

Youth Partnership

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



Symposium '(Un)Equal Europe? Responses from the youth sector'

Budapest, 30 May – 2 June 2016

Draft concept paper

Revised draft 10/02/2016

On 30 May - 2 June 2016 the EU-CoE youth partnership will organise the symposium '(Un)Equal Europe? Responses from the youth sector', to take stock of the social inclusion aspects in youth policies and explore possible approaches. The symposium will draw inspiration from other sectors dealing with inequalities and strengthen the potential of the youth sector to adapt its approaches in supporting groups of young people facing multiple inequalities across Europe.

It will explore the range of horizontal and vertical inequalities young people face in today's Europe and develop solutions through dialogue between practitioners, researchers and policy-makers. Participants will look at rights-based approaches to inclusion and social justice building, as well as at the potential and limits of youth policy and youth work in dealing with the social, geographic, economic and other forms of inequalities young people experience across Europe. They will analyse the personal experiences of [structural and contextual barriers to inclusion](#), as identified in a two-year process of mapping barriers to social inclusion by the EU-CoE Youth Partnership. The symposium will also take into account the current situation of the newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers and their necessary integration. Finally, the symposium will look at good practices across Europe, where young people have mobilised, engaged with the democratic process and have generated change, whether large or small scale.

Recognising the precarious situation and disadvantages facing youth in Europe today and the effects on their access to rights, the symposium will look at the following questions: Is the youth sector adjusting its approaches in policy, research and practice to address the challenges young people face in their daily reality in Europe today? What is immigration bringing to Europe's youth and to young migrants? How can youth work facilitate the integration process of young refugees? Is research offering the right insights for better policy? What can the youth sector do to help young people who are facing barriers to social inclusion find their way in societies and prevent marginalization? How does youth sector cooperate with and intervene in other areas affecting young people's lives? How could cross-sectoral approaches support better inclusion of young people? Which policy fields can contribute and how?

About 80-100 participants will be invited to the symposium representing the various fields of policy, research and practice.

Objectives of the symposium

- To discuss and disseminate knowledge on inequalities, in particular in the areas of participation and social inclusion of young people in Europe and beyond;
- To share good practice in youth work and youth policy relevant to the key questions of the Symposium;
- To identify challenges and research gaps, draw conclusions and formulate recommendations, as well as to propose models of youth policy and youth work interventions;
- To support knowledge-based youth policy and practice for fighting against inequalities through networking, dialogue, and peer learning;
- To connect youth, policy-makers, practitioners and researchers.

Work of the EU-CoE youth partnership in the area

The youth partnership has explored in thematic and regional activities the situation of young people experiencing social exclusion. This process focused on mapping the barriers and looking at which cross-sectoral approaches in youth policy can lead to better inclusion. Despite many efforts and political initiatives as well as activities promoted by youth work, the living conditions for many young people in Europe are still (or are even increasingly) extremely unequal. This is particularly true in view of the unexpected high number of (young) refugees coming to Europe. The topic of (Un)Equal Europe refers to social and participatory inequalities in education and training systems, in the labour market, in access to rights and social benefits and, in general, to decent living conditions and well-being. It refers also to geographical inequalities in terms of living conditions, between north and south but as well between east and west, rural and urban. And it refers to inequalities in terms of unjust or prejudicial treatment, or discrimination, on one or more of the following grounds: ethnicity, race, age, disability, religion or belief, gender, identity or sexual orientation.

High rates of structural youth unemployment, the challenges evolving from the high number of refugees coming to Europe, political, economic and social polarisation, protection of freedoms and rights-based agenda are all effecting inequality of young people in Europe today. With regards to the situation of young refugees, experts are warning against splitting socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups into the “good” and the “bad”. This might lead to a socially explosive effect that inappropriately privileges the one or the other group, in view of the high proportion of young people not in employment, education or training across Europe. The pressure on individuals to cope with the complex realities is so high that the experiences of inequality lead to consequences beyond youth policy to deal with. This situation has propelled youth policy on the political agenda and at the same time, it has increased pressure on youth policy and youth work to provide all-inclusive solutions.

On the positive side, these protracted multiple crises have mobilised large creative movements, mostly made of young people that pushed for a complete reshuffle of the political landscape (ex: Spain, Romania). They have also mobilised the energy and creativity of young people to answer the big societal changes through more active participation, through entrepreneurship, art, culture and social initiatives. The potential that young refugees and migrants bring to European societies is also

viewed constructively in many countries, leading to acceptance of diversity and a positive welcoming culture.

Preparatory group

For preparing the symposium, a group of experts will be invited to discuss contents, structure and working methods. PEYR and EKCYP networks will be involved in the preparatory phase as well as in the symposium. Other partners will be National Agencies of E+ and SALTO Resource Centres, European Youth Forum, representative NGO's of excluded groups and minorities, the Joint Council on Youth and selected welfare organisations as well as trainers and facilitators.

Preparatory group members will support the youth partnership team in further identifying speakers, defining the research needs to be commissioned and taking responsibility for different themes for the symposium, including roles at the meeting – facilitating/reporting.

Timeframe

14-15 January	1 day preparatory meeting with experts, Brussels
February-April	Call for 4 analytical papers, invitation of speakers and coordination of the symposium agenda Call for abstracts of articles to be submitted for a Perspectives on Youth book on the same subject
March	Second preparatory meeting with facilitators and those having an active role in the symposium in Brussels
End of May	Symposium at the European Youth Centre Budapest
End of June	The analytical papers and other symposium materials are made available
December	Publication of the 'Perspectives on Youth'.

Expected outcomes of the symposium

- Showcase good practice of addressing inequalities and draw conclusions for policy and practice;
- Produce a better knowledge on the situations of excluded young people and identify policies and practices to overcome obstacles;
- Publish a book to disseminate the material collected for this event. The results will also be published online as well as in a report summarising the discussions and reflections;
- Altogether, the results could also feed the discussions on social cohesion of both partner institutions and national policy-makers, leading to recommendations or conclusions.

Background on the relevance to the agenda of partner institutions

As agreed between the partner institutions, the youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europeⁱ in the field of youth, will develop under its objective 1, in the tri-annual logframe, a "think tank" function aimed at increasing the knowledge about the contexts and needs of young people in Europe as well as current and upcoming challenges they face. The knowledge produced will support activities of the EU-CoE youth partnership, the partner institutions and their relevant structures and will be disseminated to other relevant actors in the youth field.

This working priority is in line with the current political key priorities of the two partner institutionsⁱⁱ, namely,

- for the European Commission: creating more and equal opportunities for all young people and promoting social inclusion, citizenship, and participation of all young people in various aspects of society; fostering cross-sectoral cooperation through partnerships between different actors involved in delivering support to young people; further developing expertise and availability of examples of best practice in these areas; strengthening the evidence base of youth policy and sharing examples of good practice through mutual learning; understanding the challenges youth face and identifying their expectations towards policy-makers and providers of support services to young people; combating marginalization and radicalization of young people which could lead to violent extremism; building youth work's capacity to reach out to all young people especially to those with a disadvantaged background; responding to the challenges raised by the increasing number of young migrants and refugees and promoting their integration.
The discussions around this topic are very much in line with the priorities set by the European Union as they are reflected in the 2016 Erasmus+ work program especially in the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of Erasmus + in the field of youth, and most recently in the European Youth Report 2015 and the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018.
- for the Council of Europe: fostering democratic innovation and participation as well as cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in socially cohesive societies; providing democratic competences in education, youth and civil society; supporting and improving young people's access to social rights; empowering and protecting vulnerable groups and minorities; contributing to young people's autonomy and a better transition from education to working life and the labour market; developing youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and xenophobia, in particular in disadvantaged areas and for vulnerable groups. This has been recently reflected in the Council of Europe's adoption of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the access of young people of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights and the forthcoming Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies.

Draft Programme

Monday, 30 May 2016:

Morning: Arrival of participants

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| 14:00 | Opening of the event by the partner institutions, introduction to the symposium objectives and programme |
| 14:30 | Keynote speeches, introducing the context to inequalities experienced by young people in Europe today, the reasons for it and the evidence (Horizon 2020 projects, anti-poverty organisations' perspectives, direct experiences) |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | <i>Coffee & tea break</i> |

16:30 – 18:00 Panel on the challenges affecting a young person's daily life (Health, formal education from early childhood onwards, vocational education, training, work and employment, housing, youth justice and participation)

19:00 – 20:30 *Dinner*

20:30 – 22:00 Fireside conversations with the presenters

Tuesday, 31 May 2016

Reflection from the youth sector and drawing learning for the future

9:30 – 12:30 Labs round 1: Identity and Finding a Place in the Community

09:30 – 10:30 Setting the context: introduction from research and practice (including policy practice)

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee & tea break*

11:00 – 12:30 Lab reflections in groups of up to 20 participants (4-5 parallel labs exploring the same theme) The groups should reflect from the perspective of the youth sector, and draw lessons on what is working and what changes are needed to stay resilient and support young people overcome inequalities.

At least one pyramid lab will explore more in detail the situation and integration of young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe.

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch break*

14:00- 15:30 Good Practice marketplace

Actors from the youth sector and outside will be invited to share their policy, practice and research approaches to combating inequalities. Local groups will also be invited to share their initiatives during the marketplace.

15:30 – 15:45 *Coffee & tea break*

15:45 – 18:00 Labs round 2: Education, Training, Work and Employment

15:45-16:45 Setting the context: introduction from research and practice (including policy practice)

16:45-18:00 Lab reflections in groups of up to 20 participants (4-5 parallel labs exploring the same theme). The groups should reflect from the perspective of the youth sector and draw lessons on what is working and what changes are needed to stay resilient and support young people overcome inequalities.

At least one pyramid lab will explore more in detail the situation and integration of young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe.

19:00 – 20:30 *Dinner*

Free evening

Wednesday, 1 June 2016

Reflection from the youth sector and drawing learning for the future

9:30-12:30 *Labs round 3: Participation, Democracy and Civic Engagement*

9:30 – 10:30 Setting the context: introduction from research and practice (including policy practice)

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee & tea break*

11:00-12:30 Lab reflections in groups of up to 20 participants (4-5 parallel labs exploring the same theme)

The groups should reflect from the perspective of the youth sector and draw lessons on what is working and what changes are needed to stay resilient and support young people overcome inequalities.

At least one pyramid lab will explore more in detail the situation and integration of young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe.

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch break*

14:00 – 18:00 *Drawing Conclusions – Proposals for Strengthening the Youth Sector*

14:00- 16:00 Plenary of conclusions and debate

Structured reporting with challenges raised in the labs and discussion in the plenary (in groups of 10-15, to be further developed with the facilitators)

16:00 – 16:30 *Coffee & tea break*

16:30 – 18:00 Reaction and reflections of contributors on previous days

Closing of the event (institutional partners and explanation of next steps)

19:00 – 20:30 *Dinner*

Thursday, 2 June 2016

Morning: Departure of participants

ⁱ **EC-CoE Youth Partnership** See all the relevant work of the EU-CoE youth partnership on <http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/>

The page on activities mapping barriers to social exclusion and their outcomes <http://pip-eu.coe.int/web/youth-partnership/mapping-on-barriers-to-social-inclusion>

Finding a place in Modern Europe: Study on mapping of barriers to social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations, <http://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668217/Finding-09-2015.pdf/a1045d8f-a4c7-4889-b1a1-e783e470858b>

ii European Union

EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13631-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

EU Youth Report 2015 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2015.417.01.0017.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2015:417:FULL

Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of the Erasmus+ Programme <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3179/InclusionAndDiversityNOW.pdf>

COUNCIL RESOLUTION of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) - 2009/C 311/01 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01))

2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18) - 2012/C 394/03 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.394.01.0005.01.ENG

General Information on EU Youth Strategy provided on webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/index_en.htm

Council of Europe

8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, Ukraine 2008: Declaration “The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020” http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/Agenda_2020_en.asp

Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the access of young people¹ from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2282497>

2016-2017 priorities of the Council of Europe’s Youth Sector <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/>