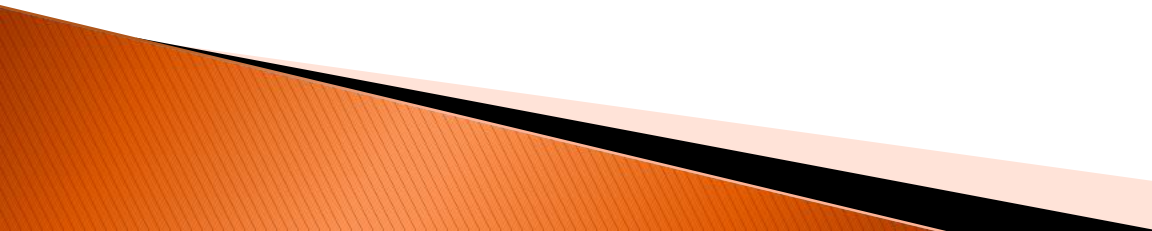


Study on Models for Recognition of Youth Workers' Competences

**Seminar on “Growing Youth Work in Eastern and
Southeast Europe”.
Bucharest
30 November 2023**

Context and aim of the study

- ▶ **The Youth Partnership commissioned the study to make recommendations to the two partner institutions (European Commission and the Council of Europe) on possible scenarios for mutual, cross-border and Pan-European recognition of youth workers' competences based on existing European and national level practices.**
 - ▶ **The aim was to make important advances in the recognition of youth work so as to ensure the robust implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) and the Bonn Process.**
- 

Overview of work undertaken

▶ Scoping Paper

- Role of youth work, youth workers and the recognition of youth workers' competences.

▶ Country and Cross-Country Models in Europe

- at third-level (Ireland, Estonia, Finland and Germany)
- in vocational and further education (Austria, Portugal, Finland)
- in non-formal learning settings (Czechia, Serbia, Ireland).

▶ Models from Outside the Youth Sector

- Graphic design, photography, data protection, coding and programming, public relations, personnel training.

▶ Pan European Models

- SALTO TOY, CofE Youth Work Portfolio, Youthpass, European Training Strategy (ETS), CoE-EU Youth Partnership's Visible Value, ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations).

“Putting the puzzle pieces together” – Report on study of models for the recognition of youth workers’ competences in Europe.

- **Two possible web-based models for the recognition of youth workers' competences are proposed. While the two models have similarities in terms of structure and methodology they also diverge in some significant respects.**
- **The two models have the same broad structure:**
 - **Criteria and thresholds for recognition of youth workers' competences**
 - **Governance, hosting, implementation and support structures and bodies**
 - **Benefits of recognition.**

Criteria and thresholds for recognition of youth workers' competences

- ▶ **Model A** comprises a two-stage accreditation system similar to those for comparable professions (e.g. photographers and trainers).
- ▶ **Stage 1 (self-assessment) criteria for recognition include:**
 - 5 years youth work experience, or
 - 2 years youth work experience + evidence of acquired competences, or
 - Formal education qualifications in youth work.
- ▶ **Stage 2 (portfolio based and peer assessment) criteria for recognition of youth work specialization. Portfolio to comprise**
 - 10 years youth work experience, or
 - 5 years youth work experience + evidence of acquired competences, or
 - Formal education qualifications in youth work.
- ▶ **Specializations and peer-review organizations are outlined.**

Criteria and thresholds for recognition of youth workers' competences

- ▶ **Model B** comprises a single-stage accreditation system for all youth workers but its main aim would be to provide recognition for volunteer youth workers with limited access to recognition. An associated aim would be to strengthen the recognition and capacity of the voluntary youth sector.
- ▶ The process would involve individual on-line portfolio based self-assessment under the following criteria
 - 7 years youth work experience and relevant education and training, or
 - 3 years youth work experience and relevant education and training + evidence of acquired competences, or
 - Formal qualification in youth work + 3 years relevant experience.
- ▶ Evidence of acquired competences would be based on, or commensurate with, one or more of the competence frameworks set out in Model A and linked with, or compatible with, the European Qualifications Framework.

Governance, hosting, implementation and support structures and bodies

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ The **Governing Board** would meet regularly to make strategic decisions and provide guidance for the implementation of the system.
- ▶ **Potential hosting and implementation bodies, include:**
 - **National agencies for Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps**
 - **Future European umbrella of youth worker associations**
 - **EU-CoE Youth Partnership**
 - **SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centres.**
- ▶ The hosting institution would be responsible for the website, implementation, quality assurance, promotion, communication and cooperation.


Governance, hosting, implementation and support structures and bodies

- ▶ **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).
 - Member States would designate an appropriate body for implementing the mechanism and evaluating and accrediting applications for recognition. The designated authority would also be responsible for promoting and supporting the initiative at national, regional and local level and liaising with the host of the platform.
 - The host organization and the Member States' designated authorities would meet twice yearly to review, monitor and evaluate the initiative and make proposals for its further development and future role.
- ▶ Both models also suggest support structures and bodies who the governing and host bodies would liaise and work with.

Benefits of recognition for youth workers

- ▶ **The core benefits for youth workers would be:**
 - **Enhanced professional self-awareness and self-recognition**
 - **Confirmation of professional credibility**
 - **Better visibility within the professional field.**
- **Potential concrete benefits for youth workers, could also include:**
 - **Higher fees for accredited youth workers in projects funded by European youth work programmes (Erasmus+, ESC, CoE EYF)**
 - **Additional points in the selection of Erasmus+, ESC and CoE EYF projects involving accredited youth workers**
 - **Recognition of prior learning through the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)**
 - **Exclusive access to professional development courses for accredited youth workers.**

Benefits of recognition for institutions, policymakers and the youth sector

- **Greater clarity of the scope and size of the youth work field in Europe that could lead to better planning and investment in youth work development.**
 - **Facilitation of cross-border recognition of youth worker competences and qualifications between member states.**
 - **A supportive European instrument for enhancing national level recognition of youth work and the youth worker profession.**
 - **Greater visibility and stronger positioning of the youth work sector in relation to other sectors in the policy-making and programme development arenas.**
- 

Conclusions and challenges

- ▶ **The criteria, methods and processes for recognition are only outline proposals and, if agreed in principle, require considerable further work and development before they could be practically applied.**
 - ▶ **They also involve many difficult and even contentious issues and options that need to be resolved.**
 - ▶ **Issues of governance, hosting, implementation and benefits have significant implications for stakeholders in the youth sector and need to be further considered and discussed by policy makers with a view to reaching some conclusions and clarifying the policy landscape before proceeding further.**
- 