

Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EXPERT GROUP

ON RECOGNITION OF YOUTH WORK AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING/EDUCATION

CONCEPT PAPER

Revised version March 2013

Why an Expert Group on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education?

Recognition of non-formal learning is an important issue, considered in the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiative Youth on the Move, the EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, the Council Resolution on youth work, the Youth in Action Programme, the work of the Council of Europe on the promotion of non-formal education/learning for young people, on quality standards in education and training activities, and on the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes gained in various contexts is the focus of the recently adopted Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning that invites the EU Member States to put in place the relevant regulations by 2018.

Recognition of non-formal learning and of youth work was the topic of various activities of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, amongst which stand the support of the conference on the same topic in Prague in 2008 as well as the Youth Work Convention in July 2010 in Ghent, organised under the Belgian EU Presidency.

A number of stakeholders (such as the network of Youth in Action National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres, European Youth Forum, Youthpass Advisory Group, Expert Group of the European portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers, etc) have expressed the need for a more coordinated approach at European level, supported by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth.

In 2011, the working paper *Pathways towards recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field* (hereinafter the 'Pathways paper') was updated by the EU-CoE youth partnership in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Youth Forum, the German National Agency for Youth in Action and SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre. In the Pathways paper, ten elements of a renewed strategy for a better recognition of NFL/E in the youth field were identified. In 2011, the symposium on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning was carried out in Strasbourg, based on the Pathways paper. The participants of the symposium agreed upon the main challenges and recommendations for further recognition strategies, and proposed concrete actions that could be considered by various stakeholders.

After adoption of the Council of the European Union Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the decision of the Joint Council for Youth in the Council of Europe to enhance activities in the field of recognition and validation of non-formal learning, the EU-CoE youth partnership could play a supportive role in this respect to bring more knowledge and expertise on ways to implement the new document in the youth field.

Considering all the above and to answer the need for a sustainable and coordinated development of the recognition strategy, the Expert Group on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning has been set up. The objectives of the Expert Group are:

- To develop measures for implementation of the elements outlined in the Pathways paper and as referred to in the outcomes of the symposium on recognition;
- To link the different initiatives in the EU (European Commission and European Council) and of the Council of Europe to recognise and validate non-formal learning, such as the renewed EU Youth Strategy;
- To continue bringing together stakeholders and experts in the youth field, include other experts where needed, and support the exchange of expertise;

- To observe, collect, systematise and disseminate information about the developments and good practice on recognition at the European level;
- To develop information and promotional materials on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education, targeting the youth field and beyond.

Draft composition of the Expert Group

The Expert Group should represent the different institutional actors as well as experts related to the field of recognition of non-formal learning in youth work. The Expert Group consists of representatives of the above-mentioned stakeholders and representatives of the fields of youth research, youth policy, and training.

The constitution of the Expert Group is as follows:

- Council of Europe, Youth Department
- European Commission – EAC D1 (Youth Unit)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- The network of National Agencies for Youth in Action Programme European Steering Committee for Youth in the Council of Europe (CDEJ)
- Advisory Council of Youth in the Council of Europe (AC)
- Pool of European Youth Researchers of the EU-CoE youth partnership (PEYR)
- EU-CoE Youth partnership secretariat
- European Youth Forum (YFJ)
- SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre
- The community of trainers in the youth field
- Experts from related fields, e.g. formal education and social partners.

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