

Youth Partnership

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



Better knowledge on youth

Findings of a Summary Analysis of the Information templates on Better knowledge on youth in the EKCYP

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Table of Content

Introduction	3
European policy framework promoting better knowledge on youth	3
Data	5
Promotion and support of an evidence-based approach to youth policy	5
Strategic and Legal framework	6
Structures and actors that play a role in gaining a better knowledge of youth	10
Support to actors working towards a better knowledge of youth	14
Knowledge transfer and dissemination in the youth field	15
Structures involved in transfer of knowledge on youth	15
Sources of information and accessible data in the youth field	19
Good practice related to fostering a better knowledge of youth	23
Conclusion	25
Reference	27

I Introduction

- **European policy framework promoting better knowledge on youth**

Both European institutions underline the importance of a greater understanding and knowledge of youth in promoting and strengthening evidence-based youth policies. In order to ensure that government strategies and policies targeting young people are successful, it is vital that they are based on concrete evidence, experience and knowledge about young people's situation: their well-being, quality of life and opportunities to take active part in society. In the same line, strong political commitment has been demonstrated starting from 1967 when the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a directive calling for the study of youth problems in Europe, followed by 1985 when the Council of Europe convened the first colloquy on youth research. In 2001, the European Union has made knowledge and a greater understanding of youth a priority through the Commission's White Paper *A New Impetus for European Youth*, confirmed by the Council of the European Union in its Resolution on the European Commission Common Objectives on a Better Understanding of Youth.

Renewed strategies in the youth field of both, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, reaffirmed the role of youth research as a principal element of the youth sector's approach to generate knowledge on the situation of young people in Europe (CoE's *Agenda 2020 in 2008*), and reasserted the importance of a cross-sectoral approach including the generation of knowledge about youth, the dissemination of youth research findings and the facilitation of youth research networks ("[An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering](#)" in 2009, followed by the "Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field 2010-2018"). It has been highlighted that: "Better knowledge and understanding of the living conditions of young women and men needs to be gathered and shared with other policy fields so as to enable appropriate and timely measures to be taken"¹. Furthermore, the strong political commitment of both institutions is reflected in their confirmation of the need to invest in research in order to promote the development of evidence-based policy, as well as to promote youth research as essential in order to achieve the overall objectives of a youth policy strategy in Europe. As a result, a wealth of information has been gathered, material produced and tools created in recent years.

The commitment to strengthen evidence-based youth policies is further reflected in a renewed strategy of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership (2010 – 2013), which emphasizes promotion of an evidence-based policy as one of its three priorities. In order to strengthen the link between European youth policy and youth research, the two institutions behind the EU-CoE youth partnership have established the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). In the period

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/evidence-based_en.htm

2010-2013 the European Commission and the Council of Europe, among others, closely cooperate in the field of promotion of knowledge-based youth policy by improving existing tools (EKCYP), an efficient and effective co-operation and networking structure in research as well as thematic workshops, seminars and events in order to enhance knowledge on youth². Both tools, the EKCYP and the PEYR play significant role in gathering and promoting better knowledge on youth in Europe. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), as an on-line database, contributes to enhancing information gathering and transfer between the fields of research, policy and practice. Through its network of national correspondents it provides the youth sector with reliable information about young people's situation across Europe, and in cooperation with The Pool of the European Youth Researchers (PEYR) it participates in the production of knowledge on current developments in the youth field from comparative perspective.

Thus, one of the current challenges of the EKCYP is the setting up of national knowledge networks, not only consisting of EKCYP correspondents, but ideally all the members of the "youth knowledge triangle" (government representatives, youth researchers and young people). Although the metaphor of a triangle comprising researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in the youth field has been adopted as a model in the context of institutionally backed production and transfer of youth knowledge, contemporary authors³ argue that in practice a more integrated approach is needed in order to provide research which is applicable, practice which is reflective and policy which is responsive. They claim that: "triangular configurations does not automatically lead to triangulations that take each perspective equally and fairly into account (Chisholm, 2006b: 27): *bringing* actors together does not guarantee they will be able to efficiently *work together*"⁴. Williamson (2006) argues that in light of tough realities and challenges 'the inspirational triangle, of deeply embedded contact and communication between its three constituent corners, still remains more of a series of disconnected straight lines'⁵. It appears that the crucial dilemmas of the triangular co-operation in the youth field are: different conceptual discourses, difficulty to find common language, stereotyping, myths etc. Despite all the challenges, shared benefits of improved relations, dialogue and understanding between youth research, policy and practice remain undisputable and lead to innovative thinking, inspirational prospects of serious dialogue and genuine mutual engagement. Still, authors warn that while structured spaces for frequent negotiation between the actors do exist, in particular at European level, it is not always clear how to navigate and bridge the different discourses constructively.

² <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/index>

³ Chisholm, L. Kovacheva, S., Merico, M., Devlin M, Jenkins, D. and Karsten, A. *Introduction chapter: The Social Construction of Youth and the triangle between youth research, youth policy and youth work in Europe* in *European Youth Studies: Integrating research, policy and practice*, TRIANGLES Series Reader N° 1, (p 11-45)
<http://www.youthstudies.eu/>

⁴ Karsten, A. *Exploring the relationship between research, policy and practice; A magic triangle? Drawing lines between research, policy and practice*, (p.41)

⁵ Ibid

- **Data**

This Summary Report aims to provide an overview of the trends and patterns related to better knowledge on youth across Europe, and reflects the current challenges linked to promotion and support of evidence based youth policy, offering conclusions which might inspire further scientific or political debate in the youth field. The Report has been developed as a mapping study based on descriptive analysis of the qualitative data provided in the information templates (national reports), which were submitted by the national correspondents of the EKCYP in 2012/13. The Summary Report aims to highlight common trends and patterns, as well as outstanding singularities related to the topic covered. The structure of the Report was determined by the nature and the content of the information templates (national reports). Availability of information included in this Summary Report was limited, since 21 information templates from the year 201/13 were relevant and up-to-date for the purpose and the content of this Report. As a result, the Report covers the following countries: 16 EU Member States (Austria, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden); 2 EFTA countries (Liechtenstein, and Norway), and 3 countries from South East Europe (2 candidate countries: Montenegro, and Serbia, and 1 potential candidate country: Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Limitations of the study refer to its scope, content and analytical approach. Since no additional research was conducted, the report is mainly based on information templates (country reports) provided by the national correspondents to the EKCYP. The content and the analytical scope of this summary report are limited to the content and the scope of information provided in those templates which were created to provide information on strategic and legal framework for promotion and support to better knowledge on youth in respective countries, as well as on existing structures and actors which play role in gaining knowledge on youth, measures of support to youth researchers and networks, and mechanisms of knowledge transfer and dissemination, as well as related good practices. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the information is only partly available in the templates, often without details or explanations, allowing comparison of the situation in respected countries only to a certain extent. For detailed insight into situation in particular countries, interested readers are encouraged to consult the mentioned information templates or relevant internet links. In order to gain comprehensive insight in the field where applicable, the National knowledge networks: mapping exercise (CoE, 2012) was reflected in this report, as well as the complementing Report from the Workshop on national knowledge networks (EU-CoE partnership, 2013).

II Promotion and support of an evidence-based approach to youth policy

In line with the articulated European framework, EKCYP national reports provide information on existing strategic and legal provisions aiming to assure conditions for an institutionalized and sustainable support to evidence based youth policy in the aforementioned countries. Apart from

this, the EKCYP information templates provide insight in existing structures and actors that play a role in gaining a better knowledge of youth, as well as on main ways of support that has been provided to them.

Strategic and Legal framework

It is important to note that the majority of countries involved in this Summary Report has developed strategic frameworks addressing youth issues at the different levels of governance, as well as related Youth acts created to regulate development and implementation of the national youth strategies. The EKCYP information templates show that there are more or less explicit references to better knowledge on youth in national strategic documents or legal acts regulating youth policy, especially in the newer EU member states like *Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia, Malta, Estonia, Latvia*, aiming to ensure an evidence-based approach to youth policy. On the other hand, there are **only a few examples of an explicit political commitment and institutional support to youth research** which has been provided through strategies or programmes, and related legal acts promoting evidence based approach to youth policy like in *Luxembourg, Norway, or Austria*.

Based on the EKCYP 2012 information template⁶, all ministries in the *Norwegian* government published a collective investment plan titled: "Investing in Children and Youth: The goal and investment priorities of the government budget 2011", which lists as a first priority research and knowledge development on children and youth. Another example is *Luxemburg*, where there is political will and commitment of the government to promote both "an evidence based policy making" and "policy relevant research", and to make sure that knowledge is exchanged around and within the "triangle". While the Youth Pact 2012 (National Action Plan for Youth) in Luxembourg prioritizes an evidence based youth policy as one of its action fields, several additional measures have been taken in order to link policy, research and practise: an Interdepartmental Committee has been created to coordinate youth policy between a number of different ministries; actions and projects in the youth field have been evaluated regularly based on both practical experience and research data, and a set of recommendations has been set for a structured and binding knowledge exchange in the youth field at the local, national and European level⁷. Similarly, *Austrian* authorities officially recognize a knowledge-based approach to youth policy, which applies foremost to youth research and participation. Youth research is seen as an important input for an evidence based policy in various fields not only in the area of youth policy but also for the shaping of support measures for young people entering the labour market or on the attitudes towards environmental issues (applied youth research)⁸. However, recent developments have been made also in the *Netherlands*, and *Ireland* in order to develop a strategic approach to evidence based youth policy:

⁶ EKCYP, Information template, Norway 2012

⁷ National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012 (p.9)

⁸ EKCYP, Information template, Austria 2012

- In the *Netherlands*, this is reflected in the creation of the Youth Knowledge Agenda, as a governmental policy document which sets its main goals in developing the youth field by gathering knowledge on youth. According to the national report, research in the youth field should be approached as development, enrichment, validation and dissemination of knowledge by connecting and linking research, policy and practice. Although there is no overall youth research law or regulation in the Netherlands ensuring an evidence-based approach to youth policy, there are various laws and guidelines to support this approach in the youth field⁹;
- In *Ireland* a much-increased emphasis on adopting a strategic approach to acquiring knowledge about children and young people has been made through creation of the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011-2016. The Strategy distinguishes between "research" and "data", saying that: "The inclusion of both data and research is an explicit recognition of the importance of achieving a comprehensive understanding of children's lives". The stated aim of the strategy is "to set out a plan to guide and support the development of research and data around children's lives... for the purpose of ensuring children and young people benefit from improved understandings of their lives". The strategy identifies a number of actions designed to build research capacity and to generate support for the compilation of data on the lives of children and young people, such as the development of survey instruments and datasets, evaluation and reporting on services for children and young people, ethical guidance and production of data and research¹⁰.

As already mentioned, in a majority of the more recent EU member countries (accession year 2004) involved in this report, more or less explicit references to better knowledge on youth ensuring an evidence-based approach to youth policy do exist in national strategic documents or legal acts regulating youth policy, although it is not sure to what extent they are being implemented in practice. For example:

- Action Plan of Youth Policy for 2012 – 2013 in *Slovakia* is the latest document, which especially in thematic parts such as Education, Information and Communication Technologies, Employment and Youth Participation in social and political life not only emphasises the necessity of systematic collecting of information as the basic material for modern youth policy creation, but also defines the concrete steps to achieve this goal in cooperation with responsible institutions and bodies (ministries, counties, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, Youth Council of Slovakia and others)¹¹;
- In the *Polish* Youth Strategy for the years 2003-2012, one of the methods to realize the 5th strategic objective was creating a strong centre for youth research and solving youth problems. The main initiative for the promotion of the evidence-based policy on youth matters was the report Youth 2011 which classifies and collects the state of knowledge

⁹ EKCYP Information template, The Netherlands 2012

¹⁰ EKCYP Information template, Ireland 2012

¹¹ EKCYP Information template, Slovakia 2012

on the young generation, and presents recommendations concerning actions related to this age group. Thus, this document did not result in constructing a specific youth policy or strategy, but is considered a basis for strategic planning in the different policy fields;

- In *Malta*, the latest National Youth policy document (2010) has youth research as one of the four principles that inform its mission calling for a better knowledge on youth intending to seek accurate and up to date information on young people's needs, values and lifestyles, in order to ensure an evidence-based approach to youth policy;
- In *Latvia*, the youth policy guidelines define youth research and better knowledge in the context of youth policy as one of the core elements of youth policy implementation, while the evidence based approach to implementation of youth policy is envisaged in a principal normative act regulating youth policy;
- In *Estonia*, although there is no a document that would set legally binding guidelines, the Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013 defines youth research as one of the ten areas of youth work, and the National program "Developing youth work quality" 2008-2013 foresees the development and implementation of a national youth monitoring system. In general, research on youth is carried out in accordance with the requirements stated in legislative acts.

In *Azerbaijan, Liechtenstein* and SEE countries (*BiH, Montenegro, and Serbia*), the system of youth research support and its organisation is not formalised, but basics have been established as the result of development of national youth policies based on European recommendations. Support to youth research here takes place through cooperation with subordinated organisations, academic institutions and international financial support. Most of these countries have references in main strategic youth policy documents or legal acts aimed to promote and support research in the youth field (at the national, or federation/entity level). For example, in *Serbia* there isn't any long-term strategy or programme for promoting and supporting research in the field of youth but in the main strategic document of the Ministry of Youth and sport – the National Youth Strategy - it is stated that: "All strategic concepts, principles and activities that refer to young people are based on firm and relevant data and on the results of studies on youth."

In principal **normative acts/laws** regulating youth policy in a majority of the countries involved in this report, reference to an evidence based approach to youth policy are envisaged:

- The Youth Work Act (2001) in *Ireland* includes among the functions of the relevant Minister the responsibility to "conduct research or cause research to be conducted in support of youth work...programmes and services..."¹²
- In *Finland*, the Youth Act (2006) specifies the objectives and values of youth work, policy and research, while in *Azerbaijan*, youth research is supported through the Law on Youth Policy, through organisation of scientific research related to analysis of youth status and settlement of their problems.¹³

¹² EKCYP Information template, Ireland 2012

¹³ EKCYP Information template, Azerbaijan 2012

- In *Luxembourg*, one of the basic principles of the Youth Act (2008) is that "youth policy is a transversal policy, based on the knowledge of the situation of young people and on the active consultation with young people on the issues concerning them". The Youth Act (2008) establishes a Body in Charge of Monitoring Youth Issues which mission is to prepare, coordinate and initiate inquiries, notices, analyses, studies and reports on the different aspects of the situation of youth in Luxembourg. The law also calls for a National Youth Report to be addressed every five years aiming at achieving a global view on the situation of youth, as well as for a National Action Plan for Youth, fixing the youth policy orientation;
- The Act of Youth Work Support (2008) in *Slovakia* guarantees improved conditions for forming young people as active citizens, who participate in the quality of their own life. The law determines the tasks of counties and municipalities in relation to youth work. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport is obliged to create „legal, organisational, research and economic conditions for youth work development”.

In *Germany*, one of the state laws¹⁴ regulates a broad spectrum of specific tasks relevant to better knowledge of youth. In *Sweden, France, Finland, and Slovenia* there are legal references regulating youth related policy areas and providing conditions for establishment of expert's bodies aimed to provide comprehensive track on youth issues and influence policy development and implementation.

In SEE region, in The Law on Youth in *Serbia*, one of the main regulations refers to “conducting research on the position and needs of young people in the Republic of Serbia”. In the Federal Law on Youth in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* as well here is a reference to an evidence-based approach to youth policy, while in *Montenegro* The Law on Youth, is planned to be created during 2013 and submitted to the government for adoption in the last quarter of 2013. The Law will define youth policy and its implementation, support to youth organisations, and youth participation, and reinforce the principle that youth policy should be evidence-based.

Based on EKCYP 2012 information templates, it can be noted that youth research has been seen as the basis for defining appropriate strategic objectives of the national youth policies in majority of the countries involved, whereas youth work practice is rarely reflected in the *magic triangle* as it is the case in *Ireland, France, and Estonia and Slovakia*. Yet, the question to what extent institutionalization and formalization of support to youth research contributes to evidence based youth policy, and to consolidation of relationships and co-operation between the different actors of the “triangle” in practice remains open for further investigation.

¹⁴ The Social Code, Book VIII (SGB VIII)– Child and Youth Services. The Section 84 of Book VIII of the Social Code places the obligation on the Federal Government to report on the situation of young people and what has been done in the field of youth services during each legislative period, as well as to propose further developments in youth welfare.

Structures and actors that play a role in gaining a better knowledge of youth

In the youth field, research has been closely connected with policy and practice in various implicit and explicit ways. At present, *European youth research* is developing as a practice-orientated field of social inquiry crossing the boundaries of disciplines, sectors, and developing new theoretical and empirical frameworks capable of guiding practice and informing policy (Bynner & Chisholm, 1998). Building upon the former highlighting of diverse agendas, methodologies and cultural contexts the trend now is toward the formation of an integrated research area, aiming to arrive at holistic understandings of the local, national, European and global youth realities and more creative and responsive methodologies whilst recognizing and incorporating the views of the users of youth research (Chisholm, 2006a)¹⁵.

Based on the EKCYP 2012 information templates, an overview of the different actors playing a role in providing information and collecting statistics on youth is presented in Table 1, classified in five categories: departments in universities, public and semi-public bodies, NGOs, private companies, and statistical offices.

Table 1: Structures and actors that play role in gathering a better knowledge on Youth

Countries / Actors	Departments in universities	Public and semi-public bodies	NGOs	Private companies	Statistical offices
Austria	-/+	+	+	+	+
Azerbaijan	-/+	+	+	+	+
Belgium (Fl)					
Belgium (Fr)					
Bulgaria					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-/+	+	+	+	+
Croatia					
Cyprus					
Czech Republic					
Denmark					
Estonia	-/+	+	-	+	+
Finland	+	+	+	+	+
France	+	+	+	+	+
Germany	+	+	+	+	+
Greece					

¹⁵ Karsten, A. Exploring the relationship between research, policy and practice; A magic triangle? Drawing lines between research, policy and practice, (p.41)

Iceland					
Italy	-/+	+	+	+	+
Ireland	+	+	+	+	+
Latvia	-/+	-	+	+	+
Liechtenstein	-/+	-	+	-	+
Lithuania					
Luxembourg	-/+	+	+	+	+
Malta	+	+	+	-	+
Montenegro	-/+	+	+	+	+
Netherlands	+	+	+	+	+
Norway	+	+	+		+
Poland	+	+	+	+	+
Serbia	-/+	+	+	-	+
Slovakia	-/+	+	+	+	+
Slovenia	-/+	+	+	-	+
Sweden	+	+	+	+	+

Academic research on youth issues and conditions is usually carried out in public universities, colleges, polytechnics, research institutes and other research organisations where research groups work on themes relevant for youth, youth policy and youth work. Those efforts rely on access to the research traditions of contributing disciplines like sociology, philosophy, educational sciences, economics, sociolinguistics, psychology and cultural anthropology as well as fields of knowledge or practice like political studies, education, management or cultural studies. Thus, the ambition to move away from canonical academic disciplines and isolated professional areas towards a new integrated field whose two main intrinsic features are intellectual and professional border-crossing and European multidimensionality remains a long term goal. In the information templates of the EKCYP 2012/13 it has been emphasized that knowledge on youth provided through traditional approach remains partial, and that it has not been necessarily classified as “youth research” (“-/+”). However, existing research endeavors related to youth pay general attention to various themes like integration of the (problematic) youth in social systems, diversity and multiculturalism, transition to the labor market, youth health, NEETs and youth-at-risk etc. Examples of **university departments specialized in youth research** (“+”) exist in Sweden, Finland, Poland, Malta, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, and the Netherlands. In these countries there is a rich research practice in various areas where topics relevant to young people are covered. Diverse cooperation between Universities is also noted, as well tendency of assignment of resources to areas, where research about youth is particularly needed. In *the Netherlands*, for example, eight out of thirteen universities play a role in gaining a better knowledge about young people in specific areas of research: all universities with departments of psychology, pedagogy, sociology, health science, criminology and economy tackle youth issues, including two master programmes in youth studies¹⁶. There are also recent initiatives in establishing youth related studies in *France* and *Poland*, or to encourage youth involvement in the research process in *Latvia*, and *Azerbaijan*. However, there is an open question of the nature of cooperation between the universities and the government in providing conditions for evidence based youth policy. In *Austria* and

¹⁶ EKCYP Information template, The Netherlands 2012

Luxembourg for example, national and regional political institutions are working together with research institutions like universities, and colleges, while in *Finland* and *Azerbaijan* youth research has been institutionalized through establishment of the research centers within youth policy divisions based in the ministries responsible for youth policy. On the other hand, *Liechtenstein* and SEE countries state necessity of long term recognition of youth research within the social research area.

Having in mind the limitations of knowledge transfer within the public sector, the importance of NGOs and private research companies in generating knowledge and in implementing international programmes becomes highly relevant. According to the EKCYP national reports, **public or semi-public organisations** currently produce institutional research which might not be necessarily specialized on youth but is directly or indirectly related to young people. In a majority of the countries involved, these are government funded or independent research institutes, public bodies responsible for health or social care, National Youth Foundations, or National Agencies for the Youth in Action Programme. In *Norway*, *Italy* and *Germany*, for example, there are research institutes which highly prioritize/or are specialized in youth research fostering a cross-sectoral approach. In *the Netherlands*, however, one of the key issues of the *Knowledge centres for the field of practice* is to comply, verify and disseminate knowledge on children and youth matters, connecting scientific research to the practitioners' needs by 'translating' scientific results into practical advice. Interestingly, in *Poland* there is an opposite tendency where the Government bodies and other structures concerned with youth policy are tending to be abolished rather than set up. Therefore, other than through some universities or institutes, there is no publicly funded youth research body¹⁷. In *SEE countries* on the other hand, apart from state or private universities and institutes there are rarely independent scientific institutions dealing with theoretical and empirical studies in the field of education, covering youth issues periodically. There, knowledge gathering is initiated and coordinated by public institutions while communication with other parts of the triangle is to be developed.

In a majority of the EU countries involved in this Summary Report, **non-governmental organisations** play a significant role in the construction of knowledge on youth by collecting or assigning research regarding certain aspects of youth culture and youth issues. Although these NGOs have different objectives and play different roles in gathering information on youth, majority of them are involved in consultation activities or structured dialogue while promoting interests of national youth organisations. This refers to umbrella organisations or associations of youth NGOs (national Youth Councils), as well as international organisations, Youth information centers etc. In *Estonia*, on the other hand, there are no NGOs which have clearly defined activity strand of gathering knowledge on youth, while in the SEE region, youth umbrella organisations are still in their early stage of development (like in *Montenegro*, and *BiH*), so a wider range of NGOs are involved in this process, although they are not necessarily specialized in youth. Yet,

¹⁷Thompson, R. and Bart, S. for the EU-CoE youth partnership, Report from Workshop on national knowledge networks, European Youth Centre Budapest, 30 January 2013.

the most of the reports available stress that communication between NGOs and other parts of the triangle is still poor, and that more structured modes of co-operation are needed.

Although the majority of national reports stated that it was not possible to provide a detailed list of private companies dealing with youth research, it can be said that there are several kinds of **private companies** which provide information on youth in the majority of the countries involved. Only *Slovenia, Malta, Liechtenstein, and Serbia* did not recognize those actors as relevant. These companies differ in their nature, and their fields of expertise. Thus, there are rare examples of those who are specialized in youth research like in *Finland*. In *Luxembourg, and Germany*, for example, there are mainly market research institutes which carry out studies on preferences, habits and attitudes of young people, as well as on media, politics, opinion, IT, finance, consumption and health. In *Finland, Sweden, France, Latvia, or Poland* research within private companies and Think tanks is more specialized in youth markets, societal trends, and future forecasting, or in youth work and vocational training like in *Austria, and Ireland*. Exclusively, in *Italy* and the *Netherlands* there are more private companies doing applied research on youth issues than public bodies, NGO's or universities. In general youth research is carried out by private research institutes mainly dealing with social and economic studies investigating also specific topics regarding young people's life. Since assignments for research often have to be opened up to tender, this opens up a lot of possibilities for funding for private companies and consultancy agencies in those countries. In SEE region, there are rare private companies involved in youth research (in *Montenegro and BiH*).

Statistics on youth are collected by **statistical offices** as central governmental authorities for official statistics in the countries involved, as well as by other offices that display population statistics and information. Young people as a specific group are usually not under a special strand of research of these offices, but the data are available as part of the general demographic data collection. Topics that are covered include mainly socio-economic, educational statistics, crime statistics, and health of youth, leisure activities and the substance use. Specific reports concerning youth can be published by those offices, but examples of integrated statistics on youth are very rare. For example, National Youth monitor in *the Netherlands* represents a summary of information about the situation of young people, which purpose is to inform policymakers, researchers and other interested parties about the situation of youth in the country. In *France*, , a unit of the national statistical office exists in each ministry and is responsible for the production of certain data, and the subsequent observation of key figures on youth can be said to be well-developed¹⁸.

¹⁸Thompson, R. and Bart, S. for the EU-CoE youth partnership, Report from Workshop on national knowledge networks, European Youth Centre Budapest, 30 January 2013.

Support to youth researchers and other actors working towards a better knowledge of youth

Following national reports submitted to the EKCYP, *ad hoc* cooperation of researchers, policy makers and practitioners occurs within different policy initiatives, started by different ministries and governmental bodies. However, in the majority of countries involved, there are no specific measures undertaken for the facilitation of exchanges between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of youth, nor for support of mobility and skills improvement of youth researchers. Thus, support of mobility and exchange of experience and practice of young researchers are some of the actions taken, mainly by promoting the participation to the EU programmes implemented in EU member countries, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Youth in Action, Erasmus.

Examples of structured support to youth researchers have been emphasized in *Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, and Norway*. For example, Finnish Youth Research Society arranges meetings for the exchange of knowledge between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of youth to take place, providing additional opportunities for their knowledge/skill improvement. In *Germany*, there is an institutionalized network established to foster exchange of all actors interested/involved in youth policy and youth research (The Child and Youth Welfare Association), while Public Hearings in the German Bundestag represent an explicit measure undertaken for the facilitation of exchanges between experts and policy makers. In *Luxembourg* measures fostering exchange between actors of the youth field have been introduced in the legal framework confirming the government's commitment to structured dialogue in the youth field. The counselling process involves young people themselves, youth organisations and youth services working with young people. Similarly, there is a policy of supporting the projects which involve youth policy stakeholders in *Norway*, providing them opportunities to work together in the implementation and dissemination of the results.

In the rest of the countries covered by EKCYP national reports, general support and mobility opportunities for youth researchers are provided by the Universities, international organisations, and public institutions responsible for youth policy development and implementation. This support consists of: provision for participation in national, regional and international events, seminars, and trainings, or grants for research projects. Apart from this, governmental Agencies or National Youth boards facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience between youth workers, researchers and policy makers in majority of European countries through periodical or annual meetings, conferences, expert hearings, or co-operation projects.

However, it is important to note that some national correspondents of the EKCYP reported that there are no institutional measures supporting exchanges and mobility of youth researchers like in *the Netherlands, Poland, Malta, Liechtenstein* and SEE countries (*Bi H, Montenegro, and Serbia*).

III Knowledge transfer and dissemination in the youth field

o Structures involved in transfer of knowledge on youth

Table 2 provides information on existing structures involved in knowledge transfer on youth, such as: directories of national youth researchers, national and transnational research networks on youth, as well as knowledge networks supporting youth policy in respective countries. It is important to note that, during analysis of the situation regarding national - transnational, and knowledge networks, it was not always clear where is the line between them and in what way they differ from one another based on the data provided in the EKCYP national reports. Moreover, information provided was often limited to lists of existing structures while their role or relationship with other actors was not clearly elaborated, nor the role of the EKCYP correspondents. Therefore, in order to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in this area, additional materials like the National knowledge networks: mapping exercise and the Report from Workshop on national knowledge networks can be consulted.

Table 2: Overview of the structures involved in knowledge transfer on youth

Countries / Structures	Directories of national youth researchers	National research networks	Transnational research networks	Knowledge networks supporting youth policy
Austria	-	-/+	+	-/+
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-
Belgium (Fl)				
Belgium (Fr)				
Bulgaria				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	-	-
Croatia				
Cyprus				
Czech Republic				
Denmark				
Estonia	-	-	+	+
Finland	+	+	+	+
France	-	-/+	+	-/+
Germany	-	-/+	+	+
Greece				
Iceland				
Italy	-	-	+	-/+
Ireland	-		+	-
Latvia	-	-/+	+	+
Liechtenstein	-	-	-	-
Lithuania				
Luxembourg	-	+	-	+

Malta	-	-	-	+
Montenegro	-	-	+	-
Netherlands		-/+	+	+
Norway	+	+	+	-
Poland	-	-/+	+	-/+
Portugal				
Romania				
Russia				
Serbia	-	-	-	-/+
Slovakia	-	+	+	+
Slovenia	-	-	-	-
Sweden	+	+	+	-/+

According to information provided in the EKCYP 2012/3 national reports, there are no **national directories** specifically relating to youth research in a majority of the countries involved. Integrated internet databases of youth researchers exist in *Finland, and Norway*, and they have been created by the national youth research networks, or institutes specialized in social/youth research. In other countries like *Austria, Germany, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Slovakia* or SEE countries (*BiH, Montenegro, and Serbia*), databases of (youth) researchers are mostly thematic, and related to particular Universities, Institutes or projects. Consequently, some efforts towards integration of the data related to youth researchers at the national level might be needed in order to improve visibility of youth researchers in the future.

Based on information templates of the EKCYP, **permanent national research networks on youth** exist in *Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg, and Slovakia* (“+”). Other EU member countries have temporary or thematic research networks organised around particular research projects or policy development processes (“-/+”). Other countries involved do not have such structures (“-”). One example of a permanent research network is the recently established Children’s Research Network in *Ireland*, which “aims to support the research community to better understand and improve the lives of children and young people, by creating and maintaining an inclusive, independent, non-profit network through which information, knowledge, experience, learning and skills can be shared”¹⁹. In *Slovakia*, **EKCYP initiatives have been an impulse for setting up national youth researchers’ network**, which includes an academic-research department as well as research institutes, while in *Finland*, the Finnish Youth Research Society represents “an independent organisation which develops national and international cooperation between youth researchers, research institutes, higher education institutions and professionals working with young people”²⁰. In *Luxembourg*, a public entity established by the Youth Act, the Observatoire de la Jeunesse, is in charge of monitoring youth Issues and plays the role of a permanent national network. The main objective of this monitoring body is to bring together all the public structures which own data concerning living conditions of young people. It has been emphasized that the setting up of this monitoring body corresponds to the

¹⁹ EKCYP Information template, Ireland 2012

²⁰ EKCYP Information template, Finland 2012

implementation of the common objectives of European youth policy for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth.²¹

Transnational research networks have been recognized as a vehicle for youth policy cooperation providing links between national and international organisations, fostering intergovernmental cooperation on national or ministerial level, as well as among advisory bodies or youth associations. In a majority of the EU member countries involved, transnational networks play a significant role in supporting individual youth researchers or national research networks, while the SEE countries are rarely involved. Greatest significance has been given to programmes and networks such as: European Youth Forum, European Youth Information and Counseling Agency (ERYICA), The network “ReferNet”, EURES Network, RAY network, The REITOX network, the European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction, Youth in Action Programme, TEMPUS, FP7, The ‘EU-CoE Youth Partnership’ namely the European Knowledge Centre of Youth Policy (EKCYP), and the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), as well as to international and regional networks providing cooperation in different research areas related to young people.

Regarding the question of permanent **National networks for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field** (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs), the following EU member countries answered affirmatively (“+”): *Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, and the Netherlands*. Others like *Austria, France, Italy, Poland, Serbia* and *Sweden* stated that they have such structures established on informal or temporary basis (“-/+”). National correspondents from the rest of the countries involved in this report stated that they do not have such structures (“-“), although there were current initiatives in establishing it like in *Ireland*. However, existing knowledge networks differ regarding their nature, structure and modality of functioning, although they represent the best practices in providing institutionalized dialogue between researchers, practitioners and the decision makers, and models of cooperation between stakeholders which is closest to the triangle metaphor:²²

- In *Germany*, there are several links between youth research and policy on the one hand, as well as youth work and policy on the other, and a variety of formal and informal knowledge networks, established on permanent or temporary basis, providing institutional exchange and dialogue between government, experts and practitioners in various policy areas related to young people. The German Youth Institute, for example, unites a number of non-governmental actors in the youth field and receives public funding in order to organize research concerning youth and family policy. The institute provides information for government bodies and youth practitioners, which makes it a part of a network including research, policy and practice²³.

- As already emphasized in this report, examples of institutional support to evidence based youth policy and cross-sectoral cooperation are present in *Luxembourg*. The institutionalisation of the dialogue within the triangle has been entrusted to the Youth Studies Centre (CESJIE) based at

²¹ EKCYP Information template, Luxembourg 2012

²² For more detailed information, EKCYP national reports on Better Knowledge on Youth can be consulted

²³ National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012 (p.7)

the University of Luxembourg. The Body in Charge of Monitoring Youth Issues plays somewhat the role of a permanent national network, and it is: "intended to link Ministry representatives, researchers, a representative of the higher youth council, as well as a representative of youth organisations and a representative from the national youth service"²⁴. The main objective of this structured pooling is to bring together all the public structures which own data concerning living conditions of young people in order to provide a better overview.

- Having in mind *Finish* cross-sectoral approach to youth policy the link is particularly strong between youth work practise and youth policy-making, while the existence of a knowledge exchange system that comes quite close to the triangle network can be firmly assumed²⁵. Unlikely, given the cross-sectoral approach of *Swedish* youth policy, "there has apparently not been any attempt to create a single national network that links all the actors in the youth field"²⁶

- In *the Netherlands*, The Netherlands Youth Institute provides an institutional framework for knowledge exchange on youth, linking all actors in the field, as an expert centre which connects scientific research to the practitioners' need for knowledge, and works closely together with Dutch governmental and non-governmental organisations.

- In *France*, although there is no national network including all the experts working on youth issues, some significant efforts to foster knowledge exchange throughout the country have recently been made. In this regard, the French Youth Experimentation Fund (FEJ) plays a vital role: its goal is the revitalization of youth policies through experimentation. Supporting the detailed evaluation of existing government programmes and calling for thematic research projects (open to both public and private organisations) the FEJ is meant to strengthen the links between the different actors in the youth field and to enhance their exchange about good practise.²⁷

There were furthermore examples of temporary knowledge networks where cooperation between youth researchers, practitioners and the decision makers was established ad hoc during the creation of important national youth policy documents in *Austria, Poland, Italy, and Serbia*. Thus, although cooperation between the different levels of government in the youth field is institutionalised, the real amount of knowledge transfer and the link between youth work, youth research and policy-making was difficult to identify. In *Poland* commitment to evidence-based policy-making is strong in every field, due to favouring knowledge transfer concerning youth. Public advisory groups, as well as civil society organisations advocating for policies, are often involved in youth research and contribute to strengthening the triangle. However, the exact roles

²⁴ EKCYP Information template, Luxembourg 2012

²⁵ National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012 (p.6)

²⁶ National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012 (p.13)

²⁷ National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012 (p. 8)

of different actors and their ways of coordinating youth issues are mostly unclear and therefore intensely discussed²⁸.

In *Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, and Malta* on the other hand institutions have been created in order to coordinate cross-sectorial cooperation and facilitate dialogue between stakeholders in the youth policy area. Although these structures lay a solid ground for a triangle network, it seems that in practice the link between youth policy, youth work and research is relatively weak and varies across policy areas.²⁹ Some examples of these structures are the National Youth Agency in *Malta* which has developed a network working both on a formal and informal manner, linking various stakeholders in the field compromising both the entities from public and private sector. Thehe Consultative Council of Youth in *Latvia*, the Cross-Sectorial Steering Committee in *Slovakia*, and The National Youth Monitoring system in *Estonia* were established in order to facilitate networking of knowledge on youth policy in these countries. Current attempt in establishing similar structures took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the process of establishment of the local and cantonal Youth Councils has started, and will result in the establishment of the Youth Council of Federation of BiH in 2013.

In general, it seems that although the different actors are active in contributing to generation of knowledge and improvement of policy and practice in the youth field, their efforts remain limited within the area in which they operate, while cooperation based on the model of youth knowledge triangle needs further encouragement. However, changes toward higher intensity and quality of exchanges between these actors are on the way already, while increased communication between research and other actors will be crucial for the immediate future of the European youth field.

o **Sources of information and accessible data in the youth field**

Table 3 provides overview of the sources of information, data available, and main IT tools for their dissemination in the youth field.

Table 3: Sources of information on youth

Countries / Sources	Data collections which provide updated statistics on youth (public and private)	Regular youth reports	National journals and reviews on youth research	IT information dissemination tools
Austria	+	+	+	+
Azerbaijan	+	-	-	-
Belgium (Fl)				
Belgium (Fr)				

²⁸ Thompson, R. and Bart, S. for the EU-CoE youth partnership, Report from Workshop on national knowledge networks, European Youth Centre Budapest, 30 January 2013.

²⁹ Based on reflections on National knowledge networks: mapping exercise, CoE, 2012

Bulgaria				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	+	-	-	+
Croatia				
Cyprus				
Czech Republic				
Denmark				
Estonia	+	+	+	+
Finland	+	+	+	+
France	+	+	-/+	-/+
Germany	+	+	+	+
Greece				
Iceland				
Italy	+	+	+	+
Ireland	-	+	+	+
Latvia	+	-	-/+	+
Liechtenstein	+	+	-	+
Lithuania				
Luxembourg	+	+	-	+
Malta	+	+	-	-/+
Montenegro	+	-	-	-/+
Netherlands	+	+	+	+
Norway	+	+	+	+
Poland	+	-	-	-/+
Portugal				
Romania				
Russia				
Serbia	+	+	-	-/+
Slovakia	+	+	+	+
Slovenia	+	-	-	+
Sweden	+	+	+	+

There are numerous public and private providers of **data and updated statistics on youth** in *Finland, Sweden, Italy, Norway, Germany, and France* while in the other EU member countries or SEE region this practice is less frequent. Statistics on youth are mainly collected and published on annual basis reflecting the general situation of young people, or addressing more specific thematic areas relevant for particular country. Apart from listing various providers and types of statistical data available, the national reports were not elaborating on possible ways of their usage in the context of an evidence based policy making. Some examples are following:

- In *Norway*, Statistics Norway provides a webpage with statistics about youth which is publicly available and free of charge, containing updated information on a broad range of topics regarding youth such as: health, living conditions, schooling, and leisure time activities. It also publishes annually statistics and reports in every aspect of the society including children and youth; the annual report of the Norwegian Children and Youth Council is also a good source of youth statistics on youth NGOs;

- In *Italy* statistics on different aspects of young people's life have been developed during the last years by the Government, in particular regarding demographic aspects and transversal topics such as leisure time, family, living conditions, poverty, health, justice, labor and vocational training, education, immigration, use of drugs, cigarettes and alcohol. The National Institute of Statistics (Istat) publishes every year an Annual Report on the situation of Italy, which represents the main tool of analysis on economic, demographic and social aspects of our country, and regularly the results of surveys on different topics of interest for youth policies (education, leisure time, participation to civil society, family, living conditions, poverty, health, justice, labour and vocational training and so on). The Italian Statistical Yearbook summarises the results of the main surveys conducted by Istat and other National Statistical System bodies.
- In *Finland*, Youth Barometer is published yearly by the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs and the Youth Research Network; Youth Living Conditions yearbooks are published by the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs (Nuora), the Youth Research Network and the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL); Leisure Time Survey of the young people is a survey based study published every three years by the Ministry of Education, the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs and Youth Research Network; Children's Media Barometer seeks to analyze children's and prepubescent' (aged 10 – 12) media relations on a national level and to produce information for profiling and developing media education. The Ministry of Employment and Economy produces monthly statistics concerning the number of employed and unemployed young people.

In *Malta*, The National Statistics Office website hosts a significant amount of statistical information on young people ranging from Education youth employment and unemployment, entrepreneurship and youth organisations to involvement in extracurricular activities and living conditions, while in *Estonia* on the other hand, private companies do not make their information available to a wider public. Analysis results are published as research reports which might be directed to academic public (scholarly articles, monographs, collections of articles, project reports) or to policy makers and practitioners (policy briefs, abridged articles in non-scholarly journals or collections). In *Slovenia, Poland, Latvia, Slovakia*, and in SEE region statistics on youth are collected and published on annual basis within general demographic data gathering.

Most national youth strategies or programmes envisage regular youth reports to be published every three to five years by the public institutions responsible for youth policy. According to information templates available, **regular reports on youth** have been published in *Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia*, and *Sweden*. The purpose of those reports is to provide continuous monitoring over changes and trends regarding general or specific youth issues, and to provide information about the youth policy implementation at the national level. Example of an integrated document of this kind is a National Youth Report in Luxembourg, which is to be published every five years to give a global view on the situation of youth in Luxembourg, according to the 2008 Youth Act. A first report was published in 2010, and contains a government's view on youth policy as well as a description of the situation of youth in Luxembourg. Six domains of youth research, which analyse youth in the context of development and transition processes of current society, are treated in depth. Apart from that, in *Finland, Italy, Germany*, and *Sweden* there are

various regular reports on children and young people published at the national or regional level and issued by public or semi public institutions addressing different sectoral or thematic areas. In SEE region, existing regular youth reports refer only to national youth policy implementation, and they are rarely published.

Furthermore, different kinds of journals dealing with youth issues on national and regional level are produced in a majority of the countries involved in this report, whereas specialized **national journals and reviews on youth research** are very rare. For example *The Norwegian Journal of Youth Research* presents a broad range of youth research, and usually presents the newest statistics of youth on various themes from different researchers around the country. An important aim is to make youth research more accessible to people outside academia. In addition to youth researchers, target groups include people who work with young people, policy makers, researchers, students and the media. In Germany, Sweden, Finland, France, and Italy a large number of publication series in the youth field are produced every year which are both academic and policy oriented, but also targeting local communities and wider range of stakeholders including young people.

When it comes to **a dissemination of knowledge on youth via dedicated internet portals, online publications, and online databases** it can be said that majority of the public and semi public institutions, as well as National Youth agencies or National umbrella youth organisations in respected countries use their own web sites as tool for information dissemination. On those websites general information on activities and events, press releases, data and information on researches, international standard glossaries and classifications are presented. The websites are usually multilingual (apart from the native language of the country, they provide information in one or two official languages in the EU). Specialized web portals or online databases for better understanding of youth or youth research promotion are quite rare. Examples of good practice are National Youth Monitor in *the Netherlands*, providing free access to information on the situation of young people in the Netherlands on the areas health and welfare, education, justice and labor. The portal is provided by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, and updated each year, as well as the Netherlands Youth Institute Database on youth research and youth studies, provided by the same authority providing information about research on youth and education. Another example is a national online portal on situation of young people in *Estonia*. The portal is part of an integrated youth monitoring system, which consists of the portal, youth monitoring yearbook, policy briefs and online database of research reports and projects on young people. Regarding the overall organisation of online dissemination of knowledge in the youth field *in Germany*, among other, the Portal for Specialists in Child and Youth Services in Germany (www.jugendhilfeportal.de) is a supra-regional portal which is financed by the federal government and regional governments and is provided by IJAB and AGJ (www.jugendhilfeportal.de). Apart from several web portals dedicated to youth issues *in Latvia*, in order to ensure continuous communication with young people, the Ministry of Education and Science uses twitter account to spread out information about different events for young people, and to inform young people about possibilities on voluntary work in cooperation with Microsoft.

In SEE region, there isn't any internet portal or online publication that represents a comprehensive system regarding knowledge on youth. However, an example of an integrated approach to

information gathering and dissemination targeting wider network of stakeholders in the youth field is the creation of the web portal for youth organisations, institutions, and youth workers by the Directorate of Youth and Sports in Montenegro, aimed at sharing of information, ideas, practices, and networking.

There are a number of **priority themes** across the area of youth research which were recently emphasized in most countries, including:

- Youth Employment/ transition from school to work,
- Young people and (non formal) education,
- Socio-economic situation of young people,
- Social inclusion/exclusion,
- Youth political participation and e-participation,
- Youth mobility and migration,
- Wellbeing and health of young people,
- Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs),
- Youth crime and justice,
- Leisure-time activities of young people,
- Youth subcultures,
- Youth and new communication media,
- Youth policy.

IV Good practice related to fostering a better knowledge of youth

The degree of transferability of good practice examples between countries – considered rather attractive, given the increasing scarcity of resources throughout Europe – remains unclear. In France, a number of institutions already had to give up their activities in order to free up funding for more demonstrably effective programmes.

Although youth research represents a relatively young research area in majority of the countries included in this report, examples of good practice have been described in: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Sweden. While annual monitoring has been recognized as good practice in observing progress of youth policy implementation, trends and changes in achieving planned results in majority of the national reports, there are also some other methods and approaches used for gaining and keeping up to date a better knowledge of youth:

- Participation to European statistics (Eurostat, Eurobarometer, EMCDDA),
- Basic and applied youth research and evaluation in the domain of youth;
- Longitudinal studies;
- Comparative studies;
- Sample Surveys, Questionnaires, and interviews;

- Consultations/structured dialogue with youth and other stakeholders in the youth field;
- Development of youth indicators;
- Youth opinion polls;
- Research and exchange structures, assuring a structural and thus sustainable interaction between policy and research, formalized either by law or by agreements,
- Joint advisory bodies;
- Joint events (workshops, forums, conferences and debates on youth issues with the participation of the different youth domain actors),
- Websites with free access to publications or databases,
- Access to statistical databases (administrative data, survey data, ...);
- A documentation centre on Youth etc.

Only a few examples described in the EKCYP national reports are going to be reflected in order to demonstrate diversity of practices:

- In *France*, as already mentioned, the French Youth Experimentation Fund (FEJ) plays a vital role in the development of an evidence-based youth policy. The Fund was created in 2009 and has since worked for strengthening the links between the different actors in the youth field, including the different layers of government and non-governmental partners. The FEJ engages in testing government programmes on a limited scale in order to verify their adequacy, creates and coordinates thematic networks, including those related to governance of youth policies and knowledge management. Furthermore, based on the cross-ministerial approach, a national agency, the *Observatoire national de la Jeunesse*, was created in 2010 in order to co-ordinate a number of pre-existing youth observatories, where factsheets for public use are elaborated, seminars and conferences are organised, reports on youth are drafted, a dashboard of indicators on youth is managed and the [Atlas de la Jeunesse](#) is produced³⁰. In the long run, a better representation of youth itself, youth work practitioners and researchers, is considered a priority, which apparently will require a sustainable institutionalisation of knowledge transfer in the youth field.
- In *the Netherlands*, the [Database of Effective Youth Interventions](#), developed by the Netherlands Youth Institute with intention to help youth care services and their professionals to improve the quality and effectiveness of their work, gives professionals, policy makers, researchers and financiers information on effective youth interventions carried out in the Netherlands, and is based on evidence³¹;
- In *Ireland*, organisations concerned with youth, both statutory bodies and NGOs, have increasingly tended to develop a specific research function (whether conducting research and/or commissioning) and have also worked increasingly in *partnership* with each other and with the academic research community. An example from the field of youth work is

³⁰ Thompson, R. and Bart, S. for the EU-CoE youth partnership, Report from Workshop on national knowledge networks, European Youth Centre Budapest, 30 January 2013.

³¹ EKCYP Information template, The Netherlands 2012

the research report on [The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work](#) (2009), jointly commissioned by all the largest youth organisations³²;

- *Polish* National Agency of Youth in Action, as a member of [Ray network](#) , is involved in producing reliable evidence to better understand processes and outcomes in youth work and non-formal education, through the project which gathers research institutes and Youth in Action agencies from 12 countries, and therefore allows comparative, transnational approach in analysing research results³³;
- The Ministry of Education and Science in *Latvia* currently develops a life quality index using cross-disciplinary approach based on youth indicators mentioned in the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);
- The Social Monitoring Department of the German Youth Institute, carries out the large-scale survey project "Growing Up in Germany" which covers the three core issues of the institute: childhood, youth and family and complements the existing information provided by official statistics³⁴;
- In *Slovenia*, resources from the European Social Fund have been allocated through a special tender for establishing eight content networks bringing together youth organisations and external partners, aiming at providing better training to young people in the areas of social, citizenship and cultural competencies. In parallel, many studies and analysis done by these networks have provided a good knowledge on young people and their interest for youth policy topics;
- In 2012 *Serbia* participated and became a member of the Expert Group on EU indicators on youth, which represents a great base for further widening of cooperation between Serbia and European countries with a very well developed system and cooperation within the field of youth research;
- Example of a creative initiative in *Latvia* where "Coffee with Politicians" was organised, as meeting of young people and politicians around a coffee/ tea table to discuss current issues and listen each other's point of view;

Conclusion

Based on the EKCYP 2012/13 information templates submitted by the national correspondents from 21 countries, including 16 from *EU member countries* (Austria, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden), 2 from *EFTA countries* (Norway, and Liechtenstein), and 3

³² Ekycp Information template, Ireland 2012

³³ EKCYP Information template, Poland 2012

³⁴ http://dji.de/bulletin/e_bull_e/bull2011_e/DJIB_2011.pdf

from *SEE region* (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia), it can be concluded that there is a great number of programmes, initiatives and activities developed in order to support and promote better knowledge on youth and to ensure an evidence based approach to youth policy at the national level.

In line with the European youth policy framework, many countries have created references within their strategic and legislative frameworks, while some have developed specialized strategic documents and programmes in this regard. Due to the diversity of their national contexts, a variety of actors and structures have been involved in enhancing a better knowledge on youth. Accordingly, various models and practices have been described in gathering and transferring knowledge between the different angles of the “youth knowledge triangle”. National correspondents of the EKCYF play an important role in this regard, by initiating communication between various actors, as well as by advocating for mutual exchange and co-operation. Still, there is an impression that visibility of the national correspondents, as well as the roles of the other actors of the knowledge triangle, need to be improved and clarified. Although there is an institutional design created for an evidence based youth policy especially in the (new) EU member states, in practice, cross-sectoral cooperation and institutionalized dialogue between policy makers, youth work practitioners and youth researchers is irregular. Knowledge networks are rarely recognized and supported formally at the national level, so that the different “corners of the triangle” usually work separately, communicating with the other stakeholders in the youth field on an *ad hoc* basis. In order to explore the reasons and causes of such reality, as well as to improve mutual understanding of the concept of “knowledge on youth”, including measures of support to the different actors, and modalities of formalisation of knowledge transfer within and out of the triangle, additional research, capacity building, coordination and continuous dialogue between the different stakeholders is necessary. An evidence based approach to youth policy needs to be further promoted, and specific programmes/measures created at the national level in order to provide a framework for recognition and implementation of sustainable and institutionalized dialogue between youth researchers, practitioners in the youth field, and youth policy makers. In this regard, the support of the EU-CoE youth partnership can play a vital role in providing additional trainings, or exchange of good practices between countries.

Due to limited capacities of the public sector in gathering knowledge on youth, NGOs, semi-public institutions, universities and institutes, but also national and transnational NGOs, play a significant role and provide added the value of youth involvement in the process. The role of private academic and research agencies has been recognized as a valuable additional force within the institutional research context, although the nature of their relationship with the other actors in gaining a better knowledge would need to be further explored. Even if the relationship between youth research and youth policy seems to be developed and articulated better than the one with youth work practice, youth research has not yet been recognized as an independent/institutionalised research area in a majority of the countries involved. Despite considerable efforts made in this direction. Considering its multidisciplinary nature, youth research is still diversified, and incorporated in a wide range of research areas. Coordination between different thematic research fields towards production of comprehensive knowledge and updated information on youth is not sufficiently coordinated in the majority of countries. Cooperation between youth researchers on the other hand takes various forms which are both

informal and formal: through research project networks in institutional, national and international levels but also within professional organisations and networks according to their speciality. Thus, specific measures are needed in order to foster and support their mobility and skills improvement and to improve their visibility at the national level, especially in the new EU member states and in the SEE region. The EU institutions and related mobility programmes play a crucial role in this regard according to the majority of national reports. Finally, in order to make current developments and information gathered on youth more available to various stakeholders, including young people, different methods of dissemination have been created. Although information technologies play a leading role in this regard, their usage needs to be improved especially in the new EU member countries and SEE region.

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