

Welcome to COYOTE 0

Youth-Training-Europe, Issue 0 (July 1999)

THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE on European Youth Worker Training

A New Framework for a Joint Development Based on Long-Standing Co-operation

The partnership – what is it?

The partnership agreement (covenant) was signed by the Directorate General XXII of the European Commission and the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe in November 1998, with the aim "to provide a framework for the joint development and funding of new European youth work training courses by the Commission and the Council".[\(1\)](#)

The establishment of this frame for co-operation in the youth and training field is based on a simple principle: both institutions work largely towards the same basic values of human rights, pluralist democracy, the rule of law, active citizenship and European co-operation, but they have different tools at their disposal to implement these principles.

The European Commission has elaborated during the last years a series of Youth programmes, which are related to the objectives of art. 149 of the Treaty of the European Community and to those set in the text of the YFE programme, notably the objective of promoting active European citizenship. The Council of Europe has a long-standing experience in training youth workers and working with youth NGOs. The idea to pool these experiences and to encourage a coherent approach to European youth worker training is not new, but it was more systematically explored in 1998, resulting in the partnership agreement between the two institutions.

The first Covenant applies to the period from November 1998 until April 1999. A second Covenant has been developed for the following one-year period until April 2000. Negotiations take place in view of obtaining, after this initial period, a longer-term commitment from both institutions to intensified co-operation.

What are its aims?

According to the first covenant, the partnership should "ensure greater complementarity and coherence between the work of the two institutions" and "provide a basis for an innovative approach in this field" in terms of partners, target public, contents and methods of the training offered. The programmes developed within the partnership should work to strengthen the values and main principles of both institutions, in complementarity with other actors having a specific expertise in this field.

Much and diverse experience exists in the field of youth worker training in Europe. Often, though, organisations, institutes or trainers work in contact with only a limited circle of partners. The partnership also aims at encouraging a greater exchange of experience, at spreading the results of activities and materials developed within and around the partnership, and at making better use of and further developing existing and new networks of trainers.

The training of youth workers from very diverse backgrounds provides a backbone for the development of active citizenship in our societies. It is therefore important to ensure quality standards and quality control of the activities and materials developed within the partnership. In the longer run, both institutions also search for a better recognition of this training, provided within a framework of non-formal education.

Who is it for?

The training activities are addressed to youth workers in Europe, in particular those co-operating with the institutions, the National Agencies for Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service, and the European Youth Forum. The term 'youth workers' refers in this context to professional and voluntary youth workers, youth leaders, members of youth organisations, youth information officers, youth officers from local and regional authorities, and trainers.

Participants should be able to act as multipliers and to pass on the experiences and knowledge gained in an activity to others within their organisation, service or local community. Emphasis is put on reaching a diversity of target groups, and in particular under-represented categories of young people.

What are the programmes?

Some key work areas have been defined for training activities taking place or materials to be developed until April 2000. They include training for trainers, training for and with under-represented groups, intercultural learning and intercultural language learning, anti-racist work, project management and organisational management. The work should be made visible to the wide range of partners and target groups concerned. [\(2\)](#)

In a process of ongoing co-operation and negotiation between the two institutions and the statutory bodies (governmental and non-governmental) of the Youth Directorate, a programme of activities and educational materials was decided upon for the starting period. The European Youth Forum has been actively involved in the practical implementation of the activities of the programme.

Under the first Covenant (until April 1999) three training courses were held: one on intercultural language learning, one for Roma youth leaders and one on project management and transnational voluntary service. A process to produce several educational binders ('resource files') on different subjects that can form the basis for training courses has been started. Coyote has been launched. Six training courses and the finalisation of the educational binders are envisaged under the second Covenant. (For more information, please turn to the full list of partnership publications and training courses in this issue of *Coyote*.)

All projects are developed and implemented by teams that bring together National Agencies, educational staff from the European Youth Centres, trainers working with the institutions and trainers representing youth organisations, and in some cases, other partners with a specific knowledge.

The partnership as a process

The partnership is a framework for a joint development of the two institutions in the field of youth worker training in Europe. As such it constitutes an ongoing process of defining and reviewing the needs, aims and objectives of the co-operation, to assess its results, and to establish the programmes that are run within this frame accordingly.

The period until April 2000 forms the starting and also experimental phase of the partnership. Until then, time will be taken to look more deeply into the needs for and interests in such a co-operation, and the added value that it represents for the institutions and their partners.

In this spirit, a "needs assessment and vision building" meeting took place at the end of April at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Representatives of the statutory bodies of the Youth Directorate, of the European Youth Forum, from National Agencies, from pilot projects carried out under Action B.II of the Youth for Europe programme, trainers and members of the institutions worked together to explore the direction in which this partnership should further develop. The discussions focused on vision building, defining the aim and objectives of the co-operation, looking into evaluation and quality criteria, partners and target groups and establishing a programme outline. A meeting to assess the results of the first period of the partnership will take place at the end of this year.

The structures around this partnership are complex and they involve a broad range of partners. The institutions, wishing to work towards greater complementarity and coherence and to ensure innovation and quality, will take steps to involve these different partners – youth organisations, National Agencies, trainers etc. – into the on-going development and implementation of the partnership programmes and build on their experiences and knowledge. In this spirit, they want to ensure the best use of the potentials that this partnership creates to promote training for youth work as a contribution to the development of active and democratic citizenship in Europe.

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Footnotes

(1) Covenant, Article 1 - Purpose, p.1

(2) Report of the first meeting of the Technical Working Party, which follows the development of the partnership, its content and practical aspects, 5-6 November 1998