

# The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

Key priorities for youth policies answers on  
**Better Understanding of Youth**



Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

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## **BELGIUM (Flemish Community), 2005**

### **1 Structures and actors that play a role in gaining a greater understanding and knowledge of young people**

#### **1.1 Departments in universities dealing with youth issues**

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL): Higher Institute for Labour (Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid) (HIVA). Dr. Cossey. Subjects: labour, education. <http://www.hiva.be> Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL): Research Group Juvenile Criminology Prof. Lode Walgrave. Subject: youth criminology, social exclusion <http://www.law.kuleuven.be/ogjc/> Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Centre for Family Educational Studies. Prof. L. Vandemeulebroecke Subject: family and parenting support <http://ppw.kuleuven.be/cgp/> Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Department of Sociology, TOR Research group. Prof. Mark Elchardus. Subjects: education, youth culture and participation <http://www.vub.ac.be/TOR/> University of Antwerp, Department of Sociology. Prof. Dimitri Mortelmans. Subject: information policy on youth. <http://www.ua.ac.be/> University of Antwerp, Department of Sociology, Research group on culture and welfare. Prof. Pelleriaux & Prof. Meulemans Subjects: education, youth work. [http://www.ua.ac.be/main.asp?c=\\*OCW](http://www.ua.ac.be/main.asp?c=*OCW) Ghent University, Department of Social Welfare Studies. Prof. Maria Bouverne-De Bie and Prof. Nicole Vettenburg Subjects: youth work, youth services, child care, children's rights <http://allserv.ugent.be/~tgarre/> Ghent University, Department of Education, Subject: education <http://memling.ugent.be/education/> Ghent University, Department of Sociology, Prof. Vincke Subject: Flemish research into pupils <http://www.psw.ugent.be/socio/> Limburgs Universitair Centrum (LUC) Diepenbeek, Transportation Research Institute Subject: mobility <http://www.luc.ac.be/imob> Limburg Universitair Centrum (LUC), Diepenbeek, Socio-Economic Institute Subjects: ICT, equal opportunities <http://www.luc.ac.be/sein/>

#### **1.2 Major public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth issues**

##### **1.2.1 National public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth issues**

Centre for Population and Family Studies, Flemish Scientific Institute Subject: participation Research and Information Centre of Consumers' Organisations Subject: consumerism Association for Alcohol and other Drug-problems Subject: substance abuse Research and Development Centre Childhood and Society Subjects: mobility, children's participation Child and Family (Kind en Gezin) Subjects: child care, deprived children, adoption, child abuse King Baudouin Foundation (Koning Boudewijnstichting) Subjects: poverty, social exclusion, social involvement In Petto Youth Service Organization Subjects: information and prevention Service Centre for Youth Policy Subjects: youth work, youth policy VDAB Flemish Public Employment Service Subject: employment, unemployment Association of Flemish Youth Services and Consultants Subject: (local) youth policy

##### **1.2.2 Local public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth issues**



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Municipal youth services, Youth advisory centres, Children's law centres, centres for student support, etc., often make efforts to collect information about youth. Research is not their first task, but does take place sometimes, for example, in relation to drawing up policy plans.

### 1.3 NGOs dealing with youth issues

All the nationally organised youth work organisations have expertise about the needs and expectations of young people. A list of these associations can be found on the following website: [http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/informatie/landelijk\\_jeugdwerk/](http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/informatie/landelijk_jeugdwerk/)

### 1.4 Statistic offices that collect statistics on youth

The Planning and Statistics Administration (APS) publishes a number of publications every year which do not specifically focus on youth but which do give an insight into elements related to the living conditions of young people. Publications: -VRIND (Flemish Regional Indicators): a survey of demographic, macro-economic and socio-cultural context data. -Profile Flanders: the position of Flanders compared to other European countries on the basis of indicators. The APS also organises a survey of citizens every year on values, attitudes and conduct, related to social and policy relevant subjects. This survey uses face-to-face interviews with 1,500 Flemish people aged 18-85. The scientific analyses of the APS survey of citizens is published every two years in the publication #Vlaanderen gepeild# (A survey of Flanders).

### 1.5 Youth researchers or experts

- The Department of Social Welfare Studies (Ghent University) carries out research into educational activities in the broader context of provisions and practices which are aimed at social and cultural development, with a particular focus on the perspective of the young people themselves. Youth work, youth services and youth protection are important subjects of research. - The research group Tempus Omnia Revelat (Department of sociology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel) works on the subjects of time use, cultural changes, media, youth culture, education, citizenship, participation in education and social life. - The research group Juvenile Criminology (Faculty of Law, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) has as central research subjects: social vulnerability and youth delinquency, school, prevention, urbanisation, youth protection and reinstatement law. - The former three research groups cooperate in the Youth Research Platform (JOP). In addition, other Flemish universities and institutes of higher education obviously also have expertise with regard to youth research.

### 1.6 Private companies dealing with youth issues

N/A

### 1.7 Others dealing with youth issues

N/A

### 1.8 New structures and actors that have been set up this year



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N/A

## **2 Legal basis**

### **2.1 Legal basis or guidelines facilitating activities leading to a better understanding of youth**

The decree of 29 March 2002 on Flemish youth policy lays down the rules for drawing up a Flemish youth policy plan and for the subsidies of the Service Centre for Youth Policy and the Flemish Youth Council. This explicitly states that attention must be devoted to youth research. The decree of 14 February 2003 on the support and stimulation of the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth (work) policy and provides that every municipality and province must draw up a youth (work) policy plan. In addition to the planned policy measures, it also includes a description of the existing situation and an analysis of needs. Depending on the local implementation of this policy plan, it can contribute to a better understanding and knowledge of youth. The decree of 19 December 2003 on the general budget of expenditure of the Flemish Community, reserved funds for the first time for scientific support for the youth policy. The funds were used to support the Youth Research Platform.

### **2.2 New Developments that have taken place this year?**

On the basis of the 2004-2009 Youth policy report, the second Flemish Youth policy Plan will be drawn up by the end of 2005. This policy report devotes attention to the activities of the Youth Research Platform (JOP). The JOP is charged with the following tasks: to draw up an inventory of existing youth research and to disseminate this, to analyse and synthesise youth research and to develop an instrument that will recurrently monitor the lives of young people. This must contribute to an objective picture of young people and their life-conditions and to scientific support for the youth policy.

## **3 Funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better understanding of youth**

### **3.1 International funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better knowledge of youth**

N/A

### **3.2 EU funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better knowledge and understanding of youth**

N/A

### **3.3 National funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better**



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## **knowledge and understanding of youth**

### **3.3.1 Public national funding**

Subsidies specifically for the Youth Research Platform (JOP) are awarded by the Department of Youth and Sport of the Government of Flanders. For 2005, this concerns a sum of 250,000 euros. Other subsidies, such as those of the federal government and the Fund for Scientific Research Flanders, are awarded to universities, institutes of higher education, and the support centres for research that is relevant to policy which sometimes also includes youth research. The conditions and the size of the subsidies vary depending on the specific research project.

### **3.3.2 Private national funding**

King Baudouin Foundation CERA # foundation Belgian American Educational Foundation

### **3.4 Other funding**

N/A

### **3.5 Actor(s)/structure(s) mainly receiving funding**

Both universities and institutes of higher education and support centres receive funds for research.

### **3.6 New developments that have taken place this year**

There are no new developments in 2005.

## **4 Paper publications disseminating knowledge about the youth field**

### **4.1 Figures for paper publications disseminating knowledge about the youth field**

N/A

### **4.2 Regular youth reports**

Flemish Community, Department of Youth and Sport, Book of Figures on Municipal Youth Work Policy, published every three years. - same core topics Flemish Community, Department of Youth and Sport. Reference book on youth work 2005-2007. Information on municipal and provincial youth work and youth work policy, published every three years. - same core topics VDAB. Study on school leavers, published annually. - same core topics Child and Family produces numerous annual reports. These deal with the following subjects: child care, out-of-school care, vaccination of children, figures on deprivation, adoption and child abuse. VAD. Annual report synthesising substance abuse in school-age children. Children's Rights Commission, annual report - same core topics



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### 4.3 Journals that publish youth research

The following Flemish journals regularly publish articles on youth research: - KRAX, vakblad van het jeugdwerk (Journal for Youth Work). Brussel: Service Centre for Youth Policy. Quarterly. - different issues - Panopticon: tijdschrift voor strafrecht, criminologie en forensisch welzijnswerk. (journal for criminal law, criminology and forensic welfare work), Antwerp, Kluwer Legal sciences, every two months. - different issues - Persoon en gemeenschap: tijdschrift voor opvoeding en onderwijs. (Individual and Society: journal for education and parenting). Antwerp: individual and society. Ten times per year. - different issues - Tijdschrift voor jeugdrecht en kinderrechten. (Journal for youth rights and children's rights.) Gent: Mys en Breesch. - different issues - Tijdschrift voor sociologie. (Journal for sociology). Leuven: Acco. - different issues - Welwijs. Wisselwerking onderwijs en welzijnswerk. (Interaction between education and welfare work) Leuven: Majong. Quarterly. - different issues - Communicatie. Tijdschrift voor massamedia en cultuur. (Journal for the mass media and culture). Leuven: KUL, centre for communication sciences. Quarterly. - different issues.

### 4.4 Reviews on youth research

The Youth Research Platform regularly reports on Flemish youth research. The first synthesising report was published in December 2004: Burssens, D., De Groof, S., Huysmans, H., Sinnaeve, I., Stevens, F., Van Nuffel, K., Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M., Walgrave, L. & De Bie, M. (Eds.) (2004). Jeugdonderzoek belicht. Voorlopig syntheserapport van wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar Vlaamse kinderen en jongeren (2000-2004). Unpublished research report, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Vrije Universiteit Brussel en Universiteit Gent. The subjects covered by this synthesis include: family, childcare, education, leisure time, media, delinquency, work, welfare, mobility, housing and ecology.

### 4.5 Other publications

N/A

### 4.6 What new support has been developed this year?

The Youth Research Platform published its first synthesis report on youth research in Flanders at the end of 2004.

## 5 IT dissemination of knowledge in the youth field

### 5.1 Databases

The Youth Research Platform has a database with an inventory of research on Flemish youth (from 2000). The reference is linked to a folder which reflects the core of the research: reference, type of publication, abstract, client, research questions and methods, results and policy recommendations. The database is updated every three months and can be consulted free of charge on <http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/databank/> The IWETO database (Inventory of Scientific and Technological Research Flanders) is a computerised system which is permanently



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accessible with data relating to current research at the Flemish universities. The existing university research into youth can be found in one of the individual databanks, viz. #Social structures and relationships#, but #youth# is not a separate heading.

<http://www.luc.ac.be/onderzoek/onderzoeksinformatie/iweto/default.asp>

## 5.2 Portals

Youth research platform. Subject: youth research <http://www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be> Youth policy of the Government of Flanders. Subjects: youth and youth (work) policy

<http://www.jeugdbeleid.be> Youth work network. Subject: youth work <http://www.jeugdwerknet.be/> Service Centre for Youth Policy. Subjects: Flemish, provincial and local youth (work) policy; organisational management, youth tourism, green spaces, diversity, intersectoral, management training <http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be>

## 5.3 Statistics, reports, journals, reviews or other publications available on the internet

Flemish Community, Department of Youth and Sport. Book of figures. Municipal Youth work policy. 2002 # 2004. [www.vvj.be/content/leesvoer](http://www.vvj.be/content/leesvoer) Flemish Community, Department of Youth and Sport. Reference book on youth work 2005- 2007. [www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/zoekboekjeugd](http://www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/zoekboekjeugd) VDAB. Study of school leavers. [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be) Child and Family (Kind en Gezin: annual reports. [www.kindengezin.be](http://www.kindengezin.be) KRAX, Service Centre for Youth Policy. Quarterly magazine. [www.steunpuntjeugd.be/krax/](http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/krax/) Burssens, D., De Groof, S., Huysmans, H., Sinnaeve, I., Stevens, F., Van Nuffel, K., Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M., Walgrave, L. & De Bie, M. (Eds.) (2004). Jeugdonderzoek belicht. Voorlopig synthesesrapport van wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar Vlaamse kinderen en jongeren (2000-2004) (Provisional report synthesising scientific research of Flemish children and young people). Unpublished research report, K.U. Leuven, VUB, UGent. [www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be](http://www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be)

## 5.4 What new tools have been developed this year?

In 2004, the database of the Youth Research Platform was set up. This database contains an inventory of research on Flemish youth (from 2000). A file is linked to the reference reflecting the core of the research: reference, publication form, abstract, client, research questions and methods, results and policy recommendations. The databank is updated every three months and can be consulted free of charge on: <http://www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be/databank/>

# 6 Methods and approaches for gaining a greater understanding and knowledge of youth

## 6.1 Quantative Methods



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	used	frequency	themes
<b>European tools (Eurostat, Eurobarometer)</b>	Yes	1 <i>per year</i>	drugs
<b>Youth Opinion polls</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Comparative studies</b>	Yes	8 <i>per year</i>	education, use of media, unsupervised minors, segregation
<b>Longitudinal studies</b>	Yes	3 <i>per year</i>	school leavers, self-respect, education
<b>Questionnaires</b>	Yes	7 <i>per year</i>	drugs, social participation, leisure, education, self-respect, media
<b>Evaluation research</b>	Yes	2 <i>per year</i>	leaving school without qualification, traffic safety

## 6.2 Qualitative methods

	used	frequency	themes
<b>Ethnography</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Participant observation</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Interviews</b>	Yes	2 <i>per year</i>	mobility, girls and computer use
<b>Discourse analysis</b>	Yes	1 <i>per year</i>	images of children
<b>Grounded theory</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Evaluation research</b>	Yes	2 <i>per year</i>	information & communication, compulsory education
<b>Action research</b>	Yes	1 <i>per year</i>	delinquency
<b>Questionnaires</b>	Yes	2 <i>per year</i>	sexuality & disability, educational support
<b>Comparative studies</b>	Yes	2 <i>per year</i>	mobility, autonomy of children with regard to transport
<b>Longitudinal studies</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A

## 6.3 The use of combining methods/ Triangulation



	used	frequency	themes
<b>Action research</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Evaluation research</b>	Yes	1 <i>per year</i>	runaways
<b>Questionnaires</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Comparative studies</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A
<b>Longitudinal studies</b>	No	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A

## 6.4 Questioning youth organisations and NGOs (especially to collect practical knowledge)

In 2004-2005, two studies were carried out in youth movements. - From November 2004 to March 2005, Chirojeugd Vlaanderen collected the views of about 300 Chiro groups with a large-scale survey: the Palaver. The Chiro management was provided with a number of different propositions on commitment, the future of the Chiro operation, the diversity of members, meaning, the network of the group# The results of this survey were translated in the next policy plan of Chirojeugd Vlaanderen. - Dehertogh, B., Mortelmans, D., Ottoy, W. (2005). Scouting: more than just a youth movement? A study into the effects of the product, commissioned by VVKSM. University of Antwerp, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences.

## 6.5 Innovative methods used in the collection of youth knowledge

N/A

## 6.6 New methods that have been developed this year

In 2005, the Youth Research Platform develops an instrument with the aim of recurrently collecting basic data on the living conditions and activities of children and young people. The survey will be carried out at regular intervals with young people between the ages of 16 and 25, by means of a postal questionnaire. In the first instance it opts to work in a cross-sectional way.

# 7 Methods developed for keeping knowledge updated and coherent

Youth research in Flanders is not carried out in a very systematic or coordinated way, so that there are many overlaps and gaps in this broad field. Both policy makers and workers in the field and researchers see this as an obstacle. In order to resolve these problems, the Youth Research Platform (JOP) was set up in the spring of 2003 on the initiative of the Flemish Minister of Internal Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service. One of the tasks of the Youth Research Platform is to draw up an inventory of the available Flemish youth research and centralise it in a database which can be consulted online, <http://www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be/databank/index.htm>. The inventory contains basic information about each research report: an abstract, a summary of the methodology, a brief review of the results, # On the basis of this inventory, the JOP draws up a report to synthesise it at regular intervals and in this way looks for answers to questions such as:



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How do we see children and young people? Which situations are focused on? What are the research questions? How does one collect knowledge about young people? The first synthesising report was published in December 2004 and includes the following subjects: family, childcare, education, leisure, media, delinquency, work, welfare, mobility, housing and ecology.

## 8 Methods for ensuring and assessing quality of knowledge in the youth field

### 8.1 Existing Methods

	used	How it is implemented
Peer reviews	No	N/A
Expert analysts	No	N/A
Indicators	No	N/A
Training of youth researchers	No	N/A
Other	No	N/A

### 8.2 This year's developments of quality assessment in the youth research field.

N/A

## 9 Promotion of youth researchers and their generational renewal and other actors who work towards a better knowledge of youth

### 9.1 Facilitating the exchange of experience and practice

On 18 January 2005 the Youth Research Platform organised the conference #Focus on youth research#, presenting three subjects (leisure time, education and juvenile delinquency). People from the practical field, as well as those from the research world and policy, were invited.

### 9.2 Supporting their mobility

On 26 and 27 April 2004, the Youth Research Platform, organised an international seminar with youth researchers from four European countries: Deutsches Jugendinstitut (Germany), Roskilde Youth Centre (Denmark), Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (the Netherlands) and Observatori Català de la Joventut (Spain). During the seminar, information and insights were exchanged and research subjects were explored, possibilities for cooperation were examined and every youth institute introduced itself to a public of fellow researchers, workers in the field and policy workers and students.



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### **9.3 Improving their skills**

N/A

### **9.4 Funding for PhDs and support of students in this field**

Most research groups include young researchers. The intake of young researchers is strongly supported with specific measures to reduce salary costs related to academic research: for example, the status of a bursary for a doctorate focuses explicitly on attracting young researchers. Other supporting measures for young researchers consist particularly of grants and prizes. For example, the Flemish thesis prize of the Pascal Decroos Fund; return mandates for young Belgian researchers staying abroad (outside the EU); Academic Foundation Leuven, etc. However, the above-mentioned types of support are not specifically intended for youth research.

### **9.5 New schemes that have been developed this year**

N/A

## **10 Comparing results**

### **10.1 Methods to exploit and compare results of activities carried out for a better knowledge and understanding of youth**

In 2001, the Government of Flanders recognised twelve support centres for research relevant for policy for a period of five years. They provide scientific support for the Government of Flanders and other relevant partners. The Support centres sometimes develop activities related to youth. The communication on youth (research) between researchers and policy makers is carried out at conferences and in debates, on websites of research groups and in publications in journals. There is also consultation in steering groups of specific research projects. The inventory of youth research and the synthesising report written by the Youth Research Platform (JOP) is intended for policy makers, practice workers and researchers.

### **10.2 Methods that have been developed this year?**

In December 2004, the Youth Research Platform published the first report synthesising Flemish youth research in the period 2000-2004.

## **11 Methods to ensure exchanges and dialogue between all actors in the youth field**

### **11.1 Seminars, working groups for a better knowledge and understanding of youth**



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Title of seminar or group	Frequency	Date & place of next meeting	Contact
Jeugdonderzoeksplatform (Youth Research Platform)	10 <i>per year</i>	N/A	jop@jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be
N/A	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A <i>per year</i>	N/A	N/A

## 11.2 Permanent national networks for developing a greater knowledge of youth that link all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)

Youth Research Platform (JOP) Contact information: Prof. N. Vettenburg, Ghent University, Department of Social Welfare Studies H. Dunantlaan 2, 9000 Ghent. +32 9 264 64 02  
jop@jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be

### 11.2.1 Functioning and support of permanent national network

The Youth Research Platform (JOP) is an interdisciplinary (social welfare studies, sociology, youth criminology) and interuniversity (Ghent University, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, K.U.Leuven) cooperation, initiated by the Flemish government. The central tasks of the JOP are to draw up an inventory, disseminate, analyse and synthesise Flemish youth research and to carry out new research, in particular the development of an instrument that recurrently monitors the life of young people. Finally, the JOP serves as a platform for partners in policy, practice and research.

### 11.2.2 The strategy for creating a permanent national network if one does not exist (i.e. setting up a working group on the issue, organising exchange of good practice on the issue, developing the network taking as starting point national correspondents for knowledge centre, creating a virtual national community linking actors, #)

Since 2003, Flanders has had a national network, viz. the Youth Research Platform (JOP).

### 11.2.3 The plans for this year

The main focus in 2005 is the development of an instrument that recurrently monitors the life of young people. Furthermore permanent attention for the platform function is an important topic, in order to carry out the central tasks as well as possible.

## 11.3 Other networks in the youth field

### 11.3.1 Transnational networks

JINT vzw was established by the Flemish Community as a coordinating body for international



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youth work. The Service Centre for Youth Policy aims to provide a contribution to ensure that youth work operates as well as possible at every level and in every respect. For this purpose, it promotes the knowledge and opinions on youth policy and youth work both at the national and at the international level, and also promotes cultural diversity; amongst other things by means of information and documentation, promotion and dissemination, study and research.

### **11.3.2 Local and regional networks**

Every municipality and the five provinces have a youth council, as provided in the decree of 14 February 2003. The Youth Council is an official advisory and participation structure, with representatives from youth work initiatives, but also sometimes with young people who are not organised. We can see the (activities of) youth councils as local/regional networks which can contribute to a better knowledge of young people, although this is not their primary objective.

### **11.3.3 Networks specific to certain actors**

In the Flemish Youth Council, there are three commissions which meet every month: The Commission on Youth Work Policy, the Commission on Youth Policy and the International Commission.

### **11.3.4 New developments planned this year**

There are new developments planned in 2005.

## **12 Transsectoral dialogue**

### **12.1 Organisation and promotion of transsectoral dialogue for example between university departments and governmental departments (e.g. seminars, working groups, common advisory structures#)**

A reflection group was composed to draw up the new Flemish Youth Policy Plan. Employees from other cabinets, civil servants, academics, government officials, organisations, youth councils and representatives of other sectors are represented in this. The Youth Research Platform (JOP) has also composed a reflection group. This has a critical function with regard to the tasks of the JOP, and consists of a permanent group of people who are familiar with subject areas familiar to young people: from the practical field, from the perspective of academic expertise and from policy.

### **12.2 New developments planned this year.**

N/A



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