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Results of the open method of coordination in the youth field with a special focus on the second cycle (2013-2015)

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Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the Council endorsed a **renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)**, also known as the EU Youth Strategy.¹ The period covered by the framework is divided into three-year work cycles. At the end of each cycle, a European Union (EU) Youth Report should be drawn up by the Commission. The Council specified that the report ‘shall consist of two parts: A joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth Report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices’. At the same time, the report should serve as a basis for establishing priorities for the following work cycle.

The **analytical part of the report** assesses the state of play at EU and national level, focusing in this instance on the second three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy; relevant information about the previous cycle is also provided. Separate chapters cover all eight ‘fields of action’ of the strategy, looking first at the priorities of the most recent cycle – youth employment, social inclusion and youth participation. One chapter is given over to the ‘Structured Dialogue’ process, which is seen as crucial to youth participation. Another chapter provides details on the EU Youth Strategy’s financial instrument, the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessor Youth in Action.

Each chapter consists of three sections. The first provides an overview of initiatives taken at EU level since 2010, with a focus on the period from 2013 to 2015. The second summarises and assesses the initiatives and action taken at national level; a distinction is made between action deriving from the **2009 Council resolution** on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field and initiatives implementing subsequent Council agreements (resolutions and conclusions). The information presented in this section is based on National Youth Reports submitted by all 28 Member States² plus Iceland, Serbia and Turkey. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy and can be downloaded from the Commission website.³ Finally, considering the framework’s invitation to encourage and support the involvement and participation of young people and youth organisations in policy-making, implementation and follow-up, the third section reports on youth-led initiatives and action by the European Youth Forum⁴ (YFJ). The YFJ, which – together with the Commission – is the only EU-level stakeholder in the

¹ Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.

² Separate contributions were submitted by the three Communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EEA EFTA States were also invited to submit National Youth Reports.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/publication/EUyouthreport2015part1>,
<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/publication/EUyouthreport2015part2>.

The National Youth Reports cover mainly the period from 2010 until the end of 2014 and include a preview of planned activities for 2015, as the questionnaire had to be returned by early 2015.

⁴ <http://www.youthforum.org/>

European Steering Committee of the Structured Dialogue, brings together 99 national youth councils⁵ and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe. In the Erasmus+ regulation⁶ the YFJ is invited to provide the Commission with regular, updated information regarding its fields of activity.

⁵ National youth councils represent youth organisations at national level and therefore act in the interests of young people in order to voice their concerns to policy-makers.

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50-73.

2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF YOUTH POLICY

2.1. Evidence-based youth policy

The EU Youth Strategy stresses the importance of evidence as a basis for policy-making. This EU Youth Report was drawn up around a framework for reporting and monitoring of youth data, research and policy activities.

Definitions of young people vary between countries. The age range 15-29 is often selected for statistical purposes at EU level.⁷ The situation of young people is measured through a dashboard of EU youth indicators⁸ developed in 2011. There are now 41 indicators in all eight fields of action of the strategy. The latest available data for these indicators can be found in a specific subsection on youth on the Eurostat website.⁹ In addition, the Commission conducted Flash Eurobarometer surveys on youth in 2011, 2013 and 2014. Data collected on those occasions further contributed to the dashboard of indicators and can now be consulted through the recently developed EU Youth Monitor.¹⁰

The evidence base was further enriched by findings from studies on youth participation in democratic life and on the value of youth work in the European Union. Eurofound – which has prioritised youth in its recent research activities¹¹ – is another source of knowledge. In its evidence-based approach to youth policy the Commission also works in partnership with the Council of Europe,¹² managing the Pool of European Youth Researchers and the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency provides additional help in monitoring data and statistics in the youth field and is assisting the Commission in the current development of a youth wiki tool. The agency also prepared the statistical part of this EU Youth Report.

The Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7) supported 20 European, large-scale, multi-stakeholder research projects with a contribution of about €63 million. ‘The young generation in an innovative, inclusive and sustainable Europe’ was addressed in a call for proposals under Horizon 2020¹³ (Societal Challenge 6, Work Programme 2014-2015). The call covered five different research

⁷ Under the Erasmus+ programme, various opportunities are available for young people aged 13 to 30.

⁸ SEC(2011) 401 final of 25.3.2011.

⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/database>

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/index_en.htm

¹¹ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/spotlight-on/youth/overview-youth-issues-a-top-priority>

¹² <http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>

¹³ Horizon 2020 is the EU’s research and innovation programme (2014-2020). FP7 was the funding programme for 2007-2013.

topics – job insecurity, mobility, lifelong learning, participation and engagement (for an indicative budget of €29 million). Eight new research projects¹⁴ started in 2015.

2.2. Legal framework and national youth policy environment

This section provides a general overview of how Member States and participating non-EU countries structure their youth policy in terms of legislation, policy strategies and interministerial cooperation. It also looks at how these countries perceive the impact of the EU Youth Strategy at the national and local levels as well as other linkages between youth policy at national and EU level.

2.2.1. Youth laws or national legislation on youth

Most countries report that during the period 2010-2014 they maintained or introduced legislation that specifically refers to youth issues or contains a section which addresses the needs and/or rights of young people.

Table 1: Overview of youth laws or national legislation on youth¹⁵

Youth law or national legislation on youth	
Belgium	<p>German-speaking Community: <i>Dekret vom 6. Dezember 2011 zur Förderung der Jugendarbeit</i> (Decree of 6 December 2011 regulating the funding of youth work http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-111/418_read-38242/); <i>Sonderdekret zur Gründung eines Zentrums für die gesunde Entwicklung von Kindern und Jugendlichen vom 20. Januar 2014</i> (Special decree of 20 January 2014 on the establishment of the centre for the healthy development of children and young people) http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-107/4314_read-43515/)</p> <p>Flemish Community: <i>Decreet van 20 januari 2012 houdende een vernieuwd jeugd- en kinderrechtenbeleid</i> (Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights)</p> <p>French Community: no youth law</p>
Bulgaria	<p>Decision of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria for adoption of the Youth Law (from 5 April 2012, prom. SG. 31/20 April 2012, effective as from 20 April 2012, amend. SG. 68/02 August 2013, effective as of 2 August 2013) www.mpes.government.bg http://mpes.government.bg/Pages/Documents/Law/default.aspx</p>
Czech Republic	No youth law
Denmark	No youth law

¹⁴ Details about the FP7 and Horizon 2020 research projects can be found in: European Commission (2015), *Their future is our future – Youth as actors of change. Research projects on youth inclusion, employment and participation supported by the European Union's Research Framework Programmes*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

¹⁵ Roman alphabetical order of the countries' geographical names in the original language(s).

Germany	<p><i>Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) – Achtes Buch (VIII) – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe vom 26.6.1990 in der aktuellen Fassung von Mai 2013 (Social Code, Book VIII – Child and Youth Welfare Act – Article 1 of the Act of 26 June 1990 – current version of May 2013)</i></p> <p>https://www.juris.de/purl/gesetze/_ges/SGB_8</p>
Estonia	<p><i>Noorsootöö seadus (Youth Work Act)</i></p> <p>https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/512012015003/consolide</p>
Ireland	<p>Youth Work Act 2001</p> <p>http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2001/en/act/pub/0042/</p>
Greece	<p>Laws on youth issues are stipulated and incorporated in the legislation of various Ministries concerning the following policy areas: education, employment, sports, health, culture, family, military service, deviant behaviour, etc. such as for instance:</p> <p>Νόμος 2413/1996 για τη Διαπολιτισμική Εκπαίδευση (Law 2413/1996 on intercultural education)</p> <p>https://nomoi.info/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A-%CE%91-124-1996-%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB-1.html</p> <p>Νόμος 4027/2011 για την ελληνόγλωσση εκπαίδευση στο εξωτερικό και άλλες διατάξεις (Law 4027/2011 on greek language education abroad and other provisions)</p> <p>https://nomoi.info/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A-%CE%91-233-2011-%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB-1.html</p> <p>Νόμος 3443/2006 για τα ΤΟ.ΣΥ.Ν. (Law 3443/2006 on Local Youth Councils)</p> <p>http://www.neagenia.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=RESOURCE&resrc=134&cnode=29</p> <p>Νόμος 4115/2013 για την οργάνωση και λειτουργία του Ιδρύματος Νεολαίας και Διά Βίου Μάθησης (INEΔΙΒΙΜ) και του Εθνικού Οργανισμού Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού (Law 4115/2013 concerning the organisation and functioning of the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation and the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance)</p> <p>http://www.edulll.gr/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/NOMOS_4115_INEDIBIM_EOPPEP.pdf</p> <p>Σχέδιο Δράσης για την ενίσχυση της απασχόλησης και της επιχειρηματικότητας των νέων (Action Plan for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship)</p> <p>https://www.espa.gr/elibrary/Youth%20Action%20Plan%20el.doc</p> <p>http://www.esfhellas.gr/en/Pages/YouthActionPlan.aspx (in English)</p>

Spain	<p>There is no specific legislation on youth at national level neither is it expected. The competences in this field have been transferred to the Autonomous Communities (hereinafter called CCAAs). These laws exist in 11 out of the 17 CCAAs.</p> <p>The existing youth regional laws and their dates of enactment are listed below: Castilla y León: Youth Regional Law 11/2002 of 10 July. Madrid: Youth Regional Law 8/2002 of 27 November. La Rioja: Youth Regional Law 7/2005 of 30 June. Islas Baleares: Integral Law of Youth 10/2006 of 27 July Aragón: Youth Regional Law 3/2007 of 21 March Murcia: Youth Regional Law 6/2007 of 4 April Government of Canarias: Youth Regional Law 7/2007 of 13 April Cataluña: Youth policies Law 33/2010 of 1 October Autonomous Community of Valencia: Youth Regional Law of 30 December Navarra: Youth Regional Law 11/2011 of 1 April Galicia: Youth Regional Law 6/2012 of 19 June.</p>
France	<p><i>Loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'Ecole de la République du 8 juillet 2013</i> http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027677984&categorieLien=id</p>
Croatia	<p><i>Zakon o savjetima mladih – Narodne novine broj 23/07</i> (Law on Youth Advisory Boards – Official Gazzete 23/07) adopted in 2007 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/297305.html</p> <p><i>Zakon o savjetima mladih – Narodne novine broj 41/14</i> (Law on Youth Advisory Boards – Official Gazzete 41/14) adopted in 2014 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_03_41_724.html</p>
Italy	No youth law
Cyprus	No youth law
Latvia	<p><i>Jaunatnes likums</i> (Youth Law) http://izm.izm.gov.lv/laws-regulations/3903.html</p>
Lithuania	<p><i>2003 m. gruodžio 4 d. Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas, Nr. IX-1871 (įsigaliojo 2003 m. gruodžio 18 d.) (Valstybės žinios, 2003, Nr. 119-5406)</i> Law on Youth Policy Framework of the Republic of Lithuania, 4 December 2003, No IX-1871 (in force from 18 December 2003) (Official Gazette, 2003, No 119-5406) http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_p?p_id=267613</p>
Luxembourg	<p><i>Loi du 4 juillet 2008 sur la Jeunesse</i> (Youth Law introduced on 4 July 2008) – A draft law amending the Youth Law of 4 July 2008 is within the legislative process, possible adoption in 2015 www.chd.lu/wps/PA_RoleEtendu/FTSByteServletImpl/?path=/export/exped/sexpdata/Mag/195/016/109145.pdf</p>

Hungary	<p>There is no single youth law.</p> <p><i>1995. évi LXIV. törvény a Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Alapról, a Nemzeti Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Közalapítványról, valamint az ifjúsággal összefüggő egyes állami feladatok ellátásának szervezeti rendjéről</i> (The 1995th LXIV. law Children and Youth Fund, National Children and Youth Public Foundation and the state's responsibilities for particular youth related tasks) 2/1999. (IX. 24.)</p> <p><i>ISM rendelet a Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Alaprogram és a Regionális Ifjúsági Irodák működéséről</i> (Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports 2/1999 (IX.24.) Functioning of the National Children and Youth Fund and the Regional Youth Services)</p>
Malta	<p><i>Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ</i> (Establishment as an Agency) Order, 2010 http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=21605&l=1</p>
Netherlands	<p><i>Jeugdwet</i> (Youth Law) http://www.voordejeugd.nl/ondersteuning/downloads/factsheets</p>
Austria	<p>Federal Act governing the promotion of extracurricular youth education and youth work (Federal Youth Promotion Act)</p>
Poland	<p>No youth law</p>
Portugal	<p>No youth law</p>
Romania	<p>No youth law</p>
Slovenia	<p>Public Interest in Youth Sector Act http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf</p> <p>Youth Councils Act http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1_ANG.pdf</p>
Slovakia	<p><i>Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou</i> (Act No 282/2008 Coll. on support of youth work)</p>
Finland	<p><i>Nuorisolaki</i> (Youth Act) (72/2006), amendments 693/2010 and 937/2013 http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2006/20060072 In English: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/lait_ja_saaedokset/Youth_act_Nuorisolaki_amend_2010_en.pdf,</p> <p><i>Valtioneuvoston asetus nuorisotyöstä ja –politiikasta</i> (Government Decree on Youth Work and Policy) (103/2006) http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/smur/2006/20060103 In English: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/liitteet/Valtioneuvoston_asetus_en.pdf</p> <p>Several other laws refer to youth issues and address the needs and rights of young people, e.g. <i>Lastensuojelulaki</i> (Child Welfare Act) (417/2007), <i>Perusopetuslaki</i> (Basic Education Act) (642/2010)</p>

Sweden	No youth law
United Kingdom	<p>There is a range of legislation relating to youth that exists in the UK. For example in Wales: The Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (2011).</p> <p>For more examples of youth laws introduced before January 2010 and maintained please see UK contribution to 2012 EU Youth Report: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm</p>
Iceland	<p>Youth law http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf</p>
Serbia	<p><i>Zakon o mladima</i>, 'Sluzbeni glasnik RS' broj 50/11 (Law on Youth, Official Gazette of the RS, no 50/11) http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf</p>
Turkey	<p>The Ministry of Youth and Sports was established by the Decree Law No 638 dated 3 June 2011 (published in the Official Gazette No 27958 dated 8 June 2011) http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=4.5.638&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXmlSearch=</p>

However, these legal acts can differ in scope: many of them have to do with youth work activities (Flemish and German-speaking Communities of **Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Finland**); some are more related to education (**France**); and others are more focused on youth participation (**Cyprus, Croatia, Luxembourg**) and/or youth well-being (**Germany, Spain, Latvia, Wales in the United Kingdom**).

Half of the reporting countries mention the existence of a cross-sectoral dimension in the implementation of these laws.

2.2.2. *National youth strategies*

The vast majority of reports (31 out of 33) mention the existence of a specific youth strategy; this trend already present in 2012 is clearly confirmed for 2015. Only **Cyprus** and **Greece** declare that they do not have a youth strategy. **Poland** used to have one until 2012 but has since then opted for a horizontal approach to issues related to education and youth.

Some of the youth strategies are new (German-speaking Community of **Belgium, Romania**) or still in the making (**Ireland** and **Malta** within the EU, **Iceland** and **Serbia** outside the EU). In 80% of the cases mentioned, youth strategies were developed after 2010, and the more recent ones tend to have a greater cross-sectoral emphasis.

Table 2: Overview of youth strategies

National youth strategies	
Belgium	<p>German-speaking Community: <i>Jugendstrategieplan</i> (Youth Strategy Plan) 2013-2015 (effective) and 2016-2020 adopted by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community on 26 January 2015</p> <p>French Community: <i>Plan Jeunesse 12-25 ans</i> (Youth Plan 12-25) www.plan12-25.be – project in stand-by</p> <p>Flemish Community: <i>Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan 2011-2014</i> (Flemish Youth Policy Plan 2011-2014) http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/vjkb.aspx</p>
Bulgaria	<p>Council of Ministers' Decision of 6 October 2010 for the adoption of National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) www.mpes.government.bg</p>
Czech Republic	<p><i>Koncepce podpory mládeže na období 2014-2020</i> (National Youth Strategy for 2014-2020) adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic, Decree No 342 of 12 May 2014 http://www.msmt.cz/file/33599/</p> <p><i>Koncepce státní politiky pro oblast dětí a mládeže na období 2007-2013</i> (Government policy on children and young people for 2007-2013) adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic, Decree No 611 of 4 June 2007 http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/koncepce-statni-politiky-pro-oblast-deti-a-mladeze-na-obdobi</p>
Denmark	<p>Youth Package 1 + 2, Youth Package 3 (2012-2016) – also local youth strategies with general focus on young people's well-being and early intervention.</p>
Germany	<p><i>Entwicklung einer Eigenständigen Jugendpolitik, Phase I</i> (ab 1.10.2011) (Development of a modern Youth Policy) http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Kinder-und-Jugend/eigenstaendige-jugendpolitik.html</p> <p>Phase II (ab 30.10.2014): <i>Umsetzung der Eigenständigen Jugendpolitik „Handeln für eine jugendgerechte Gesellschaft“</i> (Implementation of the modern Youth Policy 'Acting for a child- and youth-friendly society')</p>
Estonia	<p><i>Noorsootöö strateegia 2006-2013</i> (Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013) http://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/noorsootoo_strateegia_eng.pdf</p>
Ireland	<p>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf</p> <p>The Government, in partnership with stakeholders, is developing a National Youth Strategy for 2015-2020 which will have its basis in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People.</p>
Greece	<p>No youth strategy as such</p>

Spain	Youth Strategy 2020 – approved by the Spanish Government on 12 September 2014
France	<i>Plan priorité jeunesse</i> (Youth Priority Plan) www.jeunes.gouv.fr
Croatia	<i>Nacionalni program za mlade za razdoblje od 2014. do 2017.</i> (National Youth Programme 2014-2017) http://www.mspm.hr/novosti/vijesti/nacionalni_program_za_mlade_za_razdoblje_od_2014_do_2017_godine Former programmes: <i>Nacionalni program djelovanja za mlade od 2003. do 2008. godine</i> (National Programme of Action for Youth 2003-2008); <i>Nacionalni program za mlade od 2009. do 2013. godine</i> (National Youth Programme 2009-2013)
Italy	<i>Diritto al futuro</i> (Right to the future) http://www.diamoglifuturo.it/
Cyprus	No youth strategy as such
Latvia	<i>Jaunatnes politikas pamatnostādnes 2009. - 2018.gadam</i> (Youth Policy Guidelines for 2009-2018) http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=2994
Lithuania	Order No A1-660 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 December 2013 ‘On the Approval of the Action Plan 2014-2016 for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011-2019’ The Action Plan of Strengthening Regional Youth Policy for 2015-2017 was approved by the Order of Minister of Social Security and Labour on 9 January 2015 No A1-11 <i>Dėl Regioninės jaunimo politikos stiprinimo 2015-2017 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo</i> (Due to the Approval of the Action Plan of Strengthening Regional Youth Policy for 2015-2017)
Luxembourg	<i>Pacte pour la Jeunesse 2012-2014</i> (2012-2014 Youth Pact) www.jugendpakt.lu
Hungary	National Youth Strategy – adopted by the Hungarian National Assembly in 2009 (88/2009) Action plan for 2014-2015 – adopted by the Government in 2014. (1847/2014 (XII.30.))
Malta	National Youth Policy 2010-2013 http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijasghazagh/downloads/0662_001.pdf A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People. Draft National Youth Policy Framework 2015-2020 http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijasghazagh/downloads/Draft_National_Youth_Policy_Framework_2015-2020_Discussion_Document.pdf
Netherlands	<i>Beleidsbrief ‘Geen kind buiten spel’</i> (No child excluded) http://www.voordejeugd.nl/ondersteuning/downloads/communicatie-met-de-tweede-kamer

Austria	<p>Austrian Youth Strategy introduced in 2012 http://www.bmfj.gv.at/ministerium/jugendstrategie/dokumentation-jugendstrategie/publikationen.html</p>
Poland	<p>A specific Youth Strategy was in force between 2003 and 2013</p> <p>Report on Youth 2011 http://zds.kprm.gov.pl/sites/default/files/youth_2011_internet.pdf</p> <p>Currently, the system of development strategies includes 9 integrated strategies and 2 principal documents, defining the medium- and long-term development strategy of the country. The integrated strategies are thematically related to key policy areas of the Government. None of those documents is devoted to a particular social group. Issues related to education and youth are included in a horizontal manner in all these documents.</p>
Portugal	<p>Laws on IPDJ: Dec lei 98/2011 21 sept; Dec lei 132/2014 3 sept 11/2012 11jan; <i>Livro Branco</i> (White Paper on Youth): Resolução 11/2013 youth organisations laws Dec lei 23/2006 23 jun and dec lei 40/2006 24 aug</p> <p><i>Livro Branco da Juventude</i> (White Paper on Youth) was developed between 2012 and 2014 and is to be published in 2015. Young people and representative structures have been consulted to draw up a document at national level to define a global strategy and an action plan in the youth field. http://microsites.juventude.gov.pt/Portal/LBJ/OQueE/</p>
Romania	<p>National Strategy for Youth Policy 2015-2020</p>
Slovenia	<p>Resolution on the National Programme for Youth – adopted in 2013</p>
Slovakia	<p><i>Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre mládež na roky 2014-2020.</i> (Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014-2020) http://www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-164154?prefixFile=m</p>
Sweden	<p><i>Med fokus på unga – en politik för goda levnadsvillkor, makt och inflytande</i> (Focus on young people – a policy for good living conditions, power and influence) (new bill) http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/236143</p>
Finland	<p><i>Lapsi- ja nuorisopolitiikan kehittämisohjelma 2012-2015</i> (Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015) http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/OKM8.pdf?lang=en</p> <p><i>Lapsi- ja nuorisopolitiikan kehittämisohjelma 2007-2011</i> (The Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007-2011) http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/liitteet/opm21.pdf?lang=fi</p>

United Kingdom	<p>England: Positive for Youth www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth</p> <p>Northern Ireland: Priorities for Youth – Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work (October 2013) http://www.deni.gov.uk/19-priorities-for-youth.htm</p> <p>Scotland: Our Ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/youngpeople/youthwork/strategy/index.asp</p> <p>Wales: The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youthengagement/?lang=en</p>
Iceland	Youth strategy in preparation
Serbia	<p><i>Nacionalna strategija za mlade</i>, „Official Gazette of the RS, no. 55/08” <i>Akcioni plan za sprovođenje Nacionalne strategije za mlade za period od 2009. do 2014. godine</i>, „Official Gazette of the RS, no. 7/09”</p> <p>The Republic of Serbia adopted the first National Youth Strategy in 2008 and one year later an Action plan for its implementation for the period 2009-2014. http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Serbia_National_Youth_Strategy.pdf http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Action%20plan%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy.pdf</p> <p>In accordance with the Law on Youth (Article 11), the process of drafting a new National Strategy was launched in mid-2014. The new strategy shall cover the period of 10 years (2015-2025). It is expected to be adopted during February 2015. The three-year Action plan for its implementation will be endorsed during March 2015.</p>
Turkey	<p>National Youth and Sports Policy Paper published in January 2013 http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/01/20130127.htm&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/01/20130127.htm</p> <p>Ministry of Youth and Sports Strategic Plan 2013-2017 http://dergi.gsb.gov.tr/2013-2017-GSB-STRATEJIK-PLAN/</p> <p>10th Development Plan published in July 2013 (section on ‘Child and Youth’) http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Yaynlar/Attachments/518/Onuncu%20Kalk%C4%B1nma%20Plan%C4%B1.pdf</p>

2.2.3. Youth work

Most countries refer to particular strands or aspects of their youth strategies or laws addressing the role of youth work. Many mention their funding in favour of youth work (the three Communities of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Slovenia**). Other countries, for instance **Malta** and **Portugal**, stress the regulation of the youth work profession in their country.

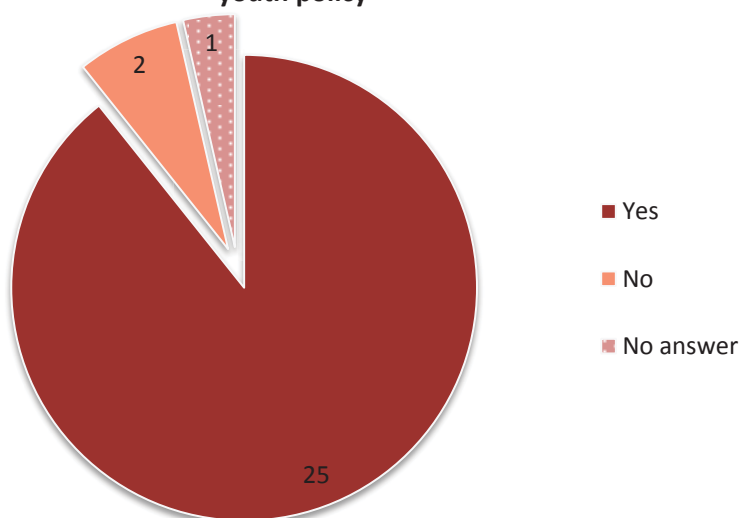
There are, however, some exceptions which highlight specific youth work strategies, especially at regional or local level. In Wales (**United Kingdom**), a national youth work strategy was launched in February 2014, setting out how youth work can support the Welsh Government’s priorities of narrowing the gap in educational achievement and reducing the number of young people who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEETs). In **Latvia**, local governments develop their own youth work strategy, and it is expected that youth work strategies will be in place for all local governments at the latest in 2015 (and maintained till 2018). **Germany** underlines the work done on the national implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, as well as its efforts to do so at local level – e.g. the framework concept for youth work of the city of Bremen.¹⁶

Here again, the activities developed since 2010 are generally based more on cross-sectoral cooperation than before.

2.2.4. Institutional mechanisms aimed at cross-sectoral youth policy

It seems that only two countries, **Cyprus** and **Denmark**, do not have an institutional mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, but some countries have several. In total, 35 cross-sectoral tools are known to exist, half of which were already in place before 2010.

Figure 1 - Number of Member States having established an institutionalised mechanism to ensure a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy



Most of the countries have set up interdepartmental working groups or committees, many of which are connected with youth strategies and are aimed at implementing these

¹⁶ <http://www.soziales.bremen.de/sixcms/media.php/13/Rahmenkonzept+Jugendarbeit.pdf>

through a cross-sectoral approach. They meet mostly at technical level, sometimes coupled with meetings at ministerial level.

Spain – Interministerial youth committee

This interministerial committee meets at least twice a year under the presidency of the Minister of Health, Social Policy and Equality. The General Director of the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) is the vice-President, and each Ministry is represented by a member with the status of General Director.

Its aims are:

- to propose youth policy programmes to the Government that highlight the economic, social, political and cultural factors affecting young people's inclusion into active social life;
- to study youth problems and propose programmes and measures to resolve them;
- to coordinate proceedings between different ministerial departments, especially on youth-related issues.

This committee approved the Spanish Youth Strategy 2020 in September 2014.

2.2.5. Linkages between youth policy and youth research

Institutionalised and regular cooperation between the ministry responsible for youth and the youth research community is common practice in around two thirds of the countries. The **Spanish** Youth Institute INJUVE has developed a research programme whose most important study is the Spanish youth report produced every four years. In **Finland**, the Finnish Youth Research Society and Finnish Youth Research Network are very active. Once per legislative period, the Federal Minister responsible for Youth in **Austria** has to report on the situation of young people. Upon request by the **Bulgarian** Ministry of Youth and Sports, sociological studies on 'Identifying the effect of youth policies on young people in the country' are carried out in order to analyse the situation of young people and prepare annual youth reports. In **Croatia**, cooperation with representatives of the research community takes place within the youth advisory board of the Government.

When such cooperation between youth policy and youth research exists, it includes the following actors:

Table 3: Cooperation between youth policy and youth research – actors involved

	Youth institutes	Universities	Research centres	Other
Belgium – Flemish Community	•	•	•	
Bulgaria			•	•
Czech Republic	•	•	•	
Germany	•	•	•	
Estonia		•	•	
Ireland		•		
Greece	•		•	
Spain	•	•	•	•
France	•			
Croatia				•
Italy		•	•	
Lithuania		•		•
Luxembourg		•		
Hungary	•		•	
Malta		•		
Netherlands	•	•	•	
Austria	•	•	•	•
Portugal		•		
Romania	•		•	
Slovakia		•	•	
Slovenia		•	•	•
Finland		•	•	•
United Kingdom	•	•	•	
Iceland		•	•	
Turkey	•	•	•	

Slovenia – Cooperation with the Educational Institute

The Office for Youth has supported and promoted cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions for a long time.

In 2014, the office strengthened its cooperation with the Educational Institute with the aim of developing knowledge on youth, the youth sector and youth policies in Slovenia.

Concrete measures to be implemented in 2015 are:

- establishing a platform for monitoring of the National Programme for Youth along the lines of ‘children’s observatory’ (development and monitoring of indicators);
- setting up a national database for monitoring youth policy in Slovenia;
- strengthening cooperation with the existing knowledge network at EU level.

2.2.6. Budgetary allocation for youth

It is difficult to provide estimates on a general budget for youth; some countries have nevertheless succeeded in presenting relevant data.

Table 4: Overview of budgetary allocation for youth

	National budget for the youth field	National budget for youth in general	EU budget for the youth field ¹⁷	EU budget for youth in general
Belgium – German-speaking Community	€ 1 695 000		Management costs of Youth in Action Agency: € 28 217. Eurodesk Agency: € 6 102	
Belgium – Flemish Community	€ 71 085 000	Overall budget for education, employment and VET € 104 828 000. There also were € 4 580 000 youth care.		
Belgium – French Community	Estimate 2013 for the Wallonia-Brussels Federation: € 47 615 000			

¹⁷ The countries generally referred to the relevant budget of the former Youth in Action programme (2007-2013).

Bulgaria	The funds spent by the specialised administration in the Ministry of Youth and Sports for 2013 are BGN 1 138 335 (funds for policies, administration of National Youth Policy (2011-2015) and subsidies for funding of project proposals). Funds spent by the governmental institutions, district administrations and municipal structures for 2013: BGN 161 770 019		Under the Youth in Action programme for 2013, 259 contracts for the total amount of € 3 538 059 were concluded Eurodesk, (National Centre European Youth Programmes and Initiatives): BGN 38 200.
Czech Republic	Subsidy programmes supporting youth work: CZK 170 million; Czech-German cooperation in the field of children and youth: CZK 3 381 500.	Funds supporting gifted children and young people (Programme Excellence): CZK 20 million and funds supporting festivals for young people, and knowledge-based and skill-based competitions for young people: CZK 35 million.	ESF Project ‘Keys for Life’: CZK 15 298 202 from EU budget (national co-financing: CZK 2 699 682)
Denmark		n/a	
Germany	2013 German expenditure on public child and youth support agencies: € 35 526 752 000 for youth work, youth social work, educational child and youth protection, child day-care services, educational support, employee further training, other expenditure and personnel costs		

Estonia	€ 7 386 520		€ 7 001 682 (EU funds without Youth in Action)
Ireland	Department of Children and Youth Affairs: Youth Affairs Budget of € 51 748 000 (2013) current and € 500 000 capital in 2015		
Greece		€ 355 775 582. This amount includes EU funds and other programmes/funds.	
Spain	€ 25 924 000 (budget INJUVE)	€ 1 600 000	€ 10 953 105
France	€ 244 551 876	€ 80.47 billion	
Croatia	In 2013 the budget allocations targeting young people were HRK 344 247 024.9 million. This amount includes state budget, lottery funds and EU funds.		

Italy	<p>National Fund for Youth of € 5 278 360 million in net cuts for the spending review allocated to the interventions of Communes (€ 659 795), Provinces (€ 264 445), Regions (€ 3 298 447) and the Central State (€ 1 055 672).</p> <p>Fund for the civil service net of cuts for the spending review: € 126 859 716</p> <p>Fund Cohesion Action Plan ‘Youth for the noon’: € 63 600 000</p>		<p>The appropriations provided with the Youth in Action programme in 2013 amounted to € 11 966 525.</p>
Lithuania	€ 1 700 000		€ 3 million
Malta	€ 680 000 (Aġenzija Żgħażaġh budget)		€ 1 802 833
Austria	<p>From 2009 to 2013 the Federal Budget Reform was implemented in two stages. It now defines for instance a new budget structure as well as outcome oriented budget management.</p> <p>https://english.bmf.gv.at/budget-economic-policy/BMF-HHRR_folder_E.pdf?4cxx82</p>	<p>There is no special dedication to the youth field in each Federal Ministry. In addition, there is supplement financial support from the Federal Provinces and local authorities</p>	€ 3 804 548 (Erasmus+ Youth in Action)
Portugal	€ 11 000 000		

Slovakia	Support of youth work activities via financial 'Programmes for youth', amount: € 2.5 million	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family runs specific initiatives for young people especially in the field of unemployment	National projects targeted on youth work development financed under European Social Fund. Amount: € 12 million	Targeting youth unemployment 'Youth Guarantee' is used. Amount: € 76 million
Slovenia	€ 200 million	€ 70 million		
Sweden	SEK 282 million		SEK 4.2 million	
Finland	€ 74 million total (71% of the total budget is allocated from the Lottery funds and the rest from the ordinary budget)	€ 976 million (general education), € 737 million (vocational education), € 2 739 million (university education)	€ 3 million	
United Kingdom				Responsibility for youth sits across various Government departments and Devolved Administrations and so it is difficult to provide a total figure of the estimated budget allocation
Serbia	€ 8 400 000		€ 1 361 259	
Turkey	TRY 5 596 536 251 (Ministry of Youth and Sports budget, includes administrative costs)			

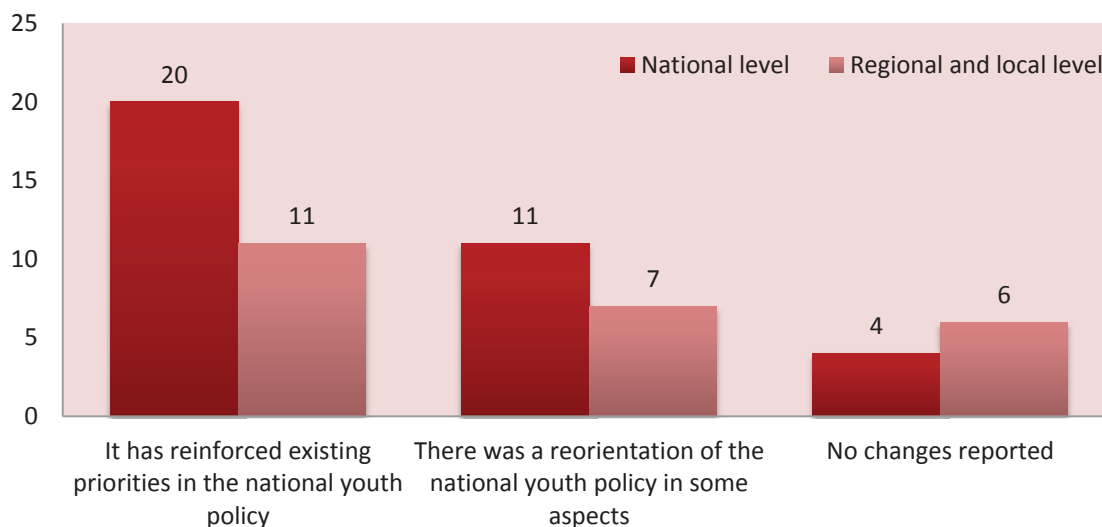
2.3. Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy

2.3.1. Impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national, regional or local level

Twenty-two reports confirm that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced existing youth priorities at national level. Many national youth strategies take their cue from the EU Youth Strategy by using the same principles, goals and fields of action (**Austria**, Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Croatia**, **Ireland**, **Malta**) or by getting inspiration from its instruments like the Structured Dialogue and support for youth participation (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany**, **Italy**, **Portugal**).

Spain, **Sweden**, the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Estonia**, **Slovakia**, **Italy**, **Slovenia**, **Bulgaria**, **Lithuania** and **Poland** as well as **Serbia** point out that the EU Youth Strategy has to some extent triggered a shift in their national youth policy. **Slovakia**'s new national strategy follows the same structure as the EU Youth Strategy, which is gradually being reflected in the country's regional youth strategies. In some countries, such as **Italy** and **Slovenia**, the European strategy has influenced the development of a cross-sectoral approach.

Figure 2 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national, regional and local level



2.3.2. Assessment of the EU Youth Strategy at national, regional or local level

One third of the national reports indicate that the EU Youth Strategy was assessed in the respective countries. In many cases, this was done when evaluating the national strategy (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Finland**, **United Kingdom**). For instance, the annual assessment of the Finnish Child and Youth Policy programme concluded that more attention should be paid to developing opportunities for all children and young people to participate.

The **German** Youth Institute (*Deutsches Jugendinstitut*, DJI) evaluated the first implementation phase in Germany (2010-2013). The assessment focused on the governance panels set up by the federal government and federal states, which monitor and coordinate the German implementation process. It was found in particular that effective cooperation had been established between the government, the federal states and relevant civil society stakeholders and that this cooperation has to be seen as a normative process. The existing panels may be enlarged to include further relevant actors at any time. The National Working Group for Structured Dialogue has, for example, included youth representatives from the European youth conferences.

2.3.3. Consultation of young people and other youth stakeholders

Young people were consulted in most of the countries when the national reports were being prepared. **Slovakia** was the only country that did not organise a specific consultation, relying instead on the results of a previous consultation on the country's new youth strategy, for which a youth conference was organised in March 2014. Slovakia therefore used the information gathered at the conference, which was updated by various stakeholders and umbrella organisations.

Figure 3 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of stakeholders involved in the consultation



2.3.4. EU Work Plan for Youth

In May 2014 the Council adopted a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 aiming to sharpen implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and better align activities in the youth field with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. This was done by focusing on a given number of priorities, supported by expert groups and other forms of mutual learning.

Most countries take the view that the EU work plan reflects national priorities. **Spain** emphasises that the cross-sectoral handling of youth employment issues, promoting non-formal learning and empowerment, is essential to drawing up youth policies in the context of the current crisis. **Malta** points out that its new National Youth Policy (2015-2020) has a dual strategic approach that is focused on youth work and non-formal learning on the one hand, and on a cross-sectoral dimension on the other hand. When drafting its youth strategy for 2014-2020, the **Czech Republic** took the opportunity to link national priorities to the priorities of the EU work plan. In **Ireland**, the three priorities of the work plan are reflected in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People; they will also be picked up in the forthcoming national youth strategy. Both policy documents recognise the significant contribution of non-formal and informal learning provided through youth work, emphasise and promote cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration, and prioritise young people's participation.

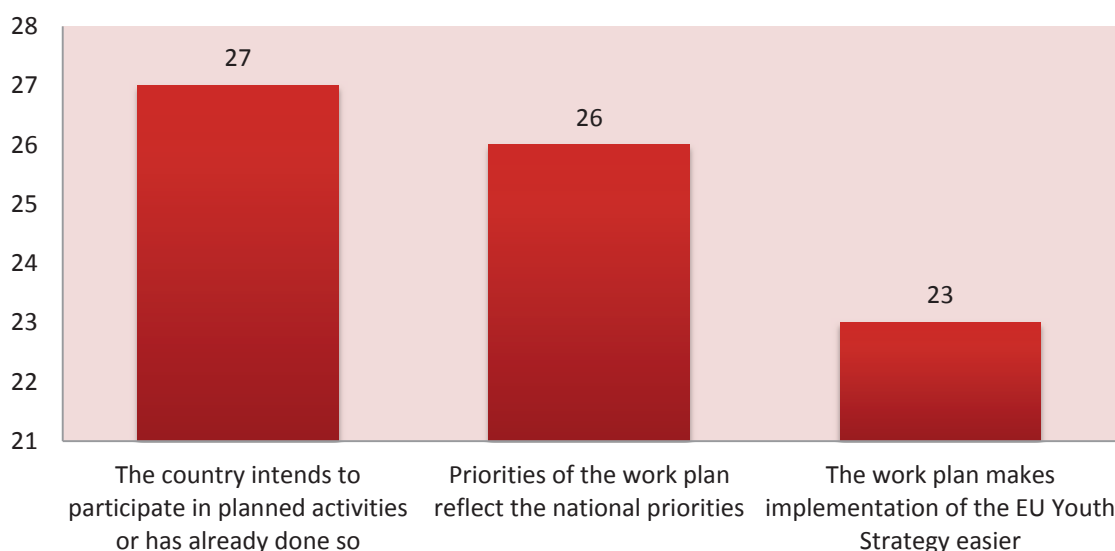
Twenty-three of the reporting countries believe that the work plan facilitates the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. **Finland** points out that the work plan lends substance to the strategy and ties it more closely to policy-making and further development of youth work at national level. **Italy** considers that the work plan allows Member States to implement the strategy more effectively in a number of ways: it identifies which fields of action are the most relevant in view of the current situation of young people; it sets a clear timetable and planning for intervention at European level;

and it strengthens cross-sectoral cooperation. For **Greece**, it serves as a concrete framework of actions for policy-makers.

Some caution was expressed. While recognising the work plan’s benefit in terms of making the EU Youth Strategy more concrete, giving clear direction and increasing transparency, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** says there is a risk that it could be considered as a separate instrument with its own dynamics of implementation and reporting. The need for the EU Youth Strategy on a long-term basis is still there and the work plan should cover all themes – and the presidency priorities should be related to it.

Finally, most of the Member States participated in the planned activities and their feedback provided details on national participation in the work plan’s expert groups.

Figure 4 - Number of Member States involved in the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Youth



2.4. Other relevant initiatives

Countries were asked to specify if they took other initiatives linked to the EU Youth Strategy, such as multilateral peer-learning activities, policy conferences or policy networks. When such activities are mentioned, these are mostly conferences or other mutual learning events.

Table 5: Overview of other relevant initiatives

	Peer-learning activity, policy conference or network	Other
Belgium	<p>French Community: 1st European Youth Work Convention in July 2010 under the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU</p> <p>Flemish Community: Seminars in the framework of the multilateral cooperation between Flanders, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia; study visits and conferences on different themes, e.g. development of youth policy at all levels, youth policy at local level, youth in an urban context, participation, quality youth work</p>	
Bulgaria	<p>Annual exchange of experience with South Korea and Azerbaijan in the field of youth policy and sport on the basis of memorandums of cooperation</p> <p>Exchange of experience with Finland for studying good practices in the youth field under a project funded by the ESF, Operational Programme ‘Administrative Capacity’</p> <p>Exchange of experience in the field of youth policies and programmes with Greece</p> <p>Bulgarian Chairmanship of the meeting of the ministers of youth and sports of the Black Sea Cooperation Organisation member states (2013)</p>	
Czech Republic	<p>Working seminar on Youth Volunteering for Visegrad Group (V4) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, September 2014; main theme: role of local, national and international volunteering in V4 and EaP countries – identification of cooperation opportunities for better efficiency</p>	<p>The new National Youth Strategy (2014-2020) was developed using Czech-Slovak bilateral cooperation, cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries and a peer-learning activity between the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Belgium, Lithuania, Netherlands and Sweden in 2011-2013</p>

Denmark	Exchange of good practices and coordination of views among the youth councils in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland). Yearly conferences for board members of youth councils in the Nordic countries.
Germany	<p>Various multilateral cooperation projects:</p> <p>European Peer Learning on Youth Policy (<i>Eigenständige Jugendpolitik</i>)</p> <p>‘youthpart’ (on e-participation)</p> <p>transitions. Successful Transitions to Training and Employment</p> <p>Participation of young people in the democratic Europe</p>
Ireland	<p>Different meetings as part of Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013:</p> <p>EU youth conference on social inclusion</p> <p>High level round table on the role of youth work in responding to youth employment and employability</p> <p>Informal meeting of EU Directors-General for Youth</p> <p>Belong To conference on ‘LGBT Youth and Social Inclusion’</p>
Spain	‘youthpart’ project (2012-2014): cooperation between Spain, Germany, Finland, Austria, United Kingdom and the Commission on youth e-participation; conferences, peer-learning seminars and youth conferences

Croatia

April 2012: 'Information right now! – Young people are asking' conference, organised by the Community Information Centres for young people in Croatia and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth to mark the beginning of a public campaign *Informacija uPRAVO sad!* (Information right now!) in Croatia; On that occasion, the European Charter for Youth Information was signed

February 2014: conference on the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, Erasmus +

December 2014: conference 'EU for Youth' to inform students, young unemployed people and young entrepreneurs about their possibilities from EU funds.

Italy

European Conference on Youth Health and Well-being, Rome, June 2010

Events organised in 2014 as part of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU:

EU youth conference on support access to rights by young people to enhance their autonomy and participation in social life

Meeting of EU Directors-General for Youth

'Regenerate participation. Youth and Civil Service in the European perspective'

'Youth employment event – 1 year after – Building a sustainable future'

Latvia	Multilateral cooperation with Estonia, Lithuania and Flanders – for the implementation of cooperation in the youth field 2012-2014. The aim of the cooperation is to promote the exchange of experience on the participation of young people in thematic areas, to identify effective methods and best examples for young people; workshops organised, for example, on 1) skill recognition through informal education, 2) youth participation in different decision-making processes, 3) youth work quality, 4) evidence-based youth policy at the local level	
Hungary	V4 seminars related to the youth field with Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries Bilateral cooperation with the Flemish Community of Belgium. A five-days long study visit was achieved in September 2014	
Netherlands	Focus in positive youth policies and practices – multilateral peer-learning seminars with German and Czech partners; one was organised in Rotterdam ¹⁸ in 2012.	
Austria	Youth Forum 2010: exchange of opinions and ideas on three main topics (education, inclusion, participation); networking and exchange of good practices in the youth field on a European level; meeting between more than 200 young people and youth workers, representatives of youth ministries and authorities from Austria, Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Belgium and Liechtenstein 2013 learning mobility research conference ‘International youth work and mobility as learning contexts: research evidence for policy and practice’ organised by the network for the ‘Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action’ (RAY)	Regional symposia 2011-2012: under the heading ‘Youth.Politics.Europe.Austria’ the tour of the federal states included symposia in Tyrol, Styria, Vorarlberg, Upper Austria and Salzburg. Apart from decision-makers in the fields of politics and administration, practitioners and multipliers were also invited according to the key topic. Apart from spreading information on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field, the goal of the series of events was to relate these European guidelines to the national and local level and to bring together various players around a chosen key topic

¹⁸ http://www.youthpolicy.nl/yp/Youth-Policy/International-conferences/Past-conferences/Multilateral_Peer_Learning_Seminar

Portugal	Conferences, peer-learning and network activities – youth employment, entrepreneurship, youth work and non-formal education – social inclusion; national and transnational	
Slovakia		Declaration on the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work: public declaration of various stakeholders (employers, ministries, municipalities, universities, youth organisations, etc.) in education about the value of non-formal education in youth work.
Finland	2 nd InterCity Conference – peer-learning in local youth work and youth policy, December 2013, Helsinki Autonomy through dependency – histories of cooperation, conflict and innovation in youth work, June 2014, Helsinki	Finland also focuses on the topic of social inclusion during its Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which includes non-EU member states (Russian Federation and Norway)
United Kingdom		UK Young Ambassadors ¹⁹ (Young Migrants project) to engage young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Structured Dialogue British Youth Council partnered with ‘Refugee Youth’ for the duration of the Trio, getting access to the target group and supporting them to develop resources and workshops to outreach further.
Serbia	Regional network Western Balkans	

¹⁹ <http://www.ukya.org.uk/YourVoice>

3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The aim of action in this field is to support young people's integration into the labour market (either as employees or as entrepreneurs) and to facilitate and support the transition from education and training, or from unemployment or inactivity, to the labour market. Opportunities to reconcile working life with family life should also be improved.

3.1. EU initiatives and action

The growing number of unemployed youth and those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) has led to an increase in the number of initiatives in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee seeks to ensure that all EU Member States make a good-quality offer to all young people (up to age 25) of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The **Youth Guarantee recommendation** was formally adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013²⁰ and endorsed by the June 2013 European Council. It includes guidelines for setting up such schemes, covering in particular the need for stronger partnerships between all the public authorities concerned (education and employment institutions), early intervention and activation, and making full use of EU funding.

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee in all Member States is already producing results. Compared to other structural reforms in Europe, the Youth Guarantee is probably one of the most rapidly implemented. All 28 Member States presented their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans in 2014, setting out the respective roles of public authorities and other organisations, how it will be financed and monitored, as well as a timetable. The Commission monitors the progress made within the EU's reinforced economic surveillance framework (the European Semester). An Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee is now in place.

The Commission provides technical support and guidance in a variety of ways. For example, to assist the Member States in developing their Youth Guarantee schemes, the Commission organises high-level events as well as more technical meetings and country visits. The Commission has set up and continuously updates a Youth Guarantee website²¹ which explains the concept and related actions to a wider audience. A dedicated hotline provides information and guidance to Member States. The Commission also encourages and enables mutual learning among Member States through the sharing of experiences and good practices. One example is a peer review of the Finnish Youth Guarantee held on 18 September 2014. The Commission also supports awareness-raising activities centred around the Youth Guarantee: a pilot was launched in four countries in the first half of 2015, with a particular focus on outreach to young people to invite them

²⁰ Council recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1-6.

²¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/youthguarantee>

to contact the relevant services. Furthermore, at the request of the European Parliament, the Commission financed 18 twelve-month pilot projects²² in seven Member States to support Youth Guarantee partnerships at the local level. The results of these projects can be found in the summary report published in April 2015 and were presented at a conference²³ during the European Youth Week.

European Parliament pilot project in Ballymun (Ireland)

A particularly comprehensive and ambitious pilot project was set up in Ballymun, outside Dublin, Ireland, to support 739 young people facing multiple barriers to the labour market in one of Ireland's most disadvantaged areas.

The project had an ambitious target of guaranteeing all newly-registered unemployed young people aged between 18 and 24 years in the Ballymun area a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, work experience, or continued education within four months of registration and all those already on the unemployment register would receive an offer within four months of an initial guidance interview. This target was met, with 98% of young people receiving their offer on time: 57% of offers were for further education and training, and the remaining 43% were offers of employment, subsidised employment and traineeships. Unsurprisingly, the profile of offers to the better educated members of the client group featured much higher rates of employment and higher levels of further education and training. For many others the 'offer' was the start of a process and not the end: stepping stones along a pathway to employment.

The Ballymun pilot was also successful in terms of engaging employers: new communication materials for employers (leaflets and webpage) featuring one key contact person for queries were developed. A database of local employers was created to facilitate communication and relationship building. A range of employer events including breakfast briefings were held to raise awareness and boost participation in the Youth Guarantee.

By the end of the project the number of youth registered as unemployed in Ballymun had dropped by 29%, which compares positively against the national rate of reduction of 19% during the same period.

Particular emphasis will be placed on youth employment in implementing the EU Structural and Investment Funds from 2014 to 2020. The regulations that govern these funds already include a dedicated investment priority targeting the sustainable labour market integration of young NEETs.

To increase available EU financial support to the regions and individuals struggling most with youth employment and inactivity, the EU also agreed to create a dedicated Youth

²² <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11400&langId=en>

²³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&eventsId=1051&furtherEvents=yes>

Employment Initiative (YEI). The YEI exclusively targets NEETs aged below 25 years, and where the Member State considers relevant, also those aged below 30 years. The YEI provides additional funding to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The YEI funding comprises € 3.2 billion from a specific EU budget heading dedicated to youth employment and at least another € 3.2 billion from the EU Structural and Investment Funds' national allocations. This will boost the support already provided by these funds for similar types of activities. Furthermore, Member States will have to complement this assistance with additional investments in structural reforms to modernise employment, social and education services for young people, and by strengthening the capacity of relevant structures and improving education access, quality and links to labour market demand.

Quality apprenticeships and traineeships are two core components of Youth Guarantee schemes. Effective vocational education and training systems, in particular those that include a strong work-based learning component, appear to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work. A recent analysis by the Center for Research on Education and Life Long Learning²⁴ (CRELL) showed a labour market advantage, at least in the short run, of young individuals with VET qualifications (compared to their non-VET counterparts), although with important cross-country differences.

Launched in July 2013, the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** brings together public authorities, businesses, social partners, vocational education and training providers, youth representatives, and other key actors in order to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and change attitudes towards apprenticeship-type learning. A Council Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships was adopted in October 2013. By June 2015, 26 Member States and 5 non EU countries²⁵ had submitted concrete commitments on next steps to increase the quantity, quality and supply of apprenticeships. Furthermore, 86 organisations (companies, business associations, chambers, social partners, education and training providers, regional authorities, youth and non-profit organisations) pledged to contribute to strengthening the supply, quality and/or attractiveness of apprenticeships. A pool of 'business ambassadors' was set up on the initiative of the European Roundtable of Industrialists.

So that young people can acquire high-quality work experience under safe and fair conditions and to increase their employability, Member States agreed on a **Quality Framework for Traineeships**²⁶ in March 2014, setting a benchmark for the determination of good quality traineeship under the Youth Guarantee. It offers guidelines to ensure that all traineeships are based on a written agreement covering learning content and working conditions (learning objectives, mentoring, limited duration, working time, clear indication as to whether remuneration/compensation and social protection apply). In addition, traineeship providers are recommended to enhance transparency by disclosing

²⁴ European Commission (2015), *Education and youth labour market outcomes – the added value of VET*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

²⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>

²⁶ OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1-4.

in the vacancy notice the financial conditions (compensation and social security coverage) and the proportion of ex-trainees recruited in the past after their traineeship. These requirements are designed to tackle the lack of transparency on compensation (46% of vacancy notices do not indicate it), often exploited by unscrupulous traineeship providers, and the problem of traineeships being renewed more than once under the guise of (non-existent) hiring prospects.

Labour mobility

The EU facilitates labour mobility, in particular by making young people aware of job opportunities in other EU countries. The **European Employment Services (EURES)** network provides information, advice and recruitment/placement (job matching) services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of free movement of workers. EURES promotes cooperation between the Commission, public employment services of 28 Member States, and their partners. It consists of about 1000 EURES advisers working on transnational and cross-border mobility issues. The human network is complemented by the EURES Job Mobility portal giving access to about 1.4 million job vacancies and offering opportunities for easy and multilingual matching of CVs with those job vacancies across Europe. The overall ongoing reform of EURES aims at making it a more demand-driven and result-oriented recruitment tool.

As part of this development, the Commission has been testing a scheme called **Your first EURES Job (YfEJ)** to help EU nationals aged 18 to 30 to find a job in any of the 28 Member States (remunerated, minimum 6 months contract). The scheme combines information, recruitment, matching and job placement support with financial incentives. It finances language courses, other training needs and travel expenses for young job applicants (for job interviews and job settlement in other EU countries). It also provides a contribution to an integration programme in the case of recruitment by an SME. The objective of the YfEJ for the three calls launched between 2011 and 2013 was to find jobs for 5000 young people on the basis of a total budget of around €12 million. As from 2013, support measures were extended to trainees and apprentices with an enhanced mobility package (e.g. further language training support, costs with recognition of qualifications, supplementary allowance for young people with special needs, mentoring for trainees/apprentices). By the end of the first quarter of 2015, nearly 4000 young jobseekers had obtained a job in another Member State, but not all projects will be finished before the end of the third quarter 2015. A mid-term evaluation confirmed the relevance and EU added value of the scheme; an ex-post evaluation will follow in 2016.

The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (2014-2020) provides additional funding to support targeted mobility schemes intended to fill bottleneck vacancies or deal with vacancies in certain occupations, sectors or Member States or to support specific target groups (e.g. young people), facilitating intra-EU job mobility. Under the programme, the YfEJ covers young people aged 18 to 35 and is open to the 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland.

From 2014 the YfEJ scheme is integrated into the above-mentioned EURES network. EURES member organisations are lead applicants, in consortium with EURES partners and other labour market organisations. The 2014 call for proposals (€7 million) selected

EURES Italy and EURES Sweden as lead applicants. For the 2015 call, €8 million is available to finance two additional projects. Each project aims at about 1 500 placements over a period of two years.

EU-funded research projects on youth mobility and labour market integration

Research projects launched in 2015:

- MOVE – Mapping mobility: Pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility in EU (<http://www.move-project.eu>)
- YMOBILITY – Youth mobility: Maximising opportunities for individuals, labour markets and regions in EU (www.ymobility.eu)
- NEGOTIATE – Negotiating early job: Insecurity and labour market exclusion in Europe (www.negotiate-research.eu)

European youth cooperation on employment

Youth employment was the overall thematic priority of the first Trio Presidency after the entry into force of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. The first cycle of the Structured Dialogue also focused on youth employment. The results of this thematic priority²⁷ inspired subsequent initiatives, such as the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.²⁸

Based on Council conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (May 2012), a thematic **expert group** was set up in order to share best practice on how to **promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability**. The expert group's final report²⁹ was submitted to the Youth Working Party on 22 January 2014. It confirms that engaging in non-formal learning activities can help boost young people's employability and social inclusion. Participation in non-formal learning activities allows young people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are frequently said to be needed in the labour market. This includes teamwork, communication, leadership, flexibility and responsiveness. It also entails discovering one's entrepreneurial and innovative potential, by identifying problems, coming up with ways of dealing with them and sticking to a chosen course of action. The report also identifies a need for greater recognition of non-formal learning and recommends ways of explaining non-formal learning more clearly to employers and educators, translating non-formal learning outcomes to the world of work, encouraging youth entrepreneurship and promoting partnerships and cross-sectoral innovation.

²⁷ See 2012 EU Youth Report.

²⁸ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1-5.

²⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

The European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 underlines the need for cross-sectoral cooperation, with a particular focus on collaboration between youth policy and employment policy. The Member States and the Commission were invited to establish an **expert group** for the duration of the work plan, whose aim is to define **the specific contribution of youth work and non-formal and informal learning to address challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment**. The group started work in October 2014 and will present its results at the end of 2015.

Entrepreneurship

The purpose of youth entrepreneurship is to combat youth unemployment and social exclusion as well as to stimulate the innovative capabilities of young people in Europe. Therefore, the objective of fostering youth entrepreneurship has a prominent place in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Commission communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*³⁰ identifies the development of transversal skills, particularly **entrepreneurial skills**, as one of the strategic priorities in education and training.

The importance of **promoting entrepreneurship** was stressed in the Council conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014). In this context special attention is paid to the concept of ‘social entrepreneurship’, which is embedded in the real economy, close to people and to local communities, and primarily aims at contributing to the general good of society. The above-mentioned **expert group** on promoting the creativity and innovative capacity of young people recommended a ‘strong focus on entrepreneurship’.

A number of policy initiatives and tools in the field of **formal education and training** address the need to foster entrepreneurship. The Council conclusions on entrepreneurship in education and training³¹ of 12 December 2014 highlight the need for a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to entrepreneurship education; initial teacher/trainer education programmes and continuous professional development; synergies between entrepreneurship education and career guidance; involvement of entrepreneurs in the learning process as well as providing traineeship, apprenticeship, work-based learning; and practical entrepreneurship experience.

In its final report³² of November 2014, the thematic working group on entrepreneurship education explored ways of embedding entrepreneurship as a key competence in education and training, namely by identifying success factors for the entrepreneurship ecosystem such as stakeholder engagement; entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods; entrepreneurial learning outcomes and assessment; supporting educators and leaders; pathway for aspiring entrepreneurs; and measuring progress and impact.

³⁰ COM(2012) 669 final of 20.11.2012.

³¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/146196.pdf

³² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=17016&no=1>

Through a study launched by the Commission's Joint Research Centre, the Commission also works on the description of the key competence for lifelong learning³³ 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship'. A competence framework will be developed, clarifying the constituting elements of entrepreneurship competence for all stakeholders – including young citizens – to refer to for any purpose, including education, employment and business endeavours.

'HEInnovate',³⁴ a joint initiative of the Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), enables self-assessment of the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of higher education to promote an entrepreneurial mind-set through education. The 'knowledge triangle' interaction between education, research and innovation supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) enhances the teaching and learning process by stimulating creative thinking and innovative attitudes and approaches that often result in venture creation.

During the second cycle of the renewed framework, the Commission adopted the communication *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan – Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe*,³⁵ which invites Member States to offer all students a practical entrepreneurial experience, including through youth work and non-formal learning (e.g. volunteering), before they leave secondary education.

A number of **EU programmes** contribute to fostering entrepreneurship. The European exchange programme for entrepreneurs 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs' (2014-2020)³⁶ gives would-be and recently established entrepreneurs the know-how that is key to creating and running a new business, through exchanges with experienced entrepreneurs in another European country. The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, the European Social Fund as well as the European Regional Development Fund (2014-2020) facilitate access to finance for social enterprises and support business creation by young people. The EU has since 2009 supported the multi-country initiative 'South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECCEL) – developing an entrepreneurial society in Western Balkans and Turkey'.³⁷ Its main purpose is to encourage systematic development of 'entrepreneurially literate' societies across the region and to support alignment of national policies with EU recommendations related to lifelong entrepreneurial learning, as well as to further develop the lifelong entrepreneurial learning system in line with the Human Capital dimension of the Small Business Act for Europe. The activity covers both secondary and tertiary education. Last but not least, the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research and

³³ Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10-18.

³⁴ <https://heinnovate.eu/intranet/main/index.php>

³⁵ COM(2012) 795 final of 9.1.2013.

³⁶ <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php>

³⁷ <http://www.seecel.hr/home-5026>

technological development (2007-2013) supported research activities related to social innovation focusing on social entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship (see box).

EU-funded research projects on entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship:

- SEFORIS – Social Entrepreneurship as a Force for more Inclusive and Innovative Societies (www.seforis.eu)
- EFESEIIS – Enabling the flourishing and evolution of social entrepreneurship for innovative and inclusive societies (<http://www.fp7-efeseiis.eu>)

Youth entrepreneurship:

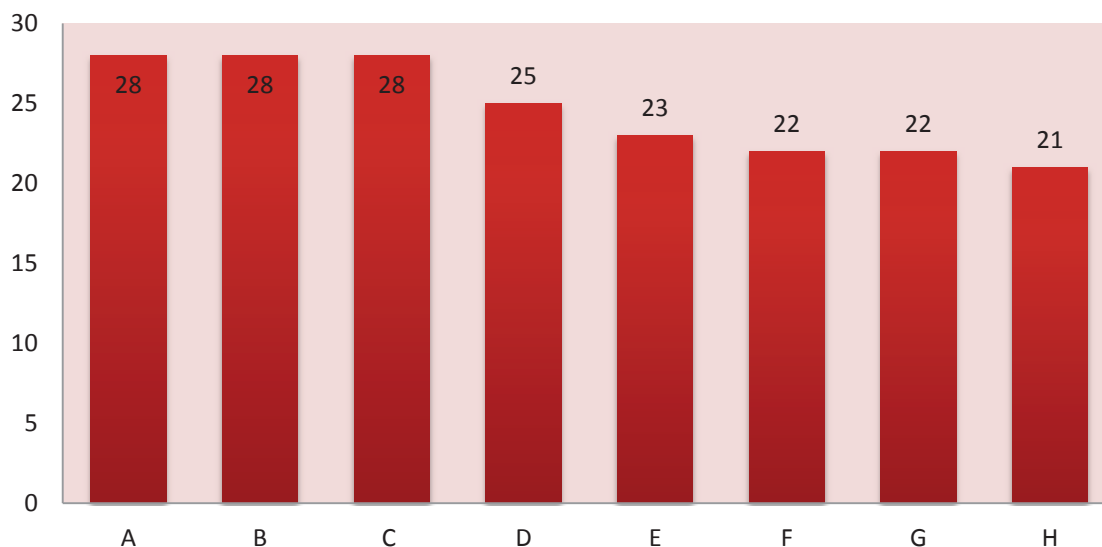
- STYLE – Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe (<http://www.style-research.eu>)
- CUPESSE – Cultural Pathways to Economic Self-Sufficiency and Entrepreneurship: Family Values and Youth Unemployment in Europe (<http://cupesse.eu/>)

3.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

3.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

The types of measures most frequently mentioned are the following: short-term measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market as well as structural measures taking into account youth; measures developing career guidance and counselling services; and measures supporting and promoting young people's entrepreneurship via entrepreneurship education, support to start-up funds and junior enterprises, mentoring programmes and European networks and structures. Interestingly, these three types of measures are amongst those which to a large extent were introduced after January 2010.

Figure 5 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship



- A – Short-term measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market and structural measures taking into account youth
- B – Developing career guidance and counselling services
- C – Supporting and promoting young people’s entrepreneurship
- D – Increasing and improving investments in the provision of suitable skills
- E – Promoting cross-border professional and vocational opportunities
- F – Lowering barriers to the free movement of workers across the EU
- G – Facilitating reconciliation between professional and private life
- H – Promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

3.2.1.1. Increasing and improving investments in the provision of suitable skills

The provision of suitable skills for the labour market is of concern to most countries. Training programmes for the attainment of new, professional, language, practical or transversal skills and of key competences are commonly used measures which are often part of the national Youth Guarantee scheme. For instance, the **United Kingdom** (England) launched two ‘Work Skills’ pilots to help 18 to 21 year-olds with training on literacy, numeracy and other work skills with 18000 participants. The support of youth work initiatives that increase young people’s employability is particularly mentioned by **Ireland**, which in the context of its annual Action Plan for Jobs³⁸ instituted a mapping exercise to categorise and comment on the Irish youth work response to youth employment. The German-speaking Community of **Belgium** identified the need for professional youth workers and will develop a specific professional qualification for this activity by 2017.

³⁸ <http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/apj.htm>

Bringing vocational training systems closer to the labour market is another priority. Here, the **Czech Republic**'s Action Plan for Support of Vocational Training (*Akční plan podpory odborného vzdělávání*) is being constantly refined and updated. **Denmark** also plans to reform its vocational education system in order to increase the participation of young people in VET and to strengthen the trust in this type of training. In **Austria**, the apprenticeship regulations (*Lehrberufspaket*) are continuously adapted to new trends and technologies and to professional practice.

From 2011 to 2015 **Slovenia** runs a mentorship programme for young people (*Mentorstvo za mlade*) with the aim to encourage employers to transfer knowledge, skills and experience from experienced staff to those who need their knowledge – new (young) employees. Special emphasis is put on inter-generational transfer of knowledge, skills and information.

Regarding better anticipation in the longer term of the skills needed, common measures are labour market forecasts, identification of competencies and professions needed, and programmes for specific skills. By way of example, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** developed, via the VLAMT project, a methodology to collect information on future skills needs in order to facilitate future vocational choices. In **Greece**, the national organisation for the certification of qualifications and vocational guidance (EOPPEP) conducted several studies on future labour market needs, for instance on green jobs and green skills needed in the Greek labour market (2011) and on emerging occupational sectors in Greece and new skills meeting labour market needs (2013). In the **Netherlands**, the public administration, education sector, trade unions and employers concluded a pact to improve the links between education and labour market in the technical sector (*Techniekpakt*³⁹). The **Polish** Commissioned Degree programmes address the huge skills mismatch concerning sector-specific skills (oversupply of graduates in social sciences, the humanities, economics, management, administration, etc. versus lack of students in mathematics, technical and natural science faculties) by scholarship schemes, remedial courses and attractive teaching activities. In **Romania**, the Law No 335/2013 on traineeships for higher education graduates aims at strengthening professional skills and abilities to adapt to practical requirements and job demands.

3.2.1.2. Promoting cross-border professional and vocational opportunities

The Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors in the fields of youth and education and training are mentioned by many countries as important support for cross-border opportunities for young people. In this context, Europass, a set of documents that can be used to show skills and competences clearly and unambiguously, is also quoted. Several countries, such as **Finland**, refer to their international mobility and cooperation programmes.

Other support measures for cross-border mobility of young people – although not directly aimed at professional or vocational development – are for instance bilateral governmental agreements concluded by the **Czech Republic** with other countries to facilitate working abroad during holidays (in South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, and soon Chile and

³⁹ <http://techniekpakt.nl>

Israel). These agreements enable young people from 18 to 30 or 35 to undertake employment in the host country for the purpose of supplementing their travel funds. Several projects of the **Latvia, Lithuania** and Belarus Cross Border Cooperation programme⁴⁰ within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people, such as the one on ‘Youth Entrepreneurship Encouragement in Kaunas and Minsk regions’, whose overall objective is to enhance entrepreneurship, youth cooperation, reduction of unemployment and young people’s mobility in the regions concerned.

More specifically on vocational training, **Luxembourg** concluded a framework agreement on cross-border vocational training in the Greater Region (see box). **Austria** offers foreign work placements to apprentices (for instance in the tourism industry). Thanks to these 3 to 5 weeks placements in another country, apprentices acquire new working methods, get to know another country and culture, improve their vocational, linguistic and intercultural competences, and get accustomed to the requirements of the labour market and clients.

Framework agreement on cross-border vocational training in the Greater Region

The members of the Greater Region (Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Wallonia and the rest of the French Community of Belgium, and the German-speaking Community of Belgium) concluded, for an unlimited period, a framework agreement on cross-border vocational training which entered into force on 4 December 2014.

The agreement formulates, for the first time, common objectives on cross-border vocational training in the region. It aims at (non-exhaustive enumeration):

- deepening the regional labour market integration;
- improving the qualification, professional mobility and adaptability of the labour force, in particular of young people;
- fighting youth unemployment and reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training;
- satisfying the demand for skilled workers;
- improving information on cross-border vocational training opportunities;
- removing regulatory barriers to cross-border mobility.

The implementation will be monitored by the Greater Region Summit’s working group on the labour market.

<http://www.men.public.lu/fr/actualites/communiqués-conference-presse/2014/11/13-accord-cadre/index.html>

⁴⁰ <http://www.enpi-cbc.eu/>

Ireland – Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme

The Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme is part of the Youth Guarantee aimed at young people aged 18 to 24 years. It consists of three options:

- 12 month sponsored placement in another European country;
- helping jobseekers find a job in Europe;
- apprenticeship programme in Germany.

Targeting of suitable candidates nationwide commenced in October 2014. Under the scheme the Department of Social Protection will fund some of the re-location costs and/or living costs incurred by jobseekers undertaking at least nine months' training/work experience abroad. Basic language training will be provided in advance and language acquisition while abroad is a compulsory element of the placement.

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Experience-Your-Europe.aspx>

3.2.1.3. Short-term measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market and structural measures taking into account youth

Besides the Youth Guarantee implementation (see Section 3.2.2.2.) which is often linked to long-term structural reforms, noteworthy fast-acting initiatives are those to prevent and re-integrate early school leavers (for instance free revision classes, tailored vocational training for socially disadvantaged or less gifted young people), job fairs, short-term first work experience offers or public work programmes.

Several countries adopted urgent labour market reform measures. For instance, **Spain's** Royal Decree-Law 3/2012 on Urgent Measures to Reform the Labour Market (10 February 2012) amended the training and learning contract in order to strengthen the employment of young people, and introduced measures encouraging open-ended contracts and job creation. The **Greek** operational programme Development in Human Resources (2013) provided funding to businesses to hire young people for acquiring professional experience. With the Act on Emergency Measures in Field of Labour Market and Parental Care (ZIUTDSV)⁴¹ in 2013, **Slovenia** introduced temporary youth employment incentives which seek to contribute to swift and stable youth employment. Employers are exempted from paying social security contributions till the end of 2014 (extended till the end of 2015 in 2014) if they employ young people under the age of 30 years for an indefinite period. Through its Job Protection Action Plan, **Hungary** offered social contribution tax benefits and vocational training contribution discounts to employers hiring young people under 25, which resulted in more than 150000 young people hired. **Croatia's** Act on Employment Incentives⁴² of 2012 aimed at facilitating

⁴¹ Official Gazette UL RS 63/2013 of 26.7.2013, Regulation No 2511.

⁴² *Zakon o poticanju zapošljavanja*, Official Gazette, 57/12.

access to first employment and work experience, facilitating access to professional or master craftsperson examination, ensuring the acquisition of work-related skills for a specific workplace without any additional costs for the employer.

Another example is **France**, which launched a ‘Jobs for the future’ scheme (*emplois d’avenir*) in November 2012. The programme supports young people with low education attainment and offers subsidised work contracts in the profit and non-profit sectors. In addition to gaining work experience, young people get access to training and counselling. By the end of 2014, 187000 young people had enrolled, which is more than the initial objective to get 150000 young people sign up for the scheme. **Denmark**’s cash benefit reform (*Kontanthjælpsreformen*) has a direct focus on young people under the age of 30 without ordinary education. The idea behind was that education is key to the stable integration of young people into the labour market. Furthermore, the reform created a greater incentive for benefit receivers under the age of 30 to find employment or enrol in an educational programme, as the cash benefits were reduced to the level of the state educational grant. Regarding young people, the overall focus of the cash benefit reform was to make sure that they have an education and remain an active part in society, leading to the successful integration into the labour market. The reform entered into force on 1 January 2014.

3.2.1.4. Developing career guidance and counselling services

Job search guidance or training courses are part of ‘supply-side’ measures encouraged by the Youth Guarantee. Under the section ‘Early intervention and activation’, one of the Youth Guarantee’s recommendations to Member States is to ‘enable employment services, together with other partners supporting young people, to provide personalised guidance and individual action planning, including tailor-made individual support schemes, based on the principle of mutual obligation at an early stage and continued follow-up with a view to preventing drop-out and ensure progression towards education and training or employment’. In this context, many countries strengthened the provision and quality of career guidance and counselling services.

Sweden’s new Education Act, which entered into force in 2011, stipulates that all pupils and students at every stage of the education system (from compulsory school throughout adult education) should have access to a person with sufficient competence as to meet their guidance needs for planning their forthcoming education and work. Guidance counsellors must be properly trained. In 2010/2011, there were 847 guidance counsellors working for the compulsory school system, which corresponds to one counsellor per 526 pupils. In upper secondary schools, there were 955 counsellors, or one counsellor per 500 pupils. In **Finland**, every person is entitled to guidance and counselling services, regardless of whether he or she is studying, working, unemployed or outside the labour market. Public sector education and employment authorities and education providers, normally municipalities, are the main actors responsible for guidance and counselling services. The division of duties between them is clear. Education and training institutions bear the main responsibility for guidance and counselling of pupils and students. The vocational guidance and career planning and educational and vocational information services, available at employment offices, are primarily intended for those outside education and training. All guidance and counselling services of employment offices,

however, are also available for students. Career plans are also tackled in youth workshops.

The **Czech Republic**'s national youth strategy contains an initiative to increase the effectiveness and quality of career counselling in leisure-based and non-formal education. This is part of a wider goal to promote greater cooperation between schools, education institutions, other educators, employers, professional and sectoral associations and labour offices to improve the young people's opportunities on the labour market. **Greece** also implemented a number of actions to raise the quality of career guidance services, such as regular training seminars for public and private sector career guidance counsellors, development of a job profile for career guidance counsellor, and preparation of a code of ethics for this profession.

The National Employment Action Plan of **Serbia** contains a strategy for career guidance and counselling which has already established career info corners in 120 local youth offices. More of these will follow in the course of 2014-2015. In **Croatia**, the public employment service developed a mobile expert team combining career guidance counsellors, employment counsellors, lawyers and other professionals. **Slovenia** also strengthened its policy on counselling work with young people. In April 2014, 40 new counsellors were hired by the public employment service. The aim of another project is to set up a network of regional career centres for young people by 2020. Offering regional guidance and counselling services is also the endeavour of **France**, where the pilot phase of a new type of public service collaboration between national and regional levels (tested in eight regions) has proven to better respond to citizens' needs. Therefore, it was decided in November 2014 to deploy this new *service public régional de l'orientation* (SPRO) across the remaining regions. Other countries have also introduced new approaches, such as **Luxembourg**, where career guidance services were centralised within the House of Guidance (*maison de l'orientation*) in September 2012.

It goes without saying that career guidance and counselling is also and increasingly provided through dedicated or specialised online portals, which sometimes integrate the possibility to create a personal account, to carry out self-assessments, etc. An example is the **Greek** career guidance portal for adolescents⁴³ launched at the end of 2012.

3.2.1.5. Lowering barriers to the free movement of workers across the EU

Besides their participation in the EURES network and the YfEJ scheme, several countries refer to the implementation of Directive 2014/54/EU of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers.⁴⁴ This directive addresses the lack of awareness or understanding of the rules by public and private employers, which is a major source of discrimination based on nationality. People also consider that they do not know where to turn to in the host Member State when faced with problems concerning their rights to free movement. The directive aims to help workers to overcome obstacles to working in another EU

⁴³ www.eoppep.gr/teens

⁴⁴ OJ L 128, 30.4.2014, p. 8-14.

country, notably by requiring Member States to designate bodies at national level to provide assistance to mobile EU workers and their families.

3.2.1.6. Facilitating reconciliation between professional and private life

Many countries maintained or introduced measures to keep or increase the number of childcare facilities and places available to families in need of it. Since the initial situation seems to vary greatly between countries, the targeted coverage rate mentioned ranges from at least 12% to 100%, also depending on the age group (under 3 or between 3 and 6 years old). The measures do not only aim to achieve better coverage but also seek to improve the quality of childcare available. In general, there is an increased focus on shared parental and paternity leave. Certificates or awards for family-friendly enterprises, such as delivered in **Slovenia** or **Austria**, are other means to facilitate the reconciliation between professional and private life and to generate cultural change.

3.2.1.7. Supporting and promoting young people's entrepreneurship

A broad range of measures promoting young people's entrepreneurship via entrepreneurship education, support to start-up funds and junior enterprises, mentoring programmes as well as – mainly national – networks and structures were taken by the different countries. These aim at improving the employability of young people by the development of relevant skills matching labour market needs, and/or providing an alternative way to get out of unemployment. Some of these measures are included in Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (**Luxembourg, Croatia**) and target, among others, NEETs. This is particularly highlighted by countries with high unemployment rates like **Spain** and **Portugal**. In other countries, such as the **Netherlands, Austria** and **France**, the emphasis is put on developing the creative potential of young people and encouraging innovation and business start-ups, with a special focus on SMEs or social enterprises. Some measures are also aimed at school and higher education teachers, enabling them to develop relevant competencies to support young people in entrepreneurship education (**France, Lithuania**). Another emphasis is put on establishing broad cross-sectoral cooperation and networking platforms between formal education, non-formal learning and the world of work: employers, businesses and employment services.

In **Poland**, entrepreneurship education is one of the priorities of education policy; the country has a comprehensive system of entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurship is a compulsory subject at school. **Denmark** put in place a national innovation strategy which aims to develop students' relevant skills and competencies from primary to PhD level. Similarly, in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, an action plan on entrepreneurship includes various measures, implemented also in school education, with the goal to equip youngsters with entrepreneurial skills. In **Spain**, an entrepreneurship and employment strategy has a strong focus on enhancing employability of young people through improvement of intermediation, incentives for hiring and promotion of entrepreneurship. **Croatia** developed plans to encourage self-employment of unemployed persons through financial incentives and professional assistance. In addition, a comprehensive Strategy of Entrepreneurship Development (2013-2020) includes a targeted entrepreneurship education programme 'Entrepreneurial Impulse', promoting entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, entrepreneurial culture, and self-employment

through entrepreneurship. In **Sweden**, a strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education was integrated in comprehensive reforms of the education system – entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial teaching are now part of the national teaching plan for lower education as well as in high schools. In **Portugal**, the business network programme RPGN supports young entrepreneurs from generating an idea to establishing a sustainable initiative.

In **Lithuania**, the National Entrepreneurship Action Plan (2014-2020) aims at creating a coherent entrepreneurship education system embedded in the lifelong learning continuum and embracing both formal education and extracurricular activities provided by youth work. The main pillars of the action plan are: improving the entrepreneurship learning environment; promoting students' creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership; entrepreneurship education; teachers' competencies; and stronger partnerships between schools, universities and companies. The plan receives funding from the Structural Funds. In 2013, **France** put in place an action plan to support students' entrepreneurship with the aim of creating 20000 youth enterprises.

In most cases the enlisted projects are implemented by stakeholders, including civil society organisations, with funding provided and monitored by relevant administrative bodies. An example is a comprehensive education programme for young people of all ages developed, which is implemented by the Junior Achievement **Serbia**⁴⁵ (partnership with local businesses). The **United Kingdom** Frontline London Campaign focuses on social business start-ups (partnership between the Cabinet Office and the daily newspaper *London Evening Standard*, with support of community organisations and volunteers). Close cooperation between the University of **Malta** and business organisations is the foundation for the Takeoff programme supporting enterprising graduates, students and staff to champion innovation and entrepreneurship. Support for start-ups is also at the core of the operational programme Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness in the **Czech Republic**. Equally, **Latvia** adopted measures to encourage innovation and start-ups to support young people in schools and at universities to become entrepreneurs. The programme includes practical training courses targeted at young people, seminars, competitions, events, and marketing activities. Financial aid and training was also provided through a national scheme for enhancing youth entrepreneurship in **Cyprus**, aiming at the creation of new and sustainable small and micro enterprises.

Creating an entrepreneurial mind-set and improving the acknowledgement of entrepreneur career is the aim of several initiatives addressed to children and young people of all ages in **Austria**, such as the Kids Business Week, seminars, junior enterprise, the programme for self-employment and start-up of the Alumni Association of the University of Vienna, as well as the entrepreneurship professorship in Klagenfurt, Linz and Vienna.

Since entrepreneurship is to be seen as a horizontal topic requiring a holistic cross-sectoral approach, a broad coalition of ministries in charge of education, youth, labour market and employment, enterprise and innovation, economy, industry and trade, and agriculture was set up in many countries. Many stakeholders were involved, including

⁴⁵ <http://www.ja-serbia.org/en>

chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, trade unions, youth networks, education centres and employment services, to conceive and implement relevant strategies and programmes.

In many countries the European Social Fund and other Structural Funds are an important source of financing these measures, alongside national public expenditures and private funding.

3.2.1.8. Measures promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

A number of countries have already introduced measures promoting sustainable development, investing in green economy and social economy with special attention to social enterprises. **Slovenia** adopted a legislative act on social entrepreneurship to increase the visibility and understanding of this business model. In most cases promoting social entrepreneurship is part of dedicated programmes or projects. For instance, the **Czech Republic** offers support, within the REVIT framework programme, to micro entrepreneurs or SMEs in economically problematic regions or to entrepreneurs having faced natural catastrophes. The programme primarily aims at increasing employment in particular regions and is not specifically addressed to young people. The **Irish** ECO-UNESCO's Green Pathways programme aims to train and progress participants onto employment in the green economy while building strong environmental, business, communication and leadership skills. Similarly, the Green Deal programme launched in the **Netherlands** fosters sustainable development in the fields of energy, elements, biodiversity, water and transport. The 'Innovation Challenge: Go Green'⁴⁶ is a competition for young people aged between 17 and 30, incentivising them to identify environmental problems that affect **Malta** and to come up with green innovation solutions. In **Denmark**, funding is provided to establish existing initiatives within sustainable and social entrepreneurship in further education, and to test selected initiatives in a pilot project and measure their effects.

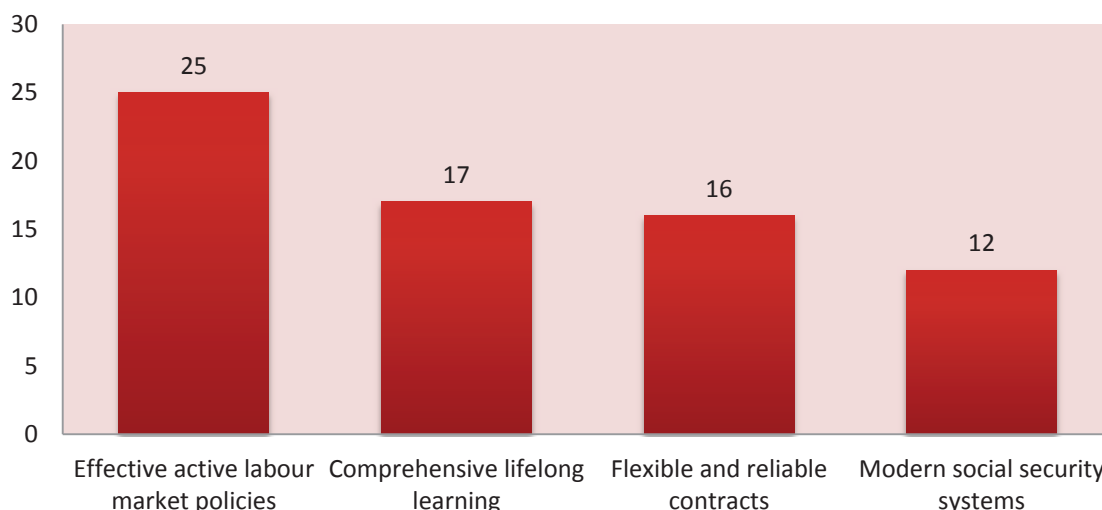
⁴⁶ https://www.um.edu.mt/create/notices/innovation_challenge_go_green

3.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

3.2.2.1. Flexicurity measures

In the Council resolution of 19 May 2011 on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment, Ministers acknowledged the importance of improving flexibility as well as security for boosting youth employment.

Figure 6 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of flexicurity measures taken at national level



Effective active labour market policies are amongst the flexicurity measures most frequently mentioned. Measures aimed at improving **flexibility** range from laws regulating flexible work arrangements (which are not specific to young persons) and subsidy schemes aimed at attracting people in the labour market or creating new jobs through flexible forms of employment to regulations on student jobs (lower taxation and social insurance contributions). A lot of attention is paid to skills development or upgrading, and to first (short-term) work experience offers for young people.

In terms of **security**, the countries refer to early activation measures, lifelong learning strategies, modernisation of social security systems (ensuring a higher level of security in the transitions between different jobs or between work and learning) or incentives for employers to offer young persons open-ended full-time contracts. In 2013, **Romania** amended its law regarding the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation⁴⁷ with the objective to stimulate employers to hire people who are looking for a job and to ensure the protection of persons within the unemployment insurance system. The recent structural labour market reform in **Italy**⁴⁸ gives gradually rising levels of labour protection to people hired on open-ended permanent contracts, but it also

⁴⁷ Law No 76/2002, amended and supplemented by Law No 250/2013.

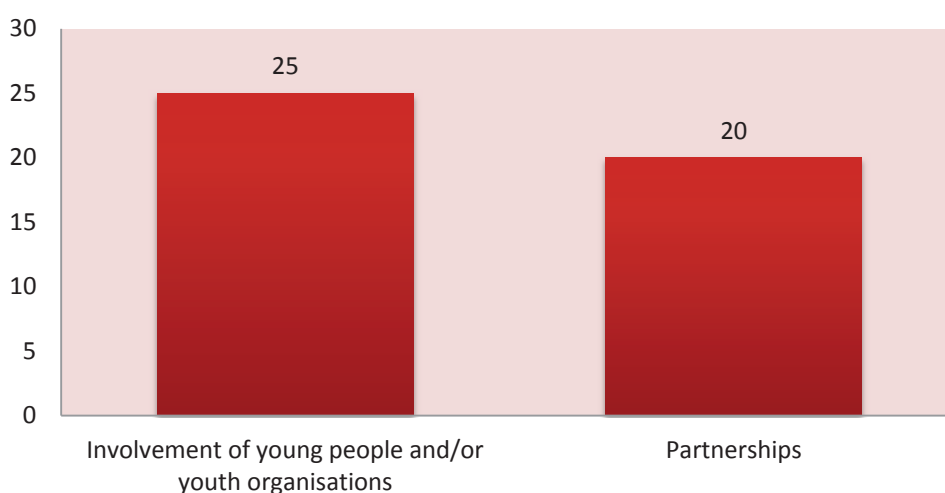
⁴⁸ LEGGE 10 dicembre 2014, n. 183.

softens protection against unfair dismissal. It should encourage firms to hire new staff and help combat unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.

3.2.2.2. Youth Guarantee

In the Youth Guarantee recommendation of 22 April 2013, Ministers agreed to make a good-quality offer to all young people up to age 25 of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

Figure 7 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the involvement of young people and/or youth organisations and the partnerships



Involvement of young people and/or youth organisations

Member States were asked to ensure consultation or involvement of young people and/or youth organisations in designing and further developing the Youth Guarantee scheme. Most of the countries consulted or involved their national youth councils or forums in the design, implementation and promotion of the national scheme. Other types of organisations listed are youth structures of social partners (both sides of industry), other non-governmental youth organisations, youth parliaments and youth information centres.

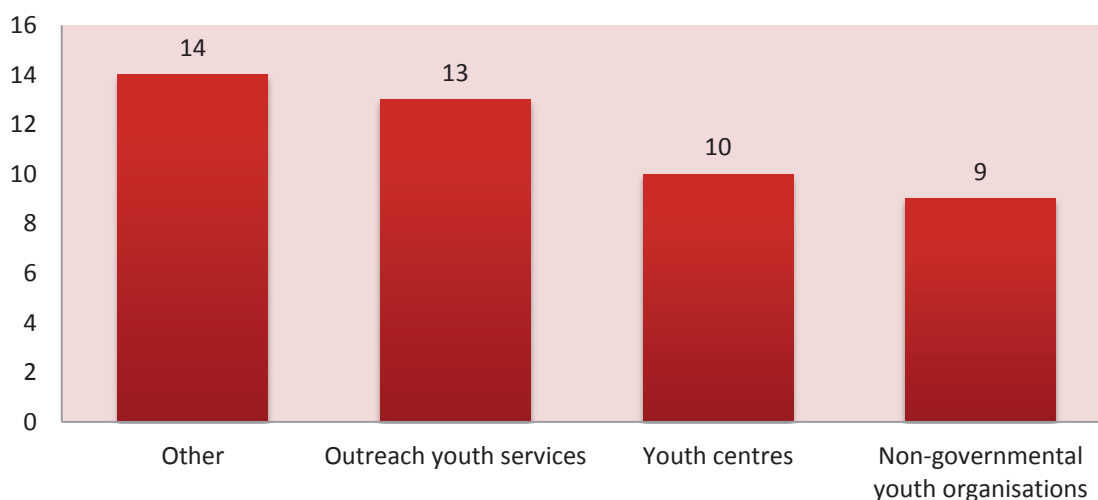
In **Malta**, European Youth Card holders and youth workers were also consulted. Young people in **Finland** were invited to evaluate the Youth Guarantee through a survey which fed into the overall evaluation and further development of the scheme. Finland is also an example for an institutionalised involvement: the Finnish Youth Cooperation *Allianssi*, a national service and lobbying organisation for youth work, is member of the interministerial working group on the Youth Guarantee. **Bulgaria's** Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was developed by an inter-institutional working group which included representatives of youth organisations. In **Lithuania**, representatives of ministries, both sides of industry and youth organisations signed a memorandum of cooperation on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Another example is the

Czech Republic where young people and non-governmental youth organisations are – alongside representatives of different ministries, social partners, regional authorities, municipalities and educational institutions – part of advisory boards established in each regional labour office in 2004. The national labour office is responsible for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. In **Romania**, the Young Entrepreneurs’ Association *Asociatia Patronatul Tinerilor Intreprinzatori din Romania* was consulted. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the youth council participates in a working group on the Youth Guarantee, which was established within the public employment service. In **Italy**, representative youth organisations were involved in the preparation of the operational programme of the Youth Employment Initiative as well as in the monitoring committee for the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Partnerships

Building up partnership-based approaches is an important feature of the Youth Guarantee. In two thirds of the countries, partnerships were established between public and private employment services, education and training institutions, career guidance services and with other specialised youth services. These specialised youth services are either non-governmental youth organisations, youth centres, outreach youth services or others (those mentioned include local youth offices, social work, municipalities, government bodies, public-private partnerships).

Figure 8 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of youth services involved in partnerships



In **Malta**, *Aġenzija Żgħażaġh*, which provides a number of services to young people, is one of the key institutions involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. In **Estonia**, the national youth council, the Estonian youth work centre and the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres are amongst the key organisations supporting and delivering the scheme. In **Austria**, these are the Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work ‘boJA’ and the youth information centres (*Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos*). The **Finnish** Youth Act laid down provisions on outreach youth work and multi-disciplinary cooperation at local level. The Youth Guarantee is seen as a way to make this kind of activities available all over the country. In **Croatia**, the public

employment service supports the development of Job Clubs (*Razvoj klubova za zapošljavanje mladih*), which offer intensive short-term targeted programmes for small groups of young people which are guided and managed by Job Club leaders. The programmes consist of tailor-made support and individualised service, such as training of job search skills, goal-setting and motivational workshops.

Finland – Tailor-made training provided by youth centres

Nuotta training is a service offered by the Finnish Youth Centres, a nationwide organisation founded in 1993 to promote youth centres in Finland. The service co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture relies on volunteerism, practical applications, a participatory spirit and community. These elements are implemented in either daily or intensive training that is tailor-made to suit the needs of the individual or group in question. The expertise of the youth centres in experiential and action-based pedagogy is instrumental in the training, where each of the youth centre's strong points and operating environments are used to the fullest.

<http://www.snk.fi/en/services/nuotta+training/>

Poland – Outreach youth services

Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy*, OHP) is a state organisation functioning under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The primary objective of OHP is to create adequate conditions for proper social and vocational development of young people, including special activities that are addressed to disadvantaged young people to support them in the process of going out of poverty, unemployment and social pathology effects. Actions taken by OHP are addressed to young people aged 15 to 25 years. The tasks are carried out by the central headquarters of OHP and 16 regional headquarters together with 49 youth education and job centres and nine education and nurture centres.

The aim of the cooperation of OHP at local level is to ensure the widest outreach to young people requiring special support in terms of education and employment. OHP has a network of over 700 units of care, education, training and labour market services, spread throughout the country (most often located in smaller towns). OHP units have developed an effective system of reaching young people who are disadvantaged in the labour market, through cooperation with schools, education offices, churches (parish communities) and other institutions. OHP cooperates also with local governments and its specialised units (social welfare centers, family assistance centers, etc.).

<http://www.ohp.pl/en/>

Estonia – The contribution of youth work to the Youth Guarantee

Youth work contributes to the development of young people and helps to acquire knowledge and life skills. In preparation for working life, methods increasing young people's contact with working life and developing their social skills are of utmost importance.

During the period 2008-2013, support from the European Social Fund helped to increase the quality of local youth work institutions in solving young people's problems and the possibilities of young people to acquaint themselves with working life. The 'Startline' website (www.stardiplats.ee) was set up, helping young people to describe their acquired knowledge and skills to employers.

To develop social skills, young people can volunteer in activities offered by youth organisations. In addition to participating in youth work in Estonia, each year several dozens of young people have the possibility to work in youth work organisations outside Estonia via the European Voluntary Service scheme.

<http://www.entk.ee/developingyouthworkquality>

3.2.2.3. Developing entrepreneurial and creative competences

The above-mentioned European expert group on how to promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people recommended developing concrete tools to enable young people to develop entrepreneurial and creative competences through non-formal and informal learning. Most of the quoted measures aiming at this are part of strategies, programmes or projects already described above. Some documents, for instance national youth strategies in the **Czech Republic** and **Serbia**, emphasise the role of non-formal learning in developing transversal skills. Specific national structures and programmes also support youth work and non-formal learning. In **Hungary**, the 'Design Terminal', a national creative industry centre promoting and strengthening entrepreneurs, provides free of charge mentoring and consulting sessions in order to help young people gaining the skills and knowledge needed to enter the labour market.

In response to the expert group's recommendations, **Slovakia** organised a regional round table gathering representatives of regional employers, secondary schools and universities, youth NGOs and other youth work structures as well as regional and local administrative bodies with the aim to find common ground for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning. This led to a declaration on the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work. A follow-up of this initiative is a national school competition promoting non-formal education, funded by the European Social Fund. Slovakia also included the youth worker profession in its National Qualifications Framework with a clearly defined set of competencies.

Greece – Ideatree Contest

Ideatree is a nationwide contest on innovation and youth entrepreneurship for young people aged 16 to 35 years old. It was set up by the Foundation of Youth & Lifelong Learning of Greece (INEDIBIM) in 2014.

The objectives of the competition are:

- enhancement and promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and extroversion of young workforce of our country;
- promotion of research, innovation production and extroversion as basic philosophy on upgrading;
- competitiveness of the country and the promotion of its creative and productive potential;
- encouragement of start-ups in sectors of high added value and innovation.

This project was funded with support from the Lifelong Learning programme.

<http://ideatree.gr/>

3.2.2.4. Youth entrepreneurship fostering social inclusion of young people

In the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014, Ministers agreed on measures to boost youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people, especially in the area of social entrepreneurship.

Promoting entrepreneurial education from an early age

Most measures promoting entrepreneurial education from an early age and highlighting the role of non-formal and informal learning are part of general strategies described above; some countries highlight additional initiatives in this area. For instance, **Luxembourg** supported innovative educational projects which enhance entrepreneurial spirit ('Go-first', 'Go-on', 'Go-further'). In its Promoting Entrepreneurship and Flexibility programme, **Slovenia** developed a holistic approach to entrepreneurship education, which involves all school types and levels and also puts emphasis on training of professionals in schools. A broad coalition of partners was established, and an informal working group on entrepreneurship in education shall integrate entrepreneurship in a systematic way into the education institutions. Amongst other initiatives, the **Netherlands** launched a Young Entrepreneur programme for all levels of school (from primary school to university) with the aim of ensuring that each student gets in touch with entrepreneurship over the course of his or her education. In **Estonia**, the Entrepreneurship Awareness programme aims at enhancing entrepreneurship spirit and culture in society as well as helping potential and operating companies to develop, by providing a range of services such as consultancy and training. There is a strong focus on projects highlighting the importance of non-formal learning.

Promoting youth work and voluntary activities

Many measures promote youth work and voluntary activities as key instruments in developing transversal skills, which are needed in running businesses and entrepreneurial action. For instance, **Cyprus**' 2014-2020 Lifelong Learning strategy foresees the establishment of a mechanism for validation of non-formal learning in addition to enhancing cooperation between the youth board of Cyprus and youth NGOs, and to developing a specific strategy on entrepreneurship including formal and non-formal education. In **Austria**, a specific law on volunteering supports the development of quality volunteering services and helps acknowledging the educational effects of volunteering, providing also financial support. **Slovenia**'s Public Interest in Youth Sector Act is a harmonised set of various sectoral public policies with the aim of integrating youth in economic, cultural and political life of their communities; it also serves to develop youth work and support youth organisations. In addition, youth awards recognise extraordinary achievements in the youth sector. **Serbia** carried out a mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competencies gained through non-formal learning in youth work, demonstrating their relevance to young people's employability. The research served as a basis for developing a recognition tool for competencies gained through youth work in Serbia. This tool should help young people increase their employability through systematic competence development and career planning.

Supporting business start-ups and social enterprises

Many countries have put measures in place which support business start-ups and social enterprises in overcoming considerable barriers to access finance, support services and mentoring possibilities. They are either part of broader entrepreneurship programmes or specific funding schemes. The **United Kingdom**, for instance, has established a New Enterprise Allowance⁴⁹ scheme to support business start-ups for inactive people aged 18 or over. These loans are combined with mentoring support. **Finland** has introduced (as part of the Youth Guarantee) entrepreneurship workshops for young people under the age of 30 for the development of their business ideas. Subsequently, participants can apply for start-up grants. The **Czech Republic** offers support for start-ups ('CzechAccelerator'), coaching, mentoring and counselling ('CzechEkoSystem') and a guarantee programme for social enterprises (2015-2023). **Portugal** also created a support programme for social businesses. The **Netherlands** set up a Social Enterprise Lab as a community of practice. In **Lithuania**, social entrepreneurship is promoted via a national entrepreneurship action plan (2014-2020), whilst France does so via a *plan entrepreneurs des quartiers*. **Poland**'s national programme for entrepreneurship supports new and existing enterprises. It is also addressed to young people and aims at building a positive image of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial learning, including business creation.

⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

Ireland – *Foróige* Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

Foróige is a leading youth organisation in Ireland who operates the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programme in cooperation with educational institutions. In 2013 it received funding from the Ulster Bank's Community Impact Fund.

Foróige NFTE is committed to changing the lives of young people in disadvantaged communities by enabling them to develop core skills in business and enterprise, and in doing so help them to unlock their individual talents and potential. *Foróige* NFTE operates in-school and out-of-school programmes, both of which have been shown to be successful in increasing school completion and college attendance rates. The programme is delivered to young people from 12 to 18 years of age through schools and youth centres throughout Ireland. The programme runs from September to May. Each year, teachers and youth workers attend an intensive training programme 'NFTE University', which equips them with the necessary skills and resources to successfully deliver the programme directly to young people.

During the programme, students study all aspects of starting and successfully running a business; receive a seed grant to start their business; visit wholesalers to buy their business supplies; engage with entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, business executives, community leaders; visit local and national companies; work with business corporate mentors; sell their products at the NFTE Class Trade Fair; and prepare and present their business plan to a panel of judges. In 2013, 1 500 young people graduated from NFTE.

<http://www.foroige.ie/our-work/youth-entrepreneurship>

Increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new concept; only few countries have legislation to lay down its definition, objectives, principles and to better capture this new type of business. In the **Czech Republic** there is a Social Entrepreneurship Act; **Latvia** plans to adopt regulation by 2018, and **Lithuania** has a specific act under preparation with an implementation period till 2020. On the basis of its Social Entrepreneurship Act, **Slovenia** has set up an implementation strategy for 2013-2016. In other countries social entrepreneurship aspects are included in general legislation or strategies linked to enterprise or employment issues, for instance in the national action plan for youth employment in **Cyprus**, in the national employment strategy in **Slovakia**, and in the Youth Guarantee programme in the French Community of **Belgium**, while the Flemish Community developed a Social Innovation Factory.⁵⁰ In 2014, **Poland** set up a national programme for the development of social economy, which outlines the general direction in this sector. In the education and youth fields the programme focuses on entrepreneurial learning from the earliest stage of education, by promoting and implementing cooperative student ideas, traineeships in social enterprises and social economy as well as creating youth funds for the development of informal youth initiatives. **Greece** adopted a

⁵⁰ <http://www.socialeinnovatiefabriek.be/nl/english#sthash.TwtqpMPF.dpbs>

Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship legal act in 2011 and uses its operational programme Development in Human Resources (2013) to provide information, counselling, coaching and mentoring for new social entrepreneurs and training in social economy and social entrepreneurship.

Enhancing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills

Traineeships, apprenticeships as well as learning mobility activities, including volunteering and training courses, are the most frequently reported measures which facilitate exchanges, sharing of experiences and other learning activities enhancing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. The **Czech** project ‘Internship in Companies – learning by practicing’ was funded by the ESF for people with little or without work experience including the unemployed. **Turkey** offers Applied Entrepreneurship Training programmes to support young entrepreneurs. In **Croatia**, the 2013-2020 Entrepreneurship Development strategy and the Entrepreneurial Impulse programme include education for craft to enable the acquisition of key skills and competencies for craft occupations, but also to involve small business entities in education. In this context scholarships and apprenticeships were financed by the ESF.

Spain – Social network *Emprende XL*

Emprende XL is an online platform functioning like a social network set up in Spain in 2013. Its main objective is to promote entrepreneurship amongst young people up to 35 years of age, and to act as reference point for new entrepreneurship projects. It provides training and counselling to young entrepreneurs who are involved in this network. It also offers services for improving collaboration between various actors and to obtain funding for the projects involved.

The social network allows users to share their ideas; there are more than 2100 free training hours available through an e-learning platform; experts’ advice and experience from other entrepreneurs are also provided. Moreover, users may, through the platform, find public and private sources of funding to implement their projects.

To date, *Emprende XL* has had almost 4000 registered users, but it is planned to extend its outreach to some Latin American countries. The platform was established through collaboration between the Spanish Youth Institute and Biznet, a private company.

www.emprendexl.com

Cross-sectoral cooperation to create favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs

Taking into account the complex environment that influences young people’s life, the need for cross-sectoral, inter-institutional cooperation to find adequate responses to young people’s needs is frequently highlighted. In most countries such platforms and networks involving various sectors are already established as part of strategies, action plans or programmes linked to entrepreneurship, education and employment. **Lithuania**’s National Youth Policy Development programme (2011-2019) strives

towards inter-institutional and cross-sectoral cooperation in developing a coherent, evidence- and knowledge-based youth policy. **Slovenia** set up an entrepreneurship programme to bring together previously fragmented funding. And the **Czech** Concept of Support for Small and Midrange Entrepreneurs (2014-2020) promotes projects which aim to create favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs.

3.2.3. *Other policy measures in this field of action*

One third of the countries list policy measures here but most of the topics are already identified in the youth-related aims and possible initiatives of the EU Youth Strategy. They concern the provision of suitable skills, support to young people's entrepreneurship and more particularly to start-up funds, traineeships and other measures to stimulate the integration of young people in the labour market.

3.3. **Youth-led initiatives and actions at EU level**

For the European Youth Forum (YFJ), **quality employment** is essential to ensuring a decent life for young people all over Europe. Against the background of the economic crisis that impacted heavily on the quality of employment, the YFJ analysed the evolution of working conditions, skills usage, income and wages as well as job stability and job security for young people. The results of this research are available in the 2013 publication 'Quality Jobs for Young People'.⁵¹

The Council, in its Resolution on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment (May 2011), stressed the importance of flexicurity measures to boost youth employment. However, the YFJ's report 'Youth in the crisis – What went wrong?'⁵² (2014) reveals that many Member States imposing austerity measures disproportionately reduced the protection of young people by cutting minimum wages and unemployment benefits. The YFJ therefore thinks that measures ensuring better protection of young people in the labour market must be put back on the EU agenda.

The YFJ is in favour of the **Youth Guarantee** and has closely followed the developments since the adoption of the Council recommendation to this effect. Based on the publication 'Youth organisations and the Youth Guarantee in Europe'⁵³ (2013), the forum and its membership have identified several hurdles in the Member States, such as the need to prioritise the Youth Guarantee and make it part of a broader investment programme in public employment services and education and training systems. It is also crucial that Member States ensure quality offers and protect young people from ending up in precarious work or poorly designed training schemes without additional benefit for their personal and professional development. Another problem is that too many young people have never heard of the Youth Guarantee. Finally, only a few Member States have effectively involved young people in shaping, implementing and monitoring the Youth Guarantee. This, however, is a vital element of the scheme because it promotes

⁵¹ http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu

⁵² <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

⁵³ http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_youthorganisationsandtheyouthgu

transparency, increases the outreach and ensures that the programme is tailored to the specific needs of young people.

The above-mentioned publication also identified good examples of successful cooperation between national governments and youth organisations. For instance, Slovenia's national youth council was heavily involved in the design of the Youth Guarantee. It led the corresponding information campaign and this approach proved to be successful: according to a 2014 Flash Eurobarometer survey,⁵⁴ young people in Slovenia are much more aware of the scheme than other nationalities.

The YFJ draws attention to the disappointment felt among organised young people at being denied any real input into a policy that directly impacts on them. Although the forum participated in several EU-level events, such as the 'Youth Guarantee: Making it Happen' conference (organised by the Commission in April 2014), there is little involvement of organised young people in monitoring implementation at EU level. For instance, young people were not formally consulted when the Employment Committee⁵⁵ put in place the Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee.

The YFJ has also called for a **Quality Framework for Traineeships** to combat youth unemployment, precarious employment and social exclusion. Whilst the Council recommendation of 10 March 2014 set out quality principles regarding the education component of internships in the EU, it did not address the most pressing area of concern for young people – the issue of remuneration. The YFJ believes that too many young Europeans are being exploited when first entering the labour market through unpaid traineeships. Therefore the forum's European Quality Charter for Internships and Apprenticeships⁵⁶ calls for a minimum level of remuneration for traineeships taking place outside education. In the YFJ's view, governments have a duty to adopt legislation that ensures equal and fair treatment of trainees in the workplace, going above and beyond the Council recommendation. The forum also actively worked with businesses to jointly draft an Employers' Guide to Quality Internships.⁵⁷ This guide is aimed at employers who are interested in setting up traineeship schemes or who would like to improve their traineeship opportunities for young people.

Additionally, the forum and its member organisations contribute to promoting **entrepreneurial and creative skills** through non-formal and informal learning. With its 2014 publication 'Money Grows on Trees – Youth Organisations Setting up Cooperatives'⁵⁸ the YFJ has provided a six-step guide to help young entrepreneurs set up their own cooperative. Besides creating new jobs for young people and stimulating

⁵⁴ Flash Eurobarometer *European Youth in 2014* of the European Parliament (EP EB395) of April 2014.

⁵⁵ Advisory committee for Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO).

⁵⁶ <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-internships/>

⁵⁷ <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/an-employers-guide-to-quality-internships/>

⁵⁸ http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/05/YFJ_MoneyGrowsOnTreesweb.pdf

economic activity, cooperatives are particularly valuable because they transfer the principle of democracy to the business world. Cooperatives tend to be financially autonomous from the financial markets, which makes them less affected by international crises. They empower their members, are embedded in their local communities, promote responsible and sustainable management and often work in close cooperation with public authorities. Finally, cooperatives can also be a part of a financial sustainability strategy of youth organisations, enabling them to continue operating in times of severe public budget cuts.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Under this strand of the EU Youth Strategy, the social exclusion and poverty of young people and perpetuation of such problems should be prevented, while mutual solidarity between society and young people should be strengthened. Another aim is to promote equal opportunities for all and to combat all forms of discrimination.

4.1. EU initiatives and action

Fighting poverty and social exclusion is one of the headline targets of **Europe 2020**, the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 seems difficult to achieve, given that the unemployment and poverty and social exclusion levels in Europe have reached record highs due largely to the economic crisis in 2008 and subsequent recessions in the majority of Member States.

Young people are particularly vulnerable and the number of policies aimed at them and their social inclusion has increased in the aftermath of the crisis. The **European platform against poverty and social exclusion**⁵⁹ is one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy. It is designed to help EU countries reach the above-mentioned headline target. It aims inter alia at delivering actions across the whole policy spectrum such as the labour market, minimum income support, healthcare, education, housing and access to basic banking accounts and at making better use of EU funds to support social inclusion. It also provides the frame for working with civil society and for enhanced policy coordination among EU countries through the use of the open method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion and the **Social Protection Committee**⁶⁰ in particular. The social situation of children and of young people in Europe⁶¹ was discussed in the **Social Protection Committee** in 2013 and 2014.

In February 2013, the Commission adopted a **Social Investment Package** calling particularly for investment in children and young people to increase their opportunities in life. It includes a Commission recommendation against child poverty, pointing to the need for children to have access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services, and a right to participate. An overall emphasis is put on preventive approaches and early intervention. In this context, the Commission built an inventory of 140 ICT-enabled social innovation initiatives of which 50 are focussed on youth initiatives, addressing mainly education and training, employment, employability and social inclusion.⁶²

⁵⁹ COM(2010) 758 final of 16.12.2010.

⁶⁰ Advisory committee for Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO).

⁶¹ *Social Europe – Aiming for inclusive growth – Annual report of the Social Protection Committee on the social situation in the European Union* (2014), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

⁶² Research project 'IESI – ICT-Enabled Social Innovation in support to the implementation of the EU Social Investment Package', <http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/eInclusion.IESI.html>.

The EU acts on behalf of EU citizens to prevent them being discriminated against on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and sex, and has introduced and initiated a broad set of measures⁶³ to combat different forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia. In 2015, the Commission published a report entitled ‘Overview of **youth discrimination** in the European Union’.⁶⁴ It focuses on two areas of discrimination from the perspective of young people, namely discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The report found that improving the quality of education and employment for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) and ethnic minority youth requires an inclusive environment. This can be achieved through training of teachers and creation of youth networks, as well as awareness-raising on rights and prospects of these vulnerable groups.

Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (2014-2020), the Commission currently supports the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO). This organisation promotes youth empowerment and leadership, builds the capacity of member organisations and argues for LGBTQ youth and student rights at European level.

Another activity regarding **information and education activities for young people about their rights** is the Commission ‘Consumer Classroom’ project launched in 2013, aiming at promoting consumer education.⁶⁵ This multilingual website encourages and facilitates the teaching of consumer education in European secondary schools; it is addressed to teachers – all across Europe – of students aged 12 to 18, counting more than 21 000 registered users, including over 13 600 teachers who are part of a dynamic web community throughout the EU.

The Commission proposed in November 2013 a directive on procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings.⁶⁶ This directive will lay down **minimum rules concerning children involved in criminal proceedings**, taking account of their particular vulnerability (e.g. mandatory assistance by a lawyer). In addition, any deprivation of liberty of children should be a measure of last resort and alternative measures should be explored. The Commission also adopted a recommendation on procedural safeguards for all vulnerable persons suspected or accused in criminal proceedings including also children.⁶⁷

⁶³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

⁶⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/overview_youth_discrimination_en.pdf

⁶⁵ <http://www.consumerclassroom.eu/>

⁶⁶ COM(2013) 822 final of 27.11.2013. In accordance with international law instruments, any individual below the age of 18 years will be considered as a child.

⁶⁷ C(2013) 8178 final of 27.11.2013.

Children who become victims of crime will be better protected and will get better access to justice thanks to the **Victims' Directive**,⁶⁸ adopted in 2012 and due to be implemented in the Member States by 16 November 2015.

European youth cooperation on social inclusion

Following publication of the 2012 EU Youth Report, three sets of Council conclusions and one Council resolution⁶⁹ relating to social inclusion of young people were adopted under the EU Youth Strategy. This is the result of the Trio Presidency of Ireland (January-June 2013), Lithuania (July-December 2013) and Greece (January-June 2014), whose main priority was to tackle social inclusion from different angles.

First, the Council conclusions on the **contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people** make it clear that youth work can enhance the skill sets of young people while addressing the barriers they encounter, and may be particularly beneficial for young people with fewer opportunities; these conclusions advocate mechanisms to ensure that youth work is quality-based, outcomes-focused and evidence-informed, and can reach out to more young people, especially those at risk of social exclusion. Second, the Council conclusions on **enhancing the social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs)** underline the need to focus on this vulnerable group of young people with an individually tailored and flexible approach to effectively and successfully (re)integrating them into the labour market, the education or training system, and social life. Third, the Council adopted conclusions on **promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of all young people**.

The Council resolution on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014) lists the priority areas which emerged from the Structured Dialogue and youth conferences in Dublin, Vilnius and Thessaloniki, seeking to enhance the social inclusion of all young people in Europe: promoting equal opportunities for all young people; promoting cooperation between education authorities, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders; promoting equal access of young people to rights and to opportunities; and strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation on and between local, regional, national and European levels. The importance of focusing on the **participation and social inclusion of young people with a migrant background**, and the role of youth work and youth policy to deal with the growing diversity among all young people, had already been underlined under the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU (July-December 2012).

The Commission published the **Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity strategy in the field of youth** in December 2014. It outlines the support and possibilities available through the Erasmus+ programme (youth) for inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57-73.

⁶⁹ All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

⁷⁰ Overall close to 24% of Youth in Action participants were young people with fewer opportunities.

The strategy also sets out the aims to be reached and defines the target groups. It seeks to ensure that Erasmus+ responds positively to diversity in the field of youth: ‘Diversity in all its forms is referred to throughout, alongside inclusion. This ensures there is a dual focus – not only on including young people but also on strengthening the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to fully accept, support and promote the differences in society’.⁷¹

The European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013) supported research activities related to the social inclusion of youth at the margins of society.⁷²

EU-funded research projects on social inclusion

Ongoing FP7 projects:

- SocIEtY – Social Innovation, Empowering the Young for the Common Good, proposes a shift in how inequality among young people and its ensuing disadvantages can be tackled, applying the capability approach (<http://www.society-youth.eu/>)
- CITISPYCE – Combating inequalities through innovative social practices of, and for, young people in cities across Europe (<http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/research-centres/interland/citispyce/>)

Ongoing Horizon 2020 project:

- EXCEPT – Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: cumulative disadvantages, coping strategies, effective policies and transfer

4.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

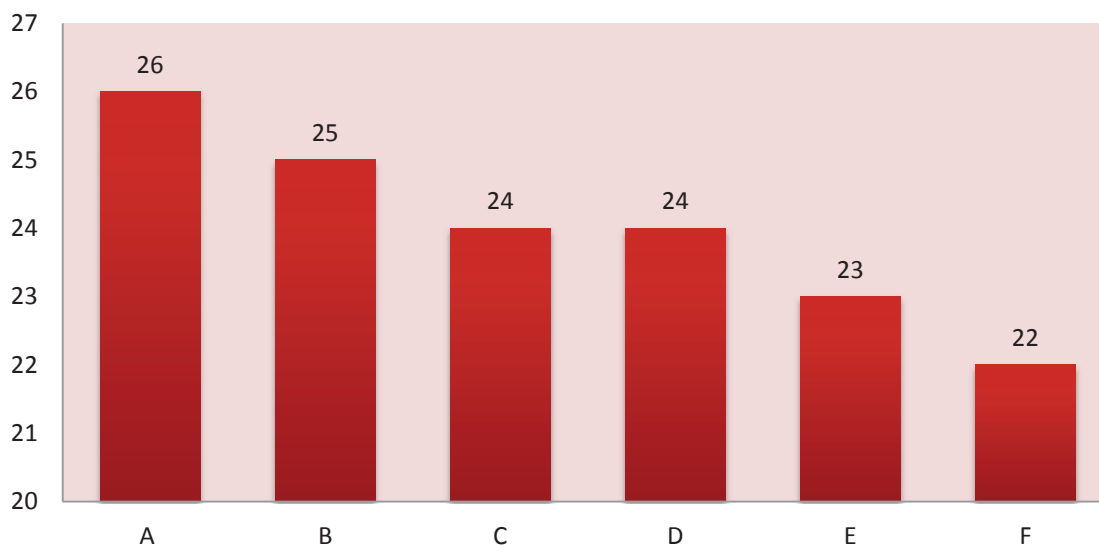
4.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

The main measures at national level concern support to youth work and youth centres as well as facilitating access to quality services. Initiatives supporting the development of intercultural awareness amongst young people arrive in second position. Globally, a significant amount of countries have developed, for the major part after 2010, measures in all areas mentioned below. This clearly shows the importance attached to the integration of socially excluded young people. Cross-sectoral cooperation was widely used for the initiation, implementation and monitoring of these measures.

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/inclusion-diversity-strategy_en.pdf

⁷² http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/social-inclusion-of-youth_en.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

Figure 9 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of social inclusion



- A – Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion
- B – Development of intercultural awareness
- C – Addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion
- D – Promoting access to quality services
- E – Promoting specific support for young families
- F – Supporting youth information and education about their rights

4.2.1.1. Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion

The majority of countries took measures in support of youth work and youth centres to improve social inclusion. Many of them developed national youth programmes that enclose general policies on social inclusion and on the development of youth work and youth centres. This is the case for example of **Latvia**, **Lithuania** and **Slovenia**. A number of countries have specific youth work strategies⁷³ in place, such as the **United Kingdom** with the Scottish strategy ‘Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019’. **Estonia**’s European Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013’ aims at developing youth work quality.

Several Member States strengthened the network of youth centres, such as **Luxembourg**, which set up a national network of local youth centres, and **Finland** with its youth centres network aiming at developing youth work methods, spreading knowledge and promoting youth mobility both at national and international level. **Austria** also created a network of youth centres (the Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work ‘boJA’), and the **Netherlands** established the *Nederlands Jeugdinstituut*. **Malta** founded ‘Youth Cafés’, a welcoming place for young people offering special services. **Sweden** and the **Czech Republic** provide direct financial support to youth organisations.

⁷³ See table 2 in Section 2.2.2.

4.2.1.2. Development of intercultural awareness

Most countries adopted various measures to support intercultural awareness amongst young people. **Denmark**, for instance, launched an ‘Initiative Part of the National Strategy against Honour-Related Conflicts’ to provide information and open a dialogue between youngsters with a view to changing attitudes towards honour-related conflicts. Developing intercultural awareness at school and in cultural institutions is the purpose of the **Netherlands’** *Cultuureducatie met kwaliteit* programme. **Slovenia** established a ‘Youth Ambassadors of Intercultural Dialogue’ programme to facilitate understanding of other cultures; this is based on youth participation. This country also launched ‘The Role Models Attract’ campaign, which is made of video compilations on various topics concerning intercultural awareness that can be used by educators, counsellors, mentors, cultural animators and others. One of these videos, ‘Richness in Diversity’, promotes key competences needed in a multicultural environment. In **Finland**, an essential criterion for awarding grants to youth organisations is the promotion of multiculturalism and equality. **Sweden** launched an action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, which is specifically targeted at young people. While the Flemish Community of **Belgium** published a call for projects regarding tolerance and anti-homophobia, the French Community developed a *Histoires croisées* programme to facilitate collaboration between youth organisations, youth centres, local youth movement groups and public youth services. The aim is to share experiences amongst youth groups from different social backgrounds. Lastly, **Austria** kicked off a global learning strategy with the purpose of providing young people with educational responses to the globalisation process. Since 2010, there has been a counselling centre specialised on questions related to youth extremism,⁷⁴ including prevention, intervention and a helpline.

4.2.1.3. Supporting youth information and education about their rights

Many countries provide support to youth information and education about young people’s rights. Most measures were taken after 2010. The tendency is that these are included in broader national youth (work) strategies or other governmental documents (for instance in **Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Sweden, Croatia** and the **Czech Republic**).

Denmark, however, launched specific campaigns and education activities on children’s rights with a particular focus on privacy, violence and children in a divorce situation. **Luxembourg** and **Austria** set up online portals, providing young people with a range of information, among others about their rights and obligations. The Ombudsman for Children in **Finland** and the Central Union for Child Welfare, an NGO, promote the rights of children and young people. In **Italy**, a specific policy on children’s rights was initiated in 2011; there now exists a ‘National Authority for Children and Adolescents’. Similarly, in 2013, the Flemish Parliament Act on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children’s rights entered into force in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**.

⁷⁴ <https://www.familienberatung.gv.at/beratungsstelleextremismus>

4.2.1.4. Addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion

Measures addressing youth homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a focus on young people, taken in many countries mostly after 2010, are usually based on cross-sectoral cooperation. A range of countries carried out studies, reports or reviews on the current level of poverty and housing needs of young people.

Czech Republic – *Programy finanční gramotnosti* (Financial Literacy programmes)

‘Financial Literacy’, an NGO, launched different programmes to develop projects in the field of further education of citizens – especially young people and children – in the area of financial literacy, by teaching people how to effectively manage their own properties, in particular regarding their financial resources. The objective is to use better knowledge acquired as prevention instrument against school bullying, crime of children and youth, gambling, over-indebtedness, social exclusion, family and affiliate crises, extremism, fear of old age as well as other negative phenomena.

In 2014, the NGO was awarded, by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, a certificate accreditation giving it the legal status of a training institution until the end of 2017.

<http://www.financnigramotnost.eu/stranka/english-summary/78/>

The conclusions of the 2015 poverty report issued by the German-speaking Community of **Belgium** draw the attention on the need to harmonise and better coordinate the living space available. **Denmark** also published an annual poverty review and launched a study on how to tackle social and material deprivation linked to economic poverty. **Finland** carried out a study on the experience, views and problems linked to housing issues of young people, with a special focus on immigrants. Many other countries implemented national programmes and strategies or adopted regulations related to this issue. Amongst other development and reform programmes, **Bulgaria** adopted a ‘National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Encouragement of Social Inclusion 2020’ to tackle youth homelessness, housing and financial exclusion. **Ireland** also has a youth homelessness strategy in place, while **Denmark** provides temporary transitional housing for the most vulnerable young homeless people through social reserve agreements in 2014 and 2015. The country also works on solid preventive and early intervention targeted at young homeless people as well as young people considered at risk of becoming homeless. **Luxembourg** created housing structures for young people in distress as well, and **Malta** built temporary to permanent residential homes and provided aid in the transitional phase. **Poland**’s Flat for the Young programme provides public funds for young married couples, single parents and singles (until 35 years) who buy their first flat.

Regarding financial exclusion of young people, the **Netherlands** has taken measures in support of young people and their parents to enable them to pay for the education system, whereas **Finland** protects minors from negative effects of gambling by enhancing the age limit to 18 years and by restricting gambling advertisement. The **United Kingdom**

(England) launched a ‘Fair Chance Fund’ to support young homeless NEETs in entering employment, education, or training.

4.2.1.5. Promoting access to quality services

Almost all countries took measures promoting access to quality services for young people, and this mostly after the inception of the EU Youth Strategy. The establishment of youth centres which provide information targeted at young people is a common feature.

In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, youth advice centres (*Jongeren Advies Centrum*, JAC) offer this type of support at local level, where young people can come along with their questions and problems. Likewise, the **Netherlands** has central points for youth, children and their parents, but also for professionals. **Slovenia** created a centre for information and career guidance within its national employment service, which is specifically targeted at pupils, students and young adults.

Access to psychological services is also increasingly being promoted. In **Cyprus**, the youth board implements an ‘Anger Management Group for Adolescents’ project, aimed at reducing the risk of dropping out of school for adolescents with risky and aggressive behaviour. The project’s purpose is to facilitate access to psychological services for young people whose families cannot support them. **Finland** has a new law on pupil and student welfare services with the objective to improve well-being in the school environment, notably by providing services of a psychologist and welfare officer in secondary education.

In several other countries (such as **Croatia, Ireland, Latvia** and **Malta**), enhancing the capacity of service providers targeted at young people at risk of social exclusion is part of the national youth strategy.

Sweden – The Online Youth Friendly Clinic (OMU)

The Swedish Online Youth Clinic (OMU) is a website whose overall aim is to improve young people’s access to information related to sexual health and gender issues. It was set up in November 2008 and is run by the ‘Council for Care’, a non-commercial organisation funded by the Swedish regions. In Sweden, most regions have youth clinics, which specialise in sexual health and psychiatric care and are staffed by a range of professionals, including midwives, therapists and social workers. The success of these clinics led them to decide to set up a website, which young women and men aged between 13 and 25 can turn to for advice and services regarding birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease tests.

<http://www.umo.se/Andra-sprak/Om-UMO/About-UMO/>

4.2.1.6. Promoting specific support for young families

The majority of countries provide financial support to young families. The **Czech Republic**, for instance, took specific measures on taxation policy, social welfare and financial support for housing by taking into account the specific financial situation of young families. **Estonia** also financially helps young families to buy or renovate their homes. A state guarantee for mortgage has also been developed in order to allow young families to buy their own dwelling. **Italy** disposes of a fund for housing young families and young precarious parents. **Poland** financially and legally supports young parents who leave foster care, and young parents who need help in rising up their child.

Many other measures are worth mentioning, such as the establishment, by the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, of a new public organisation providing information, opportunities and global support to young children's caretakers (Flemish Parliament Act on preventive care for young children – Agency Child & Family). **Sweden** launched a governmental 'Assignment to Implement Actions to Promote Young Parents to Complete their Education', and **Greece** developed a project named 'School for Parents', offering various courses on issues parents are (or could be) faced with in the education of their children, or on global and specific knowledge on family issues. **Cyprus'** programme called 'Parents Group for Parents with Children with Special Needs' provides support to young families facing a diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental disorder or a chronic condition of their child.

Several countries took general measures within their national policies or youth strategies, amongst others **Ireland, Slovenia, Finland, the United Kingdom** (Scotland) and the French Community of **Belgium**.

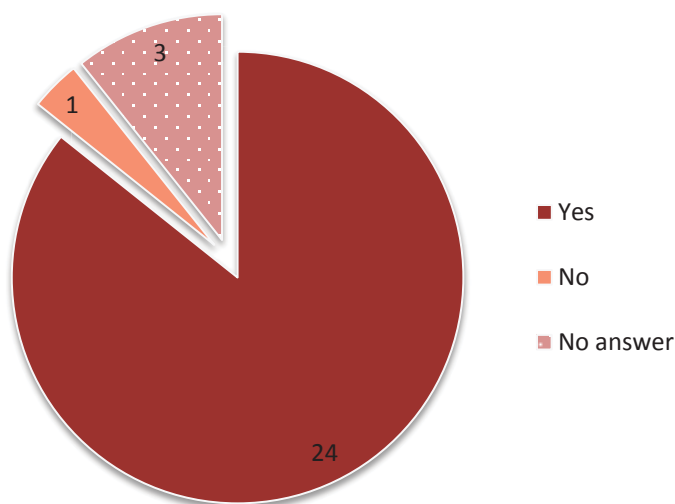
4.2.2. *Implementation of subsequent Council agreements*

4.2.2.1. Cross-sectoral approach to improve community cohesion and solidarity

As highlighted in the EU Youth Strategy and reiterated by the Council on several occasions – such as in its resolution of 11 May 2010 on the active inclusion of young people – cross-sectoral cooperation is essential in promoting youth social inclusion. Nearly all countries covered by this report took relevant measures for at least one of the issues (youth employment, education, health and well-being, political participation, cultural and social participation, and housing and living conditions), involving minimum two different public authorities.

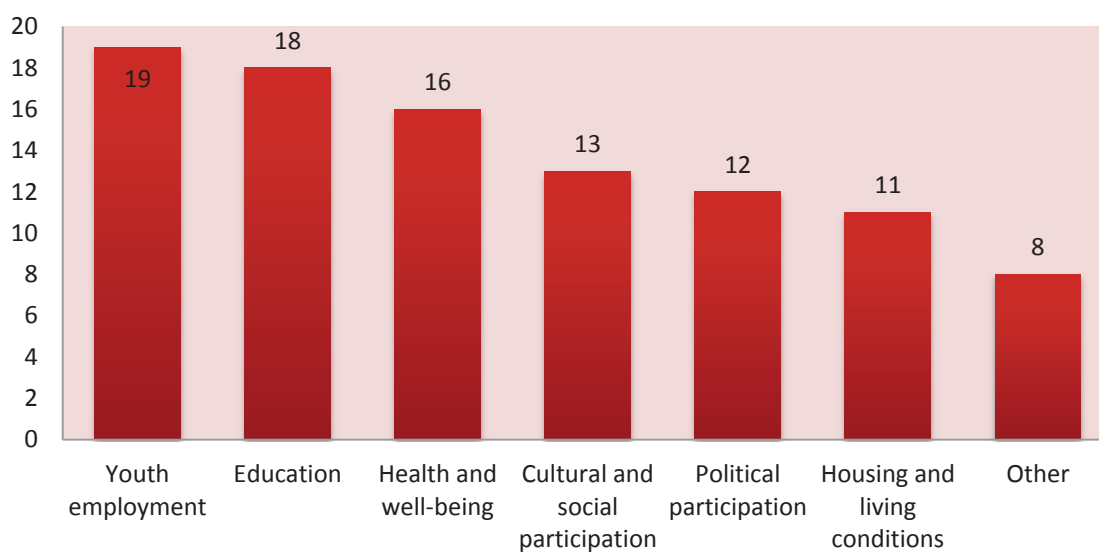
Cross-sectoral cooperation was widely used in the fields of youth employment and education, and this mainly between national ministries. In some cases, there is broader consultation and cooperation involving other public authorities or actors (e.g. national youth councils, national youth agencies, representatives of a specific region, associations).

Figure 10 - Number of Member States using a cross-sectoral approach involving minimum two different public authorities



Cross-sectoral cooperation is also often practiced in the field of health and well-being and to a lesser extent in the other fields mentioned above. In addition, working across sectors was implemented in the **Czech Republic** regarding youth information, access to youth rights, leisure time, media, environment and global development, volunteering and mobility; and in **Denmark** regarding young families and young motherhood programmes.

Figure 11 - Number of Member States' reports addressing issues through cross-sectoral cooperation with at least two public authorities



Concerning youth employment, a number of countries, such as the **United Kingdom**, **Croatia** and the **Netherlands**, have developed specific national youth policies. **Serbia** undertook a policy assessment on youth employment in order to provide and develop more effective youth employment measures. Many Member States refer to measures contained in their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.⁷⁵ For obvious reasons, measures taken in the field of youth employment are seen in connection with measures taken to improve the social inclusion of NEETs.

In the fields of education and health and well-being, cross-sectoral cooperation took mostly place between two public authorities. Individual measures can be found in the respective chapters of this document. Remarkably, the education sector often works in cooperation with the employment sector or with the health sector. By way of example, cooperation was set up in **Sweden** between the Ministry of Employment and the Swedish National Agency for Education to work on a government assignment entitled ‘Efforts to Create an Open and Inclusive Environment at Schools for Young LGBT People’.

4.2.2.2. Emphasis on youth with a migrant background

In its conclusions of 27 November 2012, the Council stressed the need to foster the social inclusion of young people, particularly those with a migrant background. A significant number of countries refer to initiatives addressing this issue.

Several countries, such as **Spain**, **Belgium** (French Community) and **Croatia**, took general measures at national level, not specifically targeting young people but including them. Many Member States developed language courses for young people with a migrant background. **Slovenia**, **Austria**, **Poland**, **Latvia**, **Greece** and **Malta** also developed language training for young foreign nationals and minorities with the purpose of better including them in society and increasing their ability to succeed in the national education system. **Turkey** launched a specific training programme which provides young migrants from Syria and Afghanistan with free Turkish language courses.

Italy’s ‘National Project for the Inclusion and the Integration of Roma, Sinti, and Travellers Children’ focuses on these minorities; it is designed to prevent early school dropout through actions aimed at improving school attendance and educational success. **Denmark** also launched projects with the objective to strengthen young ethnic minorities’ participation in civil society and in Danish democracy as well as to organise activities enhancing their inclusion in local associations. The **Czech Republic** started an ESF project called ‘Development of Counselling Services for Foreigners Provided by Job Centres’ to develop and improve the standard of services provided by the national network of job services to (young) people with a migrant background. **Germany** has developed a specific national programme on services targeted at young people with a migrant background, and the **Netherlands** launched a *Diversiteit in Jeugdbeleid* policy, enabling children and young people with a migrant background as well as their parents to have easy access to general facilities such as educational support, youth work, sport and cultural facilities.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 3.

4.2.2.3. Supporting quality youth work to foster social inclusion

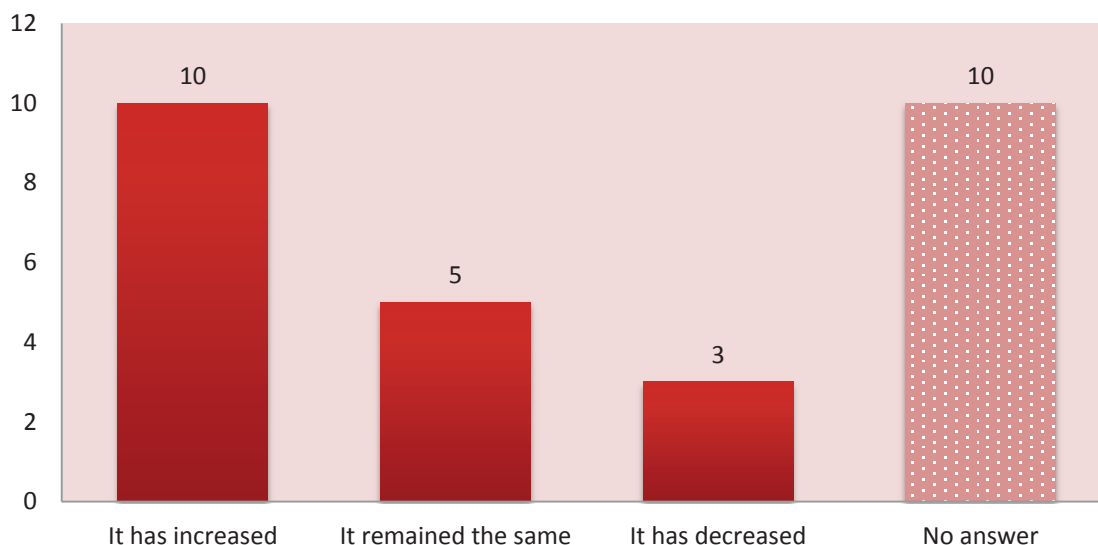
The majority of countries support quality youth work with a view to fostering social inclusion. Many do so by funding youth organisations or providing training for youth workers.

The **Netherlands** drew up a ‘Policy Note Youth 2014-2019’ setting the objective that youth work should reach all young people. The **Czech Republic** amended its state support programme for NGOs to ensure that youth organisations benefitting from subsidies meet accurate quality criteria. **France** also gives direct subsidies to national youth and non-formal education organisations through its Programme 163 *Jeunesse et vie associative*. In cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Research, **Estonia** introduced a youth work quality assessment system for local municipalities. Similarly, **Ireland** adopted a National Quality Standards Framework in Youth Work. **Slovenia** plans to integrate youth work in its operational programme for the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds, with the objective of supporting the development of quality systems in youth work, to define the professional qualification of a youth worker and to build on the education and training for youth workers and youth work. Within its national youth programme, **Croatia** aims at creating institutional requirements for the advancement of youth work through cooperation between NGOs and decision-makers. The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) in **Serbia** developed guidelines for the quality insurance of youth work.

4.2.2.4. Public funding for youth work

In two thirds of the countries, public funding is available to youth work activities fostering the social inclusion of young people. In most of them, the amount of public funding available to youth work activities is higher than three years before. In **Slovenia** the increase is linked to the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds. While in several countries – like the **Czech Republic**, **France** and **Sweden** – the level of public funding remained stable, it decreased in some other countries (**Italy**, **Netherlands**, **Ireland**) due to the crisis. In **Ireland**, for instance, funding for youth work services drastically fell between 2008 and 2014, whereas the budget for 2015 remains at the level of 2014.

Figure 12 - Number of Member States mentioning the status of public funding for youth work in the past 3 years



4.2.2.5. Social inclusion of NEETs

Almost all countries took action on enhancing the social inclusion of NEETs, and this by way of cross-sectoral cooperation. However, these measures did not necessarily target the situation of NEETs but were addressed to all young people in need. Several Member States, such as **Ireland, Spain, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta** and **Slovenia**, refer to their national action plans, in particular their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans which are most relevant for NEETs. **Poland** and **Estonia** took measures to support NEETs in a comprehensive manner, helping them to get back to employment, education or training.

In **Germany**, a national initiative called ‘Strengthen Youth’ (*Jugend stärken*) focuses on NEETs, especially those who are not registered with the public employment service. England (**United Kingdom**) developed a Youth Contract programme for 16- and 17-year-olds, which provides young people who face the greatest risk of becoming disengaged with the individualised help they need to re-engage sustainably in education, training or employment with training. England disposes of a ‘Vulnerable and Disengaged People Fund’ to support young people with special and complex needs, young care leavers and youth offenders who are easier victims of social exclusion. **Slovakia** currently works on a project named ‘InNEETiative’ to facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and stakeholders, with a view to detecting and including NEETs. The project seeks to enable these young people to be personally involved in an activity and get a first working experience (traineeships in youth centres, voluntary service in public institutions, business sector, social enterprises, etc.).

Latvia – Šķelot viļņus (Break the Waves)

Šķelot viļņus (Break the Waves), a non-formal educational programme, seeks to ensure support to young people in prisons to help them to develop, change, educate and take responsibility. In order to achieve this goal, the project developed six steps including a ten-week long training programme (one training day per week) focusing on particular needs according to different groups of young people in various prisons.

The first edition of the project (2012-2013) was coordinated by the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme and financed by the EU. The second edition is financed by the Latvian state budget.

<http://skelotvilnus.blogspot.be/2014/12/eng.html>

4.2.2.6. Priority areas defined in the Council resolution of May 2014

The Council resolution on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014) lists the following priority areas to enhance the social inclusion of all young people in Europe.

Promoting equal opportunities for all young people

Two thirds of the countries report on initiatives in this field. In several countries these were legislative measures, such as in **Italy** which endorsed a ‘Legislative Decree on the National System of Certification of Skills and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, No 13’ in 2013, or in **Croatia** whose ‘Croatian Qualification Framework Act; OG 22/2013’ serves as a basis for a coming ordinance that will regulate procedures for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. **Slovakia** issued a public declaration on the recognition of the contribution of non-formal education in youth work, while **Sweden**, conscious of the need to establish transparent systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, established in 2014 a working group to arrive at a more efficient use of existing resources (enabling more individuals to get their skills validated).

Promoting cooperation between stakeholders

Although a significant number of countries indicate that they promote cooperation between education authorities, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, only few concrete examples are available. The **Czech** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and National Institute for Further Education implemented the ‘K2 – quality and competitiveness in non-formal education’ project (financed by the ESF and the Czech government budget), which aimed at qualitative changes in NGOs and schools by facilitating a non-formal learning approach. In cooperation with the public and private sector as well as with NGOs, **Malta** established an Education Plus strategy to get young people involved in programmes that develop, beyond the knowledge acquired in schools, skills which are relevant in life. The ultimate objective is to equip young people with skills and attitudes useful to participate in the country’s democratic and economic life

and thus to become active and employable citizens. Through its ‘Step up to Serve’ campaign, the **United Kingdom** strives for establishing a bridge between the educational and voluntary sectors, with the aim of empowering young people and getting them involved in social actions.

Promoting equal access of young people to rights and to opportunities

Many initiatives were taken in this field to allow young people to fully participate in society. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, for instance, there is an act on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children’s rights; in the French Community, a decree on youth centres includes a dedicated part on ‘Specific Support to Equal Opportunities for All’, which provides additional support to youth organisations working with disadvantaged young people. The Ombudsman for Children in the **Netherlands** plays an important role in informing children and young people about ways to stand up for their rights. It also serves as instrument to monitor the proper application of children’s rights by the government and the educational, children, youth and healthcare systems. **Serbia** carried out a project on how to develop, create and strengthen new mechanisms, networks and services enabling young people to have better access and knowledge of their rights and resources.

Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation

The country reports show that cross-sectoral cooperation at and between local, regional, national and European levels still needs to be strengthened to meet young people’s needs and to ensure coherent social inclusion policies, although there are good practices at national level and below. The implementation of the **Czech** national youth strategy is done in collaboration with regional and municipal authorities as well as with the National Network of Local Action Groups. The youth advisory board of the **Croatian** Government works similarly by developing youth policies in a cross-sectoral manner, involving several ministries and other governmental representatives, public associations, educational and scientific institutions and youth organisations. Another example for working together between different levels is the Child-Friendly Cities strategy in the **Netherlands**, which aims to spread information and contacts between local, national and European municipalities and regions.

Ireland – Big Brother Big Sister

Big Brothers Big Sisters is an internationally recognised youth mentoring programme initiated in the United States in 1904. It forms supportive friendships for young people inspiring them to brighter futures. It establishes professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships between a caring adult and a young person, both on a voluntary basis. The adult volunteer takes the role of a big brother or a big sister, backing the young person with a positive development approach and identifying specific needs and necessary competencies that will help him/her to grow, to be productive and to acquire his/her own potential. The programme is based on the conviction that the relationship between an adult and a young person can be very useful for a young person facing adversity in his/her life. It is therefore a good tool to support social inclusion.

In Ireland, the Big Brother Big Sister programme is operated by *Foróige*, the National Youth Development Organisation.

<https://www.foroige.ie/our-work/big-brother-big-sister>

Turkey – Supporting Social Inclusion through Sports Education

This project – Technical Assistance for Supporting Social Inclusion through Sports Education – coordinated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports aimed at increasing future opportunities and living standards of children and young people in the disadvantaged regions of Turkey through the use of sports and sports training as a tool for building inclusion and social cohesion.

It also aimed at contributing to physical and physiological developments of children and young people and thus strengthens social ties. It furthermore had the objective to generate important values, such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, and to contribute to personal development as well as personal fulfilment of young people.

The project was financed through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

<http://www.niras.com/current-events/news/2013/social-inclusion-through-sports-education-in-turkey.aspx>

4.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has put social inclusion at the top of its priorities for the coming two years.

Together with the Social Platform (bringing together European rights and value-based NGOs working in the social sector), the YFJ has monitored the implementation of the European platform against poverty and social exclusion, the above-mentioned Europe 2020 flagship initiative. The forum specifically contributed to the Social Platform's two position papers 'Position Paper on Minimum Wage'⁷⁶ and 'An EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Income'.⁷⁷

The YFJ also analysed the situation of young people's social inclusion in Europe (covering in particular the areas of poverty, inequality, non-regular employment and unemployment) through its 2014 report 'Youth in the crisis – What went wrong?'.⁷⁸ It underlined the value of youth work, too, especially for the social inclusion of young people in civic life, and jointly provided guiding principles for quality youth work in its 2014 'Policy Paper on Youth Work'.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/20150226_SocialPlatform_PositionPaper_MinimumWage.pdf

⁷⁷ http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/20140624_SocialPlatform_PositionPaper_Directive-Minimum-Income.pdf

⁷⁸ <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

⁷⁹ <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/12/PP-Youth-Work.pdf>

5. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The aim of this field of action is to support young people's participation in representative democracy and civil society at all levels, and in society at large.

5.1. EU initiatives and action

Encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe is not only central to the EU Youth Strategy, it is a key aim of EU-level action as set out in Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The right of young people to participate in decision-making is also underlined in the Council conclusions on the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights (November 2010).⁸⁰ In addition, Article 24(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that children may express their views freely and that their views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.

Protection and promotion of the rights of the child is one of the objectives of the European Union, as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).⁸¹ This includes promoting child participation, which was the subject of a study⁸² in 2015. It includes a resource catalogue on child participation, a child-led research strand report, and reports for each Member State. In addition, funding was awarded to numerous projects on awareness-raising on rights of the child in judicial proceedings, and in general on the child's right to be heard (UNCRC Article 12) under the 2014 pilot project on raising the awareness of children with regard to their rights in judicial proceedings, the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship programme (2007-2013), the Daphne III programme (2007-2013) and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (2014-2020).

The Kids' Corner website⁸³ launched in 2011 aims to give children and young people information on their rights as well as information about the EU and its Member States. A key feature of the Kids' Corner is the **EU website on the Rights of the Child**,⁸⁴ where they can learn about their rights through games, quizzes and child-friendly texts in 24 EU languages.

Youth participation was the overall thematic priority of the second Trio Presidency (Poland, Denmark and Cyprus) after the entry into force of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. In May 2011 the Council adopted a resolution on new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in

⁸⁰ All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

⁸¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

⁸² <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/evaluation-of-legislation-policy-and-practice-of-child-participation-in-the-european-union-eu--pbDS0514101/>

⁸³ http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_en.htm

⁸⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/0-18/>

Europe. Youth empowerment, a subject closely linked to participation, is the priority of the current Trio Presidency (Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg). Council conclusions addressing **young people's access to rights as a means of fostering their autonomy and participation in democratic life**, and the **need to reinforce youth work to ensure cohesive societies** were adopted. An EU Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 also deals with political participation.

One of the most prominent measures in regard to participation at EU level is the Structured Dialogue, which is a key initiative of the EU Youth Strategy. Given its importance, Chapter 11 of this document is entirely dedicated to this process.

The Commission's regular **Flash Eurobarometer surveys on youth**⁸⁵ address opinions and attitudes of young people, for example about their involvement in society as volunteers, as members of organisations and as participants in international activities, cultural activities and political activities.

In 2013 the Commission published a **study on youth participation in democratic life**,⁸⁶ which addressed youth representation, promoting youth engagement, voting, media and youth participation, as well as youth exclusion. According to the findings, there is no crisis of democratic participation or disenchantment with political issues and concerns among youth in Europe, but young people often feel that their opinions are not represented, are dissatisfied with the way politics are conducted and are less likely to vote than older age groups. They are keen to participate, but their interests are shifting; they ask for more channels of participation. The study also stressed the need to support certain groups to warrant their involvement.

In May 2015, the Commission adopted a **report on the 2014 European Parliament elections**⁸⁷ which underlines that younger people were the largest group of abstainers.⁸⁸ The report highlights the need to identify further ways in which to foster participation in the next elections, in particular through timely support for national, regional and local awareness-raising campaigns. This is even more the case with respect to young voters' participation in European Parliament elections, for which concrete support can be provided to authorities and civil society at the local level seeking to raise awareness about EU political rights and in particular when reaching out to youth groups.

'Democratic engagement and civic participation' is one part of the **Europe for Citizens** funding programme⁸⁹ (2014-2017). It aims at strengthening the general public's understanding of how EU policies are shaped today. It also fosters the close involvement of civil society in European policy-making. A number of innovative youth projects were

⁸⁵ The latest one was published in April 2015: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_408_en.pdf.

⁸⁶ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/lse_study_on_youth_participation_2013.pdf

⁸⁷ COM(2015) 206 final of 8.5.2015.

⁸⁸ Only 27.8% of 18 to 24 year-olds voted, as compared with 51.3% in the 55+ age group.

⁸⁹ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en

funded under this programme in 2014 and 2015, such as ‘Europe 2038 – Voice of the youth’, ‘Debating Threats to Democracy and Human Rights’ and ‘International Session of the European Youth Parliament in Leipzig’ (see box).

80th International Session of the European Youth Parliament

This 12-month project financed under the Europe for Citizens programme includes a series of four youth events during 2015 which will culminate in an international youth conference in Leipzig in November 2015 – marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. This final event will gather 300 young people from all over Europe as well as local youth from Leipzig. The aim is to discuss current political issues and promote mutual understanding and a stronger European identity among participants. By taking part in the project, the young participants will experience parliamentary democracy first-hand and articulate their views on current European issues, within multi-cultural and international working groups. The project will help participants to acquire long-term competences, cultural awareness and respect, tolerance, and democratic participation, and offer them the possibility to engage as volunteers afterwards.

The project will be organised by voluntary active young people aged between 18 and 25, making it an almost entirely volunteer and youth-driven project. The project beneficiary is *Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa*, the international umbrella organisation of the European Youth Parliament.

http://www.leipzig2015is.eu/?page_id=165

The **European Youth Portal**⁹⁰ was restructured and re-launched in May 2013, adding a great deal more information on opportunities for young people. The portal is evolving into a platform for young people to engage with policy-makers and to have their say on the issues that affect them. It supports widening of the Structured Dialogue and also includes the Ideas Lab platform, through which creates young people can generate ideas on a wide range of issues, which are then rated online by their peers around Europe. The use of social media tools to engage with young people has also been improved. The new **‘European Youth’ Facebook page** serves to conduct online chats with young people on different topics. These tools are also successfully used to support big events, for example the seventh European Youth Week (2015), which witnessed new levels of outreach thanks to social media.

The Commission also promotes direct exchanges of views between Commissioners and citizens, mainly through **Citizens’ Dialogues**⁹¹ (with some 300 to 500 participants each) across the EU. The series was launched in January 2015 and 30 dialogues were held in 18 Member States in the first half of 2015. The Citizens’ Dialogues are not one-off events but part of a permanent debate cycle that covers the entire European Union. The

⁹⁰ http://europa.eu/youth/splash_en

⁹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-dialogues/>

dialogues focus on specific themes, usually linked to the Commission's political priorities, and many of them are prepared and followed up by further dialogues (in social media, but also physically on the ground). They complement formal consultation processes and serve to increase understanding of the concerns and expectations of citizens in a number of Member States where the specific aspects of an initiative are particularly important. The rate of participation of young people at these events is remarkable. The largest Citizens' Dialogue to date was on 9 May 2015 in Milan – with the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and the High Representative and European Commission Vice-President Federica Mogherini – where roughly two thirds of the 1200 participants belonged to the young generation. It took place during the European Youth Week. Apart from participating physically in the dialogues, young people often very actively contribute through social media channels as well. Citizens' Dialogues are normally web streamed live or even broadcast on TV and by Europe by Satellite, allowing 'virtual' participants to follow the event, make comments, put questions to Commissioners via social media (which are then channelled into the debate) and get answers from them, just like their fellow participants at the venue.

Some research projects supported by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and Horizon 2020 contribute to providing scientific evidence on the way young people participate in society and politics (see box).

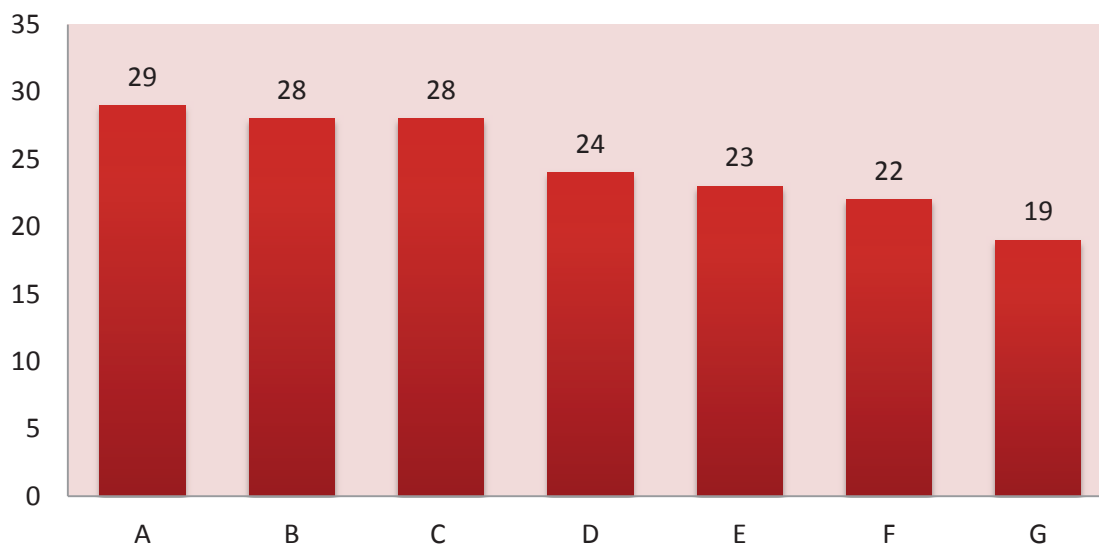
EU-funded research projects on young people's participation in society and politics

- MYPLACE – Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu>)
- SocIEtY – Social Innovation, Empowering the Young for the Common Good, (<http://www.society-youth.eu/>)
- PIDOP – Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation (<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/index.htm>)
- PARTISPACE – Spaces and Styles of Participation: Formal, non-formal and informal possibilities of young people's participation in European cities (<http://www.partispace.eu>)
- CATCH-EyoU – Constructing AcTive CitizensHip with European Youth: Policies, practices, challenges and solutions

5.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

5.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 13 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of participation



A – Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies
B – Governmental support of youth organisations and youth councils
C – Developing opportunities to debate with young people
D – Broadening youth participation through effective use of ICT
E – Supporting ‘learning to participate’
F – Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation
G – Promoting a greater diversity in youth participation in representative democracy

5.2.1.1. Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies

Member States have a genuine interest in promoting youth participation and they actively seek to create or enhance previously existing mechanisms in order to engage young people in decision-making. Whilst more than half of the Member States have maintained measures from before 2010, the vast majority instigated new ones after 2010. For instance, in **Slovenia** one of the main principles of the national programme for youth is to ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process on policies which affect them. The national programme of youth councils in **Estonia** stipulates that local municipalities consult with the local youth council on the planning, implementation and assessment of youth work. In other countries measures on participation are legally binding. In **Sweden** the consultation with young people is a constitutional prerequisite, and **Serbia** passed its Law on Youth in 2011.

5.2.1.2. Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation

Many Member States already had guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in place before the inception of the EU Youth Strategy, and they have been

even more active in this area since then, either by maintaining previously existing structures or by deepening the existing ones. **Croatia** passed its new Law on Youth Advisory Boards in 2014, establishing youth advisory boards as advisory bodies of units of local and regional self-governments. The law involves young people in decision-making on public matters of interest. The interministerial conference on youth, organised by the Government of the French Community of **Belgium** in February 2014, produced guidelines for consultation between young people and official advisory bodies and encouraged all directorates within the administration to use criteria on young people's participation for their calls for projects targeted at young people. Some countries developed digital structures for information and consultation. **Spain** offers grants to youth organisations and services to develop and promote ICT and social networks for their communication with young people.

5.2.1.3. Governmental support of youth organisations and youth councils

Member States provide, to a different extent, political and/or financial support to youth organisations and local or national youth councils. Most countries pursued or strengthened policies which existed before 2010 in this area. The Cabinet Office in the **United Kingdom** supports the British Youth Council, a structure responsible for the annual delivery of the UK Youth Parliament. In **Austria**, the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, under the provisions of the Federal Youth Promotion Act, is funding actions which get young people genuinely involved in youth organisations that focus on vocational guidance and the transition to professional life. The **Czech Republic's** 2011-2015 grant programmes for youth organisations and other organisations working with young people will be renewed; the planned new generation grant programmes will support quality systems for youth work as from 2016. In **Finland** approximately 140 organisations are financially supported each year from the state youth budget, and in **Lithuania** support at regional and national level is organised under the National Youth Policy Development programme.

5.2.1.4. Promoting a greater diversity in youth participation in representative democracy

It becomes apparent that young people are increasingly involved in democratic processes. Member States are anxious for including young people from the entire socio-economic spectrum. The national youth debate project in the **Netherlands** gives young people aged between 12 and 18 years the opportunity to express their views in youth debates at provincial level. Out of the participants in these regional debates, 150 are selected to participate in a youth debate at national level, which is held once a year. Before they participate, they are being trained to promote their ideas in front of ministers and state secretaries. Within the project 'Youth & Volunteering – a laboratory of ideas in evolution'(2010-2014), **Italy** aimed at promoting active citizenship through workshops involving young people and youth organisations, schools, universities and businesses into a process promoting youth volunteering – as an experience of active and responsible citizenship. In the **United Kingdom**, a major campaign was launched in January 2015 to raise awareness of the National Citizen Service, the UK Government's flagship youth programme.

5.2.1.5. Broadening youth participation through effective use of ICT

Measures to broaden youth participation through the use of information and communication technologies were mostly taken after 2010. ICT, usually websites, are primarily used to pass information on the country's youth policies. Many countries financially support youth organisations and youth information centres to advise young people about their opportunities to engage in public life. The French Community of **Belgium**, for instance, helps youth information centres develop their own tools for youth-targeted information.

With its multilateral cooperation project 'youthpart', **Germany** initiated an important step towards e-participation (see box). At the beginning of 2015, the Ministry of Justice in **Finland** launched Nuortenideat.fi, an e-participation service for young people.

Germany – youthpart

Youthpart – a multilateral cooperation project by IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany – was established to start international dialogue on how to encourage more young people to participate in decision-making in today's digital society. The project's overarching aim was to provide support, advisory services and help in advancing online participation formats in cooperation between Germany and project partner countries (Austria, United Kingdom, Spain and Finland).

Guidelines for successful e-participation by young people in decision-making at local, regional, national and European levels offer, to those in charge of planning an e-participation process for young people, a set of factors they should take into consideration to make the process more effective. These guidelines are designed to support youth policy experts, decision-makers, young people, youth organisations and administrative staff. They are advisory and can be adapted to the needs of different e-participation initiatives and target groups.

The project (2011-2014) received funding from the EU Youth in Action programme.

<https://www.ijab.de/en/youthpart/>

5.2.1.6. Supporting 'learning to participate'

Member States generally seek to cultivate active citizenship and participative attitude via formal education, for instance by including citizenship education in the curriculum or by supporting pupil and student councils. There are, however, also several interesting examples from the non-formal learning sector.

In **Italy**, the *Campo Giovani* programme provides young people from 14 to 22 years an opportunity to participate in a civic education project, which is organised by the Department of Youth and the National Civic Service in collaboration with the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Italian Red Cross. The programme started in 2009 and is now in its seventh edition; approximately 2 700 young people take part each year. In **Luxembourg**,

the youth newspaper *SLAM! By Youth for Youth* published quarterly since 2014 (with an online portal as well) offers place for expression for young people on topics of their interest. The project aims at developing critical thinking and professional skills amongst young people. The **Czech** ESF project ‘Keys for Life’ trained 14 regional non-formal learning coordinators and 105 youth workers and established a network where youth participation is promoted through formal and non-formal education settings.

Austria – Jugendplattform (Youth Platform)

This project is based on the concept of the ARGE *Partizipation*⁹² guidelines (*Leitfaden zur nachhaltigen Beteiligung von jungen Menschen in Gemeinden – Guidelines for the sustainable participation of young people in communities*). The objectives are:

- to create a platform with local politicians, people from the administration, multipliers and young people;
- to promote participation;
- to integrate young people in political processes;
- to inform young people about youth issues;
- to promote direct contact between politicians and young people;
- to implement projects with broad approval;
- to understand democratic processes in the municipality;
- to promote the identification with the municipality;
- to create mature and active citizens;
- to develop political knowledge;
- to promote social inclusion.

The youth platform brings together politicians, multipliers and young people to work on certain youth projects. The members can vary depending on the topic. The platform meets four times per year in the municipal office to discuss youth issues and to develop new projects (such as a skate park, youth centre). The youth platform is accompanied and supported by the regional staff of *akzente* Salzburg.

<http://www.akzente.net/fachbereiche/regionale-kommunale-jugendarbeit/mitreden-in-den-gemeinden/jugendplattformen/>

5.2.1.7. Developing opportunities to debate with young people

Almost every country disposes of mechanisms to facilitate debate between public institutions and young people. In some cases, these mechanisms are part of a wider strategy for social consensus in the decision-making process, while in other cases debates are organised on occasion. In the **United Kingdom**, the English Government involved young people in an open debate on the decentralisation and economic growth in the North of England, under the ‘Northern Futures’ programme. In the Flemish Community

⁹² <http://www.jugendbeteiligung.at/materialien>

of **Belgium**, the 2013 conference *100 x Jong in de Stad* allowed young people to share their vision and insights about the shaping of youth policy in their city. As from 2014, the youth board of **Cyprus** organises at least two public consultations per year, involving young people and youth organisations.

5.2.2. *Implementation of subsequent Council agreements*

5.2.2.1. Promoting youth participation in decision-making structures

In the Council resolution of 11 May 2011 on encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe, Ministers agreed on promoting the participation of young people in decision-making structures and on enhancing their contribution to the policies that affect them. Nearly all of the reporting countries (28) refer to their formal and institutionalised mechanism for consulting young people during policy-making. Most countries consider a national youth council as important structure for developing dialogue between young people and promoting youth participation. Local youth (and children) councils also exist, for instance in **Poland** and **Iceland**. **Ireland** set up a ‘Children and Young People’s Participation Support Team’ and a national youth parliament for 12 to 18 year-olds. A youth parliament also exists in **Luxembourg**, where in addition the Government has set up a Structured Dialogue mechanism with young people. In the **United Kingdom** (England), young people were involved in the recruitment of the new Children’s Commissioner in 2014. **France** organises regular meetings between the Interministerial Delegate for Youth (*délégué interministériel de la jeunesse*) and the French youth forum (CNAJEP). **Malta** passed a law which extends voting rights to 16 and 17 year-olds in local council elections. The purpose of this law is to strengthen democratic co-determination and participation of young people. Many countries refer to measures and methods within their national youth strategy, youth law or youth programme (e.g. the **Czech Republic**, **Bulgaria**, **Austria** and **Estonia**).

5.2.2.2. Increasing information about democratic rights and democratic values

In the Council resolution mentioned above, Ministers also agreed on increasing the information to children and young people about their democratic rights and democratic values. A high number of countries (25) confirm that they took measures on this issue. In many cases general information is provided through youth information centres.

Often children’s and young people’s rights, obligations and opportunities are actively promoted. In **Spain**, this is for instance done by the youth institute INJUVE as well as by other regional youth institutions, which are spreading information through websites and social networks. **Finland** launched a national communication strategy on children’s rights, which saw the creation of a Human Rights Centre as an expert institution in this field. Starting in 2011, **Sweden** organises every year a Living History Forum, reinforcing democratic values and combating violent extremism amongst young people by highlighting the importance of democracy in a European context. The country also made its system of citizen proposals (addressed to local councils) available to children and young people under the age of 18, enabling them to influence and participate in their local communities.

In order to maximise electoral registration and democratic engagement, the **United Kingdom** (England) launched a programme called ‘Rock Enroll!’, offering young people a free downloadable learning resource on the topic. In Wales, the National Assembly set up an online platform ‘Your Assembly – your say, your way’ with explanations on the Assembly and on democracy in general. **Germany** has a Federal Agency for Civic Education, providing citizenship education and information on political issues to all people in Germany. Similarly, ‘ProDemos’ is the House for Democracy and the Rule of Law in the **Netherlands**. It explains the systems that govern democracy and the rule of law and shows what citizens can do to exert political influence – at municipal, provincial, national and European level. In the **Czech Republic** there is a specific Civic Education Centre to make participation of young citizen in public life more effective. **Austria** published a brochure entitled ‘Co-existence in Austria’ to raise awareness of the rule of law and values of citizenship. In several countries, such as **Denmark, Italy, Ireland** and the **Netherlands**, there is an ombudsman for children and/or young people investigating their complaints, taking into account their views and offering consultancy to authorities on their situation.

5.2.2.3. Developing an eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility

Most of the countries which developed youth exchanges and cooperation between eastern countries and EU Member States did so in the framework of EU youth programmes. Naturally, the **Eastern Partnership Youth Window** within the Youth in Action programme was fundamental for the cooperation with Eastern European countries.⁹³

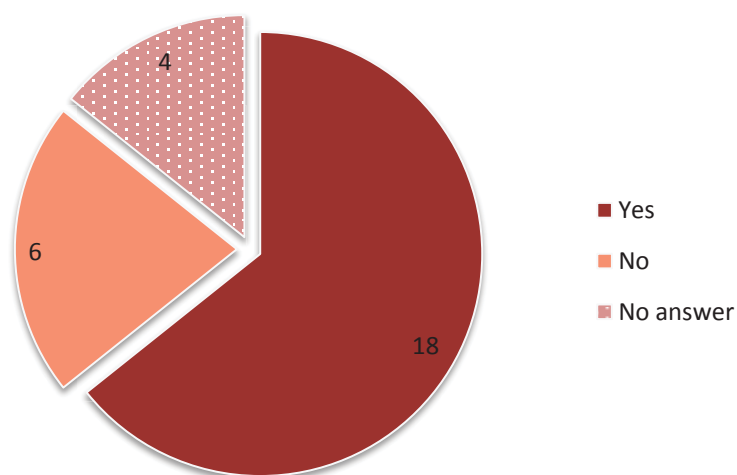
Apart from relying on EU programmes, **Poland** founded a Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Board and a Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding. In 2006, **Germany** established a Foundation for German-Russian Youth Exchange – a public-private partnership. Based on former cooperation agreements with Georgia and Moldova (2006-2007), **Lithuania** prepared renewed agreements on youth affairs with both countries. **Romania** also develops youth exchange projects with Moldova. **Croatia** and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum of understanding in 2013 to develop cooperation in the youth field. The **Czech Republic** and **Slovakia** underline the work of the Visegrad Group (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), which annually meets with **Eastern Partnership** countries to discuss youth issues and which agreed in 2012 on an action plan which includes youth mobility. **Serbia** developed support for youth mobility within its national youth strategy. Overall, it becomes apparent from the national reports that there is scope for further developing exchanges and cooperation with Eastern European countries.

⁹³ See Section 12.5.2.

5.2.2.4. Supporting active involvement and participation of youth with a migrant background

In the Council conclusions of 27 November 2012, Ministers agreed on supporting active involvement and participation of young people with a migrant background.

Figure 14 - Number of Member States mentioning support to active involvement and participation of youth with a migrant background



A considerable number of countries have maintained or introduced relevant measures; these are mostly general measures to include and support the integration of young people with a migrant background as part of national youth programmes or national youth strategies, but do not focus specifically on active involvement and participation of this target group. Many countries provide official support in language trainings and/or historical and cultural learning programmes.

Some countries particularly focus on participation in society and democratic life of young people with a migrant background. **Denmark**, for instance, set up a ‘Civil Society – Building Bridges Website’ with the purpose of empowering ethnic minority organisations. The Danish youth council carried out a project for young newcomers’ participation in civil society and democratic life; another project, ‘MS ActionAid Denmark – Opinion Leaders Against Discrimination’, aims at empowering young opinion leaders with a minority background to stand up and make their voice heard in public debates, also by challenging discriminating stereotypes they face in their everyday life. In addition, following a study that showed the positive correlation between the behaviour of first-time voters and participation in elections of their mothers, a campaign called ‘Mothers voting for local elections 2013’ was launched.

As a follow-up to the above-mentioned interministerial conference, the French Community of **Belgium** proposed to organise an intersectoral conference on obstacles to youth participation for young people with a migrant background, young people living in poverty or young people with disability. **Ireland** held a Dialogue for Change in 2014, which aimed to provide young asylum seekers with an opportunity to come together with

policy-makers and identify key policy issues that affect them. The **Czech Republic** mentions the international ACCESS project (see box).

ACCESS – Enhancing political participation of migrant youth

The ACCESS project aims to empower migrant youth to become politically active citizens on a local, national and EU-wide level and to be able to better contribute to the formulation of policies. It is a multi-stakeholder project whose activities target policy-makers from municipalities, youth leaders, youth workers and young people with a migrant background.

Through peer reviews of policies and practices in ACCESS project countries (Finland, Romania, Czech Republic, France and Spain), the project provides concrete advice and tools to policy-makers on involving young people's ideas and concerns in decision-making. In the context of this project, political participation of youth does not only include participation in electoral processes but consists of a more comprehensive approach, engaging all young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of all policies which affect them. Active political participation may entail taking part in e.g. local municipalities, youth parliaments, lobbying, providing feedback to decision-makers and voluntary involvement such as neighbourhood committees and associations.

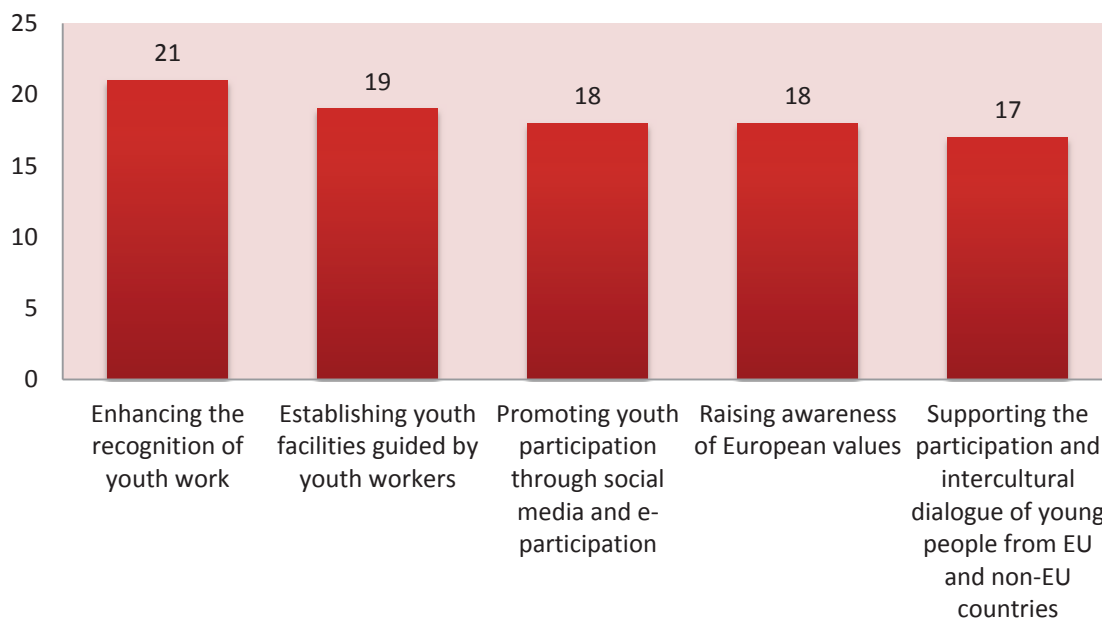
The ACCESS project, which runs from December 2013 till May 2015, is managed by IOM (International Organization for Migration) Helsinki with support from IOM offices in Prague, Marseille, Barcelona and Bucharest.

http://www.iom.fi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=230&Itemid=191

5.2.2.5. Further promoting youth participation

In the Council resolution of 11 December 2012 on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process on youth participation in democratic life in Europe, several priority areas emerged to promote youth participation. The study ‘Youth Participation in Democratic Life’ of 2013 issued a set of recommendations regarding the themes below.

Figure 15 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning further measures promoting youth participation



Promoting youth participation through social media and e-participation

The use of the internet can be more appealing to young people to express their views than more traditional forms of participation. Hence, many Member States see a significant role for social media and e-participation in promoting youth participation. **Germany** launched a ‘youthpart#lokal’ project in 2013, which supported six model municipalities in testing web-based youth participation. After a successful pilot phase between spring 2013 and autumn 2014, best practices were showcased and advice is now provided to those who wish to implement e-participation processes. The ‘Power is Yours’ website in **Sweden** is an online platform enabling young people to influence youth policy issues carried out at EU level. In the framework of its governmental programme ‘It’s about you! – Dialogue with the youth’ (*Rólad szól! – Párbeszéd a fiatalokkal*), **Hungary** first established personal meetings with young people in order to hear their opinions on national youth policies, and after six months, went on with an online questionnaire. In 2014, over 870000 young people participated in ‘Make your Mark’, the **United Kingdom** Youth Parliament’s annual ballot of the public, giving young people their say on what is debated by their Members of Youth Parliament in the House of Commons. **Latvia** developed a social initiative named [ManaBalss.lv](#) (see box).

Latvia – Public participation platform ‘ManaBalss.lv’

The platform aims to strengthen civic society and explore new forms of democratic participation in general. Every citizen from the age of 16 in Latvia who has an idea can launch an initiative to gather supporters’ signatures. Once an initiative reaches 10000 signatures, it is officially submitted to the Parliament, where it is processed and included in the Parliament’s official agenda. Later it is discussed together with the author and experts, and Parliament takes a final decision (either the idea presented in the initiative becomes a law or not). Using the site is free of charge. ManaBalss.lv ensures privacy and security of personal data. All initiative authors and users of ManaBalss.lv receive technical, legal and communication support, and ManaBalss.lv makes sure all ideas presented to Parliament are processed and heard.

ManaBalss.lv was founded in 2011 in close cooperation with the National Civic Alliance and NGO community in Latvia as well as with the National Parliament and other public institutions. At the moment there is wide cooperation with the main civil society stakeholders, NGOs and IT companies, public and private foundations.

After three years of operation ManaBalss.lv has proved to be one of the most effective, widespread and popular civic participation projects in Latvia ever. Close to 1000000 people (around 35% of Latvia’s population) have visited the platform. 14 initiatives have gathered more than 10000 votes, making their way to the Parliament, and 8 initiatives were approved by Parliament.

<https://manabalss.lv/>

Enhancing the recognition of youth work

Many countries enhance the recognition of youth organisations, youth information and counselling structures and professional youth work as channels developing participatory skills and competences. In October 2014, the **Croatian** Government adopted a National Youth Programme 2014-2017 which, together with several other strategic documents, provides a complete framework for the functioning and development of youth structures and youth organisations. In **Lithuania**, a National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011-2019 creates a structured framework for youth information and counselling with a view to raise public awareness on youth issues. **Luxembourg** adopted guidelines regarding non-formal education during childhood and adolescence, with a particular emphasis on transmitting participatory skills to young people and promoting autonomous action. In **Ireland**, a number of ‘Youth Cafés’ operate all-around the country to offer support to young people; in addition, in 2010 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs released two publications intended to assist those seeking to run and set up a youth café.

Raising awareness of European values

Raising awareness of European values, especially amongst young people with fewer opportunities, is a concern in several Member States, which therefore actively promote

respect for human rights and minorities, democracy and equality. The Scottish Government (**United Kingdom**) published its National Youth Work strategy 2014-2019, which includes continuing support to two NGOs actively promoting European values and citizenship. Another example is the German-speaking Community of **Belgium** where the promotion of a European identity is amongst the priorities of the 2011 Decree on the promotion of youth work.

Supporting the participation and intercultural dialogue of young people from EU and non-EU countries

Several Member States promote intercultural dialogue between young people from EU and non-EU countries. In **Austria**, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window 2012-2013 supported activities raising awareness of European values, especially amongst young people in neighbouring countries. In addition, Austria launched a long-term strategy on inclusion in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia in order to continue cooperation and training activities in the region from 2016 and beyond. In **Denmark**, the ‘Youth Ambassadors for Constructive Dialogue’ programme aims at bringing together young people from Denmark and the Middle East in order to increase understanding between them and overcome cultural, religious and national borders. In 2012-2013, ‘SOS Malta’, in partnership with the National Agency of **Malta**, ran a project ‘Youth Upbeat’⁹⁴ co-financed through the European Refugee Fund. It aimed to promote integration between different sectors of Maltese society, in particular young people, and refugees or persons with subsidiary protection, by providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and performing arts. This project was highly successful and demonstrated the importance of intercultural dialogue as a means to tackling negative perceptions and attitudes from both sides.

Establishing youth facilities guided by youth workers

The majority of Member States established youth facilities where young people can meet and get involved in projects. For example, the Youth Hub service in **Malta**, a non-formal educational service which operates within formal education set-ups, offers an informal and recreational environment through which a youth worker can build a trustful relationship with young people, allowing them to get involved into projects which enhance their personal and social skills. In the **Czech Republic**, leisure-time centres which provide extra-curricular education also serve as platform for children and youth to enable them to enter local, national or international projects. In 2014, 270 000 participants attended activities provided by these centres. In **Lithuania**, open youth spaces are actively involved in drafting legislative acts towards systematic and general recognition of youth work and pay attention to the support and implementation of open youth work. These open youth spaces are funded by the Department of Youth Affairs and involve every year around 7 500 young people and 330 volunteers in organised activities. In the **Netherlands**, the *levelZ jongerencentrum* provides a different example of youth participation at local level. Young people were united in various working groups and, in cooperation with the municipality of Zwolle, they developed a youth centre providing opportunities for genuine participation to local young people.

⁹⁴ <http://www.sosmalta.org/youthupbeat>

5.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

Increasing the participation of young people in civic life and in European politics is part of the core business of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The forum's pivotal role in the Structured Dialogue, the European Youth Event and the European Youth Capital demonstrates how, through its membership, it can reach out to and engage young people all over Europe. The forum also sees its role as highlighting the concerns of young voters and supporting efforts to lower the voting age to 16 across Europe.

In 2013 the YFJ launched the League of Young Voters,⁹⁵ a politically neutral initiative that aimed to amplify young people's concerns and expectations in the run-up to the **European elections**. The league, for example, co-hosted the first European Presidential Debate (28 April 2014) between the *Spitzenkandidaten* which generated over 50000 tweets. The league's study 'Addressing Youth Absenteeism in European Elections'⁹⁶ in the same year identified the sociological profile of abstainers and outlined the reforms that the EU, political parties and Member States could put in place to address this issue. During the European elections, the LoveYouthFuture⁹⁷ campaign focused on the demands of young people and on respect of youth rights across the EU and included a pledge to consult young people more widely using better participation tools. In addition, many of the YFJ members were in the forefront of 'vote@16' campaigns across Europe.

The **European Youth Event**⁹⁸ (EYE) in May 2014 was a key moment for young people's engagement with the European Union. It brought together over 5000 young people aged 15 to 30 from every Member State to share ideas and opinions during events and activities on the themes of youth unemployment, the digital revolution, the future of the EU, sustainability and European values. The **YO!Fest**⁹⁹ held at the same time welcomed over 8000 young people to learn, exchange and build cooperation on topics such as 'vote@16', traineeships, democratic participation and the future of the EU, multiple discrimination, education and youth work.

European Youth Capital¹⁰⁰ is a title awarded to a European city for a one-year period, during which it can showcase, through a multi-faceted programme, its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development. The title was held by Maribor (2013), Thessaloniki (2014) and Cluj-Napoca (2015), each demonstrating the positive change that young people can bring to a city when they are empowered. Using tools such as participatory budgeting and co-management to deliver exciting programmes of activities, the initiative has left a legacy of youthful engagement in these cities, leading to the recent creation of the Network of European Youth Capitals.

⁹⁵ <http://www.youngvoters.eu/eu>

⁹⁶ http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/02/YFJ-LYV_StudyOnYouthAbsenteeism_WEB.pdf

⁹⁷ <http://www.loveyouthfuture.eu/>

⁹⁸ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/european-youth-event/en/old-edition/eye2014.html>

⁹⁹ The name comes from the YO!Mag (Youth Opinion), which is the magazine of the YFJ since 1980.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.europeanyouthcapital.org/>

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The aim of action in this field is to support equal access for young people to high-quality education and training at all levels and opportunities for lifelong learning and to promote and recognise non-formal learning as a complement to formal education. Better links between formal education and non-formal learning should be developed, young people's transition between education and training and the labour market facilitated and supported, and early school leaving reduced.

6.1. EU initiatives and action

Reducing the rate of early school leaving to below 10% and increasing the proportion of 30 to 34 year-olds who complete third level education to at least 40% is one of the five headline targets which were agreed for the whole EU to measure progress in meeting the **Europe 2020** goals. Looking at the indicators in 2013, the EU seems to be on track to meet this target. However, striking discrepancies both between and within Member States remain and should be regularly monitored: there are still more than 5 million early school leavers across Europe, facing an unemployment rate of 41% and in countries hit hardest by the crisis, the employability of tertiary education graduates remains a severe problem.

While responsibility for education and training systems lies with the Member States, the **EU strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)**¹⁰¹ is instrumental in supporting Member States in their efforts to modernise education and training systems. In particular, it relies on peer learning and the exchange of good practices in the context of **ET 2020** working groups,¹⁰² as well as informal groupings of senior officials.

ET 2020 includes a set of seven European benchmarks designed to foster policy developments and monitor outcomes in different fields, including for instance benchmarks on early childhood education and on basic skills in reading, mathematics and science. The annual Education and Training Monitor¹⁰³ sets out the progress on these benchmarks and core indicators, including the Europe 2020 headline target on education and training. It illustrates the evolution of education and training systems across Europe. It is accompanied by 28 individual country reports and an online visualisation tool. The Centre for Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL) provides additional indicators¹⁰⁴ used throughout the monitoring exercise, which are part of the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF), a tool enabling consistent and transparent monitoring for all Member States.

The mid-term stocktaking exercise underpinning the current **ET 2020** review confirmed that the framework's four strategic objectives (and current European benchmarks) remain

¹⁰¹ OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2-10.

¹⁰² http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups_en.htm

¹⁰³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm

¹⁰⁴ <https://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ET2020Indicators/>

valid. It also confirmed that a recalibration of ET 2020 policy focus is needed, to include both the pressing economic and employment challenges and the role of education in imparting fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship. This latter issue will be a key priority in the coming ET 2020 work cycle, with a concrete set of measures underpinned by funding from the Erasmus+ programme, in line with the four areas identified in the Paris Declaration of European Education Ministers¹⁰⁵ of 17 March 2015.

Further to the EU Security Agenda and the Paris Declaration, Member States undertook to step up efforts to foster the inclusion and participation in society of all young people. These efforts complement the work of the EU-funded **Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)** which has increasingly looked into the role of education in tackling radicalisation. Among the concrete outcomes of exchanges between practitioners within the RAN in this field, the recent Manifesto for Education is of particular relevance.¹⁰⁶

Drawing on the conclusions of the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking, a 2015 Joint Report¹⁰⁷ will identify priority areas and concrete issues for future work at European level up to 2020. The 2014 Education, Training and Youth Forum, a platform for stakeholders, made a structured contribution to the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking with a particular emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation with the youth sector.¹⁰⁸

Apart from ensuring coordination under the ET 2020 strategic framework, the EU plays an equally crucial role in supplementing Member States' efforts through its funding instruments. In this context, the **European Structural and Investment Funds** support investments which help with the modernisation of education and training systems, reduce early school leaving, promote better access to good quality education, enhance access to lifelong learning, strengthen vocational education and training systems, and improve the labour market relevance of education.

The Commission communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*¹⁰⁹ calls for a fundamental shift in education, with more focus on learning outcomes: 'There is a need to recognise and value non-formal learning in a creative and innovative way, raising the visibility of skills acquired outside the formal system and fostering complementarity between non-formal and formal learning, while at the same time promoting equal opportunities.'

Part of this need to rethink education is linked to improving the recognition of qualifications and skills, including those gained outside the formal education and training

¹⁰⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf

¹⁰⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-prevent/index_en.htm

¹⁰⁷ The Joint Report is expected to be adopted at the November 2015 Education Council.

¹⁰⁸ https://education-training-youth-forum.teamwork.fr/docs/ETY_Forum_Report.pdf

¹⁰⁹ COM(2012) 669 final of 20.11.2012.

system, e.g. by encouraging validation mechanisms. That is why a Council recommendation was adopted on 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.¹¹⁰

In its final report¹¹¹ published in 2014, the thematic **expert group** set up in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy for sharing best practice on how to promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by **identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability** stressed the need to improve and widen the recognition of non-formal learning, and not just in relation to employability. A better equipped workforce is required; one that can interact effectively with young people, especially those who are disadvantaged and lack access to the labour market.

The peer-learning activity on the **writing of learning outcomes for assessment and validation**,¹¹² which took place in Ireland in November 2014, sought to explore in a practical manner issues related to the integration of different learning contexts, purposes and stakeholder concerns into learning outcomes.

An updated **European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning**,¹¹³ which covered 33 European countries (EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), was published at the end of 2014. It shows that effective tools for recognising those skills need to be better designed and applied with a view to tackling current bottlenecks within the European labour market.

In 2014, the Commission ran a public consultation on the potential benefits of developing a European Area of Skills and Qualifications.¹¹⁴ The consultation collected views of stakeholders on the obstacles faced by people in having their skills and qualifications recognised across Europe. It found that there is strong support for action to simplify European tools for recognition of skills and qualifications, to make them more coherent and easier to use, and to ensure a stronger focus on the needs of pupils, students, workers and employers.

Seeking to boost education through new technologies, the Commission launched the **Opening up Education initiative** in September 2013, presenting the actions that the Commission will implement, including policy orientation for operations funded under Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme (2014-2020). The initiative also launched the OpenEducationEuropa.eu portal, aimed at helping users

¹¹⁰ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1-5.

¹¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

¹¹² http://extendedcampus.cit.ie/contentfiles/PLA%20Cork%2019_20%2011%202014%20Report%20final.pdf

¹¹³ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

¹¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/consultations/skills_en.htm

(teachers or learners) to find relevant open educational resources and enhancing the visibility of the many high-quality resources produced in Europe.¹¹⁵

The EU Youth Strategy promotes **youth work**, which offers non-formal and informal learning environments. Generally speaking, youth work equips young people with skills and competences that are relevant to many aspects of their life, including the workplace. By engaging in youth activities, young people for example can gain important transversal skills, experience of leadership, a sense of initiative, or working in teams. For some, engaging in these activities can provide the impetus to come back to formal education after dropping out, while for others it can be a way to complement formal qualifications and thus increase their chances in the labour market. The study on the value of youth work in the European Union¹¹⁶ published by the Commission in 2014 substantiates this view. It shows a positive correlation between participation in non-formal education and achievement in formal education because, for instance, it teaches young people persistence, staying motivated to complete a task.

On 16 May 2013, the Council adopted conclusions¹¹⁷ on the contribution of **quality youth work** to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people, which resulted in the setting up of a thematic expert group on youth work quality systems in the EU Member States. It sought to examine these systems and explore how common indicators or frameworks might be developed. In their report¹¹⁸ submitted to the Youth Working Party on 8 April 2015, the experts pointed out that ‘working with indicators, quality tools and systems is crucial to the continuous development of youth work and has great potential to contribute to an enhanced credibility and recognition of the youth work sector as a whole’.

Two large-scale ongoing research projects supported by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013) are worth mentioning; they address the governance of educational trajectories in Europe and, in particular, access to and relevance of education for young people (see box).

The Commission established the Scientix platform www.scientix.eu, a community for **science education** in Europe, to ensure a wide uptake and dissemination of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education practices. The Commission also recognises that science events intended to inspire and mobilise young people are more important than ever. The annual European Union Contest for Young Scientists¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) conducts several studies to contribute to the development of a knowledge base on open education issues dealing with research on the recognition of learning through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), on the profile and motivations of MOOC learners, and on how higher education institutions deal with open education issues.

¹¹⁶ <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/working-with-young-people-pbNC0414172/>

¹¹⁷ All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

¹¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf

¹¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/eucys/index_en.cfm

(EUCYS) is one of Europe’s premier events for showcasing young scientific talent. It brings together winners of national science competitions – young people between 14 and 20 years of age – to compete with their European counterparts.

EU-funded research projects on education

Ongoing FP7 projects:

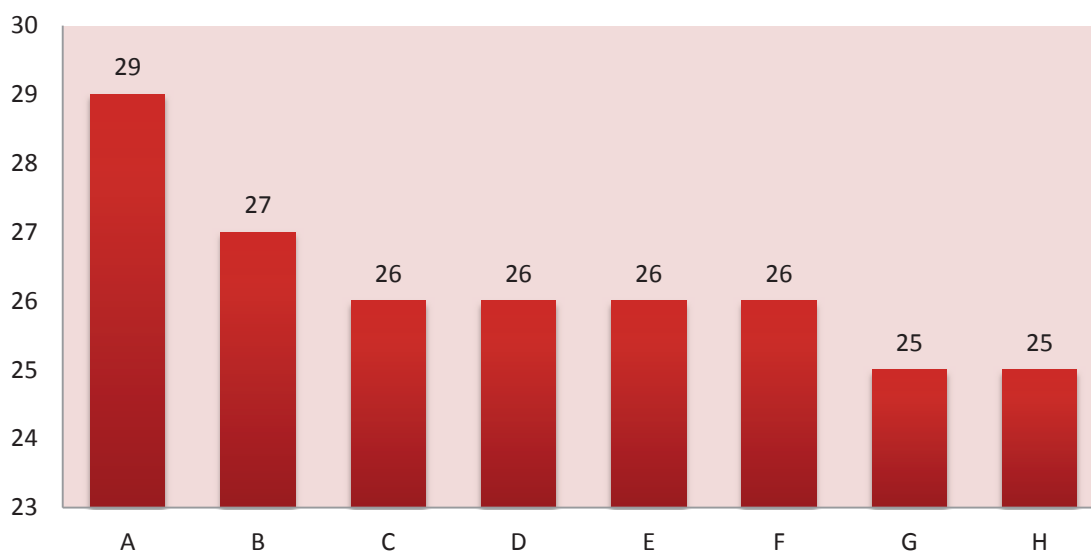
- RESL.eu – Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe (www.resl-eu.org)
- GOETE – Access, coping and relevance of education for young people in European knowledge societies in comparative perspective (<http://www.goete.eu/>)

6.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

This summary is primarily focused on non-formal learning, in line with the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy. It does not encompass all ET 2020 priority areas.

6.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 16 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of education and training



- A – Encouraging formal education and non-formal learning to support young people’s innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
- B – Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning
- C – Use of EU tools for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications
- D – Promoting learning mobility of all young people
- E – Addressing gender and other stereotypes
- F – Promoting cohesion by formal education and non-formal learning
- G – Developing non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving
- H – Developing participative structures

6.2.1.1. Developing non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving

The number of measures introduced or planned after January 2010 has increased. Many countries present good practices around youth work activities targeting early school leaving. These include a strategy to combat early school leaving in **Austria**; an ESF-funded project *Schulverweigerung – Die 2. Chance* (Chronic truants – A second chance) in **Germany**; the ‘Youth.inc’ educational programme in **Malta** helping young people to improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue in further education and/or training; the T.O.M. project in the **Netherlands** (see box); and an ESF project in **Slovakia** developing competences of young people through non-formal education.

Netherlands – Traject op Maat (T.O.M.)

T.O.M. (literally ‘tailor-made trajectory’) offers tailor-made guidance on the (re)gain of action skills and making choices by young people themselves to give them better access and thus inflow back in education and work. Young people are registered and accompanied to school and/or work. Some young people are even visited at home. Intensive coaching combined with group counselling is provided. All young people receive individual coaching from one of the T.O.M. coaches. After attending a T.O.M. course participants go back to school or move on to work. Such a course lasts as long as necessary. On average, it takes about six months for a young person to be able to go back to school and/or work.

<http://www.tomdenbosch.nl/>

Luxembourg’s specific Orientation Voluntary Service (*service volontaire d’orientation*) is targeted at early school leavers.

Some countries have strategies or action plans, such as the 2012 strategy to combat early school leaving in **Austria**, an action plan on early school leaving in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, a strategy for reducing the number of early school leavers in **Bulgaria**, or the Youth Act in **Finland** with outreach to youth work and multi-disciplinary cooperation at local level.

The **Czech Republic** and **Serbia** put particular emphasis on supporting youth organisations or youth projects which address early school leaving. Other countries highlight specific programmes in schools, such as **Ireland** with its ‘School Completion Programme’ and its strategy ‘Delivering Equality of Education in Schools’. **France**, the French Community of **Belgium** and **Latvia**, among others, refer to activities in favour of validation and recognition of non-formal learning, while **Estonia** focuses on the development of youth work quality.

Bulgaria and **Luxembourg** mention the use of IT services to tackle early school leaving. In Luxembourg an internet portal for the education and training programme ‘Level Up’ is addressed to young people without professional or school activity wishing to bridge the transition to active life with a useful occupation.

6.2.1.2. Use of EU tools for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications

Many countries present the state of play regarding their National Qualifications Framework to be developed within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The state of play concerning strategies on the validation of non-formal and informal learning is also described. Besides the EQF, other European tools such as Europass, Youthpass, the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) and the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) are often quoted.

Compared to the 2012 Youth Report, more measures were introduced to strengthen the use of the various tools established at EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications. Some countries focus their answer on the validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning activities (such as youth work). In **Bulgaria** a system for the validation of knowledge, skills and competences gained through voluntary work is under evaluation. **Croatia** plans to adopt an ordinance on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning by the end of 2015. In **Slovakia** an ESF-funded project focuses on developing competences for youth leaders and youth workers based on a competence model – the qualification gained will be included in the National Qualifications Framework. In **Greece** a system of recognition and certification of qualifications acquired via non-formal and informal learning was established and a framework for licensing-awarding bodies is in preparation. It aims at certifying those qualifications that reinforce employment, assuring that the certified qualification corresponds to specifications set out in the respective accredited occupational profile. This provides equity and access to qualifications regardless of the way learning outcomes were achieved.

Latvia – National Network of Cooperation and Information Exchange (Val-Net)

The project ‘Towards an integrated system for validation of non-formal and informal learning: initiating a national network of cooperation and information exchange’ (Val-Net) initiated a national network of cooperation and information exchange.

Two national-scale conferences, four regional forums, seminars and round table discussions aimed at addressing the validation of non-formal and informal learning, interlinking the general, vocational and higher education, as well as lifelong learning and the labour market.

All institutions participating in Val-Net (e.g. the Latvian Parent Movement, UNESCO Latvia, Ventspils Digital Centre, Riga Central Library) are involved in the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

The project (March 2012 - April 2013) received funding from the EU Lifelong Learning programme.

Slovenia – Nefiks and e-Nefiks, tools to prove non-formal learning outcomes

Nefiks aims to help youth organisations and other NGOs to show competences possible to obtain in their projects, not only to showcase them but also to describe them in terms relevant for other sectors, e.g. employers. At policy level Nefiks strives to achieve general recognition of non-formally obtained competences as equal and consisting part of an individual's education. Nefiks comes in two shapes, a booklet and an electronic portfolio (e-Nefiks). The electronic portfolio is free of charge and easily accessible everywhere where internet is available. The output of e-Nefiks is: Europass CV, list of competences (according to eight key competences), portfolios (social capital, career building), e-Nefiks forms, employer recommendations, attachments (other certificates, e.g. Youthpass). Since e-Nefiks was established, the main focus has moved towards youth employability, proving that competences obtained in non-formal settings are useful for employment.

<http://www.talentiran.si/en-nefiks>

6.2.1.3. Promoting learning mobility of all young people

More than half of the Member States mention the key role the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors (Youth in Action programme and Lifelong Learning programme, particularly Erasmus and Comenius) for promoting learning mobility of young people. The number of measures promoting learning mobility of all young people – introduced or planned since January 2010 – has increased significantly.

In the French Community of **Belgium**, *Bureau International Jeunesse* is the main actor to award public grants for mobility in the non-formal sector. In **Finland**, the Centre for International Mobility CIMO is in charge of all EU mobility programmes. In **France**, where the outgoing international mobility is widely encouraged, 180 000 young people take part in various national and European programmes for training, traineeships, sporting or cultural exchanges, community projects or volunteering. **Romania** established, as part of its National Agency for Community Programmes in Education and Training (ANPCDEFP), a national Europass centre in charge of the provision of information and support to complete and issue Youthpass and Europass documents.

6.2.1.4. Addressing gender and other stereotypes

Many countries mention their programmes and projects addressing gender and other stereotypes via formal education and non-formal learning. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, a set of projects and tools were established, ranging from coaching within a network of schools over a publication to a website on gender and diversity. In some countries, for instance **Cyprus** and **Croatia**, the topic is part of a health education curriculum in cooperation with other ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health, or local and national NGOs. In some countries like **Austria**,

Germany and **Luxembourg**, Girls' and Boys' Days¹²⁰ take place as national initiatives. In **Malta**, emphasis is put on bullying at school in all forms including on LGBT students. In **Turkey**, trainings are organised in youth centres and youth camps associated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and in coordination with young people.

Austria – Special Gender Department of the association *Amazone*

The Special Gender Department sees itself as a place for the promotion of education and expertise on all matters and issues of gender work as a whole, with a focus on feminist work with girls. The Special Gender Department integrates the aspects of working with girls, mixed-gender aspects and aspects of development, qualification and raising awareness. From these three perspectives, measures are proposed for the deconstruction of gender role images with and for girls, boys, adults, institutions and anyone else who is interested. Through the gateways of education and promotion, work is carried out on the following eight topics which have emerged over the course of many years: work, education, health, violence, culture, multimedia, politics and sexuality. The qualification area includes information on talks, seminars, specialist consultations and work materials. In many of the association's services, qualified peers function as role models for other young people. The association also works with a trained pool of advisers, who pass on their expertise as needed, thus bringing together the approaches of work with both girls and boys.

www.amazone.or.at

6.2.1.5. Promoting cohesion by formal education and non-formal learning

A number of measures were introduced after January 2010 using formal education and non-formal learning to promote cohesion and understanding across different groups, to promote equal opportunities and narrow the gaps in (educational) achievement.

Some projects are designed to give information, for example a book about 'superdiversity' in the youth sector published in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** in 2014. Special grant schemes targeting projects in the field of non-institutional education for young people exist in the French Community of Belgium or in **Croatia**. In **Germany**, a set of strategies include a funding strategy that promotes school success of children and young people with a migrant background. In England, **United Kingdom**, an additional funding programme, separate from core education funding, is targeting economically disadvantaged pupils in school. Legislation is in place in many countries, such as the 'Framework law for assistance, social integration and rights for people with disabilities' in **Italy** with additional guidelines on school integration of pupils with disabilities.

¹²⁰ Technical enterprises and training facilities, universities and research centres are invited to organise an open day for girls to change attitudes towards vocational orientation; conversely, on a dedicated day, boys learn more about service occupations in education, social affairs, healthcare or other occupations where men are underrepresented.

6.2.1.6. Developing participative structures

Legislation is in place in several countries, and student bodies are established and implemented within different educational institutions in many countries. In **Finland**, the laws on secondary and vocational educational schools oblige these educational institutions to have a student body.

In **Ireland**, one of the priority areas of the national strategy on education for sustainable development is ‘promoting participation by young people’, with school council as key structure within the school context. The strategy aims to increase the number of student councils at primary level and to review the effectiveness of such councils in post primary schools. In **Luxembourg**, the coordination of the national student council is transferred to the national youth council and will therefore gain more autonomy. The national youth council is the umbrella organisation of youth organisations and represents the opinions and interests of young people at national level. A law which gives schools the opportunity to establish student school councils has existed in **Slovakia** since 2003 and was followed by the establishment of training programmes for coordinators of student school councils. In **Lithuania**, the development of a student parliament and the implementation of related activities are still ongoing.

6.2.1.7. Encouraging formal education and non-formal learning to support young people’s innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship

Different strategies, schemes and guidelines for encouraging formal education to support young people’s innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are in place in almost all countries. Examples are a strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education in **Sweden**, a Young Enterprise charity in the **United Kingdom** or guidelines for entrepreneurship education in **Finland**. In many countries the topic is part of a national youth strategy, like in the **Czech Republic** or **Serbia**. In some countries special strategies – like a national innovation strategy in **Denmark** or an action plan for student entrepreneurship in **France** – are in place to foster students’ innovative and entrepreneurial skills and competences. Sometimes strategies and schemes on entrepreneurship are part of a broader lifelong learning strategy.

Some actions aim at stimulating entrepreneurial attitude, others focus on teaching entrepreneurial skills and competencies and therefore educate students to become entrepreneurs. Several countries include both approaches like the Flemish Community of **Belgium** in an action plan on education for entrepreneurship.

Other countries’ programmes focus more on the non-formal sector, like **Portugal**’s programme aiming at youth organisation leaders, or **Cyprus**’ planned Career Camps programme which will be implemented in 2015 to enhance entrepreneurial mind-sets and trainings for the development of non-formal learning projects on entrepreneurship. ‘YouSmile’¹²¹, a safe online interactive environment in **Greece**, promotes learning and skills development through use of new technologies. It also aims at creating an environment for the development of creative, social and literacy skills. The Other School programme in **Romania** involves both students and teachers in non-formal activities. It is

¹²¹ <http://www.yousmile.gr/>

carried out during one week of the second semester of school and is based on a special schedule, consisting exclusively in non-formal activities.

Amongst other countries, **Estonia** mentions cooperation with VET providers or projects implemented by VET schools in order to support innovation projects. One example for a project to foster innovation is ‘Youth Creates’ (*Jugend gründet*), a nationwide and online-based competition for young people in **Germany**, which supports the development of innovative entrepreneurial ideas for industry, service and trade. Participants test their ideas in an eight-week simulation.

6.2.1.8. Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning

There is a broad variety of projects, programmes and publications aiming at delivering better insight and enhancing awareness of the value of non-formal learning outcomes. The ‘Youth business cards’ in the French Community of **Belgium** raise awareness of the role and added value of youth organisations for other sectors, such as employment or education. In several countries emphasis is put on the value of non-formal learning outcomes through volunteering. In **Slovenia**, for instance, a Volunteering Act was adopted in 2011. Other countries launched studies or conducted mapping exercises to explore the theme of youth work and the value of its non-formal learning outcomes. A study¹²² on ‘hidden competences’ was published in 2014 in **Finland**, and a mapping report will be released in 2015 in **Ireland**.

Declarations on the contribution of youth work are reported for **Ireland** and **Slovakia**. Online portals or platforms informing and promoting exchange on the topic of learning outcomes of non-formal learning are also described, e.g. by **Luxembourg**. The contribution to the recognition of non-formal learning through developing a quality system for youth work is acknowledged by **Austria**. *AufZaq*¹²³ is a certification for training courses and described as an effective tool for quality development in youth work.

¹²² http://www.cimo.fi/hidden_competences

¹²³ <http://www.aufzaq.at/>

Belgium – European Youth Work Convention 2015

Belgium organised the European Youth Work Convention 2015 as one of the flagship initiatives of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. It looked at developments in youth work policy and practice since the first convention, which took place in Ghent in 2010 in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The second convention brought together over 400 policy-makers, researchers and practitioners and culminated in a declaration discussing the challenges youth work is facing at local, national and European level.

Therein, the recognition and value of youth work is addressed as follows: ‘The Convention agreed that there are three levels of recognition that have, up to now, been insufficiently addressed and require further attention. First, to gain more recognition youth work needs active promotion and advocacy by all relevant shareholders in politics, public sector and civil society at different levels. Second, there should be greater recognition of NGOs working in the youth work field, including as independent partners in the dialogue shaping youth work development. Third, there needs to be recognition and validation of the learning and achievement that takes place through youth work in non-formal and informal learning environments.’

<http://eywc2015.be/>

6.2.2. *Implementation of subsequent Council agreements*

6.2.2.1. Validating non-formal and informal learning outcomes

In the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, Ministers agreed to have in place, no later than 2018, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Relevant measures are introduced or planned by Member States to a different extent in the different youth-related issues covered by the recommendation: the involvement of youth organisations and youth workers in the development and implementation of validation arrangements; the role of the youth organisations and civil society organisations on promoting and facilitating the identification and documentation of learning outcomes acquired at work or in voluntary activities, using relevant Union transparency tools (the Europass framework and Youthpass); and the coordination on validation arrangements between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors.

In **Austria**, the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Bulgaria**, **Cyprus**, **Czech Republic**, **Estonia**, **France**, **Ireland**, **Italy**, **Netherlands**, Scotland (**United Kingdom**), **Slovenia** as well as **Serbia** and **Turkey**, relevant measures in all above-mentioned fields are planned or implemented. Youth organisations and youth workers are also involved in the development and implementation of validation arrangements in the French and Flemish Communities of **Belgium**, **Italy**, **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, **Portugal**, **Lithuania** and **Sweden**. The role of the youth organisations and civil society organisations in promoting and facilitating the identification and documentation of learning outcomes

acquired at work or in voluntary activities are equally addressed (by planned or implemented measures) in the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, in **Finland**, **Germany**, **Luxembourg**, **Croatia**, **Lithuania**, **Spain** and **Sweden**.

Finally, measures to coordinate validation arrangements between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors are introduced or planned by the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of **Belgium**, by **Latvia** and **Spain**.

6.2.2.2. Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences and their recognition and validation through quality youth work

In the Council conclusions of 16 May 2013 on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people, Ministers agreed to promote, through quality youth work, experiential learning and skills development, and the recognition and validation of such skills. In nearly all countries, relevant measures are introduced or planned in both fields: promoting the acquisition skills and competences through quality youth work, and promoting the recognition and validation of skills and competences acquired through quality youth work.

InterCity Youth (ICY) – European Network of Local Departments for Youth Work

InterCity Youth (ICY) is a European Network of Local Departments for Youth Work which gathers municipalities actively involved in youth work. The overall aim is to enhance the quality of youth work in Europe, via knowledge sharing, peer learning and policy development.

The network's objectives are:

- to enhance peer learning between local departments of youth work; providing directors and staff opportunities to professional development, mutual support and stimulation;
- to promote the exchange and development of tools for enhancing and making visible the quality of youth work and promote youth work as an arena for non-formal learning;
- to contribute to European youth policies; transmitting knowledge and insight from local government experiments and solutions to European policy agendas.

The project of setting up such a network was developed through two InterCity-conferences held in 2012 and 2013; the network itself was launched during the third conference in 2014. These conferences were supported by the Erasmus+ programme.

<http://intercityyouth.eu/>

6.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has taken a significant number of initiatives and actions related to education and training. **Quality education** has for instance always been a key point on the forum's agenda. The YFJ published in 2013 'The European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Quality Education',¹²⁴ which underlines the right of access for all young people to quality education as well as its general important role in social, political and economic life of young people. The YFJ has established a Framework for Quality Assurance of Non-formal Education¹²⁵ which proposes to youth organisations an eight-step cycle of activities, from planning to evaluation. A specific manual was also developed to support its implementation.

With the organisation of the '2014 Education Week: Quality Education: a Youth right!' the YFJ addressed the issue of recognition of non-formal education, which it had previously tackled in the 2012 study on 'The Impact of Non-formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability'.¹²⁶ Besides these youth-led initiatives, the forum also contributed to promotion of the value of competences acquired through youth work by participating in the ET 2020 working group on **transversal skills** in 2014 (which is part of the open method of coordination in the field of education and training). The YFJ also contributed to the Commission's public consultation on a European Area of Skills and Qualifications which took place in 2014.

Furthermore, since 2012 the YFJ has been a member of the **European Qualifications Framework** (EQF) Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from national authorities and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the framework. Therein the YFJ has played an important role by raising Member States' awareness about the potential impact and contribution of validation to the youth sector. It also empowers youth organisations to follow up the implementation of the EQF recommendation at national level. Connected to this and building on a series of online questionnaires, the YFJ organised an event for its membership in September 2014 on the **validation of non-formal learning**. The objective was to gather first-hand input from youth organisations and experts across Europe on what needs to be done to establish effective validation arrangements for non-formal education activities in the Member States. Driven by the desire to meaningfully contribute to the work of the EQF Advisory Group, the forum collated all the gathered evidence into a report, which it presented to the members of the group.

The YFJ deplores the little progress that has been made towards the introduction of national validation arrangements, as demonstrated by the updated European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. A lack of knowledge and recognition of the added value of such arrangements, specifically concerning the validation of competences gained through non-formal education in the third sector, seems to be the main reason for this.

¹²⁴ <http://www.youthforum.org/policypaper/european-forum-policy-paper-on-quality-educatiuon/>

¹²⁵ <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-assurance-of-non-formal-education/>

¹²⁶ http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/reportnfe_print

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Supporting the health and well-being of young people – with a focus on the promotion of good mental and sexual health, sport, physical activity and healthy life styles – is the aim of this field of action. The prevention and treatment of injury, eating disorders, addictions and substance abuse are equally in the spotlight.

7.1. EU initiatives and action

Good health has an impact on quality of life and life expectancy, and also contributes to personal well-being (physical/mental/emotional) and self-esteem/self-confidence. A healthy youth performs better at school and work. Investing in and maintaining the health of young people lowers the pressure on national healthcare systems and budgets, and makes a positive contribution to the labour market/employment and the European economy as a whole.

The Eurofound study about NEETs¹²⁷ noted the detrimental consequences for young people falling into this category of not being in employment, education or training, such as psychological distress, disengagement and risky behaviour. NEETs were found to be more prone to suffer from poor health and depression, use alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances. The foundation's policy brief of 2014 on the social situation of young people¹²⁸ highlighted the fact that unemployed and inactive young people give a comparatively low rating for their subjective well-being. It also stated that unemployed and inactive young people are more likely than others to have lower levels of mental well-being.

Nature is vital for health and contributes to the quality of life. A recent report,¹²⁹ jointly prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the WHO, underlines how contact with nature brings direct benefits to mental and physical health. In addition to these health advantages, parks and green spaces also absorb and disperse air pollutants, lower temperatures and prevent heat stress in cities, reduce social tension, and buffer noise pollution.

Health policy

The Commission supports Member States' efforts to promote healthy lifestyles. Health determinants such as a balanced diet (high consumption of fruit and vegetables, limited intake of foods high in fat/salt/sugar and sugar sweetened beverages), regular physical activity, tobacco-free lifestyle and moderate alcohol use, play an important role in disease prevention. Regarding **indicators**, the Commission and the Member States developed a shortlist of 88 European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) through a Joint

¹²⁷ Eurofound (2012), *NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

¹²⁸ Eurofound (2014), *Social situation of young people in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

¹²⁹ World Health Organization and Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2015), *Connecting global priorities: biodiversity and human health: a state of knowledge review*.

Action in 2012.¹³⁰ Wherever useful or appropriate, health indicators are broken down by age. Prevention is particularly important among young people as lifestyle habits are forged during childhood and adolescence. The EU health policy focuses on nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, smoking, sexual health and HIV/AIDS, and drug use.

Support for **nutrition and physical activity** takes place through¹³¹ the high-level group that provides an EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health (a forum for European-level organisations, ranging from the food industry to consumer protection NGOs) and through projects co-financed under the EU Health programme.¹³² The 2007 strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues and the 2014-2020 EU action plan on childhood obesity are important frameworks for action. The action plan was adopted by the high-level group to demonstrate the shared commitment of Member States to halting the rise in childhood obesity by 2020. Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity¹³³ were adopted in June 2014. A Joint Action on nutrition and physical activity involving 25 Member States is to be launched in 2015. The Commission receives additional funding from the European Parliament for pilot projects¹³⁴ designed to improve future policy action in the area of nutrition and physical activity and to identify good practices that can be used to replicate these projects in other European cities or regions.

As far as **alcohol-related harm** is concerned, young people are particularly at risk of short-term effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence, with alcohol-related deaths accounting for around 25 % of deaths in young men aged 15-29. The EU alcohol strategy¹³⁵ is designed to help national governments and other stakeholders coordinate their action to reduce alcohol-related harm in the EU. The 2014-2016 action plan¹³⁶ on youth drinking and on heavy episodic (binge) drinking focuses on prevention of alcohol-related harm resulting from such consumption and contributes to achieving the objectives of the EU alcohol strategy. It is complemented by the Joint Action on reducing alcohol-related harm,¹³⁷ also running from 2014 to 2016. Many projects funded under the EU Health programme have to do with youth and alcohol-related issues. For example, the project ‘Let it hAPYN’¹³⁸ aims to get a better overview of good and bad practices of alcohol intervention programmes used by youth organisations in Europe.

¹³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/health/indicators/echi/list/index_en.htm

¹³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/policy/index_en.htm

¹³² <http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/health/index.html>

¹³³ OJ C 213, 8.7.2014, p. 1-6.

¹³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/projects/ep_funded_projects_en.htm

¹³⁵ COM(2006) 625 final of 24.10.2006.

¹³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/2014_2016_actionplan_youthdrinking_en.pdf

¹³⁷ <http://www.rarha.eu/Pages/default.aspx>

¹³⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/projects/database.html?prjno=20121208>

As to **smoking**, the new Tobacco Products Directive¹³⁹ aims at improving the functioning of the EU market for tobacco products whilst ensuring a high level of public health, in particular for young people. It has been estimated that the combined provisions, which will apply as from May 2016, will lead to a 2% reduction in EU tobacco consumption over five years. Anti-smoking measures are also taken through EU directives prohibiting tobacco advertising and sponsorship in the media, including on television, and through the ‘Ex-smokers are unstoppable’¹⁴⁰ campaign initiated by the Commission.

In the area of **sexual health and HIV/AIDS**, EU policy aims at raising awareness about the risks of sexually transmittable diseases by enhancing the comparability of data (improved notification and comparability of national data). The Commission communication *Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009-2013* was complemented by an operational action plan¹⁴¹ that was extended until 2016. It focuses on effective prevention, including educational measures to increase awareness on sexual health, particularly relevant to youth. The Commission also funds projects or prevention campaigns to promote safe sex and address risk behaviour.¹⁴²

Drug abuse is a key public health and social concern throughout the EU and beyond. The EU drugs strategy¹⁴³ provides the overarching political framework and priorities for EU drugs policy identified by Member States and EU institutions for the period 2013-2020. It aims at ensuring a high level of human health protection, social stability and security by focusing on two dimensions of drug policy – drug demand reduction and drug supply. The strategy also has three cross-cutting themes: (a) coordination, (b) international cooperation and (c) research, information, monitoring and evaluation. The strategy is accompanied by an action plan that covers the period 2013-2016 and provides for specific actions to be undertaken by designated responsible parties, a timetable, indicators and data collection tools. The Commission is currently undertaking a progress review of the implementation of the strategy and its action plan, whose results are expected by the end of 2015. The Commission also finances a number of projects addressing drugs and a major awareness-raising campaign.

It is important to reduce the pressure on youth that comes from aggressive **marketing and advertising** of foods high in fat, sugar and salt, and of alcohol, and ensure

¹³⁹ Directive 2014/40/EU on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products, OJ L 127, 29.4.2014.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.exsmokers.eu/uk-en/index.html>

¹⁴¹ COM(2009) 569 final of 26.10.2009 and SWD(2014) 106 final of 14.3.2014.

¹⁴² ‘Sexual Awareness for Europe’ (SAFE II), ‘Mobile Sexuality’ (SAFESEX), ‘Youth Sexual Violence’, ‘Sunflower’, ‘H-CUBE’.

¹⁴³ <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/european-union-drugs-strategy-2013-2020-pbQC3213067/>

compliance with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive¹⁴⁴ and Member States' regulations and/or voluntary agreements. The above-mentioned strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues promotes the curbing of food marketing targeting children and young people. This aim is also included in the action plans on childhood obesity and on youth drinking and binge drinking. Marketing and advertising are also addressed in the Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity. Marketing and advertising comprise one of the areas of work of the EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health. Since 2005, its members have developed 35 commitments in this field.

A Joint Action¹⁴⁵ on **mental health and well-being** was launched in 2013 under the EU Health programme. This three-year initiative aims at building a framework for action in mental health policy at EU level. It addresses issues related to five areas: promotion of mental health at the workplace; promotion of mental health in schools; promoting action against depression and suicide and implementation of e-health approaches; developing community-based and socially inclusive mental health care for people with severe mental disorders; and promoting the integration of mental health in all policies. The Health programme also supports PROYOUTH,¹⁴⁶ a European initiative for the promotion of mental health and the prevention of eating disorders. In addition, the Commission implements a European Parliament preparatory action, ADOCARE.¹⁴⁷ The purpose is to consider the usefulness of creating support services at Member State level which are adapted to the needs of adolescents with mental health problems through multidisciplinary teams in non-stigmatised environments. Last but not least, under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme, the project 'Saving and empowering young lives in Europe'¹⁴⁸ (SEYLE) includes awareness interventions in schools. These have been shown to reduce suicide attempts and related thoughts among pupils by 50%. Another project, 'Measuring Youth Well-Being'¹⁴⁹ (MYWeB), currently explores the feasibility of conducting a European longitudinal survey on children's and young people's well-being. The research involves a wide range of stakeholders including policy-makers, experts, children and young people.

As to **environmental-related pressures**, EU environmental legislation has delivered significant benefits for the health and well-being of the public. However, water, air pollution and chemicals remain among people's top environmental concerns. This is why one of the three key objectives of the EU's Environment Action Programme¹⁵⁰ (EAP)

¹⁴⁴ Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services, OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1-24.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.proyouth.eu/home.html>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.adocare.eu/>

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.seyle.eu/>

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.fp7-myweb.eu/>

¹⁵⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/factsheets/7eap/en.pdf>

until 2020 is to safeguard the Union's citizens from environmental-related pressures and risks to health and well-being.

European youth cooperation on health and well-being

The Trio Presidency gave priority to the question of social inclusion during the period from January 2013 until June 2014, and the Council adopted conclusions¹⁵¹ on the contribution of **quality youth work** to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people. The Council called for better cross-sectoral cooperation with health policy and practice and emphasised the importance of seeking quality and clear outcomes for youth work. The study on the value of youth work in the European Union¹⁵² published by the Commission in 2014 describes how youth work results in a range of positive outcomes for young people, including health and well-being. Youth work plays the role of a trustworthy advisor for young people when it comes to prevention or advice on healthcare. Youth work also helps change behaviour that can diminish the risk of leading dangerous lifestyles. More generally, youth work activities add to self-awareness and confidence in young people, which contributes to their well-being.

The Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) specifically supported projects promoting healthy lifestyles and the inclusion of young people into society, including socially-excluded youth with mental health problems. Next to the permanent priority of social inclusion, health was regularly one of the annual priorities of the programme. Funding these types of projects continues under the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020).

Young people and children are today amongst the keenest users of online and mobile technologies in Europe. To give them the digital skills and tools they need to fully and safely benefit from being online, the Commission set out a European strategy for a better internet for children¹⁵³ in 2012. Its goals related to the **protection of young people against dangers arising from the use of social media** are to scale up awareness and empowerment, including teaching of digital literacy and online safety in all EU schools; to create a safe environment for children through age-appropriate privacy settings, wider use of parental controls and age rating and content classification; and to combat child sexual abuse material online and child sexual exploitation. The Commission also promotes a digital competence framework for all citizens describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to live and work in an increasing digital society.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

¹⁵² <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/working-with-young-people-pbNC0414172/>

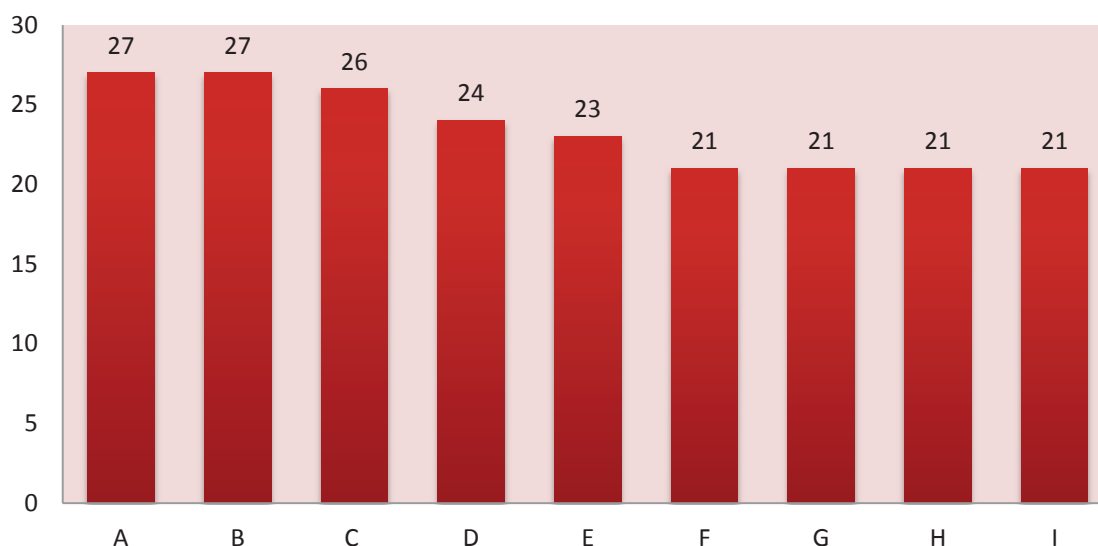
¹⁵³ COM(2012) 196 final of 2.5.2012.

¹⁵⁴ <http://openeducationeuropa.eu/sites/default/files/DIGCOMP%20brochure%202014%20.pdf>

7.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

7.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 17 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of health and well-being



- A – Encouraging youth fitness and physical activity
- B – Promoting healthy lifestyles for young people
- C – Taking into account that health is a state of complete physical , mental and social well-being
- D – Promoting the role of sport
- E – Mobilising stakeholders at local level to detect and help youth at risk
- F – Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers
- G – Encouraging peer-to-peer education
- H – Promoting safe use of new media amongst young people
- I – Making health facilities more youth friendly

7.2.1.1. Encouraging youth fitness and physical activity

A large number of countries developed national strategies or action plans to promote fitness and physical activity of young people. **Austria**, for instance, adopted a child and youth health strategy which complemented an action plan on physical activity. **Finland** elaborated a national strategy for physical activity promoting health and well-being targeted at all age groups, including children and young people. The country also runs a working group with local and regional authorities, which develops recommendations on rising physical activity and healthy diets. **Luxembourg** developed a national action plan on healthy eating and physical exercise to establish a coherent policy approach for children and young people in this field, while **Ireland** currently prepares a national physical activity plan.

In many cases, projects are also means of encouraging fitness and physical activity, such as a project in **Denmark** entitled 'Get moving' or 'PMPAM' in **Italy**, a project built on

networking with and between the local and regional levels to promote physical activity and healthy diets. The German-speaking Community of **Belgium** created a one-stop-shop for physical activity in combination with mental, psychological and social development and prevention of health problems.

In the **Czech Republic**, volunteering serves to promote physical activity, especially in the framework of a national grant programmes for youth leisure activities prioritising ‘Sport for Everybody’ and ‘Volunteerism in Sport’. Countries often mention schools as primary partners for physical education, awareness and training. By way of example, the **United Kingdom** points out high quality data collected in the framework of a school sport survey in Wales, and an online guide to teenage health and well-being created by the national youth information and citizenship charity Young Scot. Other means to encourage physical activity are outreach to young people through associations (**Sweden**) and youth work (**Estonia**).

7.2.1.2. Taking into account that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being

Many countries took measures regarding this aspect. The **United Kingdom** and the **Czech Republic** set up cross-sectoral interministerial platforms on youth health issues at the ministries in charge of youth. More specifically, the Czech Republic set up an expert platform on health, healthy lifestyles and well-being of young people at the Ministry for Youth and Sports, where experts tackle issues related to different aspects of health in regular roundtable meetings. The Young People’s Mental Health and Well-Being task force in the United Kingdom focuses on innovative solutions improving children’s and young people’s health and well-being.

Bulgaria launched an intervention programme for health promotion and integrated prophylaxis, which is divided into different levels and actions, including the municipal-level programme Healthy Children in Healthy Families with the overall aim to improve the health situation of the local population, including young people. **Slovenia** refers to a planned national programme on nutrition and health-enhancing physical activity whose purpose is to complement the national sport strategy. In **Croatia**, health is promoted through a network between health professionals, funding programmes and the Living Healthy programme, which is made up of a wide range of measures from nutrition to physical activity but also health education and enhanced communication. In **France**, a national health programme and a *plan priorité jeunesse* aim at fighting risky behaviour, answering the needs of the most vulnerable young people, developing physical activities and sports, and making young people actors of their own health. **Finland**’s multidisciplinary agencies promote health literacy – in this country, ‘Teaching Health’ is part of the curriculum.

Youth health counselling offices in **Portugal** offer free and anonymous support on all health-related questions, and the **German** Healthy Children network offers young families with children a wide range of support covering different aspects of young people’s health. Furthermore, **Italy**’s Gaining Health programme promotes healthy choices and points out risk factors, while **Latvia** aims at decreasing health risks by promoting a safe and healthy environment for young people. Young people follow seminars and discussions in which they learn how to take care of their health.

Luxembourg promotes emotional and sexual health through an interministerial coordination unit and an enlarged steering group. **Malta** also took measures related to sexual health via a national sexual health strategy. **Ireland** developed a new national suicide prevention strategy, which aims at making mental illness better understood and recognised in society. **France** took measures in this field through its national action programme against suicide 2011-2014. The **Netherlands** invest in prevention through a Healthy School initiative, and **Sweden** launched a study to gain better knowledge about young people's health in different social situations.

7.2.1.3. Promoting healthy lifestyles for young people

Measures taken in this area focus on the following three aspects: healthy lifestyle in general, healthy eating and preventing drug addiction. **Slovenia**, for instance, developed an integrated innovative approach ensuring a healthy lifestyle among children and adolescents with the pillars nutrition, physical activity, prevention and management of obesity. The objective is to reduce health inequalities. In **Finland**, a healthy and active lifestyle is promoted through a 'School on the Move' project. **France** targets young people at school as well; education and health committees aim at raising awareness about health issues. Another example is **Germany** where necessary competences for a healthy life are developed through out-of-school learning in Thuringia. **Italy's** project 'Gaining Health in Adolescence' disseminates best practices, engages health professional trainers and creates so-called communities of practice.

To promote healthy eating, nutrition plans in schools or pre-schools are part of some countries' initiatives. **Austria** developed a project named 'Our School Cafeteria'. The French Community of **Belgium** combines nutrition plans with physical activities in its *Manger-Bouger* (Eat-Move) programme. In **Luxembourg's** youth centres, healthy eating is also an important topic. And **Slovakia** has developed a national care programme focusing on healthy nutrition for children, in particular in Roma communities, and ensuring that fruit is available in schools.

Preventative measures against drug addiction include national programmes counteracting drug addiction in the **Netherlands** and **Poland** and a 'National Drugs Strategy (Interim) 2009-2013' of **Ireland**. This strategy was based on the five following pillars: supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and research. Along these lines, the **United Kingdom's** drugs strategy provides information for young people and their parents about drugs and alcohol through education. It also offers the FRANK ('Friendly, confidential drugs advice') service, a specialist substance misuse service for youth which intervenes quickly and efficiently.

7.2.1.4. Promoting the role of sport

Sport plays an important role in Member States and candidate countries to enhance the health and well-being of young people. **Latvia** has developed a state sport strategy to create equal conditions for healthy living for all. **Slovakia's** national sports programme follows a cross-sectoral approach between different ministries, such as the Ministries for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Health, Finances and Defence. **Serbia** and **Turkey** also launched national sport strategies aiming at facilitating access of all young people to sports.

Germany backs sport infrastructures and supports various youth work projects in the field of sport. Through its initiative ‘Boost for Sport’, **Sweden** aims to involve young people in sport associations. The **Czech Republic** combines promotion of sports, volunteering, engagement for development cooperation and fun in the Football for Development campaign, which is annually organised by the Association for Voluntary Activities INEX, while **Lithuania** enhances good neighbourly cooperation with Belarus through sports in the youth field. In **Luxembourg**, a national youth service trains young experts in freestyle sports to transmit their knowledge and experience to youngsters.

Finland uses sports as a tool for integration of young immigrants in cooperation with local authorities, whereas the **Netherlands** refers to ‘Sport and Moving in the Neighbourhood’, which puts particular emphasis on youth living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (*Sportimpuls*).

Austria – Project *Bewegung* (Physical Exercise)

The aim of this yearly nationwide project consists in encouraging children and youth to be daily involved in sport activities or other forms of exercise. This is promoted by the Austrian Scout Movement, whose goal is to link sport with fun through outdoor activities and experiences in the nature and to develop teamwork spirit amongst young people. In this framework, the Austrian Scout Movement prepared an outdoor activity booklet, which rewarded children and youth with a sticker and a badge every time they completed an activity.

Moreover, a project ‘On the Road’ was carried out, which consisted in a bicycle driven for a whole year through Austria by different scout groups. 5 000 kilometres and about 300 groups took part in this project; the current position of the bicycle could always be tracked on the homepage or via a Facebook group.

<https://www.ppo.e.at/aktionen/bundesthema/bundesthema1314>

7.2.1.5. Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers

The **Czech Republic**, **Sweden** and **Finland** report that knowledge of health issues is part of youth worker training in their country. **Austria** and **Ireland** organised conferences in this field. The Austrian ‘Food for Thought Conference’ took place in relation to a pilot project on health literacy in professional open youth work and information, whereas the Irish conference was organised in the context of capacity-building of youth agencies and organisations. Other countries focused on prevention training, such as the French Community of **Belgium** which raised youth workers’ awareness of suicide prevention, or **Malta** which organised workshops for youth workers on sexual health of young people.

7.2.1.6. Mobilising stakeholders at local level to detect and help youth at risk

In order to gain better knowledge about the situation of vulnerable children and youth at local level, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** launched a study which served as a basis

for projects including health monitoring and screening. The new **Swedish** youth policy law – which entered into force on 1 January 2015 – strengthens young people’s self-support, primarily NEETs. Cross-sectoral cooperation at municipal level, for instance between social services, is an important part of this new approach. In the **United Kingdom** (England), the three-year project ‘Health Champions’, which ran until March 2015 and was carried out by a voluntary organisation, focused on engagement of young people in primary care and was particularly responsive to youth in communities. The **Irish** Child and Family Agency, dedicated to improving well-being of children and youth, provided a wide range of services, including psychological support, to children, young people and families. **Latvia**’s health promotion guidelines for local governments aim at improving healthy lifestyles and sports at local level. **Slovenia** counted on capacity-building regarding healthcare, including also the local level. In the **Netherlands**, local neighbourhood expert teams intervene where and when necessary with a focus on prevention.

7.2.1.7. Encouraging peer-to-peer education

Only few peer-to-peer measures related to health and well-being were contained in the national reports. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** uses peer-to-peer education in all domains that touch the daily lives of young people, including health and well-being. The **Czech Republic** adopts a peer-to-peer approach in schools, for example in the framework of school minimal prevention programmes. In **Finland**, the method is used at the grass-roots level with the support of the Government’s Child and Youth Policy programme.

Belgium – Festi-Team

The project ‘Festi-Team’, led by the association *Latitudes jeunes* and working together with other actors of the health sector, provides peer-to-peer awareness in festivals about safe partying. A group of young volunteers are trained to harm reduction in party environment beforehand, and then they go to festivals, spread the word and raise awareness amongst other young partyers (16-25 years old) about issues related to drugs, alcohol abuse, noise and safe sex.

<http://www.cartesdevisite-jeunesse.be/projets/festi-team.html>

7.2.1.8. Promoting safe use of new media amongst young people

Although approaches are different, this topic is addressed by many Member States.

A strategy for information safety and security is for instance part of **Luxembourg**’s 2012-2014 Youth Pact. Online youth work offers services addressed to professionals working with young people, but also aims at creating an online culture of young people. In **Germany**, children and young people are helped to learn using today’s media in the best possible way, which includes counselling and cooperation with youth media protection; this was covered by a support programme in the framework of the Federal

Children and Youth Plan. Parents are targeted by the **United Kingdom**'s 'ParentPort' website, which provides useful help and advice on children's media use. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** wrote a concept note on media knowledge and established a dedicated centre on this issue. **Malta** raises awareness of and empowers minors, parents and guardians through a 'Be Smart' project. The [SaferInternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at) platform in **Austria** has a special focus on children and youth as well as on parents and educators. This measure belongs to the country's child and youth health strategy.

Cyprus created a Safer Internet Centre to promote safer internet use among children and youth. Another noteworthy project is 'CyberEthics', which amongst other things addresses children pornography, gender discrimination and inappropriate use of personal images. Cyprus also runs a helpline and a hotline to offer specific support to internet users – including children and youth. **Greece** launched a new application for smart phones named 'Cyberkid', which enables children in case of danger or threat appearing while surfing on the internet to directly communicate with officers of the Directorate of Electronic Crime – through a process of 'Cyber Alert' or by e-mail. **Croatia**, the **Netherlands** and **Italy** specifically refer to action against cyber-bullying. And the **Finnish** Internet Police monitor behaviour on social media sites with the purpose of preventive action, early intervention and online safety for young people.

Slovenia – 'LogOut & ReStart'

LogOut is a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and families by providing treatment, help, information and education needed for a healthy and balanced life in a world of media and technology.

With its 'LogOut & ReStart' programme, LogOut aims at targeting excessive use of online media and computer games amongst young people and their dependency to it. It offers therefore unique free-of-charge addiction treatment options and a wide range of different prevention activities. The main fields the organisation is focusing on are compulsive internet use, excessive playing of online games, online gambling addiction, online shopping overuse and online pornography.

It also strives to inspire children that the internet is not just a place to escape from problems but also a place of creativity and endless potential. In this framework, the organisation uses peer-to-peer support and involves families and young internet users. Team counselling of technological experts and psychologists as well as analysis of online activities, behaviour and roles are part of the approach. LogOut also organises summer camps – Logout Digital Detox Summer Camps – where youngsters live one week without internet devices and connections.

The programme is financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Health and the Municipality of Ljubljana.

<http://www.logout.si/starsi-in-otroci/>

7.2.1.9. Making health facilities more youth friendly

For this aspect Member States provide little information. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** refers to its 2014 Special Youth Care Act, whereas the **Czech Republic** and **Latvia** point at their health programmes. **Finland** mentions its Law on Pupils' and Students' Welfare. In the **Netherlands**, advice and help is provided by Centres for Youth and Family (*Centra voor Jeugd en Gezin*), and in **Sweden**, an Online Youth Clinic¹⁵⁵ (UMO) provides advice and services regarding birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease tests but also counselling on mental health illness.

United Kingdom – NHS England Youth Forum

The National Health Service (NHS) England launched a Youth Forum in March 2014. Comprising 20 young people recruited from all over the country and linked in to a Facebook network of hundreds more young people, the forum aims to provide a voice for young people. The young people work with NHS England to improve the services for young people.

During the first year, the priorities were the following:

- working with partners to develop recommendations for improving communication between young people and clinicians;
- improving awareness of mental health issues for young people;
- focusing on de-stigmatising sexual health services and improving young people's sexual health.

The delivery of the Youth Forum is supported by the British Youth Council and a reference group of a wide range of youth sector partners. In addition to that, social media offer young people the possibility to contribute to the forum with their views, ideas and experiences.

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/yth-for/>

7.2.2. *Other policy measures in this field of action*

Member States refer to a variety of issues but most of them are already identified in the youth-related aims and possible initiatives of the EU Youth Strategy. The listed measures concern teenage pregnancy, young people with disabilities and youth with special needs, the reduction of tobacco or alcohol consumption, psychological support and health education at school, the prevention and control of HIV infections and other sexually transmitted disease. An aspect not yet covered is mentioned by **Germany** which highlights measures to improve children's security and to avoid accidents.

¹⁵⁵ See also box 'Sweden – The Online Youth Friendly Clinic (OMU)' in Section 4.2.1.5.

7.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) stresses that although the right of **access to health care** is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, such access has been severely and disproportionately hampered by austerity politics in Ireland, Greece and Portugal – as observed in the YFJ’s report on ‘Youth in the Crisis’¹⁵⁶ (2014). This situation is completely unacceptable and the forum therefore urges the EU and its Member States to immediately restore the unrestricted access of young people to their right to health care.

In its 2013 publication ‘Quality Jobs for Young People’,¹⁵⁷ the YFJ researched the link between the crisis and provisions to protect **young workers’ health at work**. Given that the financial and fiscal crisis impacted strongly on young people, the forum regrets that health and well-being of young people has been a rather low priority on the EU agenda since the launch of the Commission’s Youth Health initiative in 2009. The YFJ is actively engaged in awareness-raising and capacity-building on health issues among its member organisations through non-formal education and health training.

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

¹⁵⁷ http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu

8. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Young people's voluntary activities should be supported and better recognised for their value as an important form of non-formal learning. Another aim in this field of action is to remove obstacles to voluntary activities and to promote the cross-border mobility of young people.

8.1. EU initiatives and action

The 2008 **Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union**¹⁵⁸ aims at promoting more cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people in the EU. The Commission's objective is to successfully implement the recommendation whilst encouraging civil society organisations to actively contribute to these efforts. The establishment of an expert group on the mobility of young volunteers in 2009 and the European Year of Volunteering 2011 were further milestones.

European Voluntary Service (EVS), as part of the Erasmus+ programme,¹⁵⁹ provides young people aged 18 to 30 years with an opportunity to express their personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country, within or outside the European Union. The standard duration of an EVS stint is between 2 and 12 months. The EVS scheme aims at enhancing young people's employability by offering a true learning experience which contributes greatly to the development of both personal and professional skills and competencies. Young people's participation in EVS, and in voluntary activities in general, also promotes their engagement in society – in particular it strengthens their sense of solidarity – and offers them an opportunity to contribute to their community by providing valuable services. It also stimulates their sense of initiative and social entrepreneurship, and contributes to breaking down stereotypes and fostering a sense of tolerance by demonstrating the value of cultural diversity. Finally, EVS is a useful instrument for the support and capacity-building of organisations active in the fields of youth, civic education, solidarity and social services.

A **database of EVS accredited organisations**¹⁶⁰ is available via the European Youth Portal. In December 2014, the database was re-launched with new features that make it easier for young people to find and apply for international volunteering opportunities. Advertisements for volunteering placements with application deadlines, dates of activity, place and description target young people willing to gain new experience through voluntary work. The database is designed to help organisations to attract volunteers for their projects by allowing them to create appropriate advertisements. The system is flexible and easy to use.

Between 2007 and 2013, over 48 000 young people participated in EVS under the Youth in Action programme. Erasmus+ now also makes it possible to carry out **large-scale projects relevant to voluntary activities**. In October 2014, a call for proposals was

¹⁵⁸ OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 8-10.

¹⁵⁹ See also Chapter 12.

¹⁶⁰ http://europa.eu/youth/evs_database

published under Key Action 3¹⁶¹ with a view to boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training systems and youth policies. One of the priority themes was to encourage the development and internationalisation of young people's volunteering.

YesEuropa – Young volunteers changing Europe

This 12-month project, carried out by *Asociación Building Bridges* (Spain) under the Europe for Citizens programme, aims at raising awareness among young people, teachers and youth workers from rural areas and disadvantaged backgrounds about the benefits of participating in volunteering programmes in order to become active citizens. Giving young people a greater sense of tolerance and respect is seen as key to creating future generations of committed European citizens. This project will inform them about how to become a volunteer based on the experience of voluntary organisations at European level and foster debates about European civic participation policies and opportunities for young people.

Within the framework of the project, an international seminar bringing together European civic organisations and policy-makers will be organised to discuss the results of a survey on volunteering and civic engagement, and fostering online and offline debates with the participation of young European volunteers.

<http://yeseuropa.org/proyecto-yeseuropa-jovenes-voluntarios-cambiando-europa/>

Interest in volunteering and young people's participation has continued to increase over the years. According to the **Flash Eurobarometer survey** published in April 2015,¹⁶² on average 25% of young people in the EU aged between 15 and 30 were involved in organised voluntary activities. However the situation varies across Member States. In several countries, such as Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, more than 30% of young people actively participate in volunteering, while in others (such as Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Sweden, Finland or Romania) the numbers remain below 20%. A substantial proportion of the volunteers are involved in activities in their local communities (66%). In general, the main areas of voluntary activity are charity, humanitarian and development aid (44%) and education, training and sport (40%). It is worth noting that 93% of the young people participating in the survey never had the opportunity to go abroad for the purpose of volunteering.

New opportunities to get actively involved will arise from the launch of the **EU Aid Volunteers initiative**¹⁶³ in 2015 which will bring volunteers and organisations from different countries together to work on humanitarian projects worldwide.

¹⁶¹ A description of the different key actions under Erasmus+ can be found in Section 12.1.

¹⁶² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_408_en.pdf

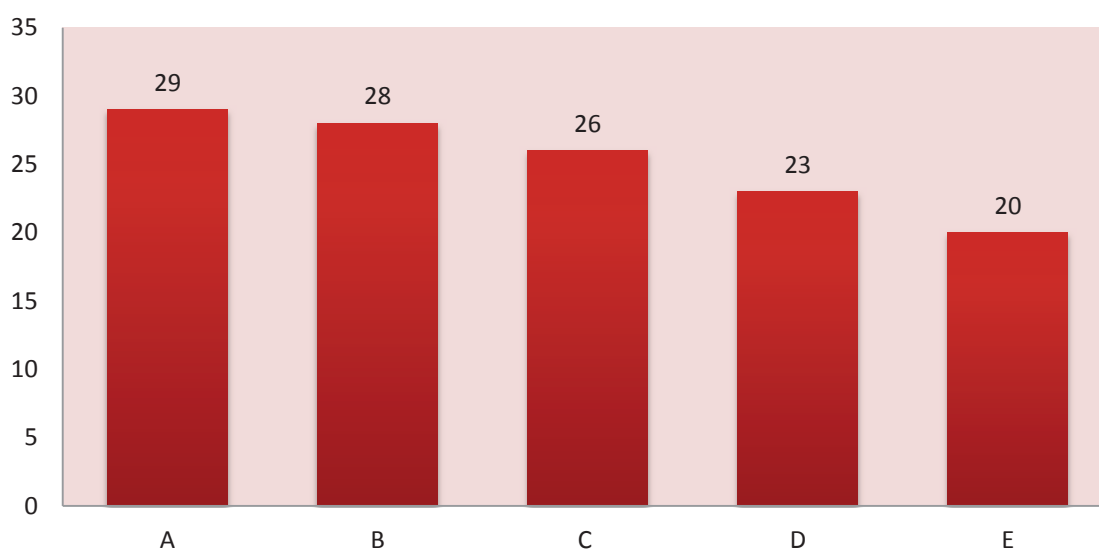
¹⁶³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en

Research projects supported by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme and Horizon 2020 contribute to better understanding of social innovation processes, including the impact of voluntary activities. For instance, the project ‘Third Sector Impact, Measuring impact, Enhancing visibility’¹⁶⁴ is a comparative European research project addressing understanding of the third sector, its scope and scale, and impacts on the common welfare.

8.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

8.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 18 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of voluntary activities



A – Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities
 B – Raising awareness amongst youth about the value of voluntary activities
 C – Supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering
 D – Engaging young people in the European Year of Volunteering 2011
 E – Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

8.2.1.1. Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities

A number of Member States, such as **Croatia, Malta, Slovakia** and **Austria**, have implemented or prepare tools supporting young people in describing and recognising competences and skills acquired through voluntary activities. It is noticeable that several countries use web and IT solutions to operationalise these tools. Between 2012 and 2014 Slovakia implemented a project with the support of the Leonardo da Vinci programme to raise awareness about competences obtained through volunteering, implemented with an

¹⁶⁴ <http://thirdsectorimpact.eu>

online tool for recognition. Similarly, Austria created an online ‘WIK:I’¹⁶⁵ which allows young people to recognise their competences with the support of youth workers. In October 2014 the **Czech Republic** introduced a vocational qualification for ‘Coordinator of Volunteers’, a certificate that is accepted across the country.

8.2.1.2. Raising awareness amongst youth about the value of voluntary activities

A large majority of countries mention their measures adopted to raise awareness amongst young people about the value of voluntary activities as well as of the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities. **Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands** and **Portugal** put in place dedicated websites aimed at promoting volunteering and raising awareness of its value. **Denmark** set up ‘Project Voluntary’, a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the national centre for voluntary work. The **German Europeers**¹⁶⁶ initiative is an example of using a network of young people who took part in transnational activities in order to promote its virtues amongst their peers.

When describing their efforts in implementing transnational volunteering, most countries underline the importance of the EVS scheme. In addition, some Members States support youth volunteering through national schemes.

Sweden – *Volontärbyrån* (Volunteer Office)

Volontärbyrån (Volunteer Office) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2002 as part of another NGO called FORUM.

Volontärbyrån uses its website to share information about volunteering issues and manages a free matching service to publicise volunteering opportunities throughout the country and make it easy for volunteers and non-profit organisations in Sweden to connect with each other.

The organisation also provides support and training to NGOs about volunteer coordination.

<http://www.volontarbyran.org/eng/>

8.2.1.3. Supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering

When it comes to supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering, there are signs for an increased Europe-wide effort. Since 2010, 4 out of 5 of the responding countries have implemented or plan to implement new measures in this regard. **Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland** and **Slovakia** have laws for volunteers addressing their well-being and safety. As for the quality of volunteering, good results

¹⁶⁵ *WIK:I – Was ich kann durch informelles Lernen*, <http://www.bmfj.gv.at/jugend/jugend-aktiv/wiki.html>.

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.europeers.de/>

were displayed through EVS and its accreditation scheme for organisations wishing to run EU-funded volunteering projects. Similar certification or accreditation measures are in place on a national level in **Cyprus**, the **Czech Republic** and **Denmark**.

8.2.1.4. Engaging young people in the European Year of Volunteering 2011

Overall, the activity level with regard to the European Year of Volunteering 2011 promoting citizenship was strong across the board. Some initiatives taken in the context of the Year led to meetings and activities which are still ongoing. In **Greece**, one of the follow-up measures consisted of the use of a national educational documentary called 'Act Positively'. It aims to stimulate and initiate dialogue on volunteering in the classroom.

8.2.1.5. Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

As to intergenerational solidarity initiatives, the **Czech Republic** informs about its 2013-2017 national action plan supporting positive ageing, in which both intergenerational relationships and volunteering are covered. In 2012 **Slovenia** released a report containing an analysis of and recommendations on intergenerational solidarity in the community.

8.2.2. *Implementation of the Council recommendation of 30 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers*

For the implementation of the Council recommendation on enhancing the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union,¹⁶⁷ the Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) and the Erasmus+ programme are highlighted by most countries. Several Member States also inform about national funding available for promoting and enabling volunteering for young people.

Italy, **Germany**, **France** and **Luxembourg** have national schemes for youth volunteering, such as the Voluntary Service Cooperation in Luxembourg for young people between 18 and 30 wishing to volunteer between 3 and 12 months. Young people from Germany as well as from other countries may take part in voluntary work in Germany through a *Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr* (Voluntary Social Year). In **Belgium**, the Bel'J programme offers young Belgians the opportunity to take part in volunteering in one of the other Communities in Belgium. The **Irish** Aid Volunteering Initiative was launched in 2013 and aims to strengthen support for volunteering across all age groups (see box).

Croatia, **Ireland**, **Finland**, **Poland**, **Slovenia**, **Spain** and the **United Kingdom** provide support to non-governmental organisations in the context of volunteering in the youth field. As an example, the United Kingdom has a grant fund that helps 26 volunteering programmes provide crucial support for young people in vulnerable circumstances, including young offenders, care leavers and NEETs.

¹⁶⁷ Although the recommendation was agreed before the EU Youth Strategy, it is included in this report because its commitments are explicitly recalled in the text of the 2009 Council resolution and because it encourages Member States to set up transnational volunteering schemes.

Following the Council recommendation and in order to increase capacities of organisations ready to receive volunteers, **Austria** established a working group. **Spain**'s National Strategy for Volunteering (2010-2014) aims to strengthen participation of non-profit actors in international networks. Furthermore, **Slovenia** explored the relevance of volunteering, through notably EVS, for the employability of young people.

The Council recommendation puts a strong emphasis on the sharing of information on volunteering – such as existing opportunities, information and training for youth workers, organisations and other actors as well as awareness of rights and responsibilities. Many countries are involved in such informational activities. In addition to using the networks available under Erasmus+ (such as Eurodesk), a notable example are **Slovakia**'s yearly meetings in local areas to motivate young people to get involved in volunteering.

Ireland – Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative

The Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative aims to modernise Irish Aid's support to volunteering, enabling experienced professionals to have an opportunity to contribute to development. Irish Aid, who is managed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, works closely with NGOs such as the Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers (*Comhlámh*) on the Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative. This initiative targets all age groups but is particularly relevant to young people (69% of international volunteers in 2013 were below 30).

Irish Aid has been a long standing partner of the UN Volunteers programme (UNV). Irish Aid also hosts an annual Volunteering Fair to showcase to potential volunteers the diversity and availability of short and long term volunteering placements overseas. Important initiatives funded by Irish Aid include the development by *Comhlámh* of the Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organisations; the provision of enhanced information on volunteering across a range of social media including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which can be utilised through the #Volops Hashtag; and profiling the experience and contribution that volunteers make to international development, leading to increased awareness and interest in volunteering.

<https://www.irishaid.ie/get-involved/volunteering/>

8.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has developed a **European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers**,¹⁶⁸ which aims at informing decision-makers, volunteer providers, organisations and volunteers themselves about adequate conditions for volunteers. This includes the protection of their rights and support by the volunteer provider. A volunteer's status can differ widely between the EU Member States. Thus the forum's contribution is valuable as a common guideline to ensure a certain level of protection.

As far as **international mobility of young people** is concerned, the YFJ has for many years been calling for reduction of obstacles to the entry of young people from non-EU countries into the EU. Commenting on the Council Position on a proposal¹⁶⁹ for a new Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing, the YFJ and several of its member organisations published a joint reaction¹⁷⁰ stating that the proposals clearly fall short of what is needed to enhance the international mobility of young people.

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/volunteering-charter-en.pdf>

¹⁶⁹ COM(2013) 151 final of 25.3.2013.

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2015/01/Reaction-to-Council-Position-on-Visa-Directive.pdf>

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

This field of action aims at young people's participation in and contribution to global processes of policy-making. It concerns issues such as climate change, the UN Millennium Development Goals and human rights.

9.1. EU initiatives and action

The EU instruments for pursuing the above objectives entail both policy cooperation and financial support through different EU programmes, mainly Erasmus+. So-called Youth Windows to Erasmus+ provide additional funds and measures to strengthen cooperation with specific neighbouring regions.

While this section deals mostly with youth cooperation with partner countries, such as China and Africa, Chapter 12 goes into detail about Erasmus+ and its predecessor programme Youth in Action and their support to the 'Youth and the world' field of action, especially as regards cooperation with partner countries neighbouring the EU.

The Eastern Partnership made significant progress in 2014. New Association Agreements were signed with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Both the Lithuanian and the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU put a focus on strengthening youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries. In 2013 and 2015, **Eastern Partnership Youth Forums** were organised through cooperation between the Presidencies, the Commission and other stakeholders. The participants' recommendations from these forums were brought to the attention of the Eastern Partnership Summits.

To support capacity-development of governments and civil society stakeholders in the youth sector in cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, the Commission has set up an Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit (EPYRU) in Kiev. EPYRU also aims to foster youth research and to implement visibility and dissemination activities related to youth in the Eastern Partnership. EPYRU activities in 2014 included the organisation of a forum on student self-government, a training course for youth workers and state civil servants, and the development of an e-learning platform.

The **EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue**¹⁷¹ (HPPD), launched in 2012, is part of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, which covers various policy fields. It provides a platform for cooperation between China and the EU in many areas, including youth, education and culture. The youth dimension of the HPPD builds on the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth, during which seven flagship events were organised. These involved the Commission, Member States and a large number of youth organisations, including the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The 2011 EU-China Year of Youth supported cooperation between more than 200 youth organisations from China and Europe.

Two HPPD meetings have been organised so far, one in Brussels (April 2012) and one in Beijing (September 2014). They resulted in the adoption of joint declarations and follow-up action plans. The current action plan provides for EU-China policy dialogue and

¹⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/international-cooperation/china_en.htm

expert seminars on issues relevant to youth – to be organised by the Commission and the ACYF – as well as joint projects in the framework of the Erasmus+ and the Chinese Youth Partnership for Friendship programmes. It is also geared to strengthening web-based cooperation between the Chinese and EU youth portals. An extraordinary HPPD meeting is scheduled for September 2015 with a view to celebrating the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations.

Cooperation between the EU and Africa in the youth field is conducted via meetings, such as **Africa-Europe Youth Leaders' summits** (the third of these took place in April 2014 immediately before the fourth EU-Africa summit) or **Africa-Europe Youth Platform** meetings (the third one was held in January 2015). These activities are part of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership which aims at jointly addressing common challenges such as climate change, protection of the environment, ensuring peace and security, good governance, effective participation in society and human rights.

The European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development financed two research projects related to young people in the South and East Mediterranean countries: SAHWA – Researching Arab Mediterranean Youth: Towards a New Social Contract¹⁷² and POWER2YOUTH – Freedom, dignity and justice: a comprehensive approach to the understanding of youth exclusion and the prospects for youth-led change in the South and East Mediterranean.¹⁷³

The **European Year for Development**¹⁷⁴ (EYD2015) is a major EU-led initiative dedicated to raising awareness, engaging Europeans in the EU's development cooperation and encouraging a debate on 'our world, our dignity, our future'. The EYD2015 aims to highlight the Union's strong commitment to international development cooperation in line with the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda by the UN General Assembly,¹⁷⁵ as well as the new international climate agreement. The EYD2015 places a strong focus on young people and their role in contributing to eradicating poverty worldwide, with a specific thematic month dedicated to Children and Youth in July.

The Commission also puts a special focus on youth aspects within **EU development cooperation**, especially with regard to education, social inclusion and combating poverty. The report on 'Youth and the post-2015 development framework: challenges and opportunities'¹⁷⁶ highlights current key challenges and opportunities with regard to youth employment and youth inclusion in development processes.

¹⁷² <http://sahwa.eu/>

¹⁷³ <http://www.power2youth.eu/>

¹⁷⁴ <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en>

¹⁷⁵ The UN Millennium Development Goals were established in 2000 and include eight anti-poverty targets to be accomplished by 2015. 2015 is also the year in which the international community will agree on the future global framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

¹⁷⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/erd-report-youth-post-2015-2013_en.pdf

In October 2014 the Commission launched a four-year project on youth inclusion¹⁷⁷ – co-financed under the EU’s Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and implemented by the OECD Development Centre – to support 10 selected countries (Cambodia, Côte d’Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Moldova, Peru, South Africa, Togo and Vietnam) to better respond to the needs and aspirations of young people through evidence-based policies and strengthen their involvement in national development processes. This project will address the main challenges youth is facing, and analyse the indicators to measure youth well-being deficits. A global methodology will be developed to assist countries in implementing and strengthening youth inclusion strategies.

The **EU Aid Volunteers initiative**¹⁷⁸ was launched in 2015. It aims to connect volunteers and organisations from different countries so that they can work together on humanitarian projects. Trained volunteers are being deployed to address needs-based humanitarian aid and to support youth capacity-building. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,¹⁷⁹ adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, focuses as well on volunteering and involvement of young people, recommending to the governments to engage with relevant stakeholders, including youth and volunteers.

¹⁷⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-development/social-inclusion_en

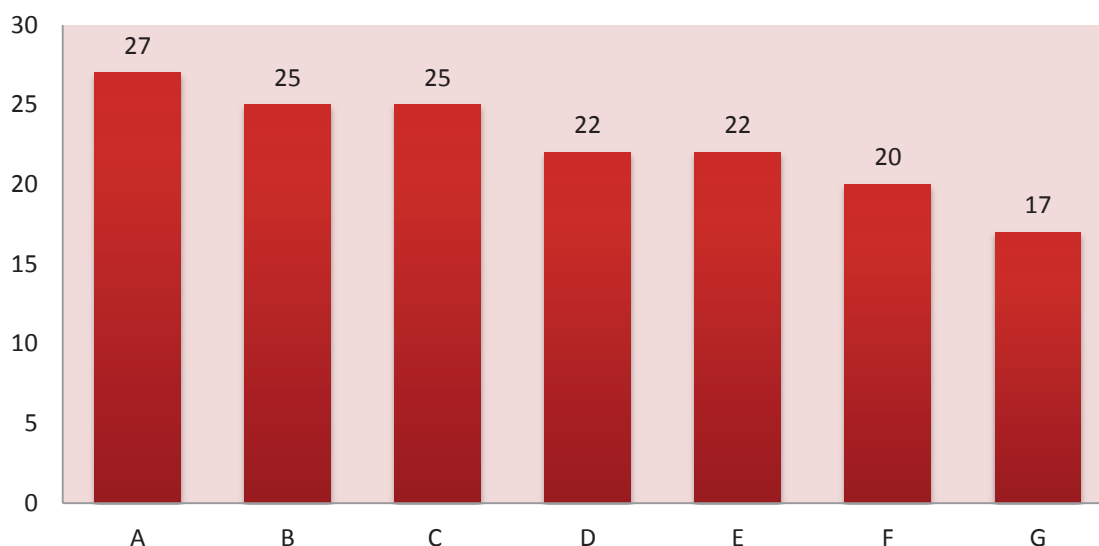
¹⁷⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

9.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

9.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 19 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of 'Youth and the world'



A – Raising awareness of young people about global issues
B – Providing opportunities to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues
C – Promoting the organisation of trainings, exchanges and meetings for young people from different regions of the world
D – Promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe
E – Promoting youth participation in development cooperation
F – Promoting youth participation in green volunteering and green patterns of consumption
G – Promoting cooperation with and exchanges between those active in youth work on different continents

9.2.1.1. Raising awareness of young people about global issues

Almost all Member States included the aims of the 'Youth and the world' field of action in their national youth strategy or development education strategy, and/or implemented programmes for that purpose.

The **Czech** youth strategy aims at making children and young people familiar with the principles of sustainable development and at developing environmental literacy. **Slovakia's** youth strategy focuses on young people's and youth workers' international mobility, on the development of quality youth work and on increasing awareness of interdependence between local actions and global impacts.

The **Irish** Aid Development Education Strategy (2007-2015) was put in place to strengthen coherence between education, citizenship and development policies in Ireland, to ensure high quality development education and the implementation of initiatives

raising public awareness and understanding for development issues. It also supports the exchange of good practice at European and international levels. Ireland's national youth council's development education programme has a number of strands such as youth workers' training on development and justice issues or the organisation of the One World Week – a week of youth-led awareness-raising, education and action that takes place throughout Ireland each year. In the **Netherlands**, youth representatives of the national youth council hold discussions with thousands of young people about sustainable development and provide input for the UN and climate conferences. This is done in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries.

Germany implements programmes which foster networking among volunteers who were involved in development projects and use the volunteers' competences for educational purposes of children, young people and adults in formal and non-formal education. The programme *Bildung trifft Entwicklung* (Education Meets Development), for example, is expected to contribute to the organisation of about 3000 educational events mainly in schools, which should reach about 75000 young people.

Several countries made global issues or development education part of school curricula. With its 2009 curriculum reform, the **Polish** Ministry of Education strengthened education on global issues within formal education at primary and secondary school levels. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports local governments and education institutions committed to raising development cooperation issues in public debates. In line with **Finland's** development policy programme (2012), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with educational authorities to ensure that global education has a solid foothold in general education. According to the new core curriculum, which should be in place in 2016, interactive methods should be used, promoting sustainable development in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Czech Republic – ARPOK

The organisation ARPOK, founded in 2004, provides Global Development Education, raising awareness about development among children, young people, pupils and teachers, both in a formal and non-formal context. Its mission is to contribute to the development of civil society in the Czech Republic and abroad. The organisation offers educational programmes, discussions about developing countries, thematic days, methodical materials, exhibitions, consultations concerning the implementation of global topics into the school curriculum, courses for teachers. ARPOK works both with pupils (interactive workshops, project/thematic day) and with teachers and youth workers (methodological seminars, handbooks, consultation centre, and library).

<http://arpok.cz/home/>

Cooperation among stakeholders tends to involve the Ministries responsible for education and for foreign affairs, the bodies related to them and civil society organisations, which in several cases create networks to achieve synergy. In **Denmark**, a network of high schools – Global High Schools – was set up to empower students to

become active learners with a global horizon. And in **Slovenia**, ‘Plan B’ is a network of NGOs and experts which form a broad civil society platform.

9.2.1.2. Providing opportunities to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues

Most of the Member States actively promote young people’s participation in international cooperation and fora. In **Sweden**, since more than 15 years a youth representative participates in the Swedish Delegation to the UN General Assembly. The National Youth Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) has a representative in the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO and the Nordic Committee for Children and Young People. Sweden also highlights that the Structured Dialogue provides youth delegates with important knowledge and experience of international cooperation and an expanded network. Similarly, **Denmark** has one representative of the Danish Student Union as a permanent member in the Danish National Commission for UNESCO. The Flemish youth council (**Belgium**) sends youth representatives to several international fora (EU, UN, Council of Europe, UNESCO). **Austria** also offers young people the possibility to be part of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO. **Romania**’s youth delegates participate in two intergovernmental conferences: the UN General Assembly and the Commission for Social Development.

In **Germany**, the permanent school competition *Alle für Eine Welt – Eine Welt für Alle* (All for One World – One World for All) which is organised on behalf of the Federal President, invites teachers to integrate topics related to global learning in their lessons. In **Finland**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture provide support to NGOs and other national-level stakeholders in order to facilitate exchange of views on global issues. Programmes like **Lithuania**’s Democracy Promotion and Development Cooperation programme and conferences like the European-North American Conference on Youth Participation (organised by the **Austrian** Commission for UNESCO) are used to foster exchange between young people and policy-makers on issues of global relevance.

9.2.1.3. Promoting the organisation of trainings, exchanges and meetings for young people from different regions of the world

Many Member States mention Erasmus+ and its predecessor programme Youth in Action as well as the Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations as examples of measures which foster the exchange and training of young people at international level.

Youth councils such as the **Danish** DUF (*Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd*) or the **Spanish** youth system – which consists of the youth institute INJUVE, youth bodies of the Autonomous Communities, youth counsellorships of city halls, youth organisations and youth councils – support democratic processes in an international youth context.

The Euromed Youth Platform, which is based in **Malta**, brings young people from the European and Mediterranean regions together in an environment of tolerance and mutual understanding and promotes capacity-building. Its ‘Search 4 Partners’ engine facilitates the creation of networks with similar objectives. **Slovenia** has developed a national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education, which defines priority areas and

ensures the funding of international mobility from the national budget. **Lithuania** has put in place a bachelor study programme ‘International Politics and Development Studies’ in English for students from Georgia and Ukraine.

In the **Czech Republic**, the main task of the Czech Development Agency – established by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs – is to implement projects in priority partner countries, to award grants to NGOs and to provide training for Czech staff involved in development assistance. In **Germany**, the ASA programme offers practical training in Africa, Asia, Latin America and South East Europe. ASA fosters competence in global learning, quality youth work and networking of young people who are interested in and/or were involved in development work. The **Netherlands** has put in place a citizenship and development programme. It aims at young people’s promotion of and involvement in international cooperation, at opening the field of development cooperation to newcomers and bringing together stakeholders from various fields, such as youth and migrant organisations and business.

Netherlands – *Samen* (Together)

The Dutch organisation *Samen* (Together) brings together young Dutch people with disadvantaged peers from Africa, Asia and Latin America. They live and work with street children and encourage young people to promote active citizenship in an international context.

Samen is part of the worldwide Don Bosco organisation.

<http://www.samen.org/>

9.2.1.4. Promoting youth participation in green volunteering and green patterns of consumption

Three quarters of the Member States made environmental and sustainable development education and participation part of their national youth strategy or developed specific strategies with this aim.

The **Finnish** National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Education and Culture developed a national strategy of education for sustainable development. Sustainable development is also incorporated as a cross-cutting theme in the national core curricula of general and vocational education. After 2010, the environmental criteria and certification system was updated to cover also economic, social and cultural aspects of sustainability. Environmental/sustainable development certificates are awarded to educational establishments.

Several countries (**Belgium, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain**) support youth organisations or have set up programmes or projects which promote youth participation in green volunteering. **Sweden** established a website to promote sustainable/green consumption amongst young people.

9.2.1.5. Promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe

Two thirds of the Member States mention activities promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe. In **Finland**, the ETVO volunteer programme channels volunteers to civil society organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Finnish Centre for International Mobility CIMO is responsible for a North-South-South programme, which, based on networks between institutions of higher education in Finland and southern partners, focuses on student and teacher exchanges.

In **Lithuania**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implements development cooperation projects jointly with other governmental and non-governmental institutions from Lithuania and partner countries. **Cyprus** initiated strategic political cooperation between Cyprus, Egypt and Israel and other countries to strengthen civil society and promote voluntary service in these countries. In **Germany**, the City of Bremen published guidelines for the involvement of young people in development policy and cooperation.

9.2.1.6. Promoting cooperation with and exchanges between those active in youth work on different continents

Germany has a funding programme for international youth work in place for bilateral and multilateral youth exchange and international mobility of youth workers. The country runs a pilot project *Jugendarbeit international – Vielfalt erleben* (JiVE) (International Youth Work – Experience Diversity), which, as part of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany, aims e.g. at fostering international youth work, increased participation of young people, intercultural learning, equal opportunities – especially also for young people with a migrant background – and at enhanced qualification of youth workers.

The youth chapter of bilateral intergovernmental agreements concluded by the **Czech Republic** enables youth workers, youth leaders and young people to join international activities including exchanges. In addition, the Czech Republic concluded bilateral sectoral agreements in the field of youth with the same aim.

9.2.1.7. Promoting youth participation in development cooperation

In some Member States, measures promoting youth participation in development cooperation are based on national strategies and implemented through programmes which support civil society organisations or cooperation with international organisations.

The **Swedish** Government provides financial support to Swedish civil society organisations which foster voluntary activities in developing countries through the Swedish International Development Agency. The agency also supports Minor Fields studies, a scholarship programme targeting students at college or university level. In **Finland**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture support NGOs who promote development cooperation, for example, by involving young people and students in development work. Each year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds about 100 experts taking up international assignments via the UN Junior Professional Officers (JPO) and

the UN Volunteers programme (UNV). The recruitment for the JPO programme is coordinated by the Centre for International Mobility CIMO. In **Lithuania**, the Democracy Promotion and Development Cooperation programme (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) finances development cooperation projects which are implemented in cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental institutions in Lithuania and partner countries.

9.2.2. *Implementation of subsequent Council agreements*

9.2.2.1. Cooperating on the international policy agenda on children, youth and children's rights

Two thirds of the Member States took steps to cooperate and take an active role in international meetings dealing with children's rights. Member States participate in international fora regarding children's rights, e.g. at the level of the UN, the European Union or the Council of Europe.

In **Finland**, the Ombudsman for Children has the main responsibility for European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. In **Denmark**, there is a Children's division at the Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman's office. In **Iceland**, actions are coordinated between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Welfare and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children.

Austria, **Germany** and Switzerland initiated a campaign 'Don't look away' aiming to protect children against sexual exploitation in tourism. **Turkey** implements technical assistance measures to fight violence against children and to prevent the abuse of children. In 2014 **Belgian** authorities, in cooperation with the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe, organised a European conference focused on the child's best interest. The event commemorated at the same time the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

9.3. **Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level**

The European Youth Forum's work in recent years in relation to 'Youth and the world' has focused on strengthening interregional and global youth dialogue and cooperation, giving youth organisations and young people a greater say in global processes, and seeking out synergies between European youth organisations and their counterparts in other parts of the world.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) was involved in action in the field of **sustainable development**, including cooperation with youth organisations and young people from other regions of the world, through participation at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (June 2012) and in the sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals throughout 2013 and 2014. The YFJ produced a Board position paper¹⁸⁰ on the subject of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and involved European youth organisations in this work through the

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/09/0061-14-Board-Position-Paper-Post2015-FINAL-0.pdf>

creation of a task force of European Youth Forum member organisations. This work has continued into 2015 through participation in the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations. Cooperation with youth organisations and young people in other parts of the world takes place through the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations¹⁸¹ (ICMYO) and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth¹⁸² (MGCY), of which the YFJ became and organising partner in 2014.

The YFJ was also involved in strengthening **global youth dialogue and cooperation** through the World Conference on Youth¹⁸³ held in Sri Lanka in May 2014. The forum was a member of the International Youth Task Force preparing this event, which attracted 1500 participants, including representatives of governments, youth-led organisations and other partners. The outcome document of the conference, the Colombo Declaration, explores ways and means of mainstreaming youth in the post-2015 development agenda and was developed jointly by young people and governments. YFJ member organisations participated actively in the conference, together with partner youth organisations from other parts of the world.

Between 2012 and 2015, the European Youth Forum and its member organisations engaged in several **interregional processes with youth organisations and institutions**, focusing on Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab and Mediterranean region and China. Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation came to the fore in 2014 through the third Africa-Europe Youth Leaders' summit. More than 100 representatives of African and European youth organisations called for a youth mechanism in the EU-Africa partnership, although Heads of State and Government, at the subsequent EU-Africa summit, did not advocate this so strongly in their final communiqué.

The YFJ was also involved in the Network of Universities on Youth and Global Citizenship¹⁸⁴ in the period 2012-2015, including through the African University on Youth and Development, the Mediterranean University and the University on Youth and Development in Mollina, Spain, where the forum was a core partner of the 13th, 14th and 15th editions.

¹⁸¹ <http://icmyo.org/>

¹⁸² <http://childreneyouth.org/>

¹⁸³ <http://www.wcy2014.com/>

¹⁸⁴ <http://uyd.me/about>

10. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

In this field of action, young people's creativity and capacity for innovation should be supported through better quality access to and participation in culture and cultural expressions from an early age, thereby promoting personal development, enhanced learning capabilities, intercultural skills, understanding of and respect for cultural diversity, and the development of new and flexible skills for future job opportunities.

10.1. EU initiatives and action

Building on a 2010 study on access of young people to culture,¹⁸⁵ the topic was taken up by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU (Council conclusions of 19 November 2010¹⁸⁶) and further addressed in Council conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (May 2012). On that basis, a thematic **expert group** was set up in order to share best practice on how to **promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability**. The expert group's final report¹⁸⁷ was published in 2014. The 2012 Council conclusions also called on Member States to make best use of the Youth in Action programme and other existing and future EU programmes and funds, including the European Social Fund.

Apart from the youth sector as such, the **European agenda for culture in a globalising world**¹⁸⁸ promotes access to culture. This includes the role art plays in young people's lives, as nicely expressed by Yehudi Menuhin who is quoted in the Commission communication: 'It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instil the respect of others and the desire of peace.'

From 2013 to 2015 the Commission implemented a pilot project and a preparatory action on the theme of **New Narrative for Europe**.¹⁸⁹ This initiative will be pursued in 2016 and is meant to connect people living in Europe to the European integration project via the arts and sciences. Its main purpose is to expand and engage more voices in the public debate on Europe by fostering a dialogue and mutual understanding among people, youth in particular, as well as building on culture as a key component of our shared European identity. A number of events and debates with young people have already been held in the Member States, producing positive feedback. At the same time this methodology can be used to test how this initiative could have a longer-lasting impact as demanded by the European Parliament.

¹⁸⁵ <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/access-of-young-people-to-culture-pbNC0113224/>

¹⁸⁶ All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

¹⁸⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

¹⁸⁸ COM(2007) 242 final of 10.5.2007.

¹⁸⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/new-narrative/index_en.htm

The second **Work Plan for Culture** 2011-2014¹⁹⁰ set up working groups composed of experts nominated by the Member States to work on the identified priority areas. These include cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture, and skills and mobility. According to the work plan, intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue should be promoted and strengthened in particular by developing ‘cultural awareness and expression’, ‘social and civic competences’ and ‘communication in foreign languages’, which are among the key components of lifelong learning identified by the European Parliament and the Council in 2006.¹⁹¹ The working group’s final report on ‘cultural awareness and expression’ will be available in December 2015. It will include good practice examples of how to develop this key competence from childhood to all stages of life. Results of other working groups’ activities are already available, such as the ones on better access to culture (2012)¹⁹² and on creative partnerships between cultural institutions and other sectors (2014).¹⁹³

As far as EU financial support is concerned, the **Creative Europe** programme 2014-2020 aims to build on the success of the previous MEDIA, MEDIA Mundus and Culture programmes (see box).

Many projects supported by Creative Europe focus on emerging artists, in most cases young people, as well as start-ups and micro-businesses in the digital domain run almost by definition by young people. As education is one of the programme’s priorities, several projects bring together cultural operators, schools and universities, as well as non-formal youth structures. The phenomenon of radicalisation has put new emphasis on projects focusing on intercultural dialogue and respect for other forms of cultural and religious expression.

The Creative Europe programme also supports specific prizes. The **European Border Breakers Award** is a European prize for rock and pop music for groups and singers having a first success abroad. All winners so far have been young talented people, many of whom have enjoyed successful careers after winning the prize. The **European Union Prize for Literature** awards emerging writers, in most cases also young and promising talents. And the **European Union Prize for Architecture** celebrates every two years a young emerging architect alongside the main award winners.

¹⁹⁰ OJ C 325, 2.12.2010, p. 1-9.

¹⁹¹ Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10-18.

¹⁹² http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/omc-report-access-to-culture_en.pdf

¹⁹³ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/creative-partnerships_en.pdf

Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the EU framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors. Following on from the previous Culture Programme and MEDIA programme, Creative Europe, with a budget of €1.46 billion (9% higher than its predecessors), will support:

- culture sector initiatives, such as those promoting cross-border cooperation, platforms, networking, and literary translation;
- audiovisual sector initiatives, such as those promoting the development, distribution, or access to audiovisual works;
- a cross-sectoral strand, including a Guarantee Facility and transnational policy cooperation.

The programme consists of two sub-programmes; the Culture sub-programme to promote the culture sector, and the MEDIA sub-programme to support the audiovisual sector.

Creative Europe's stated aims are to:

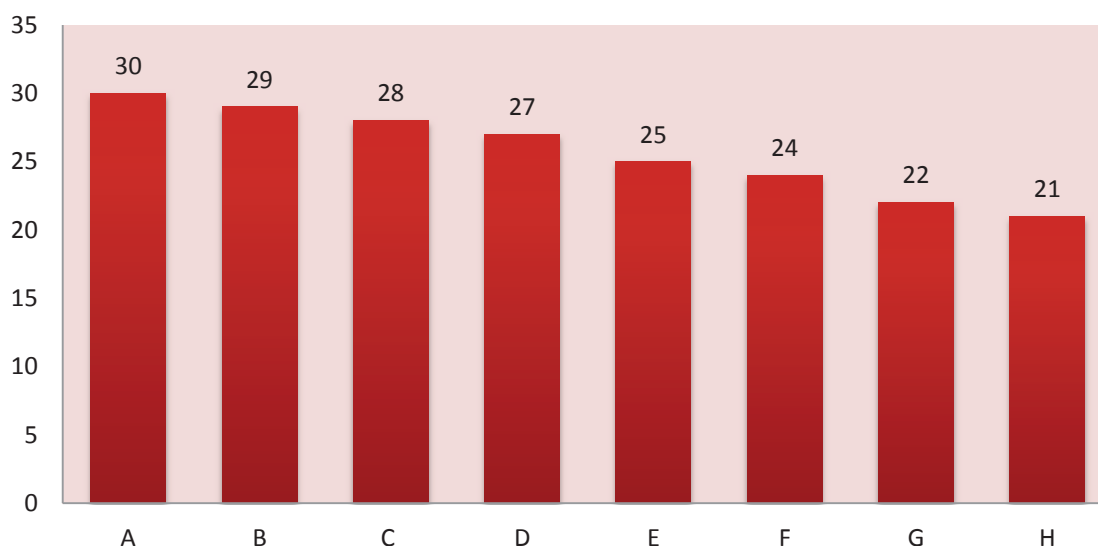
- help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;
- enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion;
- give Europe's culture and media sectors access to new international opportunities, markets, and audiences.

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/opportunities/index_en.htm

10.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

10.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

Figure 20 - Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of creativity and culture



- A – Supporting the development of creativity amongst young people
- B – Widening quality access to culture and creative tools
- C – Providing access to environments that are conducive to creativity
- D – Promoting young people’s knowledge about culture and cultural heritage
- E – Empowering young people’s creativity and innovation through new technologies
- F – Facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes
- G – Supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills through culture
- H – Promoting specialised training for youth workers

10.2.1.1. Supporting the development of creativity amongst young people

Many measures were taken to support the development of creativity amongst young people through cultural expression and wider access to culture. In **Luxembourg**, for instance, a law confers the task of fostering participation of young people not only in economic and social life, but also in cultural life, on the national youth service. The **Czech Republic** established state cultural institutions by law, which also cater for the needs of children and young people through specific programmes and offer scholarships for creativity and productive works. The country’s youth strategy facilitates equal access of children and youth to culture and motivates them to actively participate in artistic expressions. It also supports volunteering in culture and art. **France’s** 2014 *plan priorité jeunesse*, drawn up by an interministerial committee on youth, supports access of young people to art, culture and quality audiovisual and computer learning. Over the years 2012 to 2014, **Sweden** incited all cultural institutions to develop strategies to reach children and young people. In the **United Kingdom**, the ‘Creative Scotland’ strategy works with a range of partners to implement a cultural plan in relation to young people. In 2012, the

Flemish Community of **Belgium** launched a ‘Growing in Culture’ policy for those under 18 to offer more and better cultural education for all.

Cross-sectoral cooperation is mentioned notably by **Italy** and **Slovenia**. Both countries promote partnerships between cultural and educational institutions. Many countries refer to their national programmes, such as **Slovenia** (National Culture programme), **Portugal** (Young Creators programme) and **Poland** (2011-2015 Multi-annual programme Culture+, 2014-2020 National Readership Development programme). The two Polish programmes support and promote versatile forms of artistic and cultural activity aimed at raising the level of cultural awareness, critical thinking and access to culture, especially for young people. **Finland**’s Children and Youth Policy programme emphasises the status of and operational requirements for children’s and young people’s culture and creativity. Three national development and service centres in the field of youth culture are financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely the ‘Art Centre for Children and Young People’, the ‘Young Culture Organisation’ and the ‘Sorin Sirkus’ (a youth circus). **Ireland** has a specific National Youth Arts programme in place to realise young people’s creative potential. Another example for the promotion of young people’s creativity is provided for **Malta**, whose ‘Malta Arts Fund’ is meant to stimulate investment in local artists and their work.

Cooperation with schools is another means of bringing culture closer to young people and supporting their creativity, such as practised (among others) in the **Netherlands** and **Lithuania**. **Austria** has set aside a specific budget for school culture, whereas **Sweden** plans to increase access to culture for all children by a ‘Creative School Initiative’. Outreach to young people with fewer opportunities is the objective of the **United Kingdom**’s ‘Myplace’ programme (England). It provides capital grant awards for the development of quality youth centres in some of the most deprived areas of the country. **Greece** encourages cultural expression and creativity amongst young people and brings out new talented narrative writers by a narrative and short film production competition, which is designed by the Forum European Cultural Exchanges and the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art. Other countries, such as **Latvia**, underline the link between culture and tradition; here young people are encouraged to get involved in traditional song and dance festivals, thus preserving the country’s cultural heritage.

10.2.1.2. Widening quality access to culture and creative tools

The main instruments which exist to widen the access to culture and creative tools for young people (both inside and outside schools) are action plans, programmes, funds, the use of specialised centres, and cooperation with schools. **Slovakia** and **Lithuania** each developed an action plan, the first one to improve young people’s reading skills and their interest in literature, and the latter to develop conscious, civic-minded, patriotic, mature, cultured and creative young personalities. **Iceland** used its Biophilia Educational Project – a large-scale pilot project based around creativity as a teaching and research tool, where music, technology and the natural sciences are linked together in an innovative way – to provide art experiences for those children who would normally not have access. **Finland**’s ‘Proposal for the Children’s Culture Policy Programme for the Years 2014-2018’ supports activities which increase children’s and young people’s equal access to art and culture. In the **Czech Republic**, the National Information and Consulting Centre for Culture (NIPOS), and in particular its department for non-professional artistic

activities ARTAMA, promotes access to non-professional artistic activities for all groups of citizens, including youth. The **Irish** Film Board (IFB) runs a number of film workshops and courses available to primary and secondary school students. The related festival is an occasion for them to deepen their interest in film. Cross-cutting themes linked to cultural heritage as well as experimental didactic models are part of school curricula in **Italy**, while **Austria** features nationwide cultural education programmes and initiatives for schools.

Malta – Youth Empowerment programme

Malta's *Agenzija Żgħażaġh*, an agency established in February 2011 to promote the interests of young people and to provide assistance to youth organisations and young people in achieving their potential, runs a programme to empower young people. This programme incorporates a series of project initiatives for young people both at national and local level.

These initiatives aim to enable young people take further control of their lives, become motivated and enhance their own learning and resourcefulness to take up further studies, improve their employability skills and take action in the community to bring about social change. Amongst the initiatives were 'Divergent Thinkers', music tuition for young people in band clubs, and a social theatre contest. What is important is the outreach to young people with fewer opportunities.

http://www.agenzijazghazagh.gov.mt/Categories/805/Youth_Empowerment_Programme/

10.2.1.3. Empowering young people's creativity and innovation through new technologies

Promoting availability of new technologies to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation – only a few measures are cited by Member States in this field. **Spain** refers to its Young Creation programme, **Luxembourg** mentions its youth centre in Eisenborn (which provides media education), and **Germany** and **Lithuania** declare that they support actions in media literacy through youth organisations. In **Ireland**, the 'TechSpace' programme works with a number of national and regional youth organisations and schools so that children and young people can learn and develop digital skills. In **Greece**, young people's innovation is supported through a video art festival touring the country.

10.2.1.4. Providing access to environments that are conducive to creativity

Environments where young people can develop their creativity are often made available through national (youth) programmes, schools, youth work or communication tools. Some countries dispose of specific programmes, such as the Youth Initiatives project in **Cyprus** or the **Irish** Young Ensembles scheme, a fund which supports groups of young people between the ages of 12 and 23 to create ambitious and original work together in any art form. **Malta**'s '#Malteen' programme offers a weekend to give space to teenagers

to find their own creative niche and express themselves through different art forms. **Luxembourg** invites this target group to a creativity contest. In the **Netherlands**, the publicly financed ‘Mondriaan Fund’ supports visual art and cultural heritage, also with a view to young people. Art festivals, such as the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean¹⁹⁴ (BJCEM), are also environments where young artists, volunteers and large numbers of creative young people can meet.

Poland – Cooperation between schools

Through cooperation between schools, also from other countries, young people develop projects together, organise concerts and contests on international, national, regional and local levels. This allows them to showcase trends in their own country’s music culture. It is also an opportunity for talented young people to present their skills and abilities in creating contemporary young culture.

http://cea.art.pl/events/kal_impresz_2014.pdf

10.2.1.5. Facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes

Member States provide information on some measures facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes (e.g. culture, education, health, social inclusion, media, employment, youth) to promote creativity. **Lithuania**, for instance, refers to the Vilnius declaration on innovative actions for youth (6 December 2013) adopted under its Presidency of the Council of the EU; this was the outcome of an expert roundtable which brought together employers, business representatives, researchers, policy-makers and youth to discuss innovative ideas and identify solutions regarding social inclusion and unemployment of young people. In this context it was considered important to enhance young people’s active participation in the labour market and to promote creativity and innovation with a view to pursuing self-employment, entrepreneurship and first working experience. **France’s** *plan priorité jeunesse* set up a specific working group in 2014 to elaborate a quality charter for youth summer camps (*colos nouvelle génération*). The charter contains a number of commitments taken by the most relevant players involved in the provision of youth camps in France, such as to offer leisure-time activities for young people coming from different ethnic and social backgrounds and at affordable prices.

10.2.1.6. Promoting specialised training for youth workers

Specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers is essentially promoted via programmes and courses. In **Luxembourg**, for example, training in audiovisual arts, photo editing or theatre is covered by lifelong learning programmes for youth workers. Various workshops, especially regarding the use of internet, are offered in **Austria**. In other countries (like **Finland** and **Slovakia**) such specialised training is an integral part of the education programme to become a qualified

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.bjcem.org/>

youth worker (professional level youth work qualification). Universities can play a supportive role, such as in **Ireland** where a part-time, year long course leads to a Certificate in Youth Arts.¹⁹⁵ It aims to introduce those working in the non-formal education sector to the concepts, principles and practice of youth arts using a context and practice approach.

10.2.1.7. Supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills through culture

The few examples which are highlighted here are either programmes or specific projects, for instance ‘Programme Kreativ’ in **Malta** or the *Vrijhavens* project in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**. In the latter, youth workers and policy-makers are brought together in a full day discussion about young people’s needs for cultural infrastructure, the link between creativity and entrepreneurship and ways how to attract diverse groups of young people. The Culture Entrepreneurship programme (2012-2016) in the **Netherlands** focuses on leadership, patronage, and support for creative professionals and individual culture providers. **Romania** supports young people who ventured to enter the cultural labour market as young entrepreneurs by providing them with equal opportunities. This country also opens dialogue with private companies to ease access of young people to the labour market and promotes entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries.

Spain – Sala Amadís (Exhibition Hall)

The Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) puts an exhibition hall at the disposal of young artists’ works. This so-called *Amadís* exhibition hall is a place destined to artistic training, cultural production and young entrepreneurship through participative activities and programmes addressed to young people interested in contemporary creation. This allows highlighting the work of young people in order to foster creativity, facilitate the promotion and dissemination of their artistic output and put them in contact with the professional artistic world. Activities are, among others, exhibitions, workshops, concerts and performances.

<http://www.injuve.es/creacionjoven>

10.2.1.8. Promoting young people’s knowledge about culture and cultural heritage

Activities to promote knowledge about culture and cultural heritage amongst young people range from the above-mentioned ‘Creative School Initiative’ in **Sweden** to culture cards in **Malta** and creativity contests in **Luxembourg**. Many Member States, such as **Finland**, financially support NGOs for their promotion of knowledge about culture and cultural heritage. In this context the **Netherlands** refers to cooperation with UNESCO, and **Croatia** highlights involvement of youth organisations in the work of cultural committees. In **Greece**, the so-called Classes in the Dark offered a series of projections,

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.youtharts.ie/cert>

workshops and seminars – primarily for bordering regions and municipalities – which reached around 15 000 pupils and parents.

Finland – *Kulttuurivoltti* (Culture Leap)

The so-called ‘Culture Leap’ 2014-2015, a nationwide guidance in culture education plans for schools, was taken up by 1 out of 10 municipalities in Finland to launch a systematic approach to culture education in schools in the following way: a culture education plan for schools ensures that all children and young people of the region get in contact with the local cultural heritage, culture institutions such as theatres, music halls and museums. All forms of art are given the possibility to create. The political effects of the culture education plans are judged significant because of the guaranteed equal right to culture in society.

10.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

10.2.2.1. Access of young people to culture

In the Council conclusions of 19 November 2010, Ministers agreed on facilitating young people’s access to culture and listed in particular the following lines of action.

Reducing obstacles (e.g. financial, linguistic, time and geographical constraints)

A variety of measures are in place at national level to facilitate young people’s access to culture by reducing related obstacles. **Denmark**, the **United Kingdom** (Scotland), **Estonia**, **Slovakia** and **Italy** refer to their general culture policies or strategies. The **Czech Republic**’s national youth strategy also aims at improving provision of culture to children and young people in rural areas. The objectives are to motivate cultural and heritage institutions in the countryside and in small towns to create attractive events and programmes aimed at children and youth, and to exploit the potential of the network of libraries and possibly other local cultural institutions. Programmes, such as the ‘Accessible Culture’ and the ‘Visit the Museum’ programmes in **Poland**, the children’s culture policy programme in **Finland** and the national programme for culture in **Austria**, also try to widen access for young people to arts and culture. By providing continuous financial support, **Croatia** aims at increasing the number of cultural events in the educational system through formal and informal programmes of contemporary cultural and artistic practice. A cultural passport – created during the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 – in **Luxembourg** aims at granting equal access to culture and leisure-time activities for socially disadvantaged persons and groups. The **Netherlands** follow a similar approach (cultural youth passport). Free entry to museums for young people is another means to bring culture closer to this target group, for instance in the French Community of **Belgium**.

Greece – ‘Mind Games’

The international training course ‘Mind Games’ (Komotini, 12-20 April 2013) addressed cultural diversity, achieved to offer quality training on a number of key issues facing society today. Historical and current examples of good practice on interreligious dialogue, understanding the role of the media, religious conflicts and peaceful conflicts management formed the core of the programme content. Methods used were non-formal education, debates, simulations, group work and games. Participants thus reviewed issues facing civil society and trained to play an active role in promoting interfaith dialogue back to their communities. At the end of the project participants carried out their own actions in order to bring back positive change to their communities.

Stimulating strategic partnerships

Member States and candidate countries were asked about their measures promoting the development of long-term coordinated policies for access of young people to culture on all levels, with a clear youth perspective. Here again, programmes play a significant role, such as **Malta**’s above-mentioned empowerment programme, **Finland**’s children’s culture policy programme and **Turkey**’s programmes to increase young people’s participation in cultural activities, to name but a few.

Deepening the knowledge on the access of young people to culture

Bulgaria organises annual conferences to review the access of youth to culture in the country. The Flemish knowledge and research centre ‘Demos’ focuses mainly on groups and practices that are underrepresented and underexposed in the Belgian society; the French Community of **Belgium** published a survey on cultural practices. The **Netherlands** also has a knowledge institute which collects relevant information.

Promoting experiences, practices and information

Exchanges of experiences related to the access of young people to culture take place for instance in the **Czech Republic**, which promotes cooperation between various organisations and institutions in the field of artistic activities for children and youth. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** supports regional networks of teachers and professionals in the cultural field.

Supporting youth and cultural workers’ quality education, training and capacity-building

Another line of action of the 2010 Council conclusions is support of quality education, training and capacity-building of youth workers and youth leaders, artists and other cultural workers, teachers and all other relevant stakeholders involved in the access of young people to culture. For this, the countries refer amongst others to their youth work strategies and youth workers’ certification. **Estonia** mentions the ESF project ‘Developing youth work quality’¹⁹⁶ which included training for youth workers to develop

¹⁹⁶ See also box ‘Estonia – The contribution of youth work to the Youth Guarantee’ in Section 3.2.2.

the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with young people, also in the cultural field. **Finland**'s children's culture policy programme includes measures to increase teaching of culture in and outside school. Teacher training also plays an important role, for example in **Belgium** (Flemish Community), **Austria** and **Croatia**.

10.2.2.2. Fostering the creative and innovative potential of young through partnerships

In the Council conclusions of 11 May 2012, Ministers agreed to stimulate strategic partnerships between youth organisations, authorities at local, regional and national level as well as the private sector to organise projects and events led by young people. The expert group report 'Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability' also recommends achieving cooperation and joint action between stakeholders and the social partners. Globally, youth or volunteering organisations and cultural organisations are the stakeholders most frequently quoted by the reporting countries. Youth workers and teachers, trainers and other education professionals come second, and the private sector ranks third.

Some countries refer to strategic partnerships developed in the context of governmental youth creativity promotion programmes (e.g. **Luxembourg**). **Poland** mentions its 'Social Capital Development Strategy 2020' with a partnership between art universities and entrepreneurs, especially in the area of design. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** highlights 'OPEK – *Openbaar Entrepot voor de Kunsten*' (Public Warehouse for Arts), an infrastructure which seeks new, innovative partnerships between art, education and the public. **Serbia** developed a 'Protocol on Cooperation with the Independent Cultural Scene', and **Lithuania** organised a Culture Education Week enabling cultural institutions to present their education programmes and projects to teachers.

Serbia – *Rapresent* project (IDE Group)

The project was initiated by a graffiti artist and homeless man, Bojan Radanov Rapresent. Through the transformation of public places, cooperation between artists and young people, and participation and activation of young people's creative potential, their and the general public's awareness regarding street art has changed. Activities are, among others, workshops and mural painting in underground stations. This is achieved through cooperation between NGOs, associations, trade unions, private actors, civic society and many more actors.

10.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

Creativity and culture are not yet among the policy priorities of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). However, the forum annually organises the **YO!Fest**¹⁹⁷ that brings together an international array of young artists to take part in one of the biggest youth events in Europe. Additionally, the YFJ contributed to organising the **European Youth Event** (EYE) in May 2014, during which the YO!Fest took place. The 2014 edition welcomed over 8000 young people and blended policy debates and cultural events, enhancing the creativity of young people.

Moreover, the YFJ uses creative tools for engaging with young people and encouraging them to share their experiences. The forum's **digital storytelling workshops** for youth activists promote greater awareness of participating members' youth work experience: their role and actions; what they learned; and the impact this had on their lives, as well as the opportunities and challenges they faced and the changes needed. The creative work done through this method also helps participants to increase their self-esteem and strengthen respect for both their own story and other people's stories. The process itself releases creativity and innovation.

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.yofest.eu/>

11. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Structured Dialogue with young people serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation, and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field. It involves regular consultations of young people and youth organisations at all levels in EU countries, as well as dialogue between youth representatives and policy-makers at EU youth conferences organised by the Member States holding the presidency of the Council of the EU, and during the European Youth Week.

11.1. EU initiatives and action

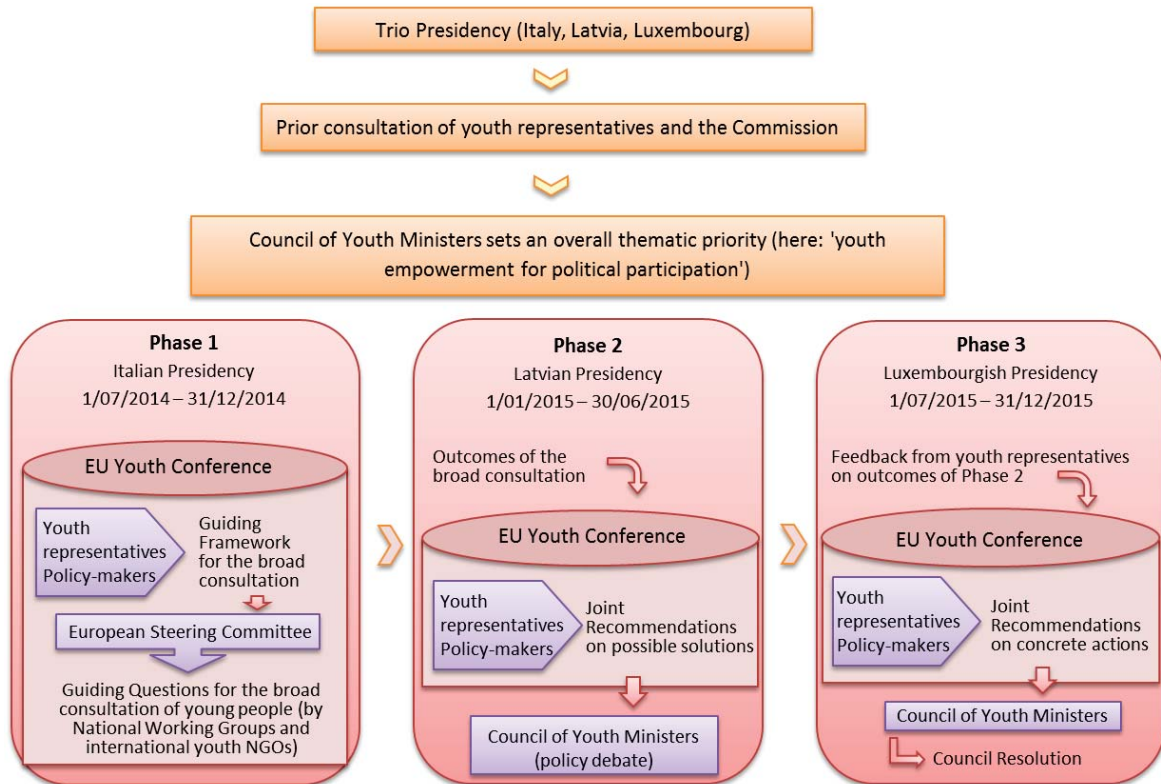
During the period covered by this report, the Commission organised a review of the Structured Dialogue process, which was launched during the 2013 European Youth Week with a conference in Brussels for all National Working Groups. In the spirit of Structured Dialogue, the National Working Groups endorsed a set of recommendations for the future development and conduct of the process, which served as background document for a conference organised in Brussels for the main actors in the process in November 2013. The conference participants endorsed joint recommendations for the conduct of the Structured Dialogue for the consideration of the Council of Youth Ministers.

Meeting in May 2014, Youth Ministers subsequently agreed a number of new developments in Structured Dialogue, including a **new architecture for the process**. This means that Structured Dialogue is now conducted on a single overall priority set by the Council, following a prior consultation undertaken by the incoming Trio Presidency of youth representatives and the Commission. The current cycle of Structured Dialogue, on ‘youth empowerment for political participation’ is conducted under this new format (see diagram), with a single broad consultation of young people across Europe launched in October 2014 on the basis of a guiding framework, which was set jointly by youth representatives and policy-makers at the EU youth conference in Italy.

The Commission followed up on the 2014 Council resolution by paving the way for annual grants from the **Erasmus+** programme to the National Working Groups, who manage the Structured Dialogue at national level. These annual grants were made available in 2014 and 2015 to all 30 National Working Groups and range from € 15 000-60 000, depending on the population of the Member State concerned.

In May 2015, the Commission again organised, as an integral part of the seventh edition of the European Youth Week, a three-day conference in Brussels for the main actors in the Structured Dialogue. At this conference, youth representatives and policy-makers endorsed 10 joint recommendations for the future conduct of Structured Dialogue, which are expected to be reflected in a Council resolution to conclude the fourth cycle of the process, which is scheduled for adoption by Ministers at the Youth Council in November 2015.

Diagram - New architecture of the Structured Dialogue as implemented during the fourth cycle on 'youth empowerment for political participation'



In accordance with the 2012 Council resolution on Structured Dialogue, a consultation of youth representatives was launched by the incoming Trio Presidency in June 2015 on the theme of the overall thematic priority for the fifth cycle of Structured Dialogue (from January 2016 to June 2017), which is also scheduled for adoption by Ministers at the Youth Council in November 2015.

The Commission made the outcomes of the third cycle of Structured Dialogue on ‘social inclusion of young people’ available to relevant Commission services. They were already taken into consideration in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity strategy in the field of youth launched during the 2015 European Youth Week.

11.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

11.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

11.2.1.1. National Working Groups

National youth councils are represented in all 30 National Working Groups and lead, according to a 2014 mapping exercise, the National Working Groups in all but 3 Member States. **Finland** remains the only Member State, where the national youth authority is not represented on the National Working Group. Youth researchers are represented in 11 and youth workers in 15 National Working Groups. 4 Member States report that other

ministries, than solely the national youth ministry, are represented in the National Working Groups.

According to reports from 23 Member States, the number of young people represented in the National Working Groups range from 1 in **Croatia** to 17 in the **United Kingdom**, with an average participation of 6 to 7 young people on the National Working Group.

11.2.1.2. Dialogue processes in other fields

The 2009 Council resolution underlines the importance of developing dialogue processes in other policy fields, similar to the EU Structured Dialogue. 14 of 27 Member States developed such processes. In **Malta**, a 2015 project on ‘Policy in Action’ creates space for discussions between youth and policy-makers on national issues. **Lithuania** organised a Structured Dialogue on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, including a public consultation, a conference and a round table with ministers. **Germany** ensured youth participation in the development of an independent youth policy (2012-2014) and in the Federal Government’s dialogue for the development of a demography strategy (2014-2017), organising 9 participation rounds with youth on various thematic priorities. In the **Netherlands**, 120 young people are selected each year since 2009 to participate in the National Youth Debate in the Dutch parliament to engage in debates with ministers and members of parliament. **Lithuania**’s 2013 ‘X-Y-Z’ project focused on the involvement of NEETs in youth policy processes, and in **Poland**, a consultative youth body was established, where youth is consulted on youth policies and on the annual national budget with a focus on the youth field.

11.2.1.3. Reform of the Structured Dialogue

During the 2013 review process, many joint recommendations were made regarding the reform of the Structured Dialogue. 17 Member States had particular comments on these recommendations. The new architecture of Structured Dialogue is generally welcomed, in particular the focus on a single overall priority, which is considered to allow more time for a systematic approach and an in-depth understanding of the overall priority and for reaching out to more young people. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** emphasises that for any participation process to be successful, all participants have to invest it and take it seriously. The main indicator of success should be the quality of discussion with young people and the outcomes reached. **Ireland** wishes to ensure that the process is open to all young people, including those seldom heard whose participation in EU youth conferences would be desirable, as the current process is at high risk of becoming unrepresentative of the views of non-organised youth. **Germany** emphasises that ‘more dialogue is important’, and that the Structured Dialogue should remain a space for a mutual exchange of ideas. The process should be strengthened at regional and local level, and its importance as a participatory process should be underlined. **Greece** suggests that the Committee of the Regions could be involved as an additional stakeholder to make the process more visible at local level, and that the Commission Representations in Member States should be members of the national working groups to increase the visibility and monitoring of the Structured Dialogue.

11.2.1.4. Visibility of the Structured Dialogue

26 Member States confirm that there were initiatives to promote the Structured Dialogue at national/regional/local level and to increase its visibility, with 21 reporting the development of a website devoted to the Structured Dialogue. 18 Member States confirm the use of awareness-raising campaigns, whilst 13 use the European Youth Portal or other platforms for their promotion/visibility of the process.

Germany reports on a 2014 dialogue event at federal level on ‘Youth and policy in dialogue’, and **Ireland** on a significant number of steps taken to increase visibility. **France** has organised four regional events and a national event devoted to the Structured Dialogue. In **Italy**, the national youth council linked the promotion of Structured Dialogue to the *Salone della Studenti* event with a big national campus and orientation on the process, and to 12 events organised across the country to increase outreach, even in remote areas. Training courses on Structured Dialogue were organised for youth leaders to build skills to allow them to act as multipliers and run consultations at local level. **Cyprus** produced an animation for dissemination through social media and organised trainings of multipliers. **Lithuania** reports on the creation of a Structured Dialogue communication strategy in 2014 and uses social media networks to attract non-organised youth and young Lithuanians living in remote areas or abroad. In **Finland**, consultation questionnaires are sent to all European Youth Card holders, and the national youth councils in the **United Kingdom** will set up a national working group in Northern Ireland in 2015. **Poland** promoted the Structured Dialogue widely during the 2013 European Youth Week.

National reports illustrate that a considerable number of Structured Dialogue projects were supported by the Erasmus+ programme, or its predecessor Youth in Action, providing ample evidence of how EU youth programmes support the policies and tools of the EU Youth Strategy.

11.2.1.5. Involvement of young people in National Working Groups

In the 2014 Council resolution on Structured Dialogue, Ministers agreed that the National Working Groups should seek to ensure the involvement of young people, including those who did not previously participate in the Structured Dialogue. 27 Member States report that initiatives were taken in this regard, although only few can yet give an indication of the number of young people participating in the consultation during the fourth cycle of the process. It is now confirmed that more than 40 000 young people across Europe participated, a doubling of the highest number achieved in any of the previous nine consultation phases. It is evident from the national reports that the number of young people represented, through youth or other organisations, in the Structured Dialogue consultations runs into several millions, although the reliability and reality of such a figure remains questionable.

In **Sweden**, new communication methods facilitated seeking out and reaching newcomers to the process. In the **United Kingdom**, effective and inclusive youth participation research is carried out to identify target groups of young people. **Malta**'s 2014 ‘Spread Outreach’ information campaign aimed at getting the Structured Dialogue across to non-organised youth and included a ‘Europinion Booth’ placed in strategic locations to

collect feedback from young people. The **Czech Republic** focused on inclusion in the consultations conducted during the third cycle of Structured Dialogue, with **Belgium** (Flemish Community) reporting that an evaluation is conducted after each cycle to improve the process and involve youth from a diverse background. In **Latvia**, an established ‘Coffee with Politicians’ method is used within Structured Dialogue consultations to attract young people with low levels of participation skills and experience. **Slovakia** includes a strategic planning in the work plan of its National Working Group to increase the outreach of the process, and close collaboration was set up with municipalities to bring the process closer to the local level. In **Germany**, a non-formal method of using a photo-workshop for youth on ‘Participating actively – with POWER’ was employed in 2014 for discussions on the theme of youth empowerment for political participation, with a view to encouraging the involvement of young people with oral or written expression difficulties. **Austria**’s 2014 ‘Participate, Be Heard, Be Part!’ project made the consultation process available to young people with fewer opportunities by allowing youth centres and workers to carry out projects with their target groups. In **Slovenia**, the ‘Youth Dialogue 2:0 – Including!’ project opened space and support for young people across the country to participate actively in the third cycle through youth work, whereas the ‘Structured Dialogue in **Croatia**’ project aimed at increasing the outreach of the process, in particular for those with fewer prospects.

11.2.1.6. Assessment of the EU youth conferences

Asked about possible improvements to the working methods and the decision-making process at the EU youth conferences, **Spain** and **Poland** call for the inclusion of non-organised young people and youth with fewer opportunities. **Malta** pleads for a more bottom-up approach to the setting of the overall priority to give youth a greater sense of ownership of the process. The overall priority should be the focus throughout the 18 months and conclude with 6 to 10 joint recommendations to be acted upon by the incoming Trio Presidency. **Sweden** notes that the overall priority is set in a rather undemocratic way, and the **Czech Republic** calls for a more democratic procedure, which could be conducted during the European Youth Week. It also suggests that a democratic voting system could be introduced for all conference participants to vote on all joint recommendations. **Luxembourg**, the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany** and the **Netherlands** feel that too much effort is spent on drafting the conference recommendations, at the expense of the time available for discussions and exchanges of ideas and experiences. Several Member States call for a more active participation of policy-makers in the conferences, and some for the participation of policy-makers drawn from ministries who are competent as regards the overall priority. **Sweden**, **Germany** and **Ireland** report that the Structured Dialogue should be conducted solely on the overall priority, and **Croatia** welcomes the new architecture with a guiding framework for the consultation set up with young people. **France** reports a very positive evaluation by its conference participants, although there is little opportunity for creativity in drafting the recommendations and a lack of time in the workshops. **Finland** suggests that greater transparency is required on how the input of National Working Groups feeds into the background documents of the conferences. Researchers should be involved in analysing national consultation outcomes, using possibly the European Pool of Youth Researchers, and exchanges of views, rather than formal recommendations, could be documented and used for policy-making. Ministry officials cannot commit themselves to

ad hoc recommendations, and the low level of participation of policy-makers in the conferences sends an important signal.

11.2.1.7. Considering the developments and outcomes of the Structured Dialogue

The countries were asked how they would consider the developments and outcomes of the Structured Dialogue at national and EU level over the first three cycles, in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Relevance

Spain considers that the dialogue themes are relevant as they define the political agenda of Member States, although the implementation process is very long. **Sweden** reports that the process has become even more relevant with the new architecture of the process, and **Luxembourg** that the process is an important learning experience for national policy-makers. The **Czech Republic** notes that recommendations from the EU level are weak in terms of national implementation, whereas **Denmark** reports that the National Working Group is a good forum for sharing knowledge and information between the various actors. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that Structured Dialogue is important, mainly as a participation process. Outcomes are very relevant for national policy debates, and that whereas the process is an important instrument at EU level, it should not be the only one. The French Community of Belgium reports that improvements were made to the process, giving more time for in-depth discussions and involving national youth councils in the setting of the overall priority. **Latvia** notes that the increase in national participation in each cycle is evidence of young people getting to know the opportunities offered by Structured Dialogue, whereas **Ireland** considered the first two dialogue cycles ‘very relevant’, and the fourth cycle ‘relevant’. **Estonia** reports that the relevance of the process has increased at both national and EU level and that national consultation outcomes are important inputs for policy planning, whereas **Slovakia** notes that the thematic priorities are not equally relevant in all Member States. **Portugal** feels that the process is important for a youth contribution to policy-making but should become more inclusive, and **France** considers the process relevant, as it has supported an orientation among youth organisations in terms of democracy.

Effectiveness

Greece reports that the new architecture, with a single priority and consultation, seems to suit better the needs of youth and other stakeholders and leads to a better understanding of the content. **Romania** notes that the process needs time to establish deep roots, but there is a goal to pursue. **Spain** reports that the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency at national level is low, and its relevance depends on the national context and theme. **Sweden** notes that effectiveness is not always the most important, and that the advantage of a common process on common challenges is high. **Malta** reports that the Structured Dialogue outcomes only become effective if they coincide with or complement national political developments. In **Denmark**, the impact is considered limited, as many Structured Dialogue initiatives are already covered at national level, with the **Czech Republic** reporting that the recommendations are often too general for national implementation. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that outcomes did not directly lead to policy measures, but diverse youth has had an opportunity to participate in the process, and **Ireland** welcomes the new architecture, as the first three cycles did

not allow for a focus on implementation. **Germany** reports that Structured Dialogue has no impacts in terms of concrete policy measures, but the impact of many hundreds young people being offered the opportunity to engage with policy-makers through decentralised Structured Dialogue projects must not be underestimated. **Poland** and **Portugal** observe that the process has impact and implications at national level, whereas **Italy** notes that the difficulty in implementing outcomes raises questions about the effectiveness of the process. For **France**, it is difficult to identify implementation outcomes, as recommendations take time to become a political reality. A greater appreciation of effectiveness at Member State level may be achieved by integrating outcome-linked indicators in relevant chapters of future EU Youth Reports. **Lithuania** reports that the biggest issue of effectiveness is the absence of ministry officials in EU youth conferences.

Efficiency

The **Czech Republic** suggests a greater involvement of National Working Groups in the implementation process in non-youth policy sectors, whereas **Latvia** identifies the need for a simple common mechanism for the implementation of recommendations at both national and EU level. **Greece** emphasises the need for a strategy to be developed by National Working Groups to involve non-organised youth, whereas **Cyprus** reports that consultation fatigue has been noted amongst young people and youth organisations in earlier cycles, because of the time and resources required. **Slovakia** considers that the efficiency has improved significantly since the first cycle of Structured Dialogue, whilst **Portugal** reports that more follow-up must be guaranteed for the process to become more effective. Structured Dialogue is an effective participation tool in the **Netherlands**, and **Lithuania** believes that the review of the process has increased its efficiency. **Spain** considers the level of efficiency at EU level to be ‘medium’, and ‘low’ at national level, while **France** reports that as the consultation process has now reached a level of maturity, it is important to use Structured Dialogue on other levels and with other projects. The Commission should encourage Member States to use the process in their revision of national policies in general, and in particular on youth issues. For the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the quality and outreach to diverse groups of young people is more important than the number of young people involved in the process.

Implementation of the Structured Dialogue outcomes

17 Member States set up measures to implement the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue. **Luxembourg** reported taking measures to disseminate the outcomes of the national consultation under the fourth cycle and briefing its youth minister before his participation in the policy debate in the May 2015 Youth Council meeting. The final recommendations of the fourth cycle will be transmitted to all relevant members of the Government. **Poland** reports that the outcomes of each cycle of Structured Dialogue are transmitted to relevant government ministers, with the ministry of the **Czech Republic** also circulating the cycle outcomes. In **Denmark**, the National Working Group reviews Council conclusions/resolutions and distribute their findings to relevant actors for their consideration of implementation. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the outcomes of the process were included in the analysis that forms the basis for a new Youth and Children’s Rights policy initiative. **Ireland** reports on the national implementation project, which brings together young people involved in consultations to focus on a

specific outcome and work for its implementation, and in **Slovakia**, outcomes of the Structured Dialogue will be used for the preparation of the Government's 'Conception of youth work development', scheduled for adoption in 2015. **Germany** reports that the National Working Group developed a feedback mechanism, and a permanent arrangement exists with the Federal/Federal State working group for the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany, which will discuss outcomes of the process and provide a written feedback on selected issues, which is published on an e-participation tool. **Austria**'s National Working Group developed a new tool to track follow-up activities, and in **Bulgaria** the national youth forum and youth organisations form part of the monitoring committees of operational programmes on human resource development, science and education for smart growth, apprenticeships, the Youth Guarantee and the 'First Job'. In the **Netherlands**, letters were sent to all municipalities to inform them of outcomes of the process, which were followed up by dialogues on implementation measures at local level. **France** proposes to use the open method of cooperation more often to help Member States to implement the recommendations emanating from the Structured Dialogue.

11.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) perceives the Structured Dialogue as a valuable tool to enable young people to participate at all levels in policy-making processes and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with decision-makers. From the very beginning, the YFJ has been a key actor in the Structured Dialogue. It chairs the **European Steering Committee** and is in charge of the communication with the National Working Groups. Together with its members, the forum has been steadily working on widening the scope of the Structured Dialogue and on better integrating disadvantaged young people. It has been actively contributing to both the 2013 and 2014 review processes by ensuring that young people across Europe were able to express their ideas.

In the YFJ's view, the Structured Dialogue needs to be approached more from a cross-sectoral perspective, involving all decision-makers from the relevant sectors in all phases of the process. The European Commission and the Member States should ensure that young people's contributions are reflected in the Council conclusions and are implemented at national and European level.

To inform as many young people as possible about the Structured Dialogue, the forum cooperates with the European Youth Portal. It also ensures media coverage of the EU youth conferences via online tools and its own website. Finally, the YFJ conducted a wide **consultation on youth policy and the Structured Dialogue** among its membership, which led to the adoption of a shadow report supplementing the information contained in the 2015 Youth Report with the views of young people across Europe.

12. EU PROGRAMME: FROM YOUTH IN ACTION TO ERASMUS+

The period covered by this report was marked by the transition from the Youth in Action programme to its successor Erasmus+,¹⁹⁸ the integrated EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. Erasmus+ encompasses all activities funded by the European Union which are related to formal, non-formal and informal learning. It fosters cross-sectoral cooperation to increase synergies and link policy development with implementation on the ground.

The new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising education, training and youth work. The seven-year programme has a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to previous spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas.

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among education, training, and youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe.

It also supports national efforts to modernise education, training, and youth systems. In the field of sport, it supports grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

Erasmus+ brings together seven EU programmes in the fields of education, training and youth. For the first time, it provides support for sport. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the education, training, youth and sport sectors.

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

12.1. Erasmus+ opportunities in the field of youth

The year 2013 was the 25th anniversary of EU programmes in favour of youth – over these 25 years, more than 2.5 million young people and youth workers have taken part in non-formal learning activities funded by the programmes, for a total budget of €1 993.2 million. In Erasmus+, 10% of the funding is reserved for specific youth activities, which is an 80% increase in total funding compared to its predecessor Youth in Action. These youth activities have a dual purpose: firstly to develop key competences and thereby

¹⁹⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50-73.

strengthen the employability of young people, and secondly to promote young people's social inclusion, well-being and participation and foster improvements in youth work and youth policy at local, national and international level. Erasmus+ aims to involve 500 000 participants in transnational volunteering or youth exchanges from 2014 until 2020.

Concretely, the Erasmus+ programme offers three main opportunities:

Key Action 1: mobility for young people and youth workers. Young people have the opportunity to participate in youth exchanges or to volunteer for a period of up to one year in another country under the European Voluntary Service scheme. Youth workers can take part in training and networking activities abroad or spend some time in a youth organisation for job shadowing or a period of observation.

Key Action 2: cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices. Organisations can apply for funding to work in partnership with organisations from other participating countries. The projects funded under this action will focus on sharing, developing and transferring innovative practices in education, training and youth provision between participating countries.

Key Action 3: support for policy reform. The Erasmus+ programme will fund strategic activities supporting policy reform across the EU. Funding opportunities under this key action may extend to meetings between young people and decision-makers or support the implementation of Structured Dialogue.

Like its predecessors, the programme is managed through a network of National Agencies which have become important actors in youth work and youth policy development at national level bringing in a European dimension. The programme is also supported by SALTO-YOUTH,¹⁹⁹ a network of eight resource centres which celebrated their 15th anniversary in 2015, and by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

12.2. Mobility for young people and youth workers

Through the learning mobility of individuals Erasmus+ aims to improve the skill sets of young people and enhance the quality of youth work and non-formal learning for young people in Europe. It provides opportunities for young people to experience learning mobility in successful formats like youth exchanges or European Voluntary Service (including large-scale projects) and for youth workers to develop their interpersonal skills and improve their employment prospects through training and networking opportunities in 'Programme Countries'²⁰⁰ and in partner countries neighbouring the EU.

¹⁹⁹ SALTO-YOUTH stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme (<https://www.salto-youth.net/>).

²⁰⁰ Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey.

European Voluntary Service²⁰¹ (EVS) provides young people aged 18 to 30 years with an opportunity to express their personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country, within or outside the European Union. Under Erasmus+, close to 100000 young people can participate in EVS until 2020.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide²⁰² contains detailed information about the conditions for participating in all the activities. In most cases, applications for funding are submitted via the Erasmus+ National Agencies in each country participating in the programme.

Deserving of special attention is the development of **Youthpass**,²⁰³ a voluntary tool to enhance the individual learning process and outcomes. It was introduced for the Youth in Action programme and further developed under Erasmus+. By 2013, 340000 Youthpass certificates had been issued. Youthpass is not just a certificate – it is integrated into EU youth activities as part of the learning process which encompasses setting personal learning goals, adjusting the goals, influencing the process, documenting the outcomes and revising them for the certificate while rephrasing the learning outcomes as key competences. Youthpass also has an impact on youth workers and organisations and helps them gain greater awareness of the value of their work. The Youthpass Impact Study²⁰⁴ (2013) revealed that among 80% of the participants, Youthpass enhances recognition of the value of non-formal education and youth work alongside the usefulness and quality of the projects.

12.3. Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices

Under Key Action 2, Erasmus+ aims to improve the quality of youth work and non-formal learning for young people in Europe. It funds opportunities for youth workers and organisations to develop innovative approaches and exchange best practice, while supporting partnerships that allow young people to boost their interpersonal skills and job prospects.

Strategic partnerships foster cooperation between organisations in different countries engaged in youth work and non-formal learning for young people. By working together, the organisations involved will develop new approaches to youth work and encourage cooperation over longer periods. Cross-sectoral cooperation in the youth field is being taken up mainly through strategic partnerships; a first call attracted some 1000 applications and 241 projects are funded. Overall, 7000 strategic partnership projects are expected to benefit in the period 2014-2020. Moreover, this action supports cooperation activities (transnational youth initiatives) fostering social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit jointly carried out by two or more groups of young people from different countries.

²⁰¹ See Section 9.1.

²⁰² http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm

²⁰³ <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

Capacity-building projects aim at fostering cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth between countries worldwide to promote quality, innovation and cooperation in youth work and informal learning for young people. Youth organisations based in and outside the EU as well as other stakeholders involved in youth issues can participate. 700 projects are expected to benefit in the period 2014-2020.

12.4. Support for policy reform

Last but not least, Erasmus+ supports the introduction, exchange and promotion of innovative practices in the youth field. The aim of Key Action 3 is to develop youth policy cooperation at European level, promote the EU Youth Strategy and encourage Structured Dialogue.²⁰⁵

Activities supporting policy dialogue and cooperation on youth issues can involve countries across the EU as well as non-EU countries and international organisations (notably the Council of Europe); Structured Dialogue with young people; and partnerships with European non-governmental youth organisations.

Structured Dialogue (meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth) projects can last from 3 to 24 months. Young people should be actively involved in all stages of a project from preparation to follow-up. Activities could include national and transnational meetings that give young people the chance to obtain information and debate issues with decision-makers; national meetings and transnational seminars that prepare the ground for official youth conferences; and any other relevant meetings, events, seminars, consultations or debates between young people and decision-makers.

12.5. Partnership with countries neighbouring the EU

Erasmus+, like its predecessor Youth in Action, fosters cooperation with partner countries worldwide and, more specifically, partner countries neighbouring the EU. It thus supports the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy in the relevant field of action.²⁰⁶ During the period covered by this report, the Youth in Action programme supported youth cooperation with partner countries in the world through a specific call for proposals. Erasmus+ contributes to international youth cooperation through capacity-building projects, which may entail activities such as policy dialogue, further development of youth work methods or information campaigns.

Both Youth in Action and Erasmus+ place specific emphasis on cooperation with neighbouring partner countries: the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership countries, Southern Mediterranean countries and the Russian Federation. Erasmus+ National Agencies can allocate a maximum of 25% of the budget available for mobility projects for young people and youth workers – by far the bulk of the budget – to activities involving partner countries neighbouring the EU. The programme also supports meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth. To further strengthen

²⁰⁵ See Chapter 11 on Structured Dialogue.

²⁰⁶ See Chapter 9 on Youth and the world.

cooperation with neighbouring partner countries, so-called Youth Windows have been established (see following sections). These support additional joint projects with neighbouring partner countries.

Structures such as the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (see box), the SALTO-YOUTH resource centres for Eastern Europe & Caucasus, South East Europe and EuroMed, or the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit (EPYRU) contribute to fostering regional cooperation.

EU-Council of Europe partnership in the field of youth

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, which stems from the close relations the Council of Europe and the European Commission have developed in the youth field since 1998, also carries out activities relating to ‘Youth and the world’. A recent external evaluation of this partnership showed that the partnership’s fostering of youth cooperation with partner countries – mostly through symposiums and seminars – is highly valued by the various stakeholders in the youth field.

The partnership’s geographic coverage spans 47 European countries (EU Member States and other Council of Europe member countries). Regional cooperation is one of the partnership’s horizontal objectives to promote young people’s participation through peer learning and capacity-building in specific European and neighbourhood regions: Eastern Europe and Caucasus, South East Europe (Western Balkans), South Mediterranean.

The overall goal of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership is to foster synergies between the youth-oriented activities of the two institutions. The specific themes are participation/citizenship, social inclusion, recognition and quality of youth work.

<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>

12.5.1. South East Europe and the Western Balkans Youth Window

A 2013 study on the impact of cooperation with South East Europe within the Youth in Action programme²⁰⁷ showed the positive effects of the programme on a number of developments in the region. The programme helped to increase capacities and build competencies in the field of youth through international training courses, networking and conferences on topics relevant to youth work and youth policy. It supported the principles and implementation of non-formal learning in youth work and enhanced the intercultural and European dimension of youth cooperation also by involving local actors (contact points) in an advisory role as advocates of the European programmes’ objectives and priorities.

A specific Western Balkans Youth Window was created in 2008 to support mobility projects taking place either in the EU or in the Western Balkans. The annual budget

²⁰⁷ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/yiaimpactsee/>

allocated to this Youth Window increased from €1 million in 2008 to €3 million in 2013. Between 2008 and 2013, 18000 young people and youth workers participated in the Youth Window activities, for which a total budget of €12.9 million was provided through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Within the framework of Erasmus+, the Western Balkans Youth Window was renewed for the period 2015-2020, with a budget of €3 million for 2015.

12.5.2. Eastern Europe and Caucasus and the Eastern Partnership Youth Window

EU youth programmes are always open to the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) as well as to the Russian Federation, encouraging young people from the region to get involved in international projects in the field of non-formal learning.

Successful youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries led to the launch of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window in 2012 for the years 2012 and 2013. It supported joint youth projects between Eastern Partnership countries and Youth in Action programme countries. The Youth Window put a specific focus on involving young people with fewer opportunities, especially those living in rural or deprived urban areas. More than 37000 young people and youth workers – some 15000 of them from Eastern Partnership countries – participated in these additional activities. The Youth Window had a total budget of €31.5 million, provided through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (EPNI). The Eastern Partnership Youth Window was evaluated in 2014. Based on this evaluation and depending on funds available, the Commission will decide in 2015 about the possible continuation of the Window.

12.5.3. Southern Mediterranean countries – EuroMed Youth

To strengthen youth cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries, a EuroMed Youth Programme was launched back in 1999. During the programming period 2007-2013, around 8000 young people and youth leaders were beneficiaries. The current EuroMed Youth IV programme runs from 2010 to 2016 with an overall budget of €11 million. Like the two regional Youth Windows, EuroMed Youth IV supports youth exchanges, voluntary service projects and training and networking activities for youth workers.

The accreditation process for European Voluntary Service (EVS) organisations in the region started in 2013 with the aim of further increasing the quantity and quality of EVS projects in EuroMed countries. Training courses offered to youth workers and NGOs aim to create new competencies and to strengthen contacts between young people and foster mutual understanding against a background of political change and instability.

In cooperation with UNESCO, the Commission established the Networks of Mediterranean Youth programme (Net-Med Youth) (2014-2017) to improve the opportunities for young people to have a real say in shaping legislation and national planning in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries. The specific objectives of the programme are to build the capacities of youth organisations and to enhance networking among them in order to reduce fragmentation of efforts and harness the collective

potential of young people for achieving democratic transition towards active citizenship, political participation and social inclusion.

The Commission also launched a European Parliament preparatory action ‘New Euro-Mediterranean initiative for youth employment promotion’ (2014-2016) to facilitate learning, networking and exchange of experience for new young professionals through periods spent working in SMEs run by experienced entrepreneurs in another country.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Abbreviations

EU Member States²⁰⁸

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

Non-EU Member States

IS	Iceland
RS	Republic of Serbia
TR	Turkey

²⁰⁸ Roman alphabetical order of the countries' geographical names in the original language(s).

Other Abbreviations

CoE	Council of Europe
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EKCYP	European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EURES	European Employment Services
EVS	European Voluntary Service
EYD2015	European Year for Development 2015
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013)
Horizon 2020	The EU's research and innovation programme (2014-2020)
HPPD	EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJ	Official Journal of the European Union
PEYR	Pool of European Youth Researchers
SALTO-YOUTH	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organization
YfEJ	Your first EURES Job
YFJ	European Youth Forum

Annex 2: Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015)

11 May 2010

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty

OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, p. 1-6

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42010X0527%2801%29>

19 November 2010

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1-1

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010XG1203%2801%29>

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on access of young people to culture

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 2-3

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010XG1203%2802%29>

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the 'Youth on the Move' initiative — an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 9-11

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2010.326.01.0009.01.ENG

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work

OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, p. 1-5

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1204\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1204(01))

19 May 2011

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment

OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, p. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C..2011.164.01.0001.01.ENG>

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe

OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, p. 1-5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42011Y0609%2801%29>

28 November 2011

Council conclusions on the eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility

OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 10-14

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52011XG1220%2801%29>

11 May 2012

Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people

OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C..2012.169.01.0001.01.ENG>

27 November 2012

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the overview of the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe

OJ C 380, 11.12.2012, p. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42012Y1211%2801%29>

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 November 2012 on the participation and social inclusion of young people with emphasis on those with a migrant background

OJ C 393, 19.12.2012, p. 15-19

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.393.01.0015.01.ENG

16 May 2013

Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people

OJ C 168, 14.6.2013, p. 5-9

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.168.01.0005.01.ENG

Council conclusions on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy

OJ C 224, 3.8.2013, p. 2-6

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.224.01.0002.01.ENG

25 November 2013

Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training

OJ C 30, 1.2.2014, p. 5-8

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.030.01.0005.01.ENG

20 May 2014

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 1-4

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0001.01.ENG

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 5-11

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0005.01.ENG

Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 18-21

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0018.01.ENG

12 December 2014

Council conclusions on promoting young people's access to rights in order to foster their autonomy and participation in civil society

OJ C 18, 21.1.2015, p. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015XG0121%2801%29>

18 May 2015

Council conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies

OJ C 170, 23.5.2015, p. 2-3

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:JOC_2015_170_R_0002

Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people

OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 3-7

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:JOC_2015_172_R_0002