

Youth work: towards a national framework of standards for youth work and youth workers in Greece

The state of affairs today

In Greece, until recently, it was not considered crucial to regulate the field of the organisation and implementation of youth work activities.

The European Year of Youth 2022 has been for Greece the springboard for the completion of key stagnant issues in the youth sector, such as the institutional recognition and certification of the profession of youth worker, a practice that has been in place in our country for several years, but has not yet been recognised, in contrast to the situation in other European countries. Moreover, the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda (2020/C 415/01) calls on Member States to incorporate a series of actions and provisions for the strengthening, recognition, training and networking of Youth Workers at local, regional, national and European level. This Resolution also constitutes a guide for Member States, which should adapt their national legislation to the proposed direction.

From this point of view and with the aim of making a substantial contribution as the EYY 2022 legacy, following the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on youth work as one of the key documentations to consider, we come to propose a comprehensive approach for the development of appropriate institutional tools, with the promotion and professional empowerment of the role of professional "Youth Workers" at its core.

The need for a regulatory intervention

It is clear that there is a need to develop a framework of national standards setting common terms and conditions for the training, certification and legal control of those employed as youth workers, whether they work for pay or on a voluntary basis.

More specifically, the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has started the process of shaping the framework for the recognition of the profession in our country

with the stakeholders in order for the State to formulate a specific professional profile describing all possible pathways for someone to be considered as a professional youth worker with the necessary scientific background, which will contribute to improving their work with young people and raising the level of their services, as is the case at EU level, by developing a specific framework of knowledge, skills and competences.

Towards a national framework of standards for youth workers - key pillars

The national framework of standards for youth workers is constituted as a set of complementary actions that can be understood as successive steps of a comprehensive regulation of the field.

Knowledge and skills Charter: There are already recognised good practices of operational analysis of the tasks, knowledge and skills of youth workers, with the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio being perhaps the most exemplary. Starting from this source, the method of 'functional job analysis' will be used to identify a functional analytical task list associated with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Shaping a national training framework: The Charter's data can be transformed into learning outcomes by establishing mandatory learning modules for all those working in the field, whether voluntary or paid, but also for all providers, both profit and non-profit.

Development of a model guide for the training of youth workers: the specification of the standards for the implementation of the relevant training programmes in order to ensure the uniform and homogeneous character of the training and to guarantee its quality.

Writing of model educational material: Based on the Charter, the national training framework, and the identified needs of the field, model training materials that are compatible with the certification process will be proposed to service providers and youth worker candidates.

Definition of the certification process and question bank: it is necessary to define the training pathways, the equivalences, but also the content of the certification procedures themselves.

National Register of Youth Workers: the register will operate under the responsibility of the General Secretariat of VETLL&Y and will include all certified youth workers, facilitating both the implementation of the specific provisions on child protection and the control and supervision of the conditions of operation of private providers and organisations, as regards the quality of the services provided.