

Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

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Information

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Young people as well as policy makers and experts have highlighted the importance of easy access to complete, accurate and balanced information that meets young people's needs and questions and is designed especially for them, thus being understandable and customized as a basic prerequisite for their participation and active citizenship.

The right to information has been recognised e.g. in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Youth information policy in Europe has been started by the Council of Europe in 1985 when the conclusions of the 1st Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth recommended to the Member states to “promote the development of an European network of youth information centres”. Following this recommendation the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) was born. The work done by ERYICA was recognised by the second ministerial conference in 1988 and the association and the member states were asked to put more attention on the definition of quality standards for the youth information services and on the training of youth information workers. In the meantime the Youth Card associations in Europe started a cooperation and in 1991 a [Partial Agreement was set up between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Card Association \(EYCA\)](#) and then renewed in 2003.

In 1990 the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the first legislative instrument regarding youth information in Europe, namely a [recommendation concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe](#). It recommends to promote co-ordination at European level of a policy of information and counselling, to support the creation of appropriate information services, to promote research on the subject and to support the development of a European network of respective services.

In 1991 also the European Economic Community (EEC), the predecessor of the EU, issued its first document on youth information, namely the [Communication of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament “Keep young Europeans informed”](#).

In the second half of the 90s, both the European Union and the Council of Europe issued resolutions concerning the youth information policy. In 1995 the Council of the European Union published a [resolution on cooperation in the field of youth information and studies concerning youth](#) and in 1998 the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers issued a [resolution which set as an objective to foster young people's access to information and new information technologies](#).

In the 90ies also EURODESK, an initiative to inform young people on offers and opportunities of the European Union was launched in Scotland and rapidly grew into a European project, more and more Member States taking up the idea and joining the network and the European Union fostering the project quite soon in its development. Nowadays EURODESK is an established information structure supported by the EU through the Youth in Action funding programme and it is the official information network of the funding programme itself.

In 1993 ERYICA – the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency adopted the [European Youth Information Charter](#) which quickly became the underlying set of work

principles for Youth Information Centres and Services in Europe and has served ever since as a basis for all activities and developments undertaken in the European network as well as a starting point for new structures and work principles on national, regional and local level. The charter was revised and a new version adopted in 2004 to give room to the new developments e.g. in the use of new technologies in information for young people. The European Youth Information Charter is also named as a reference document for enhancing quality of information for young people.

In 1997 the Council of Europe decided to increase its efforts in the Youth Information field even further by signing a [Partnership agreement with ERYICA](#) with the purpose to promote and develop European cooperation in youth information and counselling, in particular by organising training activities for persons involved in youth information and counselling.

The EU published in 2001 [The White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth"](#), including Youth Information as one of the four key areas, and gave another boost to European discussion concerning this part of youth work. Since the launch of the White Paper, the European Union and its Member States have engaged in a coordinated approach regarding young people's access to information of quality. In two resolutions the Council of the European Union stresses the importance of promoting the access of youngsters to information in order to give them the opportunity to take advantage of their possibilities, take knowledge based decisions for their life and foster their participation in civil society.

In particular the following points are stressed in the [Council Resolution of November 2003 on common objectives for participation by and information for young people](#) :

- improving access for young people to information services;
- increasing the provision of quality information;
- increasing participation by young people in youth information, for example in the preparation and dissemination of information.

[In 2005 the Council of the European Union](#) stressed once again the importance of Youth Information highlighting especially networking among youth-oriented information structures in various sectors at local, national and European level and the need for continuous training of those involved in youth information to foster quality information for young people. The profile of Quality Youth Information in Europe should be raised and cooperation, networking and exchange of good practice should be sought also between national Youth Information sites and portals across Europe.

As part of the follow up of the White Paper process the Commission published twice a Communication to the Council of the European Union regarding the [proposal](#) and [implementation](#) of common objectives in the field of participation of and information for young people.

Even though information for young people is mainly a responsibility of the Member States also on European Level different initiatives were undertaken to support the development of information offers of high quality for young people:

- In 2005 **the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy** was created in the framework of the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European

Commission which focuses on research and training in the field of youth. The EKCYP provides information and data on all relevant activities and documentation in the youth field for consultation by decision makers, people involved in youth work and young people themselves.

- **The European Youth Portal** was launched in 2004 by the European Commission offering European information to all interested youngsters. The Commission gave to the three existing information networks for young people on European Level (ERYICA, Eurodesk and EYCA) the task of creating this portal.
 - **ERYICA** – the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency composed of national Youth Information Coordination Bodies and Networks.
 - **EURODESK** – the network providing information on European Funding- and Mobility-Opportunities for young people and those who work with them, also has the task to manage the content on the European Youth Portal on behalf of the European Commission.
 - **EYCA** – the European Youth Card Association giving young people access to discounts and promoting mobility in Europe.

They are actively involved in further developing Youth Information in Europe, supporting cooperation and exchange of experience on European level and contributing to the implementation of the aims and objectives of European Youth Policies concerning information for young people. They also organized joint activities like Seminars, a joint website and they cooperate with the European Youth Forum

The Council of Europe organised in cooperation with ERYICA in the end of 2007 a **Colloquy on "The future of Youth Information in Europe"**.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Union in 2008/2009 went under the process of evaluating their Youth Policies and defining new priorities and strategies for the upcoming decade(s).

The future Council of Europe strategy for youth outlined in Agenda 2020, information and counselling services are still part of the declared objectives under the priority 'Human rights and democracy'.

After having launched a new phase of the structured dialogue with young people and having reviewed the political processes since the launch of the White paper in 2001 the European Commission issued in 2009 the **European strategy for youth 'Investing and Empowering for the period 2010-2018'**, approved by the European Council in November 2009. In this new framework for a future EU youth strategy, information is put rather on participation since it is an essential precondition for active participation of young people in civil society.

Related documents:

- [Recommendation concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe Rec\(90\)7](#) adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 21 February 1990
- [Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Keep young Europeans informed"](#), 3 June 1991, Brussels. SEC(91)1010 Final
- [European Youth Information Charter](#) adopted by the 15th General Assembly of ERYICA on 19.11.2004
- [Communication from the Commission to the Council of 20.7.2006 - COM\(2006\) 417 final](#) on European policies concerning youth participation and information
- [Council Resolution on cooperation in the field of youth information and studies concerning youth](#), 31 March 1995.
- [Recommendation on Youth Mobility R\(95\)18](#) adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 12.10.1995
- [Partnership Agreement between Eryica and the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1st October 1997'](#)
- [Resolution on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe Res \(98\) 6](#) adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16.4.1998
- [European Commission White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth"](#), COM(2001) 681 final, 21.11.2001
- [Council Resolution on common objectives for participation by and information for young people](#), Official Journal C 295 of 05.12.2003
- [Council Resolution on implementing the common objectives for youth information](#), Official Journal C 141/3 of 24 June 2005
- [Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people](#), COM(2003) 184 in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field
- [Communication from the Commission to the Council on European policies concerning youth participation and information](#). Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth : Implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship COM(2006) 417 final of 20.7.2006
- ["Young people and their information needs in the context of the information society"](#) by Neil Selwyn for the Council of Europe/ERYICA-Colloquy " The future of Youth Information in Europe", Budapest, November 2007
- ["The development of Youth Information in Europe"](#) by Alexandra Cangelosi for the Council of Europe/ERYICA-Colloquy "The future of Youth Information in Europe", Budapest, November 2007
- [Final report on the Council of Europe/ERYICA-Colloquy on "The future of Youth Information in Europe"](#), Budapest, November 2007
- [How boys and girls in Europe are finding their way with information and communication](#)