

Youth Partnership

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



EKCYP-PEYR annual meeting report

Brussels, Belgium | 28-29 May 2024



Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

Executive summary

The 2024 annual meeting of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) and the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) took place at the Bedford Hotel & Congress Centre in Brussels, Belgium on 28 and 29 May 2024.

During the two-day meeting, new members of EKCYP and PEYR were introduced to the Youth Partnership, and participants engaged in discussions around the following topics:

- what is the Youth Partnership, how do the two networks contribute to its work, and what activities and outputs are planned;
- reviewing the outcomes and outputs of the 2022-23 workplan, and discussing the priorities of the 2024-25 workplan;
- outlining the opportunities available to the networks, such as conferences, symposia, workshops, seminars, support to partner institutions, research, policy reviews, training kits (T-kits), Youth Knowledge Books and massive open online courses (MOOCs);
- mapping the work currently being done by PEYR researchers and EKCYP correspondents in relation to current priorities of the 2024-25 workplan, including rural youth, mental health and well-being, youth mainstreaming and youth perspective, youth participation, climate crisis, youth work, and peace and security.
- identifying remaining research gaps, challenges, and policy and practice needs.

Introduction and institutional context

The Youth Partnership is a joint programme of the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field, which provides a unique and evolving platform of co-operation between youth work, youth research and youth policy. Both institutions emphasise the importance of a knowledge-based approach to youth policy making, as expressed in their relevant policy documents and strategies. The Youth Partnership co-ordinates the two networks – the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) and the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), including the PEYR advisory group – which contribute to evidence-based policy making.

EKCYP is a network of correspondents who are nominated by country representatives in the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). The correspondents contribute national-level data and information to an online database intended to provide the youth sector with a single access point to reliable knowledge and information about the situation of young people across Europe.

PEYR is a pool of 35 researchers and experts from across Europe who have a diversity of expertise in different policy, practice and research areas connected to youth. They provide research, advice, expertise and analysis to the Youth Partnership, the European Commission and the Council of Europe on issues relating to the lives, needs, aspirations and experiences of young people in Europe. Members of PEYR conduct research, administer surveys, write analytical papers, policy briefs, studies and other publications of the European Union-Council of Europe Youth Partnership. The current members of PEYR were selected through an open call at the end of 2023, with approximately 70% of current members being new to the pool. The PEYR network is supported by the PEYR advisory group, consisting of senior youth researchers having long-term experience with the Youth Partnership.

Three pillars of the Youth Partnership's work

Youth work

The Youth Partnership works on promoting, developing and strengthening quality youth work and the social, political and formal recognition of its contribution to youth participation and social inclusion of young people. It supports the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda by facilitating the dialogue within the youth work community of practice, contributes to the increasing recognition of youth work, and supports initiatives of the European Union and the Council of Europe on youth work through research and activities.

In the 2024-25 workplan, upcoming activities relating to youth work are:

- biannual meetings of the Steering Group on the 4th European Youth Work Convention;
- seminar on youth work development in eastern and South-East Europe;
- advocacy tools for youth work development and communication about the European Youth Work Agenda;
- youth work strategy manual;
- T-kit 3 (revised) on project management;
- T-kit 9 (revised) on funding and financial management;
- T-kit 12 (revised) on youth transforming conflicts;
- editorial work on T-kit 1 on organisational management (revision);
- editorial work on a new T-kit 16 on well-being and mental health of young people;
- research on indicators of quality standards for youth work;
- follow-up on the mapping study on European youth work ecosystems and the study of models of recognition of youth workers' skills and competences, including the outcomes of the review of the Council of Europe's recommendation on youth work;
- massive open online course (MOOC) on youth work essentials (updated), with short online courses on project and financial management;
- support for preparations and implementation of the 4th European Youth Work Convention, Malta, May 2025;
- series of workshops at the 4th European Youth Work Convention to promote and disseminate the latest publications and resources produced by the Youth Partnership.

Youth policy

The Youth Partnership supports knowledge-based participatory youth policy development by offering research, knowledge and information to relevant stakeholders and building capacity of youth policy actors. It aims to enhance dialogue within the youth sector between youth policy makers, researchers, practitioners and young people.

In the 2024-25 workplan, upcoming activities relating to youth policy are:

- symposium on young people, democracy and climate action, 24-26 September 2024;
- seminar on participatory youth policy making, tools and resources for adopting European standards and support measures in national and local youth policy, combined with the evaluation and closing meeting of the project Shaping youth policy in practice;
- in-depth study on the existing youth mainstreaming/youth perspective initiatives and projects at European level, making a review of the recommendations of international organisations and providing recommendations to partner institutions;
- in-depth study on the existing youth mainstreaming/youth perspective initiatives and projects at national level and providing recommendations to the sector;
- Youth Knowledge Book on the youth perspective in policy making/youth mainstreaming;
- MOOC on youth policy essentials (updated), with a new module on local youth policy and one masterclass organised per year.

Youth research

The Youth Partnership collects, analyses and develops knowledge, data and information about young people, to better understand current and upcoming challenges and trends in their lives, and their implications and relevance for youth policy and youth work. It organises seminars, workshops, symposia and knowledge forums where research informs the sector, stimulates dialogue and contributes to better youth policy and practice.

In the 2024-25 workplan, upcoming activities relating to youth research are:

- Perspectives on Youth: research on young people’s mental health and well-being, including the study, Insights and Youth Knowledge Book (tbc);
- research on youth political participation, including:
 - the study on democracy and civic space; and
 - research on young people’s voting behaviour during the 2024 European elections;
- Coyote youth work magazine dedicated to young people’s political participation;
- study on young people in rural areas;
- MOOC on youth research essentials, run in a self-directed format.

Current priorities of the Youth Partnership

The priorities of the Youth Partnership are decided by the partner institutions, following a series of consultative meetings with the broader youth sector and EKCYP and PEYR networks. During the annual meeting 2024, current priorities of the 2024-25 workplan were presented and discussed in thematic parallel sessions:

- rural youth;
- mental health and well-being;
- youth mainstreaming and youth perspective;
- youth participation;
- climate crisis;
- youth work;
- peace and security.

Parallel working sessions

Following the introduction of the Youth Partnership, members of EKCYP and PEYR discussed some of the key thematic areas covered by the partnership, including current research projects, trends, challenges, gaps and knowledge needs.

Young people in rural areas

Facilitated by Francisco Simões, reported by Ruta Braziene

The term “rural areas” can have a different meaning and vary between countries and regions. There is also a distinction between remote areas and intermediate remote areas, which the group discussed in the pan-European context. The key challenges identified during this parallel session were the following.

- Access to services
 - Rural youth often lack access to essential services and infrastructure, including quality education, healthcare, transport and digital connectivity.
- Access to education and employment (school-to-work transition)
 - Rural youth require specialist support in developing skills relevant to the local labour market.
 - It is also difficult to access non-formal education which helps young people develop these skills.
- Self-identification of rural young people
 - Do young people from rural areas identify themselves as a particular “disadvantaged” group?
 - What does this mean for policy and research?
- Identification with and the role of the local community
 - What does the local culture look like?
 - How do young people relate to it?
 - What role does community play in rural young peoples’ lives?
 - What does hierarchy look like in the local rural community?
- Vulnerability of rural young people
 - What different vulnerabilities do rural young people face?
 - How do we consider the intersectionality of these vulnerabilities in policy and research (poverty, exclusion, etc.)?
- Connecting with rural young people
 - How do we effectively engage with rural young people when conducting research?
 - What mechanisms exist to accurately measure the experiences of rural young people?
- Regeneration of rural areas
 - What role does the regeneration of rural areas play in young people’s lives?

- How can regeneration improve opportunities for rural young people?
- What role can youth workers play in local development agencies?
- Rural-urban migration trends
 - What are the current trends across Europe relating to rural-urban migration?
 - How do we improve quality of life in rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration?
 - How can research and policy effectively measure and support rural-urban migration?
- Youth spaces in rural areas
 - What presence do designated youth spaces have in rural areas?
 - What support is there for the development of youth spaces?
 - How can youth work bridge this gap?

The following two European-level projects on the topic of rural youth were highlighted:

- COST Action CA18213: Rural NEET Youth Network: Modelling the risks underlying rural NEETs social exclusion, available at <https://rnyobservatory.eu/web/>, accessed 15 October 2024.
- Tr@ck-IN: Public employment services tracking effectiveness to support rural NEETs, available at <https://eeagrants.org/archive/2014-2021/projects/RF-YOUTH-0031>, accessed 15 October 2024.

The following upcoming activity of the Youth Partnership was also highlighted:

- **Youth research**
 - Study on rural youth.

Mental health and well-being

Facilitated by Snežana Klačnjana and Dunja Potočnik, reported by Sladjana Petkovic

Young people's mental health and well-being have gained importance in the youth sector and policy discussions in recent years, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. In June 2023, the European Commission first published an initiative that aimed to finally put mental health at the centre of European Union policy making. It advocated for integration of mental health in all relevant European Union policies, recognising a need to address the

broader structural, socio-economic and environmental factors impacting mental health, and highlighted the need for adequate investment in mental health community infrastructures. This thematic session reflected on the relevance, current trends and strategies to address mental health. It outlined the following current trends and issues.

- Impact of Covid-19 pandemic
 - The aftermath of the pandemic has amplified the existing challenges related to mental health (such as isolation, depression, anxiety).
- Impact of armed conflict
 - The current state of conflict in Europe and around the world has exacerbated mental health issues amongst young people, particularly those with direct relations involved/affected by the conflict (such as in Ukraine).
- Access to services and support
 - In many countries, there is limited access to support due to an insufficient number of psychologists and weak engagement from psychologists with schools.
- Accessing mental health support online
 - There is still an open question surrounding the ways we can digitalise mental health support for young people.
 - There is a need for more research and best practices in this area.
- Capacity building
 - Currently, there is limited capacity for professionals dealing with mental health.
 - There is a need for additional support for professionals to cope with the changing realities, problems, methods and tools relating to mental health.
- Role of youth workers
 - The role of youth workers is not recognised enough in dealing with the mental health crisis.
 - There needs to be better recognition of youth work and its collaboration with other professions (such as psychologists and mental health support services).
- Role of communities and families
 - The role of communities and families is essential in supporting young people to regain a sense of belonging.

- Better guidance needs to be given to communities and families on how to support young people's mental health.
- Peer support programmes
 - Many countries are trialling peer support programmes.
 - Further support from professionals is needed to make them more sustainable.
 - Evidence needs to be collected to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Missing data for evidence-based policy making
 - Currently, there is a gap in evidence relating to young people's mental health across Europe.
 - There is a lack of a systemic approach to evidence generation.

The following best practice examples were highlighted by participants:

- **Serbia**
 - There are enough psychologists and pedagogues in schools, they support teachers, and the focus is on active learning and prevention of violence.
 - The challenge is that youth workers are not included in the process and not recognised enough (in schools).
- **Portugal**
 - Country programme TAKE CARE provides space for youth aged between 12 and 25 (or 30) based on protocols and psychological support is available.
 - Well-being services are private and paid by the state, parents are welcome to join.
- **Ukraine**
 - There are different initiatives to support children.
 - A manual on trauma and the role of youth work child books (funded by the European Union) to help channel trauma and understand emotions.
 - One initiative helps to understand how to talk with children and how to teach adults – professionals and parents – to deal with mental health issues.
- **Azerbaijan**
 - There is a children's hotline service which covers the entire country.
 - The ministry of internal affairs supports regional initiatives based on WhatsApp information and a reporting system.

- There are good examples but also gaps – it is not a fully comprehensive system.
- UNICEF U-support is a good platform but its sustainability is a problem.

The following upcoming activities of the Youth Partnership were also highlighted:

- **Youth work**
 - Editorial work on a new T-kit 16 on well-being and mental health of young people.
- **Youth research**
 - Study on young people’s mental health and well-being.
 - Insights publication on young people’s mental health and well-being and Youth Knowledge Book (tbc).
 - Perspectives on Youth seminar on young people’s mental health and well-being, 27-28 November 2024.

Youth mainstreaming and youth perspective

Facilitated by Tomaž Deželan and Howard Williamson, reported by Tiina Ekman

Youth mainstreaming and youth perspective in policy development has long been a priority on the European agenda, but it has gained increased attention since the European Year of Youth in 2022 and the Reykjavik declaration of 2023. While youth perspective and mainstreaming approaches come with different nuances, both acknowledge young people as agents of change and partners in the process of developing policy, prioritising young people’s agency in defining and shaping social, political and economic agendas. The key challenges discussed during this parallel session were:

- **Defining concepts**
 - Identifying similarities and differences in youth perspective and youth mainstreaming as approaches to policy development.
 - Clarifying what should be seen as “universal truths” and what can be context-specific adaptations.

- Youth rights
 - Outlining what “youth rights” are in the European context.
 - Creating a framework for upholding them and embedding them in policy-making processes.
- Systematic approach
 - Ensuring consistency, reliability and efficiency in youth mainstreaming and youth perspective processes by creating systematic guidelines for partners to follow.
- Evidence-based approaches
 - Youth perspective and mainstreaming approaches should be evidence-based, in line with the standards of the Youth Partnership and partner organisations.
 - We need to reflect on the best ways to collect this evidence.
- Meaningful participation
 - Distinguishing between meaningful and “meaningless” participation.
 - How to encourage meaningful participation from young people which results in youth being empowered and involved in the political process.
 - Mapping the relationship between participation and youth perspective/mainstreaming approaches.
- Awareness raising
 - Raising awareness across institutions about the importance of integrating a youth perspective and youth mainstreaming in order to move progress forward.
- Safety
 - Awareness surrounding the safety risks of engagement in visible political life for young people (particularly for young women).
 - Discussion surrounding the protections available for young people engaging publicly and provisions for further protections.
- Youth-friendly language
 - Making sure that political communications are in accessible and “youth-friendly” language in order to better engage young people to take part in political processes.
- Young people are not a homogeneous group
 - It is important to consider the intersectionality (gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, etc.).

- Need to ensure representation and inclusion of the most marginalised young people, especially in mainstreaming activities.
- Reach of mainstreaming and youth perspective activities
 - How are youth perspective and mainstreaming activities reaching the most marginalised groups of young people?
 - How can we proactively ensure we are engaging young people effectively and inclusively through appropriate measures based on needs, expectations and interests?

There was a reflection on the current state of the integration of a youth perspective and youth mainstreaming across Europe, with examples of best practices coming from Belgium and Sweden.

The following upcoming activity of the Youth Partnership was also highlighted:

- **Youth policy**
 - Research on youth perspective in policy making/youth mainstreaming.
 - Youth Knowledge Book on youth perspective in policy making/youth mainstreaming.

Youth participation

Facilitated by Gilda Isernia and Ondřej Bárta, reported by Guy Redig

Youth participation takes many diverse forms – it can be formal or informal, including activities such as voting, political party membership, engaging through a youth organisation, or taking part in online political activism, boycotts, or a protest movement. Current research by the Youth Partnership aims to develop a better understanding of what participation is (and is not), and some of the key challenges facing youth participation. The workshop initially broke participation down into formal and informal participation, before discussing the following challenges:

- Shrinking of civic spaces

- Across Europe there is a shrinking of civic spaces where young people can engage in politics.
- What can be done to circumvent this and create more civic spaces for youth participation?
- Formal electoral level
 - How well prepared are young people to vote?
 - There is currently a broken feedback loop regarding outcomes of voting.
 - How are policies outlined in the election process upheld upon election?
- Individualised participation
 - Many young people do not “formally” participate but demonstrate informal participation through their own life choices (veganism, climate activism).
 - How can we effectively measure informal participation?
- Digital participation
 - How can European Union institutions create new ways of participation that are more inclusive (such as digital spaces for participation)?
 - How can youth work support this?
- Co-ordination capacity
 - Young people often do not have the time, skills nor experience to co-ordinate effectively.
 - How can youth work bridge that gap and support the co-ordination of participation activities?
- Policy makers’ engagement with youth
 - Policy makers are not trained to engage with young people.
 - Translation of policy into practice and communication with young people (such as youth councils) is lacking.
 - How can this gap be bridged?
- Incentives for participation
 - How to incentivise participation amongst young people?
 - How can we provide personal benefits for participation?
 - What is the role of youth work in incentivising participation amongst youth?
- Safe participation

- How can we ensure participation is safe for young people when they are more vulnerable to online abuse and hate speech (particularly young women), and are less respected (and not treated as peers) in the process?
- Effective engagement strategies
 - There is a need for more research on what engagement strategies are most effective.
 - How can these be implemented across Europe, where resources and capabilities of youth workers vary significantly?

Amongst these discussions, there was one best practice example discussed by participants:

- **Sweden:** youth policy includes a [rights-based youth perspective](#) as a concept, where all government decisions and initiatives that affect young people should have a youth perspective.

The following upcoming activities of the Youth Partnership were also highlighted:

- **Youth research**
 - Research on young people's participation, democracy and civic space.
 - Research on young people's voting behaviour, including the impact of lowering the voting age to 16 or 17 and the new trends in standing for elections as candidates.
 - Coyote youth work magazine dedicated to young people's political participation and voting.

Climate crisis

Facilitated by Neringa Tumėnaitė and Tomi Kiilakoski, reported by Lieve Bradt

Sustainability and the climate crisis are key priorities for young people, and also feature highly on the policy agenda. The impact of climate change has also been recognised as a priority at the European policy level, and the Council of Europe's commitment to a healthy environment has been reaffirmed through the 2023 Reykjavik declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe. Current research by the Youth

Partnership explores the role of youth work and youth policy in tackling the climate crisis and supporting young people in dealing with its broader consequences. This workshop initially presented the upcoming symposium on [young people, democracy and climate action](#) to be held in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 24 to 26 September 2024, before discussing the following current issues:

- Eco-anxiety
 - Many young people are overwhelmed by the current climate crisis.
 - This is reflected in the rising amount of “eco-anxiety” reported by young people.
 - This is heightened by a lack of knowledge on how to make more “climate-conscious” decisions.
- Intergenerational relationships
 - The climate crisis is contributing to breakdowns in intergenerational relationships for many young people who feel let down by the older generation for contributing to climate change and not tackling its causes.
- Perceived inactivity of policy makers
 - There is frustration from many young people towards policy makers due to a perceived inactivity – there is lots of “talking” about the climate crisis but limited action being visibly taken to tackle its causes.
- Individualised approach
 - Young people are not a homogenous group, yet discussions surrounding youth and the climate crisis consider all youth as equal, without acknowledging different experiences, perspectives and levels of concern.
- Behavioural changes
 - Young people feel there is too much pressure on them to “green” their choices and behaviour.
- Sustainable youth work
 - Debate about what the role of youth work is with the climate crisis.
 - How can youth work be made more sustainable (such as limiting travel and digitising opportunities)?
 - What would sustainable youth work look like?
- Eurocentric perspectives

- The debates surrounding the climate crisis are still Eurocentric and do not consider indigenous knowledge on the environment.

The following upcoming activities of the Youth Partnership were highlighted:

- **Youth policy**
 - Symposium on young people, democracy and climate action (24-26 September 2024).
- **Youth research**
 - Research paper on climate litigation.
 - Research paper on climate emotions and eco-anxiety.
 - Youth Knowledge Book on youth and democracy in the climate crisis.

Youth work

Facilitated by Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll and Dragan Atanasov, reported by Dora Giannaki

The workshops on youth work discussed the role of youth work in Europe today, reflecting on the changing needs of young people and the changing nature of youth work. The Youth Partnership currently focuses on promoting and strengthening youth work and recognition of its contribution to, *inter alia* youth participation and social inclusion of young people. Initially, this workshop presented the [MOOC on youth work essentials](#) (2022) and the symposium [Visible value: growing youth work in Europe](#) at the European Youth Centre in Budapest (31 May-1 June 2023). The following issues relating to youth work were identified:

- Youth work as a tool
 - Youth work should be conceived as a “tool” to facilitate achievement of a priority (such as for the purpose of peacebuilding), rather than being a main policy priority itself.
- Rights-based approach

- Youth work should be considered as a constant instrument for the promotion of human rights.
- Young people should be agents in determining the interventions that are best for them as individuals and collectives.
- Diversity of types/uses
 - There are different types of youth work and different ways to use it.
 - There needs to be a common ground adopted at the European Union level to model as best practice.
- Methodology
 - The upcoming 4th European Youth Work Convention should emphasise methodology (proving value) as a core philosophy of the education required by youth workers.
- Differing national realities
 - The realities of youth work, youth work systems and attitudes to youth work vary significantly across Europe.
 - It is a challenge to homogenise youth work systems at such a broad level.
- Policy awareness amongst youth workers
 - Many youth workers are not actively engaged with youth work policy.
 - There are many barriers to engaging with this, particularly surrounding visibility, accessibility and inclusivity.
- Occupational standards
 - Employment standards of youth work (such as remuneration, working conditions) are a challenge for attracting and retaining people in the field.
 - There is a need for promotion of youth work as a profession.
- Funding of youth work
 - Current funding model for youth work across Europe is volatile and youth work is underfunded.
 - Increasing budget allocation and political support for youth work should be higher on political agendas.
- Future of youth work
 - What does the future of youth work look like?
 - How can we relate it with other professions?
 - How can it potentially address the needs of different age groups?

- Intergenerational dialogue
 - There is a growing disconnect between generations – how can youth work bridge this gap and encourage intergenerational dialogue?

The following upcoming activities of the Youth Partnership were highlighted:

- **Youth work**
 - Biannual meetings of the European Union-Council of Europe Steering Networking Group of the 4th European Youth Work Convention Agenda.
 - Seminar on youth work development in eastern and South-East Europe.
 - Advocacy tools for youth work development and communication about the European Youth Work Agenda.
 - Editorial work on a new T-kit 16 on youth work and mental health and well-being of young people.
 - Research on quality standards indicators for youth work.
 - Follow-up on the mapping study on European youth work ecosystems and the study of models of recognition of youth workers' skills and competences, including the outcomes of the review of the Council of Europe's recommendation on youth work.
 - MOOC on youth work essentials (updated) with short online courses on project and financial management, and one master class organised per year.
 - Support to the [4th European Youth Work Convention](#), Malta, May 2025.
 - Series of workshops at the 4th European Youth Work Convention to promote and disseminate the latest publications and resources produced by the Youth Partnership.

Peace and security

Facilitated by Samir Beharić and László Milutinovits, reported by Mehmet Gökay Özerim

The workshops on peace and security discussed the experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the unique experiences of post-conflict societies. The crux of this discussion was surrounding the issue of young people migrating from the region, and the challenges of

European Union accession for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. This led into a broader discussion surrounding the following current issues relating to peace and security across Europe:

- Youth perceptions of peace
 - The status of “peace” in a country is a crucial component for young people’s decisions about their life, such as whether to stay or emigrate.
- Youth extremism
 - The increasing risk of youth extremism, notably in rural, ethnically homogeneous areas where extremism arises with the introduction of new people who are not part of the homogenous group.
- Environmental concerns
 - The growing awareness amongst young people surrounding issues such as deforestation and mining, which are prompting youth activism.
- Mental health
 - The long-term effect of countries being in a “frozen conflict” situation which creates feelings of insecurity and has a negative impact on young people’s mental health.
- Political participation
 - What are the reasons for lower voter turnout amongst young people, and what role do peace and conflict play in this?
- Rapid technological change
 - What is the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and rapid technological change on peace and conflict?
- Relevance of solutions
 - How can youth workers and policy makers adapt conflict resolution methods to stay relevant in a rapidly changing environment?
- Emotional impact of living in post-conflict regions
 - There is a distinction between emotional and rational reactions.

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

- It is important to focus on addressing the emotional rather than rational reactions of young people in post-conflict situations.
- Risk of politicisation
 - What is the role of reconciliation training in youth work?
 - There is a potential for reconciliation training to be “politicised” and lose its effectiveness.
- Effectiveness of international resolutions
 - Examining the impact of the United Nations and other international organisations on conflict resolution and assessing their effectiveness.
- Challenges with digital tools
 - Difficulty in using digital tools for conflict resolution and transformation.

During this discussion, there was one best practice example discussed. The Regional Youth Co-ordination Office (RYCO) in Tirana was exemplified as a relevant initiative with a focus on peace and security policies.

The following upcoming activity of the Youth Partnership was highlighted:

- **Youth work**
 - T-kit 12 (revised) on youth transforming conflict: the state of affairs of the revision process was presented, and the challenges and opportunities of developing new T-kits or revising old ones were discussed. The issues raised included digitalisation vs. the usefulness of printed publications, the importance of capacity building activities where such manuals are used, the amount of digestible information for readers and users, and usefulness in the current context in Europe.

Thematic priorities of partner institutions

The second day of the annual meeting began with an introduction to the thematic priorities of the partner institutions, with presentations from Marta Touykova, Head of Sector for Youth Policy, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), the European Commission; and Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe.

European Commission

The European Commission's work for and with youth is guided by the [EU Youth Strategy \(2019-27\)](#). It focuses on three core areas of action: [engage](#), [connect](#), [empower](#).

Additionally, the Erasmus+ programme is a key component supporting the objectives of the European Commission. The Erasmus+ programme priorities for the 2021-27 period are:

- Inclusion and diversity
 - Promoting equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions.
- Digital transformation
 - Supporting citizens of all ages in acquiring the digital skills and competences they need to live, learn, work, exercise their rights, be informed, access online services, communicate, critically consume, create and disseminate digital education content.
- Environment and the fight against climate change
 - Emphasising the need to provide learners of all ages with opportunities to find out about the climate crisis and sustainability through both formal and non-formal education, and to make learning for the green transition a priority in education and training policies and programmes.
- Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement
 - Supporting active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning, and fostering the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy.

Council of Europe

On 23 January 2020, the [Youth sector strategy 2030](#) was adopted. It focuses on four priorities:

- Revitalising pluralistic democracy
 - By increasing the capacity of youth civil society to advance participatory democracy and democratic citizenship within and beyond their memberships.

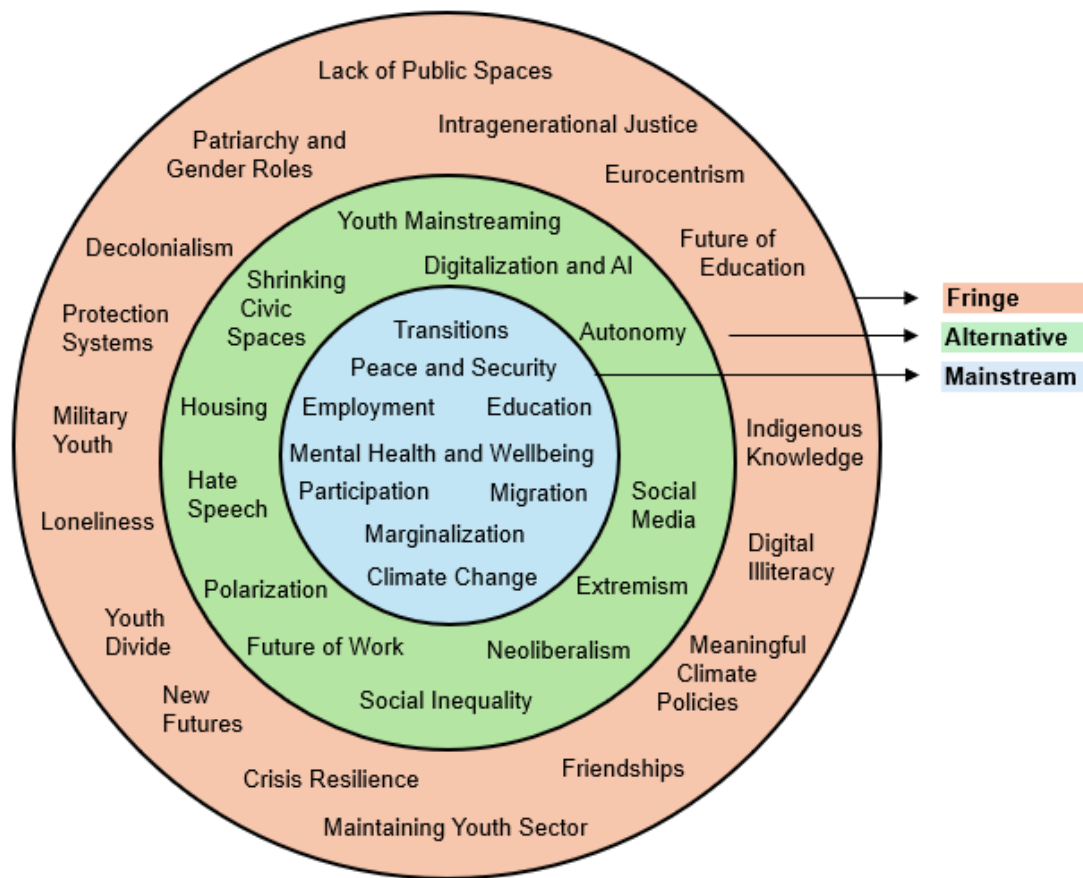
- By conducting more policies and governance processes in a meaningful, participatory manner, involving diverse groups of young people and their representatives/organisations.
- By strengthening youth policy and youth work in removing barriers to youth participation.
- By improving institutional responses to new developments in democracy, such as the changing participation patterns.
- Young people's access to rights
 - By furthering progress in the implementation of the Council of Europe's standards on young people's access to rights.
 - By increasing capacity building and resources for youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders to provide human rights education and advocate access to rights.
 - By improving institutional responses to emerging issues affecting young people's rights and their transition to adulthood, such as, but not limited to, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, artificial intelligence, digital space, increased mobility and new forms of employment.
- Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies
 - By better equipping stakeholders to tackle both the challenges of building inclusive societies through policies, programmes and projects that embrace diversity and of effectively monitoring and countering discrimination, violence and exclusion.
 - By allowing young people, including those experiencing any form of discrimination and exclusion, to benefit from opportunities that develop their commitment to and exercise of democratic citizenship.
 - By embedding key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and environmental sustainability, more prominently in policy, practice and research within and beyond the youth sector.
 - By strengthening young people's capacities, agency and leadership to prevent violence, transform conflict and build a culture of peace through substantial support for funding, building networks and recognising the full diversity of young people and their ways of organising themselves.

- Youth work
 - By strengthening, recognising and advancing youth work policies and practices by embedding youth work within youth policy frameworks, notably through a European youth work agenda and its implementation, in close co-operation with the European Union.
 - By improving the quality of youth work delivered by both volunteer and paid youth workers.
 - By extending the access and attractiveness of youth work and non-formal education/learning for the benefit of wider populations of young people.

Future directions for research: bullseye

The final working session mapped out future directions for research, where participants were grouped together to map out the “mainstream”, “alternative” and “fringe” future directions for research for the Youth Partnership and youth sector. This was based on a period of self-reflection on current issues and challenges present in each participant’s own country and their specialist field of research.

Mainstream issues are widely recognised and accepted topics within academic, professional and public discourse. Alternative issues are less conventional but still hold credibility and are increasingly recognised in academic circles, while they might challenge traditional perspectives or focus on emerging issues that have not yet gained widespread acceptance. Fringe issues are highly unconventional or controversial topics that receive minimal support from mainstream academic or professional communities. The findings of this exercise are presented below:



This mapping activity identified the key issues and challenges for young people, youth workers, researchers and policy makers across Europe. There is a growing emphasis on issues relating to mental health and well-being, particularly the impact that many of the “fringe” issues had on mental health, such as military and youth, patriarchy and gender roles, Eurocentrism, friendships and loneliness. There were many challenges tied into youth transitions, such as autonomy, housing, the future of work, neoliberalism and social inequality. Additionally, a growing concern surrounding extremism, hate speech and marginalisation amongst young people reflects the current political situation across Europe, and the impact it has on them. Finally, the future of the youth sector was a prominent challenge, with discussions surrounding youth mainstreaming and participation, as well as how to maintain the youth sector as it currently is, and improve its societal standing.

Appendix 1 – Agenda

28 May 2024

9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Opening of the meeting
9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Reconnecting – getting to know each other
10:30 a.m. - 10:35 a.m.	Presentation of the agenda and workflow
10:35 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	From the Youth Partnership about the Youth Partnership
10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Coffee break
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Working together
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	The work of the European Youth Forum
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Thematic parallel sessions I <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rural youthMental health and well-beingMainstreaming and youth perspective
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Coffee break
4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Thematic parallel sessions II <ul style="list-style-type: none">ParticipationClimate crisisYouth workPeace and security
5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Plenary, reporting from each topic
7:00 p.m. -	Dinner

29 May 2024

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Looking ahead, thematic priorities of the partner institutions Council of Europe European Commission
10:00 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.	Supporting activities Administrative procedure Communication and dissemination Writing guidelines
10:40 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Coffee break
11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	Upcoming research topics in the field
11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Closing of the meeting
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Work in research teams (ongoing Youth Partnership projects)
1:00 p.m. -	Lunch and departures

Appendix 2 – List of participants

Name	Surname	Role
Narmin	ASLANBAYOVA	EKCYP
Dragan	ATANASOV	PEYR
Cristina	BACALSO	PEYR advisory group
Ondřej	BÁRTA	PEYR
Samir	BEHARIĆ	PEYR
Lieve	BRADT	EKCYP
Ruta	BRAZIENE	EKCYP
Anne-Cecile	CASEAU	PEYR
Tomaž	DEŽELAN	PEYR
Salome	DOLIDZE	PEYR
Tiina	EKMAN	EKCYP
Ela Serpil	EVLIAOGLU	PEYR

Ana Cristina	FERNANDES TAVARES DA COSTA GARCIA	EKCYP
Teresa	FERREIRA	PEYR
Tomislav	GAJTANOSKI	EKCYP
Martin	GALEVSKI	PEYR
David	GARVA	EKCYP
Dora	GIANNAKI	PEYR
Jeanne	GORNY	EKCYP
Enrique	HERNÁNDEZ-DIEZ	PEYR
Frederike	HOFMANN-VAN DE POLL	PEYR
Gilda	ISERNIA	PEYR
Jasmin	JASAREVIC	EKCYP
Hannes	KÄCKMEISTER	EKCYP
Etch	KALALA	PEYR

Tomi	KIILAKOSKI	EKCYP
Snežana	KLAŠNJA	EKCYP
Marko	KOVACIC	PEYR
Sintija	LASE	PEYR
Irina	LONEAN	PEYR
Anna	LYTRA	EKCYP
Sofia	MAGOPOULOU	PEYR
Nino	MIKHANASHVILI	EKCYP
Tijana	MILOSEVIC	PEYR
Daniele	MORCIANO	PEYR
Mehmet Gökay	ÖZERIM	PEYR
Maria-Carmen	PANTEA	PEYR advisory group
Nadiia	PAVLYK	PEYR
Natali	PETALA-WEBER	EKCYP

Sladjana	PETKOVIC	PEYR advisory group
Tuuli	PITKANEN	PEYR
Dunja	POTOČNIK	PEYR advisory group
Šimon	PRESSER	EKCYP
Mette	RANTA	Researcher (former PEYR)
Guy	REDIG	PEYR advisory group
Francisco	SIMÕES	PEYR
Bram	SPRUYT	PEYR
Veronica	STEFAN	PEYR
Marti	TARU	PEYR advisory group
Jenni	TIKKANEN	PEYR
Neringa	TUMÉNAITÉ	PEYR
Mariana	TURCAN	EKCYP
Federica	VALERI	EKCYP

Georgina	WHITEMAN	PEYR
Howard	WILLIAMSON	PEYR advisory group
Manfred	ZENTNER	EKCYP

COUNCIL OF EUROPE	
Tobias FLESSENKEMPER	Head of the Youth Department

EUROPEAN COMMISSION	
Marta TOUYKOVA	Head of Sector for Youth Policy, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)
Babis PAPAIOANNOU	Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM	
Lauren MASON	Policy and Advocacy Manager

EUROPEAN UNION-COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Tanya BASARAB	Research and Youth Policy Manager, Manager of the Youth Partnership a.i.
Lana PASIC	Research and Youth Policy Manager
Marietta BALÁZS	Junior Youth Project Officer
Alice BERGHOLTZ	Senior Project Officer
László MILUTINOVITS	Senior Project Officer
Mojca KODELA-LESEMANN	Youth Policy and Research Assistant