

Youth Partnership

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



Youth policy symposium with EECA countries

Concept Paper

Dates: 11-12 June 2012

Venue: Georgia

Partners: SALTO RC EECA and the Ministry of Sport and Youth of Georgia

Main theme: Youth policy and well-being of young people - a knowledge based approach to youth policy-making in the EECA region.

Outline:

Following the workshops on youth policy development in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Budapest, Hungary 2008; Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland 2009) the symposium on Youth Policy Cooperation in the EECA region in Odessa in July 2011 served as a platform for re-launching the discussion on the state of youth policies in the region. A special summary report commissioned by the EU-CoE youth partnership on the situation of EECA youth policies was presented at the symposium and provided the regional and European stakeholders with a valuable opportunity to identify burning issues and propose further actions. The regional stakeholders participating in Odessa event welcomed the increased support to their youth policy development provided by the EU and CoE and expressed the wish for the EU-CoE youth partnership to continue playing an active role in this process. The regional stakeholders particularly voiced a need for investing more in the development of the knowledge-based principle to youth policy-making in the region and in the promotion of youth work in the region. They considered of particular importance to have a better dialogue of researchers and policy-makers and a greater social and political recognition of youth work. It was requested to exchange best practices among the countries of the region and with the rest of Europe.

Acting on this demand, the EU-CoE youth partnership will organize in 2012 a follow-up symposium in the region dedicated to knowledge-based approaches in youth policy-making and focusing in particular to the topic of well-being of young people.

Participants:

The symposium should bring together approximately 50-60 key stakeholders of the youth field from different countries of the region (and some experts from other parts of Europe), including in particular national governmental authorities in charge of youth, youth workers and youth leaders with interest and experience in the topics, but also representatives of municipalities/districts (depending on structures existing in countries), researchers, practitioners and other relevant

stakeholders, e.g. from formal education, health, social and employment sectors, plus NA's and Salto's.

Policy Context:

National youth policy reviews and a summary report for the region were produced by the EU-CoE youth partnership in 2011 and discussed at the Odessa Symposium. They shed the necessary light on the situation in the youth field in the region and served as a first step for discussing further development. Some countries (Georgia) have since engaged in the development of national youth policy. Others have focused on sectoral approaches, for example in the field of employment (Ukraine, Azerbaijan). Their experiences will serve as valuable examples for discussion at this year's event. The participation of experts and policy-makers from other parts of Europe will contribute to following up on another of Odessa's conclusions - the need to increase information exchange and sharing of best practices between the region and the rest of Europe.

Both the CoE and the EU continue to place great importance on cooperation in the youth field with EECA countries. In the 2012-2013 period, the European Commission will allocate 31.5 million euros for cooperation within Youth in Action Programme with the Eastern Partnership countries through the "Eastern Partnership Youth Window". Within the Window, the European Commission plans to support the establishment of Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit whose purpose would be to, inter alia, support capacity development of government and civil society actors in the youth sector in Eastern Partnership countries, and encourage the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders.

The Council of Europe is equally contributing on its side. A policy review of the Ukrainian youth policy is scheduled to be conducted by an international group of experts and a number of seminars and trainings will be organised in 2012 for policy-makers and youth workers in the region.

Aims and objectives:

- Initiating dialogues, discussions, debates, exchanges and possible co-operations among all stakeholders;
- Creating opportunities for peer-learning
- Presenting good practices
- Learning from research based evidence and improving policy and practice

Themes:

Overall theme

- Youth policy and well-being of young people - a knowledge based approach to youth policy-making in the EECA region.

Main themes

- Evidence-based youth policy development, in particular in the fields of health and young people's access to social rights : policy, research and practice perspective
- Role of youth work in the health and social inclusion fields
- Youth-focused anti-discrimination policies

Programme design:

- Plenary sessions
- Panel discussions and working groups
- Open space: Small scale group work / peer-learning for networking, project developing etc.
- Field visit