

INSIGHTS INTO YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE



Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

INSIGHTS INTO YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

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The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

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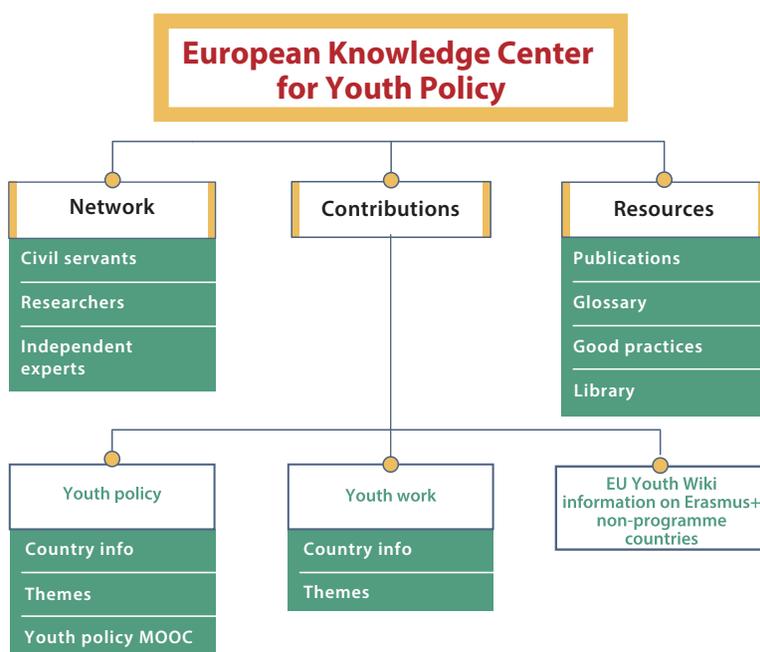
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Preface

Welcome to Insights into youth policy governance!

This publication was created in the framework of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY),¹ managed by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership. EKCY was established almost 15 years ago as an online library to gather information about the situation of young people and to support youth policy and youth work practice. This network of correspondents,² covering the 50 member states of the European Cultural Convention, regularly collects and updates information on their respective country or region, covering almost the whole of Europe. Each correspondent is appointed by the relevant ministry represented in the European Steering Committee for Youth. The network includes civil servants, researchers and independent experts chosen by the authorities to act as a contact point for knowledge gathering in that country. Since 2016, EKCY has also contributed to the newly launched EU Youth Wiki platform, which is a comprehensive database on topics relating to the EU Youth Strategy.



1. For more information, please visit <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge/-ekcy>, accessed on 1 June 2018.
2. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/ekcy-correspondents>, accessed on 1 June 2018.

A decade of collection and analysis of thematic and general youth-policy-related data has created a wealth of knowledge that is beneficial to policy makers, practitioners and young people involved in youth policy making. To better share this knowledge, the EKCYP network is launching a series of publications, entitled *Insights*, with the following objectives:

- ▶ to present comparative cross-country overviews on specific topics;
- ▶ to share the knowledge gathered by the correspondents in a simple and useful way;
- ▶ to identify models where they exist;
- ▶ to suggest questions for reflection.

We chose to call this series *Insights* because it aims to give a global understanding of specific topics, as the meaning of the word suggests. These publications do not aim to present exhaustive information, but a snapshot of diverse country models. Readers interested in going deeper into the subject may pursue further reading in the relevant pages of EKCYP and the EU Youth Wiki.

This first *Insights* will test the ground to see how useful such an approach to knowledge sharing is. This *Insights* will be used within the youth policy activities carried out by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, namely the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on youth policy and youth policy training. It will also be disseminated through all the communication channels of the youth partnership to interested stakeholders.

We hope that this publication will reach far beyond the scope of the inter-institutional partnership and that policy makers, service providers, students, researchers, young people and public authorities at national, local and international levels will make good use of this analysis in their own quest for more informed policy initiatives. The analysis is based primarily on the EKCYP youth policy country sheets and the EU Youth Wiki Chapter 1: Youth policy governance³ contributions collected in 2016 and 2017. While data can get old quickly, the patterns of structuring youth policy change at a slower pace and this is the reason why we kick off this analysis of youth policy governance by engaging with three specific questions:

How is youth policy established in a country – what context defines it?

Who is responsible for youth policy at various levels?

What place does youth participation have in youth policy governance?

The authors, the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership team and the EKCYP correspondents wish you a reflective and useful read!

Tanya Basarab

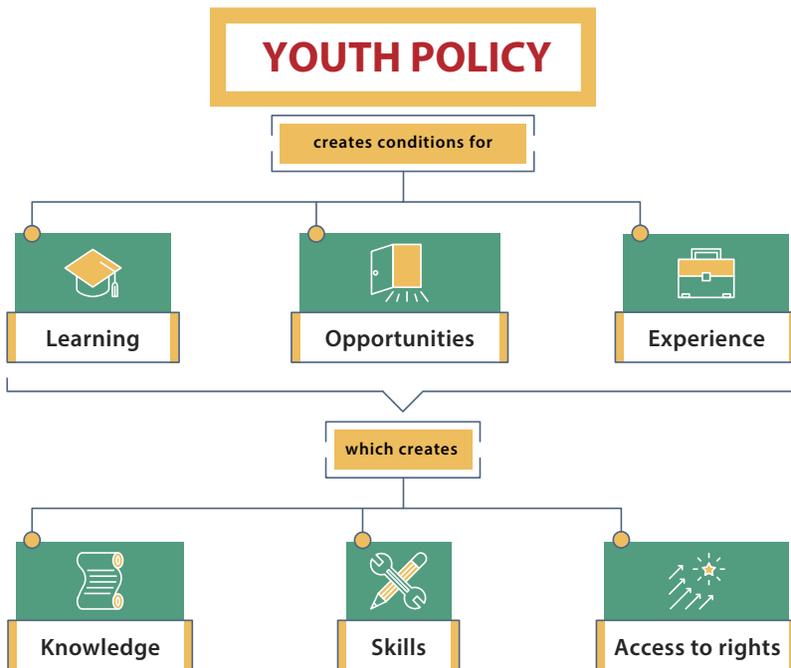
EU-Council of Europe youth partnership

3. <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/1-youth-policy-governance-overview>, accessed on 1 June 2018.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This publication seeks to provide insights into youth policy development and the forms of governance which manage policy design, delivery and evaluation across Europe. It thus offers a picture of how youth policies are set up (the legal framework) and which public structures manage their implementation, as well as how young people are involved with them. The analysis is presented based on a multi-country review of contributions from the EKCYP and the EU Youth Wiki chapters on youth policy governance. Finally, *Insights* also presents European-level policy imperatives and governance in the Council of Europe and the European Union, and the knowledge on this subject gathered through their partnership in the field of youth.



The purpose of youth policy is to create conditions for learning, opportunity and experience, which enable young people to develop knowledge, skills and competences. This allows young people to be actors of democracy, integrate into society and, in particular, play an active role in both civil society and the labour market. The key measures of youth policies are to promote citizenship learning and the integrated policy approach.⁴

Youth policy is a dynamic process with systems and structures that change constantly. The analysis in this *Insights* is based on the contributions received in 2016 and 2017. Approaches to policy making change slowly and it is hoped this analysis can serve all new and ongoing initiatives. This publication includes elements of good-governance structures in the youth field, recognising diversity and aiming to highlight distinct approaches.

- ▶ First, *Insights* aims to explain various youth policy models and formats of youth policy governance, as well as the components of effective governance, with a focus on the role and function of key stakeholders.
- ▶ Second, the publication aims to provide a multi-country overview including a descriptive and analytical picture of models used at the national and local level (where applicable).
- ▶ Third, there is an identification of the stakeholders involved in the decision-making processes, which are mapped out, and of the legal instruments that impact upon policy and strategy development.
- ▶ Finally, it draws conclusions from the topics analysed.

The pace of social, political and structural change across Europe provides unprecedented opportunities and challenges for young people, practitioners and the policy makers concerned with innovative strategy development. Across Europe, countries with similar socio-political regimes tend to have similar approaches to youth policy development and implementation, at least in terms of the range of areas they cover and the priorities they adopt. This publication includes a selection of practices identified in different countries. The authors aimed to provide a wide geographic scope for the examples listed.

National youth policy governance systems interact through commonly agreed frameworks both at intergovernmental level through the Council of Europe and at supranational level through the European Union. The Council of Europe promotes youth policies that are based on human rights and democratic standards; are opportunity focused; involve young people in their formulation and implementation; create conditions for learning, opportunity and experience; and are based on robust data collection (Council of Europe Youth Department 2016). The European Union supports policies that create more opportunities for young people, improving their access and full participation in society. Such policy frameworks also value the role of youth work and non-formal learning, stress the importance of a cross-sectoral approach, and emphasise the need for evidence and dialogue with young people (European Commission 2009).

4. See "Glossary on youth" on the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership and the youth policy essentials: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary/-/glossary/Y#youth-policy>, accessed on 19 June 2018.

The presentation of many country models and the analysis which follows are intended to enable policy makers, practitioners and young people to understand and engage with youth policy governance.

Insights will offer suggestions for further reading and resources to enable the reader to develop effective governance, policies and strategies which make a difference. In addition, this hands-on approach will invite the readers to examine important questions relating to youth policy planning and implementation within their own context.

Chapter 2

Conceptualising youth policy governance

At a basic level, the concept of governance can be described as the structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, the rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment and broad-based participation (UNESCO 2016).

Both the European Union and the Council of Europe promote the notion of effective governance in designing, implementing and evaluating youth policy.

Historically, the drive towards good governance resulted from the need to be much more accountable and efficient in responding to dynamic social, political and economic needs. Increasingly, in a world of competing demands on scarce resources, the public sector, at all levels and in organisations and projects, is required to develop good-governance processes as evidence of its competence.

Based on the data examined, there are two broad approaches to youth policy which require systems of governance:

- ▶ an overarching national youth policy or framework (the approach in countries such as Austria, Azerbaijan and Sweden);
- ▶ sectoral policies embedding youth policy or structures serving the needs of young people (such as in Norway or Turkey).

In this publication, we look at the following aspects of youth policy governance:

- ▶ the legal basis;
- ▶ the relevant government structures and how their responsibilities are divided;
- ▶ how young people are involved.

Before we proceed, we invite you to reflect on the following questions relating to youth policy governance:

How is youth policy governance organised in your context?

In your country, what government structure is best placed to manage youth policy governance?

What kind of youth policy do you think would be more beneficial for young people in your context: a specific national youth policy or co-ordinated sectoral policies?

2.1 The legal framework for youth policy development

In this section, we present the key actors involved in decision-making processes in the youth field at national, regional and local levels. This includes stakeholders responsible for the participation of young people, both public authorities and non-governmental partners.

For this purpose, the analysis has been structured as follows:

- ▶ identifying the governance systems depending on the constitutional status of a country;
- ▶ analysing the transfer mechanisms of the national youth policy at regional and local levels;
- ▶ identifying the role that the end beneficiaries of youth policies – young people – have in the development and implementation processes.

YOUTH POLICY LEGAL FRAMEWORKS					
defined as	In the constitution	single legal act defined as:		other acts in the youth field:	
	Art. 70 of the Portuguese Constitution covers all rights and duties of young people	The National Law on Youth	The Law on Protection of Social Development of Youth	The Youth Act	The Law on Public Interest in the Youth Sector
examples	Portugal	Romania	Ukraine	Iceland	Slovenia
defined as	A combination of different legislative acts which address the needs and rights of young people	Youth action plans	Youth priority plan	Youth strategy with assigned action plans	
examples	Sweden	Albania	France	Hungary	

What is the legal basis of youth policy in your country?

Is there more than one legal and government text on youth policy (law, strategy, action plan)?

Are they all implemented?

2.2.1 Levels of public authorities that are responsible for youth policy

Youth policy governance usually reflects the primary aspect of the governance system of a country, which in most cases is described in its constitution: federated, unitary and/or devolved. Decentralisation is perceived as the key to good governance, thus it is essential to have a clear perspective on the impact of such systems on the quality of governance.

A national youth policy is a government's commitment to and practice of ensuring good living conditions for young people and opportunities for them to participate. A governmental authority must be assigned the responsibility for co-ordinating youth-related issues and the development, implementation and evaluation of national youth policy. In most cases, this authority is a ministry. If not, it is a governmental agency with strong, direct links to a ministry (Denstad 2009: 13-14).

The following is an overview of how responsibilities in matters of youth policy or youth work are allocated in different countries.

2.2.2 Central authority youth policies

For the purpose of this publication, the experts used the information collected specifically in relation to youth policy and did not look at other fields. In most of the countries studied, the following situation emerges: a Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) is usually the central authority when it comes to the development and implementation of youth policies.

Furthermore, such ministries usually have a specific department managing youth policy development and implementation. For example, in Ukraine the Department of Youth Policy within the MoYS is the authority responsible for national youth policy. It is difficult to make a value judgment on how important it is to have a specific unit within the line ministry responsible for youth policy since the EKCYP correspondents provided general information and were not asked to explain the implications of such structures.

EKCYP and EU Youth Wiki data from 2015 and 2017 on responsibility for national youth policies are compiled in the following table.

YOUTH POLICY NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Ministry of Youth and Sports

Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Serbia

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Czech Republic, Slovakia

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

Kosovo*

Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

Republic of Moldova

Ministry of Social Affairs

Liechtenstein

Ministry for Children and Equality

Norway

Youth Affairs Department under:

- **Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth:**
Albania
- **Ministry of Education**
Belarus
- **Ministry of Education and Research**
Sweden and Latvia
- **Ministry of Social Security and Labour**
Lithuania
- **Ministry of Education and Culture**
Finland
- **Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Ministry of Justice and Safety**
the Netherlands
- **Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy**
Croatia

There are a few examples where youth is combined with yet other areas. In Hungary, the Children and Youth Department of the Ministry of Human Capacities is the primary body responsible for the implementation of the youth strategy (and for the co-ordination of the intergovernmental elements).

In many countries, youth policy shifts between these “traditional” combinations with every new government formation. During such changes the importance of youth policy may grow or diminish. These changes may lead to higher staff turnover and the knowledge, networks and partnerships built with stakeholders over months and years may suffer.

* All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

What is the main government structure responsible for youth policy in your country?

If youth is combined with other fields, what is the visibility of youth policy within that structure and what are the implications for youth policy?

What is the proportion of resource allocation to youth compared to the other domains and how can it be improved?

2.2.3 Models of youth policy governance in federal countries

Federal countries such as Austria, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Belgium have a general division of responsibilities or in some cases have allocated all the responsibility for youth policy to the federal regions.

In **Austria**, the Federal Chancellery is primarily responsible for youth policy at the national level. In accordance with the federal structure of the state, competences are divided between the central government and the federal states that have one ministry in charge of youth. But other ministries and organisations also implement parts of the youth policies.

In **Germany**, the Social Code, Book VII – Child and Youth Services, defines three levels of responsible authorities in the field of child and youth services:

- ▶ national level (*Bund*) – the ultimate responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (the ministry is responsible for encouraging and supporting national youth policy activities);
- ▶ regional level (*Länder*) – the ministries for youth in the federal states function as state-level youth authorities and in this capacity are responsible for encouraging and supporting the activities of public-sector and independent child and youth welfare organisations and assisting in the continued development of youth (and child and youth welfare) policy. The ministries responsible for youth issues co-operate and co-ordinate their work through the Conference of Ministers for Youth and Family Affairs;
- ▶ local level – at local level the youth office (*Jugendamt*), consisting of a committee and administration, is responsible for the planning and funding of local youth services. It has the authority to carry out the tasks and guarantee services as laid down in the Social Code, Book VIII. The youth office is in charge of setting up local youth plans. It provides financial support for activities directed at children, young people and families in urban and Local districts and villages.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Affairs has representatives from all the entities and the Ministry of Civil Affairs co-ordinates its activity, working closely with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Republika Srpska, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Department for Professional and Administrative Affairs – Brčko District.

In **Belgium**, a federal state consisting of three communities and three regions, there is no hierarchy between the federal, the community and regional levels – a unique

characteristic of Belgian federalism. In the field of youth, each type of entity – regions and communities – has its own exclusive competences: the federal level has competence on important policy fields such as justice, social security, employment and tax legislation; the responsibilities of the region are linked to the territory and include the environment, agriculture, urban planning and housing; and the communities are in charge of matters relating to education, health care, culture and youth. The communities are competent on youth and youth policy, and have a minister responsible for youth, a parliamentary commission, a number of administrative departments with “youth” in their title and a large number of specific youth-related budget items.

As these models show, the division of responsibilities varies from setting a direction and oversight to running policies and programmes, and in such situations one must consider where most of the weight lies, where the tensions are and how they contribute to a stronger or weaker youth policy governance.

What is the model of youth policy in your country at the moment and what structures are the most active?

What kinds of co-operation and co-ordination exist between the various structures and levels?

Which level is engaged with which part of the policy-making cycle (planning, implementation, allocation of resources, monitoring, evaluation)?

2.3 Role of elected bodies/legislative structures

In most countries, the elected bodies or legislative structures have an essential role in setting the youth-policy agenda, allocating resources and overseeing the development and implementation of the national youth policy. Almost all parliaments have a committee or subcommittee on youth and this committee can have a wide range of activities from research to organising specific hearings, meeting young people, writing reports, undertaking legislative initiatives and keeping the focus on youth in the legislative arena.

For example, in **Lithuania**, the National Parliament and the Commission for Youth and Sport Affairs control the implementation of youth policy. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, through the Department of Youth Affairs, works closely with the Council of Youth Affairs in a collegial advisory body constituted on the basis of equal partnership from representatives delegated by the state institutions and the Lithuanian Youth Council, which is the representative body of youth civil society organisations.

In **Ukraine**, the Department of Youth Policies within the Ministry of Youth and Sports works closely, at the legislative level, with the Committee on Family, Youth Policy and Tourism of Ukraine’s parliament on all matters and policy initiatives related to youth.

The role of legislative bodies should not be underestimated in ensuring the government is accountable to elected representatives of the people for its actions. In this sense, it is important to follow issues such as lowering the voting age to 16 or how political parties and individuals running for elected office view young people and

what policies they propose in their electoral programmes. Such commitments can then be monitored and checked by young people themselves. Engagement with representative democracy should be ensured consistently as it is a crucial dimension of youth policy governance.

In your country, how active is the parliament or elected body in youth policy?

What decisions relating to young people and youth policy have they taken recently?

To what extent were young people consulted or involved in that process?

2.4 Topics covered by youth policies

There have been long debates about what should constitute the core of youth policy. Some countries define very specific areas to be covered by youth policies. Policy themes also evolve and shift to respond to the needs of young people of the times.

Almost all government structures target youth fully or partly, through policies, strategies or specific programmes. It would generally be the case that, for example, a ministry in charge of transportation would manage specific initiatives to facilitate young people's access and use of public transport. The same would be applicable in relation to income, financial inclusion, employment, entrepreneurship, social protection, health care, the digital world, information, education, justice or other fields.

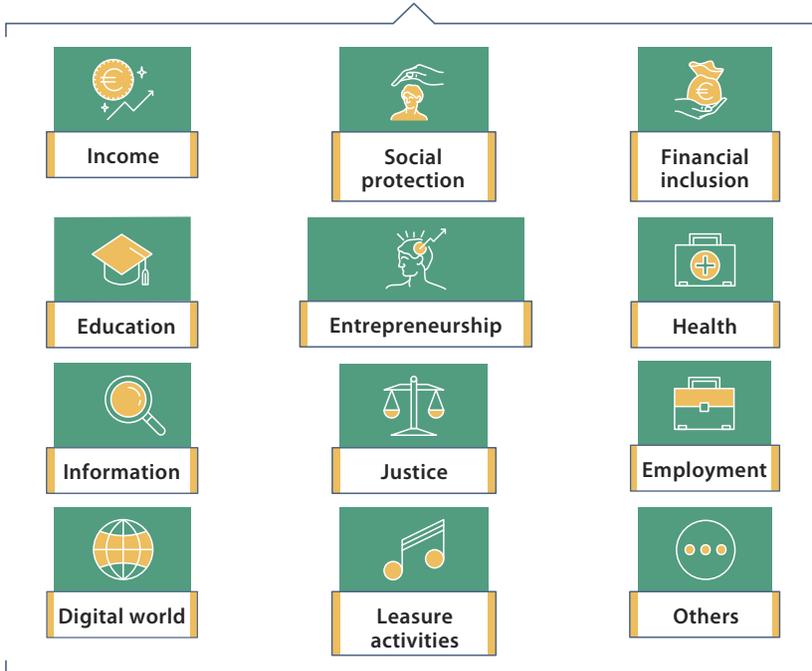
This means that youth policy often intersects with other policies that are in the remit of other structures. It would be very interesting to know how these overlapping aspects interact and how youth policy, which often has a strong engagement of young people, is positioned among other fields in the whole public policy context. For example, the **Czech Republic** has a cross-sectoral youth strategy which coexists with other policies and structures targeting young people. The family policy includes initiatives for young families and the strategic document on combating homelessness also targets young people experiencing homelessness.

Other such examples can be easily found if one checks how other policies at national level cover/address youth as a target group. In developing effective cross-sectoral co-operation, it is essential to co-ordinate action between different transversal policies. This co-operation determines, on a long-term basis, an integrated and effectively communicated youth policy.

The following represents only the most frequently mentioned focus points of youth policies in the EKCYP youth policy country sheets and EU Youth Wiki Chapter 1: Youth policy governance contributions:

- ▶ health;
- ▶ education;
- ▶ employment;
- ▶ social inclusion;
- ▶ leisure-time activities.

YOUTH POLICY THEMES



Another example is the **Netherlands**, where four ministries are responsible for various areas concerning youth. The four ministries, working together, come up with policy measures and programmes that respond to youth needs and interests in different fields: health, employment, cultural and civic participation, education, etc.

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport: in charge of the overall youth policy and most specialised services for families and children.
- ▶ Ministry of Security and Justice: deals with juvenile justice policy and related institutions.
- ▶ Ministry of Education, Culture and Science: responsible for organising all educational matters in the Netherlands.
- ▶ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment: administers labour-related measures, including the Childcare Act, for childcare services and playgroups.

What policy areas address young people in addition to youth policy in your country?

Which themes and areas are seen as the most important from the perspective of young people?

Which themes and areas are seen as the most important from the perspective of the government? Are there big differences between these perspectives and how are they addressed?

Chapter 3

Cross-sectoral youth policy co-ordination: horizontal and vertical models

Youth policy co-ordination can also be viewed horizontally (across the same level of services) or vertically (top-down/bottom-up communication); models that combine elements of both also exist. In terms of horizontal co-operation, in most cases, the responsibility for youth co-ordination is located within interministerial working groups/structures on specific youth policy matters. Co-ordination may happen through regular meetings and monitoring systems – especially when it comes to developing youth strategies, monitoring developed policies, or revising youth action plans.

Below are some examples collected in the EKCYF and EU Youth Wiki of structures managing horizontal/cross-ministerial co-ordination.

3.1 Horizontal cross-sectoral co-ordination

In **France**, the Cross-Ministerial Committee for Youth is chaired by the prime minister. It adopts the youth strategy, which serves as a national roadmap, and drafts measures that the public authorities must take on board to improve young people's lives. The authority responsible for the co-ordination of the National Youth Strategy and Youth Priority Plan is the Ministry responsible for Youth, which has general competence in regulating and overseeing youth policies. The minister's decree of attribution specifies that this ministry is responsible "for preparing and implementing the Government's policy bearing on actions in favour of youth".

In **Finland**, according to the Youth Act, the government must adopt a programme for youth work and policy every four years. The National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme is the main legislation that co-ordinates the objectives, measures and strategies determined by the key ministries with responsibilities in the youth field.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for implementing the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme in conjunction with various other ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of the Environment.

In **Malta**, cross-sectoral support for young people includes the areas of education and training; health and well-being (Health Ministry); arts and culture (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture); voluntary and community activities and sport and recreational activities (central authorities or local government), education and employment (Ministry of Education and Employment). Activity in the youth field is co-ordinated by the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations.

In **Turkey**, different ministries are involved with implementing the 13 main policy areas in the youth policies chapter of the National Youth and Sports Policy Document.

In the **Czech Republic**, different ministries are in charge of implementing the 13 main policy areas in the National Youth Strategy, adopted by the government. Before presenting it to the government, the Youth Chamber – an advisory cross-sectoral body of the Ministry responsible for Youth – consults and approves the draft.

What are the main areas covered by youth policy in your country?

How effective is cross-sectoral co-ordination on youth issues within your government?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of approaches when all youth concerns/matters are covered by one policy or by multiple policies and authorities?

3.2 Vertical co-ordination between different levels of government

The co-ordination of the central authority with regional and local authorities is vital. Local authorities are close to the young people in their communities and are able to implement measures tailored to the context in which they live. Having concrete guidelines to communicate the national understanding of youth policy and to ensure that it responds to the realities of young people's lives in their local contexts is crucial to ensuring effective implementation. The following are some examples of co-ordination initiatives between various levels of government.

Norway has a predominantly centralised political/administrative system of governance, which means that most, if not all, overarching political strategies are made at state level, and then implemented using a top-down approach. Both counties and municipalities have increased their autonomy in terms of the way government funding is being used to obtain the desired means and reach their goals, by using so-called free funding – otherwise known as non-earmarked funding. Both youth policy practices and the ratio of the youth policy budget to the total municipal/county budget vary greatly. Regarding budget allocation, the government publishes two official documents to describe which policy fields affecting youth needs and rights

are being addressed. The annual publication on activities and budget provisions in children and youth policy promotes cross-ministerial co-ordination, describing the most important areas which the government wishes to focus on when prioritising the needs and rights of children and young people. Similarly, this annual publication insists on active cross-ministerial co-ordination to deliver effective service to young people in communities. This annual document is published by the Ministry of Children and Equality, and includes initiatives from all ministries that have budgetary posts under “children and youth”. In terms of budgeting, Norway has many separate youth budgets for the different ministries and/or executive units of the ministries and on every county and municipality budget.

In **England (UK)**, youth policy is an area involving several ministries, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The main themes underpinning the offer made by local authorities are set out in the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People’s Well-being, issued by the Secretary of State for Education in 2012. It lists the youth work and other services that local authorities should provide, so far as they are practically able, to improve the well-being of young people. This includes youth work and other activities with a strong focus on connecting young people with their communities and enabling them to belong and contribute to society.

In **Luxembourg**, the local level plays an essential role in the creation and implementation of youth policies. Most municipalities have a deputy in charge of youth issues and a youth commission, which is a board that is mandated to represent youth interests. The commission is not a legislative authority but acts in an advisory capacity. Every municipality has a Municipal Youth Plan that stresses the importance of active youth participation and, for this purpose, financial support from the state to municipalities is ensured for developing the required infrastructure for youth services.

What would be the best balance between centralised and decentralised structures?

How clear is your government about who is in charge of what in youth policy implementation?

What do you think are the strengths of national authorities and those of local authorities in youth policy implementation?

3.3 Important responsibilities for regional or local authorities in youth policies

Regional and municipal authorities are often assigned an important role in youth policy development and the implementation process. As they are the closest public structures to where young people live, local authorities most often have an implementation role with policies drafted by central government. However, in many countries, local authorities have a much bigger role and develop their own strategies, projects and programmes for young people with quite elaborate consultative or participatory structures.

In **Italy**, Article 117 of the Italian Constitution grants regions legislative and executive powers in all subject matters that are not expressly covered by state legislation, such as youth policies. Currently, 8 047 municipalities provide services for young people through their offices.

In **Greece**, the Law on Decentralised Government states that the 13 regions have to manage the creation and implementation of youth programmes, with the municipalities being obliged to form a municipal committee for consultation, which includes the representatives of the local youth council. Additionally, there are administrative units with different responsibilities, for example within education, culture, sports and youth.

In **Montenegro**, the 23 municipalities, through their local governments, are responsible for devising youth policies and providing conditions for their implementation. For this purpose, most appointed officials in municipalities manage youth issues, having adopted local youth action plans that call for the opening of youth offices (in three municipalities). The local action plans are set up on the basis of all relevant national and international documents and strategies and in close co-operation with non-governmental and international organisations.

In **Slovenia**, the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act prescribes that local communities implement youth policy at local level, in accordance with their own interests, needs, capabilities and circumstances, such as the number and structure of the population, economic power and spatial and personnel capacities in the youth sector. Local communities may implement youth policy at a local level by adopting a local programme for youth, establishing a working or consulting body for youth issues, financially supporting the programmes in the youth sector, and implementing other measures in the youth sector. The role of local communities in developing youth policies varies and depends on the size of each community. The municipality of Ljubljana has a structure within the city administration (youth department) that provides public tenders (for youth programmes, projects, information networks, international activities), youth research, a networking NGO in the youth sector, an information network for young people, educational programmes and training programmes for youth workers, and empowerment of youth NGO structures. In 2015, the Council of the Municipality of Ljubljana adopted a youth strategy. Smaller communities co-operate closely with youth centres that take over part of the tasks that the local community should provide. Because most of the local communities do not have a youth office, co-operation with local authorities and youth centres is essential.

In **Finland**, municipalities enjoy significant autonomy in the allocation of resources for certain priorities and activities and can also evaluate the services provided for young people.

In **Sweden**, municipal autonomy plays an essential role in the creation and implementation of youth policies. The 20 regions have a considerable degree of autonomy and it is the role of the county administrative boards to see that the decisions taken by the government and the parliament have the best possible effects in that county. The 290 municipalities with local governments are responsible for youth policy areas such as educational matters, employment and training, social care, culture and leisure. Similarly, most of the decisions in the youth field are taken at the municipal

level. Youth policy in municipalities can, if the municipalities so decide, start from the national objectives, but the way it is executed in practice is shaped by local conditions. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society supports municipalities in the creation of local youth policy, provides funds for local youth projects and provides information on the conditions of young people.

What is the role of municipal and regional authorities in your country?

On which youth-related issues do these authorities work?

What do you think municipal or regional authorities need to do to strengthen youth policy?

Which government level would be the most effective youth policy driver in your country: central or local?

Chapter 4

Youth policies with, by and for young people

When establishing youth policy governance, it is all too easy to put an emphasis on efficiency, but we must not lose sight of the fact that this governance serves the needs and aspirations of young people and those who work with them. In this sense, it is critical to know how young people are involved in the processes of drafting youth policy, how priorities are set in the youth field and how resources are managed. Evidence suggests that in many cases young people are actively engaged in the delivery and monitoring of youth policy programmes.

The extent of youth involvement varies from having young people only invited to meetings, to co-operating with public authorities, or to having young people fully involved and having their voices heard in the policy-making processes. The basic objective of youth policy is to increase the probability of the successful integration of young people in society.

For this purpose, special attention has been given to creating highly participatory youth policy processes, with young people's voices represented in all steps of decision making. The following are some examples.

In **Poland**, the local government bodies operating at the provincial, district or community levels are assigned tasks relating to youth policy matters. The seven provinces have established formal structures in the shape of youth parliaments or youth councils supporting and representing young people. The communal youth councils facilitate young people's participation in the process of making decisions affecting their peers. The Polish Youth Council serves as an advisory body to the government and then to the Minister of National Education. In 2016, the Minister of National Education created the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland, which operates under the authority of this same minister. The council is an advisory body. Its tasks include "expressing opinions and presenting children- and youth-related proposals in the scope of matters remaining within the remit of the education and upbringing area of the government". The term of the council is one year and it is composed of 16 members and their substitutes (16) who are appointed by the Minister of National Education from among students of lower and upper secondary schools.

In **Spain**, the Spanish Youth Council ensures the co-ordination of the authorities with the associative youth movement. The council was established in 1983 and is composed of youth entities. It aims to participate in the design of policies that affect young people.

In **Georgia**, the Youth Organisations Forum is the non-profit body that unites the youth NGOs. The aim of the forum is to support the drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of effective youth policies, as well as to work with governmental bodies in responding to youth needs. The other important non-governmental body representing young people is the National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia, which includes 45 non-governmental youth and children's organisations as members. The forum aims to create a favourable environment and conditions for development, co-operation and co-ordination of non-governmental youth organisations, leading to a planned increase in the participation and social activity of young people.

Following the same model, **Ukraine** has two main national organisations representing young people. The Public Association National Youth Council of Ukraine represents and protects the civil, political, social and economic rights of young people and aims to expand opportunities for personal development and active youth participation in political life. The second youth non-governmental body is the National Youth Council of Ukraine, which includes 17 leading youth organisations, of which 12 are Ukrainian. The council aims to consolidate the youth sector in co-operation with governmental structures.

These examples show that steps have been made to make the voices of organised young people heard through the participation of the National Youth Councils/ National Youth Forums in the drafting and implementation of national youth policies. Some examples show that sometimes there is more than one structure competing to act as a representative of youth organisations. However, the role of the councils is often that of an advisory or consultative body and further steps are required to ensure authentic participation of these bodies in the decision-making processes.

In your context, do young people actively participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation of youth policy?

Can any young person participate if they want to or do they have to belong to some structure (for example, a youth council, a youth parliament or a youth organisation)?

What is the impact of youth participation on the policy process?

What are the main limits to the participation of young people in policy making?

Chapter 5

European participatory mechanisms for youth policy making

5.1 Structured Dialogue of the EU Youth Strategy

In order to make young people's voices heard in the policy-shaping process, the European Commission has put in place the "Structured Dialogue", which is defined as a means of mutual co-operation between young people and decision makers. It is organised into 18-month work cycles, each being focused on a thematic priority. Each of the member states conducts a national consultation with young people and youth organisations and sets up a national working group composed of representatives of youth ministries, national youth councils, local and regional youth councils, youth organisations, youth workers, young people and youth researchers.

STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

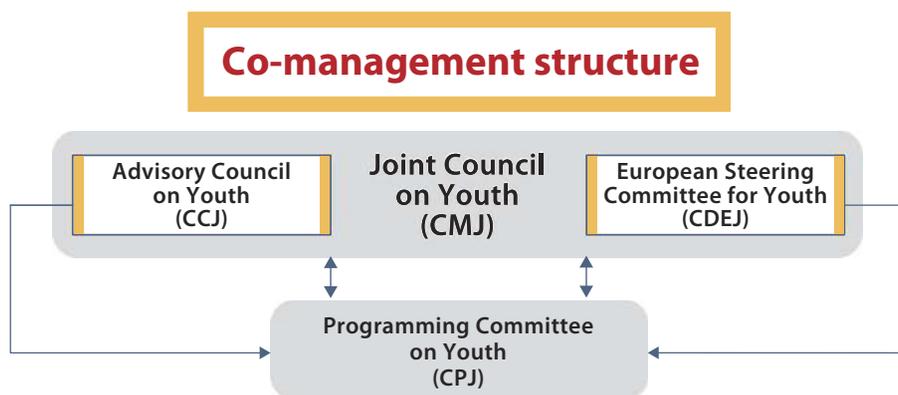
Decision makers



Young people

5.2 Co-management system of the Council of Europe in the field of youth – The Joint Council on Youth

The Council of Europe has put in place a unique decision- and policy-making body that represents both the governmental sector and non-governmental partners through the co-management system. The Joint Council on Youth brings together the European Steering Committee for Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth (AC) in a co-decision process, setting the youth sector's objectives, priorities and budgets. The AC is made up of 30 representatives of youth NGOs, national youth councils and youth networks and provides input on all youth sector activities, including setting priorities allocating budget and monitoring implementation, making sure that the youth voice is heard in the whole youth policy process.



How aware are young people in your country about European policy-making processes?

How can young people in your country participate in European youth policy making?

What are elements from the European level that can be taken up in your national or local youth policy processes?

Chapter 6

Conclusions

In examining the landscape of youth policy development across Europe, it is clear that significant efforts are being made in countries to develop effective response strategies for the needs and aspirations of young people. We must acknowledge that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach when comparing youth policy across European countries. The influence of culture, history, legal instruments, employment opportunities and the socio-political climate will almost certainly affect how youth policy and strategic planning is constructed and the legitimacy it needs to make substantive progress.

The following represents a snapshot of the critical issues in the youth policy debate relating to the aspects explored in this *Insights*.

Most European countries have a youth policy in place and a strategic plan for its implementation, supported by governance processes. There is evidence of cross-sectoral co-ordination across different ministries, departments and public bodies. However, the evidence analysed does not say much about the role of elected bodies and their impact on youth policy governance. There is also little information on the engagement of implementation structures (service providers such as youth clubs/offices, health clinics for young people or other youth services). There is also sparse information on how the engagement of young people takes place.

The country information shows that the influence of European youth policy has been particularly strong in countries that have created youth policies “from scratch”, often as part of a process of social and political transformation (such as Estonia, Albania and Serbia). In contrast, there is much less evidence that European youth strategies have influenced national policies in countries with pre-existing youth strategies (such as Portugal) or where there is a long-standing tradition of youth infrastructure and recognition (such as the UK, Belgium and Denmark).

The public sector and the non-governmental sectors have been developing strong partnerships and political commitment to youth policy, both at the national level through the involvement of national youth councils, and also at the local level through local participatory structures.

The impact of the involvement of young people in the design and evaluation of youth policy is difficult to evaluate; however, country evidence shows that youth policy is mainly implemented through national advisory bodies – such as national youth councils or equivalent structures.

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Youth policies are initiated and reviewed regularly at various levels, from local to national and international. People who work within this process, from policy makers to practitioners, researchers and young people, ask themselves how they can set up the best governance system for their context, who should manage youth policy, how communication can be ensured among the different stakeholders and how young people are involved.

Using over 15 years of gathering and analysing evidence in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKYCP), the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership presents its first *Insights*. This publication seeks to provide insights into youth policy governance with presentations of approaches in different countries and with guiding questions for reflection. It thus offers a picture of how youth policies are set up (the legal framework) and which public structures manage their implementation, as well as how young people are involved. The analysis is presented based on a multi-country review of contributions gathered in 2016 and 2017 from the EKYCP and the EU Youth Wiki. To frame the analysis across Europe, *Insights* also presents European-level policy imperatives and governance in the Council of Europe and the European Union, and the knowledge on this subject gathered through their partnership in the field of youth.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

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EUROPEAN UNION

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