



European Commission and Council of Europe
Partnership on Youth

Report

2nd Meeting of EKCYP-Correspondents
(22. - 23. October 2007)

Introduction

The 2nd meeting of correspondents to the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy was opened by the coordinator of the EKCYP with an overview on the latest developments in the Partnership on Youth between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in general and on the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy in specific

The information on the objectives and the stage of the redevelopment of the partnership webportal, including the EKCYP, was the main point of the introduction. Furthermore the situation regarding the information available in the section Country Information of the EKCYP was presented. It showed that for some countries data were not yet available and that for others the data provided where in most cases not complete.

In 2007 correspondents were working on slightly simplified questionnaires. The simplification of the questionnaires was done following the recommendations of the quality group as well as the input of the national correspondents.

Tour de table – the countries situation

In a first round the correspondents from different countries gave an insight in their respective working situation related to the answering of the EKCYP questionnaires and the drafting of country sheets. The correspondents had been asked before the meeting to prepare a short report on their working conditions (working context or institution, existence of official support, cooperation partners, and quality control)

For Romania Sorin Mitulescu described the situation of the institute for youth where he was employed. This institute is under the guidance of the Ministry of Education, but the cooperation with other structures of the government was not very good.

He pointed out that a national data base was missing, therefore certain data, asked for in the Knowledge Centre were hard to obtain in a short time. To gain data on the local and regional level it was not possible to contact all 5.000 municipalities, therefore it would be better to work with regional structures.

Michel Vandekerke described the Observatory for Youth as a department of the Ministry of the French speaking part of Belgium. The purpose of this observatory was to gather information for decision making. Therefore the additional work in order to provide this information to the EKCYP was relatively easy to be conducted. A basic quality check of the data was done by the team of the Observatory.

For the Flemish part of Belgium, represented by Nicole Vettenburg, the provision of information for the EKCYP was part of the work of the youth research platform

(YOP). But Nicole pointed out, that the amount of work used for the EKCYP was hardly able to cope with the existing workforce. She had to find a new person to feed the database.

In Turkey the national correspondent Tulin Sener is working alone at the University of Ankara, without any direct relationship to the Directorate of Youth and Sport which is directly connected to the prime ministers office. The infrastructure makes it hard to work since students can enter the room and only one computer and one telephone are available for three colleagues. It is difficult to collect data, since no funding is available for the task. She works sometime with students collecting data and paying them with her own money as there is no official funding provided for the EKCYP correspondent's task in Turkey. For the gathering of data Tulin is also cooperating with some NGOs.

Jon Sigfusson showed a completely different picture for Iceland. The data collection is not difficult, since everybody concerned with youth affairs in Iceland knows everybody else. So it is little effort to collect the data if they are available. But not all topics are of high importance for the Icelandic case.

For France no real difficulties apart the immense time consumption of the data collection are reported by Jean-Claude Richez. Also the political validation of the data takes a lot of time. On the regional and local level no data on youth policy can be provided since it would be an impossible task to collect information of the 33.000 municipalities that all do youth policy.

The situation for data collection in Austria is not too difficult. If data existed they normally were available and since Austria was not a very big country, people working in the youth field know each other and have information on data sources, says Manfred Zentner. Due to the federal structure of youth policy in Austria some of the questions in the current questionnaires can not be answered, since only regional data exist. The Ministry in Austria is interested in setting up a national youth network, so recently a feasibility study on establishing such a network was finished. The establishment of the network, which will also support the work of the EKCYP-correspondent, is planned for the next year.

Caroline Vink and Tirza Kujenhoven from the National Youth Institute described the situation of the national correspondent in the Netherlands as somehow difficult: – even if the Institute collects data on childcare, children and youth for professionals on behalf of the Ministry of Youth and Families and is therefore quite well placed for the duty. But the topics required for the EKCYP are not so important for the Dutch

youth policy and vice versa. Also the age brackets are hard to focus on, since they are not the same for national youth policy.

Caroline Oldfield from the English national youth agency sees the main problem for the work of the UK correspondent in the fact that the Department for Children, Schools and Families coordinates the work with the respective departments from Scotland, Wales and North-Ireland but is not in charge of the youth affairs in the UK as a whole. Therefore information on other countries than England is hard to get. A further difficulty arises of the age definitions for youth policy in the UK-countries that are not the same as the convention in the knowledge center. The amount of time used for the work on the EKCYP is far more than calculated in the department.

Susanne Klinzing from Germany reported that the EKCYP correspondents work was part of the work plan of IJAB. This institute runs a database on European youth work and understands its own role as institute on youth. The main difficulty in Germany is the data collection. Due to the federal structure of youth work and statistics 17 statistical offices have to be contacted to get a good and accurate picture on the situation of youth in Germany.

In Portugal the Portuguese Youth Institute collects the data for the EKCYP but as Alexandra Moreira describes, this is not one of the most important tasks of this institution. A large number of data in the questionnaires do not change over the years. The main challenge for the work is the shortage of resources – regarding time as well as human resources. Since the questionnaires have to be translated first and the answers have to be authorised by the president of the institute and then again translated to English the procedure is very time consuming. Another problem is the age range covered in national statistical data since for Portugal these are 0 – 24 years and 25 – 56 years.

The Ministry of Youth, Education and Employment in Malta has according to Miriam Teuma only a small department for youth affairs. Collecting of data is easy because research is mainly done by the university, but also some grass root research exists. Anyway also in Malta the most problematic point in the work of the EKCYP correspondent is the amount of time that needs to be dedicated to this duty. In the case of Malta there is a close contact and cooperation with the member of the researcher's network.

In Poland the Youth Research Centre of Warsaw University is responsible for the data collection for the EKCYP; however no special funding for that work is provided. For the data collection the Youth Research Centre cooperates with a network of researchers, with data collections, with the centre of statistics, the police and other

institutions. One of the main problems is that for some questions different sources provide different answers because data are based on different indicators and the correspondent has to decide which one to trust. For the moment the future situation of the contribution to the EKCYP remains unclear and will depend on the developments in the ministry responsible for youth following the recent elections.

Lack of resources is the main problem for the correspondent in Sweden, states Vegard Hölaas. Even if the National Youth Board has access to many researches all around the country and Sweden is a good mapped society – a lot of statistical data exist. However many of these data are not fitting the needs of the EKCYP as they are concerning different topics. And data on youth are in general covering the age group 16 to 25 according to the Swedish age definition for young people.. Due to the lack of resources the EKCYP-correspondent is limited to the data contained in public reports. Additional resources would allow to profit from data gathered by private institutions.

For the daily work it is also problematic, that no concrete profile and instructions for the job as national correspondent is given, whereas the other tasks of the National Youth Board have a clear description. Therefore people tend to pay lower importance to the correspondent's task.

In Slovakia the National Institute for Youth is in charge of the data collection for the EKCYP. This institute has good contacts to the youth field but still data collection on local level is difficult. Tibor Skarbsky believes that this will become easier since the municipalities will have to report on the developments in the field of the White paper priorities in the future. Also the involvement of the Institute in planning and organisation of youth research in Slovakia makes it more convenient to get data.

The situation in Norway is described as good by Cay Gjerustad. About 10-15 researchers of NOVA are involved in youth research in Norway and also the Ministry is interested in this work. The cooperation with NGOs and the Ministry eases the task of the EKCYP correspondent. As in Sweden the population is well mapped but sometimes the accurate sources are hard to find.

Sami Myllyniemi, the Finnish EKCYP correspondent, portrays the Finnish Youth Research Network as visible in public and also strongly involved in the youth policy making. Problematic topics, where hardly new data can be found in Finland, are the key priorities voluntary activities and participation – here data is old or missing at all. Another problem for the correspondent is that some data has to be bought and to find the budget for that is difficult. Validation in Finland is given through the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Youth Affairs.

Recent developments and institutional context for the EKCYP

The recent developments 2007 in the youth policy of the European Commission were presented by Ekaterini Karanika. One of the most important item was the Eurobarometer Survey on Youth carried out in all 27 member states and covering the target group from 15 to 30 years old young people. The sample of this representative survey were 800 young people in each country (500 in the small countries). The results of this survey can be found on the homepage of [Eurobarometer](#).

The EuNYK network to support the EU Member States to set up national youth networks of youth knowledge held the second meeting in March 2007. These national networks would also help the EKCYP correspondents to get data. This topic is of high priority not only for the Commission but also for the Member States since 2008 ends the phase for reporting on the concrete outcomes resulting from the implementation of the common objectives on better knowledge and understanding of youth". It is planned to have more meetings of this network in 2008 to intensify the cooperation.

Following the resolution on young people's active citizenship of November 2006 two working groups were established. One on the development of assessment tools for participation by and information for young people, and the second on peer learning. The cooperation with DG research is intensified and two were calls already published under the FP7 [Youth and social exclusion](#)" and ["Democratic ownership and participation" are specific to Youth or include Youth](#). Furthermore Eurostat will take a closer look on the own surveys for data on young people and will make a publication on that topic.

A new communication [Com (2007) 498] on promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society was adopted in September 2007. The main messages of this Communication are that full participation of young people in society can only be achieved through better and earlier investment in youth; the approach should be more and more transversal and youth policies should be developed together with young people.

Among the concrete actions foreseen in the Communication an EU report on youth to be prepared every three years with the participation of young people is of utmost importance for the correspondents. In order to contribute to this reporting exercise the themes covered so far, by the EKCYP knowledge should be broadened and include the fields of Health, Social Inclusion, Employment and Education, , in order to take into account the priorities mentioned in the Communication.

So in 2008 the work for the correspondents will be intensified as information on additional topics should be collected; but their work will be also lightened since the

questionnaires will be further simplified. The way to provide information on the new topics is not yet decided. They could probably take the shape of fact sheets.

It is planned to support the work of the correspondents on a political level (especially relevant for the EU member countries) through an official letter to be sent to Ministries but financial support is not planned .

On behalf of the partnership between the EU and the CoE Hanjo Schild gave an insight on the current discussion regarding the new developments of the EKCYP in the Partnership. It was pointed out that the Knowledge centre is not just the questionnaires on the key priorities but that also national youth policies can be presented in the EKCYP. To highlight a certain counter weight to the European Union youth policy it would be important to have many CoE countries in the Knowledge Centre present.

After two years pilot phase and the current phase of restructuring of the EKCYP it is now entering the phase of quality improvement. The picture presented should be more accurate and usable, therefore the questions which could not be answered by many countries should be reduced;

One of the main questions regarding the further development is the rise of visibility of the EKCYP. This can be reached through the merging of the three homepages of the partnership on the one side and via the enlargement of the range of topics covered on the other. Also the linking to other sites will improve the situation. But the EKCYP has to be promoted also on the national level – therefore the national data has to be accessible in an easy way. To provide some data on the countries in the own language might also help to increase the interest. But anyway the system will not be self running; so offline information on the Knowledge Centre is of utmost importance.

Furthermore it would be important to offer relevant data for the different target groups. Researchers are not satisfied with the provided data, because no further research can be done with them. The same holds for youth policy makers on the national level; they already have the information shown on the EKCYP. They might be of higher interest for local politicians. One way to increase the interest of national policy makers might lie in the enlargement of the range of topics.

Technical update

Carole Schnitzler, the new webmaster of the Partnership, presented the recent developments on the technical side of the Knowledge Centre. At the end of 2006 a study was launched to develop a new website. The objectives for the new web

portal are to improve the user friendliness, to merge the three partnership websites and to upgrade the platform. There will be a single entrance to the questionnaires displayed in pdf format which should allow for direct access to the country data and the view of all answers at the same time. The advantages of this new site is that it provides easier navigation, that the whole questionnaire will be downloadable and that the global search engine will also cover the answers of the questionnaires.

In the future no virtual forms, to be filled out by the correspondents, will be used anymore but word documents that will be converted into pdf documents by the secretariat. This also allows to make changes after accepting the answers and allows for a better handling and updating of information.

The first idea to allow comparability on the horizontal as well as on the vertical level, so between years and between countries was very ambitious. But it turned out, that it did not work – mainly because many sections had no answers at all. Now the comparability between countries is a little bit more complicated but can still be done by opening and/or printing the respective pdf documents.

Simplifying the questionnaires – working groups

Following the amount of missing information in the replies to the questionnaires these should be further simplified taking into account the information available in the member states. Four working groups were built to work each on one questionnaire. The common task was to reduce the questionnaires to the most important questions.

The following proposals were made:

A) Working group notes Questionnaire youth participation

- 1) The first question should relate to the context on youth participation in the member state, national framework, legislation, strategy etc.
- 2) Question related to structures for participation, using examples of parliament and council: Listening of the questions regarding each level should be avoided and instead an overview should be given on the number of existing structures, if possible with a website address or other contact for further information. It would be interesting to know how do these different levels relate?
- 3) Overview of provisions/ organisations for youth participation Questions 3.1 to 3.4, should be kept and merged into one question It should be asked for an overview and data/statistics if possible.
- 4) Regarding the structures of representative democracy the questions on membership in political parties, the –vote, elections and other activities should be kept.
- 5) Learning to participate: Questions should be kept but in a simplified manner

B). Working group notes Questionnaire voluntary activities

- 1.1: Relevant question that gives background information. It should be possible to give an answer to the question for most countries.
- 1.2: Even though it can be difficult in many cases to give a number of participation it is a very important question and should therefore remain included.
- 3.1: This is also a question that could be difficult to answer, but it is considered so important that it is included.
- 3.2: It is interesting to see how voluntary activities is financed in the different countries. Could probably be easier to answer than 3.1.
- 4.1 and 4.2: Included to give background information about how voluntary activities are organized.
- 5.2 and 5.3: Should remain included because the answers should give information about how voluntary activities are recognized by the government and policy makers.
- 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3: we felt that questions starting with 6, 10 and 9 were about related issues: do the government facilitate participation in voluntary activities for young people and how do they do that. We preferred the questions 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 because they were most specific and probably the easiest to answer.
- 13.0: Interesting to monitor the existence of surveys on voluntary activities.

C) Working group notes questionnaire on “Better Understanding...”

- The working group pretty much confirms the relevance and the usefulness of the questions proposed in the questionnaire (that is why were not so successful in the first place at dropping questions). At the same time we realize it might not be easy or might not be possible for all correspondents to provide all the needed answers.
- Our general experience: discussion about the questions is helpful and inspiring. Not only for discussing the relevance of the questions and making a selection out of the existing version. But it also stimulates a shared view of the meaning of the questions among correspondents and it has a facilitating influence on providing the answers.
- Title 6, 7 and 8: Although we understand and see the relevance and importance of these questions, at the same time it will be difficult to provide the answers; getting the answers might provoke a study in itself. We also have some doubts about the quality of the answers that will be given; we suppose these questions might lead to all kinds of answers.
- Proposal for combining title 10 and 11: New title: Networking and support for networking.

D) Working group on Information

- The working group on information proposed to have an introduction before the different sub themes of the questionnaires
- It was proposed to merge the questions askin for information points on national, regional and local level.

- Access and use of information points (and youth portals) could not be measured satisfactorily information given to this answer might therefore not be useful
- The questions under number 4 (participation of young people in information) are too specific, notably 4.1. asking for the number of publications produced by young people for the purpose of youth information. A more general question describing the ways of participation in youth information would be suggested.

The country fiche

After working on the simplifications of the questionnaires the discussion focused on the new established country fiche.

The question on widening the range of topics is related to the question on how to present these data. The country fiche replacing the ABC of youth policy from now on represents a more accessible and userfriendly document than the older questionnaire format.

The country fiche allows more descriptions of the political situation in the given country. It also enables the correspondents to describe the relation between national youth policy and other policy fields.

But still some problematic fields stay. So the problem of defining “migration” is still given in the different countries. The term has to be defined in the glossary. The same holds for the youth welfare services in the countries; what is involved in youth welfare?

The special accentuation of minorities and young people with migration background marks them as a special group of special political interest. But nevertheless other groups in need of a targeted youth policy exist – even when not covered in the country fiche – and should be described in a qualitative way.

For the topic of welfare services it was fixed that it is important to state if these are public or if non-public organisations are offering them in the name of authorities. Furthermore it has to be defined if welfare for families, unemployment benefit or scholarships should be counted as part of the welfare services.

Upon the reporting system on the other cross-sectorial topics no final decision is taken. For some of the topics already reporting systems exist – at least for the EU-member countries, so it will be decided how in which form the data will be presented.

It is the plan to involve the correspondents more into the development of the other features of the EKCYP. But the correspondents should not just contribute to the other sections but can also multiply the information and invite colleagues from the countries – researchers, trainers, policy makers – to contribute to the EKCYP.

Especially researchers should upload papers in their own language with an English summary.

Support structures for the EKCYP and the correspondents

It is planned to have at least two meetings of correspondents each year and also focused thematic discussions could support the work of the correspondents – for training as well as for the simplification of questionnaires.

The quality group to the European Knowledge Centre also should also meet more often.

Furthermore the correspondent's network should be linked closer to the research seminars: to each seminar one or two representatives of the network should be invited. This should also imply that the seminars get better coverage in the Knowledge Centre.

Countries visits by representatives of the partnership to countries where the cooperation between correspondents and Ministry does not function very well could provide additional support to the correspondents work.

The possibility of contributing with funds to acquiring data from non public institutions has to be explored further by the Partnership.

Also in the future a more official support letter from the partnership should help the correspondents to get access to data easier. But also the Ministries in the countries should provide the correspondents with support letters. Furthermore the EC will “remind” the EU-members that it is their task to support the structures to provide data for the EKCYP.

In connection with that the “job description” of the correspondents will be more accurate and detailed so that it will be clear what structures should be available to do the work.

Additional sources of information on the European level will be searched and the partnership will try to establish co-operation with these sources, like it is done with EUROSTAT. Also links to existing web pages will be included on the EKCYP webpage. (In this regard a network meeting of information providers on European level is planned).

Study on socio-economic scope of youth work in Europe

The background of this study was a lack in the recognition of youth work and it's socio-economic relevance in many countries. Previous research showed that the socio-economic scope of youth work is not known in many countries.

So in this study 10 European countries participated (Austria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Spain).. The task was to provide definitions of youth work in the different countries first, provide details

Report 2nd meeting EKCYP correspondents

on the money spent on youth work, the number of people working in the field of youth work and how many young people are participating in youth work activities. The study showed that it is hard to find the different numbers. So the national budget for youth work can be found, but the spending on local level is hard to figure out. The number of the people working in the youth field is as hard to get.

It is planned to enlarge this study on more countries in the first step but also on other questions where relevant data is missing.

The results of the study are available on the EKCYP at: http://www.youth-knowledge.net/INTEGRATION/EKC/Research/Socioeconomic_scope1.html

Vienna, 13.11., Manfred Zentner