Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
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EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL CONSEIL
OF EUROPE DE L'EUROPE

Ministry of Social Policy and Youth

of Croatia

Youth Policy in South East Europe
Organised by

EU-CoE youth partnership, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth of Croatia, ERYICA and
SALTO RC SEE

Hotel Dubrovnik, Zagreb

19-20 June, Zagreb (Croatia)

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL

INCLUSION AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS

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1 Preface – background of the symposium

Young people in South East Europe (SEE), more frequently than young people from Western or Northern European countries, experience exclusion, blocked access to their rights and difficulties in reaching their social and economic independence. Their transition to adulthood is highly marked by socio-economic vulnerability and consequences of such a situation are not only experienced by the youth themselves, but also the society at large. Societal balance and productivity are endangered and additional efforts have to be made in order to reverse youth disadvantages. The Council of Europe has been nurturing social cohesion and promoting access to rights by lying down policies referring to *the European Convention on Human Rights*[1] and *the Revised European Social Charter*[2][../../Bojan/Downloads/EN Enter Call for pax.doc - ftn2](). In this context, the widely recognized social rights are education, work, social security, health, housing, quality of life, movement of persons, non-discrimination and poverty alleviation. Also, in line with this, *the Resolution on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe* aims at "providing young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society"[3].

The EU sees social inclusion as '*a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. Social inclusion also ensures that vulnerable groups and persons have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and that they can access their fundamental rights*'[4] Social inclusion is one of the eight policy areas underlining the cross-cutting approach of the EU Youth Strategy. It is also a key priority of the Youth in Action programme.

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[1]http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf
[2]http://www.coe.int/t/dGHl/monitoring/Socialcharter/Presentation/ESCRBooklet/English.pdf
[3]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Documents/CM_Res_08_youth_policy_en.pdf
[4] European Commission (2010) *The European Social Fund and social inclusion*. [Online] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=166&langId=en.

The countries of South East Europe have been severely affected by the economic crisis, which, in their case, started more than twenty years ago. As a result of enduring economic crisis, poverty and social insecurity resulted in political instability and severe hindrances to social integration. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment has been on the constant rise in this region, reaching almost 50% in some countries. The current generation of young people in South East Europe is facing new challenges and opportunities, much different than those faced by their parents. This generational change has been going on simultaneously with the transition from socialist to the market economy and digital society. The imbalance between constraints placed on young people and opportunities offered to them makes access to their rights very challenging. Therefore, young people have to be empowered to be able to access their rights, and one of the most efficient tools for this empowerment is information. As observed in the background paper to the symposium on **the Role of Information and Counselling in Young People's Social Inclusion and Access to Rights,** youth information and counselling services in this region are only trying to follow well established practices of the Western and Northern European societies. Their efforts should be awarded, but also drawbacks recognised and some guiding principles given as a recommendation. The aforementioned symposium presents a stepping stone towards the goal of providing better youth information and counselling and easier access to the rights for all young people in South East Europe.

The problem of social inclusion, difficulties in finding employment and the low levels of both learning and geographical mobility are among the biggest challenges for young people in the SEE region. Inevitably, a complex mix of different public policy solutions is needed to deal with these problems. Youth information and counselling is one of the most important parts of soft youth policies. Or, as the invitation to the symposium puts it:

> *"Information and counselling represent an important empowering factor for young people in overcoming social exclusion and achieving access to their rights. The key lies in providing adequate, understandable and easily accessible information that young people can feel comfortable using. And while modern means of communication open up new and exciting possibilities in reaching out*

to an increasing number of young people, we must not neglect the importance of counselling and the role of professional youth work. Information without personal support and advice can be ineffective or, worse, wrongly interpreted."

The purpose of the symposium was to look at how the governments and other stakeholders can increase their outreach and extend their information and counselling support network to young people in the South East European region. The core topic of the symposium was "*information as a tool for accessing rights*". This approach treats information as one of the most important means of "soft" youth policy. Guaranteeing access to information is an essential condition for young people to live a meaningful life.

The symposium provided an opportunity to analyse existing good practices in the field. It was a chance to involve current and prospective actors from different geographical areas, learn of their existing competences and structures, as well as emphasize the special role played by information and counselling as a cross-sectoral policy tool. The event equally focused on the elaboration of strategies for enhancing the current practice and expanding it to include new needs of young people.

The participants came from altogether 19 countries.[5] They included members of youth NGOs, youth councils, representatives of youth ministries, government agencies and academics.

The symposium was also a follow-up to the earlier EU-CoE youth partnership / SALTO RC SEE activities in the region of South East Europe (Trogir, Croatia 2007; Belgrade, Serbia 2008; Brdo, Slovenia 2009, Tirana, Albania 2012), and to the country studies on youth policy in the region published by the partnership.

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[5]Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and United Kingodom.

2   The Symposium

Following the official opening by the hosts and the partner institutions, much of the remaining programme was organised around the three thematic workshops on (1.) social inclusion, (2.) employment/entrepreneurship and (3.) mobility. All workshops featured three thematic presentations of good practice from the region and other European countries. A closing session at the end of the second day was dedicated to summarizing and discussing the main findings and recommendations.

2.1   The opening plenary session. Welcome by hosts and partner institutions

Milanka Opačić, a Vice President of the Croatian Government and Minister of Social Policy and Youth, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (MSPY), which is the coordinating body in Croatia for policies in the field of youth. Since the beginning of the EU integration negotiation, MSPY has been actively working on adopting and implementing the European guidelines and practices in the field of youth. Year 2013 is especially fruitful for the MSPY since major reforms are being undertaken – adaptation of the new National Youth Action Plan, new Law on Volunteering, introducing the first National Youth Act, participating in the "Information Right Now!" campaign[6] and setting the "youth-guarantee"[7] that will start with implementation in July, before official EU start in January 2014.

Željko Jovanović, Minister of Science, Education and Sports, focused his contribution on the instruments of social inclusion for disadvantaged youths – unskilled, minorities and young people with disabilities. This Ministry has made significant efforts in making the educational system accessible to all. To this end, it has successfully used the IPA IV instrument for preparing several projects on youth social inclusion and integration. Since the rationale behind these Ministry actions has been: better education – better employment – happier people, the Ministry has been active in promoting and enabling skills that would make young

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[6]http://www.informationrightnow.eu/
[7]http://www.youth-guarantee.eu/

people more competent for life in contemporary European societies. Another representative of the Croatian Government, **Danijel Baron**, Assistant to the Minister of Labour and Pension System, referred in his contribution to some of the government's employment measures targeting youth – education, training for work, public works, self-employment. These steps will be additionally strengthened by introduction of the "youth guarantee" and the use of the European Social Fund resources.

Jan Truszczyński, Director-General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth at the European Commission, observed in his speech that youth unemployment does not represent only a great personal hardship for young people, but also a huge cost to Europe, in the amount of roughly 150 billion euros per year. The problem of young people not in employment, education or training ("NEETs") is especially pronounced. In order to tackle this crisis the Commission is especially focused on initiatives aimed at reducing the number of school drop-outs and the so-called Youth Guarantee. The social inclusion of young migrants and their full participation in society is equally one of the important areas, with youth work considered to be a powerful instrument of social inclusion. Mr Truszczyński concluded his contribution by stating that youth policies have to lead to the improvement of young people's skills and to their increased autonomy in society. One of the tools which will help in this direction will be also the new EU Youth Portal[8].

Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training Division at the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, emphasized in his speech the importance of youth information and counselling for social inclusion. In his view, the right to information presents the basis of democratic societies. To this end, equal participation of young people in all domains of life has to be ensured, which has been one of the guiding principles of the Council of Europe undertakings since 1985. Mr Gomes remarked that nowadays despite the digitalisation of our everyday lives some young people have better access to social rights, infrastructure and services than others. Therefore, it is very important that educational systems prepare young people for

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[8]http://europa.eu/youth/en

active participation in society with all rights and responsibilities. Throughout this process we should bear in mind that the cyber dimension must be included and promoted in citizenship.

Robiu Salisu, Youth Ambassador of the "Information Right Now!" campaign, as a true representative of the young, mobile and proactive generation, contributed with a very interesting presentation entitled "Testimony – the Importance of Youth Information and Counselling for Young People". He presented the CLIC web site[9] for youth information and counselling in Wales, run by young people and funded by the Welsh Government. Synergy between the young people and the national government proved to be a truly good practice scenario, as CLIC has been very influential at both national and local level, providing youth information, counselling and networking opportunities in all walks of life.

An important contribution to the work of the symposium was made by the **"COYOTE" magazine**[10] team, which frequently interacted with the participants and recorded their views and opinions. The next issue of "COYOTE" will be dedicated to the topic of youth information and counselling and the team used the symposium as an important source of content.

Ms McIntyre's keynote presentation with the title "**Floating ideas**" provided information about Scotland's system of youth information and counselling. Her main argument focused on the differentiation between information and counselling services. She offered a theoretical model of one horizontal axis which has sole information and sole counselling on its two ends. Naturally the middle is occupied by the mixture of information and counselling. The decision on the best mix of the two services depends on the actual situation and needs of young people. Youth information services are more useful for those who are able to find and process information independently. This also includes their ability to make decisions without a notable professional support. (i.e. their direct social background is supportive enough.) Information amended with some counselling is suitable for those young people who feel that they need or want something, but they lack the ability to obtain the necessary

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[9]http://www.cliconline.co.uk/
[10]http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/Coyote

information on their own. And finally, in a case of mostly excluded young people, who have serious problems and face major challenges in their lives, youth counselling is the best solution. Young people in this category usually have chaotic lifestyles and they could be characterized by their risky behaviour, which strengthens the need for a generalist type of youth counselling.

Fiona McIntyre introduced a circle model that summarised four key capacities of the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence that could also mark the strategic objectives of youth information and counselling: confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. At the heart of this approach is the well-being of children and young people. This is defined as a situation when they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. In this regard youth information and counselling stands between formal education system and traditional youth work.

She also saw digital literacy as a key condition for information literacy. Scotland's digital charter identified digital technology as an important tool in the process of catching up. Her proposal was that young people should be equipped "not just to survive, but to thrive". Treating young people as co-producers and co-designers in this process is a key factor.

The first concluding message of Fiona McIntyre could be used as a guideline in youth oriented policies: "It is in our hands to build services which are not about helping young people to weather the storm, but allowing them to dance in the rain." The second one is more narrowly defined, but nicely summarizes the aim of this symposium: "Not-informing and not-counselling young people is a luxury we cannot afford, especially in this region".

Davide Capecchi, Director of ERYICA, in his presentation "*The role of information and counselling in fostering young people's social inclusion and access to their rights*" provided a brief overview on the rationale for youth information and counselling. He also gave an introduction to some of the most relevant strategic questions that shape the form and content of youth information and counselling from the moment it became institutionalised. First he pointed out the contradiction between the idealism of equal rights and opportunities defined by major international conventions (i.e. the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child[11]) on one side and the more problematic reality on the other side. He described the inequalities between groups of young people by quoting Filip Coussée: *"Unfortunately youth work seems to empower the powerful and police the vulnerable"*.

The geographically sporadic and often ad-hoc emergence of youth information services dates back to the 1950s and 1960s.[12] But it was not until the 1970s that systematic discussion and progression began in the professional development of these services provided for young people. By this time it had become evident that there was a need for specific help for young people in difficult situations. They needed places where they could simply come in and talk with somebody. The idea behind this approach was, among others, prevention of serious malaise. It was also recognized that the established traditional model of assistance for youth was less effective or even counterproductive. The merely bureaucratic, overly official and psychiatric-medical based character of the assistance was not compatible with young people's needs and expectations. Hence, there was a need for innovative answers to new social problems.

Three major issues emerged as key questions in the debates at the first European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres in 1972:

1. The advantages and disadvantages of a comprehensive service against subject specialised services;
2. The differences between and strong points of three assistance concepts: youth information centres (YIC), youth counselling centres (YCC), and services that integrate youth information and counselling (YICC);
3. The social action of the youth information and counselling services.

The debate on the constantly moving focus between the significance of youth information and youth counselling is still a relevant question nowadays. In the last decades actors and stakeholders in the field of youth services gained significant knowledge and methodological

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[11]Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that *"[C]hildren and young people have a right to participate in the decision making processes that are relevant to their lives and a right to influence the decisions made in their regard within the family, school, and community."*
[12]See some other details in this process in the Background Paper prepared for the symposium.

expertise on the content and form of targeted youth information and counselling services. However, cultural and attitudinal differences across regions of Europe and the constantly changing needs and motivations of newer and newer generations of youth suggest that both theories and tools require continuous development and monitoring.

Becoming independent, becoming part of the society, and becoming information literate are the three main pillars of any youth information services as it was incorporated into the European Youth Information Charter[13]. This document also sets the professional principles, minimum standards and quality measures in the early 1990s. The Principles for Online Youth Information[14] enhanced these with some new points of view reflecting the revolutionary technological changes that completely reshaped young people's habits in communication and accessing information.

One recent example of a good practice was also highlighted: the Information Right Now! Campaign[15] is based on the objectives that young people need to understand that they have the right to information, and it can be found in youth information centres, and the right to information needs to be acknowledged and guaranteed by the relevant decision makers. The Campaign was launched in April 2012 and it involves all Council of Europe member countries to carry out numerous activities on a decentralized level. Some countries of the South East European region were particularly active in the program.[16]

2.2   Social inclusion

Examples of good practice

The presentation of good practices in social inclusion included one example from Montenegro and two from Croatia.

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[13] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Partners/Eryica_Eur_Youth_Inf_Charter_en.pdf
[14] http://eryica.org/page/principles-online-youth-information
[15] http://www.informationrightnow.eu
[16] The number of activities carried out in Macedonia – FYROM was 11, which was followed by 8 in Croatia and 5 in Montenegro.

Dragana Papić, youth information programme coordinator working for **Forum MNE**[17]in Montenegro, reported on their efforts to provide youth information training for Roma youth through a variety of projects. Preparatory trainings were provided for all participants before the core training on youth information began. These trainings focused on verbal and nonverbal communication, efficient communication in difficult situations, prejudices, discrimination, conflict-solving techniques, network of support and group cohesion. The training on youth information was aimed at introducing the importance of quality youth information for Roma adolescents in order to allow them to most effectively seize their opportunities. Inevitably the social inclusion of young Roma people and the access to their rights are some of the most difficult social political and economic challenges, not just in Montenegro but in the whole region. Since the organisation has a long history of dealing with Roma young people, they have had an opportunity to develop extensive in-depth knowledge of those key issues that have to be kept in mind when working with Roma.

The differences in the way of living (living conditions, habits, etc.) compared to that of the majority of the society, the communication obstacles (i.e. language barriers, use of Bernsteinian 'restricted code'[18]), the feeling of discrimination, the lack of focus and concentration, and different levels of experience in non-formal learning were the main challenges for the leaders of the project. To overcome these difficulties the use of an adequate communication strategy was recommended (i.e. repetition of simplified and clear instructions as many times as necessary, continuous checking and re-checking of the level of comprehension, practice through very concrete tasks connected with everyday life and with their aspirations and natural abilities, and the need for periodic focus-refocus). On the other hand, a generally high level of enthusiasm, creativity as a natural resource and the participants' willingness to participate represented the assets and resources on which successful projects could build on by utilising them to support young people's actions for self-development.

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[17]http://www.forum-mne.com
[18]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basil_Bernstein

Zdenka Radić from the Croatian **PRONI Centre for Social Education**[19] shared their good practice on how to integrate a broad range of local stakeholders into the everyday functioning of youth organisations in order to support the social inclusion of young people more effectively. The organisation – inter alia – established an advisory board that includes representatives from various institutions and NGOs (i.e. police, Red Cross, employment centres and voluntary service centres). The most important advantage of the advisory board lies in the ability to quickly react to the situation and the changing needs of young people. Bringing together those professionals that directly or indirectly deal with young people means a more effective and smoother sharing of information and it also forces the institutions to wittingly or unwittingly communicate, cooperate and coordinate their efforts with each other. According to Zdenka Radić, this model proved to be so successful that in several other Croatian cities similar advisory boards were set up. The idea of "*move closer to young people, not wait for them to come in but go where they are*" was also put into practice by PRONI, since they are regularly organizing youth information fairs outside their office.

The very personal experience shared by **Ivona Šeparović** from Croatia of her own social inclusion showed an excellent (and somewhat fortunate) example of how a young person with disability can grow up and succeed in a supportive social and institutional environment where the key solution to overcome the obstacles was primarily communication. The support from the association 'Zamisli' and her further involvement into the activities of the organisation provides evidence for the well-known but rarely applied concept of integration and inclusion.

Workshop on Social Inclusion

The workshop on social inclusion was organised around six topics and questions. Participants were divided into six groups in order to answer those questions by collecting good practices, principles to be followed, risks to be avoided and any other relevant information. All groups discussed one topic and a set of questions under the main heading of social inclusion.

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[19]http://www.proni.hr

#1 Outreach

The general problem of outreach focused on the question of how to increase social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the region using youth information and counselling. In this regard the role of youth information workers, NGOs, local and regional authorities and international actors was also discussed.

The general problem in the region is the underdeveloped network of physical infrastructure. Of course, there are clear differences: in some countries larger cities are well covered, therefore a larger proportion of young people could be reached via these centres, but it is certainly not true for the region as a whole. However, across the region young people from rural and remote areas and/or with disadvantaged social background or low level of education usually lack information and counselling services. Access points or youth centres can be found only in bigger cities, thus leaving a significant proportion of young people in the region more or less physically cut off from these centres.

#2 Access to rights

One of the main objectives of youth information and counselling is to support young people to be more aware of their human rights. It is of key importance to young people in the region to be informed about human rights and having the right to quality education, employment, participation, and opportunities for social and geographical mobility.

During the discussions it was noted that if information and knowledge on rights is forced into the frames of (formal) education, young people would just repel it as it would be seen by them as an additional topic to learn and to take an exam on. One solution could be organization of special workshops that require active involvement of young people. Its success is more guaranteed if it also includes learning through games. By applying the concept of *gamification* and *edutainment* one could expect success especially for those between 10-16(18) years of age. The use of cartoons and comics is also encouraged. As a general introduction to the topic design, preparation and effective distribution of a "simple" poster on youth rights could also help raising awareness and inform young people on a basic

level. Special youth radio programs could also be considered, however its efficiency in the reach of young people should also be analysed and sometimes questioned.

To raise awareness of young people and also involve them actively, organizing flash mobs on the topic of rights could also be a good solution. It also leads to a widely shared conclusion that initiatives should not come from organizations and from other directions "from above", but from young people themselves. In other words, youth workers active in this field should take advantage of young people's creative energies, and they should endeavour to channel these resources into the right directions.

And finally the role of formal institutions should not be neglected: awareness raising should also be part of the activities of schools. They need to be involved in the development of information literacy skills – as one of the key competences - of young people. It is encouraged to build partnerships between institutions of formal education and NGOs providing non-formal education tools for young people.

#3 Motivation

The question of motivation fundamentally affects the efficiency of youth information services. How to motivate young people to ask for help while searching for information? And how to raise the awareness of youth on how to assess and filter the information?

To answer these questions the sociological idea of social trust was used by the participants. In general the low level of institutional trust significantly hinders the efficiency of youth information. Moreover, young people are scared to ask questions, and sometimes they feel embarrassed due to their position or a problem they have. To overcome these problems the relevant organizations should "have a human face". The key to success lies in providing professional, trust-based, sensitive and understanding face-to-face services. Certainly there are some sporadic examples of youth information and counselling services in the South East European region that build their daily routines on these principles. However at the general level there is a need for paradigm changes in the nature of the services. This problem of the South East European region partly resembles the early dilemmas of youth information and

counselling services of the "West". Therefore, in the region it is highly important to show "that someone cares". Without this personal, one-to-one manner the otherwise good initiatives could also go wrong. It is also important that maintaining the trustful environment requires constant efforts. Building trust is not a one-time effort. It needs to be refreshed constantly in order to inform and engage new generations of young people.

One of the most difficult tasks is to find the relevant methods and tools that can be used to access young people and that can also maintain their motivation on a longer run. It is never a wrong idea to ask young people directly about how to approach and motivate them. The accurate targeting of different groups of young people is one of the key points for success. Research can also help finding the right methods, however it should also be kept in mind that research into new services for young people is not always reliable, since they can be very positive on certain ideas, technologies and opportunities, but in reality they may fail to act with such enthusiasm. Use of sophisticated research which combines different carrot and stick methods is also desirable instead of applying only classic and simple questionnaires. Furthermore, the use of social media in motivating and engaging young people, without a well-defined strategy and implementation, also does not guarantee a success. Using technology on its own is not enough, since it only provides tools and frames for efficient information transfer and communication. A crucially important step that cannot be neglected is to fill it with meaningful content.

#4 Participation

Low level of youth participation and active citizenship in its political sense is a common characteristic of young people in Europe. The low level of involvement in non-compulsory activities in associations and a generally low density of youth organizations across the region make it a real challenge to find the role and place of information and counselling services in fostering active youth participation.

There are two main reasons of low youth participation: lack of information and lack of motivation. If young people do not have the information they simply cannot participate in

any kind of useful activities. The lack of motivation appears when young people feel "disconnected" from the topic of participation. They simply do not perceive its importance neither at personal nor at social level. So there is an urgent need to find new ways to reach and integrate young people. The use of novel instead of traditional methods for establishing contacts and passing the information was discussed earlier. Again, "thinking outside the box" and using non-traditional measures is a good strategy. "*If dancing or sports is the good solution, then use that!*" – said one of the participants. It was emphasised that the promotion of successful personal stories, that are not far from and unattainable for the target groups, could also increase the level of engagement and motivation to participate.

Not just the absence but the overload of information can also be undesirable. The ability of navigation through the almost endless flow of information could only be developed through professional, well-trained, face-to-face counselling work and through the help of peer educators. And again: people who actually provide the information must be competent and professional. Young people should feel that information and counselling services they receive could contribute to the improvement of their situation. Their doubts, fears and defeatism have to be bridged by youth workers who are able to provide flexible and personalised support.

#5 Inclusion groups

Groups of young people that are in more need of being included have some common attributes across the region (Roma people, young people living in remote areas, low-skilled young people, etc.) and they can be quite easily identified. However, it is also evident that these specific target groups also vary in their special characteristic, needs and opportunities. Therefore, it definitely makes sense to ask the question how youth information and counselling can adapt its methodologies to the needs of these specific target groups.

In general, talking about any target groups, it is always important to analyse their social position in relation to other groups, because different groups need different approaches. In general those groups of young people that are more or less excluded need more counselling

work. This requires personal presence, in all regions of the country and not only in major cities or where young people are present in great numbers. It is crucial to emphasize that acting locally is more important than acting at the national level – young people need implementation mostly at the local level. If young people are not coming to youth information workers, then the youth workers need to go to places where young people spend their time. "*Sitting in a nice office is not enough. Go to streets, go and find for example Roma young people and talk to them*." – as it was formulated by one of the participants. In theory it sounds well, but evidence across the region suggests that street youth work is rarely being used. It certainly requires additional infrastructure and professional staff, which entails additional financial resources and new organisational schemes. But it also brings into the discussion the need of change in strategy that youth organisations follow in South East Europe.

#6 Role of peer-to-peer information and counselling

Finally, the benefits and advantages of peer-to-peer methodologies for social inclusion of young people in the region were also discussed. Which mistakes do we need to avoid? How to prepare the "peers"?

Inevitably the peer-to-peer methods of youth information and counselling are among the key tools that could be used for reaching young people. Although the technological environment has changed a lot, the issues of the last 15 years are very similar. In most countries of the region much below 10% of young people are involved in any kind of youth information and counselling services. This number should certainly be raised in the next few years. This process could be strengthened by actively building on the social networks of young people. If youth workers are able to find young people who have extensive peer connections and who are in "opinion leader" position in their network, by using them as local hubs the level of reach could be significantly expanded.

What should be avoided? The discussions on potential risks clustered around the manipulation of information, the misleading of young people, the misuse of information, and

finally leaving peers without support and surveillance. So, hailing only information on young people without giving them keys to filter and understand is definitely a non-efficient strategy. For the information to be delivered new approaches and new solutions are needed, as the ones that were discussed above in more detail.

2.3 Employment and Entrepreneurship

Examples of good practice

Andres Lokk from the Estonian Youth Work Centre[20] brought two of his organisation's good examples to the participants of the symposium. The Switch On! (NuppTööle!) project was organised by the Smart Work Associate in cooperation with several other organisations. Its main objective was to offer special training courses and work experience to young people in cooperation with employers. The target group of the project were young people (16-24) who were in marginalised social position (i.e. not working or studying for the last 4 months, and without primary, secondary, or vocational education. Certainly it is one of the biggest challenges to contact, organise, engage and motivate these young people. During the period between the beginning of 2012 and mid-2013 more than 200 young people participated in the project. As the first stage of the project, Work Clubs were formed and young people were offered summer schools based on non-formal teaching methods. In summer camps young people got professional help to realise what kind of jobs would suit their abilities and expectations the best. These events also provided useful information for the project leaders on the planning of what kind of employers would match the participants' individual skills, needs and motivations.

The second stage of the project included classroom trainings on labour market related competencies, like the necessary information for entering the world of work (i.e. how to apply for a job, preparing for a job interview, getting acquainted with the employer's expectations, getting to know the legal framework of being employed, etc.). Parallel to the

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[20]www.entk.ee

labour market training every participant received individual counselling to support his/her personal career plan, which also included organised visits to different companies. Those young people whose career plan also implied learning an occupation (around 60 people) had a job shadowing experience for 10 days. During this time personal, face-to-face contacts were preserved through meetings in the Work Clubs to support the learning process and the work experience, and to reduce tensions that may arise from the change of young people's daily routines and life style, and to simply maintain the level of motivation. The main results of the project were the direct, personal work experience offered to young people, and the growing self-confidence in a group of marginalised young people who are usually ashamed of their position. For them, participating in a project like this is an opportunity for a new start that could lead to upward mobility.

At the end of his presentation Andres Lokk presented an online tool for young people. The website www.stardiplats.ee is an initiative of the Estonian Youth Work Centre and it aims to raise the employability of youth by fostering the better social recognition of young people's non-formal learning experience by young people themselves and by employers, teachers and parents. Using the website young people can get support to create their own portfolio or CV by integrating all their formal education and working experiences, together with the different kinds of non-formal education experiences, voluntary work etc.

The second presentation of good practices in this session was also reporting on an example from Northern Europe. **Mika Pietila** from the Koordinaatti-Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling in Finland gave a general introduction to the activities of the organisation[21], and also presented the Byström Youth Service[22] operating in the city of Oulu.

As it was noted in the background paper, Finland was the first country to set up dedicated youth information services for young people starting from the 1950s. Currently Koordinaatti (financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland) supports decentralised youth information and counselling services as a part of the National Youth Work Development and

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[21]www.koordinaatti.fi
[22]http://www.koordinaatti.fi/sites/default/files/Bystrom-youth-services.pdf

Service Network. According to their *arspoetica,* there is a strong emphasis to move young people towards being planners, providers and evaluators of the services.

Without doubt Finland has one of the most extensive networks of youth information services. 80% of Finnish young people between 13-25 years have access to the service in their own place of living. Currently youth information services are provided in 250 municipalities. They are operated by the local municipalities themselves or NGOs. In addition, 44 online youth information and counselling services are active on local and regional level, and the National Youth Information Portal will be launched in August 2013.

The Byström Youth Service in Oulu is a good example of how youth centres should adapt to the needs of young people. As a *low threshold* service, it is easily accessible (i.e. visits could be with or without appointment) and customer-oriented (i.e. all services could be accessed from one place). The services are mainly preventive, and because it is complementary, it does not replace other services. The key areas of the service include general youth services in the following fields: employment and economic development, education, sports, welfare services. In every case – if it is needed – the staff members identify the situation of the person and select the most suitable professional who will continue with guidance and counselling. Regular programs of the centre also include group counselling and organisation of thematic days and seminars.

Finally the third introductory good practice presentation was right from the heart of the South East European region. **Jan Kulenovic** from the Youth Information Agency of Bosnia-Herzegovina highlighted some facts on the situation of young people in the country. Preconditions for youth information services in Bosnia-Herzegovina differ to a great extent from those in Northern Europe. Although it is a complex problem with several determinants, the lack of links between education and labour market resulted in 58% of unemployment for young people. Furthermore, in general, young people in the country tend to be passive in getting the necessary information they need for education, employment, participation, etc. So there is a great need for programmes and initiatives that are aimed to tackle these issues.

The MUNJA project[23], physically located in Sarajevo offers "classic" information and counselling services for young people who "*want to be successful and appealing in society and in the labour market*" and *"who are willing and motivated to invest in themselves".* The services include – inter alia - counselling on how to find a job and how to set up business. There is also a special grant with mentoring for those who want to establish an organisation or a small business. MUNJA also offers space with all the necessary facilities (flip chart, laptop, speakers, LCD projector, etc.) for formal and informal meetings of young people. For those who are interested there is an opportunity for month-long internships to gain practical knowledge and experience for the personal development of organisational and communication skills.

Workshop on employment and entrepreneurship

The workshop on employment and entrepreneurship was organised around a "World Café" discussion where participants had the opportunity to move around tables and share their opinions on several subtopics.

The Table One tried to identify the actors that support young people's employment in the region. Usually the different Ministries and other governmental bodies, employment offices, university career centres, youth councils and NGOs, and companies were identified as the most important actors. The preparedness of these actors was also discussed, but the answers in most of the cases were quite negative. This harsh judgement was even more pronounced for the excluded young people: unskilled, living in remote/rural areas, living with disabilities, young single mothers, who often do not have access to competent and sympathetic professional.

The task of the Table Two was to discuss by what means the fragmentation of information on employment issues for young people of the region could be bypassed?

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[23]http://www.munja.ba/

As an answer, it was suggested that first of all different stakeholders should be aware of young people's reality. They have to understand their current status and aspirations, which should be followed by the creation of coherent and accessible information sources. Such services should be co-created and co-managed by working together with young people.

The lack of cross-sectorial approach and low level of institutional support to information and counselling services were also mentioned. Unfortunately young people could easily get lost among the unstructured and fragmented sources of information. In addition to being a waste of time, this also drains their motivation. Finding and then nominating one public institution or agency to coordinate the content of youth information services as an umbrella-organisation could be a good solution. At the micro level the use of online social networks and peer-to-peer information sharing could contribute to the more effective flow of information.

The Table Three tried to understand what are the needs of young people when it comes to employment? As a general rule it was suggested that young people's needs could only be understood if appropriate amount of time is devoted to listening to them. Because of the complex nature of needs, listening is not always enough. The final provision of information should be based on a constant process of iteration, so even the small details could be covered. Follow-up and feedback on further development should not be forgotten as well. The difficult part of the story is that unfortunately the application of this approach requires the reform of how currently job-centres in the region operate in general.

The Table Four collected answers to the question "*what kind of information young workers need to be provided with and what are the specific information needs of young workers as opposed to other age groups?*" In brief, the following topics were identified: professional advancement / working on personal competences and skills, job searching, status of the preferred profession on the labour market, social/pension rights & benefits, law on labour rights & unions, contract negotiation, work-life balance, financial awareness (i.e. loans).

The topic of the Table Five was to discuss the most appropriate methodologies in the region for guiding young people to employment opportunities through information provision. According to the opinions of the participants one of the most effective methods would focus

on reaching the young people "on the spot", which means that youth information services should consider leaving their comfortable offices and regularly visit young people at those places where they tend to spend their time (i.e. schools, festivals, etc.). Also, the establishment of mobile info points that could reach those rural areas that are usually out of the radar of "classic" youth information and counselling services should be considered. As a conclusion on this part we can say that for all young people realistic, honest and fair provision of information is a necessity.

In terms of enhancing youth employability following tools were mentioned: training, non-formal education, social gatherings, peer-to-peer learning, face-to-face counselling, internships, job shadowing, volunteering and social entrepreneurship. The last aspect mentioned in this workshop was a lack of long-term perspective of youth information services. Providing opportunities for follow up activities and keeping in touch with young people should be a part of the service. The implementation of this approach is certainly challenging, since it requires the transformation of the present "*serve & forget*" method of operation.

2.4   Mobility

Nowadays youth mobility is an essential element of their personal development; it enables young people to become competent, fulfilled and confident members of society. It has been recognised by the Council of Europe, which in its Key Issue Paper of the Competiveness Council[24] introduced a notion of the "fifth freedom":

> *"In order to succeed in the transition to a highly competitive knowledge economy, the European Union needs to create a "fifth freedom" – the free movement of knowledge. Member States and the Commission are invited to deepen their dialogue and expand their cooperation in order to further identify and remove obstacles to the cross-border mobility of knowledge."*

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[24]http://globalhighered.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/st06933en08.pdf

Although cross-border mobility has been made easier in the last couple of decades, it still remains a complex area and people aspiring to be mobile have to absorb a vast amount of information, varying from issuing visas, social and health security coverage, housing, and specific legal requirements that depend on the field of mobility. Therefore, easily accessible and appealing information and counselling systems are of the utmost importance for all, especially the young people who wish to be mobile. Their efforts have been supported by the European Youth Portal[25] (EYP), first launched in 2004, and just launched in a new redesigned and restructured format. At the symposium **Graeme Robertson** from the European Commission, DG for Education and Culture, Youth Policy Unit, presented the new EYP. The new EYP was launched on May 2013; it covers 33 countries and it is available in 27 languages. It interlinks information on European and national level – relevant to the real-life experience of young people. The new era of this portal will be dedicated to greater interaction with young people, discussion forums and user generated content. The portal is easy to manage and it is organised according to eight themes of the EU Youth Strategy (Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Youth & the World, Health and Well-being, Participation, Social Inclusion, Voluntary Activities and Creativity and Culture). The portal's new content also supports one of the most important elements of the European youth policy – the Structured Dialogue – by providing details of all three cycles of Structured Dialogue, individual country reports from each cycle and contact details for National Working Groups.

The second good practice example in the mobility section was presented by **Evaldas Rupkus** from the Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT), who is also Eurodesk Lithuania coordinator. The story of the Lithuanian youth info portal, which has managed to double its audience in a very short time period, showed us how important it is to inter-relate youth information centres from local and regional level with youth organisations and organisations working with young people. Mr Rupkus said that one of the reasons for their success lied in their motto: "*So*

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[25]http://europa.eu/youth/en

many opportunities, so little time – what can I do???", coupled with understanding that online does not go without offline. In other words, engaging in activities is one of the greatest motivation factors for young people as online outreach can be increased through a variety of offline activities.

An interesting example of good practice also came from Portugal and was presented by **Claudia Reis** from Portuguese Sports and Youth Institute (Lojas Ponto JA). The main objectives of this youth information and counselling centre is to collect, process, disseminate and promote the information of interest to young people (local, regional and international information); promote the integration and participation of young people; promote youth counselling; promote opportunities for young people; promote and develop the values of citizenship and encourage tolerance and multiculturalism. The new concept of this institute is: "*Together wherever you are*", with emphasis on reaching demotivated and isolated young people by providing them both online and offline with face to face information and counselling. This model of activity is especially influential in health information and counselling by employing mobile health info units that enable not only youth information but also maintenance of social connections and enhancing networking.

Workshop on Mobility

Workshop on mobility tried to answer the question on "*How youth information and counselling supports mobility in the context of access to rights*?" which was additionally divided into two questions: I) *To which extent is information on mobility relevant to young people's access to their rights? And* II) *How youth information and counselling services could be prepared to support young mobile people?* Moreover, the second question was divided into six subgroups, organising the participants around following crucial issues:

1. motivation to be mobile;
2. informing young people about mobility;
3. supporting young people during their mobility;
4. including young mobile people in the local community during their mobility;

5. exploiting the potential of peer-to-peer approach before, during and after a young person's mobility experience;

6. valorising of the youth mobility experience with an aim to motivate and encourage other youth for mobility.

#I Relevance

The first round of mobility workshop, dealing with relevance of information on mobility for young people's access to their rights, emphasized that mobility can enable access to the right to education, employment in the European labour market, health, participation in decision-making, social and cultural rights, and in general: European citizenship. It was also stressed that mobility increases young people's experiences, motivations, gaining competences, learning languages, getting to know other cultures and networking. In this context, the information on mobility opportunities has to be focused on practical how-to-do and on risks associated with travel.

#II Preparation of the youth information and counselling centres

#1 Motivation to be mobile

The targeting question of the first stream of the second round of mobility workshops "*How youth information and counselling services could be prepared to support young mobile people?*" resulted in recommendations on motivating young people to mobility. These recommendations could be divided into five groups, depending on their focus (issues they are dealing with):

1. human resources;

2. infrastructure;

3. networking;

4. marketing and reaching out;

5. policy.

Well-trained and supported human resources present a basic prerequisite for all quality youth services, which entails that youth workers in information and counselling have to be engaged constantly in learning about content and methods of youth work. They are responsible for providing a "human touch", while offering reliable and easy to access information and serving as a bridge to partnering services and institutions. Infrastructure – not only in terms of providing a place to work, but also providing technical infrastructure and facilities that are appealing and easy to access for young people – is a condition that is very frequently not evenly provided to all young people in SEE. Young people from remote and rural areas still cannot access youth information and counselling services on a daily basis, and very often relevant information is provided only through public institutions young people are reluctant to use (like schools and public administration offices). Therefore, networking has to be constantly nurtured, allowing all participants in the network – from public institutions, public and private companies, via NGOs, to individuals – to constantly update their knowledge about changes in the field of youth information and counselling. Following on this, marketing and reaching out have been recognised as an intrinsic element of youth information and counselling, especially in SEE, where there is lack of long and well established tradition of youth information and counselling outside formal systems (e.g., the educational institutions and employment services). And the last element inter-connecting all previously mentioned elements – policy – has to be ready to revise its main recommendations and to adopt the new ones, based on surveying the real needs, obstacles and perspectives of both young people and youth information and counselling services.

#2 Informing young people about mobility

According to the Eurobarometer survey Youth on the Move[26] (2011, p. 25), only 13,5% of young Europeans have studied abroad and only around 20% of them had either taken apprenticeship or traineeship abroad. There is no reliable data on such a percentage for SEE, but it can be presumed that percentages of internationally mobile youth are significantly

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[26]http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf

lower in this region. The reports and testimonies from the participants of the symposium were in line with this conclusion, urging for more structured and efficient systems of youth information and counselling in SEE. Participants expressed their wish to explore new opportunities, establish new contacts and share experiences with other young people, while existing structures in youth information and counselling still do not provide information on such opportunities.

When it comes to real opportunities offered to the youth from this region, all countries have access to the following mobility programmes and information services:

1. Youth in Action Programme[27]
2. Eurodesk[28] and European Youth Portal[29] – the main providers of information on European policies and opportunities for young people;
3. The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)[30];
4. The European Youth Card Association (EYCA)[31] – provides youth-relevant information and *the European Youth Card.*

The Erasmus – Western Balkans programme[32] is available for residents of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM and Serbia, while Croatia is a full member of Erasmus Mundus Programme[33]. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, offer information on additional schemes, providing information on youth mobility via their national youth web portals[34].

Although national and European web portals and services provide information on mobility opportunities available to young people from SEE, many young people from this region are not aware of them. The symposium's participants have recognised that there is a very sharp divide between young people who are and those who are not aware of all existing

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[27] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php
[28] http://www.eurodesk.org/edesk/
[29] http://europa.eu/youth/en
[30] http://www.eryica.eu/
[31] http://www.eyca.org/
[32] http://erasmus-westernbalkans.eu/
[33] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/
[34] All listed programmes and portals are in detail described in the Symposium „Background paper".

opportunities. This divide is most evident along the line of educational attainment: highly educated youth and university students are the most mobile part of population, very actively engaged in mobility ranging from tourism to education and employment. On the other hand, there are young people with vocational or lower education who leave their place of birth on very rare occasions. They often lack financial resources and easily accessible information for undertaking any mobility. Filling in this gap should be one of the most important aims of organisations working with young people, firstly by providing mobile info units, and eventually by establishing well-resourced organisations and structures that can enable and empower deprivileged young people to prosper from mobility opportunities.

#3 Supporting young people during their mobility

In order to be mobile young people have to completely transfer their entire life to another geographical location during a certain amount of time. This implies that during mobility period they have to cover all essential needs (means of transport, food, health and social security) and all the needs that are related to a specific aim and area of their mobility (entertainment, culture, education, employment). Such an extensive list of the needs that have to be fulfilled during mobility period entails serious preparation and planning, both prior and during mobility period. Additionally, there are specific needs that have to be fulfilled after the mobility period, such as covering additional and non-expected costs of their travel (e.g. health insurance), staying in connection with the people they met abroad, translating documents issued abroad (e.g. education certificates) and planning future journeys related to the same cause. The symposium participants have warned that support during mobility is of a special importance since young people staying abroad are more vulnerable, and, if not informed properly, may face situations of high risk. Therefore, prior to going abroad young people have to be sufficiently informed about all services available abroad, ranging from services satisfying needs for very general information (e.g. touristic offices) to very specific ones (e.g. health insurance and available medical utilities). European networks and programmes offering funding for educational and training purposes (e.g. Erasmus) have well established networks at the national level. Young people included in such schemes usually can get reliable and timely information. Contrary to this, young people

travelling via individual incentives, either for tourism reasons or for educational or employment purposes might be in adverse situations if not informed sufficiently. In this context, next to the reliable information that can be easily accessed and that is provided by a skilled worker, raising awareness on the importance of getting information is one of the crucial elements of preparedness for mobility. Young people have to be aware of all sources available abroad for information, financial help or help in risk situations. They also have to be provided with a list of networks active abroad in a specific field, networks that could help them to make transient situations easier (e.g. associations of students from their homeland).

#4 Including young people in the local community during mobility

Social needs come high on a list of human needs; people need interactions with another human beings and productive life in a community can make their life fulfilled. During longer periods of mobility social bonds with primary communities from the homeland are broken or weakened and people aspire to connect to new communities. This aspiration has been recognised by the symposium participants since some of them reported on a feeling of loneliness and isolation during mobility. For this reason, a need to make close bonds with member of new communities is ranked the first among the roles of integration in the local communities. The next two recognised roles are more instrumental: 1) need to dive in local culture and to lean about cultural specificities; 2) need to learn new languages through everyday communication. Still, inclusion of new-comers is not always easy and a two-way process has to be assured: 1) provision of services to whom a migrant can turn for advice and 2) provision of services that are focused on both recognising the needs of new members of communities and raising awareness among natives on importance to express welcome to the new members.

#5 Peer-to-peer approach before, during and after mobility

Luckily for young people nowadays, the youth activist scene in all domains of life is more vivid and productive than ever. Young people are not only members and leaders of NGOs, but also (social) entrepreneurs, policy makers, politicians and employees at public

institutions. It enables young people to create proactive and well-functioning networks able to offer reliable information to their peers. Still, richness of such networks is not always available to the young people, especially not to young people who are deprived because of their social background, or educational or employment status. National campaigns, conducted at local level by young people, can add a friendly face to mobility information and counselling and motivate currently inactive youth to enrich their life and potentially change their social status.

#6 Valorising youth mobility experience

The system of information on mobility prerequisites and opportunities is changing very quickly, with a vast amount of new information emerging on a daily basis. Equally, there are new institutions and services that try to play a role in this sector and it is getting harder and harder to grasp changes in the system and estimate which opportunity suits the best someone's needs and aspirations. These were the most obvious reasons for difficulties in valorising youth mobility experiences that were noted by the symposium participants. Although the European guidelines and instruments for valorising youth mobility experiences work with excellent results in some countries (e.g. Youthpass[35]), and represent an added value to the individual portfolios of young people, the SEE region has not completely adopted such practices. Young internationally mobile people still face administrative burdens and unwillingness of administration officers at educational and employment services and companies to recognise their skills and knowledge gained during mobility. Implementation and monitoring of such instruments in SEE could play one of the crucial roles in motivating young people to undertake international mobility and add to the individuals' and their countries' prosperity.

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[35] https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/

3 Recommendations

The overall impression from the symposium was that the SEE region was slowly but steadily improving its youth information and counselling. Still, some inadequacies in everyday access to information and counselling present a serious obstacle to the status of young people regarding access to their rights, namely rights in social inclusion, employment and entrepreneurship and mobility. Many shortcomings still need to be bridged. The recommendations resulting from the symposium can be organised into eleven crucial areas.

Message

Messages targeting young people have to be clear, relevant, easily accessible and interesting – they have to be delivered in a way understandable to the young people – by using case studies and examples of good practice. Throughout conceptualisation of these messages, young people's opinions and aspirations have to be considered, employing co-creation and co-development in designing campaigns.

Approach

The best approach recognised by the participants of the symposium was a combination of face-to-face, mass-media, social gatherings and online media approach. When it comes to the elements that have to be avoided during youth information and counselling, manipulation, misleading and misuse of information, as well as guidance by non-competent workers were mentioned.

Means of delivering

The symposium participants have found that the educational system is not entirely appropriate for delivering messages of importance for young people in the field of social inclusion, employment and entrepreneurship and mobility. Therefore, they suggested that messages could be delivered by alternative means, like kiosks that provide online information free of charge, free bulletins and cartoons distributed on the street, "flash mob" campaigns, easily accessible and appealing web portals and youth radios and TV

programmes managed by young people. The importance of social media is on a constant rise and no youth targeted campaign should be undertaken without usage of social media.

Motivating young people

As noted by one participant of the symposium: "motivation is about relationships and building trust, especially in the SEE". Often young people after experiencing a failure in obtaining information, service or funding feel they cannot rely on existing institutions any more. Moreover, some people are frightened to ask for information or help, or they might feel embarrassed of their status. For this reason, it is crucial that the approach to young people is marked by positive expressions, direct approach and taking care of long-term perspective. And to "make the citizens the heart of the campaign", as noted by one of the participants.

Differentiation of approach

Different geographic regions have different needs and circumstances. Young people widely differ regarding their socio-demographic background and current status. All these aspects have to be taken into account when establishing structures for youth information and counselling. Services offered to young people have to be tailored to their needs, trying to encompass the target group of young people as widely as possible.

"Significant others"

Young people are members of different networks and organisations, starting from their families, friends, peers, educational institutions and various associations. In order to assure efficient youth information and counselling, the network of "significant others" also has to be informed and aware of information and counselling opportunities for young people.

Peer-to-peer

Peer-to-peer information and counselling has been extracted from the above listed "significant others" since it presents one of the most influential ways of transferring information and experiences. Young people are at the same time users and creators of relevant information and richness of their assets should be recognised and awarded.

Infrastructure and support structures

Uneven access to ICT among young people in the SEE has been recognised as one of the most prominent obstacles to adequate youth information and counselling. Young people of lower socio-economic status and low education can access internet often only via public facilities (classrooms or internet-cafés). The fact that they cannot access internet from their homes decreases their possibility to fully participate in all opportunities that are offered to their peers with better access.

Inadequate infrastructure in terms of non-existence of youth information centres in many municipalities entails that young people residing in rural and remote areas cannot fulfil their rights. Moreover, support structures that are fully functional in most Western and Eastern European countries, like counselling centres at universities, have not been established yet in some SEE countries. The symposium participants have also noted that a lack of cross-sectoral approach makes youth in such areas even more vulnerable. Moreover, youth work and youth information and counselling in this region is often placed with youth NGOs who are not provided institutional and financial support for their activities, which is a practice that has to be abolished by recognising their efforts and providing basic prerequisites for work.

Implementation

Only one message resulted from discussion on implementation of the European guidelines in the field of youth information and counselling – a need for coordinated and integrated implementation *vs.* current fragmented scene of youth information and counselling in the SEE:

Evaluation and monitoring

The symposium participants agreed that evaluation and monitoring of youth information and counselling system has to be established at two levels: 1) by continuously collecting data on individual experiences and outcomes, and the satisfaction of young people and 2) by occasional nation-wide and European survey on youth experiences with youth information

and counselling provision. Youth workers, youth researchers and youth policy makers should be able to understand status and aspirations of young people and to work together in order to crate coherent and accessible data sources appealing to the young people.

Policy

Policy-makers have recognised the importance of direct inclusion of youth into policy making. The same is true for youth information and counselling policies and tools at the European level, but nevertheless still presents a challenge in the SEE region. Hence, it is important to promote the inclusion of young people in policy-making through wide public campaigns, as well as through specific campaigns targeted at the main stakeholders in youth policy making.

It is equally important to stress the need for enhanced inter-sectoral cooperation, especially between the public institutions and the NGO scene. These two sectors are often perceived as mutually competing, with only occasional cooperation, thus limiting achievements in the field of youth information and counselling.

4   Final remarks

The symposium identified three crucial areas that need improvement in order to achieve meaningful and efficient youth information and counselling in the SEE region: I) recognition of efforts and achievements of non-governmental sector in youth information and counselling; II) implementation of the European policy guidelines and III) intersectoral cooperation.

Stakeholders **c**urrently active in youth information and counselling have to be recognised for their contribution and provided with infrastructure and means for performing their activities. At the symposium, we learned about tremendous efforts of many NGOs that achieved significant results without much help from the public sphere. National and local governmental institutions and funding agencies should acknowledge the results these NGOs are achieving and provide them with all infrastructural and financial support for their activities.

European policy and the pool of practice offer a good basis for the establishment of well-functioning frameworks of youth information and counselling in SEE. It is important to ensure a real commitment of all stakeholders that would support the creation of a comprehensive scene in which competent and active networks of youth workers would provide youth information and counselling in all areas described by "generalist information". Moreover, tools that have been used at the European level for enhancing young people's opportunities for participation in society and upgrading their educational and employment status, such as the Structured Dialogue and Youthpass , should equally be used.

Cross-sectoral dialogue in the youth sector should be promoted through more inclusive and transparent communication between authorities, youth associations and the general public. Equally - coordination and co-management – should be widely applied at the national and at the regional and local levels.

Another element that is a functional prerequisite of intersectoral cooperation is related to the operation and implementation of the set of plans and strategies at all levels of the system. Youth policy normative in SEE follows European strategies, but they are very often not fully implemented at the national level. Moreover, there is no clear feedback on the implementation of certain plans and programs, which is accompanied by the lack of evaluation of these same plans. We could say that a system which would involve all stakeholders in the design and implementation of youth policy is still not functioning as a coherent unit, and that there are very often ad-hoc actions at work, instead of committed and efficient functioning. Therefore, the system of regular reporting and evaluation of each step in youth policies and actions should be established, followed by continuous revision of the implementation plans and programmes.

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6   Appendices

6.1   Programme

Tuesday 18th June 2013	
Time?	**What?**
18:00 – 21:00	Registration
19:00	Dinner
20:00	Get to know each other

Wednesday 19th June 2013	
Time?	**What?**
08:30	**Registration**
09:00 – 10:00	**Opening** Welcome by hosts and partner institutions: **Rui Gomes,** Head of Education and Training Division, Youth Department, Council of Europe **Dario Baron,** Assistant Minister of Labour and Pension System of Croatia **Jan Truszczyński,** Director General, DG Education and Culture, European Commission **Željko Jovanović,** Minister of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia **Milanka Opačić,** Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Minister of Social Policy and Youth ---

	Robiu Salisu , Information Right Now!, Youth Ambassador : "Testimony - the Importance of Youth Information and Counselling for Young People" **Moderator: Morana Makovec**, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth of Croatia
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee break
10:15 – 10:30	Introduction into the programme and presentation of Coyote team
10:30 – 11:00	Keynote speech: **Fiona McIntyre**
11:15 – 13:00	Synergy with the Youth on the Move event
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 15:55 **15:00**	**Input into the symposium theme** The role of information and counselling in fostering young people's social inclusion and access to their rights (ERYICA perspective) **Davide Capecchi, director, ERYICA** **Social Inclusion: Presentations of Good Practices** **Dragana Papic**, Forum MNE (Montenegro) **Zdenka Radic**, PRONI Centre for Social Education (Croatia) and **Ivona Separovic** from NGO "Zamisli"
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break
15:45 – 17:30	Workshops on Social Inclusion - division into 6 groups

Time	What
16:30 **17:00**	- work 45' - presentations - discussion + conclusions
17:30 – 20:00	Free time
20:00	Dinner (for participants who are staying in the hotel)

Thursday 20th June 2013	
Time?	**What?**
09:00 – 09:30	**Employment and Entrepreneurship: Presentations of Good Practices** **Andres Lokk**, Estonian Youth Work Centre (Estonia) , **Mika Pietila**, Koordinaatti-Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling (Finland), **Jan Kulenovic**, Youth Information Agency Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
09:30 – 11:15 **10:00 coffee**	**Workshop on Employment and Entrepreneurship – World café** - 7 tables (6 topics) x 8 chairs - 3x20 min - each table needs a table host to take notes and present in the end (3 min) - final remarks
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:10	**Mobility: Presentations of Good Practices** How YI and C supports mobility in the context of access to

	rights
	European Youth Portal - **Graeme Robertson**, European Commission, DG for Education and Culture, Youth Policy Unit
	Evaldas Rupkus, Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT)
	Claudia Reis, Portuguese Sports and Youth Institute
12:10 – 13:00	Workshops on Mobility - 6 groups
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 15:15	Presentations of the previous session
15:15 – 16:00	Summarizing Conclusions By rapporteurs
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 16:45	**Final words by partner institutions and hosts** **Graeme Robertson**, European Commission, DG for Education and Culture, Youth Policy Unit **Srd Kisevic**, EU-CoE youth partnership **Ante Martić**, Head of Sector for Youth
16:45 – 17:00	Messages to the Coyote team
17:00 – 20:00	Free time
20:00	Dinner for all participants

Friday 21th June 2013
Departure of participants

6.2 List of participants

Albania
Mr Andi Maliqi, Regional Council Shkoder
Ms Aulida Anamali, Municipality of Shkoder

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms Emina Mehanovic Youth Advisory Panel - UNFPA
Mr Abaz Sabic, Students Association of the Faculty of Political Sciences
Ms Nela Sladojevic, Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Srpska
Mr Jan Kulenovic, Youth Information Agency Bosnia-Herzegovina (OIA)
Ms Ivica Hrkac, Advisory Council on youth of the Council of Europe

Bulgaria
Ms Siyka Kovacheva, Paissii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv
Mr Petyo Kanev, Ministry of Education, Youth and Science

Croatia
Ms Iva Domijan, Elementary school Kraljevica
Ms Zdenka Radic, PRONI Centre for social education
Mr Ivan Medic, Info zone
Mr Marko Kovacic, University of Ljubljana
Mr Andrija Petrovic, Grad Zagreb
Ms Ivana Kuzmanic, Association for promoting quality education for youth with disabilities "IMAGINE"
Mr Drazen Gecevic, Croatian Youth Hostel Association
Ms Sanja Vukovic Covic, European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)
Ms Maja Dragojevic, Union of Information Centres in Zagreb
Ms Lana Gorianzky, Youth NGO Breza
Mr Dubravko Šopar, Association IMPRESS

Estonia
Mr Andres Lokk Estonian Youth Work Centre (EestiNoorsootöö Keskus)

Finland
Mr Mika Pietilä, Koordinaatti - Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling

France
Mr Ibai Guirles, France Bénévolat

Georgia
Ms Manana Kavtaradze, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia

Greece
Mr Christoforos Pavlakis, Research institute Information and Communication Technologies and Society (ICT&S Centre)

Kosovo[36]

Ms Zana Tahiri, IDRA Research and Consulting

Mr Albion Zeka, University of Prishtina

Lithuania

Mr Evaldas Rupkus, Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT)

Moldova

Ms Margarita Kotenko, National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM)

Montenegro

Ms Dragana Papic, Forum NME

Ms Sladjana Petkovic, Pool of European Youth Researchers – PEYR

Ms Jelena Miljanic, UN Coordination Office in Montenegro

Portugal

Ms Claudia Reis Leitao, Portuguese Sports and Youth Institute

Romania

Mr Mihai Sebe, Ministry of Youth and Sports

Serbia

Ms Zora Krnjaic Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Ms Bojana Perovic, Ministry of Youth and Sport

Mr Antonio Saccone, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Policy and Diplomacy of Sport

Spain

Mr Jose Moreno Serrano, Directorate general of employment and youth Castilla-La Mancha

"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Mr Zoran Ilieski, Coalition of youth organizations SEGA

Ms Zorica Stamenkovska, Agency of Youth and Sport

Turkey

Ms Gelnta Achmet Oglou, Kecioren Municipality

United Kingdom

Mr Robiu Salisu, Clic Online

Keynote speaker

Ms Fiona McIntyre, United Kingdom

Facilitators

Ms Simona Mursec, Slovenia

Mr Marko Paunovic, Serbia

Rapporteurs

Ms Dunja Potocnik, Pool of European Youth Researchers/Institute for Social Research, Croatia

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[36] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Mr Bence Sagvari, Pool of European Youth Researchers/Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary

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Mr Davide Capecchi

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European Commission, DG EAC

Mr Graeme Robertson

Secretariat of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

Ms Marta Medlinska

Mr Srd Kisevic

Ms Viktoria Karpatska

SALTO RC SEE

Ms Sonja Mitter Skulj

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>