



Youth Partnership

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



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EKCYP insights

European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

EKCYP insights

Philipp Boetzelen (ed.)

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Introduction

Philipp Boetzelen

→ The beginning

The virtual European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYC) has been developed by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth since 2005 with the overall aim of fostering evidence-based youth policy by providing relevant and up-to-date knowledge to policy makers, youth researchers and practitioners. Its origin goes back to the Council of the European Union resolution on common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth, which says of the identification and provision of existing knowledge on youth:

*In the light of the actual circumstances and the priorities of each Member State, the following not-exhaustive list of lines of action may be pursued ... at European level (g):
Make the best use of any relevant instrument being developed by the Commission in co-operation with the Council of Europe.¹*

Such a request was very much in line with the Council of Europe recommendation on youth research and provision of available knowledge on youth, adopted in 1992,² and it led to the establishment of the EKCYC within the existing research covenant between the two institutions.

More recently, the EKCYC has been endorsed by the Council of Europe Agenda 2020 and the European Commission youth strategy,³ and since 2005 its further development has been continuously on the programme of activities of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth.

→ The format

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy is embedded in the website of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth and consists, *inter alia*, of the main following elements:

- a searchable online library (more than 1 500 policy and research documents);
- an expert database (more than 120 registered experts from Europe and beyond);
- a glossary of terms relevant to European youth policy and youth work;
- a thematic section called “Youth policy topics”;
- a section where information on each country’s youth policies is provided by national EKCYC correspondents.

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1. Council of the European Union: Draft resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. October 2004.
 2. Council of Europe Recommendation No. R 92 (7) concerning communication and co-operation in the field of youth research in Europe.
 3. Council of the European Union: An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering: a renewed open method of co-ordination to address youth challenges and opportunities, April 2009. Council of the European Union: Resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation on the youth field, November 2009.

The EKCYP country information relies on a network of national correspondents, nominated by the countries' ministries responsible for youth policy. The number of correspondents grew from 16 in 2005 to 42 in 2011. More than 36 correspondents regularly contribute to the EKCYP by drafting and updating country sheets and answers to questionnaires on priority issues. Further information on the role of correspondents can be found in Chapter 1 and in the appendices to this booklet.

→ The challenge

Even if knowledge-based youth policy is nowadays officially pursued by the majority of EU and Council of Europe member states, neither the scope or breadth of existing knowledge and research, nor the specific knowledge transfer from research and practice to policy is the same everywhere, to put it mildly. There is not one general model or ideal pattern for the way knowledge-based youth policy is organised, but many valid models, shaped by a number of factors like size of country, administrative organisation and specific traditions, which have proved to work well – or not – in their own national context. The relative weight given to youth policy or youth work in the national context and the financial resources of a given country should also be mentioned when it comes to assessing the level of existing knowledge of youth and the organisation or knowledge transfer.

Pretending to collect meaningful and comparable data with a set of questionnaires at European level through national correspondents is therefore not so obvious. Depending on their institutional affiliation and support, national correspondents in different member states have more or less access to unequal levels of existing evidence.⁴ If we take the metaphor of a journey, the EKCYP's endeavour resembles a full-scale trek in the unexplored Carpathian Mountains, rather than a weekend trip to the city of Tallinn. Like all journeys, it entails a huge number of lessons: on the complexity of Europe and the youth field, on institutional constraints and on the irreplaceable motivation of actors engaged in a common purpose. It is crucial to reflect on the lessons learnt and to value the learning process for what it is: the prerequisite for knowledge-based improvements.

→ This publication

At the origin of this publication was the idea of enhancing awareness of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy by presenting some elements of its content in an appealing way, given that the present architecture of the EKCYP database has its limitations when it comes to easy access to the different bits and pieces of youth knowledge (for example, the youth policy frameworks presented in Part III). In other words, this little book does not describe the EKCYP's technical features or discuss future developments; it wants to put forward some EKCYP content.

It was thought that the best way to attract interest and enhance ownership among its stakeholders would be to develop another type of knowledge, so far under-represented in the EKCYP: a cross-country analysis of available national data. Therefore, in 2011 correspondents were asked to collect data on amended questionnaires on participation and volunteering, to be analysed by two members of the Pool of European Youth Researchers, Kateryna Shalayeva and Manfred Zentner. Even if still scattered, a critical mass of information had been provided by the majority of correspondents and this constituted the basis for the summary reports on participation (Chapter 3) and volunteering (Chapter 4).

4. See Chapter 1 for a more specific insight into the correspondents' challenge.

In addition to these two summary reports on national youth policies, this publication features a number of recently commissioned youth policy frameworks, which are a key feature of the EKCYP: short factsheets on youth policy priority issues from a European perspective. The issues selected for this publication are: Better understanding of youth/knowledge-based youth policy (by Andreas Karsten), Human rights as a priority of European youth policy (by Justina Pinkeviciute), Anti-discrimination and diversity (by Barbara Bello), Youth violence (by Mark Bellis and Karen Hughes), Youth mobility (by Elisa Briga), Non-formal learning and education (by Andreas Karsten), Youth work (by Filip Coussée), and Creativity and culture (by Manfred Zentner) – all important aspects of a European youth policy.

But a booklet on the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy would not be imaginable without paying tribute and giving a voice to the backbone of this exercise, the network of EKCYP correspondents. Therefore the publication starts with two views from the inside, written by Manfred Zentner and Miriam Teuma, both long-standing correspondents to the EKCYP.

I.
Views
from the inside

Manfred Zentner

Inside the EKCYP: some notes of an addicted correspondent

It all started for me back in 2004 when the first steps towards a European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy were taken at national level. Since I represented Austria in the European network of youth researchers – which had long existed under this name and might have continued to do so – I was asked to take on this extra task of providing data on youth to an international database. Without hesitation and without any clue what was to come, I agreed.

Wow – what a great idea! To collect data on youth in different European countries to make it possible to compare between countries and, since the data were collected on a yearly basis, we could even see developments. A fantastic idea! All information on a topic collected in one place, presented in an easily accessible format where you do not have to understand tables of statistical data and do not have to read hundred of pages of legal papers or studies to find similarities and differences between countries. Yes, this idea sounded great to me – and it would clarify the role of researchers in explaining the results in a way that users could digest.

→ The pilot phase

And thus Austria was one of 16 countries that participated in the pilot phase of

the project. Bryony Hoskins, the research officer of the Council of Europe youth department back then, was in charge of this project – and we, the team of correspondents and Bryony with her team in Strasbourg, started work.

The correspondents were equipped with a questionnaire that asked for very diverse data on different topics – from statistical data on the youth population to participation in elections, from usage of youth information offers to the number of volunteers in different fields of civil society. What made it difficult was that the data the correspondents were asked to collect in many cases just did not exist in their countries. So, in preparation for our first training on the software of the European Knowledge Centre, we correspondents collected data, made contacts with resource persons and tried to fill in the questionnaires as well as possible.

At the first meeting it became obvious that correspondents had filled in the questionnaires in different ways. We had to deal with different definitions of youth policy topics – beginning with the age of young people. We wondered how the database would ever provide comparable data. We started discussing the meaning of questions, how to interpret various concepts and which data were valid. But more and more the question of missing data became the focus of discussion, since it turned out that for some questions we had no national data, or we could not get hold of data that existed.

The next challenge was data input. To put it bluntly, the software was user unfriendly. We correspondents could not just copy the selected data into the database, but had to fill in each question anew, save the data after each input – else it would be lost – and then wait for every change to be validated by the “back office”. So, already our first training session had shown this would not be as much fun as we expected. The database solution that we used was very good but complicated. Data input was sheer horror, the questionnaires were too long and detailed, and we still had data missing. But it was the pilot phase of the project. And a pilot is done to find out what should be changed, what can be improved. So I started working on it with great enthusiasm.

The launch of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy at the Luxembourg EU presidency conference was welcomed by the audience but already there the question came up of the target group of the EKCYP – as it was called now, since this abbreviation sounds like the French word *équipe*. Was this knowledge centre for policy makers, youth workers or researchers? How was knowledge defined: was it only data or was it also experience of practitioners and models of good practice? Were we going to point out the fact of missing data, to provoke national or international research in those fields? These questions, together with the learning from the pilot phase, gave the direction that the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy should take in the future: it should become easier for correspondents to provide the data; the questionnaires should be more precise and shorter; other fields of knowledge should be integrated into the EKCYP – and the output data should satisfy scientific standards.

All these improvements were needed and would definitely lead the project in the right direction – so the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy is (or at least could be) an important instrument for policy makers, youth NGOs, youth workers and researchers. But to serve all these different target groups is always challenging.

Policy makers want to see statistical data and input on developments so they can learn from the examples in other countries, youth NGOs need trends and data on

participation but also information on examples of good practice, researchers need comparable data or (even better) access to the raw data so they can make their own calculations. It was obvious that a single database could not fulfil all these needs. So the EKCYP concentrated on policy makers, on youth work and on civic society.

But, even with this clarification of the targeted audience, the problems did not vanish. Still data on certain topics were missing, and especially on those topics where the policy makers wanted data. They looked for it in the EKCYP because they could not find data at national level – but they found that the EKCYP also lacked the data, simply because it was still only a collection of national data in an international database. And often they could not find any current data. Data over five years old should not be presented – but often there was no other data source than those “old stories”. So the correspondents could do nothing else but provide in many cases the same data as the year before – and developments could not be detected.

The problem with results from social research is that it takes time to set up good research, collect the data, present them and make them available. It is not comparable to the mere counting and calculating of birth, death and migration data. Behind such a project are the research questions, and they focus on changes caused by diverse and increasing challenges in that country. Therefore youth policy and research – mostly nationally commissioned – did not focus only on the four main priorities of the White Paper on Youth: participation, information, voluntary activities and knowledge of youth. There were (and are) other topics that needed and continue to need attention and research, to be financed at the national level.

→ Moving on

Thus suddenly we, the correspondents, got blamed by policy makers at national and European level for not keeping the EKCYP data up to date – and we asked: why did “they” not commission research on that topic?

So both sides, audience and information providers, were not happy with developments or with the collected data. It became an ever-growing task of the national correspondents not only to collect data but to explain the idea of the EKCYP and the questionnaires to those institutions that nominated them in the first place.

It was clear that vast changes were needed to keep the idea alive and the data interesting. It also was obvious that the huge database was just too big for the needs of the EKCYP. The usability of the information centre had to be more important than the possibility of making online comparisons of data. Creating easy access to the data had to have higher value than sophisticated options for working with data.

The data should not just cover the priority topics of the White Paper but also the topics tackled in the European Youth Pact and more. Besides this widening of the focus, the other major change was integration into the partnership homepage as one of its three pillars instead of an independent page. With the merging of the pages of the partnership, the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy would automatically get more attention. And this turned out to be the correct approach: the new diversity of topics, including employment, education, health, culture and others, made the EKCYP more interesting for users and the focus on background information made it a good resource page for general information on overarching topics. Integrating the EKCYP into the web pages of the partnership also helped to address new target groups.

For the correspondents the work changed considerably: instead of the complicated online data input, we were asked to provide information sheets on different topics. These sheets retained the most important information of the “old” questionnaires – quantitative and qualitative data, legal resources and forthcoming events. To gather the data is now a lot easier and the procedure of validating data at national level is less difficult since the information sheets are shorter. But one of the main problems remained: the lack of data in some fields. In many countries the turnout in elections is not documented for specific age groups and can only be detected with surveys; the same is true for membership of parties or unions, which is often only estimated. But these blank spots in the landscape of knowledge should be like signposts pointing to further research or data collection. Non-existing data can not be invented by us, the correspondents, but has to be found by researchers or statistical offices. And this research should be commissioned, either by national states or by an international organisation.

The EKCYP grew bigger as did the “family” of the national correspondents, who do their work in more than 36 countries now, collecting and delivering data on different topics. All the correspondents are dedicated to doing their job, and it is a pleasure meeting all of them at least once a year. With the growing number of countries, widening topics and new projects, the importance of the EKCYP grew. And yet it is still not as well known as it deserves. The EKCYP is not only the collection of information sheets and data but also, with the digital library and the experts database, a perfect tool for everyone working with youth topics.

→ The best is yet to come

I am still convinced that the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy is a good idea and can be an even greater information hub on youth all over Europe. The new questionnaires and info sheets will not only cover existing topics but focus more on the eight areas of the EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering and the so-called indicators of youth policy.

This development will further increase the usability of the EKCYP, but one has to be certain that its focus stays on youth policy in European countries. To narrow the scope of the EKCYP down to EU topics, or to a collection of EU-wide studies concerning youth, implies narrowing Europe down to the EU. Indicators are good means to measure developments, but they need to be set in context and here the EKCYP can and should be a complement to other sources. Existing statistical data and EU-wide research results should be gathered and presented in the EKCYP, but also the background papers, policies and statistical data of the non-EU European countries – and especially summary reports and interpretations – have to be available in the EKCYP.

The role of the correspondents might be redefined: they could provide firstly the basic data and then just major changes in the data, while giving information on projects, strategies or programmes on youth-related topics in different countries. The role of EKCYP correspondents could focus more on information provision back to the national level. It was always seen as one of the main problems of the EKCYP that all information was available in English only; for local policy makers or many youth NGOs this might be an obstacle to using the data. Here, the national correspondents, together with the youth departments in national ministries, should find solutions to make the vast amount of information more easily accessible for these groups.



Miriam Teuma

The EKCYP now and then: a correspondent's viewpoint

When I became national correspondent for Malta in 2008 – a role I have fulfilled ever since – the EKCYP was three years old. It was set up, under the joint framework for Youth Partnership of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, as an online database whose aim was to provide the youth sector throughout the continent, and indeed beyond, with a single access point for reliable knowledge and information about young people's situation across Europe. The EKCYP's primary objective was to effectively enhance knowledge transfers between the fields of research, policy and practice through the collection and dissemination, to as many users as possible, of information about youth policy and research in Europe and beyond. The role and aim of the EKCYP has emerged in the context of what was seen as the increasing importance of, and need for, a knowledge-based approach to youth policy making as well as the higher profile that youth issues have attained, as evidenced by the European Commission's White Paper "A new impetus for European youth" (2001) and the EU Council resolution on a renewed framework for co-operation in the youth field (2010-18).

In terms of operational functions, central management and co-ordination

structure, the EKCYP relies on a Europe-wide network of national correspondents whose role is to compile and update country sheets or profiles, respond to questionnaires and contribute to factsheets on cross-sectoral issues. The EKCYP also provides online access to research data, information on youth issues (including an expert database), information on teaching and learning tools and examples of good practice.

Some seven years on since its establishment, how has the EKCYP fared in terms of fulfilling its remit? What have been its strengths and weaknesses? How has it confronted new and emerging challenges? Most of all, what have we learnt, we who have been involved in the work of the EKCYP over that time? Clearly, I can only comment from my own perspective as a national correspondent; nonetheless my experience may not be uncommon.

The most conspicuous feature of the EKCYP is that it is an online database. Leaving aside the technical and management aspects of data collection, there cannot be said to be a shortage of databases and data on young people. Indeed, the reverse is the case. Whether at European level, through Eurostat, or at national level, there is a profusion of data and information on young people's education, health, employment and much else. Country profiles have been a feature of European reporting mechanisms in the areas of social inclusion and employment. There has been an increasing focus on garnering data on "youth" following the advent of the European Commission's "Youth Report" and the ongoing development of a dashboard of indicators for youth. This is to say nothing of the wealth of research data and information in individual fields, such as education.

Against this background it might be more apposite to ask: what kind of database should the EKCYP provide? What kind of country sheet or profile should it compile, and how?

Clearly, the EKCYP should not seek or compile data that is available through other reliable and recognised sources, whether at European or national level. Telling people how to access such information and bringing it together in a country profile is, however, a prerequisite in fulfilling its role and, given the abundance of information available, meeting this task in itself poses a considerable challenge. There has been an argument that in providing data the EKCYP should focus on data not readily available through standardised databases, for example data relating to "soft" issues, such as young people's attitudes, concerns and indeed fears. However, as experience in compiling the dashboard of indicators has demonstrated, this too is in itself a considerable challenge.

These challenges bring into stark relief the crucial role that national correspondents play in compiling country sheets. Correspondents are nominated by national ministries responsible for youth policy. Some correspondents are ministry officials while others are academics in the youth field. Although all are competent, their perspectives are not uniform and it is not always clear what priority is given to compiling country sheets. These have a standardised format comprising background information on national youth policy, priority themes of the EU White Paper, transversal youth policy themes, and the results of seminars and studies organised by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. Despite these efforts, the compilation of country sheets is subject to the usual pitfalls: lack of up-to-date data and information, differences of interpretation of what is required and the (perhaps low) priority accorded to the task.

There is also the issue of what role national correspondents play, or should play, in supporting the EKCYP in providing examples of good national practice and emerging issues in national youth policy and research, as well as in promoting the EKCYP and its resources at national level. From my own experience of working with the EKCYP and national correspondents and colleagues over four years, a number of issues come to mind that might be of some assistance in considering future approaches.

Clearly, while the EKCYP provides an online database, this is a function of its role rather than the role itself. Its role is clear: to help enhance knowledge transfer between the fields of research, policy and practice, to support a knowledge-based approach to youth policy making at European and national level, to compile and disseminate examples of good practice and to provide opportunities and tools for the sharing of such good practice among experts and practitioners. How can this be done more effectively?

First, the central role and function of the EKCYP needs perhaps to be further focused on providing clear, precise and comprehensive information on all relevant and up-to-date data and research available on young people in Europe and beyond, and on how this data can be accessed. While it would be apposite, as an online database, for the EKCYP to provide and replicate the most relevant and pertinent data on young people in Europe through the packaging of such information on its database, it should not engage at this juncture in the compilation or commissioning of additional data but rather focus on providing information on and access to what is available.

Second, the relationship between the EKCYP and national correspondents needs to be strengthened. Central to this relationship is the role assigned to the national correspondents. Such a role can only be clearly defined through effective engagement and co-operation between the EKCYP and the sponsoring national ministries. However, an inkling of the kind of role that national correspondents might have may be discerned from what I have outlined above. As indicated, they are required to report on a number of topics for the EKCYP country information section. The background information (the “country sheet”) could be expanded to include the historical and broader socio-economic context of the youth field. Given the comprehensive nature of the EC’s “Youth Report” under the renewed co-operation framework in the youth field, the focus on transversal youth policy themes may be less necessary and more attention might be given to the results of seminars and studies organised by the Youth Partnership. Consequently, the focus of national correspondents in compiling national sheets might have the following features:

- a comprehensive and up-to-date background note on the historical and socio-economic context of youth policy development and implementation;
- an analysis of the current state of youth policy and its implementation at national level and future planned developments, including relevant data;
- examples of good national practice and regional co-operation in the youth field, and what these have to offer at European level and beyond;
- examples of research undertaken or planned at national and regional level in the youth field, and what this has to offer at European level and beyond.

Such an approach would give national correspondents a more discreet and focused role in developing a national profile of the youth field, one that would reflect not only common European issues and concerns but also distinctive and informative features. The focus would be less on data and responses to questionnaires and more

on contextualising the current experiences of individual countries in the development and implementation of youth policy. This approach would also complement and support the central work of the EKCYP in the compilation and dissemination of data, as outlined above. However, all this is contingent on a higher level of co-operation and frequency of interface between the EKCYP and its sponsoring agencies and national correspondents and the relevant national ministries. The EKCYP and national correspondents alone cannot meet the role assigned to them without the active and ongoing support of their sponsors.

**II.
Summary reports
analysing the EKCYP
information templates**

Manfred Zentner

Youth participation in policy making

Since the 1990s we have seen many forms of citizen participation as a reaction to ongoing developments in various countries: the protests of young migrants in the French *banlieues*, the Greek protests, demonstrations against the closing of a youth centre in Denmark, university occupations in Austria, student protests in London, Portuguese and Spanish young people demonstrating against the constraints of the economic crisis, disorder in some cities in the UK, Madrid's *indignados* on the Puerta del Sol, the *geração à rasca*,⁵ the Stuttgart 21 protests and the Occupants. All these represent the new movements influencing societies at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. One of the most interesting parallels politically is the rise of new movements with the simultaneous alienation from party politics.

These new forms of participation bear a resemblance to the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, but it seems that the present movements will not be sustained as political groups as their predecessors were. Their impact on European or national politics can

5. Portugal's "desperate generation" – well educated but with very poor prospects in their own country.

also be questioned since so far they have gained little more than mere recognition, certainly not a lot of reaction. Do politicians see these actions as participation at all?

The impact on society may be very strong – but probably only in the future. Participation of young people in democratic life is one of the most important topics of youth policy in Europe but “participation” can be understood in many ways, and its support and implementation may vary considerably between countries.

Different interpretations of these participatory actions show the range of perceptions – and these manifestations of political engagement are not always welcome. Perhaps some were not planned to be political movements at all (as was seemingly true of the looting in London) but still they are reactions to the social or political situation or have direct political consequences.

We can also observe that all of the above-mentioned forms of participation are informal ways of getting voices heard. Are formal or traditional ways of participating in democratic life no longer of interest to young people? This chapter deals with the question of participation of young people and tries to provide an overview of the situation in Europe. It concentrates on participation in society understood as a way to influence one’s living conditions. Although participation in (political) decision-making processes is the main focus, attention is also given to the concept of participating in social, cultural and economic life.

→ Data

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY) offers information on the structures for, and degree of, participation in 30 countries. This information is provided by national correspondents according to the availability of data in their country. For this report, information was analysed from 18 correspondents who used newly designed information templates on participation, which allowed comparison of the situation in these countries to a certain extent. This chapter also reflects information from other studies and research. The EKCY templates focus on the legal situation in a given country for youth participation, existing structures and organisations for youth participation, young people’s membership in NGOs, their participation in elections and how young people can learn to participate. Records of youth information are also covered in these questionnaires. Additional data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and from Eurobarometer studies are also presented here.

→ The legal situation of youth participation

The opportunities for participating are manifold in almost all European countries. The new information sheets on participation⁶ collected in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy prove this. But the understanding of participation differs. In fact it appears that the framework of youth participation could not be more diverse in different European countries.

From the information available in the EKCY, many European countries have laws that guarantee young people’s participation or even the involvement of youth in decision-making processes. In some countries the involvement is granted at national level, in others at regional or local level. In most cases the participation is arranged via a national youth council, which is normally an umbrella body for youth organisations. In some countries, participation is granted for pupils and students – but not

6. So far, 18 countries have provided data in the new information sheets.

for young people as such. In other countries, participation is granted for all citizens and in that way also for young people. The way the representatives of young people are chosen is also very diverse in Europe: in some countries the selection is bottom up, by direct vote; in others they are appointed by organisations.

Laws giving young people a right to get involved in policy making at national level – at least by giving advice to the authorities and being consulted on youth topics – exist in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Romania or Sweden, among other countries. At regional, local or municipal level, participation is granted in, for example, Belgium (Flemish and German communities), Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Netherlands and Sweden. Participation is strongly welcomed, but involvement in politics is not guaranteed, in France, Italy, Malta and elsewhere. Different approaches to rights of participation and degrees of involvement can be found in countries with federal structures.

Table 1 provides an overview of laws on participation, indicating all countries where a law makes it mandatory for young people to be included in policy making and the decision-making process at various levels. It does not indicate differences between youth councils (or comparable structures like youth parliaments) or the way they are elected. In some countries it is not mandatory to involve young people in the decision-making process – but that does not mean that they are excluded. In Slovakia, for example, the youth strategy aims explicitly at youth participation but this is not written in law. In Estonia and Sweden youth participation structures must be set up throughout the education system, enabling young people to influence decisions in schools and universities, and to be heard on other topics.

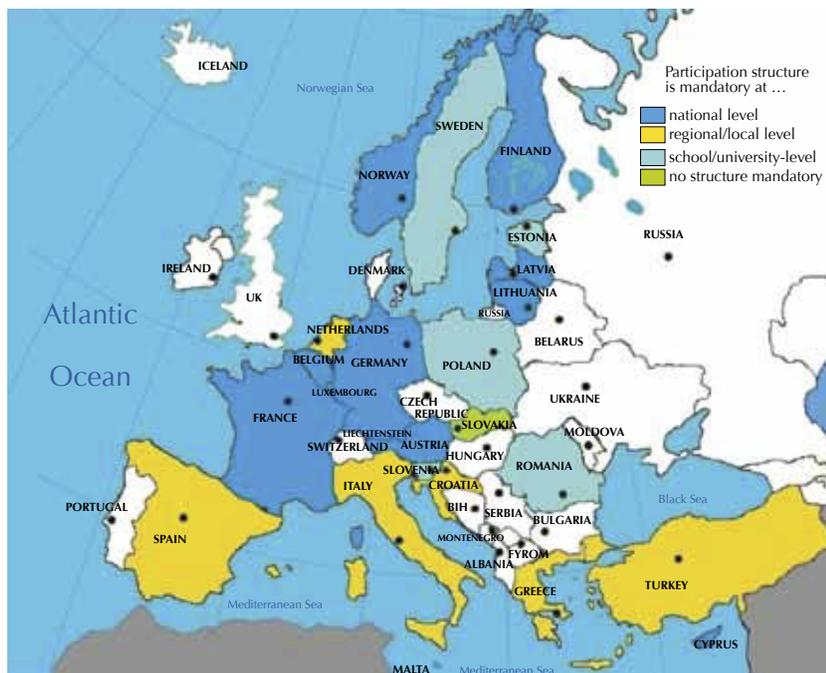
It has also to be pointed out that the existence of mandatory participation structures at any level does not guarantee that young people's opinions are taken into account at all. It might even be more effective to have no mandatory structure in law but a culture of participation that allows everybody and every interest group to get their opinions heard and respected in the decision-making process. Map 1 gives an overview of the situation in Europe; where countries are coloured white, no information was available in the EKCYP.

Table 1. Laws that make it mandatory to enable youth participation at some level

	law on youth participation – national	law on youth participation – regional	law on youth participation – local/municipal
Austria	y	y/n	n
Belgium (Flemish-speaking community)	y	y	y
Belgium (French-speaking community)	y	y	n
Bulgaria			
Croatia	n	y	y
Cyprus	y	n.a.	n
Czech Republic			
Denmark			
Estonia	n	n	n
Finland	y		y
France	y		y
Germany	y	y/n	

Greece	n	n	y
Iceland			
Italy	n	n	y
Ireland			
Latvia	y	y	y
Liechtenstein	y	n.a.	
Lithuania	y	y	y
Luxembourg	y	n.a.	n
Malta	y	n.a.	
Moldova			
Netherlands	for everybody		y
Norway	y	y	y
Poland	n	n	n
Portugal			
Romania	n	n	n
Russia			
Slovakia	n	n	n
Slovenia	n	n.a.	n
Sweden	n	n	n
Spain	n	y	
Turkey	n	n	y
Ukraine	n	n	n
United Kingdom			

Key: y = such a law exists, n = no legal regulations exist, n.a. = not applicable, y/n = different practices in different parts of the country, blank = no information available in the EKCP.



Map 1: Mandatory participation structures at different levels

→ Youth councils and their rights

As mentioned above, in almost all European countries youth councils, boards, parliaments or similar structures exist – regardless of whether it is mandatory to have them set up or not. Furthermore, most European countries have school and university councils or other instruments for pupils' and students' involvement in decisions concerning their school or university and the education system. These representative bodies are established at local (school or university), municipal, regional and national level. However, the structures and degrees of involvement differ. This is shown in the information sheets on participation, in answers to the question on the different councils.

School councils exist in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine. These councils have to be involved in decision making at school level, but they can also give advice on educational questions. In most of these countries, schools must allow pupils to have such boards or councils.

National, regional or local youth councils (or boards) fulfil two main tasks. First, they provide support and information for youth, youth organisation and youth work; second, in many cases they have to be consulted if political decisions concerning young people are to be taken. This is true for those countries indicated in Map 1, but also in Slovakia, following a youth plan which advises local authorities to do so, in Sweden, where a youth board is established for that purpose, in Estonia, where local pupil councils take on this task, and in Poland and Romania, where this is done by local authorities on a voluntary basis.

In addition to those countries for which the EKCYP provides information (dealt with above), national youth councils also exist in Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan; they are being created in Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". These councils act mainly as advocates for young people and in support of youth organisations; their involvement in policy making is often still indirect (and not as a mandatory consultative body).

From that list it is evident that (organised) young people are represented at different levels by youth councils in practically the whole of Europe. Getting their voices heard and involving them in democracy are important issues.

→ Young people's involvement in the representative democratic system

Young people's right to participate is not defined only as the right to be involved in the process of policy making. Young people can also influence politics by voting, just as much as other groups of citizens, as soon as they are of legal age for taking part in elections.

In Austria, young people can vote in all elections from the age of 16. In some federal states of Germany, and in one canton of Switzerland too, 16 is the legal age for voting – but only at regional level. In all other European countries, participation in elections as a voter is allowed from the age of 18 (though in Italy one has to be 25 to vote in the elections for the senate).

But do young people use their right to vote, or is the popular prejudice – that young people are not interested in the democratic system – true?

Because of data protection policy, for many countries it is impossible to present actual data on young voters' participation in elections, so the information sheets in the EKCYP do not satisfactorily answer this question either. What we learn is that, in most countries, youth participation in elections is perceived as equal to or less than the average participation.

Data from the European Social Survey⁷ show that youth participation in elections is in all European countries less than the general turnout for elections. Table 2 shows that young people's participation in elections is closest to overall participation in Belgium, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Denmark and Sweden, whereas in Lithuania, the United Kingdom, Latvia, Ireland and Turkey youth participation in elections is a lot lower than the average. One could infer from these big differences that the accessibility of elections differs in these countries. It would in any case be interesting to investigate why in some countries the voting behaviour of young people is far more similar to that of the average population than in other countries.

From a comparison with the few existing official data in the EKCYP, we can observe a systematic over-rating in the European Social Survey. This over-rating is stronger in older age groups than with youth. This allows us to deduce a greater willingness among the older generation to give socially accepted answers in surveys. The difference in participation rates of youth and the average might also relate to different attitudes to socially accepted answers.

Table 2. Participation in the most recent national election

	participation by age <30	participation by age ≥30	participation total
Austria*	75.1	90.6	87.1
Belgium	88.9	92.7	92.1
Bulgaria	48.0	76.2	72.8
Switzerland	45.7	68.4	64.5
Cyprus	82.6	96.5	93.4
Czech Republic	35.0	62.8	58.0
Germany	64.8	86.3	83.8
Denmark	82.6	95.8	94.2
Estonia	44.0	70.0	64.7
Spain	75.2	83.3	81.8
Finland	71.4	84.7	83.2
France	56.3	81.2	77.6
United Kingdom	38.0	76.4	70.3
Greece	75.5	90.8	87.9
Croatia	69.5	81.7	78.9
Hungary	72.9	81.5	80.2
Ireland	49.6	85.0	79.3
Israel	50.7	84.0	74.8
Latvia	35.8	69.2	62.9
Lithuania	26.0	54.8	48.6

7. The European Social Survey data series available online at <http://ess.nsd.uib.no/> and can be analysed online as well. The data used here come from wave 4 (2008) or wave 3 (2006).

Netherlands	69.1	88.7	86.0
Norway	65.6	88.7	85.7
Poland	68.0	74.3	72.8
Portugal	60.5	75.3	73.7
Romania	50.3	72.6	67.6
Russian Federation	62.0	77.1	73.9
Sweden	80.2	93.0	91.1
Slovenia	54.9	77.7	72.6
Slovakia	59.0	81.4	77.6
Turkey	54.5	93.2	79.6
Ukraine	63.8	85.5	80.9

Source: European Social Survey, wave 4, 2008 (*data from wave 3, 2006), percentages of the eligible voters.

The results here are similar to the outcomes of the latest Eurobarometer study, “Youth on the move”,⁸ but in this research the question was about participation in any election in the past three years, so it also included regional/local and European elections. That study showed that participation was highest in Belgium, Sweden, Malta and Austria, and lowest in Lithuania, Luxembourg – which is interesting because participation in elections in these two countries is mandatory after registering as a voter – and the United Kingdom.

It is also remarkable to see the outcome of elections as it affects young people’s involvement in the representative system – namely, as members of national parliaments. The number of parliamentarians under 30 years of age is an indicator, not so much of the country’s youth policy, more of the approach of the political parties to involving young people and enabling the generational change in politics. The percentage of members of parliament under the age of 30 varies from 0% in France, Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Liechtenstein to 6.7% in the Netherlands and even 8.9% in Estonia. In many countries we do not have information on this question. Map 2 gives an overview.

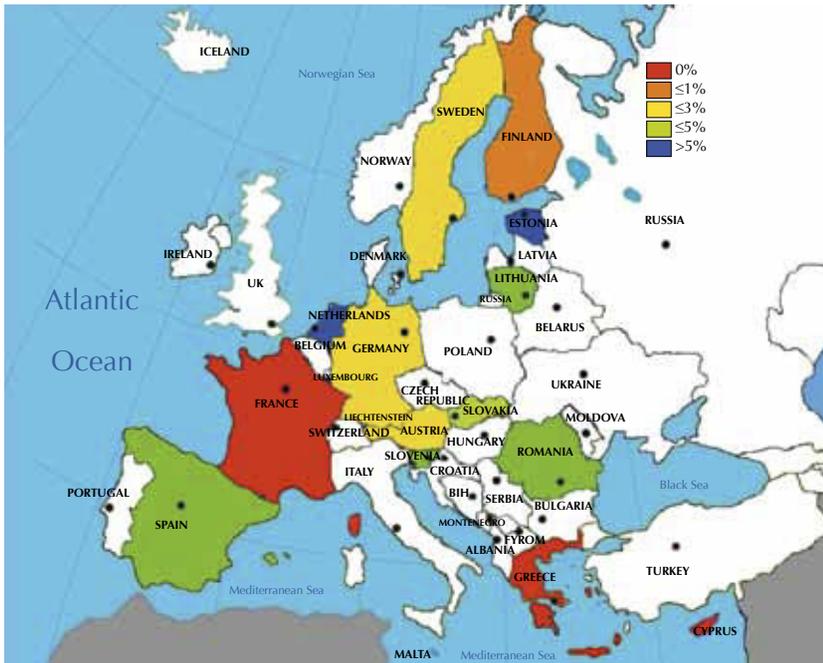
Young people’s interest in politics seems to be rather low. Data from the European Social Survey 2008 show that in only one of the participating countries did more than 12% of young people under 30 claim to be very interested in politics; the exception was Denmark, with 17%. It is not a big surprise that young people are not very interested in politics,⁹ and this has not changed tremendously in recent decades. There is a strong correlation of between disinterest in policy and a feeling that policy is difficult to understand, which indicates that (young) people are not interested in politics because they just do not understand politics and politicians.

But political participation is more than voting in elections every five years or so. The Eurobarometer study “Young Europeans”¹⁰ pointed to more options for ensuring that young people’s voices get heard in the process of policy making. It found that young people saw direct contact with politicians and debating with them as the best ways to get involved in policy making; joining a political party came second and participating in lawful demonstrations third. The tendency to “personal politics” was represented by methods like wearing stickers, badges or T-shirts with socio-political messages or

8. Flash Eurobarometer, 319a, “Youth on the move” (2011), pp. 17-18.

9. The European Youth Report 2009 also mentioned these findings.

10. Flash Eurobarometer 202, “Young Europeans” (2007), p. 40.



Map 2: Percentage of members of national parliaments aged less than 30

by conscious consumption.¹¹ The European Social Survey 2008 also analysed these activities of young people. Here, signing a petition was the most popular action, followed by boycotting certain products. Working in a political party was the least interesting form of participation according to this research. Therefore one can observe a shift towards non-institutional forms of participation and involvement. It seems that these forms are opportunities to express political views for those not yet eligible to vote and for those who show less trust in the institutional forms of political involvement. Nevertheless the ESS data show that interest in politics is a prerequisite for both traditional and non-institutional ways of participation.

With new technologies come new forms of participation – especially via the Internet – and these are becoming more and more interesting to policy makers, who try to offer this method of involvement too. Online consultations and questionnaires are already quite common ways to get in contact with young people. In addition, online social communities like Facebook offer new opportunities for personal politics (as a new platform for publicity) but also new tools for communication, information and calls to political action. These new technological forms of participation are recognised and mentioned in the EKCYP – both top down and bottom up – but they could play a more important role in participation in the future.

→ Participation in NGOs

One of the main approaches to young people's participation is to enable their participation in civil society. By being members of NGOs, especially youth NGOs,

11. The expression "personal politics" summarises individual approaches to demonstrating one's values and attitudes. The philosophy behind personal politics is that one need not be member of a party or political movement to show one's opinion; it is enough to live according to one's convictions and show this by expressive symbols like clothing.

young people cannot only use their leisure time creatively but also influence their surroundings – either by active participation and volunteering or simply by taking advantage of offered opportunities.

In many European countries, (national) youth councils are umbrella organisations for youth NGOs and therefore represent not only their member organisations but implicitly also the young people who are members of the youth NGOs. Therefore it is very important to know how many young people are involved in any NGO. It is also a major challenge for civil society and for (youth) policy to enable and foster the involvement of non-organised young people.

The Eurobarometer study¹² had a closer look at this theme, and once more the great diversity among European young people can be observed. Participation in activities by young people aged 15 to 30 varies from 33% in Poland to 72% in the Netherlands. The EU average is 52%.

It turns out that in all EU member states (with the exception of Romania) young people participate most in sports club activities (EU average: 34%); the next most popular activities are in youth clubs, leisure clubs or a youth organisation (18%), followed by activities of cultural organisations (14%). Least popular among young people in the European Union seem to be organisations active in human rights or global development (5%), political parties or bodies (5%) and organisations active against global climate change (3%). In all cases there are big differences among EU member states, and high activity levels in one field do not always indicate a high degree of participation in all the others. So sport clubs have the highest percentage of participation in the Netherlands (59% vs 34% average in EU27); youth clubs in Ireland and Luxembourg (26% vs 18% in EU27); cultural activities are most popular in Austria and Slovenia (21% vs 14% in EU27); other NGOs in Italy (12% vs 8% in EU27); human rights in Denmark (11% vs 5%); political parties in Austria (10% vs 5%) and climate change activities in Ireland (6% vs 3% in EU27). The relatively low percentages for participation in youth NGOs is an argument for setting up youth councils so that they do not represent only their member organisations, along with their young members, but try to reflect the needs and wishes of all young people. Those youth councils that are open to non-organised youth are in this respect exemplary in involving young people in decision making.

→ Learning to participate

Recent developments in Europe and adjacent regions indicate that participation is not just in traditional ways but very often in non-institutional forms. Why do young people choose to participate in this way and not use one of the many existing ways in their country? Do youth even know about existing ways of getting their voice heard and participating in society?

Political and/or civic education is, in most European countries, part of the school curriculum, but there are many ways of tackling this topic. For example, the structures of the state and the political (and electoral) system are in some countries elements of other school subjects like history, ethics/philosophy, political science, law or sociology. Sometimes these topics are the content of special subjects commonly named citizenship or civic education. In yet other countries, learning to participate is seen as a cross-curricular task that is dealt with in various subjects from history to mathematics. The content taught in these subjects usually covers the country's constitution,

12. Flash Eurobarometer 319a, "Youth on the move" (2011), pp. 7-11.

→ Youth information

Besides formal and non-formal education, the way youth information is set up may also be important for youth participation – informing youth about opportunities to participate not just in decision making, but also in the provision of information itself. Youth information is often seen as a distinct part of youth work and youth policy – or closely related to both.

Youth information centres and/or points exist in many countries, but not all. Some countries do not see youth information as a task for a special unit; instead it is embedded in youth work, youth centres or information centres. Map 3 shows countries that have special youth information centres or points; this does not imply that young people in other countries get no information at all, but they have to approach a youth club/organisation or school to get it.

The aim of youth information is to reach as many young people as possible, so often it is important to offer not just one information centre but to offer regional structures that make it easier for young people to get in contact with the information providers.

The information sheet covers topics that could be of interest in information points. The most often mentioned topic of youth information services is study and scholarships, which all countries cited, followed by youth exchange and European opportunities for young people. Employment, jobs and training are the next most common themes in youth information services. Health issues and relationships are also topics of importance for young people. Less often mentioned are social security benefits and consumer rights.

Thus, most information that is provided falls into three main groups: education-related, job-related and mobility-related topics.

Besides these topics, some themes were relevant. Money and income are important issues in some countries, as are leisure time, drugs/prevention and participation. But problems (like debts or drugs) are also often topics for youth information, and so counselling is mentioned in various info sheets as a method used in youth information points or centres.

The involvement of young people in the creation and delivery of youth information is gaining more attention. Most commonly, young people are involved in writing text and supplying photos for information material and publications, but they can also participate by providing peer-to-peer information directly. This approach can be followed in schools for given topics, or on the Internet (e.g., in forums).

→ Conclusion

Young people's participation can be – and in fact is – more than voting every four years or joining an organisation. Trying to change things, expressing support or opposition, or even getting involved in decision making can often happen nowadays through non-traditional and informal ways. Not always are these new forms of participation accepted by all policy makers. Often participation is defined only by those in power – and cynics say, it is defined by them to stay in power – and those that should be empowered cannot choose their own way. Yet in the past new forms of participation emerged from types of protest that were initially rejected, often forbidden or even declared illegal, only to be accepted and praised years

later, like the student protests of 1968. Participation is often, regrettably, if not a token, then an invitation to play by the rules of the rulers.

Where there are structures for involving youth representatives in political decision making, that does not guarantee that young people's needs and wishes will really be respected. Even young people's legal right to be consulted in youth-related concerns does not ensure that policy makers will take youth opinion into account. It needs a mixture of both: the openness of policy makers and the force of legal structures, whether laws, strategies or action plans. Joint decision making and co-management, as in the youth policy field of the Council of Europe, can guarantee that young people are at least represented when decisions are taken. Their involvement is a matter of mutual respect, along with the will of policy makers to take young people's opinion into account and the efforts of youth representatives to stand for as many young people as possible.

But to really involve young people, the first prerequisite is to make youth aware of all the possible ways to participate. For actually getting involved – in traditional ways or in non-institutional, non-traditional ways – the prerequisite is an interest in politics and society. This interest is not a certainty; it has to be created. Helping young people from an early age to understand policy and supporting them as they make up their minds on political topics can generate interest in politics and thus participation in democratic life. Learning to participate, in and outside school, learning about democracy, the state and politics, showing the way to get involved – all are thus of the utmost importance. Therefore all forms of information (including institutional youth information) on participation must be easily understandable if they are to be useful to young people.

With both prerequisites in place – effective structures influencing participation and information on opportunities – young people will be interested in participating in society and decision shaping. At least they will if the topic is interesting for them, or if it has a direct impact on their lives. Therefore a third condition has to be fulfilled: information on the impact of political developments must be available and understandable.

If structures exist and are known about, and if consequences of developments are understood, youth will participate in society and policy making. Then it is task of the politicians to accept young people's approach to participation, try to understand what they are told and asked, and act on it.

→ Sources

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Kateryna Shalayeva

Volunteering by young people in Europe

This summary report has been developed as a mapping study. It aims to provide an analytical overview of the situation, both of young people and of national policies, in regard to volunteering. The report is based on the information given in the information templates (national reports) prepared by the national correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), a tool for knowledge sharing of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union – the Youth Partnership.

The summary report has been written by the consultant, contracted by the Youth Partnership for this purpose. In principle, the report was intended to cover all EU, EU-accession and EFTA countries. However, the consultant was limited by the availability of information, as not all national reports (information templates) were ready at the time when this summary report was being written.

The mapping exercise consisted in aggregating qualitative information contained in answers to the EKCYP questionnaires. This report aims to highlight common trends and outstanding exceptions.

The consultant was able to include 23 national reports from the year 2011

and also used two national reports from the year 2008, for those countries and on those questions where they were relevant and up to date for the purpose and content of the report.

As a result, this summary report covers the following countries:

- EU member states: Austria, Belgium (Flemish-speaking and French-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden – 2011; and Latvia and the United Kingdom – 2008;
- EFTA: Liechtenstein – 2011;
- EU-accession countries: Croatia – 2011.

National reports went through certain processes of verification and/or approval by the relevant national authorities.

→ Introduction

The nature and content of the information templates determined the structure of this summary report, which consists of an introduction, a section on the legal frameworks for volunteering by young people in Europe, a section on the institutional frameworks for young people in Europe volunteering, and technical recommendations for future EKCYP reports.

The section on legal frameworks covers legal definitions, fields of volunteering, social protection of volunteers, remuneration for voluntary activities, and legal and policy aspects of national and transnational voluntary services for youth in Europe.

The section on institutional frameworks covers recognition mechanisms for volunteering, types of recognition and recognition instruments, partnership schemes and trends in the promotion of volunteering.

As to the research method, the consultant used document analysis and case studies. Where functional links were established, or comparative overview was an important element of the analysis, the consultant has illustrated the conclusions with figures and tables.

Limits of this study

The content and analytical scope of the summary report are limited by the content and scope of the information templates. As information is only partly available in the templates (if at all), comparative analysis is difficult. This is also due to particular national contexts, which – even if mentioned in many cases as determinant factors – are often not well enough described in the national reports.

This summary report is based exclusively on the information templates and no additional research was conducted.

Interested readers are invited to consult the information templates for further details and Internet links, where available.

Statement of the issue

Volunteering is today at the top of the political agenda. And this is not only thanks to the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Volunteering merits its place among

top-priority policy areas because of the contribution that volunteering as a social phenomenon makes to society's development. Volunteering allows people to gain competences valuable for the labour market and enhances societal cohesion; it promotes active citizenship and facilitates participation in society; it safeguards the democratic foundations of European societies, and is deeply rooted in their nature.

But national volunteering policies are not free from contradictions. Especially sensitive are the questions of social protection of volunteers and formal recognition of learning via volunteering. This summary report points to several contradictions, related to the balance between regular employment and volunteering, social security rights and the status of volunteering as not being employment, the altruistic nature of volunteering and the right to a decent living/income, statutory and non-statutory forms of volunteering, formal recognition and social appreciation of volunteering, and several other issues.

If economically active youth have to concentrate on finding and keeping a job, because volunteering cannot guarantee them a decent living, then unemployed young people will seek paid employment first, or else risk losing their unemployment benefits. Economically inactive youth (full-time students, those on long-term sick leave or engaged in family duties, and others) must go through all sorts of permission procedures in order to safeguard their social security benefits while volunteering. The question arises: For whom are volunteering policies created?

We shall see, however, that the great majority of European governments co-operate with civil society (to a larger extent), and with the private sector (to a lesser extent), in order to create and put into effect intelligent and efficient volunteering policies. Research in the areas that touch upon volunteering comes more and more often into the picture, as a tribute paid to evidence-based youth policy.

Snapshot of volunteering

A very brief look at the statistics shows that about two thirds of volunteers in the Czech Republic are students in secondary schools, colleges, polytechnic schools and universities, or relatively young women on maternity leave.

In Spain a quarter of all volunteers are in the age group 15 to 24, and just over one sixth of all volunteers are in the age group 25 to 34. Students tend to volunteer more than other young people.

In Germany, there has been a slight decline in voluntary involvement among young people aged 20 to 24. Especially important is the fall-off that has been registered among students. This might indicate the effect of recent changes to the bachelor's degree system.

But in Slovakia, the same tendencies are explained by economic decline, because students usually need to work, and do not have enough spare time to dedicate to volunteering.

Next we look at some more challenges, citing countries that report a particular problem.

Actual challenges

As mentioned in many national reports, non-profit organisations experience difficulties in recruiting young volunteers. Even in countries where voluntary involvement

is high and stable, it is not easy to attract new activists into the volunteering movement (Denmark).

The reasons for that vary from country to country. There are lots of similarities and lots of different features in the landscape of volunteering movements across Europe.

Life management

Young people might not see volunteering as a priority (Slovakia), and might experience lack of time, which is not necessarily related to job or study (Finland). Volunteering under the age of 18 is problematic for some young people, because they need the consent of their parents or legal guardians, and may not get it (France).

Avoidance

Young people may fear they will get a negative image, as volunteering still has negative connotations among the young (United Kingdom) or among older generations (Romania).

Interest

Young people wish to contribute directly to society, not via fixed membership or “ideological” affiliation. They wish to decide freely when and where to contribute (Sweden).

At the same time, volunteering organisations do not provide young people with the opportunities they are looking for (United Kingdom). Young people do not feel comfortable in those organisations (Belgium). Because volunteering organisations are predominantly composed of adults, the activities and ambience of volunteering organisations do not respond to the expectations and needs of young volunteers (Greece). Young people often find it difficult to relate their experience and interest to the activities offered in volunteering organisations. Young people prefer to work with their peers (Greece).

Job

Young people might see volunteering as an obstacle to finding and keeping a paid job (Belgium). In a period of economic crisis, young people prefer to focus on activities that are likely to lead them to steady jobs. Training, internship, short-term or even low-paid jobs are preferred to voluntary involvement (Spain).

Recognition

Lack of social recognition does not encourage or attract young people to volunteering either. Not all forms of volunteering are equally recognised (Belgium).

Formal recognition is an even bigger issue. High-quality training (a formal degree) remains the priority for many young people (Belgium) and the social value of a job and formal training remains very high (Cyprus). Therefore many young people try to combine studies with a job, and this takes many of them away from volunteering. The experience and skills acquired in volunteering are not acknowledged or validated by any formal system. Even Youthpass is not an officially recognised certification. Skills developed in volunteering are not recognised in the same way as official qualifications (Greece).

Access to rights

Nearly every national report mentions administrative procedures, restricted access for certain vulnerable groups of young people and the absence of insurances and social security benefits. Specific examples are the unclear legal status of volunteers (Sweden), absence of mechanism of compliance with existing regulations (Spain) and administrative challenges that arise from European law, which does not differentiate between profit-making and non-profit organisations in terms of taxation of service providers (Finland).

Law and administration

The relevant laws and policies are dispersed in different documents, codes and regulations. It is not always clear who is responsible for what (administration issue), or where to look for correct legal answers (law codification issue). The absence of one main public body to regulate all aspects of volunteering is clearly a problem (Greece).

Nearly every national report mentions the excessive dependence of civil society bodies on public funding. This becomes a matter of sustainability and independence, as the operation of volunteering organisations comes to depend on the rate of subsidies, and their agenda and their priorities tend to reflect official policy priorities.

Outreach

Access to and dissemination of information remain problematic. Only large organisations can afford strategic communication of their activities (Spain). There is a significant number of young people whose reply is “No one asked me” to join volunteering (Finland, Slovakia, United Kingdom).

Professionalisation of the sector

There is apparently a need for a nationwide curriculum for the training of volunteers (Austria). And people involved in the organisation and co-ordination of voluntary activities find they experience lack of professional training too (Greece).

Lack of knowledge and management skills results in inefficient operation of volunteering organisations. This loss of energy and resources often leads to disputes among members. Young people are particularly vulnerable in this sort of situation (Spain).

→ Legal framework for volunteering by young people in Europe

This section deals with some of the legal aspects of volunteering for young people in Europe. It describes the current state of the art, and refers to existing laws and policies on volunteering and to related ones. It also explains the reasons behind the development of legal policies on volunteering in various European countries. Policy clusters and a typology of law-making have been developed for this purpose. This section also deals with legal definitions, fields of volunteering, the social protection of volunteers, remuneration for voluntary activities, and legal and policy aspects of national and transnational voluntary services for youth.

The legal basis

Legal protection has been recognised as the strongest and most effective mechanism of guarantee. The same applies to the legal framework of volunteering. The law is

used to encourage civil participation in volunteering, and to guarantee the social protection of volunteers. However, there is no consensus on how law-making in the field of volunteering should be developed, and different European countries offer different solutions. Debates continue within countries and internationally on the need for a law on volunteering, and its form, scope and content.

For the purpose of this study, we have distinguished two clusters of provisions that affect the legal framework for volunteering in Europe. One cluster is the law; the other is policy. In the law cluster we include the law on volunteering as one sub-cluster and satellite laws (where volunteering is not the primary target of the law, but one of the issues). The second cluster includes policies, programmes, strategies, action plans and similar documents where they are exclusively concerned with volunteering, as one sub-cluster. All other policy documents where volunteering is mentioned, explicitly or implicitly, form the other sub-cluster.

Countries might have both a law and a strategy, or a satellite law and other policies. We have seen different combinations in national reports. The countries with a law on volunteering are Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovenia. The countries where volunteering is mentioned as part of other laws or codes are Austria, Greece, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. Having or not having a law does not determine whether a country has or does not have either a strategy on volunteering or other programmes where volunteering is mentioned explicitly or implicitly.

Three countries have a policy on volunteering (instead of, or in addition to, a law): Croatia, Greece and Spain. Those countries which have volunteering addressed via other policy instruments are Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and the United Kingdom.

Table 3. Overview of the legal basis for volunteering by young people in Europe

country	the law		policy	
	country	the law	policy, programme, strategy	other documents
Austria		X		
Belgium	X	X		X
Bulgaria				X
Croatia	X		X	X
Cyprus				
Czech Republic	X	X		
Denmark				
Estonia				X
Finland				X
France	X	X	X	
Germany	X			
Greece		X	X	
Hungary				
Ireland		X	X	X
Italy	X			

Latvia		X		X
Liechtenstein		X		
Lithuania	X		X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X	X
Malta	X			
Netherlands		X		
Poland				
Portugal				
Romania	X			
Slovakia		X		
Slovenia	X	X	X	X
Spain	X	X	X	
Sweden		X		
United Kingdom				X

Approaches to the law on volunteering

Whether or not a country has a specific law and/or a specific policy on volunteering depends on reasons particular to that country, and is determined by its individual cultural, historical, social, and maybe even geographical circumstances, but we have noticed certain common tendencies in the way countries decide and develop their regulatory approach to volunteering. This has led us to propose a classification of approaches, what we might call a typology of law-making on volunteering. Map 4 shows the distribution of the four types.

No law, on principle

In this type of approach, countries think along these lines: Do we need a law on volunteering in our country? Is not volunteering, as it exists now, an expression of free will by our citizens and residents? Yes, it expresses individual free will; therefore it is not a matter for regulation. We remain faithful to this free will principle and see no need for a law on volunteering in our country. This is the approach used in Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden).

Law-making where needed

In countries that follow this type, one might hear arguments like these: in a country like ours, we need better recognition of the contribution that civil society makes to social cohesion, and this contribution is made first and foremost by volunteers. Because we value what these people do, of their own free will, and their investment in our society, we need to protect them, and that means protection in law. These arguments are popular in the countries of central and South-Eastern Europe (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania).

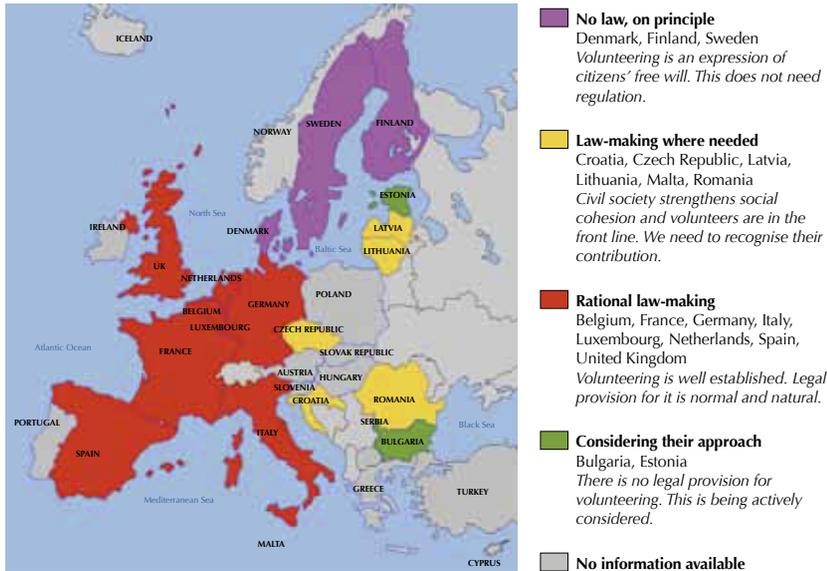
Rational law-making

In countries taking this approach, the strongest arguments are pragmatic: our country has a long tradition of volunteering. This is seen in its developed infrastructure, various long- and short-term programmes at local, national or international level and a well-established system of governmental, municipal and private funding. We

have made progress towards formal recognition of learning-through-volunteering. For us, law-making in the area of volunteering has been a natural process, which we believe is useful and rational, and we will continue with this approach. Such reflections on policy development for volunteering are found in western Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, UK).

Considering their approach

A few countries, included in the summary report, are still deciding which way to go in their approach to law-making on volunteering. They are working on it (Bulgaria, Estonia).



Map 4: National approaches to law-making on volunteering in Europe

Legal definitions

Reading through national reports, we have noticed a variety of terminology: “volunteering”, “volunteerism”, “volunteer”, “voluntary service”, “volunteer work”, “volunteering organisation”, “volunteering sector” and many more, but their definitions are not always established. Many related words are used as synonyms without any very precise meaning.

Let us take some examples. In the Belgian act on the rights of volunteers, volunteer work is understood as a non-compulsory, unpaid activity, undertaken for the benefit of third parties; it is set up by an organisation, but it is not carried out by the same person for the same organisation as part of an employment contract, a contract of service or a permanent appointment. Likewise, the Italian law on volunteering emphasises its character of altruism and solidarity, with no (personal) economic gain.

These features – free will, solidarity, altruistic involvement for the benefit of society – represent the dominant understanding of the nature of volunteering. In the laws and policies of European countries where definitions are given, we find very similar

legal interpretations. At this stage, we are only tracking common features in the legal understanding of the nature of volunteering, but we will very soon see the kind of grey areas that popular understanding of volunteering brings us.

Some countries function without a legal definition of “volunteering” or “voluntary service”. This is the case in Austria, Estonia, Greece and Sweden, to name a few. There are various reasons why those countries do not have an established legal definition of volunteering.

As explained in the previous section, certain countries expressly avoid establishing a law on volunteering, and consequently avoid the need to establish legal definitions of it. This is the case for Sweden. But, of course, as this social phenomenon exists, there is an obvious need to put a name to it. In Sweden, definitions of volunteering exist in policy and research texts, which describe volunteering as time and effort that are freely given, unforced and unremunerated, by individuals to voluntary and public organisations.

An existing distinction in the meanings of “volunteering” can be illustrated by the French words *bénévolat* and *volontariat*. Both translate into English as “volunteering”. But *bénévolat* is informal voluntary work, carried out in free time, inside or outside, an organisation, and is not related to any legal status of volunteers. *Volontariat* is a formally recognised type of volunteering (formal volunteering), it is involvement via a non-profit organisation that lasts several months. *Volontariat* usually incorporates a specific legal status for volunteers and there are certain social guarantees attributed to it.

In this sense *volontariat* or “civic service” (in France) resembles “statutory voluntary service” in Germany. Both are “formal types of volunteering” programmes, which means they function within an established legal framework, they are facilitated and funded by the state, volunteers receive a package of certain social guarantees and benefits, their involvement is partly funded by pocket money or allowances and the experience gained in such programmes is certified by state-issued documents, which are, in turn, formally recognised by other society actors like employers, universities and public authorities. Examples of this type of volunteering exist in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in France and Germany as already mentioned, and to some extent in Spain.

Another kind of volunteering happens with/in an organisation, without a fixed period of time, for a more or less structured project or for a spontaneous initiative. This form of activism is neither *bénévolat* nor “statutory service”, but it is very common among young people across Europe. However, there are almost no social guarantees attached to this type of volunteer.

In conclusion, such legal distinctions between various forms of volunteering create divisions in status between volunteers, and not all forms of voluntary activism receive equal treatment in law. There is a contradiction in seeing volunteering as an expression of free will, an active, altruistic contribution to society, and yet protecting and facilitating only specific forms of voluntary work.

Fields of volunteering

The spheres of society where volunteering is allowed, encouraged or supported vary from country to country. In Czech law, volunteering primarily provides services in the social sector – helping, for example, unemployed, handicapped or elderly

people, ethnic minorities, immigrants, people leaving prison, drug addicts and victims of domestic violence.

In Austria the emphasis is on health care and emergency response and rescue services, like fire brigades. Czech and Austrian fields of voluntary work are rather similar to those of Italy. In Luxembourg, volunteering starts at local level with area committees and leisure activities. The emphasis is on active citizenship and social cohesion. In recent years there has been a discussion in Luxembourg that made clear that emergency response and rescue services are of utmost value. In Belgium, humanitarian action and international solidarity are seen as a priority at national level. Attracting volunteers to the welfare and health sectors is the priority in the region of Flanders.

In Latvia there is a relevant tradition of organising joint cleaning of the environment once a year. In Finland sport and recreation are important areas for voluntary involvement. In Cyprus, the focus is on work with young people. Estonia's latest priority is to provide unemployed young people with opportunities to obtain work experience by involvement in volunteering. The same motivation drives voluntary work in Slovakia.

All in all, volunteers are active in nearly all spheres of society, but the priorities vary from country to country. There are various reasons for that. But at this stage we want simply to register this diversity of activities where volunteers are called to give a helping hand.

Social protection of volunteers

Now we come to one of the most complicated issues in the whole legal framework of volunteering – the social protection of volunteers. This is the burning question for volunteers and voluntary organisations. The answer is hidden behind the social value of volunteering, the synergy and the ultimate contribution that volunteering brings to our societies.

We wish to direct the attention of the reader to the paradox that persists in the legal status of volunteers. To put it simply, what is a volunteer?

If we believe that volunteering is a free-time, free-will, unpaid activity for the benefit of a third party, then we should not expect any social guarantees for volunteers. At the same time, national policies try to encourage more volunteering and to attract to it young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The paradox is the contradiction between the dominant concept of what volunteering is (the actual legal status of volunteers) and the intention to encourage people to volunteer, without offering them the necessary social guarantees.

A volunteer's legal status decides the level of social protection guaranteed to that volunteer		
Volunteering is out of free will in free time outside fixed employment to the benefit of a third party	BUT the paradox is that	Social security rights are earned only by paid labour

Figure 1: The paradox of the legal status of volunteers

Some countries have found a solution to this paradox in “statutory volunteering” – programmes of fixed duration, administered by government or local authority, in which volunteers receive an extended package of social guarantees in exchange for unpaid labour (volunteering).

In statutory programmes, volunteers receive regular medical and civil liability insurance, a pension record, family, unemployment, incapacity and other benefits, and pocket money or an allowance. Their experience in statutory volunteering programmes is attested by formally recognised instruments, which can be translated into grades or qualifications.

Access to such programmes may not be easy for everyone, and limitations persist. There may be initial requirements of age, education and work experience, as in Germany, legal barriers (restricted duration, hours, types of activity, compensation) related to employment or various restrictions on beneficiaries of social assistance payments, as in Belgium and elsewhere.

In regard to EU legislation, we need to refer to Regulation 1408/71, which provides for social security coverage for those cross-border volunteers who have such protection at home. Such rights are protected in EU law, but that protection can be limited by national legislation.

Obstacles:

Everyone is encouraged to seek paid employment first
Restrictions in duration, hours, types of activity,
compensation for those receiving social assistance payments
REG (EEC) 1408/71 covers only those volunteers who are
insured under their national security legislation

STATUTORY VOLUNTEERING AS A SOLUTION:

Minimum age limits
Educational requirements
Insurances (regular medical, civil liability, accident)
Benefits (family, unemployment, record of service,
pension, incapacity, living allowance)
National and international schemes

Figure 2: Statutory volunteering

We have mentioned Belgium as a country where formal restrictions in access to volunteering persist for specific groups of young people. As a matter of good practice, we include a more detailed description of Belgian social security law on volunteering, as applied in Flanders.

EXAMPLE – BELGIUM (FL)

*The act on the insurance regime for young people involved in volunteering
September 2010. Source: national report Belgium (Flemish-speaking community)*

If volunteers receive unemployment benefits, or benefits caused by leave of absence, or temporary benefits for school leavers, they shall report their volunteering activities in writing to the unemployment agency of the National Employment Office (RVA). The burden of proof remains with the RVA, and the request shall only be rejected in certain specified cases.

Those cases are: the volunteering work is not officially defined, or the nature, volume or frequency of the activity does not correspond to volunteering, or the unemployed person becomes less available to the labour market.

If volunteers receive a living allowance, they must take an extra step. They shall notify their welfare officer at the Public Centre for Social Welfare before starting their volunteering activities.

Young people with replacement income have the right to receive payment that covers the expenses of voluntary work. There is no risk that social benefits would be reduced, but the conditions of the law shall be met.

In case of a person receiving disability allowance, a medical certificate shall establish “compatibility” between the actual health condition of the candidate-volunteer and the nature of any volunteering tasks. The same procedures exist in case of other illness or pregnancy. Volunteers are held responsible for obtaining such medical certificates in advance.

We end this section with a more detailed comparative overview of social protection for volunteers, and their reimbursement and remuneration for volunteering involvement, in Europe.

Table 4. Overview of social protection for volunteers in Europe

country	social protection (insurances, allowances, benefits)									
	medical insurance	accident insurance	liability insurance	family allowance	unemployment benefits	pension benefits	other benefits			
Austria	X ST			X ST	X ST	X ST				
Belgium			X	X	X					X ^{BE}
Bulgaria										
Croatia										
Cyprus										
Czech Republic	X ^{CZ}					X				
Denmark										
Estonia										
Finland										
France	X	X	X	X	X ^(bénévoles)	X ST				
Germany	X ST	X	X	X	X ST	X ST				X ^{GE}
Greece										
Hungary										
Ireland					X					X
Italy	X									
Latvia										

Table 5. Overview of reimbursement and remuneration for voluntary work in Europe

country	forms of reimbursement/remuneration		
	expenses involved	pocket money/ allowance	other
Austria			X vouchers
Belgium		X	
Bulgaria			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Czech Republic			
Denmark		X	
Estonia			
Finland			
France	X	X ST	X vouchers
Germany	X	X ST	X ST accommodation, work clothes
Greece			
Hungary			
Ireland	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements
Italy	X	X (salary)	
Latvia			
Liechtenstein		X	
Lithuania	X		X meals, phone calls, training, work clothes
Luxembourg	X	X	
Malta			
Netherlands	X individual arrangement		
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovakia	X		
Slovenia	X	X	
Spain	X (occasionally)		
Sweden	X individual arrangements		
United Kingdom	X individual arrangements	X individual arrangements	X end-of-service award

Recommendations for a legal framework for volunteering

These recommendations were developed by the consultant and are based on an analysis of the country questionnaires.

1. Each country shall remain autonomous in deciding its own national legislation and policies on volunteering, which are the result of its unique cultural, historical, social and geographical features, and actual needs. The diversity of local, national and international volunteering opportunities shall continue.
2. European countries may and should learn from one another's best practice in development, support and recognition of volunteering (voluntary participation) by their citizens.
3. European states should co-operate to promote cross-border volunteering among Council of Europe member states, in the EU and beyond, supporting this expression of goodwill by their citizens, furthering peace, justice and solidarity: the fundamental values of European societies.
4. European states shall conclude bilateral and multilateral conventions, and advance EU legislation, in the area of recognising and protecting the social rights of volunteers.
5. For this purpose debates should continue and consensus should be reached, where possible, on the legal status of a volunteer in national and/or international laws.
6. In support of the genuine nature of volunteering, volunteers shall enjoy social protection. This shall include, but is not limited to, medical insurance, family allowance, recognition as duration of labour for unemployment benefits and pension, and access to professional reintegration programmes.
7. Further attention should be paid to persisting divisions between "recognised" (statutory) and "unrecognised" (informal) volunteering. Such legal distinctions create an extra division in status among volunteers, and not all forms of voluntary activism receive equal treatment in law. An effort must be made to resolve the contradiction of seeing volunteering as an expression of free will and an active, altruistic contribution to society, and yet protecting and facilitating only specific forms of volunteering.
8. Research must continue to play a vital role in the process of decision making on volunteering. Evidence-based policy on volunteering should become the rule.
9. Special attention should be paid to the development of volunteering opportunities for young people with special needs in gaining access to volunteering. The relevant groups include, but are not limited to, parents with young children, single parents, youth with learning and/or behavioural difficulties, young people with disabilities, young people with addictions, youth with criminal records and young PLWHA (people living with HIV/AIDS).
10. Those special volunteering opportunities, in both national and cross-border volunteering schemes, should include the development of supportive infrastructure in travelling, housing, daily assistance and orientation, psychological support, personal guidance and medical assistance. This need also includes capacity building in sending and hosting organisations.

→ Institutional framework for recognition of volunteering in Europe

This section describes how volunteering is recognised – by both formal recognition, called “validation” for the purposes of this report, and social recognition, termed “appreciation” – and it provides examples of recognition mechanisms and country-specific recognition instruments. This section also looks at the way partnership in volunteering is organised in the reporting countries, and the latest tendencies in promotion of volunteering in Europe.

The stakeholders

Having read through the national reports, we can identify the stakeholders involved in recognition policies and the recognition process in countries across Europe. Not surprisingly, the national lists of recognition stakeholders resemble each other.

The stakeholders include the volunteers, voluntary organisations and civil society bodies in general, governments and local authorities, business (employers and recruitment agencies), universities and the educational system as a whole, and international organisations.

Recognition types, mechanisms and instruments

The existing multiplicity of recognition instruments for learning via volunteering can be reduced to two types: social recognition, the mechanism that allows society to demonstrate social appreciation of the contribution that volunteers make in important spheres and urgent needs of society; and formal recognition, the mechanism that credits the learning experience of volunteers while they are also fulfilling their socially important missions. We have collected examples of recognition mechanisms in Table 6.

Table 6. Recognition of volunteering – Types and mechanisms

TYPES OF RECOGNITION	
SOCIAL RECOGNITION/APPRECIATION	FORMAL RECOGNITION/VALIDATION
Mechanisms	Mechanisms
Awards	Degrees
Honours	Credits
Medals	Certificates (qualification)
Certificates (attendance)	
Distinctions	
Discounts	
CV records	

The various social appreciation mechanisms may be found in nearly every country. These are very colourful and popular instruments, many of them created to promote volunteering, to inform people of the nature of volunteering and to record the exceptional contributions that volunteers make in resolving critical social issues. To each recognition mechanism we have attributed recognition instruments, and these are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Social recognition of volunteering in Europe, recognition instruments

country	recognition instrument
Austria	Annual Award for Special Achievements in Volunteering
Belgium	Oscar for Social-Cultural Work My VDAB Annual Award for Volunteer Work
Finland	International Award for Young People Recreation Activity Study Book
France	<i>Légion d'Honneur</i> (Legion of Honour) <i>Ordre du Mérite</i> (Merit Order)
Luxembourg	TEAMK8 Card Youth Merit Award
Malta	Golden Medal OASI Youth of the Year Award John XXIII Kindness Award
Netherlands	International Award for Young People Children's Ribbon
Romania	Civil Society Gala
Estonia, Malta, Netherlands	CV records

Another type of recognition mechanism is formal recognition, a way to validate learning via volunteering, which may be expressed in degrees, credits or certificates (see Table 8).

Table 8. Formal recognition of learning via volunteering – Country examples

FORMAL RECOGNITION/VALIDATION	
Degree (qualification)	Belgium, France, UK
Credits	France, Italy
Government certificates	Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Malta, Slovakia

Formal recognition is not as widely spread in Europe as social recognition. However, in this summary report we can state a firm intention to achieve better formal recognition and show the actual progress towards this objective in the great majority of countries. Table 9 lists specific examples of how learning via volunteering is formally recognised across Europe.

Table 9. Formal recognition of learning via volunteering – Recognition instruments

country	recognition instrument
Belgium (French community)	OJ, CJ decrees
France	Validation of acquired competences
Germany	Nachweise International Qualipass Granted as waiting time for university (for statutory volunteering only)
Italy	National civic service certificate Credits attributed by universities on the basis of certificates given by NGOs

Lithuania	Volunteering recognised as internship (at discretion of professor)
Luxembourg	<i>Attestation de l'engagement</i> (attestation of engagement) <i>Validation des acquis professionnels</i> (validation of acquired professional competences)
Malta	Mentioned in school certificate Degree-plus programme (voluntary work unit) in the university curriculum
Netherlands	<i>Ervaringscertificaat</i> (experience certificate) Volunteering is part of school curriculum
Slovak Republic	NGOs accredited by government give certificates for accredited programmes Database accessible for universities and employers
Slovenia	Nefiks, system of recognition
United Kingdom	National qualification framework, volunteering from 0 to 3

To provide a better overview, Table 10 lists all countries in the summary report with their recognition types. Some countries have both types of recognition; the rest have only one.

Table 10. Overview of recognition of volunteering in Europe

country	types of recognition	
	formal qualification	social appreciation
Austria		X
Belgium	X	X
Bulgaria		
Croatia		
Cyprus		X
Czech Republic		
Denmark		
Estonia		X
Finland		X
France	X	X
Germany	X	X
Greece		X
Hungary		
Ireland		X
Italy	X	
Latvia		
Liechtenstein		
Lithuania	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X
Malta	X	X
Netherlands	X	X
Poland		
Portugal		

Romania		
Slovakia	X	
Slovenia	X	
Spain		
Sweden	X	X
United Kingdom	X	X

Partnership in volunteering

The framework for recognition of volunteering is not limited to formal and social recognition mechanisms. It goes beyond that. It is also about partnership established among the main stakeholders of the recognition framework.

The questionnaire asked EKCYP correspondents about the mechanisms of partnership. Our interest was to know what partnership mechanisms existed at local or national level in three categories: first, partnerships between NGOs, second, partnerships between NGOs and government and/or local authorities, and, third, relations established with the private sector.

We found that partnerships between NGOs are generally characterised by coalitions, networks and platform building, all ways to unite to lobby for specific volunteering policies. They run joint campaigns, organise promotional actions and develop common Internet resources.

Partnerships between NGOs and government and/or local authorities are characterised by consultative or co-decision structures, joint running of volunteering centres and information campaigns, implementing community projects that attract volunteers, and research.

Public-private partnerships are characterised by sponsorship, corporate volunteering, technical assistance and resource sharing. Sometimes a partnership is established with private individuals. Table 11 gives details of existing methods of partnership in volunteering.

Table 11. Partnership in volunteering

country	partnership bodies		
	NGO-NGO	NGO-government	public-private
Austria			
Belgium	X	X	X
Bulgaria	X		
Croatia		X	
Cyprus		X	
Czech Republic			
Denmark			
Estonia			
Finland	X + individuals	X	
France	X	X	X <i>volontariat</i>
Germany	X	X	

Greece		X	
Hungary			
Ireland	X	X	X
Italy	X	X local authorities	
Latvia			
Liechtenstein			
Lithuania	X	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X
Malta		X	
Netherlands	X		X
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovak Republic			
Slovenia	X	X	X
Spain	X	X	
Sweden	X + individuals	X	X
United Kingdom			

Promotion of volunteering

Strategic promotion of volunteering is part of most action plans on recognition. The actions can include information about volunteering opportunities, raising awareness of the role of volunteering in society, and co-ordinating efforts by various stakeholders of volunteering in the promotion of voluntary work.

The list of options is long. They impress one with their imagination and creativity. Anyone might find inspiration there when deciding what action to take. It can be activity in local communities, annual national award ceremonies (these attract much media attention) or attractive portals and Internet platforms for volunteers. Posters, a more traditional way of putting out information, can be placed in busy public places, at bus stops and metro stations, in main streets and shopping centres, and accompanied by an Internet campaign. Schools and universities can be targeted with specific promotional events.

Youth information and volunteering information centres, run by municipalities or coalitions of NGOs, not only spread the word but provide counselling about volunteering for young people and their parents.

Volunteering is promoted via television, radio and newspaper advertisements. Volunteers share their success stories online, in print and by word of mouth. Children learn about volunteering in front of their computers via interactive games, at home or in a classroom.

Volunteering is more and more present as a theme in school curricula. Local communities, schools, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers take part in public competitions, showing off their best endeavours.

Among new media, volunteers do not ignore social networks, like Facebook and Twitter. Online matching databases offer abundant opportunities for volunteers and

voluntary bodies to find each other. And it is always nice to talk to one's friends and relatives about voluntary work or to use street performance, street fund-raising and street recruitment to attract attention to volunteering.

Last but not least, joint campaigns with national youth councils help to promote recognition of volunteering, as do training courses for volunteers, for their organisations or for youth officers, youth workers and clerks, whether locally, regionally, nationally or beyond.

All in all, there is a clear tendency to use new technologies for the benefit of volunteering. But personal contact and advice from someone we know and trust remain important too. Some inspiring examples can be found in Table 12.

Table 12. Promotion of volunteering in Europe

country	promotional activities
Belgium	Volunteering Fair Exhibition "You+Me+Us: Portraits of Volunteers on the Move" Voluntary Service Platform Youth Movement Day Volunteers' Week "Coloured Volunteer Work" – practice-oriented training
Bulgaria	Facebook campaign
Cyprus	Best Volunteering Project – competition among schools Volunteer Week in schools Youth information centres Cyprus National Volunteering Portal Volunteering–Social Inclusion–Equal Opportunities: an interactive multimedia learning tool on DVD, a game
Czech Republic	Business in the Community
Estonia	Regional volunteering centres
Greece	Bridge of Collaboration for Volunteering
Italy	Youth and Volunteer: a laboratory of ideas in evolution, Internet based
Liechtenstein	Competition for the Best Volunteering Project
Lithuania	Promotion of volunteering via General Teaching Plan Online Volunteering Matching Database Facebook Twitter
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Volunteering Agency, matching, competence building and information service Bénévolat des jeunes Fräi, well ech wëll! An du?
Malta	VolTours Facebook
Netherlands	Municipal Volunteering Centres I Am Great! campaign VETvrijwillig (awesome volunteering) iVolunteer recruitment project DOET annual awareness-raising campaign Volunteering for and by Young People and Families

Romania	Volunteer Portrait Booklet, stories of young volunteers
Slovakia	"72 Hours"
Sweden	National Volunteering Agency, Volunteering Matching Database
Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Luxembourg	Volunteering Portal

Recommendations for an institutional framework for recognition of volunteering

These recommendations were developed by the consultant and are based on an analysis of the country questionnaires.

1. To invite, encourage and facilitate mutual learning between all stakeholders of the recognition framework on volunteering.
2. To stimulate participation by the private sector, business, employers and recruitment agencies in the process of recognition of volunteering, and to consult them on the added value of volunteering.
3. To use corporate volunteering as an example of a recognised form of volunteering. To learn the lesson for the broader recognition framework.
4. To stimulate public–private partnership on volunteering.
5. To continue debates on the genuine nature of volunteering in relation to formal validation of learning via volunteering. Without the risk of over-formalisation of informal learning, the recognition of volunteering as a valid source of learning needs to be appreciated.
6. To provide training in the use of new media for volunteers and their organisations.
7. To specifically support matching online databases, Internet social networks, interactive games and Internet portals, where they are dedicated to volunteering.
8. To continue the mutual convergence of formal, non-formal and informal learning for the benefit of volunteering.
9. To incorporate research for evidence-based recognition policies on volunteering.

III.

EKCYP youth policy frameworks

Part III consists of eight youth policy frameworks, which are the main element of the EKCYP thematic section. This format aims to give a definition of youth policy priority issues and to inform the reader about related policy developments. The focus is on European policy developments led by the Council of Europe and the European Union. The online reader gets quick access via hyperlinks to all policy documents mentioned and a list of further related documents.¹³

13. See the online version at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/youthpolicy.html>.



Better understanding of youth and knowledge-based youth policy

Andreas Karsten

A greater understanding and knowledge of youth is of paramount importance for policy making in the youth field because, to meet the needs and expectations of young people, policies should be based on comprehensive knowledge and a well-researched understanding of their situation, needs and expectations. A knowledge-based approach to policy development is particularly imperative in the context of rapidly changing realities and constantly fluctuating circumstances facing younger generations in Europe. Unquestionably, youth research plays a vital role in generating knowledge and a better understanding in aid of youth policy development.

In the Council of Europe, a need for youth research was first formally identified in 1967, when the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Order No. 265 calling for the study of youth problems in Europe. In 1992, in Recommendation No. R (92) 7, the Committee of Ministers underlined the importance of youth research and called for the nomination of national youth research correspondents. In 2008, the role of youth research as a principal element in the youth sector's approach to generating knowledge on the situation of young people in Europe and promoting evidence-based youth policies was reaffirmed by the Conference

of Ministers responsible for Youth in its Declaration on the Future of the Council of Europe Youth Policy – Agenda 2020, and by the Committee of Ministers in its Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, whose activities are based on three approaches, methods and instruments:

- youth research and co-operation between youth researchers and policy makers in order to promote evidence-based youth policies and support the work of practitioners in the youth field, with a special focus on the recognition of competences and skills acquired in non-formal education and youth work (such as the Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers);
- carrying out studies and producing publications and educational and training material in order to support youth work and policy, with an emphasis on supporting youth policy development at national level through national youth policy reviews;
- further development of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy in the framework of its Youth Partnership with the European Commission.

Since 2008, the Council of Europe has co-published *Forum 21* – the European journal on child and youth research, a project of IJAB in Germany, INJEP in France and NYA in the United Kingdom. *Forum 21* publishes summaries of research results that are relevant for policy makers and practitioners, in English, French, German and Russian.

The publications *Eggs in a pan – Speeches, writings and reflections* by Peter Lauritzen and *Supporting young people in Europe: Volume 2*, edited by Howard Williamson, are two examples of the understanding and knowledge of youth generated by the Council of Europe.

In the European Union, a greater knowledge and understanding of youth grew to become an enduring priority with the Commission's White Paper "A new impetus for European youth" in 2001, when it was made one of four priorities to which the open method of co-ordination of the 1st EU youth policy cycle was applied. Within this framework, the Council of Youth Ministers agreed upon the following common objectives in 2004:

- to identify existing knowledge in priority areas of the youth field (namely participation, information and voluntary activities) and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it;
- in a second stage, to identify existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field (such as autonomy, creativity, non-formal learning, education and training, employment, entrepreneurship, transition from education to employment, social inclusion, health and the fight against discrimination) and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it;
- to ensure quality, comparability and relevance of knowledge in the youth field by using appropriate methods and tools;
- to facilitate and promote exchange, dialogue and networks to ensure the visibility of knowledge in the youth field and anticipate future needs.

In 2009, the EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering suggested employing a cross-sectoral approach in eight fields of action, outlining possible ways to generate more youth knowledge, share youth research findings and facilitate youth research networks to strengthen evidence-based policy making.

The EU youth strategy also called for an expert group on youth indicators, which was set up in 2010. Based on its work, the European Commission released a staff

working document, “EU indicators in the field of youth”, in March 2011. This presents a dashboard of 40 youth indicators summarising key data for the EU youth strategy and its eight fields of action.

The renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-28) identifies knowledge building and evidence-based youth policy as the first of seven instruments to support implementation of specific initiatives in the youth field and cross-sectoral approaches aimed at mainstreaming a youth perspective in related policy fields. The framework states:

*Youth policy should be evidence-based. Better knowledge and understanding of the living conditions, values and attitudes of young women and men needs to be gathered and shared with other relevant policy fields so as to enable appropriate and timely measures to be taken.*¹⁴

In recent years, the EU has initiated several instruments to strengthen evidence-based policy making in the youth field. These instruments, which the EU intends to publish regularly, are current examples of the understanding and knowledge of youth generated by the EU:

- The 2007 Flash Eurobarometer “Young Europeans”;
- The 2009 Eurostat “Statistical Youth Portrait”;
- The 2009 European Research on Youth Report;
- The 2009 EU Youth Report.

In 2003, the Council of Europe and the European Union agreed to enhance their co-operation to develop and share better knowledge in the youth field by networking and collecting research knowledge to inform European youth policy and educational practice.

In the framework of this co-operation, the Youth Partnership co-ordinates a Pool of European Youth Researchers, organises thematic research seminars usually followed by research publications in the Youth Knowledge series and oversees implementation of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, which facilitates the availability and visibility of knowledge about youth across Europe.

The Pool of European Youth Researchers was established in 2011 to succeed the European Network of Experts on Youth Knowledge. It aims at providing a platform for consultation, exchange and advice from a research perspective.

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy aims to provide the youth sector with a single access point to reliable knowledge and information about young people’s situation across Europe. By doing so, it enhances knowledge transfers between research, policy and practice in the youth field and contributes to the recognition of youth work and non-formal education.

The Youth Partnership has generated understanding and increased our knowledge of youth by its wide range of contributions, including the publications *Youth employment and the future of work* and *The history of youth work in Europe*.

14. ECORYS (2011). “Assessing practices for using indicators in fields related to youth. Final report for the European Commission”, DG Education and Culture. Birmingham: ECORYS.



Justina Pinkeviciute

Human rights as a priority in European youth policy

Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all human beings, regardless of their nationality, language, religion, belief, sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic origin, descent, age, disability, family or any other status.

Human rights are expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, legally guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and they are elaborated and explained by other non-binding documents like general comments, resolutions and directives. In addition to the declaration and the two covenants, there are various international and regional treaties that list human rights and set out the obligations of governments to act in certain ways to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

→ European human rights protection system

The European Convention on Human Rights (also known as the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) contains civil and political rights and was the first Council of Europe convention aimed at

protecting human rights. The European Convention on Human Rights established the European Court of Human Rights with jurisdiction to find against state parties that do not fulfil their obligations under the Convention.

The European Social Charter is the Council of Europe's treaty that sets out social and economic human rights. It established the European Committee of Social Rights, a body that ascertains whether member states have honoured the undertakings set out in the Charter.

The Council of Europe also has other human rights treaties that deal with specific human rights issues or vulnerable groups, such as European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

In addition to treaty-based mechanisms, the Council of Europe's work in promoting and protecting human rights is supported by two independent institutions within the Council of Europe, namely: the independent monitoring mechanism of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the non-judicial institution of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

According to the Treaty on the European Union, human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights are core values of the European Union. The commitment to human rights protection was reinforced by the adoption of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which contains civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the European Union. Since 1 December 2009, when the Lisbon Treaty came into force, the charter has been legally binding on the Union.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is an expert body of the European Union. It was established in 2007 with the aim to provide the European Union's institutions and member states with "assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights in order to support them when they take measures or formulate courses of action within their respective spheres of competence to fully respect fundamental rights".¹⁵ It does this by collecting and analysing data on fundamental rights and providing independent advice to policy makers.

→ European youth policy and human rights

International human rights norms and values implicitly and explicitly shape European institutions and European youth policies. Human rights offer a normative framework for the formulation of regional and national youth policies, as well as strengthening policies by legal obligations.

Effective youth policy is not possible without the empowerment of young people. By introducing a concept of rights into youth policies, policy makers not only acknowledge the needs and special situation of young people, but also reaffirm their entitlements and rights. Youth policy becomes more than a goodwill gesture from government – it becomes a legal obligation of states to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights for young people.¹⁶

15. Council Regulation (EC) No. 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 on establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

16. Draft guidelines: A human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, 10 September 2002.

The new EU youth strategy emphasises that “European Youth Policy co-operation should be firmly anchored in the international system of human rights”. The Future of the Council of Europe Youth Policy: Agenda 2020 Declaration identifies “young people’s full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity” as a priority for the Council of Europe’s youth policy and action.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are among the most fundamental elements of international human rights law. These principles can be found in most youth-related policies of the Council of Europe and European Union. In addition, European youth policies have a particular focus on young people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or socially excluded. The resolution of the Council of the European Union on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities contains encouragement to prioritise young people in the most vulnerable situations when implementing regional and national youth-related strategies.

The international human rights framework requires active and informed participation of young people in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies that affect young people’s lives.

The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life is one of the key policy documents for active youth participation in Europe. The charter recognises that all local and regional sectoral policies should have a youth dimension, and it identifies consultation and co-operation with young people and their representatives as an essential principle in youth policy implementation.

Another important element of the human rights framework is accountability. Human rights require European states to be accountable for their actions: to show, explain and justify how they have fulfilled obligations regarding international human rights. In Europe there are several types of accountability mechanism available, including the European Court of Human Rights, the European Committee of Social Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

With regard to young people below the age of 18 who are alleged to have or who have committed an offence, the Council of Europe adopted the European Rules for Juvenile Offenders subject to Sanctions or Measures. Among the basic principles that have to be followed by states in their treatment of young offenders, the European rules list respect for their human rights. In addition, the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights has published an issue paper on “Children and juvenile justice: proposals for improvement”. In this paper, the Commissioner has emphasised that states should create juvenile justice systems that are effective and human rights-based, and secure the well-being of children and young people in conflict with the law.

Education and training play a central role in promoting international human rights values and principles. In 2000 the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe started the Human Rights Education Youth programme, aiming to “mainstream human rights education in youth policy and youth work practice”. To support human rights education in the formal and non-formal sectors, it has produced a manual on human rights education – *Compass*.

In 2006 the Council of Europe, in partnership with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum, started a one-year European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation, entitled “All Different – All Equal”.

In 2010 the Committee of Ministers adopted the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The charter explains that “one of the fundamental goals of all education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is not just equipping learners with knowledge, understanding and skills, but also empowering them with the readiness to take action in society in the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.”

Similarly, the Youth in Action programme of the European Union identifies the promotion of respect for human rights and human dignity as one of its objectives for the period 2007-13.

Barbara Giovanna Bello

Anti-discrimination and diversity

Equality, diversity and non-discrimination are fundamental ingredients of the European idea, but have been mixed up in different ways over the years. The original recipe for equality prescribed the Aristotelian principle of formal equality, according to which “things that are alike should be treated alike” and differences between people should be deemed irrelevant. This approach proved inadequate to tackle all forms of discrimination and did not take into account the fact that the equal application of rules to different groups or individuals can produce unequal results.

Since the late 1990s in Europe there has been a shift towards substantive equality, which seeks to remove obstacles to the achievement of equal opportunity and equal outcomes. Therefore the recipe has been enriched with bigger quantities of a tasty spice, diversity, which can be defined as the range of human differences, visible and invisible, in gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political opinion, citizenship and many others.¹⁷

17. See *Travelling cultural diversity*, a folder pack taken from the Salto-Youth Cultural Diversity course. Salto is Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities in the European Commission YOUTH programme.

The increased recognition of diversity as a European value emphasises the benefits of having multifaceted experiences in shaping a democratic society and the integrity of each and all individuals. Ultimately, it realises individuals' right to be different and not to be discriminated against because of this difference, by going beyond stereotypes, prejudices and stigmatisation of what is conceived as "other".

Within the European Union, the motto "United in diversity" enshrines the idea that Europeans are united in building peace and democracy, and that the many different cultures, traditions and languages existing in Europe are a plus value for the continent. However, until 1997, the focus of anti-discrimination protection was limited to the nationality of member states' citizens and to gender. Later on, new powers for combating discrimination – on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation – were conferred under the substantive amendments to the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, together with the reinforcement of provisions on discrimination based on gender. As a result of this process, the EU institutions passed a set of anti-discrimination directives in 2000, the so-called equality directives, giving everyone in the EU (citizens and third-country nationals) a common minimum level of legal protection against discrimination.

The protection from these kinds of discrimination was reiterated by the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009. In fact, it gives the same legal value as the European treaties to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, signed on 7 December 2000 in Nice, whose Chapter III, "Equality", promotes the non-discrimination principle on a wide range of grounds while calling for respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Attention has been given also to multiple discriminations suffered by individuals (women in particular) because of the overlap or intersection of multiple grounds of discrimination. On the other hand, this set of laws does not cover differences of treatment based on nationality or on the legal status of third-country nationals, even if Directive 2003/109 on long-term residents breaches the wall of fortress Europe.

A major impetus to anti-discrimination and diversity was given by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which was given powers on 1 March 2007 as a body of the European Union, built on the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). It issues many studies and reports on EU anti-discrimination strategy, focusing on particularly vulnerable groups, such as asylum seekers, the Roma minority and Muslims.

Besides, the EU has been supporting and financing several activities related to diversity and non-discrimination, such as the five-year pan-European information campaign on combating discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation, under the slogan "For diversity, against discrimination", in which youth issues were very much stressed.

In order to raise awareness of the need to enhance the principle of non-discrimination in practice, to foster intercultural dialogue and to promote social inclusion, the EU named 2007 as the Year of Equal Opportunities for All, 2008 as the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and 2010 as the Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The Council of Europe's commitment to combating discrimination and valuing diversity can be traced back many decades. Article 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, signed in Rome in 1950 and strengthened by Protocol No. 12, reads:

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

The Convention may arguably increase its significance within the EU, because the Lisbon Treaty provides that the European Union “shall accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”, becoming a party to the Convention in the same way each of its member states is. Many other Council of Europe documents complement the fight against discrimination, like the revised European Social Charter, whose Article 20 fosters “the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex” and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed in 1995.

Within the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has issued various recommendations to promote the anti-discrimination principle, to fight racism and racial discrimination, and to harmonise post-2001 anti-terrorism legislation and practices with anti-discrimination protection on grounds of nationality, national or ethnic origin and religion – or, more often, to combat discriminatory practices by public authorities. In particular the ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 8 on combating racism while fighting terrorism, adopted on 17 March 2004, has a particular impact on youth, because many practices (like racial profiling) affect Muslim young men. Since 2007, the Council of Europe and the European Union have co-operated in running the awareness-raising campaign “Dosta!” to break down stereotypes of and prejudices against the Roma minority.

The aforesaid general legislation and activities have had a dramatic impact in the youth sector. In 2001 the European Commission launched the White Paper on Youth Policy, in which the fight against racism and xenophobia was prominent along with the “mainstreaming of youth” in other policy areas like wider discrimination, health and well-being.

The European Commission gave a new impetus to youth education, employment and inclusion policies with the communication “Promoting young people’s full participation in education, employment and society”, COM(2007)498 adopted in September 2007, setting as a key issue the achievement of social inclusion and equal opportunities for minorities’ young people. Also the Youth in Action programme for the period 2007 to 2013 has among its objectives the promotion of the fundamental values of the EU among young people, in particular respect for human dignity, equality, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination. In 2008, following consultation with national governments, the European Youth Forum, youth organisations and other stakeholders, the European Commission launched the new EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, which urged efforts to mainstream youth in all anti-discrimination policies.

The European Spring Council of March 2005 adopted the Youth Pact as part of the revised Lisbon Strategy, aiming at improving all young people’s education, employment, vocational integration, mobility and social inclusion. In 2009, the European Youth Forum suggested that, when the Lisbon Strategy was revised in 2010, a renewed and updated European Youth Pact should be integrated into the Europe 2020 strategy in order to draft “special measures addressing the needs of specific groups of young people facing discrimination and social exclusion: young

women, young migrants, young people with disability, young LGBT people, young people from ethnic and religious minorities, as well as young people with fewer financial means". Consequently, the Europe 2020 strategy launched Youth on the Move, which summarises 28 key actions aimed at increasing young people's employability and access to the labour market, encouraging above all young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have difficulty gaining access to EU grants to study or train in another country.

On 27 November 2009, the Council of the European Union issued a resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-18) that sought to anchor European youth policy in the international system of human rights, saying:

A number of guiding principles should be observed in all policies and activities concerning young people, namely the importance of (a) promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination, respecting the rights and observing the principles recognised inter alia in Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Within the Council of Europe, Agenda 2020 was signed in Kyiv, Ukraine, on 11 October 2008 by the ministers responsible for youth from the 49 states party to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe, in order to refresh its youth agenda, as suggested by the Parliamentary Assembly's Recommendation 1844 (2008). Agenda 2020 sets a number of priorities for Council of Europe youth policy and actions, which include empowering young people to promote, in their daily life, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue and co-operation; preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any ground; supporting initiatives by young people in conflict prevention and management, and post-conflict reconciliation, by means of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension; and supporting youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

In the same year, a resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, adopted on 25 November 2008, followed up the action plan agreed in Warsaw in 2005, particularly the youth campaign for diversity, human rights and participation "All Different, All Equal" (see below). The resolution set up many ambitious goals, three of which were: to promote equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives; to effectively implement gender equality and prevent all forms of gender-based violence; and to live together in diverse societies.

The Council of Europe and the European Union have launched several joint campaigns to promote the principles of equality and non-discrimination. For example, from June 2006 to September 2007 the Council of Europe, in partnership with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum, ran the aforesaid campaign for diversity, human rights and participation, "All Different, All Equal", to strengthen the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. The campaign was inspired by its namesake run in 1995 by the member states of the Council of Europe.

In the framework of the Youth Partnership set up by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the focus on the themes of anti-discrimination, social cohesion, inclusion and diversity has intensified since 2005 and this has been reflected in thematic research seminars on social inclusion (2005), diversity, human rights and participation (2006) and non equal opportunities for all (2007). A collection of the presentations from these seminars has been produced to disseminate the results of the events.

*Mark Bellis
and Karen Hughes*

Youth violence

→ The case for youth violence prevention

Violence is one of the leading causes of death and disability among young people in Europe. Over 10 000 Europeans aged 15-29 lose their lives to violence each year¹⁸ and far more suffer physical, emotional, psychological or social harm from involvement in, witnessing or fearing violence. Violence can affect every aspect of young people's lives, hampering their prospects for education, employment and health, and reducing their ability to form healthy personal and social relationships. Preventing youth violence is of critical importance in a wide range of youth, social, family, health and employment policies. More widely, a high level of youth (and other) violence can form a barrier to economic investment in an area.

Compared with other age groups, young people have higher risks of involvement in violence as both victims and

18. World Health Organization: "Global burden of disease", disease and injury regional estimates, cause-specific mortality: regional estimates for 2008.

perpetrators.¹⁹ Youth is a period marked by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural changes that can contribute to aggression and also vulnerability to violence. For example, biological and neurological changes occurring during puberty, such as a rise in the level of stress hormones, can increase the risk of engaging in aggressive or anti-social behaviour; relationships with peers can take precedence over the influence of parents and other authority figures; and young people can be exposed for the first time to situations where violence may occur, such as sexual interactions, drinking environments and illicit drug markets. How young people cope with these challenges depends on the strength of their social and emotional skills, the family and social support they have around them and the cultural and social norms they have learnt during childhood.

→ Early life opportunities for youth violence prevention

Many of the key risk factors for involvement in youth violence stem from the family and community in which young people grow up. Children who are abused or who live in dysfunctional households – for example, if they witness domestic violence, parental substance use or criminal behaviour – have increased risks of later involvement with youth violence.²⁰ Other risk factors in early life include having a teenage mother, coming from a single-parent family, having poor parental relationships and low educational achievement.

The impacts of children's early life experiences on their risks of violence mean that early life interventions have an essential role to play in preventing youth violence. Such interventions work with children and their families from the very earliest stages of life, fostering healthy brain development, the formation of social and emotional skills and strong family and community support. Effective programmes include home visiting by nurses for new parents, parent training programmes and preschool enrichment programmes.²¹

These interventions work to strengthen bonds between parents and their children; provide parents with knowledge and skills to understand and care for their child; and develop emotional, social and learning skills in young children. They can also incorporate broader support for families in health, social well-being and employment. As well as helping to prevent youth violence, early interventions can have long-term benefits in reducing other forms of risk taking in young people, such as alcohol abuse, tobacco and drug use and unsafe sex, and can enhance their educational and employment outcomes. Such programmes can be highly cost-effective; returning savings in health, social and criminal justice well in excess of programme costs.²²

19. Sethi D., Hughes K., Bellis M. A., Mitis F. and Racioppi F., *European report on preventing violence and knife crime among young people*, Copenhagen: World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2010; Bellis M. A., Hughes K., Wood S., Wyke S. and Perkins C., "National five year examination of inequalities and trends in emergency hospital admission for violence across England", *Injury Prevention* (2011), 17: 319-25.

20. Duke N. N., Pettingell S. L., McMorris B. J. and Borowsky I. W., "Adolescent violence perpetration: associations with multiple types of adverse childhood experiences", *Pediatrics* (2010), 125: e778-86.

21. World Health Organization, *Preventing violence through the development of safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children*, 2009.

22. Aos S., Lieb R., Mayfield J. et al., *Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004.

→ **Schooling and youth violence prevention**

When children enter formal education, the provision of a safe school environment is critical in protecting them from bullying and youth violence, and enabling them to learn and develop effectively. Whole-school approaches create environments where bullying is not tolerated, incorporating clear regulations and procedures for addressing bullying, teacher training, parental education, the provision of safe physical environments and educational curricula that strengthen children's life skills.

There are life skills programmes that develop children's social and emotional skills, such as empathy, self-respect, problem-solving, anger management and effective conflict resolution. These programmes can reduce aggressive and violent behaviour in youth.²³ School-based dating programmes can also build relationship skills and address gender stereotypes and norms with the aim of protecting young people from intimate partner and sexual violence.

→ **Preventing youth violence by tackling alcohol**

Youth violence is strongly associated with the use of alcohol, which can disinhibit aggression and increase individuals' vulnerability to assault. Measures to reduce the availability of alcohol and its harmful use by youth are important elements in violence prevention strategies.²⁴ Strategies to reduce the availability of alcohol include increasing the price, implementing and enforcing age restrictions, reducing alcohol advertising and promotion, and limiting the number of outlets that can sell alcohol. With much youth violence occurring in and around drinking venues, such as pubs, bars and nightclubs, it is also important to promote responsible server practice (e.g. no sales of alcohol to minors or those already drunk), improve comfort levels (e.g. more seating, less crowding), prevent cheap alcohol promotions, enforce licensing legislation and provide deterrents to anti-social behaviour and aggression.

→ **Social determinants and youth violence prevention**

The length and severity of youth involvement in violence vary considerably. For many, fighting and other forms of delinquent behaviour are a temporary phase that individuals outgrow as they move into adulthood. For others, however, aggression and conduct disorder can emerge early in childhood, develop into more serious forms of offending and violence during adolescence, and continue into adulthood. These youths and their families can require more intensive support, such as that provided through multi-systemic therapy. Such therapy has been found to reduce violence, delinquency and crime among youths already engaging in offending behaviour, by incorporating psychotherapeutic techniques (such as cognitive behavioural therapy) with parent training and broader support to help youths and their families address problems with peers, schools and neighbourhoods.

Youths who live in areas with high levels of deprivation and crime, or who have few educational and employment opportunities, may see little future for themselves and consider violence and crime as the only options for achieving status, resources and wealth. Where such communities have endemic violence, aggressive behaviour

23. World Health Organization, *Preventing violence by developing life skills in children and adolescents*, 2009.

24. World Health Organization, *Preventing violence by reducing the availability and harmful use of alcohol*, 2009.

can be seen as both a social norm and a necessary response for self-protection. Such factors contribute to young people obtaining weapons for self-protection and joining gangs, where violence can be legitimised and even promoted. The presence of gangs, weapons and drug markets is an important risk factor for youth violence. Youth violence can also thrive in societies with low levels of social cohesion, wide social inequalities, growing youth populations, high unemployment and weak criminal justice, or where social and gender norms are tolerant of violent behaviour.²⁵

→ Policy and youth violence prevention

The Council of Europe's recommendation on the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety, covering both intentional and unintentional injury, identifies young people as a key group for attention. The World Health Assembly resolutions on the prevention of violence: a public health priority (WHA49.25) and implementing the recommendations of the "World report on violence and health" (WHA56.24) provide a framework for governments to take action to prevent violence. This is supported in Europe by a resolution of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe on the prevention of injuries in the WHO European region.

The risk factors that contribute to youth violence are addressed by many broader European policies, including those on education, employment, health and well-being, social inclusion and human rights. Violence prevention is also fundamental to success in many key youth-focused policies, including the EU youth strategy, The Future of the Council of Europe Youth Policy: Agenda 2020 Declaration, and the European Union's Youth in Action programme. Violence is just one of many challenges facing deprived populations in particular, but it is often a barrier to addressing other health and social issues because the resulting fear and instability impede individual, community and financial investment in affected areas. Consequently, preventing violence is often a prerequisite for successful implementation of other health or social policies.

The series *Violence Prevention: The Evidence*, published by the World Health Organization, details the evidence behind many of the prevention strategies outlined here. Specific to youth, the European report on preventing violence and knife crime among young people by WHO Europe brings together information on the extent of youth violence in Europe, the risk factors, evidence of what works in prevention and the policy options.

25. Sethi D., Hughes K., Bellis M. A., Mitis F. and Racioppi F., *European report on preventing violence and knife crime among young people*. Copenhagen: World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2010.

Elisa Briga

Youth mobility

The term “youth mobility” refers to the ability of young people to move across and between countries, inside and outside Europe, for formal and non-formal learning purposes. Youth mobility takes place in the framework of exchange programmes with the aim of developing interpersonal, intercultural and linguistic skills. At EU level, youth mobility is also linked to the wider policy for the mobility of workers in the Common Market.

Youth mobility is not dealt with in a formal convention at European level, and so far the intergovernmental co-operation of the Council of Europe and the soft law of the European Union in the field of youth policy have focused on introducing instruments that promote it in a practical way. In particular, the Council of Europe has focused on promoting mobility for intercultural learning and integration in the wider Europe and in this way played an important role in recognising young people’s aspirations in central and eastern Europe and in fostering east–west youth mobility. The EU has established mobility programmes which address also the specific aim of fostering European citizenship and the employability of young people.

Youth mobility across borders in Europe has been promoted by civil society organisations and political institutions since the end of the Second World War as a means to foster intercultural dialogue and peace. The Council of Europe was the first international governmental organisation to address this phenomenon at the European level and, when the youth sector started expanding in the mid-1960s, youth mobility was among its major themes. The first initiatives in this field were the European agreement on young people travelling with collective passports (1961) and the European Agreement on “Au Pair” Placement (1969). In 1972 the European Youth Foundation was established to provide financial support for European youth activities which serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation among young people in Europe.

From the mid-1980s youth mobility became a permanent item on the ministerial conference agenda and more documents appeared covering specific aspects, such as the mobility of youth workers and local policies to promote mobility. In particular, in the 1990s the Council of Europe made four important steps in the promotion of youth mobility: Resolution 91 (20) instituting a partial agreement on the youth card for the purpose of promoting and facilitating youth mobility in Europe, which gave birth to the European Youth Card Association, two recommendations on youth mobility, No. R (95) 18 on youth mobility and No. R (94) 4 on the promotion of a voluntary service, and the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility (now Mobility Fund by Rail for the Young and the Disadvantaged) set up in 1994 by agreement with the International Union of Railways.

At the end of the 1980s, the European Union also started promoting youth exchanges through specific funding programmes such as Erasmus (1987) and Youth for Europe (1989), and the implementation of these programmes represented the first initiative of the European Union in the youth sector. The Treaty on the European Union signed in Maastricht in 1992 recognised this development in Article 149, paragraph 2, which states that the Community action should also be aimed at “encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors”. Youth mobility became an asset of EU youth policy through the further development of the funding programmes promoting mobility; in particular, a great achievement in the field of non-formal education was the launch of the European Voluntary Service programme. The most important policy documents were the resolution concerning an action plan for mobility (2000) and the recommendation for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers (2001), whose principles were then included in the White Paper “A new impetus for European youth” (2001). The White Paper underlined the importance of recognising specific skills gained through mobility experiences, and youth mobility emerges as a transversal policy which has to be taken into consideration in the fields of voluntary activities, information, participation, education, training and employment. The White Paper was followed by the Framework of European co-operation in the youth field in 2002, updated in 2005 to take into account the European Youth Pact where “Education, training and mobility” forms one of the three pillars.

The main focus of the youth mobility programmes promoted by the EU has been the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities but the number of young people who are able to benefit from the EU mobility programmes remains relatively small at around 380 000 per annum and very often disadvantaged youth is still not reached. However, the Erasmus programme emerges as the big success of EU policy in this field: 2.2 million students have participated since it started in 1987.

Youth mobility is currently high on the agendas of the Council of Europe and the European Union, and is also one of the themes on which the two institutions based their partnership in the field of youth established in 1998.

The Declaration on the Future of the Council of Europe Youth Policy: Agenda 2020 includes supporting the development of youth mobility, which is also encouraged in Recommendation Rec(2004)13 on the participation of young people in local and regional life, where an entire article is dedicated to the role of local and regional authorities in policies for mobility and exchanges.

At the level of the European Union several important policy documents have been produced on the topic of youth mobility: the European Quality Charter for Mobility (2006), the Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union (November 2008), the conclusions of the Council on youth mobility (December 2008) and the Green Paper on the Learning Mobility of Young People launched in July 2009. Moreover, the promotion of youth mobility is included in the resolution on a renewed framework of co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018) and “increasing learning mobility and opportunities for young people” stands out as one of the three priorities of the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth for the years 2010-14.

The developments outlined above paved the way for the current main policy paper in the field of youth mobility, the communication from the Commission “Youth on the Move”. It is one of the seven flagship initiatives in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union, it builds on the results of the Green Paper on the Learning Mobility of Young People and it is closely linked to another flagship initiative “An agenda for new skills and jobs”, which aims to enhance geographical mobility throughout the EU. The strategy outlined in Youth on the Move is the EU’s answer to the high rate of youth unemployment; it aims to prepare young people to face future challenges of the economy and sets up the basis for EU youth mobility programmes post-2013.

The main idea behind Youth on the Move is that learning mobility is an important way for young people to enhance their development as active citizens and strengthen their future employability, by acquiring new professional competences and developing a positive attitude towards mobility. Therefore the Commission sees in mobility a key instrument to prepare young people to live in the society of the future, be open to new ideas and deal with the unfamiliar, and it aims to extend opportunities for learning mobility to all young people in Europe by 2020, by mobilising resources and removing obstacles to pursuing a learning experience abroad.

The strategy aims to support “strong development of transnational learning and employment mobility for young people” by implementing specific actions focused on monitoring progress in removing obstacles to mobility, developing tools to foster mobility (Youth on the Move Card, European Skills Passport) and especially supporting youth employment (Your first EURES job, European Vacancy Monitor, Youth Guarantee) and informing young people about existing opportunities. Finally, it envisages a Council recommendation on promoting the learning mobility of young people.

The youth policy sectors of the Council of Europe and the European Union began with the creation of frameworks to encourage the mobility of young people, but this phenomenon has not been systematically measured so far because of its

high level of fragmentation. The EU is investing considerable funds and making significant political commitments to encourage youth mobility, so the policy in this field should be evidence-based and assessed through the setting of benchmarks. The staff working document of the EU indicators in the field of youth proposes an indicator to measure volunteering mobility, thus trying to gather data on youth mobility in non-formal education, while for the formal education sector the Commission will propose EU benchmarks on learning mobility, focusing in particular on students in higher education, vocational education and training.



Andreas Karsten

Non-formal learning and education

Non-formal learning is an extensively used and intensely debated notion in the youth field. It stands for a range of core learning principles, methodologies and approaches in the youth sector, commonly emphasising the learner's intrinsic motivation, voluntary participation, critical thinking and democratic agency. It is widely acknowledged and recognised that non-formal learning provides unique learning opportunities to millions of young Europeans every day.

The glossary of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy describes non-formal learning as follows:

Non-formal learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.

In recent years, academic enquiry has gradually shifted to reposition non-formal learning – defined in 1974 by Coombs and Ahmed as “any organized, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system” – as one of a number of learning situations on a learning continuum and structured across multiple dimensions between formality, non-formality and informality of learning.²⁶

Political interest in the variety of learner-centred and practice-based educational processes that are subsumed under non-formal learning has increasingly been focused on quality standards, validation and strategies for recognition.

In 1998, the European ministers responsible for youth confirmed, in the final declaration of their 5th conference, non-formal education as a priority working area in the Council of Europe’s youth field. Considering non-formal education as a means of integration into society, the ministers called for recognition and valorisation of the competences and qualifications acquired through non-formal education.

Since then, non-formal learning and education have been repeatedly affirmed as key priorities of the Council of Europe. In 2005, the ministers responsible for youth said that recognition of non-formal education competences should be reinforced. In Agenda 2020, the Conference of Ministers emphasised that the recognition of non-formal education and learning makes a strong contribution to young people’s access to education, training and working life.

Complementary to the Council of Europe’s policy development and educational work on non-formal education, the European Union has made efforts to strengthen recognition of non-formal learning, guided by the European Commission’s White Paper “A new impetus for European youth” and contextualised by the memorandum on lifelong learning.

The European Youth Pact reaffirmed the focus on recognition of non-formal learning, and this was underlined by the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-18):

As a complement to formal education, non-formal learning for young people should be promoted and recognised, and better links between formal education and non-formal learning developed.

Both European institutions have given non-formal education and learning an increasingly high status and considerable momentum with high-level resolutions: the Council of Europe with Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people, and the European Union with Resolution 2006/C168/01 (EUR-Lex - Official Journal - 2006 - C 168) on recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field.

Embedded in this policy framework, two important instruments were developed to facilitate the validation and recognition of skills and competences acquired through

26. Coombs P. and Ahmed M., *Attacking rural poverty: how non-formal education can help*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1974; Chisholm L., “Rediscovering the learning continuum: renewing education for democracy”. Keynote speech at the EU Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes 2007-2013 launch conference, Tallinn, 11 April 2007; Colley H., Hodkinson P. and Malcom J., *Informality and formality in learning*, Learning & Skills Research Centre, London, 2003.

non-formal learning. The European Union launched Youthpass, and the Council of Europe introduced the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers. Both tools are meant to support users in identifying, describing and assessing competences and are thus meant to contribute to the recognition of non-formal education and learning.

In 2004, the two institutions joined forces and published, under the auspices of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the milestone working paper “Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and learning in the youth field”. The paper, a milestone at the time, provided a comprehensive overview of the political context and relevant policy frameworks surrounding non-formal education, described essential features and characteristics of non-formal learning in the youth field and set out pathways towards validation and formal recognition. Having remained a key text over the years, the working paper has been updated to a new version, Pathways 2.0, which attempts to define a new strategy for the better formal, social and political recognition of non-formal and informal learning and to stimulate ideas for and discussion about concrete steps, strategies and tools to strengthen recognition.

The European Youth Forum, representing youth organisations as spaces for non-formal learning and providers of non-formal education, has made significant contributions to this policy discourse. Seeing recognition of non-formal education and learning as a prerequisite for making lifelong learning a reality across Europe, the European Youth Forum has adopted several policy papers, produced numerous reports on the issue and organises regular dialogue events on non-formal education.

Beyond the youth sector, but strongly linked with the EU’s lifelong learning strategy, is the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), in which the validation and recognition of non-formal learning plays a significant and strategic role. Both organisations have published extensively on non-formal education and learning, notably “Recognising non-formal and informal learning: outcomes, policies and practices” (OECD, 2010) and “European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning” (CEDEFOP, 2009). CEDEFOP has also provided valuable insights into national policies and practices in its European inventory on validating non-formal and informal learning.

In years to come, the youth field is likely to face increased demands to synchronise its current sector-specific policies on and approaches to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning with wider contexts and instruments like the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) or the European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO).

Filip Coussée

Youth work

→ Youth work, a very diverse field of practice

Youth work is multifaceted practice. This makes it difficult to identify the defining features of youth work. In this piece we offer an overview of some of its central characteristics.

In some countries “youth work” is a relatively well-defined, distinct practice. In other countries (especially in southern Europe), the term is less known and there is no identifiable overall concept of youth work. In all countries, however, we observe a distinct, but diverse field of social and educational practices shaping a so-called third socialisation environment, after family and school.

Regarding the target group of youth work, it can be observed that in a number of countries youth work is restricted to work with young people aged 15 to 25, whereas in other countries (e.g., Belgium, Germany) there is no strong distinction between children’s work and youth work. Likewise, a number of countries make a distinction between cultural work and welfare work with young people, resulting in strong dividing lines between what could be called “youth work working with young people” and “youth work working on

young people". In most countries, though, there is a clear tendency to take a broad view of youth work, integrating differentiated practices, with different target groups and varying aims.

In the EU Council's resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (November 2009), youth work was defined like this:

Youth work is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of "out-of-school" education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation.²⁷

This broad definition reflects the huge diversity in methods, areas and target groups. It informed a recent Europe-wide study on the socio-economic scope of youth work, comparing definitions, legal frameworks, youth work aims and target groups across 10 countries. Many key players now feel that we should celebrate the diversity of youth work practice, as was clearly stated in the First European Youth Work Convention, during Belgium's EU presidency.

→ Youth work, a powerful practice full of tensions

A common feature of all these practices is the use of methods of non-formal education (educational activities outside the formal educational system) and the emphasis on voluntary participation. These two characteristics distinguish youth work from other educational interventions, whether in the private sphere of the family or in public, formal institutions like schools. Youth work starts where young people are and does not have to bother with pre-structured programmes or predefined learning outcomes. At the same time, as Peter Lauritzen stressed, youth work is committed to the social inclusion and integration of young people.

Therefore youth work is a polyvalent and powerful, but ambivalent, practice. Youth work is a form of informal education, which has an ambivalent position between private aspirations and public expectations; thus it is not possible to impose a single concept of youth work. As a social and educational practice, youth work intervenes in situations with a history of their own. Nevertheless, it seems clear that youth workers and youth policy makers across all countries do have a shared knowledge base when discussing youth work. There seems to be a shared set of values and methods in youth work practices all around Europe:

- voluntary participation of young people;
- listening to the voice of young people;
- bringing young people together;
- connecting to young people's lifeworld;
- broadening young people's lifeworld.

Especially in the last two points we clearly see why youth work is a field of tensions. Connecting to the lifeworld of young people is not the endpoint of youth work

27. This definition is based on the work of the late Peter Lauritzen, former Head of the Youth Department and Deputy Director at the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, who has left us an all-encompassing definition of youth work (<http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/glossary.html#Y>).

practice. This would mean that young people were virtually cocooned, enclosed in their lifeworld. So youth work also aims to enrich the lifeworld of young people and to broaden their horizons. This ambition to broaden the lifeworld of young people is often transformed into social inclusion strategies, in which exclusion is assumed to be caused by a lack of participation in pre-structured activities. Accessibility is then the main topic in the youth work discussion.

That is why the relationship between youth workers, policy makers and young people (especially the vulnerable) is often a troubled and tensioned one in which youth work loses its appeal to young people if practice is dominated by external, adult-driven expectations. Socially excluded young people or those living on the margins of social exclusion seem especially hard to reach. The more society imposes external expectations and outcomes on youth work to increase efficiency, the harder it becomes to reach vulnerable young people. It is fascinating how other rather informal practices like sport are struggling with the same counterproductive effects when instrumentalised for externally defined outcomes.²⁸

There is yet another paradox that stems from one of the other shared youth work values: voluntary participation. It is generally assumed that youth work contributes to young people's social and democratic skills and attitudes. At the same time, however, we notice that youth work seems to draw dividing lines between young people. There are few practices where black and white, poor and rich, low-skilled and well-educated, religious and non-religious, disabled and non-disabled, left-wing and right-wing, disco freaks and metalheads are brought together. This is a huge challenge for youth workers: making young people feel at home, that they belong to a group, and yet at the same time building bridges between different groups.

In conclusion, despite its value and power, youth work is a vulnerable practice. Both the power of youth work and its vulnerability are the result of its inherent contradictions and ambivalence. Thus it somehow reflects the condition of being young in Western societies nowadays, endowed with the greatest freedom ever but at the same time subject to ever-growing pressure to fit in with a market-driven world of competition.

28. Kelly L., "Social inclusion through sports-based interventions?", *Critical Social Policy* (2011), 31/1: 126-50.

Creativity and culture as important topics of a European youth policy

Manfred Zentner

Even before the economic crises began in 2007, creativity was already seen as a major personal skill in dealing with challenges and demands. There is no longer only one correct answer to a given problem; flexible thinking, unorthodox methods and creative ways to solve problems are seen as the appropriate approaches in a world of globalisation. To find creative solutions to complex problems is understood as an important input for innovation, which is seen as the main motor of the European economy.

Furthermore, creativity is a human capacity that enriches people's personal life, enables them to meet daily challenges and fosters co-operation in society. Gradually, it has become the accepted wisdom that creativity is not just a given talent but an ability that can and should be trained and improved. As a consequence, creativity has become one of the aims in the upbringing of children and in education. Creativity flourishes in societies where free, equal and open exchange between humans, people and cultures is taken for granted.

→ Creativity and culture in European policies

Since creativity plays such an important role nowadays, it is not surprising that

the year 2009 was declared European Year of Creativity and Innovation (Decision No. 1350/2008/EC). As its home page announced:

Creativity and innovation contribute to economic prosperity as well as to social and individual well-being. So creativity and innovation are thriving factors for entrepreneurship and important new skills needed in new jobs. Therefore these capacities are mentioned as key competences (see the recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning and the resolution on new skills and new jobs) and thus being in line with the ideas of the Lisbon Strategy.

Culture is, as the Council of Europe points out, an essential component and a key factor in human rights and democracy. It builds the basis for an understanding of society, of life itself; it is the basis of co-operation, dialogue and exchange. Therefore as early as 1954 the Council of Europe sought strong policies on culture to foster respect for identity, diversity, intercultural dialogue and cultural rights – as the basis for respectful and tolerant living together (see European Cultural Convention, ETS No. 18). Cultural diversity and cultural heritage are important elements of the European self-concept. The Lisbon Treaty too (Article 167) points out that the Union should take culture into account in all its actions so as to foster intercultural respect and promote diversity.

Creativity is a key factor in culture and cultural expression, and vice versa: culture is seen as a catalyst for creativity. The culture programme of the European Commission (2007–13) has set the stimulation of creativity through culture and the promotion of creative industries as a European Union policy. In the European agenda for culture in a globalising world too, culture and its influence on creativity are discussed:

The role of culture in supporting and fostering creativity and innovation must be explored and promoted. Creativity is the basis for social and technological innovation, and therefore an important driver of growth, competitiveness and jobs in the EU.

This link between culture and creativity, the features of creativity leading to innovation, competitiveness or economic growth, and the prerequisites for fostering creativity are all analysed in detail in the study “The impact of culture on creativity”, which mentions the term “culture-based creativity”. The study emphasises that learning about arts and culture in school and in lifelong learning has a major impact in stimulating creativity. Even a possible future European Union creativity policy is outlined.

In their manifesto, the ambassadors for the European Year of Creativity and Innovations – a group of artists, economists, researchers and scientists – outlined what lines of action are needed to foster creative thinking and support innovative approaches. This manifesto can be seen as a further marker on the path towards a creativity policy. Last but not least the economic impact of culture and creative industries is gaining more and more strength, and they are therefore the topic of European research and a special Green Paper on unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries.

→ Creativity and culture in youth policy

The links between culture, economy, education and creativity have been the topics of various conferences. The home page of the European Year of Creativity and Innovations 2009 provides a good overview and starting point for further research. The importance of creativity in the lives of young people today was a topic in events of that year, and especially the role of new technologies in young

people's approach to creativity. A series of interesting papers on this issue can be found in the reports of the CICY Conference in Belgium and Promoting a Creative Generation in Sweden – to name only two conferences.

The increased importance of creativity has also had an impact on education, which is at the core of youth policy. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe now recommends assessing educational success not only in the traditional subjects of schooling but also in “soft skills” like creativity.

This stronger emphasis on culture and creativity is reflected nowadays in youth policy declarations. A policy of valuing and encouraging the creative potential of young people is one of the recommendations for refreshing the Youth Agenda of the Council of Europe; and, in the EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, creativity is one of the main tools for dealing with the challenges of our time when standard approaches seem not to work well. In that strategy document, creativity is coupled with entrepreneurship to highlight the need of creative solutions in the economy too. Young people should be encouraged to think and act innovatively.

Appendices

→ 1. Correspondents to the EKCYP

country	name	institution
Andorra	Pau Rosillo Buscà	Cap d'Àrea de Joventut Ministeri d'Habitatge, Joventut, Ensenyament Superior i Recerca
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Austria	Manfred Zentner	Institut fuer Jugendkulturforschung und Kulturvermittlung
Azerbaijan	Farhad Hajiyev	Ministry of Youth and Sport
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Belgium (French Community)	Michel Vanderkeere	Ministère de la Communauté française – Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Jasmin Jasarevic	Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria	Petyo Kanev	Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
Croatia	Sandra Car	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences/ Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity
Cyprus	Anna Loizou	Youth Board of Cyprus
Czech Republic	Hana Marikova	NIDM – National Institute of Children and Youth
Estonia	Marti Taru	Institute of International and Social Studies at Tallinn University
Finland	Sami Myllyniemi	Finnish Youth Research Society
France	Solange Fourcoux	Mission coopération européenne et internationale jeunesse vie associative
Georgia	Ana Sabakhtarishvili	Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs
Germany	Kerstin Wondratschek	International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany
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Hungary	Andras Deri	National Institute for Family and Social Policy
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Luxembourg	Marianne Milmeister	University of Luxembourg
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Slovenia	Barbara Zupan	Ministry of Education and Sport – Office of Youth
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Front row (sitting): Solange Fourcoux (France), Aleksandra Karlinska (Poland), Kerstin Wondratschek (Germany), Philipp Boetzelen (Youth Partnership), Lihong Huang (Norway)

Second row (standing): Vadym Georgienko (Ukraine), Bianca Faragau (European Commission), Tamara Nikolic (Serbia), Jana Mihalikova (Slovak Republic), Loretta Felici (San Marino), Pink Hilverdink (Netherlands), Manfred Zentner (Austria), Sener Tulin (Turkey), Marti Taru (Estonia), Hanjo Schild (Youth Partnership), Marianne Milmeister (Luxembourg), Bruno del Mazo Unamuno (Spain)

Back row: Valda Karnickaite (Lithuania), Jason Zammit (Malta), Andras Deri (Hungary), Barbara Zupan (Slovenia), Sorin Mitulescu (Romania), Anne Swaluë (Belgium), Ana Sabakhtarishvili (Georgia), Maurice Devlin (Ireland), Srd Kisevic (Youth Partnership), Kari Paakkunai (Finland)

→ 2. Contributors to this publication

Professor Mark Bellis is Director of the Centre for Public Health and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Violence Prevention at Liverpool John Moores University. He leads national and international projects addressing violence, substance abuse, sexual behaviour and public health intelligence. Mark is UK focal point to the World Health Organization for violence prevention and a founding member of the Violence Prevention Alliance. He is an active researcher and the author of over 200 peer-reviewed publications.

Barbara Giovanna Bello gained a PhD in Law and Society, and then held visiting fellowships at Humboldt University in Berlin, in Bochum and in Freiburg im Breisgau. Her research interests are in the fields of youth policy, European anti-discrimination policy, intersectionality and multiple discrimination, diversity, juvenile justice and evaluation. She collaborates with the University of Milan and is a member of the Research Committee on the Sociology of Law and of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies.

Elisa Briga holds a Master's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the University of Trieste, writing her thesis on the role of youth information centres in the promotion of youth mobility. She is currently working as Programme, Project and Advocacy Co-ordinator for the European Federation for Intercultural Learning. She previously worked as a trainee and staff member for the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, part of the Youth Partnership. In her spare time she works on a voluntary basis for the international youth organisation CISV, focusing on peace education.

Filip Coussée is a researcher at Ghent University. His work focuses on social pedagogy as a perspective on social work, and youth and community work. He studied the history of youth work in Flanders and its connections with developments in other social professions and in other European countries. He also works for Uit De Marge (“Out of the margins”), the Flemish support structure for youth work with children and young people facing social exclusion in different domains.

Dr Karen Hughes is Reader in Behavioural Epidemiology at the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University, where her work focuses on violence, alcohol use and nightlife health. She conducts original research, reviews evidence of effective prevention and develops intelligence to support prevention activity.

Andreas Karsten works as a researcher and educator at the Generation and Educational Science Institute (GENESIS) and the NGO Demokratie & Dialog. Positioned at the junction of research, policy and practice, he attempts to permanently weave media, new and old, into his work with people, teams, companies and organisations on themes such as (youth) knowledge, participation, citizenship, empowerment, literacy, learning and change. He blogs about his work at www.nonformality.org.

Justina Pinkeviciute is a human rights activist, educator and researcher currently working with grass-roots social movements in Colombia. She is focusing her work on social and economic human rights, women rights, active and informed participation of communities. Justina is a member and a former campaigner with Amnesty International, a member of the editorial team for the 2nd edition of *Compass – A manual on human rights education with young people*, and a member of the Trainer’s Pool of the Youth Department for the Council of Europe.

Kateryna Shalayeva PhD is a member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers, which is co-ordinated by the Youth Partnership. She is sociologist and lawyer, specialising in policy research, programme evaluation and comparative analysis of legislation. She has long experience in non-formal education with young people and the women’s movement, which allows her to bring research, policy and practice together in her work. Kateryna is also a member of the Pool of Trainers of the Youth Department, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, at the Council of Europe.

Miriam Teuma has been lecturing within the Department of Youth and Community Studies at the University of Malta since 2001. She is also president of the Maltese Association of Youth Workers, which seeks to promote the youth work profession, and has been involved in a number of European and Euromed projects. At present, she is the national correspondent for the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy and is a member of various EU groups. She has represented Malta on the EU Youth Working Party and at EU youth conferences as well as at Council of Europe level. Her academic interests are non-formal education, youth policy and youth work practice. In January 2011, she was appointed the first Chief Executive Officer of the Malta Youth Agency – Agenzija Zghazagh.

Manfred Zentner has been involved in youth research since 1997 and now works at the Institute for Youth Culture Research in Vienna. He also lectures at teacher training institutes and is a trainer for social research. His main fields of research are lifestyle, participation, media usage and evaluation of projects. Among other international research projects, he is co-rapporteur for the International Reviews on Youth Policy in Hungary and Belgium.

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EKCYP insights

Are you interested in youth policies throughout Europe? Do you want to know more about the youth policy priorities of the European Union and the Council of Europe? Then you should get to know the virtual European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP). Established by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth and supported by a Europe-wide network of national correspondents, this online database aims to foster evidence-based youth policy through the exchange of knowledge between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. This book provides insight into the knowledge one can obtain through the EKCYP and explains how national correspondents work to contribute up-to-date information.

*The **Council of Europe** has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.*

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