

Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

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European youth work policy goals analysed:

The role of the EU-CoE youth partnership in the interplay between the European Union and the Council of Europe

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1 Introduction

In the last decade the policy dimension of youth work has come much more into focus. Proliferation of different documents covering youth work demonstrates the need for better contextualization, recognition or even regulation of youth work as a distinctive practice across Europe. European Union (hereinafter EU) and Council of Europe (hereinafter CoE) demonstrated their dedication for better support to development and advancement of youth work, both at the European level but also at national levels. This paper seeks to study thoroughly the youth work policy goals and objectives, compare, and identify similarities and differences between the two institutions. For this analysis, youth work is understood as described in the *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda*.

Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision-making.

The second central concept in this analysis is the notion of policy goals. As explained in Petek et al (2021): "William N. Dunn regards policy goals and objectives as aspects of a normative future (1994: 195–197). Policy goals are seen as the expectations in the policymaking process—its purposes and reasons (Kustec Lipicer 2012: 106, 110–111).

Policy goals are "basic aims and expectations governments have in deciding to pursue (or not) some course of action" (Howlett 2011: 16). They are connected to intentions as they refer "to the intentional aspects of designs and indicate what the purported consequences are desired to be" (Schneider 2013: 224). "Broad purposes (or 'ends') of governmental activity in one field" (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 14) is also one of the definitions.

The following documents are analysed here to understand strategic orientations of the European Union and Council of Europe and to assist in creating more operational plans for the implementation of youth work policy objectives:

- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda,
- Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention,
- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Youth Work,
- The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and
- The Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030.

These five selected documents illustrate the strategic orientation of both European Union and Council of Europe as they represent the most relevant policy framework for youth work development at the European level¹. Hence, the goal of this analysis is to showcase, examine and compare youth work policy goals/objectives of the EU and CoE. Can common traits of the two organisations be adequate for drafting a common operational plan or are there some gaps that need to be addressed. What added value can the EU-CoE youth partnership (hereinafter Youth Partnership) offer to the implementation of European youth work agenda and how. This paper answers these and similar questions.

In order to examine the puzzle, the research team did a thematic analysis of five important papers referencing youth work from the EU and CoE and offer recommendations on the role of the Partnership in the foreseeable future in that regard. In the first step policy goals and objectives in each of the documents are identified. These goals were extracted by using the approach of inductive coding (Chandra and Shang, 2019) which was an incentive for the second step of clustering the identified goals into eight thematic categories based on the similarity of the content. These eight categories are described and analysed focusing on similarity and difference between the EU and CoE points of view. The third step of the analysis focused on identifying the gaps and inconsistencies followed by recommendations on what the role of the Youth Partnership could be in addressing these findings.

¹ Authors recognize that these five selected document are not the only relevant documents illustrating policy development of youth work however these five documents are sufficient to portray a comprehensive picture on youth work at the European level. For instance, the Final declaration of the second youth work convention is one of the documents that sets the ground for the European youth work agenda and as such could be a part of the sample, however by taking a look at the text very few explicit policy goals are mentioned in that regard. Therefore, even on a discursive level authors recognize its importance, it was decided that for this rudimentary type of the analysis it is not necessary to include it in a sample.

2 Analysis

As stated in the previous section policy goals were grouped into eight thematic categories. These are the following:

1. Quality youth work;
2. Youth workers: learning and cooperating;
3. Youth work: understood and recognised;
4. Innovative, adaptive and sustainable youth work;
5. Developing youth work;
6. Youth work for youth;
7. Core values;
8. Youth policy.

In the continuation of this section we bring a description of each thematic area and focus particularly on

the difference between European Union's and Council of Europe's point of view.

2.1 Quality youth work

The construct of quality youth work is illustrated through several prerequisites. Firstly, quality youth work demands *structures* and *resources* for its provision. These structures should be constructed based on the *evidence-based approach* and consequently *quality standards* should be developed. Furthermore, quality youth work, as stipulated in different European documents, requires a *network of diverse stakeholders* from different sectors and meaningful *cooperation* among them. One of the main goals of quality youth work is that it should *empower youth for change*. Externally, documents ask for *appreciation* of youth work from people within and outside the community of practice.

Ensure the presence of sustainable structures and the availability of appropriate resources for quality youth work (Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

Quality development in youth work is closely linked to other issues and therefore it needs to be discussed and handled in a more holistic and at the same time structured way/ It needs to focus on specific aspects, while at the same time relating these to the bigger picture of youth work policy and practice and connect them with the basic values and principles of youth work.// information about existing support structures and mechanisms// is to develop clearer structures for cooperation and co-creation within and between all levels and stakeholder groups within the youth work community of practice.// establish clear and coordinated processes for spreading information, having continuous dialogue and working together around common quality issues// map and spread knowledge

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

Improving the quality of youth work...// standard setting // relevant co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector, which should develop programmes of activities based on the present resolution and, where appropriate, submit proposals for standards to the Committee of Ministers (The Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030)

Analysis of the five documents regarding quality of youth work highlights that both international organisations recognise quality (in) youth work as pivotal. Although there is agreement on the importance of quality, there is a noticeable difference in its construction between the EU and the CoE. More concretely, quality youth work is significantly more elaborated in the CoE documents where measures on how to achieve it are somewhat more specific in comparison to the EU narrative. Parts of the documents on quality youth work written by the CoE are often supported by the existing CoE youth sector mechanisms (co-management, quality label etc.) whereas this support is absent from the EU outlook.

2.2. Youth workers: learning and cooperating

Thematic area ‘Youth workers: learning and cooperating’ is constructed through the descriptions which acknowledge the present context, mainly that the community of practice in Europe is *diverse* including both paid and volunteer youth workers, who might have rather different training and education paths behind them. Therefore, a more coordinated approach of youth work *education* and *training* is stressed in the documents to assure that the youth workers are well equipped: *competent, learning* and *knowledgeable*.

Youth workers are expected to closely *cooperate* with other specialists, especially with those from formal education, but not exclusively – cooperation should be broad and lead to innovation of the practice. It is considered important, that youth workers, together with old and new partners from different fields, *respond* to the changes taking place in society (including those connected to the crisis) and *adapt* practices accordingly. *Evidence-based approach* within the youth work community of practice is strongly encouraged together with better understanding of the framework and concepts of youth work, which also links back to training and education and more knowledgeable and *aware* (context-aware, knowledge- aware, professionally self-aware) practitioners.

It can be concluded that youth work community needs *support* and *empowerment* to do what they are seen best at: *enable youth* (towards democratic engagement participation). This support must be regular and coordinated: resources (including *social guarantees* of youth workers), networks and platforms are needed to ensure that youth workers are actively *involved in developments of youth work* and become the *implementers of Bonn process*. Competent and well-equipped youth workers are the foundation of the quality youth work which should eventually lead to stronger recognition of youth work.

...assuring basic conditions and protection for voluntary and professional youth workers, including insurance, minimum salaries and safety networks for burnout/---/ assure that supporting structures (such as National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes and the European Youth Foundation) do not only offer funds, but also more long-term support and vision.

(Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention)

A recognised profession needs to have an educational pathway (Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention)

Youth workers themselves, on the other hand, need to adapt to changing needs and habits of young people and technological change.

(European Commission, EU Youth Strategy)

Young people's democratic engagement is supported by communities of practice that produce knowledge and expertise/---/ improving institutional responses to emerging issues affecting young people's rights and their transition to adulthood, such as, but not limited to, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, artificial intelligence, digital space, increased mobility and new forms of employment.

(Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030)

Quality education and training and practical support for youth workers across the EU are a precondition for promoting the recognition and validation of youth workers' competences in the Member States.

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

Based on the analysis of the five documents, it can be concluded that both international organisations recognise the importance of supporting youth workers' community in learning

processes and broad(er) cooperation. It can be stated that within the documents of CoE, the empowerment of the youth workers have been given a more central role and seen in a broader way – linked perhaps more clearly to achievement of other goals such as quality youth work, sustainability and recognition of youth work.

2.3. Youth work: understood and recognised

The theme 'Youth work: understood and recognised' is strongly connected with the previous theme of youth workers: learning and cooperating. It links back to the competent and learning practitioners and emphasises the need of everyday *reflective practice, analytical thinking* (including evidence-based practice and more specifically the need of more youth work research) and maybe, most importantly, – *common conceptual ground and understanding* of the practice, which of course would help the sector to *better communicate* youth work to the public etc. and this way to become a more *strategic* practice.

There should be (new) coordinated and inclusive (youth workers, youth, partners) ways to have *discussions* on the conceptual ground and frameworks of youth work. It is seen important to show the real benefits of youth work, such as *empowering youth* and the long-term positive *effects this has on a society*, but also the *innovative* aspect and the *quality* of youth work. Overall, there is an ambition to make *youth work known and appreciated in Europe*.

Although discussions and cooperation towards a common understanding of the conceptual ground and framework of youth work are important goals in the documents, there are already *pre-constructed frameworks* described as well, mainly: human-rights framework, youth work is (non-formal and intercultural) learning, youth work is supporting transitions, youth work is enabling youth to participate in the society.

...to create a common narrative not only for the recognition and validation of learning in youth work, but also for the recognition and validation of youth work in general.

(Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention)

More investment in strategic and coordinated efforts and resources to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a self-standing work arena./---/ While this calls for cooperation, relationships and partnerships with other sectors.

(Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention)

A common basic understanding and shared principles therefore needs to be developed. It is also necessary for there to be safe, accessible, open and autonomous spaces for youth work, for continuous reflection to be undertaken on methods and innovation in practices, for trends and new developments to be analysed, and for conceptual frameworks, strategies and practices. /---/ ... and be consistent with the nature, self-image and professional practices of the field, in order to ensure that the role and importance of youth work, as well as the results it delivers, are acknowledged beyond the field itself

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

In some cases, youth work is the bridge into education, training or work, thus preventing exclusion/---/ Recognition can be improved by a more systematic use of quality tools

(European Commission EU Youth Strategy)

Taking into account the diversity of youth work across and within member States, special attention should be paid to the need for strategies, frameworks, legislation...

(Council of Europe Youth Work Recommendation)

Based on the analysis of the five documents, it can be concluded that both international organizations work towards recognition of youth work and pay more (CoE) or less attention to the complexity of the challenge, including the disputable conceptual ground or frame of youth work. Although the need to move towards the common narrative (concept, framework) of youth work is seen important there are already pre-constructed frameworks in the documents of both institutions which might contradict with the principles of the next steps towards the common ground described in the documents: discussions, cooperation, new partnerships, new synergies and broader cooperation.

2.4. Innovative, adaptive and sustainable youth work

The aforementioned documents call for innovative, adaptive and sustainable youth work particularly due to different *crises* Europe is facing. In order to adequately respond to these crises *capacity building* of all stakeholders involved in the youth work environment is crucial, just as

resources for its provision. Youth work should *not be taken for granted* and without proper *investments* its sustainability is put into question. Since youth work should follow, respond and react not only to *European but also to global trends* young people are experiencing, it is no surprise its development goes in unexpected directions and *opens new topics*.

...and to assure the sustainability of youth work, particularly at the local level /.../It should, however,

certainly include capacity building for all stakeholders and sustainable funding.

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

Youth policy-makers should engage in a constructive dialogue with young people and youth workers to create more resilient youth work structures grounded in evidence-informed innovation principles, encompassing long-term thinking, reflexivity and strategy-based youth work//... improving smart youth work while putting greater focus on developing digital competences// making youth work greener.

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

Supporting youth empowerment through quality, innovation and recognition of youth work.

(The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027)

Innovative, adaptive and sustainable youth work is present in both the EU and CoE points of view. Even though all documents stipulate the importance of flexibility, adaptability to new circumstances and an adequate response to crisis, innovation is slightly differently portrayed in the EU Youth strategy. Tentatively, one might say that in this document innovation in youth work is seen instrumental in contributing to youth empowerment, whereas in the CoE documents innovation in youth work could be read as a value in itself. Nevertheless, this finding should be taken conditionally as more rigorous analysis are required for more definite conclusions.

2.5. Developing youth work

Developing youth work is the construct consisted of several fundamentals. Firstly, development of youth work must be tailored according to the needs of young people, identified through *evidence-based* data. Youth workers and youth should be engaged in development of respective strategies and measures. Moreover, systematic approach towards monitoring and evaluation of development and challenges is needed, as well as in following the trends relevant to youth work. Appropriate *resources* for the continuous development of youth work are required.

Developing youth work needs cooperation and *synergies* on all levels - from fostering cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe to further develop youth work practices and policies, to cooperation and *networking* among youth work community of practice from local to European level. It also requires *broader cooperation* with different sectors and involvement of *actors outside the youth work community*.

For the youth work community of practice to further develop youth work as a field geared to young people's needs, internal cooperation should be nurtured, including connections between youth work providers and youth policy makers, and cooperation with other sectors and policy areas// Cooperation in the youth work community of practice

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

Set up an open and consultative Network for youth work development in Europe. /.../ to the development of youth work by promoting innovative approaches, supporting the development and cooperation with and between different actors inside and outside the youth work community of practice, providing support and disseminating information on the various thematic priorities, approaches, networks and target groups. In this regard, advice and expertise from other sectors should also support the network. The network should seek to involve new actors in its development work//

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

There is a need for strategic and operational approaches to cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as greater horizontal cooperation on youth (and youth work) at all levels//...

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

Priority covers the Council of Europe youth sector's action to strengthen youth work development, the quality and recognition of youth work (in the member States and at European level) and European cooperation on furthering youth work development through partnerships.

(The Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030)

Based on the analysed documents, it can be concluded that both institutions recognise the importance of developing youth work, from local to European level. This is mainly seen through joint documents (Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention and Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda). With regards to developing youth work, there are also some concrete measures proposed (e.g. establishment of the Network for youth work development in Europe).

When analysed individually, it can be stated that documents of the Council of Europe are elaborating the construct in more details (stressing the importance of resources and networks,

as well as stating commitment to strengthen youth work development), while in the EU Youth Strategy of the European Commission, the concept of youth development is not clearly mentioned.

2.6. Youth work for youth

As stated in all documents, youth are playing the central role in the youth work, as beneficiaries, as well as *active shapers* of youth work measures and programs. Youth work should be providing equal opportunities for all young people. It is the cornerstone of a support system for youth, with the emphasis on youth from diverse backgrounds and those belonging to various vulnerable groups. Youth work is seen as a *good practice to connect with youth* and by using different outreach methods it has the potential to reach out to all youth. It supports *involvement of youth in changing* their local communities. One of the main youth work goals is to create a safe environment and provide positive experiences for youth through guiding their personal and social development. It supports various *initiatives of youth*, fostering their participation in *dialogue* with decision-makers.

To develop and expand the youth work offer, reaching out to and involving more young people, especially to ensure that young people from all backgrounds.// A basic youth work offer should therefore include a clear strategy to enhance social inclusion and diversity among participating young people//

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

//..to all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities: youth work has a unique potential to reach out to the most vulnerable ones and address their individual needs.

(The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027)

//promote equal access to youth work for all young people

(Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Youth Work)

In all examined European documents, there is a consensus in understanding that youth work has to address and involve all youth. Moreover, both institutions are emphasising the potential of youth work to involve youth with fewer opportunities and those coming from various backgrounds. It can be also concluded that both institutions promote equal access to youth work, leaving no one behind.

2.7. Core values

A construct that refers to core values encompasses several basic elements. Youth work is *value driven*. Values are embedded into all principles and illustrated through various forms of youth

work practice. They create an unwavering and unchanging *guide for youth workers* in fulfilling their goals. Through youth work, young people are supported to actively contribute to their communities by shaping them in line with ethical values like *human rights, intercultural learning and dialogue, peace/non-violence and gender equality*. Regardless of the topic, values related to social development, such as *participation and democratic citizenship, solidarity and social justice*, are rooted in all youth work programs, strengthening access to young people's rights. Furthermore, youth work should equip young people with *knowledge and skills* to protect, practice and promote core values. It should also foster *critical thinking* of young people as a prerequisite for personal development. When creating support mechanisms at national and EU level, the documents seek *networking and synergy* with existing programs and *resources*.

.. to contribute to the development of inclusive, sustainable democratic, plural and peaceful societies

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, // deepening youth knowledge/broadening youth participation, so that young people participate meaningfully in decision-making, on the basis of a broad social and political consensus in support of inclusion, participatory governance and accountability // embedding key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and inter-generational dialogue and environmental sustainability, more prominently in policy //

(The Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030)

Agents of solidarity // and help develop an understanding of European values and tolerance // to offer new opportunities for youth to express solidarity // ...

(The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027)

In regard to core values, the analysis of five European documents showed that values are recognised as one of the most significant constructs. It can be concluded that both institutions have distinct defined frameworks that include basic values and principles. In CoE documents, human rights, democracy and participation are more pronounced, laying the foundation for Council of Europe's standards on young people access to rights.

EU calls for promotion of values such as solidarity, intercultural dialogue and tolerance within and beyond the EU. It provides various support programs and schemes, inviting Member States to seek for synergies between resources on all levels.

2.8. Youth policy

Youth policy in general is understood as a prerequisite for youth work. All documents point out the importance of evidence-based youth policy. This horizontal, coordinated approach of making decision should be based on collaboration and cross- sectorial cooperation in order to produce quality decision on regard to youth work. But not only that, dialogue with young people and youth workers is seen crucial for quality youth policy. Only by creating youth policy in a participative and inclusive way it will reflect its importance but also mirror the core values of youth work too. Here, the help and structured support from member states is seen as vital. If youth policy wants to be recognised, effective, efficient, adequate, just and sustainable it is pivotal to coordinate bot European Union and Council of Europe to act in same or similar directions. Of course, national contexts should be signposts for channelling youth policy into creating enabling environment for young people.

In addition to this, documents on youth work point to that youth policy is in fact a quality prerequisite for quality youth work and its integral part. Without elaborated, sustainable and well-structured youth policy at the European and national levels it is much more difficult to have quality youth work provision. Thus, development of youth work necessarily means investing in youth policy structures. Youth policy, if done correctly should reflect the needs of young people and be created in interaction with the whole community of practice. Through that young people will have greater chances to be active co- creators of their communities.

The youth sector has been long calling for a horizontal approach to be applied to youth policy, and this should be no different when it comes to the components of youth work in those policies. stakeholders whose involvement is essential in all these processes and structures.// strengthened cooperation at European level between the European Commission and Council of Europe that should aim at the wider dissemination of youth (and within it, youth work) policies horizontally across other areas of policy-making// youth work should be continued to be embedded in both long-term youth specific strategies// involve young people as equal creators of the policies affecting them.

(Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention)

...sustainable structures and resources, effective co-ordination with other sectors, as well as to related policies

(Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Youth Work)

...implementation of the Agenda as part of the EU Youth Strategy and, where possible, fully integrate youth work policies into all levels of youth policy and the associated strategies In the Member States

(Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda)

3. Conclusion and gaps

Given the points presented in the previous section, it is evident that both the European Union and Council of Europe consider youth work as a policy goal. Youth work is well contextualised, adequately explained and sufficiently elaborated so it can be considered one of the essential and central points in the youth field. The documents analysed for this purpose clearly take into consideration its complexity, versatility, eclecticism, and specificity of a context in which youth work is taking place. The analysis showed that there is a great congruence between the European Union and Council of Europe in aiming to recognise, preserve and develop youth work. However, some differences between these two bodies are noticeable. Although the European Union clearly states its intention to improving and spreading youth work throughout Europe and beyond, the CoE's narrative on youth work is more concrete, better supported by concrete measures aimed towards achieving youth work goals, slightly better contextualised than the EU point of view and more linked with values. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that in general both the EU and CoE share a common vision of future in which youth work is present, strong and more developed than it is now. Documents reveal high level of duplication of goals which supports the argument on common direction of the two institutions.

Apart from the comparison between the two institutions, there are some other thought-provoking findings. Firstly, it is remarkable how much these framework documents refer to community of practice (or youth sector). It is visible that participation of all relevant stakeholders is one of the cornerstones of youth work policy creation. All documents call for a joint, participatory, and inclusive process of horizontal collaboration among diverse actors to create quality outputs. This participatory moment is remarkable as almost every section of each policy document contains some dimension of it. The **challenge that rises from this is coordination**. Even though coordination of these actors is recognised in all strategies, there are still **no concrete mechanisms explained on how this coordination should take place**. There is no coordinated approach in establishing links either at intra-sectoral level (among various stakeholders of the youth work community of practice, from local to European level), or in relation to outside of the youth work community (cross-sectoral cooperation).

To foster youth work development in all countries across EU and CoE, **equal distribution of knowledge is needed**. There is a lack of coordination and continuous support mechanisms for ongoing and further developments for each of the thematic categories identified through this analysis, especially in relation to youth work policy, recognition, quality and sustainability of

youth work. Although clustered separately, these thematic categories are closely interlinked. In creation of supporting mechanisms, **the attention should be given to bridging developments of different thematic categories to avoid (re)creating gaps**. It remains to be seen how two giant international organisations will manage to secure the implementation of their own procedures and at the same time coordinate diverse actors with their own interests.

Another important aspect highlighted in all documents and identified in all thematic categories in the analysis is a **need for evidence-based approach**. A common framework is needed in relation to knowledge base and research to lead towards better understanding of youth work, along with identification of directions for its development. Additionally, **knowledge transfers between policy, practice and research needs to be reinforced**.

In addition to this and topic-wise, there are some topic that are mentioned as policy goals but not sufficiently elaborated. For instance, the **role of ICT, ethics in youth work or green youth work**. Once again, the documents analysed for this purpose do not offer concrete mechanisms of how to act on these topics. Some other topics seem to be missing from the documents. For instance, **work conditions and labour rights of youth workers or link with demography** – two prominent topics in European debates are not mentioned in the documents.

Lastly, the documents are sometimes **contradictory in referring to certain elements**. For instance, on the one hand documents call for **active citizenship**, while at the same time by referring to **transition theory** they put young people in a passive role. Even though this might seem as a mere academic debate, this contradiction that is not resolved reveals that both the CoE and the EU should work with researchers even more closely to find their own epistemic background on the view of young people.

4. Recommendations

In light of these identified gaps, it is clear that youth work development in all segments and on all levels calls for a comprehensive approach and centralised coordination from the European level. As stated in the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda, *The EU-Council of Europe partnership in the youth field could be assigned a central role in ensuring synergies and in facilitating dialogue for youth workers.*

The following recommendations are suggested to the Youth Partnership in terms of roles it can play in supporting the implementation of European Youth Work Agenda:

1. The Youth Partnership is invited to take **coordination of the National groups for the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda**, to monitor achievements, collect and disseminate results.
2. The Youth Partnership should **take the leading role in establishing and coordinating ongoing dialogue within and between different stakeholders** that are part of the youth work community of practice on all levels (local, national, regional and European) through meetings, online platform(s), virtual support groups, etc.
3. It is advised to **provide support to national and European networks of youth workers** to create ground for networking, youth work development, advocacy initiatives for work conditions and labour rights of youth workers, exchange of good practice.
4. At the European level, the Youth Partnership should **establish connections and coordinate an on-going dialogue among youth work community of practice and other relevant fields** (education, health, employment, culture, etc.), thus work on enhancing cross – sectoral cooperation to showcase the potential of youth work and its benefits to other fields.
5. The Youth Partnership should consider **establishing and coordinating (thematic/specialised) expert bodies at European level that provides direction and mentoring support to regional, national and local level for the implementation of the EYWA**. The following topics are of great importance:
 - integration of youth work into national policies;
 - recognition of youth work;
 - youth work sustainability;

- quality mechanisms for education of youth workers (both formal education and training);
- quality mechanism for implementation of youth work programs at local, national and European level;
- innovation in youth work, related to the new trends among young people as well as trends related to youth work practice (digitalisation, ethics in youth work, green youth work, etc.).

In creation of expert bodies, the Youth Partnership is advised to foresee the mechanism for communication and cooperation within, as well as among expert bodies.

- Within the established networks, such as the network of national correspondents within the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), the Youth Partnership should **capture developments of EYWA implementation through regularly updated Country sheets or online platform capturing the developments by countries.**
- Within the established pools, such as The Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), the Youth Partnership should **lay the foundations for continuous evidence-based data collection** to feed youth work policy, as well as youth work practice. It is advised to:
 - a. Identify a **research and knowledge development agenda** for the next two years related to youth work;
 - b. Generate **evidence-based data for youth work policies** and developments of EYWA implementation;
 - c. Set up **indicators for measuring success of EYWA implementation and its evaluation**;
 - d. Collect and update data related to **youth work statistics** (data on youth workers (paid and volunteers), youth workers vocation/profession, structures, youth work programs/services, young people involved, etc.).
 - e. Reinforce connections among community of researchers and youth workers aiming to:
 - Foster youth work research at national level by **providing research methodology and developing Guidelines for quality youth work research**;

- Develop **research methods that can be transferred to practice** and used by youth workers;
- Develop mechanism for **measuring impact of youth work** on local, national and European level;
- Develop mechanism for **evaluation and monitoring of youth work programs** on local, national and European level.

Appendix 1 – list of policy goals

Institution	Document/ Position of the text within the document	Extracted text
EU Council	Conclusions...	Promote the further development and strengthening of quality and innovation in and recognition of youth work
	Under the AIMS	and, in partnership with the youth work community of practice, improve the framework within which it is carried out, at all levels,
		including by drawing on cross-sectoral cooperation and evidence-based approaches
		... implementation of the Agenda as part of the EU Youth Strategy and, where possible, fully integrate youth work policies into all
		levels of youth policy and the associated strategies In the Member States
		Ensure the presence of sustainable structures and the availability of appropriate resources for quality youth work
		So that all young people can have a positive experience of the measures put in place in this area, or shape these measures themselves,
		with a particular focus on action at local level and in remote and rural areas where there are fewer opportunities for youth work
		Strengthen and extend the common principles of youth work within the youth work community of practice by increasing knowledge and awareness of developments in youth work in Europe, by promoting regular cooperation, exchange and common
		practices, while taking into account the differences between the various levels and areas of youth work
		Enhance understanding of the concepts, methods and tools used for education and training in youth work, further develop competence-based frameworks for formal and non-formal youth work education and training, where applicable and provide the
		various actors involved in youth work with sufficient quality education, training, guidance and support
		Regularly monitor and evaluate the state of and developments and challenges in youth work, analyse the needs of young people
		and trends relevant to youth work, involve young people when developing strategies
		... and encourage the youth work community of practice in cooperation with other sectors concerned, to respond to these
		developments and continue to develop their ways of working accordingly
		Where appropriate, further develop strategies and actions that allow non-formal and informal learning in the area of youth work
		to be recognised and validated...
		... and the contribution of youth work to empowering young people to be recognized // strengthen youth work's capacity to empower young people
		... to contribute to the development of inclusive, sustainable democratic, plural and peaceful societies
		Increase opportunities for cross-border interaction and exchange between young people from different cultural and socio- economic backgrounds and for intercultural exchange within Member States, making this standard practice in youth work, and

		facilitate the creation of more strategic projects for cooperation in youth work across Europe
		In light of the experience gained from the COVID-19 pandemic and in view of possible future crises, ensure, at all levels, the ongoing existence and operation of the various facilities and structures involved in youth work by developing crisis-proof mechanisms and resources, including digital technologies, and ensure that facilities and structures are able to adapt to the current situation and similar situations that may arise in the future
		Strengthen cooperation both between Member States and the Council of Europe and between the respective institutions in order to support the development of quality youth work across Europe
	EMPHASIZING Challenges	... Youth work must remain responsive to changes in society and in young people's everyday lives, to new knowledge and to the political context (.../In addition, it is essential to address global trends such as demographic challenges, climate changes and digitalisation, and to support the development of innovative, smart and digital youth work while also being actively inclusive and offering equal opportunities to all young people.
		Conceptual framework: /.../A common basic understanding and shared principles therefore needs to be developed. It is also necessary for there to be safe, accessible, open and autonomous spaces for youth work, for continuous reflection to be undertaken on methods and innovation in practices, for trends and new developments to be analysed, and for conceptual frameworks, strategies and practices
		Competence: It is important to provide sufficient resources for the continuous development of youth work.
		Quality education and training and practical support for youth workers across the EU are a precondition for promoting the recognition and validation of youth workers' competences in the Member States
		Credibility: Practices in the field of youth work need to be promoted in society, and the quality of youth work must meet the expectations and requirements of the field and of society,
		... and be consistent with the nature, self-image and professional practices of the field, in order to ensure that the role and importance of youth work, as well as the results it delivers, are acknowledged beyond the field itself
		... In order to meet these requirements, the quality of youth work must also be improved, monitored and evaluated. Research should be carried out in the area of youthwork, but without creating unnecessary bureaucratic burden
		For the youth work community of practice to further develop youth work as a field geared to young people's needs, internal cooperation should be nurtured, including connections between youth work providers and youth policy makers, and cooperation with other sectors and policy areas// Cooperation in the youth work community of practice
		/.../appropriate legal frameworks, financial resources, institutional frameworks, and appropriate and sustainable structures are all important factors //The very existence and sustainability of many youth associations, youth work organisations and youth services is under threat as a result of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
		... seeking further synergies with the work carried out by the Council of Europe in this area. This would allow fostering mutual co-operation and creating synergies between the EU and Council of Europe to further develop youth work practices and policies
		The process of implementing the Agenda, called the 'Bonn Process' (5), should be shaped by the youth work community of practice, within their respective spheres of competence and their various mandates, roles and capacities.

		the enforced relevant EU's funding programmes in the field of youth, (in particular Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps), may offer support and funding to facilitate the implementation process of the Agenda in line with the programmes' objective
	INVITATION TO MEMBER STATES AN D COMMISSION etc*	Promote the European dimension of youth work through cross-border and transnational exchange, cooperation, intercultural learning and peer-learning
		Set up an open and consultative 'Network for youth work development in Europe. /.../to the development of youth work by promoting innovative approaches, supporting the development and cooperation with and between different actors inside and outside the youth work community of practice, providing support and disseminating information on the various thematic priorities, approaches, network sand target groups. In this regard, advice and expertise from other sectors should also support the network. The network should seek to involve new actors in its development work
	INVITE EUROPE AN COMMISSION	The central role of Partnership...ensuring synergies and in facilitating dialogue for youth workers /.../ with the youth work community of practice to share information, knowledge and good practices, engage in cooperation and peer-learning.
	Final Declaration of the European Youth Work Convention	
	GROWING YW: YW provision (a lot on local aspects)	To develop and expand the youth work offer, reaching out to and involving more young people, especially to ensure that young people from all backgrounds... // A basic youth work offer should therefore include a clear strategy to enhance social inclusion and diversity among participating young people//
		..., including those with fewer opportunities, have access to youth work. // A basic youth work offer should therefore include a clear strategy to enhance social inclusion and diversity among participating young people//
		in a post-pandemic Europe, youth work must seek to innovate and go further than the paths already known/.../ order to establish a baseline to advocate for YW growth
		framework to set the standard
		and to assure the sustainability of youth work, particularly at the local level /.../It should, however, certainly include capacity building for all stakeholders and sustainable funding
		To be co-managed by youth organisations, youth work providers and relevant authorities;-to include the creation of spaces to listen to young people's voices /.../to seek connection and build links with other domains

		include new initiatives of young people, in the spirit of social innovation and entrepreneurship
		Special attention should be given to rural areas to support the development of quality youth work and the creation of a community of practice
		This calls for legal provisions that secure funding mechanisms for youth work at all levels, from the local to the European level. A European Charter should be developed to inspire good governance at all levels when building funding system(s)// clear processes to get access, be transparent in its implementation, be coordinated and avoid overlaps;// is not overburdened with rules, without neglecting the focus on governance, accountability and quality// financial sustainability of youth organisations and allows them to build more complex and longer-term strategies, away from merely programme based or project funding// implemented on an evidence-basis, where the real needs of youth work are reflected // mainstream youthwork priorities in overall European funding (such as European Solidarity Corps, European Social Fund, Climate Pact, and Horizon)// ensure stronger access of youth work to European funding
		allows assuring basic conditions and protection for voluntary and professional youth workers, including insurance, minimum salaries and safety networks for burnout// assure that supporting structures (such as National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes and the European Youth Foundation) do not only offer funds, but also more long-term support and vision
	GROWING YW: Quality	Quality development in youth work is closely linked to other issues and therefore it needs to be discussed and handled in a more holistic and at the same time structured way/ It needs to focus on specific aspects, while at the same time relating these to the bigger picture of youth work policy and practice and connect them with the basic values and principles of youth work.// information about existing support structures and mechanisms// is to develop clearer structures for cooperation and co-creation within and between all levels and stakeholder groups within the youth work community of practice.// establish clear and coordinated processes for spreading information, having continuous dialogue and working together around common quality issues// map and spread knowledge
		establish occupational standards, and build coherent routes, relevant curricula and appropriate institutional locations for the education and training of youth workers
		have a youth work research agenda
	GROWING YW: Common direction	The flow of communication and deliberative collaboration within the youth work community of practice both horizontally (between different actors within the community of practice) and vertically (between European, national, regional and local levels) are essential.
		a coordinated approach to learning, sharing, supporting and building on youth work development and good practices at the local level, towards regional, national and European levels, and vice versa, is needed// Furthermore, more common ground can be secured through regional European networks and exchange within and between them in order to advance shared youth work architectures across Europe// work together on improving quality and determine common approaches to youth work// bridge gaps and missing links// map // structural national and European funding for collaborative youth work structures and networks
		For youth work in Europe to thrive// local youth organisations and local youth work need to know about the opportunities at other levels, become familiar with 'European youth policy' and take part in European youth work and European youth programmes, as well as develop them further// There is also a need to reinforce relations between national and European youth work development Strategies

	GROWING YW: Beyond the YW Community of practice	communicate the value of youth work, facilitate and stimulate structural and strategic cooperation with other sector//... both public and private//.... innovation and sustainability. Synergies between different sectors and actors are crucial for reaching out to all young people.../ Giving them a voice and supporting them to take action, as well as providing them with multiple entry points to public services and, as a result, leaving no-one behind
		There is a need for strategic and operational approaches to cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as greater horizontal cooperation on youth (and youth work) at all levels//...
	GROWING YW: Recognition	to create a common narrative not only for the recognition and validation of learning in youth work, but also for the recognition and validation of youth work in general
		More investment in strategic and coordinated efforts and resources to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a self-standing work arena. // While this calls for cooperation, relationships and partnerships with other sectors, youth work nevertheless deserves its own rightful place within European policy agendas
		To challenge of a shared understanding of youth work partially connects with the diverse interpretations of youth work-related terminology. Developing a common language, a set of common terms supporting a widespread generic definition of youth work can support building a better and wider understanding of that field of work. While this ought to leave enough space to adjust and connect to local context.../clear and tailored communication plan that connects all levels
		towards the recognition of youth work implies strengthening an evidence-based approach and mechanisms to better showcase the impact of youth work not only on individuals, but also or foremost on communities and on society
		moreover, when tackling professional standards, we need to pay particular attention to voluntary youth workers' practices to gain a better understanding of their contribution to the field.
		building bridges from the perspective of education and training also means to go beyond the idea of integrating non-formal education and learning into formal education settings and rather work towards a coordinated system enhancing collaboration and cooperation between distinct sectors working on a common purpose// building on past processes, validation, certification and accreditation remain areas of work that also require a common narrative. A recognised profession needs to have an educational pathway// This also means to not only further develop and implement strategies and instruments for the recognition and validation of non-formal education and learning in youth work, but also to elaborate offers that foresee bridges between the education and the training of youth workers
	GROWING YW: innovation and emerging challenges	Youth work should develop to a stage where it can be a safety net for young people in times of uncertainty. Mental health promotion is seen as a crucial point in youth work. Youth workers should be habilitated to carry out projects promoting and maintaining the mental health of young people, particularly those facing intersectional and other vulnerabilities
		Youth policy-makers should engage in a constructive dialogue with young people and youth workers to create more resilient youth work structures grounded in evidence-informed innovation principles, encompassing long-term thinking, reflexivity and strategy-based youth work//... improving smart youth work while putting greater focus on developing digital competences// making youth work greener
		The European Youth Work Agenda should keep strengthening the role of youth work in times of uncertainty by keeping up the values of youth work// advocating for youth work in Europe and globally to be one of the primary civic society development

		strategies
	GROWING YW: Policy Frameworks	policies should be implemented at all levels and should be based on co-creation together with the youth work community of practice, including young people, in line with a rights-based approach to participation, recognising them as main// The youth sector has been long calling for a horizontal approach to be applied to youth policy, and this should be no different when it comes to the components of youth work in those policies. stakeholders whose involvement is essential in all these processes and structures.// strengthened cooperation at European level between the European Commission and Council of Europe that should aim at the wider dissemination of youth (and within it, youth work) policies horizontally across other areas of policy-making// youth work should be continued to be embedded in both long-term youth specific strategies// involve young people as equal creators of the policies affecting them// systematic check of youth work policies
		Involving research in policy-making
		youth laws, youth work laws and strategies for youth work should be present and promoted all over Europe, at local, regional, national and European levels, supported by the cooperation of the EU and the Council of Europe
	GROWING YW: a strategic framework for...	European institutions are considered to have a key light-touch enabling role to play in advocating, advising, assisting and inspiring the development of youth work within their member States. // alignment of the vision for youth work between the two European institutions// connecting the Bonn process to other strategic social and educational initiatives within the European institutions
		co-creation and co-management with the whole community of practice// curriculum development for youth worker education and training;-backing innovation hubs for progressive and pioneering youthwork;-ensuring full participatory platforms for youth work dialogue and development
		Promote recognition of non-formal education and learning in and through youth work
		encourage youth work research for evidence-informed youth work practice
Council of Europe	Youth Sector Strategy 2030	
	RESOLVES...	enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.// strengthening young people's access to rights// deepening youth knowledge/broadening youth participation, so that young people participate meaningfully in decision-making, on the basis of a broad social and political consensus in support of inclusion, participatory governance and accountability// increasing the capacity of youth civil society to advance participatory democracy and democratic citizenship within and beyond their memberships// governance processes in a meaningful, participatory manner, involving diverse groups of young people and their representatives/organisations // furthering progress in the implementation of the Council of Europe's standards on young people's access to rights// bedding key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and inter-generational dialogue and environmental sustainability, more prominently in policy /.../ research// strengthening young people's capacities, agency and leadership to prevent violence, transform conflict and to build a culture of peace // co-operation based on the core values of the Council of Europe;

		young people's democratic engagement is supported by communities of practice that produce knowledge and expertise/improving institutional responses to emerging issues affecting young people's rights and their transition to adulthood, such as, but not limited to, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, artificial intelligence, digital space, increased mobility and new forms of employment// bedding key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and inter-generational dialogue and environmental sustainability, more prominently in /.../ practice// equipping stakeholders to tackle both the challenges of building inclusive societies through policies, programmes and projects that embrace diversity// capacity building of young multipliers (youth leaders and youth workers), notably through the European Youth Centres and their education and training programmes
		strengthening youth policy and youth work in removing barriers to youth participation// improving institutional responses to new developments in democracy, such as the changing participation patterns of young people, digitalisation or internet governance
		through substantial support for funding, building networks // financial support to the development of youth civil society, notably through the European Youth Foundation
		strengthening, recognising and advancing youth work policies and practices by embedding youth work within youth policy frameworks, notably through a European youth work agenda and its implementation, in close co-operation with the European Union
		Improving the quality of youth work...// standard setting // relevant co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector, which should develop programmes of activities based on the present resolution and, where appropriate, submit proposals for standards to the Committee of Ministers
		Extending the access and attractiveness of youth work and non-formal education/learning for the benefit of wider populations of young people
		between policy makers, practitioners and researchers in the field of youth// co-operation with the European Union and partnerships with other stakeholders and services involved in areas which are relevant to the Council of Europe youth sector// o- management system bringing young people and government representatives together to take decisions, which should be the main platform for the development of Europe-wide consensus...// space for political and interinstitutional co-operation// intergovernmental co-operation//assistance to youth policy development in member State
		anticipating future trends, challenges and opportunities// innovation in youth work, youth policy and youth research
		proactive outreach to and engagement of young people experiencing disadvantage
	Background document (only thoughts which are not mentioned above are extracted)	Priority covers the Council of Europe youth sector's action to strengthen youth work development, the quality and recognition of youth work (in the member States and at European level) and European co-operation on furthering youth work development through partnerships
European Commission	EU Youth Strategy	

		Able young people to be architects of their own lives, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope in a changing world; active citizens//positive change//supporting youth empowerment through quality, innovation and recognition of YW//
		Stepping up youth participation// supporting learning to participate// innovative and alternative forms of democratic participation// Helping prepare young people for participation ,through youth work Actions around civic education and media literacy in synergy with formal education and public authorities
		Bringing young people together across the EU and beyond//improve the impact of policy decisions on young people through dialogue//Fostering youth participation in democratic life//Launching a new EU Youth Dialogue// The dialogue will be coordinated at EU level fed by youth at all levels and supported by National Working Groups with improved monitoring arrangement <i>Reaching out to all young people</i>
		digital technologies have revolutionised young people's lives// online activism //consolidating the European Youth Portal as a digital single entry point for young people to engage with the EU// ... promoting participation in European/---/ elections// using tools to promote debate about the EU
		Agents of solidarity// and help develop an understanding of European values and tolerance// to offer new opportunities for youth to express solidarity//...emphasis on those with fewer opportunities
		Supporting 'learning to participate' and raising interest in participatory actions across Europe and beyond through Erasmus+// and help develop an understanding of European values and tolerance// The Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges20enable dialogue between youth in the EU and in Southern Mediterranean countries// to realise its (Solidarity Corps) full potential and ensure that national schemes allow for cross-border experiences, the Commission and Member States should cooperate on a supportive policy, legal and administrative// cross-border mobility of volunteers//
		Young people's engagement in solidarity: Promoting support schemes and capacity-building of organisations active in this area, raising awareness of opportunities and providing information about rights and benefits when volunteering ...//When developing national schemes, Member States should seek complementarity and synergies with the European Solidarity Corps//effective use of EU programmes and funds, such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, including the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Creative Europe, and their successors. The Commission calls on Member States to explore synergies between funding sources at EU, national, regional and local levels
		Youth work brings unique benefits to young people in their transition to adulthood// providing a safe environment for them to gain self-confidence, and learn in a non-formal way//In some cases, youth work is the bridge into education, training or work, thus preventing exclusion.// to all young people, In particular those with fewer opportunities: youth work has a unique potential to reach out to the most vulnerable ones and address their individual needs.
		In some cases, youth work is the bridge into education, training or work, thus preventing exclusion.
		Recognition can be improved by a more systematic use of quality tools
		youth workers themselves, on the other hand, need to adapt to changing needs and habits of young people and technological change. Youth workers have to upgrade their skills to understand the issues youth face online and exploit new opportunities offered by digital learning, in line with the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens25and the Digital Education Action Plan

		Ensuring the concerns of young people are heard in EU policy making, notably through an EU Youth Coordinator who would be a European Commission contact and visible reference point for young people.// sectoral cooperation should be reinforced at all levels of decision-making searching synergies, complementarity between actions, and including greater youth involvement
		Sharpen the strategy's focus: the Commission invites Member States to concentrate on targeted actions translating EU priorities into the national context, to be identified in National Action Plans//The strategy will focus on shared EU youth priorities across Member States, while allowing flexibility in pursuing mainstreaming actions to adapt EU priorities to national circumstances//The Council is expected to set tri-annual EU Work Plans with the Commission//effective implementation relies on strong evidence
Council of Europe	Youth Work Recommendation...	establishment or further development of quality youth work is safeguarded and pro-actively supported within local, regional or national youth policies, as appropriate.// takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of YW// strengthen the capacity of youth work to respond to the changes and trends in our society and the emerging challenges faced by young people// Promoting Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centre//development of appropriate forms of review and evaluation of the impact and outcomes of youth work and by reinforcing the dissemination, recognition and impact of the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio in the member States
		Taking into account the diversity of youth work across and within member States, special attention should be paid to the need for strategies, frameworks, legislation...
		...sustainable structures and resources, effective co-ordination with other sectors, as well as to related policies
		promote equal access to youth work for all young people
		Youth workers and young people should be actively engaged in any planned measures for implementation// Stakeholders, including youth workers and young people, should be involved in developing this framework (competency)
		establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers// carry out a mapping exercise on existing education and training (such as vocational training and higher education) and existing systems for validation of competences for paid and volunteer youth workers//
		ad hoc high-level taskforce /.../ a mid-term strategy for the knowledge-based development of European youth work// co-ordination of and access to youth work knowledge and resources at European, national, regional and local levels// support the exchange of youth work practices, peer learning and the creation of sustainable networks and partnerships// strengthen the dialogue between youth work, youth policy and youth research// fostering national and European research on the different forms of youthwork and their value, impact and merit;
		stimulate co-operation within the youth sector and among sectors and fields of expertise wherever youth work takes place in order to reinforce ties, in particular between formal education and youth work and between public authorities, the private sector and civil society
	Memorandum	The recommendation also includes proposals for the youth sector of the Council of Europe to support member States in this task, maximising the positive contribution that youthwork can make to Europe's future through co-operation, peer learning and collaboration// It sends a strong message to policy makers and practitioners to continue to support and renew youth work in Europe and recognises the valuable role that the Council of Europe plays in formulating youth work-related policy