to create a world fit for children, which was described as follows:<sup>85</sup>

*"A world fit for children is one in which all children get the best possible start in life and have access to a quality basic education, including primary education that is compulsory and available free to all, and in which all children, including adolescents, have ample opportunity to develop their individual capacities in a safe and supportive environment. We will promote the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive and cultural development of children as a matter of national and global priority."*

Promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence and combating HIV/AIDS were identified as priority areas of action.

#### 4.2.4. Main policy document

The United Nations did not adopt a new policy document after 'A world fit for children', that is exclusively directed towards children or children's rights. Current policy on children('s rights) can be found in the Resolution entitled 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. (see 4.1.2. *Main Policy Document*)

### 4.3. UN policy agenda on youth

#### 4.3.1. Legal basis

In 1965, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the **Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples**.<sup>116</sup> According to this non-binding instrument, young people shall be brought up "*in a spirit of peace, justice, mutual respect and understanding*" (Principle I) and "*in the knowledge of the dignity and equality of all men, without distinction as to race, colour, ethnic origins or beliefs*" (Principle III). Associations of young people are encouraged to promote the purposes of the United Nations (Principle V).

---

<sup>116</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/2037. For evaluation on the implementation of the Declaration, see UN Doc. A/RES/43/136.

#### 4.3.2. Decision-making body

Within the United Nations system, the General Assembly is the main policymaking organ. It comprises all 193 Member States of the United Nations.

#### 4.3.3. Historical overview

In 1979, the General Assembly decided to designate 1985 as the **International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace**.<sup>117</sup> The year offered a *'useful and significant opportunity for drawing attention to the situation and the specific needs and aspirations of youth, for increasing co-operation at all levels in dealing with youth issues, for undertaking concerted action programmes in favor of youth and for improving the participation of young people in the study, decision-making processes and resolutions of major national, regional and international problems'*.<sup>118</sup> At the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, in 1995, the United Nations strengthened its commitment towards young people by adopting the **World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)** to the Year 2000 and Beyond.<sup>119</sup>

#### 4.3.4. Main policy document

The WPAY is the key instrument of global youth policy, providing *'a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people'*.

#### *INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION*

The **United Nations Programme on Youth** is the only part of the United Nations Secretariat with the explicit mandate to address youth issues. The United Nations Focal Point on Youth is in charge of monitoring progress and constraints in achieving the goals of the WPAY. It resides under the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA DISD).<sup>120</sup> It has various publications on youth, among which the World Youth Reports.<sup>121</sup> The Division for Social Development furthermore provides support to the Commission for Social Development (CSocD). As advisory body to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on key social development issues and policies, the CSocD is responsible for the implementation and follow-up

---

<sup>117</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/34/151.

<sup>118</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/40/1.

<sup>119</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/50/81

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/about.html>; <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/about/desa-divisions/social-policy.html>

<sup>121</sup> The World Youth Report 2003 examined the global situation of young people. The World Youth Report 2005 was entitled 'Young People today, and in 2015'. The World Youth Report 2007, 'Young people's transition to adulthood: Progress and challenges', provided a regional overview of the challenges faced by young people in the different priority areas. The World Youth Report 2010 focused on youth and climate change; the World Youth Report 2012 was entitled 'Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times'. The World Youth Report 2013 was entitled 'Youth and Migration'.

of the WPAY.<sup>122</sup> The Commission currently has 46 members, based on equitable geographical distribution for four-year terms.

#### TIME FRAME

The WPAY is divided into three phases. The first phase included the drafting of the WPAY and its adoption by the UN General Assembly. The second phase concerned world-wide implementation to the year 2000. In the third phase, from 2001 to 2010, focus is on *“further implementation and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered”*; and suggestions should be formulated as regards *“appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and specific measures to improve the situation of young people”*. Resolution 66/121 of 19 December 2011 on policies and programmes involving youth reaffirmed the World Programme of Action for Youth, including its fifteen interrelated priority areas, and called for further implementation on all levels.

At the first Global Forum on Youth Policy in 2014, led by the UN Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, the co-conveners committed in the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies for *“further promoting and supporting the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth”* and *“promoting synergies between youth policies and broader development policies and frameworks, particularly in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and means of implementation thereof”*.

#### OBJECTIVES

The Programme of Action *“focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society”*.

#### AGENDA – THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The WPAY covers **fifteen youth priority areas** and contains principle issues, specific objectives, proposals for action in each of these areas. The fifteen identified fields of priority are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, substance abuse, juvenile justice, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, as well as globalization, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues. The WPAY includes various references to ‘children and youth’ and ‘street children’ and refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the context of the protection of girls and young women from economic exploitation and hazardous work. Nevertheless, no structural links with policies on children’s rights have been established.

---

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division.html>

The World Youth Report 2003 examined the global situation of young people.<sup>123</sup> In the first ten chapters, the different priority areas of the WPAY were reviewed. In the five following chapters, more recent issues were addressed. These new themes were thereafter formally acknowledged by the UN General Assembly as additional priority areas for youth development: globalization, information and communication technology (ICT), HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues.<sup>124</sup>

In the World Youth Report '*Young People today, and in 2015*' of 2005 the fifteen priority areas were grouped into three clusters, '*representing the broad contexts in which today's youth deal with challenges and concerns that many of them share in spite of the vast differences in their cultures, societies and communities*'.<sup>125</sup> The first cluster 'youth in the global economy' includes the topics of globalization, education, employment, and hunger and poverty; the second cluster 'youth in civil society' comprises the issues of environment, leisure, participation in decision-making, intergenerational relations, and ICT; whereas the last cluster 'youth and their well-being' focuses on concerns relating to health, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, the situation of girls and young women, and youth in armed conflict.

In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the **Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond**, which expanded on the five additional priority areas.<sup>126</sup> The Supplement contains various references to 'children and youth'. Interestingly, with respect to armed conflict, a series of proposals for action aims at 'protecting youth under age 18 from direct involvement in armed conflict', and is thus in fact limited to a specific age group within youth that coincides with the international definition of 'children', i.e. minus 18 years old.

#### *APPROACHES, METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS*

According to the WPAY, '*implementation of the WPAY is ultimately the responsibility of Governments with the support of the international community and in cooperation, as appropriate, with the non-governmental and private sectors*'. In the implementation, Governments should '*promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes*'. As regards the implementation of the WPAY at national level, the Programme (moreover) urges or calls on governments to:

- Formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns;
- Undertake special efforts to develop and disseminate model frameworks for integrated policies and to identify and organize an appropriate division of responsibilities among governmental and non-governmental entities concerned with youth-related issues.
- Strengthen national capacities for data collection and dissemination of information, research and policy studies, planning, implementation and coordination.

---

<sup>123</sup> UN Doc. A/58/79-E/CN.5/2003/4.

<sup>124</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/58/133.

<sup>125</sup> UN Doc. A/60/61-E/2005/7. See also UN Doc. A/RES/60/2.

<sup>126</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/62/126.



- Establish or strengthen national coordinating mechanisms for integrated youth policies and programmes.

In a report of the Secretary General of 2007, the advancements and difficulties as regards the participation of young people in the global economy were analyzed.<sup>127</sup> In its resolution on 'Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy', the UN General Assembly formulated various recommendations towards Member States in this respect.<sup>128</sup> A report of the Secretary General of 2009 focused on the implementation of the two other clusters, the well-being of youth and their role in civil society.<sup>129</sup> Again, the UN General Assembly extracted various policy recommendations from this report with respect to the eleven priority areas.<sup>130</sup>

In December 2009, the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim the year commencing on 12 August 2010 the **International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding**, among others to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Youth Year of 1985.<sup>131</sup> Until 11 August 2011, a wide range of activities took place throughout the world, guided by the United Nations Framework approach. This system's approach focused on three key areas: create awareness (increase commitment and investment in youth); mobilize and engage (increase youth participation and partnerships); and connect and build bridges (increase intercultural understanding among youth).

#### *4.3.5. References to children('s rights) policies*

The World Programme of Action for Youth contains some references to 'street children' and 'children and youth', but no links with policies on children('s) rights are established.

---

<sup>127</sup> UN Doc. A/62/61-E/2007/7. See also UN Doc. A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, elaborating on goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy.

<sup>128</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/62/162.

<sup>129</sup> UN Doc. A/64/61-E/2009/3.

<sup>130</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/64/130.

<sup>131</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/64/134.

**Annex 1: European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children’s rights: state of the art**

FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE		POLICY AGENDAS ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS		
	<b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>	<b>European Union</b>	<b>Council of Europe</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>Legal basis</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/2007)</li> <li>- Article 3 (3) al. 2 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European Convention on Human Rights (1950)</li> <li>- European Social Charter (1961/1996)</li> <li>- Council of Europe conventions relevant to children</li> <li>- Warsaw Declaration and Action Plan (2005)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and three Optional Protocols</li> <li>- ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973)</li> <li>- ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)</li> </ul>
<b>Decision-making body</b>		<p>For trafficking and sexual exploitation of children: European Parliament and Council of the European Union</p> <p>For other measures that impact on children(’s rights): linked to the substantive field</p>	Committee of Ministers through the work of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF). Current Terms of Reference of the CAHENF are valid from 1 March 2018 until 31 December 2019.	United Nations General Assembly International Labour Conference
<b>Main policy document</b>		<i>Currently there is no recent EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child.</i>	<i>‘Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)’ (the Sofia Strategy)</i>	<i>‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG’s)’</i>
<b>Type of document</b>	Convention (binding)		Decision of the Committee of Ministers (taken at meeting of Ministers’ Deputies) (non-binding)	Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (non-binding)

<b>Institution responsible for (monitoring) implementation</b>	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child	Unit C2 - Fundamental rights policy of the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission  + other services of the relevant Directorate General	The Council of Europe's work on the rights of the child will continue to be coordinated by the Children's Rights Division within the Directorate General of Democracy. The Inter-Secretariat Task Force on Children's Rights will facilitate this task.	United Nations Children's Fund – UNICEF
<b>Time frame</b> -	Adopted 20 November 1989, entry into force 2 September 1990		Adopted 2 March 2016 For the period 2016-2021	Adopted 25 September 2015 for the period 2015 – 2030
<b>Objectives of policy on children('s rights)</b>	Core principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-discrimination (art. 2)</li> <li>- Best interests of the child (art. 3)</li> <li>- Survival and development (art. 6)</li> <li>- Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To remedy the gaps in children's legal protection, and even more between law and practice.</li> <li>- Strong political commitment paired with the allocation of sufficient resources and a broad societal awareness of the rights of the child are needed to ensure that children are seen and treated as full rights-holders.</li> </ul>	A post-2015 development agenda on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership
<b>Agenda (Thematic priorities)</b>	Clusters of articles for reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General measures of implementation</li> <li>- Definition of the child</li> <li>- General principles</li> <li>- Civil rights and freedoms</li> <li>- Family environment and alternative care</li> <li>- Education, leisure and cultural activities</li> <li>- Special protection measures</li> </ul>		Strategic objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equal opportunities for all children;</li> <li>- Participation of all children;</li> <li>- A life free from violence for all children;</li> <li>- Child-friendly justice for all children;</li> <li>- Rights of the child in the digital environment</li> </ul>	Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- End poverty in all its forms everywhere</li> <li>- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</li> <li>- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</li> <li>- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</li> <li>- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</li> <li>- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</li> <li>- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</li> <li>- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</li> <li>- Reduce inequality within and among countries</li> <li>- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</li> <li>- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</li> <li>- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</li> <li>- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</li> <li>- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</li> <li>- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</li> <li>- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--	--

				the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
<b>Approaches, methods and instruments</b>	<p>Reports of the State Parties to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Three communications procedures: complaints (or communications) from individuals or representatives, the inquiry procedure and inter-State communications (optional protocol on a communications procedure, OPIC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer support and cooperation to Member States by the EC</li> <li>- Make annual report on implementation of the policy</li> <li>- Cooperate with stakeholders</li> <li>- Promote using existing legal instruments and policies as common</li> <li>- Instruments and policies for EU action</li> <li>- Include the rights of the child into the “fundamental rights check” in the EU legislation process</li> <li>- Improve the basic data and information to guide decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making the standards work for children;</li> <li>- Involving all relevant stakeholders;</li> <li>- Communicating children’s rights;</li> <li>- Evaluating performance</li> </ul>	Voluntary and country-led follow-up, based on a set of global indicators and in a global partnership.
<b>References to young people and/or youth policies</b>	No references to young people or youth policies		<p>The radicalization of children and youth is mentioned as an issue of concern that calls for more investments into education for tolerance and intercultural dialogue</p> <p>As part of the strategic objective of promoting child participation, it is stated that “action will be undertaken to facilitate exchange of experiences on rights-based child participation in co-operation with the Council of Europe youth sector, child and youth organizations, ombudspersons for children and child advisory bodies”.</p>	Various references to “young people”, but no references to youth policies
<b>Cooperation with other policy levels</b>		The Commission will strengthen cooperation among the main stakeholders, making optimal use of existing networks and international organizations or bodies involved in children’s rights. To this end, the	Cooperation with member States, EU, international organizations (such as UNICEF, CBSS, OIF), civil society, ombudspersons for children, academic networks, the private sector and children themselves.	“The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized.”

		<p>Commission brings the stakeholders together in a <i>European Forum for the Rights of the Child</i>. The Forum includes all the relevant stakeholders (including Member States, UN agencies, the Council of Europe, civil society and children themselves), and contributes to the design and monitoring of EU actions and act as an arena for exchange of good practice.</p> <p>Furthermore, the EU Commission organises regularly meetings of the informal Member States expert group meeting on the rights of the child to establish closer cooperation between the Commission and Member States on various issues relating the protection and promotion of the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), are other valuable partners in this respect.</p>	
<p><b>Responsibilities of States Parties / Appeal to the Member States</b></p>	<p>Undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.</p>			<p>Implementation of the plan by all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership</p>

<b>POLICY AGENDAS ON YOUTH</b>			
	<b>European Union</b>	<b>Council of Europe</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>Legal basis</b>	- Arts. 6 and 165,2 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union of 2008	- Warsaw Action Plan (2005)	- Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965)
<b>Decision-making body</b>	Council of Youth Ministers	Committee of Ministers, supported by a system of co-management between the following institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)</li> <li>- The Advisory Council on Youth</li> <li>- The Joint Council of Youth</li> <li>- The Programming Committee on Youth</li> </ul>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>Main policy document</b>	<i>European Council of Youth Ministers' resolution of 26 November 2018 on the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027</i>	<i>Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe</i>	<i>World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY)</i>
<b>Type of document</b>	Resolution of the Council of Youth Ministers (non-binding)	Resolution of the Committee of Ministers (non-binding)	Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (non-binding)
<b>Institution responsible for implementation</b>	The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) comprises a Youth unit within Directorate B (Youth, Education and Erasmus+). Unit EAC.B.3 is in charge of youth policy aspects, European Solidarity Corps, the Youth chapter of Erasmus + and the Traineeship Office.	Directorate of Youth and Sport, part of Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport	Commission for Social Development  UN Programme on Youth, part of Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations
<b>Time frame</b>	2019-2027	Destination 2030 Shaping a new strategy for the youth sector	1995-2010; reaffirmed in 2011 without specific timeframe

		Devising a new strategic document on youth policy for the next decade.	
<b>Objectives of youth policy</b>	Increase social and civic engagement and participation in democratic life.	To provide young people – girls and boys, young women and young men – with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To strengthen national capacities in the field of youth</li> <li>- To increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda (Thematic priorities)</b>	<p>Working on effective, focused and joined-up implementation within and across sectors while tackling core areas of the youth sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage: meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people in the development, implementation and assessment of policies that concern them.</li> <li>- Connect: creating solidarity within the European Union through mobility and exchanges, cooperation, and cultural and social activities at European level.</li> <li>- Empowerment: young people feel encouraged taking their lives in their own hands.</li> </ul> <p>European Youth Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- connecting EU with youth;</li> <li>- equality of all genders;</li> <li>- inclusive societies;</li> <li>- information and constructive dialogue;</li> <li>- mental health and wellbeing;</li> <li>- moving rural youth forward;</li> <li>- quality employment for all;</li> <li>- quality learning;</li> <li>- space and participation for all;</li> <li>- sustainable green Europe;</li> </ul>	<p>Priorities:</p> <p>Human rights and democracy, with special emphasis on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- human rights</li> <li>- participation</li> <li>- gender equality and gender-based violence</li> <li>- environment and sustainable development</li> </ul> <p>Living together in diverse societies, with special emphasis on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue</li> <li>- racism and discrimination</li> <li>- conflict prevention and management, as well as post-conflict reconciliation</li> <li>- youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons</li> <li>- sub-regional youth cooperation in Europe and beyond</li> <li>- global solidarity and cooperation</li> </ul> <p>Social inclusion of young people, with special emphasis on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- integration of excluded young people</li> <li>- access to education, training and working life</li> <li>- transition from education to the labour market</li> </ul>	<p>Priority areas (2000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Employment</li> <li>- Hunger and poverty</li> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Environment</li> <li>- Drug abuse</li> <li>- Juvenile delinquency</li> <li>- Leisure-time activities</li> <li>- Girls and young women</li> <li>- Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making</li> </ul> <p>Additional priority areas (2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Globalization</li> <li>- Informations and communications technology</li> <li>- HIV/AIDS</li> <li>- Armed conflict</li> <li>- Intergenerational issues</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- youth organisations and European programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- young people’s autonomy and well-being, as well as access to decent living conditions</li> <li>- cultural, sporting and creative activities</li> <li>- intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Approaches, methods and instruments</b>	<p><u>Guiding principles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality and non-discrimination</li> <li>- Inclusion</li> <li>- Participation</li> <li>- Global, European, national, regional and local dimensions</li> <li>- Dual approach (Specific initiatives in the youth field and mainstreaming initiatives)</li> </ul> <p><u>Instruments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence-based policy making and knowledge building in the youth field</li> <li>- Mutual learning and dissemination</li> <li>- Participatory governance</li> <li>- Mobilising EU programmes and funds</li> <li>- Monitoring of EU funding</li> <li>- Communicating about EUYS</li> <li>- Future National Activities Planner (FNAP)</li> <li>- EU Youth Dialogue</li> <li>- EU Youth Coordinator</li> <li>- Equal access to quality Youth Information and Support</li> <li>- EU Work Plans for Youth</li> <li>- Monitoring, reporting, evaluation.</li> <li>- Mid-term Review</li> </ul>	<p>Approaches, methods and instruments</p> <p><u>As regards youth policy development and cooperation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intergovernmental and international cooperation</li> <li>- Service to countries</li> <li>- Cooperation with EU</li> <li>- Partnerships with other stakeholders</li> <li>- Co-management</li> </ul> <p><u>As regards youth work, education and training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multilateral youth cooperation</li> <li>- Working with multipliers and supporting quality youth work</li> <li>- Intercultural learning</li> <li>- European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundations</li> </ul> <p><u>As regards youth research and knowledge of youth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth research and cooperation between youth researchers and policy makers in order to promote evidence-based youth policies</li> <li>- Carrying out of studies and production of publications</li> <li>- Development of European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy</li> </ul>	<p>Means of implementation:</p> <p><u>At national level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See “appeal to member states”</li> </ul> <p><u>Regional cooperation</u></p> <p><u>International cooperation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data collection and dissemination of information</li> <li>- Research and policy studies</li> <li>- Planning and coordination</li> <li>- Technical cooperation, training and advisory services</li> <li>- Outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies</li> </ul>
<b>References to policies on children(’s rights)</b>	<p>The EUYS does not contains explicit references to children’s policies. The Council does emphasize that all actions undertaken within this EUYS should affirm the international standards of human rights, and thus specifically children’s rights. Equality, non-discrimination</p>	<p>Preamble: “Convinced of the need for a dynamic youth policy in the Council of Europe, which includes children as well as young people”</p> <p>Text:</p>	<p>Some references, mainly to “street children” and “children and youth”, but no links with policies on children(’s rights).</p>

	and participation are underlying requirements for all policies and activities concerning young people. These general requirements are also guiding principles within the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The EUYS also emphasizes that young people should have equal access to quality youth information on their rights.	“co-ordination between child- and youth-related activities should be further enhanced”	
<b>Cooperation with other policy levels</b>	Cooperation global, European, national, regional and local dimension.  Cooperation between young people, youth organisations, Member States, stakeholders and experts.	<u>As regards youth policy development and cooperation</u> - Intergovernmental and international cooperation on the development of youth policy, with particular focus on setting standards and supporting their implementation - Cooperation with the European Union	See means of implementation “international cooperation”
<b>Appeal to the Member States</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work together to enhance European cooperation in the youth field</li> <li>- Adopt, on the basis of national priorities, measures at national level which can contribute to achieving the overall objectives outlined in the renewed framework, as well as consider whether inspiration can be drawn from mutual learning at EU level, when devising national policies in the youth field and other related policy areas.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy</li> <li>- Develop and disseminate model frameworks for integrated policies and identify and organize an appropriate division of responsibilities among governmental and non-governmental entities concerned with youth-related issues</li> <li>- Strengthen national capacities for data collection and dissemination of information, research and policy studies, planning, implementation and coordination.</li> <li>- Establish or strengthen national coordinating mechanisms for integrated youth policies and programmes.</li> </ul>



**Departement Cultuur, Jeugd en Media**  
Arenbergstraat 9  
1000 Brussel