

## **Youth Partnership**

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



# Seminar on the European Youth Work Agenda

## Growing youth work in Eastern and Southeast Europe: knowledge, realities and ideas for the future

### Draft report

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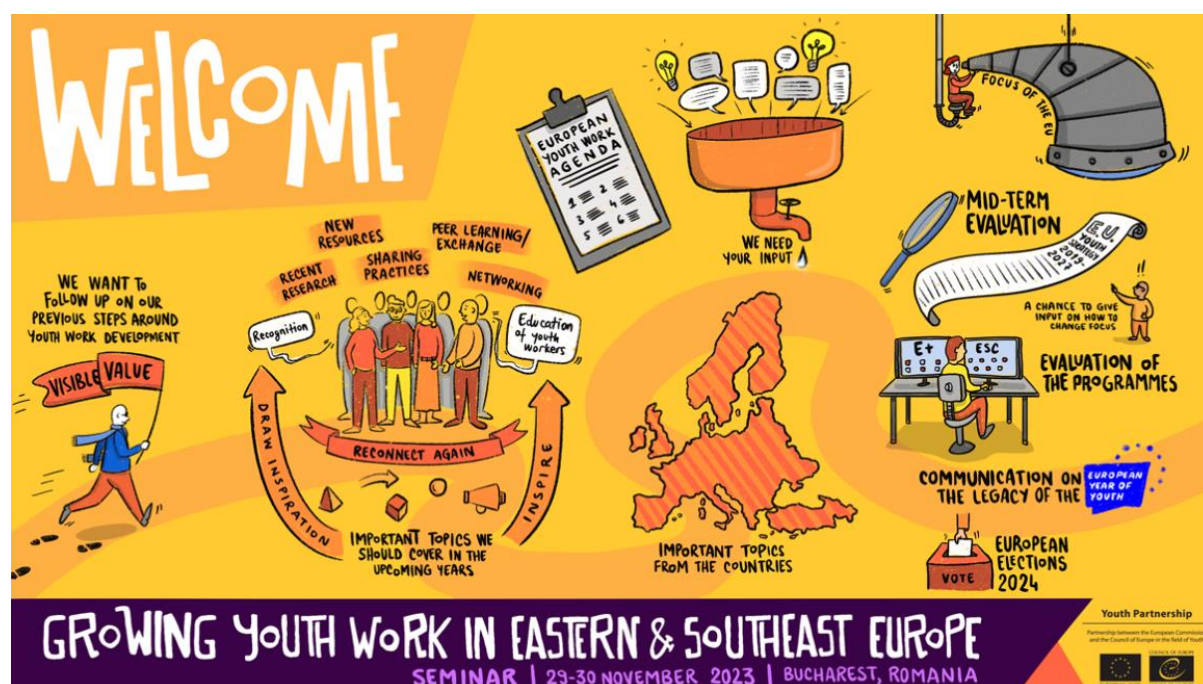
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## Executive summary

Following the [Visible Value regional seminar and Symposium](#), held in Sarajevo in 2022, this seminar explored in depth the context within which youth work is developed, the situation of practitioners and how the youth work ecosystem at national, local, and regional levels is evolving. During the seminar, good practices were identified and built upon, and the latest research results were disseminated, primarily through the "[Visible value – Growing youth work in Europe](#)" handbook, Youth Work Strategies manual, Council of Europe's [youth work recommendation review](#), a thematic study on [mapping the European ecosystem of youth work](#)<sup>1</sup> and [resources](#) developed on recognition of youth work. Contributors highlighted several times that youth work needed to be clearly delineated from social work and adhere to youth work values. The seminar showed a wealth of knowledge about youth work realities in the region and challenges for youth organisations in maintaining cooperation with local governments, due to a changing political context. Participants explored how youth work could be strengthened, structured, and recognised in Southeast and Eastern Europe, as well as how European level actors can support future initiatives in these regions, through the Youth Partnership. The panel with youth work practitioners highlighted concerns that many young people coming to their activities experienced a general sense of loss or lack of perspective, lack of plans or motivation for the future.



<sup>1</sup> Hofmann-van de Poll, Frederike (2022). Mapping youth work ecosystems the European Youth Work Agenda and its implementation on European level. Sarajevo: seminar [Visible Value – strengthening the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda in Eastern and Southeast Europe](#)

## Purpose and expected outcomes

The objectives of the seminar were:

- Discussing the latest research on youth work and showcasing the [Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth](#) (Youth Partnership), promising initiatives and resources;
- Assisting the youth work community of practice in developing youth work, networking, and exchanging information on the [European Youth Work Agenda](#) (EYWA), and identifying obstacles and needed support;
- Providing an overview of the [Council of Europe](#) (CoE), the [European Commission](#) (EC) and the Youth Partnership initiatives and achievements related to youth;
- Identifying specific youth work development support needs that can be addressed in the next Youth Partnership work programme, keeping in mind Southeast and Eastern Europe in particular.

The event's expected outcomes were:

- Dissemination of Youth Partnership-collected research findings and best practices on youth work;
- Strengthening the skills and capacities of the network of youth work professionals involved in the Youth Partnership's various activities and projects;
- Ideas for the next Youth Partnership programming period, regarding the objectives, priorities, and support needed to help youth work flourish in Eastern and Southeast Europe;
- Feedback on the Youth Partnership's draft Youth Work Strategies manual;
- Developing ideas for the next European Youth Work Convention.

Within the seminar, a meeting of the [Pool of European Youth Researchers Advisory Group](#) (PEYR AG), focused on way the two research networks of the Youth Partnership (PEYR and EKCYP – European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy) can improve quality of its deliverables and how they can better support strengthening the research component of EYWA implementation.

The seminar started with an overview of the history of the Youth Partnership and its mandate concerning youth work development, with an emphasis on regional specificities in East and Southeast Europe. The previous two year achievements and plans for the future were presented on, starting with the seminar in Sarajevo in 2022 – [Visible Value – strengthening the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda in Eastern and Southeast Europe](#) and symposium [Visible value: Growing youth work in Europe](#) that was held in 2023 at [the Youth Centre Budapest](#).

The main Youth Partnership goals for the programming period 2022-2023 period were shared, focusing on increasing activities on youth work and strengthening its role in implementing the European Youth Work Agenda, along three main directions:

- Contributing to the dialogue within the youth work community of practice;
- Enhancing youth work recognition;
- Promoting youth work initiatives within the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Joint actions of the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, especially the events and occasions that gather youth work practitioners, youth researchers, policy makers and young people, were expected to keep motivation in the youth work community of practice.

An updating of the youth work practice architectures, with a special part on the educational trajectories of youth workers was foreseen for the first quarter of 2024. Research focus of the Youth Partnership included Youth Work Agenda, learning from Covid-19 impact on young people and the youth sector, sustainability, and climate issues in the everyday lives of young people. The list of [Youth Partnership publications](#) issued in last two years gives a good comprehension of the activities organised in past term.

The European Commission was focusing on the [Erasmus+](#) and European Solidarity Corps Programme, as well as the mid-term evaluation of the Youth Strategy 2019-2027.

The [European Year of Youth](#) (EYY) 2022, gave a chance to connect what was planned and to invest more finances into areas important to young people. Results of the year highlighted many actions in other policy fields that need to be better communicated and interconnected. A communication on the [EYY legacy was issued at the end of 2023](#) , encompassing what has been achieved, opportunities and follow-up actions. The mid-term evaluation of the Youth Strategy will allow for the inclusion of more themes relevant to young people but featuring insufficiently in the strategy as it was adopted five years ago.

The next year, 2024, is the year of the EU Parliamentary elections, which should serve as a chance to advocate for higher and better targeted financing of the youth sector. Even the countries that are not a part of the EU can benefit from the EU Parliament decisions as policies have wider impact.

On the Council of Europe side, the statutory bodies in the field of youth, namely the [Joint Council on Youth](#) (CMJ), the [European Steering Committee for Youth](#) (CDEJ) and the [Advisory Council on Youth](#) (CCJ) shared priorities of the organisation on youth work development.

CDEJ bureau member Gjorgji Tasev presented its actions to promote the role, standards and quality labels of youth work in the CoE countries, alongside five priorities of the CoE youth sector, as described in the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 focus on:

- Revitalising pluralistic democracy;
- Young people's access to rights;
- Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies;
- Youth work;
- Intergovernmental co-operation on youth policy.

These priorities imply that young people from all parts of European society will be empowered to participate in pluralistic democracy and to promote human rights to build inclusive societies based on the principle of equality. Member States will adopt concrete measures to develop and implement policies for young people based on Council of Europe standards, facilitating young peoples' access to rights. Implementation of the [Reykjavik Declaration](#)<sup>2</sup> is one of the instruments that could be used for achieving the Council of Europe goals as young people and leading principles of youth work are incorporated in this Declaration, , with special respect to the strenghtening a 'youth perspective' in the organisations's work.

Konstanze Schönfeld, member of the CCJ announced peace education in youth work among the CCJ projects for 2024, which aims to mainstream peace education into youth work. She also provided a general outlook of the Joint Council's tasks in relation to the [four priorities for 2022-25](#) and shared information about a new CCJ mandate starting in 2024.

## Understanding the reality and regional dynamics: Perspectives of young people, youth work practitioners and local organisations

Inspiring stories and steps towards opening new channels of cooperation in the sector were shared during the introductory part on the reality and regional dynamics of youth work. Sharing experiences included research and policy initiatives, project in the field of youth work development, as well as memorable events and achievements in 2023. Fruitful insights into a wide scope of activities and initiatives were put together by the participants, ranging from those involved in youth work since 1975 to young people who have just joined activities in the youth sector. Following the sharing activity, the participants exchanged some notes on the foreseen developments in research and policy initiatives and projects.

The three most prominent conclusions from this exercise were:

- a) the need to develop infrastructure,
- b) the need for more well-rounded funding, and
- c) better support from municipal level were three most prominent topics.

A panel discussion on the youth civil society organisations and youth workers realities included input from:

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<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe (2023). Reykjavík Declaration United around our Values. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing

- Andrei Dobre, [Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation](#) (Romania)
- Vesela Mareva, [International Youth Centre Stara Zagora/Trakia University](#) (Bulgaria)
- Oksana Malchenko, [Youth Worker's Association of Ukraine](#) (Ukraine)
- Jasmin Jasarevic, NGO [Proni](#) (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Anna Yeghoyan, NGO [Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre"](#) (Armenia)



Panelists revealed that youth workers often lead ‘parallel’ lives; they are youth workers, but at the same time they have ‘another paid job’ to support themselves and their families. Therefore, they face a complex set of challenges conciliating professional and private lives.

### *Needs and Challenges of youth organisations*

Peacebuilding and reconciliation a renewed youth work priority in Southeast Europe: A post-war period and transition and associated peace building process were highlighted as important components of the PRONI activities in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Often peace building activities were not structured, they underlined letting young people talk to each other to develop mutual understanding. After that period – EU topics took over – regional development, environment, and digitalisation. However, in the last two to three years associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are coming back to the the topics of peace building and reconciliation. Young people feel the need to share and to be supported as politics and politicians do not allow for development. Generally, young people would like to be involved in debates around European topics, but the trends are somehow going backwards, especially with polarisation and radicalisation. The social system and public institutions do not provide sufficient support to young people; there is no supported transition to adulthood, which is a severe obstacle to youth social integration and achievement of their aspirations.

Armenia: focus on supporting displaced young people and mental health challenges. Youth work practitioners in Armenia put a lot of efforts into supporting displaced young people

from Nagorno Karabakh. There is too much trauma and youth workers are trying to support young people to resolve their inner conflicts and to find a safe spot and their place in the world. Many young people are under pressure of temporary placement and insecure social position, they find it hard to take decisions and to tell right from wrong. Mental health is challenged, but youth workers feel hopeful as young people are talking more openly about mental health challenges and they are opening to new experiences and to personal growth. Anna's proposal for the coming period is to collect more data and conduct regular research in order to develop evidence-based policies and activities.

Bulgaria: Leaving rural young people behind. Young people in rural areas, as one of the Youth Partnership [topics](#) were highlighted as a subgroup of young people that needs more attention from the youth experts, policy makers and funders, especially in the regions where youth centres are located primarily in bigger towns. Covid-19 pandemic introduced a chance for young people from rural and distant areas to take part in activities, at least through online channels. Nowadays, as youth work activities returned to the youth centres, young people from rural areas again face a challenge of disconnect and a lack of support.

Romania: spaces for young refugees and rhetorical policy frameworks. An example from Romania pointed out that young refugees across the region still do not have a safe space where they can spend their free time and relax without any obligations. Many young people are wandering streets due to a lack of services and youth friendly spaces. Strategies of 'not letting anyone behind' are not applied. Young people do not sense purpose in their life and youth workers ask themselves what is the purpose of pro-forma documents that do not have a positive impact on the young peoples' lives. The underlying evidence is that young people need support to bridge deficiencies in their social capital.

Ukraine: In some ways, young people in combat areas share similar experiences as the refugees, since they live under conditions very similar to those during the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning they can only access education through digital technologies. Displaced young people need support with integration since educational outcomes are inadequate and young people are socially excluded. Mobility programmes are not accessible for them. There are also challenges of safe-guarding young peoples' lives in the youth sector, which is often due to administrative obstacles and obtaining permits from the local authorities to provide activities for young people. Most funds are allocated to war-related needs and the youth sector is struggling to obtain funds for regular activities. Most often, the needs of young people, such as mental health, youth social inclusion and positive youth development, remain neglected. Youth activities have been reduced to supporting youth mental health, their social inclusion and some programmes of non-formal education for 'soft skills' development. Ukraine is a diverse country and young people's needs differ per region, which is currently not acknowledged or supported. Young people need a safe space and support in understanding their needs and opportunities.



Proposals for future actions:

In addition to more research and insights in the youth sector, Armenian youth workers are trying to adapt to the context. This applies both to their professional status and their activities with the young people. In Armenia there is a qualification course for youth workers, but there is no professional education. Youth Initiative Centre (YIC) is opening youth centres in different regions, and they are trying to promote open youth work, so young people have a place to feel better integrated in society. Such spaces are in high demand judging by the big number of young people coming to those centres. Armenian Ministry of education, science, culture, and sport is cooperative and supports the initiatives of the youth sector. Still, the youth organisations mainly rely on project funding and call for more international mobility and exchange of experience. This makes youth structures vulnerable. Potential political changes make it very difficult to build sustainable programmes under constant threat of contingencies.

In Ukraine, positive moments in youth work development in the past two years include new youth centres. This only slightly improved the landscape of possibilities for young people as the country faced many school closures due to the combat activities. Regarding the policy framework, a professional standard of youth work has been developed in 2023, and it could pave the way for better establishment of youth work in Ukraine. The occupational standard in the Register of Occupational Standards is available in [Ukrainian](#). In 2021, a Youth Law was adopted, and in 2023 the Youth Fund has been established on the principles of the [European Youth Foundation](#).

As an example, contrary to the positive developments in Ukraine, youth work in Republika Srpska is somehow stalled as no new centres are being opened, and, although the new framework for policy has been adopted in 2023<sup>3</sup>, there is no budget dedicated to its implementation.

In Bulgaria, the number of youth centers has increased from four to eight, with the expectation that up to twenty will be opened in the coming years. However, even with this kind of growth, it is insufficient, as there are many young people from rural areas who do not have access to youth activities. Youth organisations are trying to convince the municipalities to invest in youth centres and to support youth work activities. Benefits of such investments extend into improvement of conditions in the local community in general.

Engaging new youth workers was stressed as one of the major challenges in youth work in Romania. Digitalisation brought many new opportunities for upskilling, but social skills and empathy, which proved to be the most important ones in youth work, cannot be developed so easily. In addition, it is difficult to make a living out of youth work and most youth workers are employed outside the sector. Usually, after completing Erasmus+ programmes

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<sup>3</sup> Ministarstvo porodice, omladine i sporta (2023). [Omladinska politika Republike Srpske od 2023. do 2027. godine](#)

youth workers find a job in a more prosperous sector. In conclusion, youth work practitioners need more predictable funding to disseminate results of youth work.

The panel concluded that structures and strategies are not enough if funding is no stable. This may be the reason why the youth sector looks with hope at the private sector.

Hope and aspirations:

Hopes and ideas how to achieve them in youth work were a topic of the third question. Changing the lenses and paradigm of looking at youth work was suggested. There are many other components that could be considered youth work (i.e. social work institutions), and there has to be a clear delineation between the public institutions supporting young people and youth work. Sharing among youth experts and youth workers should be strengthened, as there is an abundance of knowledge in the youth sector on how to facilitate positive changes. Equally important was to find other models as youth work is evolving with insufficient public funding support. A more open attitude towards youth work, acknowledging many actors who are employing youth work, although they are not called youth workers, being less critical of the ecosystem and more critical of ourselves were some suggestions. All youth work actors and structures implementating it should be invited to the table. In this regard, space is a major issue since organisations often get the funds but they are not offered space and face many administrative obstacles in implementation. In this regard, "sometimes it takes a one month planning to conduct a one-hour activity". In conclusion, the youth sector needs to (re)invent how to understand youth work in the post-crisis and/or post-war context of Southeast and Eastern Europe. There was, however, a positive note offered; youth work in these regions is very attractive since it can leave a legacy, and all the struggles make youth workers 'feel alive'.

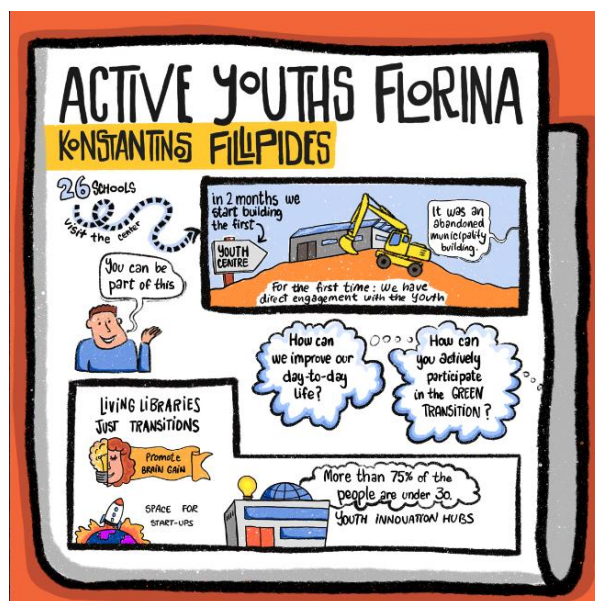
Resilience is another 'buzzword', but we also must discuss how to adapt to changing circumstances and how to use the existing resources. Allocation of budget and infrastructure is sometimes governed by political preferences, i.e. compatibility of the youth organisations with the ruling ideology. In line with this input, it was suggested that the youth work community needs to advocate for improved quality and ethical use of the resources in youth work.

## Share and learn: Inspiring practices

The presenters showcased different approaches to youth work and how actors in the youth field worked in synergy. The inspiring practices focused on how youth work is structured in and what resources and conditions were needed to achieve goals.

### National level example: Greece

The first national example – [Educational Centre for Renewable Energy Sources \(ECRES\)](#), co-funded by the Green Fund and the [Just Transition Development Programme \(JTDP\)](#), was presented by Konstantinos Filippidis from the [Active Youths Florina](#) (Eurodesk Point). ECRES is an educational centre for information and development concerning the green transition and renewable energy, based in Filotas, in the regional unit of Florina, Greece. Besides focusing on Greece, the JTDP widens its good



practice dissemination through the project “Creation of Educational Actions for Green Development and Centre of Renewable Energy Sources”, which aims at informing young people about the development of green culture in the entire region of Western Macedonia. In addition to welcoming students and teachers from the schools in the region, the project can also be visited by the general public. A Centre has been operating since November 2022, implementing educational activities, and hosting more than 20 schools.

This project aims to:

- Making green culture a priority;
- Providing information about renewable energy sources;
- Promoting green and just transitions among youth;
- Organising awareness-raising campaigns;
- Identifying and promote new employment opportunities;
- Creating new opportunities and incentives after decarbonisation;
- Contributing to the upgrading of living conditions in the area.

The project related activities enhanced inclusion of young people and their importance in participating in Greek and EU policies. New forms of inclusion and participation of young people in the process of implementing a just transition were developed. Policymakers were informed of the factors that motivate young people to build their lives in their home country (employment and entrepreneurship, education, research and innovation, environmental factors, economic factors and social factors).

Three more examples from Greece/Western Macedonia were also presented:

1. The project “[Empowering the Next Generation: Youth Engagement in European Elections](#)” (YEEEs24), was conceived as an opportunity to build an informed and engaged European electorate, and increase democratic participation in Western Macedonia, as one of the most Eurosceptic regions in the EU. The project will be implemented through online & offline activities, for a period of nine months (10/23-06/24).
2. [Education and innovation youth centre](#) provides educational services to the young people.
3. Rural Innovation Accelerator ([Youth Innovation Hub](#) - YIH) –which provides a space for innovation and support for young entrepreneurs through the YIH Accelerator hub and YIH Source hub.

#### National level example: North Macedonia

Gjorgi Tasev, Advisor for Youth to the Prime Minister of North Macedonia presented historical developments of Youth work in North Macedonia. In 2012, the [Centre for Intercultural Dialogue](#), with funding from the [National Democratic Institute](#), has launched an initiative to recognize and professionalize youth work. As a result of this initiative, the [Union for Youth Work](#) was established and is still functioning as the main non-public actor.

The first youth work fair in North Macedonia was held in 2013 to raise awareness and establish links between youth work providers and institutions. Various initiatives have contributed to a greater understanding of youth work. In September 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy adopted the occupational standard in the field of youth work, under the name “Worker with Youth”.

In June 2021, the Union for Youth Work and the [Agency for Youth and Sport](#) awarded certificates to 14 youth workers for a completed adult education programme in accordance with the occupational standard Youth Worker ([National Portfolio of Youth Workers](#), [Youth Wiki: Recognition and Validation of Skills Acquired through Youth Work](#)). By December 2022, a total of 24 people had successfully completed the programme and received Youth Worker certificates.

The adoption of the [Law on youth policies and youth participation](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 10 from 16 January 2020) was an important step for the youth policy development in the country since it established the necessary legal framework for opening local youth councils, three municipal youth offices with corresponding “officers for youth”, and local youth centres, as essential youth services.

Since 2010, ten Youth Centres are fully functional in North Macedonia, and the Rulebook - Portfolio of Youth Workers and Rulebook for quality standards of youth centres were adopted. From the academic year 2023/2024 the Master's studies for youth work is being opened. The programme is implemented at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" and students will be able to acquire the title of Master in Youth Work.

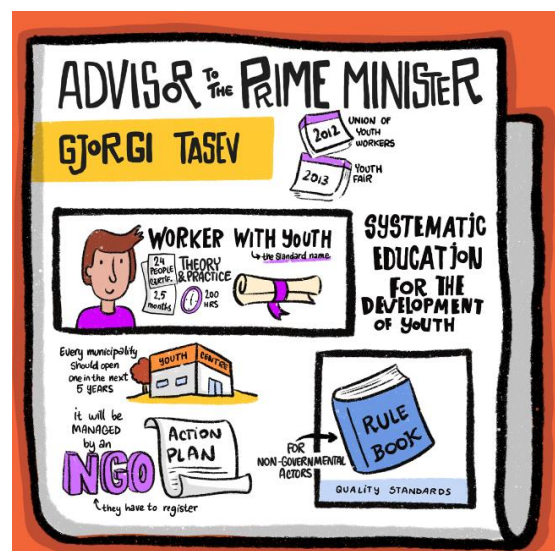
The youth sector in North Macedonia recognizes six challenges for the future of youth work:

1. Full recognition of youth work;
2. Strengthening the youth infrastructure and creating more youth spaces and opportunities;
3. Professionalisation of youth work;
4. Standardisation of youth work;
5. Adoption of the Law on youth work;
6. Development and expansion of the youth work offer.

Several examples of good practice were briefly presented to showcase the way youth work developed in the country, including [Youth Centre Kavadarci](#), Youth Centre Kumanovo, [Youth Centre Veles](#), and [Youth Centre Ohrid](#).

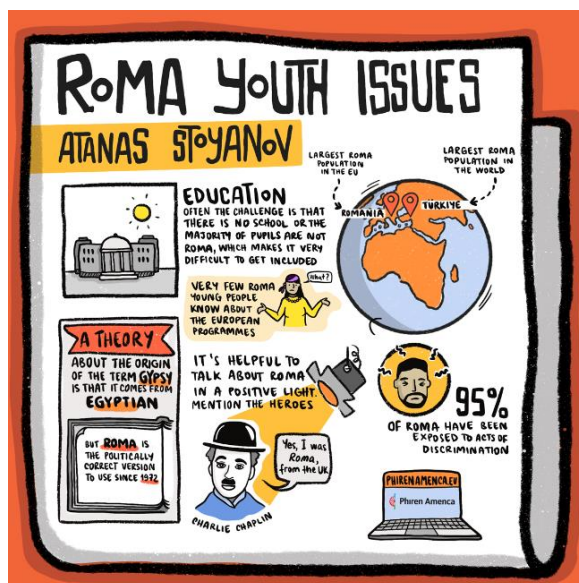
National level example: Bulgaria

Atanas Stoyanov from [Phiren Amenca network](#) held a workshop on the Roma challenges and perspectives. The first part focused on: 1) Roma culture (traditions, language family and community) and 2) challenges (discrimination and



stereotyping, educational barriers, economic and health disparities, and housing issues). After a short discussion in groups and acquainting the workshop participants with some youth work activities in Roma communities, the results from Phiren Amencá's surveys on "[Roma Youth: Challenges and Perspectives](#)" (2021), and "[Roma youth participation in mainstream youth structures](#)" (2023) were presented. The survey results revealed the following:

1. Youth from Roma communities are excluded from national youth councils and international youth non-governmental organisations.
2. Policies and policymakers have yet to systematically and continuously address the needs of Roma youth in Europe, and mainstream youth institutions do not target Roma youth specifically in their work.
3. Roma youth organisations are represented by only seven of the surveyed National Youth Councils.



4. Roma youth are explicitly a focus of only four of the National Youth Councils surveyed.
5. Roma youth are insufficiently included in National Youth Councils through proactive measures.
6. Only one of the nine Roma youth organisations interviewed belongs to a National Youth Council.
7. Diversity and inclusion strategies were only declared by three National Youth Councils.
8. Roma youth represent only two of the international non-governmental youth

organisations surveyed.

The workshop also brainstormed how to address issues for Roma young people in the areas of education, social isolation, and mental health. The first topic gathered proposals for better allocation of resources and more targeted social and youth policies concerning Roma young people in dispersed and rural communities. It was proposed that these measures for education should be supplemented by community empowerment, mentorship programmes, and evidence-based policy through government engagement. Concerning the issues of young Roma social isolation and its adverse consequences for mental health, proposals focused on cultural awareness programmes, organisation of cultural events and celebrations with young Roma as active participants, establishment of peer support groups and increasing access to mental health services.

Barriers to inclusion of young Roma were discussed at the end. Discrimination and stereotypes, educational disparities, economic marginalisation, a lack of representation, language and communication barriers, cultural insensitivity and lack of cultural awareness, social exclusion, limited access to information, lack of support systems and inadequate support targeting Roma youth and historical trauma and historical prejudice were listed as the most pronounced barriers to Roma young people's involvement in mainstream youth participation initiatives. Recommendations addressing barriers to Roma mainstreaming included:

1. Increasing understanding of Roma culture, history, and challenges through training.
2. Creating an inclusive environment through anti-discrimination policies, codes of conduct, and guidelines.
3. Activities such as cultural exchanges, joint projects, and social gatherings.
4. Youth participation in mainstream youth structures, including decision-making bodies and youth councils.
5. Organising workshops, information sessions, and partnering with local leaders.
6. Involving Roma youth in mainstream youth programmes planning and implementation.
7. Development of mentorship programmes that connect Roma youth with mentors both within and outside of the community.
8. Joint development of initiatives with Roma organisations and community leaders.
9. Identification and addressing historical traumas and demonstrate a commitment to positive change by recognising past injustices.

The conclusion of this session stressed out that Roma youth representation and presence in youth power structures need to be enhanced so that policymakers are introduced to specific Roma youth initiatives.

## International resources in Southeast and Eastern Europe

Andriy Pavlovych from [Salto Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre](#) shared in writing information on a geographical scope of the SALTO actions. In Erasmus+, the area of cooperation between the Programme and neighbouring partner countries stretches over 13 000 km and covers 13 time zones. With a population of around 1 billion, it comprises 55 countries. There are 28 Programme Countries: 28 European Union member states and Turkey, Serbia, North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and four regions: 1) Region 1 - Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro; 2) Region 2 - Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine; 3) Region 3 - South-Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Syria, Tunisia and 4) Region 4 - Russian Federation.

The main streams of the SALTO programmes in this region include:

1. Increasing the number of projects that involve participants with fewer opportunities.
2. Increasing the number of projects that address young people as priorities and focus on inclusion and diversity in different project phases.
3. Awareness raising and capacity building in the youth sector.
4. Reducing inequalities among young people in respect to their educational opportunities and social inclusion.

## Meeting of the Pool of European Youth Researchers Advisory Group

[The Pool of European Youth Researchers Advisory Group](#) (PEYR AG) explored different approaches to achieving the European Commission and the Council of Europe priorities in the field of youth for the next two years. Members of the PEYR AG discussed opportunities for enriching evidence-based policy to support better European debates. The forthcoming renewal of the PEYR has been highlighted as one of the steps for enhancing the quality of deliverables and written contribution from researchers. PEYR AG identified concrete areas to improve the quality of the research results, including more mentorship and direct involvement of PEYR AG members in projects, stronger coordination points within the research teams, interviewing representatives of the partner institutions and starting with existing policies, projects, published research and initiatives by the Youth Partnership and the partner institutions, more rigorous respect of the communication styleguide and updated quality guidelines. An induction process is planned for the new PEYR to ensure the new Pool knows the priorities of the partner institutions and the expectations from research.



## Learning about the Romanian youth sector reality

Opportunity to learn about Romanian youth work realities with local organisations explored four practices and project that could inspire further actions.

- 1) Mihai Vilcea from [National Youth Foundation](#) (FNT) presented examples of the youth houses in [Timisoara](#) and Tulcea as part Socialist youth infrastructure that is managed by their members (10 youth houses, 14 youth clubs and 4 sport and leisure facility), recently renovated and used as youth centres, and as a tool to sustain youth work practice. About 36% of the youth facilities built by the Communist Youth Union are managed by FNT members.



Apart from the regular activities, the FNT provides young people with an opportunity to take part in strategic projects, such as:

1. [Project Revitalising the youth sector in Romania](#): aimed at improving cooperation and development for a sustainable community for youth ecosystem (November 2021 - April 2024). The project is focusing on capacity building of youth organisations and youth infrastructure that is part of FNT network<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://spatiupentrutineri.ro/english/>

2. Cooperation and development for a sustainable community - The project facilitated collaborative relationship between the local authorities in Sibiu and Hunedoara counties and non-governmental organisations of and for young people<sup>5</sup>.
  3. [Project Representative for a day!](#) was designed to give young people the opportunity to know in detail the activity of a public authority in their community – been implemented during the National Youth Day (2 May). The selected young people participate in all the meetings/meetings of the local elected officials, who have accepted the invitation to get involved in the project, have planned for such a day, precisely so that the participants have the opportunity to know in detail all the challenges of such a functions. The young people were selected by the representatives of the county youth foundations, based on a public call for applications.
  4. The "[Empowering Youth for a Stronger European Democracy](#)"<sup>6</sup> project aims to strengthen the democratic involvement of young Romanians, advancing their understanding of the democratic values of the European Union and the role of the European Parliament. With a focus on the 2024 European elections, the project intends to promote active citizen participation and deepen knowledge about the political landscape of the European Union.
  5. [Ukrainian youth integration in Romania](#), which started in March 2022, built the model of safe space (youth centre) for young Ukrainians who came from the conflict zone, based on the model already developed at the network level. Now, FNT is coordinating eleven youth centres, where young Ukrainians and young Romanians are taking part in social cohesion activities and educational programs. Youth centres are functioning in areas where Ukrainian refugees have chosen to start a new life.
- II) Cosmin Catana and Sorin Berbecar from the association [Curba de cultura](#) held a workshop on how to lead meaningful conversations with young people in rural post-Communist Romania. Rural communities in Romania experience lack of trust due to the consequences of Socialist regimes that installed an undercover system of espionage among the members of communities. The main guidelines imply that communication must be honest, direct and without strings attached. Curba de cultura also emphasized their pride in being independent of local authorities and the activities they tailor-made for young people from rural communities.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://rotineret.ro/cooperare-si-dezvoltare-pentru-o-comunitate-durabila/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://youthdemocracy.rotineret.ro/>

III) Alina Bulumac and Aniela Firulovic from the [Social Incubator](#) shared that their association have engaged around 2.000 young people so far, especially from vulnerable categories, mostly done with funding from corporate sources. The main aim of their activities has been to contribute to increasing the chances of social and professional integration of vulnerable young people in Romania. The main project of the organisation ([Youth of the Future/Life Project](#)), supports youth people



who have left or are forced to leave the foster care system (16-26 years), has become the main focus of the association. The programme facilitates the creation of a suitable environment for the development of young people from vulnerable backgrounds, giving them personalized help in the following areas:

1. Completing the studies;
2. Vocational counselling;
3. Finding a paid job;
4. Personal and professional development;
5. Psychological counselling;
6. Housing.

The Incubator representatives shared inspiring life stories of three young people who encountered serious disadvantages during their young age. The importance of having a mentor who assists young people on an everyday basis and respecting the basic code of conduct was emphasized.

IV) George Adrian Oprea from [Outventure Association](#) presented the programme Outdoor 360.

A video showcased steps that led youth workers to successfully manage 16 workshops on different life skills. This association organises the outdoor educational programmes with young people, which enhance their socialization and skills required in everyday life. Their target groups are young people in foster care. After completing the programme, the stations set up outdoor are in the hands of young people, which is a metaphor of life as the continuation of this programme completely relies on the efforts of young people.



## Knowledge, research findings and good practices on youth work development

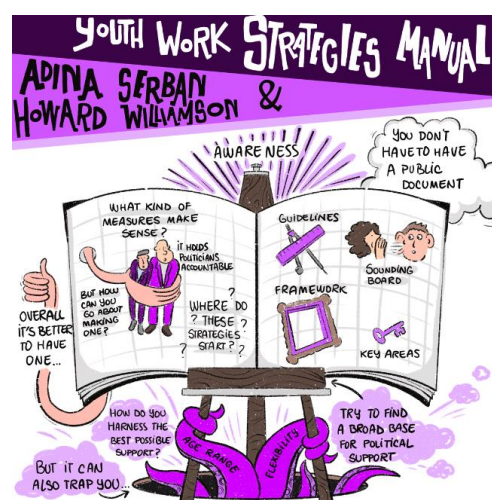
### Youth Work Strategies Manual

Adina Serban and Howard Williamson presented a draft of the Youth work strategies manual, starting with the introduction of emergence of youth work at European and national levels. Despite significant diversity of youth work practices across Europe, three [European Youth Work Conventions](#) paved the way for better reflection of these practices in Europe. Those three political documents focus on youth work and youth work governance:

1. Legal framework;
2. Actors (young people, youth workers, youth organisations);
3. Funding.

The basis of the Manual comes from the [Youth Policy Manual](#) by Finn Denstad<sup>7</sup>, who argued for six reasons to use it:

1. Improves youth work;
2. Strengthens quality;
3. Ensures youth participation;
4. Makes youth work more flexible (and more fixed);
5. Supports stakeholder ownership;
6. Prospect of better cross-sectoral co-operation.



However, these six principles can be followed only in the settings where youth work is well established, while those where youth work is relatively new have different rationales for 'strategy'. Insights (30 responses from 23 countries) gathered by A. Serban and H. Williamson through an online questionnaire in February 2023 indicate that youth work practitioners, representatives of public institutions and researchers, have diverse concepts of youth work, (they differ in their understanding of the principles, goals and undertaken actions in youth work). Their conceptualisation of youth work ranges from independent youth work to various models of integrated actions at national, regional and local levels.

<sup>7</sup> Denstad, Finn Yrjar (2009). *Youth Policy Manual*. Council of Europe Publishing.

However, most respondents to the survey agreed that youth work should have a distinctive role and should not be mistaken for institutional practices (e.g. in social work).

The youth work strategies manual looks at building cross-sectoral partnership, recognising value of youth work, enhancing life chances, building workforce capacity, measuring impact of youth work, and improving social inclusion of young people. The participants in the survey also touched upon development of digital youth work, youth work in formal education settings (e.g. schools), strengthening the understanding of youth work pedagogy, quality standards for youth centres, youth information and counselling, child and youth protection, youth cultures and creativity, and social and political education and participation. Indicative themes listed by the survey respondents also included youth work development; young people's circumstances, young people's aspirations and bridging young people and society.

A wide range of actors and stakeholders should come together and agree to ensure sustainable funding for the implementation of youth work actions as well as meaningful monitoring and evaluation when designing a strategy. The survey inputs proposed the key elements for the youth work manual: enough time for consultation; funding and resources; training and qualifications; spaces for practice; inclusion; levels of responsibility; focus; distinction; integration/collaboration and envisioned steps for moving forward.

Taking all the elements into account, the essential conditions for development of a youth work strategy should include youth participation, consultation with stakeholders and ownership by public authorities and stakeholders as essential conditions. Moreover, the core content of the youth work strategy should integrate vision and mission, funding base, concrete objectives and goals, rationale for goal setting, analysis of need and context, well-tailored formulations, and concrete steps for implementation and evaluation. However, it has to be said, once again that often not only that stakeholders do not understand what youth work is, they do not understand what the needs of young people are. The conclusion was that due to the lack of understanding of the essence of youth work, youth work strategies are often mere an inspiration, not even a recommendation.

## A European model of recognition of youth workers skills and competences

The Youth Partnership commissioned James O'Donovan and a group of experts (Darko Markovic, Andreas Karsten, Hillary Tierney, Illona-Evelyn Rannala and Rita Bergstein) to provide recommendations to the two partner institutions (European Commission and Council of Europe) on possible scenarios for the mutual, cross-border and pan-European instrument for the recognition of youth workers' competences, based on existing practices at the national and European levels. He presented a European model of recognising the skills and competences of youth workers. To ensure the robust implementation of the

European Youth Work Agenda, the objective was to make important advances in the recognition of youth work.



In the study, James O'Donovan et al recognise three country and cross-country models in Europe:

1. At third level higher education (Ireland, Estonia, Finland and Germany);
2. In vocational and further education (Austria, Portugal, Finland);
3. In non-formal learning settings (Czech Republic, Serbia, Ireland).

There are two possible web-based models for the recognition of youth workers' competences. Even though the two models share some similarities in terms of structure and methodology, they also differ in some important ways. In general, both models follow the same structure:

1. Criteria and thresholds for recognition of youth workers' competences;
2. Governance, hosting, implementation and support structures and bodies;
3. Benefits of recognition.

Two models identified are:

Model A comprises a two-stage accreditation system similar to those for comparable professions (e.g. photographers and trainers), which imply two possible models of reaching the recognition; either through self-assessment or through peer-assessment. Model B, on

the other hand, proposes a single-stage accreditation system for youth workers, but primarily to recognise those youth workers who do not have easy access to recognition. Strengthening the voluntary youth sector's recognition and capacity is also an aim. On-line portfolio-based self-assessment would be part of the process.

Model A proposes a Governing Board to safeguard legitimacy, ensure quality and oversee the implementation of the recognition system. The Governing Board would comprise representatives of key stakeholders at European level. Potential hosting and implementation bodies could include: National agencies for Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps; Future European umbrella of youth worker associations; EC-CoE Youth Partnership and SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centres. Whereas, Model B proposes three tiers of governance, hosting, and implementation as follows: Potential hosts of the web-based, on-line platform (as in Model A) and Member States that would designate an appropriate body for implementing the mechanism and evaluating and accrediting applications for recognition.

Accreditation could have the following concrete benefits for youth workers:

1. A higher fee for accredited youth workers in youth work projects funded by European programmes.
2. Accredited youth workers are given additional points when selecting projects.
3. ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) recognition of prior learning.
4. Youth workers who are accredited have access to professional development courses exclusively.

Among the benefits of recognition for institutions, policy makers, and youth organisations are:

1. Clarification of the scope and size of the youth work field in Europe to facilitate better planning and investment.
2. The facilitation of recognition of youth workers' competences and qualifications between member countries.
3. Youth work and the youth worker profession are to be recognised at the national level through a supportive European instrument.
4. Enhanced visibility and positioning of the youth work sector as a policy-making and programme development sector.

Conclusions on challenges regarding a common European framework of youth work accreditation concern a lengthy process of development and issues of governance, hosting, implementation and benefits that might have significant implications for stakeholders in the youth sector. There is also an issue of 'translation' since the youth work concept that has been widely accepted in Europe is the one developed in the UK during 1960s. Youth work

practitioners on an everyday level face difficulties in translating processes and structures established by the UK youth work stakeholders; they are somehow forced to adapt the elements that are not suitable to their realities. The workshop participants reflected on questions whether long practicing youth workers need recognition and concluded that while individuals might not need it, their organisation may benefit of better support if they can show that their youth workers passed through recognition processes.

## Analysis of youth work related publications of the Youth Partnership since 2010

Analysis of youth work related publications since 2010 of the Youth Partnership made by Sladjana Petkovic and Marti Taru aimed at creating a timeline of research outcomes by the Partnership. The analysis connects the Partnership deliverables, and research outcomes since 2010 to policy developments – documents, strategies, and recommendations by the partner institutions, to see how the work by the Youth Partnership has been influencing and boosting the development of youth work in Europe, despite the challenge of establishing connections. A list of outcomes, publications and linking those elements to the



policy developments showed that the Youth Partnership actions significantly impact positive developments in youth work in Europe.

Discussion by suggested that desk reports only are not enough as a source of information, and that they should be supplemented by interviews to build informative stories. Some interventions also indicated being overwhelmed with the research available. Translating the publications or mediation was seen as a way forward, contributing to adapting them to national and local realities.

One conclusion was that formal education teaching should have contact with everyday professional practice, since only reading books and attending seminars is not enough to form practitioners.

Usage of youth friendly and research specific language was also identified as one of the obstacles to efficient 'translation' in the Youth Partnership publications. Concretely, if a publication is targeting young people, it must be presented in youth-friendly language that is a bit different from the research language, leading to a disconnect between research, youth, policy, and practice. Participatory research and involvement of young people in the studies was seen as a way to respond to this challenge.

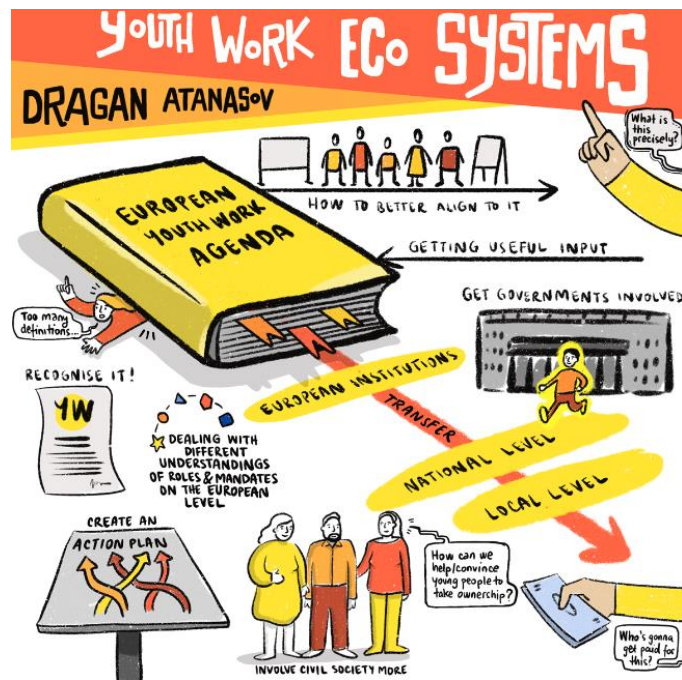


The second part of this workshop was dedicated to recognising contributions of the Youth Partnership research for understanding and purposeful implementation of youth work actions. Inputs from discussants emphasized that the Partnership provides knowledge and resources that are essential to be active in the youth field, both in the international context and at the national level. The Partnership publications are seen as a good tool for learning and getting ideas, also finding evidence to support a certain cause. In addition, the Partnership website is a powerful and valuable tool to find materials, evidence supporting advocacy for certain causes and issues and for creating networks with people from other countries.

Better positioning of the Youth Partnership publications requires more clear presentation of the implications of evidence for various stakeholders; the Partnership needs to demonstrate the relevance of knowledge and knowledge production in/for the policy process. It was advised that while doing this, the Partnership could also learn from some other platforms how knowledge is produced and used. Another element that could contribute to greater recognition and usage of the Partnership publications concerns the importance of using targeted design for various audiences.

## Mapping youth work ecosystems on European and national levels

[Mapping youth work ecosystems on European and national levels](#) by Dragan Atanasov and Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll (2023) aims to contribute to the deeper understanding of European youth work by 1) identifying European actors implementing the EYWA; 2) identifying their initiatives, programmes, and projects and 3) analysing interactions, synergies and overlaps between them. The study defines the youth work ecosystem as composed of “the complex network of actors - institutions, organisations, agencies, individuals – at European level, which contribute to the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda” (p. 3).

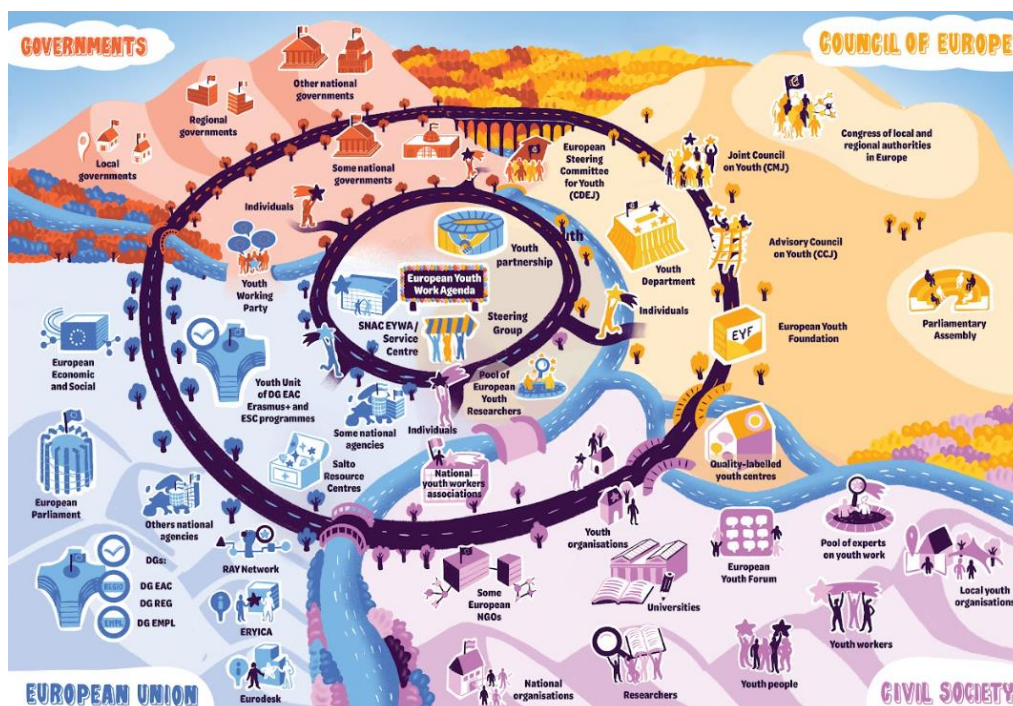


The core actors in this ecosystem are:

1. Youth Partnership (institutionalised cooperation between the two institutions);
2. European Steering Group representing the Community of Practice;
3. European Service Centre for the Bonn Process at JUGEND für Europa (until November 2023).

The researchers use a graphic presentation of the youth work ecosystems on European and national levels (picture 1).

Picture 1: Youth work ecosystems on European and national levels



While working on a common aim, the actors in the community of practice – the European institutions, the national governments and civil society organisations – are facing certain extrinsic and intrinsic challenges, with intrinsic challenges outnumbering the extrinsic ones. The extrinsic challenges concern: 1) overall state of youth work organisations and working conditions of youth workers; 2) shift in priorities from youth work to other youth policy priorities and 3) ambiguity in terms and understanding of the nature and role of youth work. The intrinsic challenges include: 1) implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda and Bonn Process through different lenses of the policymakers and practitioners; 2) broad definition of the eight thematic priority areas; 3) accountability; 4) lack of involvement of national and local authorities; 5) lack of ownership by civil society; 6) discursive differences between EU and Council of Europe; 7) lack of clarity on roles of European institutions and Youth Partnership; 8) debate on the structural level and 8) discontinuation of the European Service Centre for the Bonn Process.

In conclusion, the researchers have identified tasks for the way forward:

1. Reaching a common understanding of the purpose and implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda.
2. Defining the eight broad areas of thematic priority work.
3. Developing a communication plan (or plans, depending on the needs of different stakeholders) to promote the European Youth Work Agenda, including recommendation 1 and recommendation 2.
4. The roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders need to be distinguished.
5. Bringing the European Youth Work Agenda to the national, regional, and local levels through more concrete efforts.
6. Engaging different actors from civil society in the European Youth Work Agenda more concretely.
7. Assuring the involvement of relevant organisations and institutional bodies capable of supporting the European Youth Work Agenda and youth work development in general, especially those who are not directly responsible for youth policy.
8. Increasing and using better available funding in support of the European Youth Work Agenda, and with it, the future development of youth work in Europe.
9. Differentiating and highlighting the coordination and steering efforts to increase the visibility of the European Union and the Council of Europe within the European Youth Work Agenda, and their subordinate authorities at the executive level.

## Learning and exchange with the PEYR Advisory Group (AG)

Participants proposed for exploring with the PEYR AG members, topics of the [European Youth Work Agenda](#) and other themes covered by the Youth Partnership: participation, inclusion and access to rights, youth workers' education, mental health, migration, sustainability, digitalisation and AI. After a brief brainstorming, 23 topics (in alphabetical order) were noted, of which 14 topics were shortly discussed (underlined):

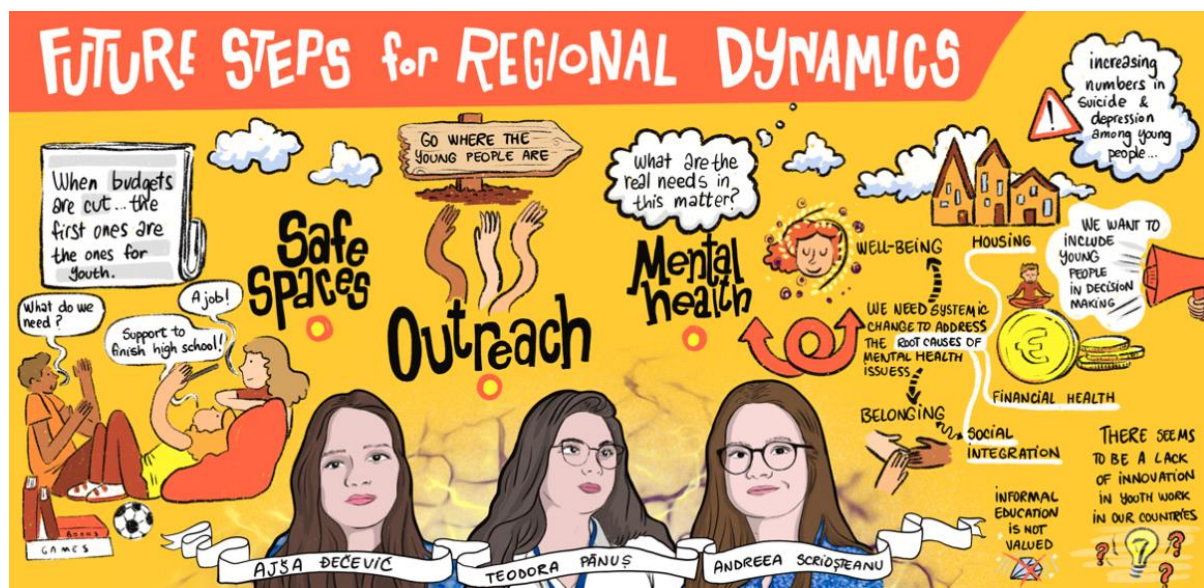
1. AI and digital technology in youth work
2. Balance between inclusive and exclusive youth work
3. Barriers to implementation of youth policies
4. Confusion and resistance in youth work
5. Corruption
6. Cross-sectoral approach and mainstreaming
7. Educational programmes in youth work
8. Ethics in youth work
9. Evolution of youth culture
10. Identifying young NEETS
11. Impact of non-formal and informal education
12. Impact of youth policy on youth migration and brain-drain
13. Lobbying in youth work
14. Mental health, professional services and youth work
15. Municipal youth work
16. Partnerships in youth work
17. Peace building in youth work
18. People with disabilities and youth work
19. Political and ideologies of youth work
20. Positive youth work narratives
21. Youth participation on the local level
22. Youth work online and offline infrastructure
23. Youth work standards and definition and recognition

This session aimed at using the expertise within the PEYR Advisory Group for concrete projects the participants were implementing in their countries. The diversity of topics points to a range of interests of the members of youth work community of practice and some of them can be integrated in other research initiatives at regional or European levels.

## Future steps for regional dynamics in youth work development: Perspectives of young people and youth organisations

Three panel participants presented perspective of young people and youth organisations concerning the future steps to be taken in order to promote and advance youth work in Europe:

- Andreea Scriosteanu, [European Youth Forum](#)
- Teodora Panus, CNTM, [National Youth Council Moldova](#) (NYC)
- Ajsa Decevic, NGO [Forum MNE](#) Montenegro



Ajsa Decevic focused on some of the problems young people are dealing with on a daily basis in Montenegro:

1. Youth employability –rising number of young people in NEET situation every year.
2. Motivating youth to be more engaged and active.
3. Mental health – a lot of non-professionals working in the field of mental health with young people.
4. Youth clubs – a lack of clubs in municipalities, functioning of those clubs, youth administrators do not have the freedom to do what they believe young people want and need, but have to ask the Ministry of Sport and Education for approval, and have to follow only those guidelines.
5. Non-formal education not being recognised or well-perceived, especially by teachers in high school.
6. Education, political parties all contribute to the challenges.

In Montenegro, it is difficult to reach the young people in need, i.e., when asked for cooperation, schools usually send in only highly performing students. There are large regional disparities, youth NGOs are more present in centre and south of the country. The public institutions sometimes do not leave enough space for youth organisations to make independent decisions on the course and type of their activities. Additionally, youth work in Montenegro is not recognised, only a title of the 'youth activist' exists, who are mostly not qualified to assist young people experiencing mental health issues. Additionally, the voices of young people are not heard. The government sometimes conditions funds at local level by demanding certain activities that may not be aligned with the needs of young people. At the same time, young people are pressured by high expectations and not provided support and safe space for self-realisation. This creates significant mental health issue and there is a high demand for qualified youth workers.

Teodora Panus from the NYC of Moldova stressed that Moldova also fights a high level of youth unemployment, especially the high number of young people in NEET situation<sup>8</sup>. There are still no tangible results, although youth NGOs are closely working with the social services, employment services and public administration. On the level of organisational capacities, there is a high turnover of youth workers who are attracted by more profitable sectors. Attracting young people and engaging them in activities is also a challenge. Funding is a constant challenge, and currently European funds are decreasing. The programmes that are funded are poorly managed and not responding to the needs of the young people (i.e. there are large funds for start-ups and there are not so many young people who would benefit from such funds and who could turn it into a sustainable practice). Additionally, there is a lack of youth research, and the government is reluctant to invest in anything related to youth. Data from the statistical office is inconsistent and not covering all topics relevant to young people. As a result, it is difficult to advocate for young people if there is no adequate information.

Andreea Scriosteanu built on the previous interventions, highlighting that as a response to this situation, the European Youth Forum is focusing on building a framework for support systems for young people and youth workers. The European Youth Forum's new five-year strategy aims to seek responses to the socio-economic crisis (precariousness, low quality internships, housing issues and difficult transition to autonomy) through four pillars: democracy, youth organisations, climate crisis and economic crisis. There is also a need to collect age and gender disaggregated data for better adjusted youth policies; some data is still available on the level of general population. In this respect, new topics were added to the [Youth Progress Index](#) (YPI) and on the European Youth Forum webpage four reports on the YPI, including a report on mental health can be found. The European Youth Forum promotes the co-management system, and the [European youth dialogue](#).

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<sup>8</sup> Howard Williamson intervened with an advice on the correct usage of the NEET term – „young people in NEET status“ or „young people in NEET situation“, not the „NEETs“.

Eastern Youth Partnership is also in the focus of the European Youth Forum and there are some results, but the common challenges of young people and youth workers must be further explored. Apart from the war in Ukraine, there are reconciliation processes, conflicts that affect the lives of young people and their future prospects.

## Debates

What is the access to mental health support? In Montenegro, access depends on the region, and often non-professionals work with vulnerable young people in inadequate settings. Public mental health professionals have long waiting lists, issuing appointments with three months delay, while private sector specialists are available and expensive. In Moldova, the NYC appointed a professional and there are psychologists at schools and at the medical centres but only in bigger cities. Youth centres rarely have mental health experts, and if they do, the mental health professionals can be only paid from project funding.

Participants called for more action on mental health, a systemic change, not only treating the symptoms. Member States need specific youth mental health national strategies and improved access and trained professionals. Targeted outreach to the young people in need is crucial as often young people joining youth work are already among the better connected. It is especially complicated to reach the young people who live outside bigger towns. Therefore, it is important to find the resources and to interact with the young people on the local level. Sub-granting schemes and mentorship are some of the tools that can be used to disseminate good practice.

How can vulnerable young people be better reached and included in youth work? The participants agreed that part of the problem related to the educational system that puts young people in a box and limits their knowledge on knowing their rights and advocating for them. Anything connected to non-formal education is still not recognised, which is perpetuated by unresponsive public institutions.

## Needs, expectations and plans regarding youth work development in the two regions in upcoming years

A session on the envisioned plans, needs and expectations regarding youth work development in Southeast and East Europe started with a discussion on the importance of separating social work from youth work. As a profession, social work helps people improve their individual and collective well-being, as well as those of their families, friends, and communities, through mainly individual engagement by social workers with a clear state mandate. Youth work is by definition any social, cultural, educational, or recreational activity that is conducted by, with, or for young people, either in a group or individually. Youth work should be able to attract all groups of young people, irrespective of their personal characteristics and background. There have been numerous attempts to instrumentalize youth work over the last decade, especially around youth employment.

However, deviation from the practices that enrich young people’s lives and subservience to available funding distracts the efforts of the civic youth sector, depletes their resources and often decreases their quality.



As regional actors in youth work function within different institutional and policy frameworks, with different human and financial resources, it is challenging to find a common path for improving the current status, the quality and sustainability of the current model of youth work practice. Youth sector practices and models of targeting young people and meeting their needs must be continuously reinvented as a result of the wide range of vulnerabilities and intersectionalities young people face. Institutions fail to adequately address the needs and aspirations of young people with disabilities, those from minority groups, those living in rural areas, and those from LGBTIQ+ groups, their needs are amplifying. It is crucial that the public sector responds to the mental health needs of young people in an effective and timely manner, but responses are too sporadic and delayed.

A lack of youth work frameworks and policy implementation coordination between EU and non-EU countries is another factor contributing to the pressure on youth work organisations in Southeast and Eastern Europe. Digitalization highlights many opportunities available to young people in other European regions, starting with the freedom to organise youth work without political pressure. The first step in addressing this matter is to set agendas rather than react; to shift focus and act proactively. Another essential step for better positioning of youth work is education of private-sector donors. As actors in the civic sector set agendas and enhance networking, they must reflect on the values of youth work and define where youth work stands, preferably separate from social services. It is also crucial to conduct regular critical reflections about the youth work actions and to deliver direct messages to decision-makers.

Ideas for the Youth Partnership seminar foreseen for autumn 2024 included space for networking and sharing ideas, and potentially a specific thematic area of importance to these regions. Proposals addressed topics that were discussed at previous Partnership



events, such as EYWA national action plans, planning for the next European Youth Work Convention, digital youth work, ethics in youth work, funding for youth work, and developing youth workers' competences (communication skills, skills for managing consultation processes, lobbying skills, management skills). Youth workers require stronger lobbying skills so they can advocate agendas more proactively. Attracting more young people outside the civil society organisations, outdoor activities and visiting local youth work initiatives were proposed.

## Conclusions

Evaluations indicated that participants gained information, inspiration, and impetus to facilitate change on the national and local level in their countries as a result of the seminar. Participants highly appreciated sharing the experiences on implementation and intersectoral cooperation, as well as discussions with the youth researchers. The evaluation was followed by the announcement of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership on the themes to be tackled in the coming biennial work plan, including youth perspective/youth mainstreaming, mental health and wellbeing, and young people living in rural areas. There was a strong emphasis on the recommendation regarding the youth work ecosystem and its integration into the Youth Work Agenda.

The Youth Partnership symposium in 2024 will address the topic of climate and sustainability, while the topic of the next regional seminar planned for October 2024 is still to be identified, based on the outcomes of this present event. A decision has also been made that the EU Youth Convention will be held in Malta in 2025.

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## Annexes

### Annex I – Seminar programme

The programme of the seminar and all related documents and materials are available on the dedicated website at: [Growing youth work in Eastern and Southeast Europe: knowledge, realities and ideas for the future - Youth Partnership \(coe.int\)](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/growing-youth-work-in-eastern-and-southeast-europe-2023).<sup>9</sup>

### Annex II – List of participants

Family name	First name	Profile	Country of residence	Organisation
<b>Aslan</b>	Selcuk	Youth worker	Türkiye	GoFor
<b>Atanasov</b>	Dragan	Researcher	North Macedonia	Union for Youth Work
<b>Decevic</b>	Ajsa	Youth worker	Montenegro	NGO Forum MNE
<b>Deda</b>	<b>Brixhilda</b>	Youth worker	Albania	Organisation LIBURNETIK
<b>Deri</b>	Andras	Researcher/ Educator	Hungary	ELTE Faculty of Education and Psychology, Institute of Research on Adult Education and Knowledge Management
<b>Dobre</b>	Andrei	Youth worker/ Researcher	Romania	Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation
<b>Dumbraveanu</b>	Aliona	Policy-maker	Republic of Moldova	National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work (Republic of Moldova)
<b>Filippidis</b>	Konstantinos	Youth worker	Greece	Association of Active Youths of Florina
<b>Gojayev</b>	Roman	Youth worker/ Educator	Azerbaijan	Gender Hub Azerbaijan
<b>Gulyas</b>	Barnabas	Youth worker/ Educator	Hungary	Eotvos University Faculty of Education and Psychology

<sup>9</sup> <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/growing-youth-work-in-eastern-and-southeast-europe-2023>



		Researcher		
<b>Jasarevic</b>	Jasmin	Member of NGO/CSO	Bosnia and Herzegovina	NGO Proni
<b>Klašnjaja</b>	Snežana	Policy-maker	Serbia	Ministry of Tourism and Youth
<b>Kovacic</b>	Alja	Youth worker	Slovenia	Zavod za podjetništvo, turizem in mladino Brežice
<b>Lonean</b>	Irina	Researcher	Romania	Centre for Sustainable Community Development
<b>Malchenko</b>	Oksana	Member of NGO/CSO	Ukraine	NGO Youth Worker's Association of Ukraine
<b>Mareva</b>	Vesela	Youth worker/ Researcher	Bulgaria	International Youth centre Stara Zagora/Trakia University
<b>Maricic</b>	Marija	Educator	Serbia	Youth office in Uzice
<b>Michev</b>	Georgi	Policy-maker/ Youth worker	Bulgaria	Global Organization for Development
<b>Mladjenovic</b>	Ljubica	Policy-maker	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Municipality of Bijeljina
<b>Najaryan</b>	Artur	Youth worker/educator	Armenia	Youth Initiative Centre NGO
<b>O'Donovan</b>	James	Researcher	Malta	Consultant and researcher - Pool of Experts on Youth Work Development (Youth Partnership)
<b>Pantea</b>	Maria-Carmen	Researcher	Romania	Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group and University "Babes Bolyai" Cluj Napoca
<b>Panus</b>	Teodora	Member of NGO/Youth worker	Moldova	National Youth Council of Moldova
<b>Petkovic</b>	Sladjana	Researcher	Montenegro	Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group

<b>Rannala</b>	Ilona-Evelyn	Researcher/ Educator	Estonia	Tallinn University
<b>Redig</b>	Guy	Researcher	Belgium	Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group and Pool of Experts on Youth Work Development (Youth Partnership)
<b>Roka Varfi</b>	Jehona	Policy-maker	Albania	National Youth Congress
<b>Schönfeld</b>	Konstanze	Policy-maker	Germany	Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) representative / World Esperanto Youth Organisation (TEJO)
<b>Scriosteanu</b>	Andreea	Member of NGO/CSO	Romania	European Youth Forum
<b>Stoyanov</b>	Atanas	Policy-maker	Belgium	Phiren Amenca International Network
<b>Sulungur</b>	Orhun	Policy-maker	Turkiye	Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Turkey
<b>Taru</b>	Marti	Researcher	Estonia	Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory and Pool of Experts on Youth Work Development (Youth Partnership)
<b>Tasev</b>	Gjorgi	Policy-maker/ Youth worker	North Macedonia	Associate for Youth and Youth Policy North Macedonia
<b>Tierney</b>	Hilary	Researcher/ Educator	Ireland	Centre for Youth Research and Development (CYRD), Maynooth University and Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group (Youth Partnership)
<b>Tismanaru</b>	Nadia	Youth worker	Romania	Quality Label for Youth Centres, Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT)

<b>Topciu</b>	Arlinda	Policy-maker	Albania	Head of Cabinet, Minister of State for Youth and Children - Prime Minister's Office
<b>Vilcea</b>	Mihai	Policy expert	Romania	Quality Label for Youth Centres, Timisoara Youth House (FITT) / National Youth Foundation (FNT)
<b>Vizir</b>	Cristian	Member of NGO/CSO	Moldova	Center of Information and Resources PRO BONO
<b>Williamson</b>	Howard	Researcher/ Policy expert	Wales (UK)	University of South Wales, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group and Pool of Experts on Youth Work Development (Youth Partnership)
<b>Yaroshenko</b>	Nataliia	Youth worker/ Educator	Germany	NGO Young Agents of Change
<b>Yeghoyan</b>	Anna	Youth worker/ Researcher	Armenia	Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO
<b>Zentner</b>	Manfred	Researcher	Austria	Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group and University for Continuing Education Krems

<b>Organising team</b>		
<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Role/position</b>
<b>EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership</b>		
<b>Basarab</b>	Tanya	Research and Youth Policy Officer, EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
<b>Kodela-Lesemann</b>	Mojca	Administrative and Project Assistant, EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
<b>Milutinovits</b>	Laszlo	Project Officer on youth work development, EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
<b>Facilitators and rapporteur</b>		

<b>Potočnik</b>	Dunja	Rapporteur
<b>Serban</b>	Adina	Facilitator
<b>Turcan</b>	Mariana	Facilitator

<b>Photo, video, and graphic recording</b>		
<b>Adrian-Oprea</b>	George	Photography and Videography team (Outdoor 360)
<b>Dumitru</b>	Paul	Graphic facilitator (Picturise)
<b>Macoveanu</b>	Renata	Graphic facilitator (Picturise)
<b>Mihaila</b>	George-Alin	Photography and Videography team (Outdoor 360)
<b>Popa</b>	Andrei	Photography and Videography team (Outdoor 360)

*\*All references to Kosovo, whether 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.*