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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Presidency suggestions on the implementation and governance of the EU Youth Dialogue  
– Revised presidency guiding document

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Delegations will find attached a revised and final version of the Presidency guiding document presented and discussed at the Youth Working Party on 4 December 2018, reflecting the comments made by delegations and the contributions subsequently received by the Presidency.

In light of the broadly positive reaction from delegations to this initiative, the Presidency is hereby sharing an updated version of this document as a contribution to further discussions on the implementation and governance of the EU Youth Dialogue.

## **EU Youth Dialogue**

### **Presidency suggestions on implementation and governance**

The background, guiding principles and objectives of the **EU Youth Dialogue** are outlined in the Council Resolution on the **European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027**, especially in annex 1<sup>1</sup>.

This document aims to present some guidance on how these could be implemented. It can serve as a source of inspiration and a basis for discussion.

#### **1. Implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue**

The EU Youth Dialogue process aims at being an innovative approach that strives to include young people in policy-shaping and bring about positive change (e.g. towards achieving the European Youth Goals) in youth policy at local, regional, national and European level.

This process should preferably follow work-cycles of 18 months with one overall thematic priority per cycle that is closely linked to the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Goals. The European Youth Goals can additionally aim at providing an overarching thematic framework across many cycles to come.

Every cycle builds on the learnings of the previous one. At national and/or European level such a learning process could be supported by accompanying research or other process monitoring activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 14080/18: Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027

The thematic priority for a cycle should be proposed by the respective Trio Presidencies in close coordination with the European Steering Committee. It should be in accordance with the EU Work Plan and consider the expectations and interests of young people. The thematic priority should be agreed upon by the Council preferably at least six months before the start of a cycle in order to facilitate preparatory activities as well as enable better alignment of funding priorities<sup>2</sup>.

Relevant actors for the EU Youth Dialogue on all levels are (among others)

- young people
- decision-makers
- youth representatives, and
- other actors active in the youth field such as youth organisations (including INGYOs), youth workers, social workers, researchers, as well as
- stakeholders from other sectors that are relevant for the youth field and can facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration.

The EU Youth Dialogue change process follows **three phases**<sup>3</sup>: **Engaging. Connecting. Empowering.** The following table aims to line out different guiding considerations in the respective process phases. In a holistic approach the table aims to answer the questions “**Why**”, “**What**”, “**Where**” and “**When**” and to point out the differences between the three phases. The model set out here serves as a reference point in a general sense and as guidance rather than a constraining implementation procedure.

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<sup>2</sup> An exception is the first cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue 2019-2021 where the theme should be agreed upon as soon as possible, in any case before the start of the cycle.

<sup>3</sup> The three phases correspond to a change model of Co-sensing, Co-inspiring (Presencing) and Co-creating as described in Theory U. This model has been widely used in change processes and can be a source of inspiration for the implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue cycles. <https://www.presencing.org/#/aboutus/theory-u>

	<b>Engaging</b> <i>1st phase</i>	<b>Connecting</b> <i>2nd phase</i>	<b>Empowering</b> <i>3rd phase</i>
<b>Why</b>	<p>The purpose of this phase is to understand the chosen topic and develop it further.</p> <p>Opinions of those affected by political decisions should be collected.</p> <p>Different opinions need to be heard. Different interests should be considered and points of view made visible.</p>	<p>The purpose of this phase is to formulate a shared awareness about what needs to change.</p> <p>Based on the insights of the engaging phase, joint ideas on what everyone involved can do should be exchanged through dialogue.</p> <p>Connecting main stakeholders through dialogue should lead to more effective patterns of decision-making.</p>	<p>The purpose of this phase is to trigger change and perpetuate impact, from vision to action.</p> <p>This means acting from a shared awareness about what needs to change.</p> <p>Implementation should begin and lead to long-term impacts.</p>
<b>What</b>	<p>Actors relevant to the widest possible angle of the topic, including young people, youth representatives and policy-makers are identified and assembled in this phase.</p> <p>Different stakeholders who are willing to contribute, especially young people, should be enabled to take part in the process through targeted</p>	<p>The relevant actors (see above and first column) are inspired and engaged by a common idea of the future.</p> <p>A common agreement of what should be achieved is written down as specifically as possible. This includes formulating a view and proposals for policy-makers, based on the views of young people and on evidence-</p>	<p>The named relevant actors (see first and second column) disseminate outcomes to stakeholders and strengthen the common vision by putting it into practice, based on a collective responsibility.</p> <p>All actors involved are invited to develop implementation plans and prototyping activities at different scales and in various settings. This should</p>

	<b>Engaging</b> <i>1st phase</i>	<b>Connecting</b> <i>2nd phase</i>	<b>Empowering</b> <i>3rd phase</i>
	<p>support and peer groups. This contributes to long-term capacity building throughout the whole cycle.</p> <p>Exploring different aspects should be facilitated through research and dialogue with young people on different levels.</p> <p>Outreach to young people should always strive to be as inclusive as possible and whilst taking into account the opinions of a wide range of young people. Special attention should be given to those whose voices are at risk of being overlooked and those with fewer opportunities.</p> <p>In this context youth work and organisations working with young people with fewer opportunities are of utmost importance. This exercise is essential for</p>	<p>based data.</p> <p>The result of this formulation shall be communicated as feedback to everyone involved in the process so far.</p> <p>Especially In this phase, a bridge between representative and participatory democracy is built.</p>	<p>engender tangible implementation. These activities can be small-scale youth led projects as well as immediate actions taken by National Working Group members.</p> <p>All actors involved in the previous phases shall be informed about the implementation progress.</p> <p>Young people and youth workers previously involved should be empowered to conduct implementation activities themselves.</p>

	<b>Engaging</b> <i>1st phase</i>	<b>Connecting</b> <i>2nd phase</i>	<b>Empowering</b> <i>3rd phase</i>
	understanding a system in order to bring about change.		
<b>Where</b>	<p>At <b>European level</b> the European Steering Committee facilitates evidence gathering from a wide array of young people, from practitioners and from research on a broader scale. A Europe-wide consultation should be coordinated if it is considered that it will enhance understanding and implementation of the chosen topic. This consultation should be built in accordance with the National Working Groups.</p> <p>At <b>national level</b>, the National Working Group facilitates this phase by taking into account evidence both from research and from practitioners as well as from the consultation if</p>	<p>At <b>European level</b> major actors with a stake in the chosen topic assemble. A common proposal on the desired, specific change at a European level should be developed as possible.</p> <p>At <b>national level</b>, the National Working Group assembles major actors.</p> <p>As a contribution towards the European level, a reflection of differing agendas and perspectives</p>	<p>At <b>European level</b> the Council is invited to consider the ideas developed so far. Actors are invited to collectively reflect upon actions that can support the implementation.</p> <p>Time to act whereby European and national decision makers, as well as youth representatives at EU and national levels, agree on an implementation plan and on indicators to measure progress, where appropriate.</p> <p>At <b>national level</b>, decision makers together with youth representatives (e.g. assembled in the National Working Group) should coordinate the process of taking the ideas into account in the development of their</p>

	<b>Engaging</b> <i>1st phase</i>	<b>Connecting</b> <i>2nd phase</i>	<b>Empowering</b> <i>3rd phase</i>
	<p>applicable. The National Working Group coordinates outreach activities on national and subnational levels.</p> <p>At <b>subnational (local or regional) level</b>, activities can contribute to exploring (parts of) the selected theme with young people.</p>	<p>amongst young people should be elaborated.</p> <p>For themselves, a common proposal on the desired, specific change at a national level helps for should be developed in order to having a common vision about the change they want to achieve.</p> <p>At <b>subnational (local or regional) level</b>, major actors with a stake in the chosen topic assemble. A common proposal on the desired, specific change at this level should be developed.</p>	<p>policies, considering how far the ideas developed may be transformed into policy and action, in accordance with its national policies and priorities.</p> <p>At <b>subnational (local or regional) level</b>, decision-makers in the field of youth together with young people and/or youth representatives coordinate the process of taking the ideas into account in the development of their policies, considering how far the ideas developed may be transformed into policy and action</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>The engaging phase is linked to the <b>first presidency</b> of the respective trio. Preparation begins before the cycle by initiating the process with constituting the European</p>	<p>The connecting phase is linked to the <b>second presidency</b> of the respective trio. On European level, the main input towards the Council is formulated at this stage.</p>	<p>The empowering phase is linked to the <b>third presidency</b> of the respective trio. On all levels, prototypes of the new actions should be put into practice through all actors involved within their</p>

	<b>Engaging</b> <i>1st phase</i>	<b>Connecting</b> <i>2nd phase</i>	<b>Empowering</b> <i>3rd phase</i>
	<p>Steering Committee and agreeing on a topic in accordance with the EU Work Plan.</p> <p>The preparation should ensure timely agreement on the overall topic.</p>		<p>respective sphere of competence.</p>



## 2. Monitoring the impact

The active part of the change process cycle (conducted by the ESC and NWGs) ends with the third phase. This means, activities for the implementation of results are not in the sole responsibility of the NWG or the ESC but continue inside the institutions involved. The role of the EU Youth Dialogue actors after the end of a cycle - as a follow-up on what has been done - is rather to monitor the impact that has been stimulated.

Regular check-up points on the political implementation of outcomes of the EU Youth Dialogue after the end of each cycle should be foreseen. They could be included, for example, after two and four years in the Work Plan for Youth of the Council.

Developing a central online tool to monitor the impact (for example, in the format of a drop-a-pin map) is encouraged. This would allow overseeing different activities on different levels, as well as track the implementation of policy recommendations and ideas, linking them to the Youth Goals.

## 3. Methodological approaches

The Youth Dialogue methodology includes approaches towards participation on **four different stages**:

1. **Information** on participation possibilities as well as on the overall topic, provided from local to European levels;
2. **Consultation**, including online and offline interaction methods as well as evidence-based research results;

3. **Direct dialogue** between policy makers and young people, building on best practices in methodological approaches developed in the Structured Dialogue so far, such as taking on elements from the method compilation “The Art of Hosting”<sup>4</sup>, as well as on continuous innovation in this respect;
4. **Continuous partnership** in the governance of the process at subnational (local and regional), national and European level, including partnerships with relevant sectors according to the topic of the cycle where appropriate.

To keep the expectations of participants in line with what is possible in the approach that is being implemented, all actors involved in the process should be informed in which of the above mentioned four stages of participation they are taking part in.

#### 4. Governance of the EU Youth Dialogue

This proposal aims to present a conceptual approach: national, regional and local circumstances and resources may vary and lead to different interpretations of his approach. Nevertheless, the common aim shall be to achieve a well-balanced and successful implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue.

**The European Steering Committee** steers and facilitates the process at EU level. It is responsible for proposing the overall thematic priority (whenever possible by involving young people in deciding the topic), providing information about the EU Youth Dialogue on European level, as well as ensuring coordination with the National Working Groups and the European Working Group<sup>5</sup>, contributing to the objectives of the cycle.

- **Members:** It is composed of inter alia representatives of each of the Trio Presidency countries’ Ministries for Youth Affairs, National Youth Councils and National Agencies implementing EU Youth programmes in the respective country as well as the European Youth Forum and representatives of the European Commission.
- **Additional actors:** Involving relevant actors from the youth field or other relevant fields (such as the EC-CoE youth partnership, youth researchers, youth workers, facilitators, or

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.artofhosting.org/> and the “Learning Map: Structured Dialogue” published by the Austrian National Working Group

<sup>5</sup> The European Working Group is an informal committee that assembles International non-governmental youth organisations (INGYOs) active in the EU Youth Dialogue.

experts) in the work of the ESC can bring various expertise<sup>6</sup> to the process. The members of ESC should reflect on the necessary composition of the ESC in order to reach the objectives of the Cycle and invite relevant actors to join the ESC for the duration of the Cycle.

- **Working procedures:** The European Steering Committee is invited to elaborate clear working and governance procedures as well as an implementation plan (or similar document) and key principles for each work cycle, in line with the objectives of the EU Youth Dialogue and the guiding principles of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, ensuring lean governance and coordination of the process in line with the Council procedures. The implementation plan (or similar document) allows having an overview of the process, and providing timeline of activities. It gives the NWGs an indication of what will happen at which point of the process, which is crucial for planning of national, regional and local activities. To ensure continuity, a timely information and hand-over-procedure for the upcoming Trio shall be prepared as well.
- **Communication:** The working procedures shall include specifications on how the communication with relevant partners and stakeholders throughout the process will be maintained, especially with the NWGs as well as with youth researchers, EURODESK and ERYICA, Youth Wiki representatives and Non-Governmental Youth Organisations active at a European level. The process should be transparent in regards of input and outreach, including a comprehensive process timeline and the communication of meeting outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> The ESC should set up standards for the involvement of external support persons like researchers, facilitators, etc., including fair and transparent payment.

**National Working Groups** steer and facilitate the process at national level<sup>7</sup>. They are the connecting link between the national and European levels and coordinate activities implemented at national, regional and local levels, which are crucial for the success of the impact of the youth dialogue at all levels.

- **Members:** These groups can, where applicable, utilise existing structures and be composed of inter alia representatives of Ministries for Youth Affairs, National Youth Councils, local and regional youth councils, youth organisations, those active in youth work - including volunteers as well as representatives of professional open youth work, a diverse range of young people and youth researchers. Member States are encouraged to give a leading role to acknowledged youth representation structures at national level, in most cases National Youth Councils. This should ensure that the process is not only run for young people but genuinely by and with young people.
- **Additional actors:** In each cycle, National Working Groups are encouraged to invite representatives of policy sectors outside the youth field which are relevant for the overall thematic priority for the respective cycle.
- **Tasks:** The National Working Group has the task of securing the participatory process in the Member States, including outreach to a diverse range of young people, as well as the transfer of information between the local, regional, national and European level. The National Working Group should act as an ambassador of the EU Youth Dialogue and represent the process in the Member State concerned. It is important that the NWGs are provided with substantial resources to enable stable cooperation and inclusion of partners.

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<sup>7</sup> The same way National Working Groups are established in Member States, the countries outside the European Union, in particular candidate countries, could follow the same model when the necessary support is provided. This would enable an active role of their youth population in the EU Youth Dialogue process and a meaningful inclusion in EU Youth Conferences.

**The respective Trio Presidency** works together in a coordinated process throughout the cycle. They have a leading role in seeking political commitment of the Member States, within the Council of the EU, to put in place concrete policy initiatives to follow-up the proposals from the EU Youth Dialogue.

- **European Union Youth Conferences:** Each of the presidencies is invited to organise a European Union Youth Conference on the overall thematic priority of the EU Youth Dialogue cycle. The conferences may have different focuses in accordance with the progress of the cycle and may use different methodology matching the objective of the phase of the cycle. The respective presidency should invite National Working Groups to nominate representatives of each Member State to participate in the EU Youth Conferences. The National Working Groups are encouraged to undertake a transparent, inclusive and participatory selection of the youth representatives and ensure comprehensive handover between outgoing and incoming representatives takes place. In order to ensure a coherent working approach, the Trio Presidency is encouraged to engage a number of consistent main facilitators who assist in implementing each of the conferences. Based on the needs of each conference, the number of facilitators can be changed, keeping in mind the workload needed for successful organisation of the conference.
- **Outcomes:** The Trio Presidency should take a leading role in the feedback process towards all stakeholders involved. This includes the dissemination of the Council Conclusions/Resolutions and other outcomes to all the relevant formations of the Council.
- **Research support:** The Trio Presidency is encouraged to commission and resource researchers in the whole process of the cycle, especially for the elements of consultation and monitoring of the implementation.

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