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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Evaluation

Accompanying the document

**Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

on the interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

{COM(2024) 162 final}

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Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
ALMA	Aim – Learn – Master – Achieve
BIK+	Better Internet for Kids Strategy
CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG	Directorate-General
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EAGFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EQ	Evaluation Questions
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
EUYD, EU Youth Dialogue	European Union Youth Dialogue
EUYS	The EU Youth Strategy
EYE	European Youth Event
Youth Portal	European Youth Portal
Year	European Year of Youth
FNAPs	Future National Activities Planners
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
UN SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

1. INTRODUCTION

This staff working document describes the purpose, methodology and findings of the European Commission's interim evaluation of the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (hereafter referred to as 'EUYS'), which is the framework for EU cooperation in the youth field based on the Council Resolution of 18 December 2018¹.

Purpose

Based on the Council Resolution establishing the EUYS, and in line with the European Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines², the purpose was to provide an interim evaluation of the EUYS, assessing its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU-added value at mid-point.

The results will be used as input to eventually develop and adapt the instruments and initiatives in the context of the implementation of the EUYS, to guide potential adjustments to the EUYS and its alignment with evolving developments, challenges, and needs of young people. The results will also inform the reflections and preparations of the framework for EU youth policy cooperation beyond 2027.

Scope

The interim evaluation covers:

- the period from 2019 to part of 2023, which represents the midway point of the EUYS' implementation;
- the analysis of the performance of the EUYS in all EU Member States;
- the EUYS' instruments and related initiatives, such as the EU Youth Dialogue, the EU Youth Coordinator, the European Youth Portal, mutual learning activities, knowledge- and evidence-building, the European Youth Work Agenda, and more.
- the alignment with the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes and the effects of the 2022 European Year of Youth on the EUYS.

Methodology

The Commission's interim evaluation was supported by an independent external evaluation assignment/support study³ using a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis, including qualitative and quantitative data and contribution analysis. The contribution analysis consisted of assessing the extent to which the EUYS contributed to the intended changes and included developing an intervention logic for the EUYS instruments, unpacking their implementation and using primary evidence validating the assumptions. In addition, a cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted using a defined framework to assess the costs associated with the EUYS. A steering group of relevant Commission departments oversaw the evaluation.

The external evaluation assignment was carried out between February and December 2023 and included a public consultation and multiple targeted consultations. The consultation strategy

¹ [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](#)

² [Commission Staff Working Document. Better Regulation Guidelines \(2021\)](#)

³ [Support study for the Interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#)

for the evaluation was based on a mapping of stakeholders and the quantitative and qualitative data was mainly gathered through the following consultation activities:

- **Call for evidence** on the Commission's 'Have Your Say' portal from 23 September to 21 October 2022.
- **Public consultation** on the 'Have Your Say'-portal from 26 April to 2 August 2023.
- **Quantitative data** on awareness of the EUYS and engagement with its instruments, collected through:
 - Online survey of young people
 - Online survey of youth civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups
- **Qualitative data** on perceptions of the EUYS and examples of progress in its implementation, collected through:
 - 105 key informant interviews with 21 policy makers at EU level and 84 policy makers at national level and 3 focus groups with 15 decision and national policy makers, from 3 May to 20 June 2023;
 - 4 focus groups with 21 young people from 14 June to 8 August 2023. Group interviews and individual interviews were performed with 9 civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups from 14 June to 23 August 2023.

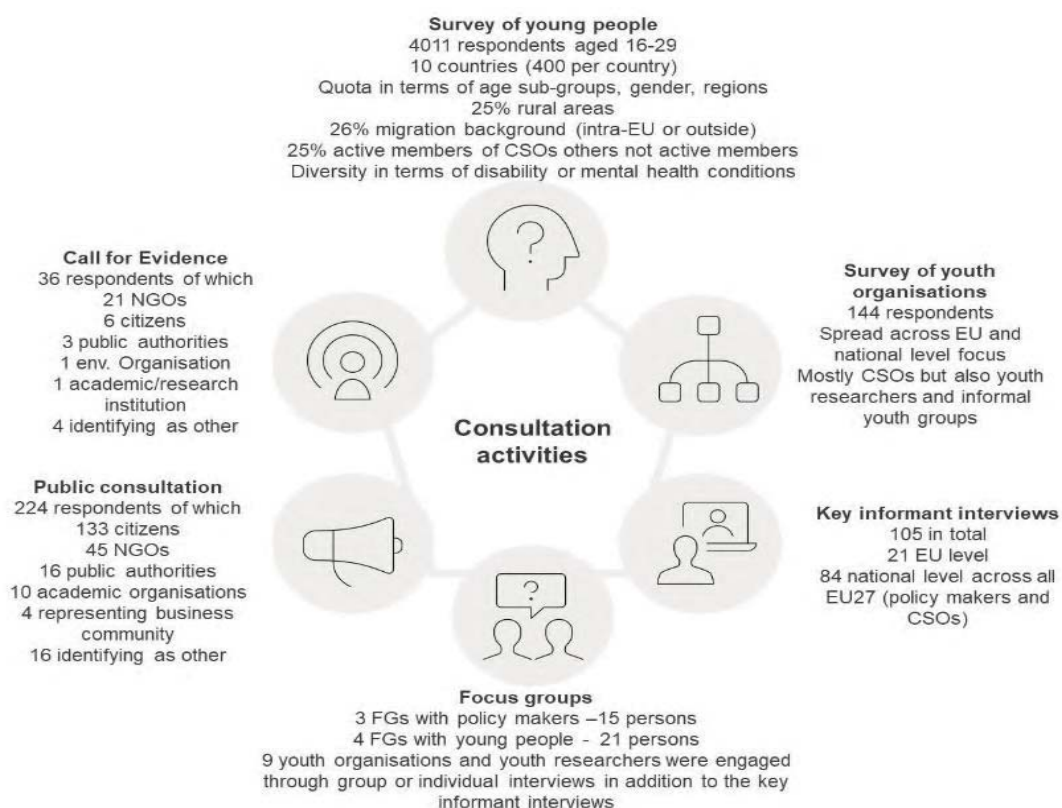


Figure 1. Stakeholders' participation in consultation activities.
 Source: Kantar Public – Public Consultation on the EU Youth Strategy, 2023

The EU mandate⁴ and the open method of coordination⁵ in the field of youth policy set the scope for the intervention logic. The EUYS aims at contributing to the development of youth policies by encouraging cooperation and supporting and supplementing Member States' actions. This involves a challenge in identifying causality and in attributing and quantifying the specific effects of the EU Youth Strategy. The effect of the EUYS is thus often indirect, and mediated by stakeholders' awareness, their buy in and alignment to the EUYS. The performance of the EUYS relies to a large extent on Member States activities, their interest in exchanging and learning from each other, making use of the instruments available at EU level, and committing resources at national, regional and local levels to pursue the common objectives.

The evaluation encountered some challenges to data collection. The main limitations identified were the complexity of youth-related policies, potential overlaps with other evaluations, and limited evidence on human resource cost data. Mitigation measures involved prioritising qualitative methods such as key informant interviews and focus groups to capture insights on youth policies' complexity, methodology to differentiate from overlapping assessments, and quality checks in data collection.

The methodology is detailed in Annex I and II.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1. Description of the EU Youth Strategy and its objectives

The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 builds on 20 years of European youth policy cooperation and aims to promote young people's participation in democratic life, in line with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, to support social and civic engagement and to ensure that all young people have the necessary means to participate in society.

The **overall objectives** of the EUYS are to:

- enable young people to be architects of their own lives, support their personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope with a changing world;
- encourage and equip young people with the necessary resources to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change inspired by EU values and a European identity;
- improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education, health and social inclusion;
- contribute to the eradication of youth poverty and all forms of discrimination and promote the social inclusion of young people.

⁴ Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

⁵ The open method of coordination (OMC) in the European Union may be described as a form of 'soft' law. It is a form of intergovernmental policy-making that does not result in binding EU legislative measures and it does not require EU countries to introduce or amend their laws.

By pursuing the above objectives, the EUYS should also help realise the vision of young people as expressed in the **11 European Youth Goals**⁶, which are part of the EUYS, by mobilising EU level policy and programme instruments and actions at national, regional and local levels by all stakeholders.

In short, the EUYS aims to **engage, connect and empower young people**, and to **advance youth participation and youth mainstreaming across different policy areas**. Through the open method of coordination, it encourages the development of youth policies across the EU and beyond, in synergy with other policies targeting young people such as education and training, employment, health, culture, environment, media literacy or digital skills. It also provides a policy framework for the EU youth programmes, which are Erasmus+ youth and the European Solidarity Corps.

The EUYS maintains a high degree of stability and continuity in overall objectives and instruments. At the same time, changes were introduced to better respond to the challenges and needs in a rapidly evolving society, to address the recommendations from the interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 and to reflect input coming from stakeholders and young people.

The **structure** of the EUYS was simplified and the previous eight fields of action were rationalised into three core areas of the youth sector – ‘Engage, Connect, Empower’ – while also mainstreaming youth as a priority across different policy areas and emphasising the importance of greater youth involvement across the board.

The **changes introduced in the 2019-2027 EU Youth Strategy**, most of them resulting from the lessons learned from the interim evaluation of the predecessor framework 2010-2018, mainly consisted in adaptations linked to:

- More focus and flexibility to adapt European priorities in national contexts;
- Wider outreach to young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities;
- A new approach to working across policy areas;
- Improved transparency and monitoring framework;
- Multi-level and participatory governance;
- A clearer link between EU youth policy and related EU programme activities.

Concretely, the main new/strengthened actions included:

- Improve cross-sector cooperation across policy areas, including through the creation of an EU Youth Coordinator, to give youth a voice in shaping EU policies;
- Launch a new and more inclusive EU Youth Dialogue, with a focus on youth with fewer opportunities;
- Remove obstacles to and facilitate volunteering and solidarity mobility;
- Implement a Youth Work Agenda to increase recognition of non-formal learning;
- Reinforce the links between EU youth policy and related EU programmes (Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps)

⁶ [European Youth Goals](#) | [European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

- Track EU spending on youth.

The EUYS was developed before 2019 against the backdrop of a broad range of **challenges of young people**. On their way to adulthood, young people typically experience several transitions in their personal life and environment, from education and training to work, living on their own, partnerships or starting a family life, and becoming active citizens. Many face uncertainties about their future, because of climate change, digitalisation, globalisation, demographic and socioeconomic trends, discrimination, social exclusion, populism and fake news, with potential effects on jobs, skills, health and well-being, or of the way our democracies work.

The policy context has changed dramatically since the launch in 2019 of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing inflation crisis. During the first years of the implementation, these unforeseen circumstances have amplified existing challenges faced by young people and children, including negatively affecting the mental health and general well-being of young people. The Flash Eurobarometer on mental health⁷, launched in October 2023 ahead of World Mental Health Day, showed that 59% of young people (15–24 year-olds) had an emotional or psychosocial problem (such as feeling depressed or feeling anxious) in the last 12 months. According to a UNICEF report from 2021, suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people (15-19 years of age) after road accidents, and in the EU, the annual value of lost mental health, in children and young people is estimated at EUR 50 billion.⁸ In the public consultation for this evaluation, the most frequently mentioned challenges for young people today are the impact of the rise in cost-of-living (95% of respondents), mental well-being (91%) and financial stability (90%).

Intervention Logic of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

Given the EUYS' complexity and diverse set of instruments, assessing its impact requires a structured approach. To unravel how different components of the EUYS contribute to the overarching goals, impact pathways were developed as part of the external support study, shedding light on how the instruments contribute to the specific objectives in the EUYS' three core areas: 'Engage,' 'Connect,' and 'Empower'.

For the evaluation, the impact pathways were organised in a simplified manner according to four groups that were anticipated to result in direct or indirect outcomes and impacts.

- 1) **Policy development and implementation:** Evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge building, mutual learning and dissemination, peer learning activities, Future National Activities Planners and EU Work Plans for Youth. These activities establish the policymaking environment for all other activities;
- 2) Activities in the **'Engage'** core area: Participatory governance including through the EUYS stakeholder platform; the EU Youth Dialogue and EU Youth Coordinator. These activities allow youth and relevant youth stakeholders to engage in youth policy making at the EU and national levels;

⁷ [Flash Eurobarometer 530. Mental Health \(2023\)](#)

⁸ [SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#)

- 3) Activities in the **‘Connect’** core area: Communicating the EU Youth Strategy; mobilising and monitoring EU programmes and funds; youth information and support services such as the European Youth Portal. These activities allow youth and relevant stakeholders to strengthen their network and use the opportunities available to them;
- 4) Activities in the **‘Empower’** core area: youth information and support services such as through European-wide organisations; and activities for the quality, innovation and recognition of youth work based on the European Youth Work Agenda.

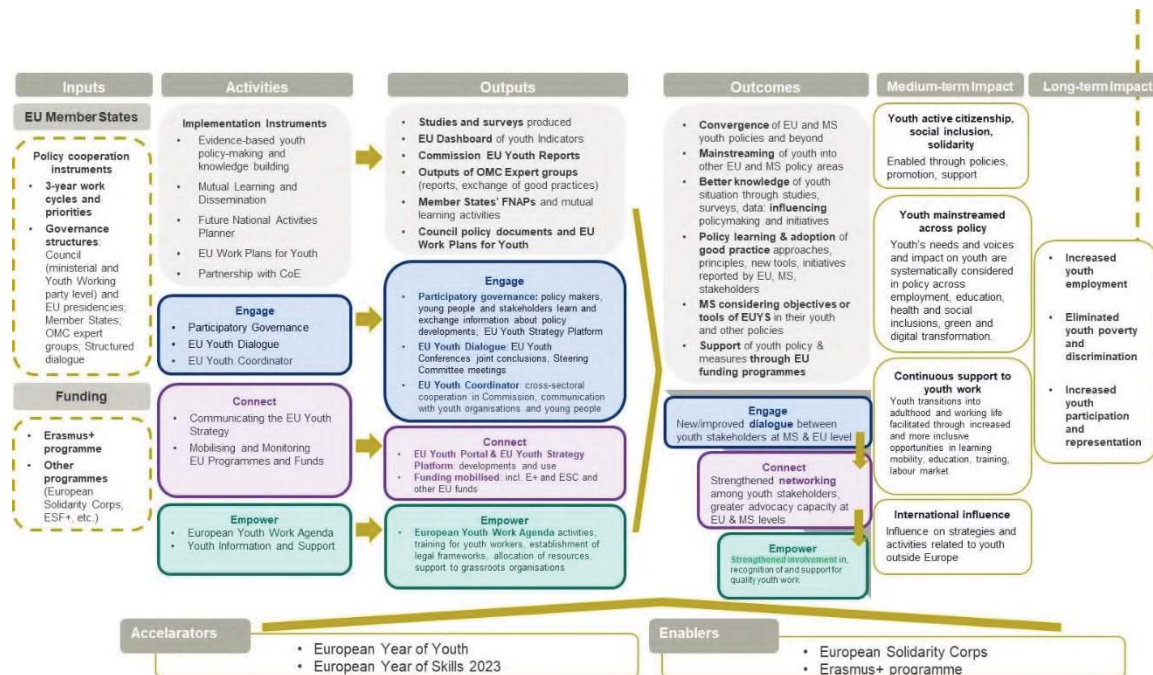


Figure 2. Intervention Logic of the EU Youth Strategy.

Source Kantar Public

2.2. Points of comparison

To assess the impact of the EUYS, it is crucial to consider the context before the intervention and the expectations for its development. Given that the previous Strategy was active between 2010 and 2018, it serves as a valuable reference period to evaluate the progress achieved by the current Strategy.

Baseline

Over the reference period (2010-2018), European economies were recovering from the 2008 economic crisis. However, there were significant challenges such as the high level of NEETs. This was an indication of the vulnerable status of young people in the EU. Although there has been a notable decline to 11.7% in 2022, worldwide phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic slightly increased the proportion of young people in this categorisation.

Between 2014 and 2018, youth unemployment rates decreased across all Member States but remained more than twice as high as general unemployment. In 2018, 3.415 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU28. This decrease continued into 2019 but increased slightly in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite economic improvements, inequalities persisted. For example, the percentage of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion (aged 15-29) rose between 2015 and 2016 to a peak of 28.3%. Thereafter,

there has been a steady decline in this rate, to a low of 24.3% in 2019. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, saw a 1 percentage point increase from 2019-2021, while recent data points to a return to 2019 levels in 2022.

Youth unemployment rates, EU and EA, seasonally adjusted, January 2008 - September 2023

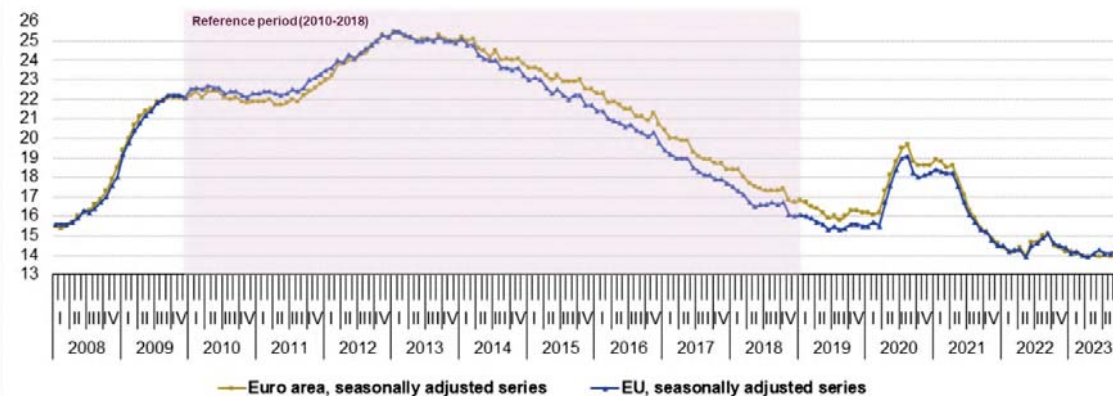


Figure 3. Youth unemployment rate in the EU 27, under 25 years of age (2008-2023)

Source: Eurostat (2023). YTH_EMPL_100⁹

Before the EUYS was implemented in 2019, inequalities within EU society, especially those spanning different generations, persisted. These disparities came despite an economic upswing and diminished unemployment rates over the reference period. For example, the percentage of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion (aged 15-29) rose between 2015 and 2016 to a peak of 28.3%. In addition to this, gender imbalances also persist, with young women being more prone to facing risks of poverty and social exclusion.

Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities or active citizenship across Europe was unevenly distributed over the reference period, and particularly in 2015: Eastern European countries (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria, and Latvia) had lower participation rates (between 0.3-9%) compared to central European countries (e.g., Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark) with higher participation rates (between 55-90%). The results from the third International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2022 (ICCS 2022)¹⁰ show a decreasing trend (2022 compared to 2016) in civic and citizenship competence of students in several of the participating EU Member States¹¹. The recent results of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022¹² show that student's personal

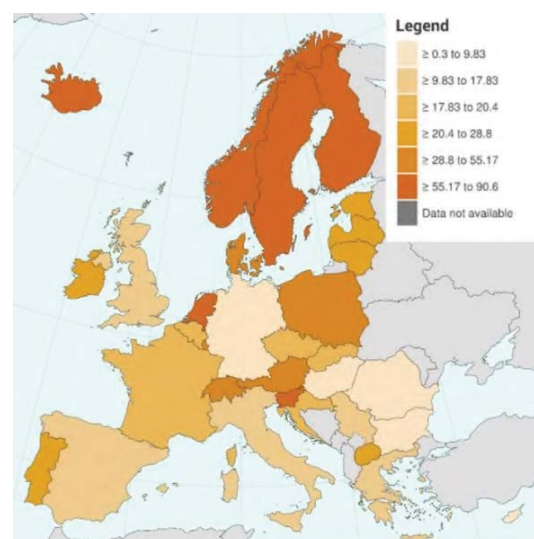


Figure 1. Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities or active citizenship (% of young people), 2015. (Source: Eurostat (ILC_SCP19__custom_2135736))

⁹ Eurostat, Youth unemployment rate by sec, age, country of birth

¹⁰ Education for Citizenship in Times of Global Change - ICCS 2022 International Report | IEA.nl

¹¹ ICCS participating EU Member States: Sweden, Poland, Estonia, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Lithuania, Netherlands, France, Slovenia, Slovakia, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Cyprus, Bulgaria.

¹² PISA 2022 Results (Volume I) : The State of Learning and Equity in Education | PISA | OECD iLibrary (oecd-ilibrary.org)

circumstances such as socio-economic status and the advantages or disadvantages that come within have an impact on student performance (OECD, 2023). Individuals with higher socio-economic status often have better access to education and sources of information which can foster deeper understanding and knowledge of civic participation.

Points of comparison

EUYS aims to respond to the challenges of youth unemployment, participation in voluntary activities, and active citizenship by promoting youth engagement, addressing inequalities, and enhancing opportunities for young people across Member States. The following table presents the main points of comparison against each evaluation criterion. It presents the insights obtained from the evaluation of the previous Strategy, the related main aims of the current EUYS, and also serves as the basis for assessing the performance of the EUYS in addressing the identified challenges and achieving its objectives.

Point of comparison (situation prior to 2019) ¹³	EUYS 2019-2027 ¹⁴	Indicator (how progress is measured)
Effectiveness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUYS 2010-2018 brought tangible changes at national and organizational levels, promoting common approaches across Member States. • EUYS 2010-2018 directly influenced policy agendas, especially in volunteering, internationalisation, mobility, youth work, and cross-sectoral policy. • EUYS 2010-2018 also impacted non-formal learning, youth entrepreneurship, and addressing NEETs. • Greater awareness and understanding among key stakeholders, including policymakers and youth organisations, were highlighted as crucial. Better dissemination and communication are needed. • Youth organisations in EUYS activities reported positive outcomes, including changes in practices, partnerships, and networking. • Structured dialogue, EU fund mobilisation, mutual learning, and knowledge-building were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to strengthen the link between the EU and young people through inclusive and digital dialogue, focused priorities, and effective information sharing. • Emphasises youth engagement and participation in democratic life and seeks to improve cross-sector cooperation. • The expected achievements include fostering youth participation, promoting solidarity and intercultural understanding, supporting youth empowerment, and enabling active citizenship. • Emphasises equality, inclusion, participation, and global-local dimensions as guiding principles. Member States are encouraged to implement targeted actions, promote cross-sectoral cooperation, and explore synergies between funding sources. • Aims to improve accessibility, visibility, and impact, with a systematic approach to youth information and the effective use of EU programmes and funds. In particular, the importance of youth mainstreaming is highlighted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of awareness and understanding of the EUYS among key stakeholders, policymakers, youth organisations, and young people. • The level of youth participation and engagement in decision-making processes and the implementation of the EUYS. • The extent to which the EUYS has influenced policy agendas, frameworks, and practices in Member States.

¹³ [Evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy and the Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the EU](#). ICF (2016)

¹⁴ [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](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identified as key tools for EU youth cooperation. Integrating and building upon existing efforts were identified as important for greater effectiveness. 		
Efficiency		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources allocated to EU cooperation activities in the youth field were generally small. Nonetheless, even with a relatively low budget, the EU youth cooperation was successful in triggering changes at national and organisational level. The budget was however spread across a large number of activities covering many fields of action, which meant that it was often being spread thinly. Some obstacles to efficiency were identified including limited resources at national level to take full advantage of EU cooperation structures; inefficiencies related to certain specific instruments or activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instruments and governance of the EUYS are primarily financed by EU programmes, in particular Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, with other EU programmes contributing to its objectives. Member State national funding also contributes to their participation in the instruments and governance of the EUYS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The efficiency of resource allocation and utilisation within the EUYS. The degree to which structures in the EUYS enable efficient decision-making processes, effective communication, and streamlined implementation of the EUYS' initiatives.
Coherence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUYS 2010-2018 lacked an integrated approach at the EU level and cross-referencing with relevant initiatives was limited. Stakeholders expressed the need for greater involvement of the youth sector in decision-making processes. The implementation instruments were generally relevant, but the coherence in decision-making regarding their use was not clear externally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasises the alignment of youth policy with EU funding and the focus on shared priorities across Member States while allowing flexibility for adaptation. Aims to reinforce the link between EU youth policy and related programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. Maintains the coherence of its core areas and instruments, promoting effective and joined-up implementation across sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree to which there is integration of youth perspective into broader policy areas. The level of cross-referencing and integration between the EUYS and other relevant EU initiatives.
EU added value		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The added value of the EUYS 2010-2018 was influenced by Member States' alignment and interest in cooperation. In countries with strong alignment or low interest, the added value was limited. National factors drove changes, and the EUYS contributed inspiration, expertise, leverage, and resources to support the EU Youth Open Method of Coordination objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out several areas for Member State cooperation, as well as the promotion of sharing information and best practices through the FNAPs. Aims to contribute to enhancing collaboration and knowledge exchange, expanding youth participation in policy consultations, and fostering the cross-fertilization of innovative ideas and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which young people across all Member States actively engage and participate in the EUYS' initiatives. The extent to which the EUYS has acted as a catalyst or accelerator for change at the national level.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It acted as a catalyst in some Member States, fostering a "youth policy" culture and leading to lasting effects like new frameworks and legislative revisions. Overall, the EUYS played a significant role in youth policy development. 		
Relevance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUYS 2010-2018 had a high degree of relevance in addressing the needs of young people and youth stakeholders. EUYS 2010-2018 objectives were seen to have been aligned with the priorities identified by young people, such as employment, education, training, and cross-border volunteering. The flexible framework of the EUYS allowed for addressing a wide range of issues and accommodating diverse needs across Member States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out various needs and challenges faced by young people and youth stakeholders, including uncertainties about their future due to technological change, demographic trends, discrimination, social exclusion, fake news, and populism. Emphasises the importance of acquiring necessary skills to contribute to prosperous, democratic, and cohesive societies, as well as the need to address socio-economic and democratic exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the EUYS addresses the needs and challenges of young people and youth stakeholders today.

Table 1. Points of comparison.

Source: Kantar Public – Public Consultation on the EU Youth Strategy, 2023

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

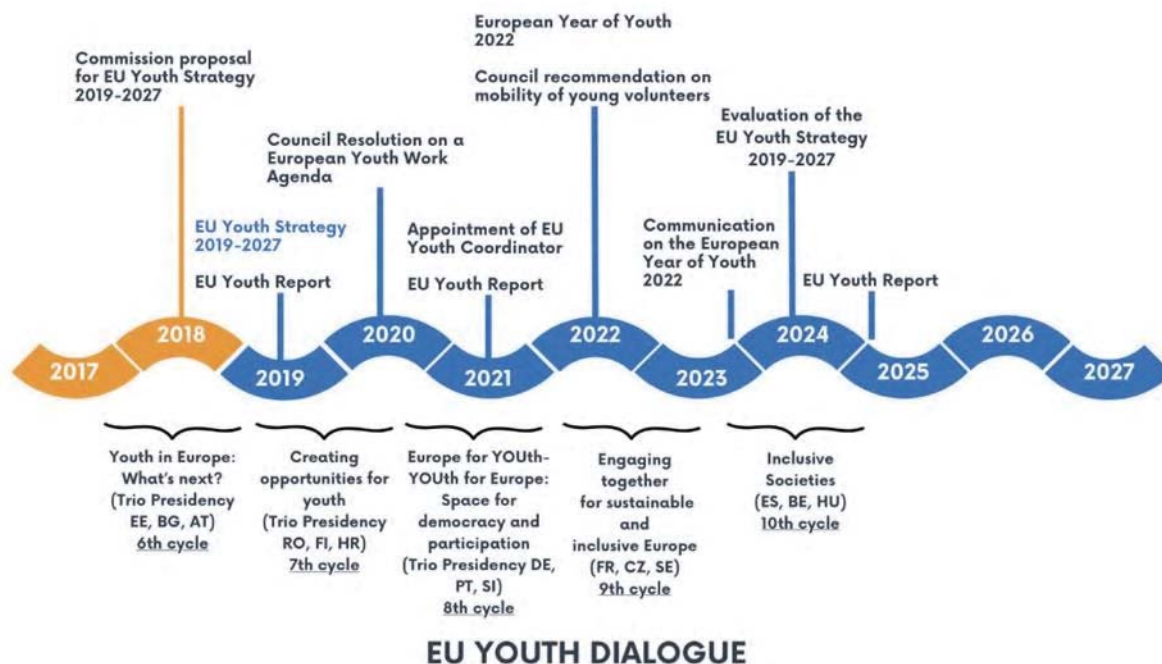
3.1. Current state of play

Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy during 2019-2023

The EU Youth Strategy operates in **three-year work cycles**, at the end of which the **Commission reports on the progress in the EU Youth Report**¹⁵. The priorities and actions in the core areas for each cycle are set by the Council together with the Commission and presented in the **EU Work Plans for Youth**. Each Work Plan spans two Council Presidency trios. The overarching thematic priority for 2019-2021 was ‘Creating opportunities for youth’ and for 2022-2024 it is ‘Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe’.

¹⁵ [EU Youth Report 2021](#) and [Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the EU Youth Report 2021](#)

EU YOUTH STRATEGY



EU YOUTH DIALOGUE

Disclaimer: The infographic showcases only the main milestones.

The governance and implementation of the EU Youth Strategy is supported by a range of **instruments**, mainly financed through **the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes**, such as the EU Youth Dialogue, the European Youth Portal, the European Youth Work Agenda, mutual learning activities, knowledge- and evidence-building and more.

The **new generation of EU youth programmes** – Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 – have brought a significant boost: the Erasmus+ budget for the 2021-2027 period doubled to over € 26 billion (with an additional 2 billion from EU external cooperation funds) and the European Solidarity Corps budget for 2021-2027 period was consolidated to just above € 1 billion. This benefits young people and youth work organisations and the development and implementation of the EU Youth Strategy at EU and national levels. Erasmus+ provides support to policy reform in the youth, contributing to the implementation of the EUYS.

A number of **new or updated actions**, including Youth Participation Activities and DiscoverEU in Erasmus+ and the Solidarity Projects and Humanitarian Aid Strand in the European Solidarity Corps, have enriched the range of opportunities open to young people and supporting their democratic, civic and humanitarian engagement. The four **horizontal priorities** of both programmes - inclusion and diversity, environment and fight against climate change, digital transformation, participation and civic engagement – and the quality

and support measures, such as training and cooperation and networking activities and SALTO resource centres¹⁶, create linkages between the EUYS and the programmes.

Highlights of the EUYS implementation during 2019-2023 are presented below.

Mutual learning activities

Mutual learning activities¹⁷ between Member States, the European Commission and relevant stakeholders is an important instrument to advance youth policy in the core areas as well as cross-sectorally. Mutual learning activities include expert groups which can develop policy guidance, practical tools and share good practices as well as peer learning activities, peer counselling and supporting studies.¹⁸

The implemented activities during the first years of the EUYS included three several Expert Groups that worked on indicators, on the mobility of young volunteers and cross-border solidarity, and on youth work. The Expert Group's recommendations were finalised based on similar challenges among Member States, for example, to improve volunteering and solidarity activities to reach more people with fewer opportunities.

Furthermore, three Peer Learning Activities between Member States have taken place on non-vocational qualifications for youth work, on a rights-based approach to youth policies, and on complementarity and synergy between national or regional volunteering schemes for youth and the European Solidarity Corps.

Some of the challenges for implementing a rights-based approach to youth policies identified during the Peer Learning Activities include limited youth participation, outdated communication and participation tools, lack of mechanisms to reach out to vulnerable youth and the digital divide. The Peer Learning Activity on non-vocational qualifications for youth work mentions that digital technologies such as micro-credential systems have been useful in identifying and recognising key competences at national level and could contribute to long-term impacts such as increased youth employment¹⁹.

Future National Activities Planners

The Future National Activities Planners²⁰ (hereafter referred to as 'FNAPs') allow Member States on a voluntary basis to share their national priorities in line with the EU Youth Strategy. The FNAPs aim to increase transparency in the implementation of youth policies at regional, national and EU level. Youth policies in Member States are among the most important instruments for the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. They are often consolidated in a national youth strategy or an equivalent youth policy planning document, as documented by the Youth Wiki. The content of such national youth strategies can be highly relevant for the European Commission and Member States to establish synergies,

¹⁶ SALTO resource centres (Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) provide services (expertise, trainings) to National Agencies of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

¹⁷ [Mutual Learning and Expert Groups | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁸ [Mutual Learning and Expert Groups | European Youth Portal](#)

¹⁹ [Peer learning activity \(PLA\) on non-vocational qualifications for youth work – Meeting Report June 2021 \(2021\)](#)

²⁰ [Future National Activities Planners | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

stressing also the importance of representativeness and of including the voices of young people with fewer opportunities and of those not organised in youth associations. To date, nine cycles of the EU Youth Dialogue have been fully implemented with three of them having been implemented during the current Strategy. The tenth cycle is on-going. It started in July 2023 and will end in December 2024.

The participatory process in each country is organised by national working groups through representatives of youth ministries, national youth councils, youth organisations, youth workers, researchers, and young people from all backgrounds. It was through the sixth cycle of the Dialogue (then called Structured Dialogue) which was being implemented during the former EUYS that the EU Youth Goals were shaped, and the aim of the cycle was to contribute to the creation of the 2019-2027 Strategy. One of the actions of the new Strategy was to launch a Dialogue with more focus on people with fewer opportunities.

During the last three Dialogue cycles, the proportion of young people identifying as disabled, part of an ethnic or religious minority group or LGBTIQ had increased (table 2 below). The participation of minority groups largely reflects the conclusions from an evaluation of participant inclusion levels within the EUYD, conducted by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (hereafter referred to as ‘EU-CoE Youth Partnership’).²⁵ The report states that 49.5% of the participants represent minority groups and that there is overrepresentation for all the minority groups mentioned, except NEETs and rural youth.²⁶ This showcases that the EUYS has become more diverse over time. In terms of gender equality, over the EUYD cycles 6-9, there were 59.85% of female participants, compared to 40.15% of male participants.

	Seventh Cycle	Eighth Cycle	Ninth Cycle
Time-period	January 2019 – June 2020	July 2020 – December 2021	January 2022 – June 2023
Trio Council presidency	Romania, Finland and Croatia	Germany, Portugal and Slovenia	France, Czechia and Sweden
Theme	Creating opportunities for youth	Europe for YOUTH-YOuth for Europe Space for democracy and participation	Engaging together for sustainable and inclusive Europe
Relevant European Youth Goal	<i>7 Quality Employment for All</i> <i>8 Quality Learning</i> <i>6 Moving Rural Youth Forward</i>	<i>9 Space and Participation for All</i>	<i>3 Inclusive Societies</i> <i>10 Sustainable Green Europe</i>
Share of participants who assessed	LGBTQ+: 10%	LGBTQ+: 8%	LGBTQ+: 28%

²⁵ Moxon, D, Barta, O., [Evaluation of participant inclusion levels within the EU Youth Dialogue, Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth \(2023\)](#).

²⁶ Ibid.

themselves to be youths with fewer opportunities²⁷	Religious minority: 13%	Religious minority: 8%	Religious minority: 21%
	Ethnic minority: 13%	Ethnic minority: 12%	Ethnic minority: 20%
	From rural area: 36%	From rural area: 34%	From rural area: 26%
	With disability: 5%	With disability: 4%	With disability: 19%
	NEET: 14%	NEET: 6%	NEET: 10%

Table 2. Overview of the EU Youth Dialogue.

Source: Kantar Public – desk research, 2023

The EUYD also aims to contribute to policy making by providing inputs to Council documents. For instance, the ***Council Resolution on the Outcomes of the seventh Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue*** invited the Commission and the Member States to address how to promote non-formal learning methods and approaches to secure formal recognition of non-formal education/learning and volunteering activities²⁸. The ***Council Resolution on the Outcomes of the eighth Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue*** invited the Commission and the Member States to prioritise and give visibility to the EUYD in national and EU-level events, promote youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, and support and strengthen cooperation between different stakeholders, such as the European Steering Group, National Working Groups, the European Youth Forum, National Youth Councils, International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, and other relevant stakeholders²⁹. The ***Council Resolution on the outcomes of the ninth Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue*** invited the Commission and the Member States to consider the outcomes of the ninth cycle of the EUYD when implementing and evaluating current youth policies and designing future policies in synergy with all policies affecting young people.³⁰

Communicating the EU Youth Strategy & Youth Information and Support

The European Youth Portal³¹ is the single multilingual entry point for EU level youth related information and opportunities. It functions as a one-stop-shop portal for young people and the visits increase year on year. In the period January-December 2023, the European Youth Portal registered more than 10.5 million visits, making it among the top 10 most visited websites on europa.eu overall, and the most visited website during the first days of any DiscoverEU round. Its revamped version launched in November 2020 supports the EU Youth Strategy in providing content and services for young people centred around its three core areas and a dedicated section on the EU Youth Strategy targeting youth stakeholders.

Other organisations involved in youth information and support are the Eurodesk network, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) and the European Youth Card Association (EYCA).

²⁷ Moxon, D., Bárta, O., EUYD9 Results of the Consultation Phase: Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe, (2022)

²⁸ [Resolution of the Council on the Outcomes of the 7th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, 2020/c 212/01](#)

²⁹ [Resolution of the Council on the outcomes of the 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue, 2021/C 504/01](#)

³⁰ [Resolution of the Council on the outcomes of the 9th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue, 9134/23](#)

³¹ [About us | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

On a national level, there are also examples of measures implemented that are connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in general, the main information from the national level came from the National Agencies for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. These National Agencies are responsible, among other things, for providing information about the programmes.³² These National Agencies are supported by SALTOs, which is a network of resource centres working on the horizontal priority areas for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes and supporting the programmes' international dimension.

EU Youth Strategy Platform

The EU Youth Strategy Platform is a collaborative online platform for youth stakeholders (youth ministries, programme implementing bodies, youth NGOs, researchers, networks and youth work organisations) which aims to build a basis for a regular civic dialogue, offer opportunities to exchange information on activities and results, and facilitate participatory governance and coordination of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. Following the launch in 2019 and online activities held in 2020, the pandemic disrupted the work of the network, however with the European Year of Youth many of the members re-convened as part of the Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholders' group. The plan is to revive the EU Youth Strategy Platform group in 2024 as part of the legacy of the Year.

Evidence-based Youth Policy Making and Knowledge Building

Evidence-based policy making³³ requires continuous research, knowledge development and outreach to young people and youth organisations. The **Youth Wiki**³⁴ gathers data to support the evidence base for the EUYS. It provides comparable qualitative information on youth related national policies, based on official documents, such as laws, decrees, regulations and recommendations. This supports analysis of policies, reforms, trends and exchange of good practices. The Youth Wiki complements the resources available via other internal and external knowledge providers, including:

- **Eurostat**, providing survey data on the situation of young people;
- **EU-Council of Europe Youth partnership**, providing research and training materials on youth policy related topics;
- **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Dashboards and National Agencies**, including the RAY research network providing data and analysis on the youth programmes.
- **Civil society organisations and international organisations**, providing research on youth related topics.

Youth Wiki data and other available data, as well as research, studies and reports, are used for the regular official report on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy – **the EU Youth Report**. The EU Youth Report covering the first triennial cycle (2019-2021) was published in 2021 and the next EU Youth Report will cover the period 2022-2024. The 2021 EU Youth Report³⁵ provided a snapshot of the situation and challenges facing young people and of the

³² [Erasmus+ Contacts \(ec.europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contact-us)

³³ [Evidence-based policy-making | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://evidence-based-policy-making.europa.eu/)

³⁴ [Youth Wiki: Europe's Encyclopedia of National Youth Policies \(europa.eu\)](https://youth-wiki.europa.eu/)

³⁵ [Report from the Commission on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2021\) \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021R0001)

progress in the implementation of the EUYS, against the backdrop of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report stressed that 2020 and 2021 were atypical years and that the COVID-19 outbreak led to the acceleration of digital trends and had a negative impact on education, employment and mental health of young people. Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy was also disrupted, however allowed for flexibility to modify, reschedule (or cancel if not possible) some actions in the EU Work Plan for Youth 2019-2021 and to adjust projects in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

The Eurostat EU Youth Dashboard³⁶ provides statistical data about the situation of young people. The Dashboard was updated in 2022, based on the proposal of an ad hoc expert group on youth indicators³⁷, as an achievement under the European Year of Youth. It is composed of a selection of statistical indicators grouped according to the EUYS core areas of ‘Engage’, ‘Connect’ and ‘Empower’, complemented with contextual indicators. The EU Youth Dashboard takes the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy into consideration which is important to facilitate youth mainstreaming.

The EU-CoE Youth Partnership provides research, training and cooperation on youth topics and functions as a “think tank” and laboratory in youth research, youth policy and youth work. The partnership coordinates and supports the European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) and its Steering Group in producing and disseminating knowledge.

EU Youth Coordinator

The first EU Youth Coordinator was appointed in the European Commission in June 2021. The EU Youth Coordinator acts as a reference point for young people and their representatives, promoting integration of the youth perspective in relevant policies, contributes to coordination and cooperation of Commission services on youth mainstreaming and encourages youth participation and uptake of opportunities.

The EU Youth Coordinator chaired the internal Commission informal Youth Network and the European Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholders’ group. The first one is an internal network for capacity building, coordination and collaboration on youth related issues between Commission services, while the second one comprised a group of 29 Member States, six contact points from Erasmus+ associated countries and more than 120 European-level youth stakeholders and was set-up in 2021 to support the implementation of the European Year of Youth. Furthermore, given the success of this group, the plan is to transform it into a renewed EU Youth Stakeholders platform which would meet regularly and exchange on initiatives for young people.

Monitoring and mobilising EU programmes and funds

The **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps** programmes are key programmes that contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and advancing youth policy cooperation. Erasmus+ provides opportunities for non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion,

³⁶ [EU Dashboard, \(ec.europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg-8-4-10)

³⁷ [Proposal for an updated dashboard of EU youth indicators \(op.europa.eu\) \(2021\)](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/11111111-1111-1111-1111-111111111111)

creativity, and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of youth. The formal education and training strands of Erasmus+ also contribute to youth engagement and empowering young people. European Solidarity Corps provides opportunities for volunteering and solidarity activities as well as volunteering in the field of humanitarian aid. Quality and support measures under both programmes, e.g. transnational cooperation and networking activities and SALTO resources centres, contribute to synergies and bridges between youth programmes and youth policy.

The **SALTOs³⁸ in the youth field** play a specific role, as they often participate in and coordinate the long-term cooperation activities among National Agencies and involve a range of stakeholders at different levels. These are the so-called Strategic National Agency Cooperation Activities (SNACs), of which a range operate at the intersection between Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes and the EUYS, contributing to youth policy development as well as to quality in the programme implementation. Two new cross-sectoral SALTOs were set up under the current programming period, the SALTO on Green transition and sustainable development and SALTO Digital.

As manifested during the European Year of Youth, there are also many **other EU programmes/funds/instruments that benefit young people**, such as Horizon Europe, EU cohesion policy funds (including ESF+, ERDF and its Interreg strand, Just Transition Fund, Cohesion Fund), EU agricultural funds (EAGF and EAFRD), Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Technical Support Instrument, Digital Europe, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme, EU4Health, Creative Europe, the Technical Support Instrument and many more.

The **interim evaluations of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps** programmes, to be completed by the end of 2024, will assess the performance and impact of the initiatives and actions implemented via both programmes.

EU Work Plans for Youth

The EU Work Plans for Youth created by the Council and the Commission present the priorities and actions in the core areas of each three-year work cycle. Each Work Plan spans two Council Presidency trios. The overarching thematic priority for 2019-2021 was “Creating opportunities for youth”, and for 2022-2024 “Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe”. The implementation of the 2019-2021 Work Plan was however altered by the pandemic. Some actions had to be modified, rescheduled or even cancelled.³⁹

In the 2022-2024 Work Plan for Youth, the European Year of Youth was given particular attention⁴⁰. Out of the more than 13 000 activities organised as part of the Year, the most popular topic was Participation and Engagement. In conclusion, the Year has strengthened cross-sectoral cooperation; youth participation has emerged as the top focus and new tools for youth participation have been introduced. Mainstreaming a youth angle in EU policy across all

³⁸ [SALTO resource centres \(Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities\) provide services \(expertise, trainings\) to National Agencies of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.](#)

³⁹ [Report from the Commission on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2021\)](#)

⁴⁰ [Resolution of the Council on the EU Youth Strategy Work Plan 2022-2024/C 504 /01](#)

relevant policy areas and not exclusively of those pertaining to the youth field, is a key legacy of the European Year of Youth.⁴¹

European Youth Work Agenda

The EYWA is an important instrument to strengthen, develop and promote **youth work**⁴², which was considered the second most relevant topic for cooperation in the 2021 FNAP.⁴³ The EYWA is linked to several instruments of the EUYS. A particular focus of the EYWA is to act at local level and in remote rural areas. As part of achieving this, the Sub-group on Youth Work, met six times between 2021 and 2022. The sub-group had a role in the implementation of the EYWA by giving advice on the process of creating and implementing a dedicated digital platform on youth work to share information, knowledge and good practices, engage in cooperation and peer learning. The subgroup also supports the EU-CoE Youth Partnership.

The Steering Group on the European Youth Work Agenda supported the implementation of the EYWA through three meetings between 2022-2023. The Group has supported the implementation by facilitating the dialogue within the youth work community of practice, support improvement in recognition of youth work, supporting EU-CoE Youth Partnership and EU initiatives on youth work, organising activities in the priority regions with a focus on Youth Work Development and by providing learning and development opportunities for members of the youth work community of practice.

Broader perspective on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy

Taking a **broad perspective of implementation** which benefits young people, policy developments linked to the EU Youth Strategy span over many inter-connected policy areas: the EU Youth Strategy contributes to (and benefits from) delivering on the objectives of the, the European Education Area⁴⁴ and the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)⁴⁵, and other underlying sectoral policy agendas (e.g. the European Agenda for Adult Learning 2021- 2030⁴⁶, the European Strategy for Universities⁴⁷, etc.), the European Skills Agenda⁴⁸, the New European Innovation Agenda⁴⁹, the European Pillar of Social Rights⁵⁰, the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027⁵¹, or the European Union Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024⁵². With the sixth European Education Summit in November 2023, the mid-term review of the European Education Area was concluded, showing strong progress towards EU level targets

⁴¹ National Agencies Event January 2023 – 2022 European Year of Youth, 2023.

⁴² Youth work covers activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature; by, with and for young people; delivered by youth workers; and based on non-formal and informal learning processes and voluntary participation (EYWA, points 1-7).

⁴³ [Study on youth work in the EU – Final report](#), (2021).

⁴⁴ [Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#)

⁴⁵ [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\) 2021/C 66/01](#) - Publications Office of the EU ([europa.eu](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/1000000/1/attachment/data/00000001/1360000.pdf))

⁴⁶ [Council resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning \(2021-2030\)](#)

⁴⁷ [Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future](#)

⁴⁸ [Communication 30June_v2.pdf; Helping Europe's youth find \(better and greener\) jobs \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴⁹ [Communication on a new European Innovation Agenda](#)

⁵⁰ [European Pillar of Social Rights | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵¹ [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#)

⁵² [European Union Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024](#)

and inspiration for further efforts to make the experience of Europe as an open space for education, training and mobility an opportunity for all.

The **international dimension** of the EU Youth Strategy has been strengthened through the first-ever policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world adopted in October 2022 – the Youth Action Plan in the European Union external action for 2022-2027⁵³. It will help deliver on international commitments, such as the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, by enhancing youth participation and empowerment in the EU's external action policies.

Youth policy developments following the start of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 have in particular focused on **youth work**, based on the new dedicated core field of action – Empower – which targets youth work in all its forms as a catalyst for empowerment of young people. Youth work brings unique benefits to young people in their transition to adulthood, providing a safe environment for them to gain self-confidence, and learn in a non-formal way. Two policy documents adopted in 2019 emphasise the need to invest in youth work: Council conclusions on digital youth work and the Council conclusions on education and training of youth workers. The policy base on youth work was further strengthened with the adoption of the European Youth Work Agenda in 2020.

Furthermore, policy developments have also specifically aimed at strengthening **young people's democratic participation**, including through the Council conclusions on fostering democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe⁵⁴ and on strengthening multi-level governance when promoting the participation of young people in decision-making processes⁵⁵. The EU Children's Participation Platform⁵⁶ involves children (0-17) in EU decision-making and supports their active participation in democratic life, contributing to youth participation and active citizenship in the EUYS. The Commission's Citizenship Package⁵⁷ aims to support democratic participation by raising awareness on EU citizenship rights, including with a Guide to EU citizenship⁵⁸ targeted to young EU citizens (who start being democratically engaged). The Defence of Democracy package⁵⁹ includes relevant Recommendations: the Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes underlines the importance of promoting the participation of young people and children in democratic life in the EU and refers to best practices of existing children and youth councils and processes, including the EU Youth Dialogue.⁶⁰ The Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections covers supporting young citizens in the exercise of their electoral rights, both as voters and candidates, and on promoting political engagement, with a special focus on young people, especially first-time voters. Youth

⁵³ [Youth Action Plan \(Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative\) | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵⁴ [Council conclusions on fostering democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe, 20 November 2020](#)

⁵⁵ [Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening the multilevel governance when promoting the participation of young people in decision-making processes.](#)

⁵⁶ [EU Children's Participation Platform | European Union \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6330

⁵⁸ [Citizenship Package - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵⁹ [Protecting democracy - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶⁰ [Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society C\(2023\) 8627 final](#)

participation is a key feature of the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+), with active involvement of children and young people across the EU in shaping the digital environment through consultations and youth led activities.

Policy developments have also aimed to promote **cross-border volunteering**. The Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union⁶¹, aims to address obstacles to and facilitate cross-border volunteering, in particular for young people with fewer opportunities, through the European Solidarity Corps as well as national schemes. This also contributes to the European Education Area through fostering, valuing and recognising non-formal learning including volunteering, and enhancing the inclusiveness, quality and recognition of cross-border solidarity.

The **European Year of Youth 2022**⁶² raised awareness of EU action and strengthened opportunities for young people to voice their views, engage in and influence policies at different levels, also giving a boost to the EU Youth Strategy. The objectives of the Year were very relevant for and closely linked to the EUYS:

- Renewing the positive perspectives for young people and drawing inspiration from their actions, vision and insights;
- Supporting young people, especially those with fewer opportunities to become active and engaged citizens and actors of change;
- Promoting opportunities for young people in a green, digital and inclusive world;
- Mainstreaming youth policy across all relevant policy areas to encourage that a youth perspective is brought into policy-making at all levels.

The **Conference on the Future of Europe**⁶³ generated lessons of relevance for participative democracy in the EU's youth policy-making and many of the ideas and proposals on the future of Europe concern young people. Building on the success of the Conference on the Future of Europe, **Citizens' Panels** (with significant participation of young people) have become a regular feature of EU policy making.

Developments of high relevance for the EUYS also included the **2023 European Year of Skills**⁶⁴, the Commission **Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health**⁶⁵, adopted in June 2023, and Council Conclusions⁶⁶ in this area in November 2023, and the Commission **proposal for a Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone**⁶⁷, as part of the Talent Mobility package, adopted in November 2023.

⁶¹ [Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union](#), 5 April 2022

⁶² [European Year of Youth 2022](#)

⁶³ [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

⁶⁴ [European Year of Skills \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶⁵ [Communication from the Commission on a comprehensive approach to mental health, COM \(2023\) 298 final](#)

⁶⁶ [Conclusions of the Council on a comprehensive approach to the mental health of young people in the European Union \(C/2023/1337, 30.11.2023\) I](#)

⁶⁷ [Proposal for a Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone](#) as part of the [Talent Mobility package](#).

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation framework covers the five evaluation criteria, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and relevance. These were operationalised through more detailed evaluation questions (see Evaluation framework in Annex III) for the following evaluation objectives.

Effectiveness

- Evaluate progress in the core areas (Engage, Connect, Empower) and progress towards the 11 European Youth Goals, guiding principles at EU and MS level.
- Evaluate the extent to which the EUYS instruments have proven to be effective.
- Examine unintended/unexpected effect of the EUYS.
- Evaluate the extent to which the EUYS instruments have supported cross-sectorial cooperation and mainstreaming.
- Examine the ability of the EUYS to adapt to unforeseen developments and the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic and Russia's full scale military aggression of Ukraine.
- Evaluate the impact of the EUYS on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.
- Assess the extent to which the EUYS promotes green and digital transition.

Efficiency

- Evaluate the extent to which the EUYS instruments, structures, processes and activities were non-burdensome and cost-effective.
- Assess the extent to which the EUYS has used proportionate resources to achieve its objectives.

Coherence

- Assess the coherence of the EUYS with wider EU policies and priorities.
- Uncover how the different core areas and instruments of the EUYS work together to achieve its objectives and are coherent with each other.
- Assess the extent to which the EUYS' coherence was influenced by the European Year of Youth.

EU added value

- Assess how and to what extent does the EUYS add value in what MS could achieve on their own.
- Evaluate to what extent the EUYS promotes cooperation between countries in Europe and beyond.
- Assess the extent to which the EUYS' added value was influenced by the European Year of Youth.
- Explore the possible consequences of discontinuing the EUYS.

Relevance

- Understand the degree to which the objectives of the EUYS remained relevant over the period 2019 - part of 2023.
- Evaluate how the EUYS still corresponds to the needs and challenges of young people and youth stakeholders.
- Assess the extent to which the EUYS' relevance was influenced by the European Year of Youth.

The evaluation covered the period from 2019 to part of 2023. Special attention was given to the new or strengthened elements, in particular the renewed EU Youth Dialogue, the FNAPs, the EU Youth Coordinator, and the developments related to the new emphasis on quality youth work as a specific strand.

4.1. To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

Effectiveness

This section presents the findings concerning the effectiveness of the EUYS as a strategic framework at EU and national levels, its effects in relation to the three core areas 'Engage', 'Connect' and 'Empower', the effectiveness and sustainability of the EUYS instruments, the degree of adaptability of the EUYS, and how it has contributed to the social inclusion of young people, as well as to the digital and green transitions.

A number of **general remarks** on the effectiveness of the EUYS need to be taken into consideration:

- Among the stakeholders consulted, **very few had a clear, comprehensive overview of the EUYS as a whole and of its instruments**, making it difficult for them to determine what exactly has been achieved by the EUYS, over and above what has been achieved by its component parts, i.e., its instruments and activities.
- Many stakeholders consider the EU youth programmes, namely **Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps as very closely intertwined with the EUYS** and struggle differentiating between the contribution of the programmes and contribution of the EUYS.
- The EUYS 2019-2027 builds on the previous Strategy (2010-2018) and framework for European cooperation in the youth field⁶⁸. While the current EUYS has been restructured and some new instruments have been introduced, many activities and priorities are a continuation of the previous frameworks. It is **very difficult, if not impossible, to clearly delineate the effects of the current Strategy independently of the predecessors**. Consulted stakeholders were not always able to differentiate clearly between the current and previous Strategy as from their perspective these are a continuous effort. Therefore, it is likely that the findings presented in this chapter on

⁶⁸ [Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field \(2010-2018\) \(2009\)](#)

effectiveness do not solely capture the effects of the current Strategy at mid-term but also capture the legacy effects of previous frameworks.

Key findings related to the effectiveness criterion:

- The EUYS has contributed to **foster active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity** in particular through the EU Youth Dialogue and the EU youth programmes (Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps).
- The EUYS has a **positive influence on youth policies** at national level as well as on **youth mainstreaming** into other policy areas, resulting in specific and tangible policy developments at national level.
- The EUYS has fostered **more inclusive and good quality youth work** through the European Youth Work Agenda as well as through aligned priorities and actions in EU youth programmes. As part of the public consultation, 71% of respondents who were aware of the EUYS or of any of its instruments (102 out of 143) considered that the EUYS helped improve the quality of youth work, while 71% (101 out of 143) considered that it increased the recognition of youth work.
- The EUYS has a **wider international influence** beyond the EU through the international dimension of the EU youth programmes and the Youth Action Plan in EU external action.
- The EUYS has fostered participation of **young people with fewer opportunities** in the EU Youth Dialogue and EU youth programmes.
- The EUYS has accelerated the promotion of the **green and digital transition** through its instruments at the EU and national level, albeit to varying degrees.

The EUYS as a strategic framework

The evaluation found that the EUYS was effective in **promoting youth participation, fostering solidarity and intercultural understanding, supporting youth empowerment and enabling active citizenship** at EU and national levels.

This was achieved through a **combination of instruments**, with the most important contribution by the:

- The **EUYS** celebrates more than 10 years of existence and is the **largest participatory instrument at EU level** involving young people in policy making. As flagship instrument of the EUYS, it directly **boosts the active citizenship of those participating**. The EUYS has also contributed to stimulate more participatory initiatives in Member States. The EUYS through its last three cycles, has played a key role in **increasing the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities**, thus ensuring a more diverse and representative dialogue.
- The **mobilisation and monitoring of EU programmes, funds and instruments have created important opportunities for young people**, focusing on youth mobility and volunteering. The EUYS has effectively fostered alignment of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes with the EUYS objectives. Examples of the

strengthened linkages include new/adapted actions such as the Youth Participation Activities, DiscoverEU and Youth Worker Mobility in Erasmus+ and the Solidarity Projects and Humanitarian Aid Strand in the European Solidarity Corps. The EUYS has increased the awareness and accessibility of EU youth programmes promoting information about youth opportunities through the European Youth Portal and the Eurodesk network. This has empowered young people to contribute to societal debates on critical challenges and encouraged them to actively engage with these issues.

- **The European Youth Work Agenda has strengthened the policy focus on quality and recognition of youth work.** This acts in combination with EU programmes which provide important funding to youth work, including for youth workers mobility, youth exchanges and partnerships in the field of youth work. Through transparency tools such as the Youthpass⁶⁹, young people and youth workers can identify and document learning outcomes and achievements in cross-border youth and youth work activities and volunteering, contributing to recognition of youth work.

Youth mainstreaming

The EUYS also encourages mainstreaming the youth perspective across different policy areas at EU level and it encourages national policy makers to strive for the same through national youth strategies or policies. Youth mainstreaming aims to ensure that the effects of policies on youth are systematically examined and considered when designing or changing policies. It also aims to ensure meaningful youth participation and youth representation so that the needs and voices of young people are taken into account across different policies.

When it comes to **youth mainstreaming at EU level**, the results are somewhat mixed. The evaluation of the EUYS 2010-2018 concluded that whilst the EUYS was striving for youth mainstreaming it was making limited progress in this regard at EU level. The creation of the EU Youth Coordinator in the EUYS 2019-2027 was partially a response to this conclusion and an effort to enhance youth mainstreaming in EU policies and initiatives. This current evaluation finds that progress has been made in youth mainstreaming and the following findings arise from the analysis:

- **There is a stronger emphasis on youth mainstreaming in EU policies beyond the youth policy field.** This is also shown in the analysis of coherence. Developments such as youth engagement in climate action, the vulnerability of young people to mental health difficulties during and after the pandemic, exposure and vulnerability of young people to online threats including misinformation, cyberviolence or fraud, have increased the focus on youth in different policy agendas of the EU.
- There has also been an **increased exchange on youth at EU level**, which has promoted more discussions and actions on youth-related challenges and priorities. This was also boosted and increased thanks to the 2022 European Year of Youth, which had youth mainstreaming as one of its four objectives, and the work of the EU Youth Coordinator.

⁶⁹ [Welcome to Youthpass | Youthpass](#)

- **EU policy makers have actively participated in EUYD discussions and activities**, indicating a commitment to youth-related initiatives. Other participatory actions such as the creation of the **EU Children's Participation Platform**, policy dialogues with European Commissioners organised in the context of the European Year of Youth, or the **Youth Sounding Board** for youth participation and empowerment in EU external action have also emphasised the role of youth and of the dialogue between EU policy makers and youth
- Nevertheless, despite these efforts, **only 31% of the respondents in the survey for young people mentioned that EU initiatives effectively address their needs**, suggesting room for improvement in this regard.
- Interviews with national policy makers and CSOs revealed that some of these stakeholders were not aware of or expressed **doubts about the influence of the EU Youth Dialogue on European policy making**.

At **national level**, the contribution of the EUYS to **youth mainstreaming is more indirect and** depends on the extent to which national youth policies and strategies succeed in fostering such mainstreaming. The EUYS shapes national youth policies but the scale and type of effects vary greatly across countries. The predecessor EUYS (2010-2018) led to the establishment of youth strategies in most EU countries. The focus of the 2019-2027 EUYS has been to influence policy agendas, frameworks, and practices in Member States. As a result, national youth policies are better aligned with the EUYS and there is therefore less incentive and scope for the EUYS to have a direct impact on triggering national strategies. Nevertheless, EUYS continues to be a '**catalyst**' for national youth strategy/youth policy developments, e.g. by empowering national youth sectors and stakeholders and enhancing their legitimacy also in the eyes of policy makers from other sectors in the Member States.

The following **factors** were found to **limit the influence of the EUYS on youth mainstreaming at national level**:

- All EUYS instruments, except the EUYD, EU Youth Coordinator and Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, are **solely targeting policy makers in the field of youth**. For example, the evaluation found no evidence that stakeholders from outside the youth sector would regularly participate in EUYS mutual learning activities or events.
- The **EU Youth Dialogue**, despite its embedded national process, is **sometimes perceived as an initiative intended for the EU level**, and national stakeholders do not always see it as something that could contribute also to national policies. As a result, the EUYD does not systematically influence national policy debates and national policy development. Stakeholders are not always aware of the final recommendations and even less of the follow-up.

The use of **concrete youth mainstreaming instruments** (including youth checks, youth tests or similar) was not explicitly covered in evaluation questions, however national policy makers in Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, France and Austria, mentioned the existence and positive experience with such tools in their countries. A forthcoming analytical report by the European Commission (expected in 2024) will present youth mainstreaming approaches in EU

Member States. The use of a ‘youth test’ in EU policy making was among others advocated by the European Youth Forum⁷⁰. In its conclusions on youth mainstreaming⁷¹, the Council invited the Commission to use its Better Regulation framework to factor in the impact of new policies on young people.

On 10 January 2024, the Commission adopted a Communication on the legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022⁷². The Communication deepens the youth dimension of EU policies, thus boosting the engagement of young people in the preparation of EU policies. When designing EU policies, the Commission will use the full potential of youth mainstreaming as part of the Commission’s Better Regulation framework and toolbox, resulting in a youth check. These tools will be complemented with several youth-specific instruments under the 2019-2027 EU Youth Strategy.

EU Youth programmes

At **programme level**, there is a very clear relationship between the EUYS and the EU programmes in the field of youth, Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps:

- The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes are the **main and best-known instruments** of the EUYS. For example, 93% of the respondents to the survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal group were aware of Erasmus+, and 90% of the European Solidarity Corps. In the public consultation, 95% of the respondents were aware of Erasmus+ and 80% of the European Solidarity Corps. The programmes offer a range of opportunities across all education and training sectors, youth and sport, among other for young people, youth workers and civil society organisations.
- **Funding opportunities have become better focused and more strategic, e.g. as concerns new actions such as Youth Participation Activities, and the renewed Youth Worker Mobility action under Erasmus+.** While the direct contribution of the EUYS to these changes is difficult to delineate, it is clear that the EUYS explicitly aims to mobilise and promote effective use of EU programmes for its objectives.

There is no clear evidence about the effects of the EUYS on other funding programmes, although positive steps were noted in the context of the European Year of Youth, with the mobilisation of more than 30 European Commission departments and services which contributed to the objectives of the Year with more than 130 policy initiatives for young people.

Youth Work

The EUYS, in combination notably with the EU funding programmes in the field of youth, has **contributed to strengthen the quality, recognition and inclusiveness of youth work** and thus helped to facilitate young people's transitions to adulthood, and to the world of work, enhancing their skills and competences and their active citizenship. These changes have been

⁷⁰ [EU Youth Test | European Youth Forum](#)

⁷¹ [Conclusions of the Council of the European Union on promoting youth mainstreaming in policy decision-making processes in the European Union, \(C/2023/1342\) \(2023\).](#)

⁷² [Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

achieved through the **European Youth Work Agenda**, professionalising youth work and strategic cooperation with policy makers at EU and national level and civil society organisations. This also included mutual learning activities, notably the work of the expert group on youth work and associated studies and guidance.

The CSOs as well as young people surveyed expressed positive views on the contribution of youth work to young people in their transition to adulthood, and the recognition and quality enhancement of youth work contributing to the developing quality youth work offer.

Qualitative evidence from interviews, focus groups and desk research show a positive interaction between the EUYS, EYWA and youth work developments in EU Member States:

- EUYS has acted as a **catalyst in accelerating specific efforts in the field of quality youth work**. This has been achieved by professionalising youth work and increasing cooperation between policy makers and civil society organisations at EU and national level.
- Through the EU youth programmes, the EYWA policy ambition around and support for quality youth work can directly reach youth workers and youth organisations and contribute to effects such as better **recognition of youth work**. For example, 71% of the respondents to the surveys of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups considered that the EUYS increased the recognition of youth work. Tools such as Youthpass can be a direct trigger for the recognition of youth work.
- The Steering Group on the European Youth Work Agenda provided a relevant support to the implementation of the EYWA, with several meetings, activities and opportunities for the youth work community of practice.
- The EU-CoE Youth Partnership has played an important role in the implementation of the EYWA, particularly through the research conducted by the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) driving the development of better knowledge and contributing to the development of evidence-based youth initiatives such as the EYWA.
- There is already a strong network – **SALTO** – which is funded through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes – and which has two decades of history in supporting youth work development and youth workers.
- Member States (as well as other countries such as candidate countries) are in different stages of development of their youth work systems and youth workers, including the professionalisation and training offer for this crucial group of professionals. Subsequently there is scope for mutual learning and exchange.

Youth work was also a sector that was **strongly affected by COVID-19 pandemic**. The effects on youth work were three-fold:

- On one hand the restrictions imposed meant that many activities which were delivered face-to-face were disrupted (moved on-line, postponed or cancelled. According to the study⁷³, **70% of responding youth workers and youth leaders stated that the impact**

⁷³ Krzaklewska, E., Senyuva, Ö., Covid-19 and learning mobility: a desk research study. Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, (2020). 0

was major, and only one percent stated that the pandemic had no effects on their youth work.

- **Vulnerable groups were particularly affected** by this disruption as many youth workers and youth organisations lost contact with vulnerable young people during the pandemic.
- The **isolation during the pandemic worsened mental health of many young people, highlighted in the focus group with the CSOs also**, and created increased or new demand on youth workers which they were not equipped in terms of capacities or also in some cases in terms of competences. As example, the Health at a Glance report 2022⁷⁴ reported that 1 in 2 young Europeans reported unmet needs, and that depression among young people more than doubled.

These **challenges further strengthened the relevance of the EYWA** and created a new momentum for cooperation in the field of youth work post pandemic. This development also favourably influenced the take up of recommendations and guidelines stemming from the EYWA and associated activities.

International dimension

The **international impact of the EUYS** is demonstrated by its role in **shaping external action for youth** as well as when it comes to accelerating knowledge exchange and creating positive perceptions among international organisations. The EUYS has become a reference and a source of guidance for youth-related actions in the external context, while facilitating knowledge exchange and cooperation with countries outside the EU. This is evident in several ways:

- The EUYS has played a key role in shaping the activities and principles implemented in the framework of external action for youth. This includes the adoption of the **Youth Action Plan in EU External Action** for 2022-2027, where the EUYS has served as a reference document providing guidance for youth-related actions in the external actions.
- As mentioned in the key informant interviews with EU level and international organisations the **Youth Wiki** – Europe’s Encyclopaedia of National Youth Policies providing information on youth policies in the EU MS and in 5 candidate countries - has facilitated the exchange of knowledge and good practices within the EU and CoE countries. An interview with the representative of the UN showed that the Youth Wiki was used as a reference point: “*We used Youth Wiki comparative overviews of what happens at national level. For example, we have used it on the matter of social inclusion [and how it is addressed] in national youth strategies*”.
- The principles and model of the EUYS are highly regarded by other international organisations as a replicable model for countries outside the EU. **International organisations, including UNICEF, view the EUYS positively and as a source of inspiration.**

⁷⁴ [Health at a Glance : Europe | \(ec.europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/health-at-a-glance/)

- The **EUYS has encouraged the participation of international organisations in dissemination activities**, thus promoting the exchange of valuable information and experience in the youth field. For example, UN staff has participated in EU youth events where there was an opportunity to discuss and exchange good practices. The OECD has been involved in the dissemination and exchange through their network of “Friends of Youth+” under the Public Evidence Committee.
- **Mutual learning and dissemination have played a crucial role in shaping youth practice in countries** participating in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, including around youth dialogue and volunteering activities. This is further reinforced by the process linked to the implementation of programme activities, which ensures that the experiences of participating organisations are disseminated to countries outside the EU. In addition, the participation of third countries in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes demonstrates the international reach of the EUYS.
- The **EU-CoE Youth Partnership has brought an international dimension** to the EUYS through its geographical coverage, supporting the EUYS in promoting cooperation between countries within and outside of the European Union.

The youth researchers interviewed flagged the positive contribution of the **EU-CoE Youth Partnership** to research on issues faced by youth. The **Knowledge Hub**⁷⁵ was mentioned as a positive example of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership and focused on the impact of the pandemic on young people and the youth sector. In the survey of CSOs the EU-CoE Youth Partnership was also positively perceived⁷⁶. In some of the open-ended questions, the respondents noted that the organisation and professionalism of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership was a positive factor strengthening the influence of the EUYS.

Effectiveness of the EUYS' instruments

This section outlines how the different instruments contributed to the effectiveness of the EUYS so far and presents the contribution analysis for each of the instruments separately. However, it is important to keep in mind that the instruments are designed to operate in an intertwined manner. They are also expected to have effects at different levels (system level: EU and national policies, organisational level: civil society organisations practices, individuals: young people).



The EU Work Plans for Youth: the contribution analysis showed that the activities, outputs and results of the EU Work Plans for Youth were achieved. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the 2019-2021 Work Plans and some activities were modified, rescheduled or cancelled, indicating a successful adaptation to some degree. The subsequent Work Plan for the period 2022-2024 compensated partly for the delays.

⁷⁵ [COVID-19 impact on the youth sector | Council of Europe](#)

⁷⁶ 53% of the CSOs agree (to a very great or great extent) that the EU-CoE Youth Partnership is complementary to existing initiatives/policies at the national level

The EU Work Plans for Youth are found to have **contributed to the medium-term impact of ensuring that EUYS activities are focused, driven by agreed priorities and that resources are used in a strategic manner towards agreed activities.**



The FNAPs⁷⁷: Contribution analysis showed that the outputs and results of FNAPs were partially achieved. In 2019 and 2021 the FNAPs were only partially completed by national representatives and the number of completed FNAPs declined in 2021 compared to 2019, therefore suggesting that they are of limited added value at national level. Their current use is primarily at EU level and for EU-level overview of national youth strategies. In the consultations, policy makers found them burdensome to complete and with limited use, while most other stakeholders indicated limited involvement and awareness of the FNAPs. This indicates a need to consider alternative ways of gathering information on national youth policy priorities and developments, including e.g. through the Youth wiki.



Evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge-building tools: the contribution analysis showed that data have been collected, and several studies have been carried out to fill the knowledge gap, but the dissemination of evidence has not been fully implemented. While progress has been made, challenges remain in terms of data availability and interaction between different platforms presenting the data. The Expert Group on indicators made a comprehensive proposal for a monitoring framework⁷⁸ which includes an updated Dashboard of (mainly quantitative) indicators on the situation of young people (based on which Eurostat published an updated EU Youth Dashboard in 2022), and a new Dashboard of (mainly qualitative) policy indicators on the EUYS instruments. For the latter, efforts need to continue on availability and accessibility of data.

Activities under this instrument contribute to the generation of knowledge about the situation of young people and their needs, about implementation of the EUYS instruments and about youth policy developments, and this evidence is somewhat used for the youth policies. Limitations in data depth, methodology and centralisation hamper the wider impact of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of the EUYS, suggesting potential for improvements through better integration and access to data. For this reason, the analysis showed that the evidence-based tools **somewhat contributed to the medium-term impact of the EUYS in enhancing youth mainstreaming and strengthening youth policies.**



The EUYS' **participatory governance** aims to involve a wide range of youth stakeholders, including national authorities and agencies, young people, youth organisations, experts and researchers, in particular through an EUYS stakeholder platform launched in 2019. The meetings of the platform were disrupted by the pandemic and subsequently replaced by the European Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholders' group meetings.

There is recognition that the EUYS was designed in a participatory manner (see for example the European Youth Goals which were defined through the EU Youth Dialogue and also the process with a year of listening that preceded the Commission proposal for the EUYS) and that the Commission strives to also steer it in a participatory manner. However, the EUYS stakeholders' platform meetings were impacted by the pandemic, replaced by webinars due to

⁷⁷ [Future National Activities Planners \(FNAPs\)](#) allows Member States to share on a voluntary basis information on national youth policy priorities in line with the EUYS.

⁷⁸ [Proposal for an updated dashboard of EU youth indicators | \(op.europa.eu\) 1](#)

the pandemic, and this could not fully provide for optimal interaction. It remains to be observed if the positive experiences with the 2022 European Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholder group can be sustained for a permanent EUYS stakeholders' group. Subsequently so far this strand of activities **contributed somewhat to the objective of participatory governance of the EUYS, and youth mainstreaming into different policy areas as well as across different levels of government.**



The **EUYP** celebrates more than 10 years of existence and is the largest participatory instrument at EU level for involving young people in policy making. This flagship instrument under the EUYS has been instrumental in systematically involving young people in policy debate with policy makers and stakeholders and formulating policy recommendations and promoting their active citizenship. The EUYP has successfully engaged a diverse range of young people, including those from minority groups, indicating a **broad inclusivity**, which needs to be sustained and efforts made to further involve any under-represented groups. Participation of young people with fewer opportunities in the EUYP has increased over the cycles (except for NEETs and youth living in rural areas, whose representation decreased between 2019-2021) indicating that the EU Youth Dialogue has become more inclusive over time and contributed to medium-term impacts such as social inclusion but also long-term impacts such as increased youth participation and representation.

Young people themselves as well as the stakeholders interviewed generally praise its added value on the young people who participate. Almost 90 000 young people have engaged in the consultation in the period 2019-(first half)2023, of which 22 000 during the 9th cycle (January 2022–June 2023). The individual level impact of the EUYP is an important contribution to active citizenship. There is however limited evidence that young people who take part in the EUYP receive proper preparation and training which would help in particular young people with fewer opportunities to build knowledge, confidence and public speaking capabilities, thus contributing to making their inputs to the dialogues even more effective. The role and systematic involvement of national youth councils in the EUYP could also be clarified.

Stakeholders and policy makers at national level are in general very positive about the EUYP which is clearly one of the success stories of the EUYS. In terms of the use of EUYP recommendations, the interviews and desk research show that youth voices are reflected in the design of youth policies at EU level. However, there is less evidence about the extent to which EUYP contribute to mainstream the youth perspective in other policy areas. While some national policy makers report that the results of the EUYP are useful to design national initiatives, a greater number perceived that the EUYP could be further strengthened by increasing ownership at the level of applying it to national youth policies. This will allow the EUYP to have the same positive impact on national policies as it has been shown to have at EU level.

Taking this into consideration, the **EUYP fully contributed to policymaking, empowering young people's voices and fostering a vital link between young people and decision-makers**, however the inclusiveness of the process needs to be kept up and the impact of the EUYP recommendations can be further strengthened.



The **EU Youth Coordinator**: the first EU Youth Coordinator was appointed in June 2021 and was immediately active during the preparation and implementation of the 2022 European Year of Youth, which created a strong momentum for inter-service cooperation and youth mainstreaming. The EU Youth Coordinator set up and animated a dedicated informal internal Youth Network, as well as the European Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholders' group. The Coordinator was extensively in contact with many stakeholders and harvested their suggestions and concerns. The EU Youth Coordinator is relatively known among the stakeholders despite this role being new. Interviewees in the evaluation almost uniformly agreed on the benefits of establishing the EU Youth Coordinator role and its effectiveness, in particular for knowledge-sharing on youth needs for cross-sectoral cooperation within the European Commission.

The EU Youth Coordinator is the front runner for youth mainstreaming in the EU. The evaluation pointed out that the EU Youth Coordinator mandate is very vast in terms of cooperation and communication with external stakeholders. Considering the high expectations for this role, adequate resources are required for fulfilling this highly visible role.

Moreover, the European Year of Youth offered a strong incentive of cooperation and synergies between the different Commission departments, as youth was high on the European political agenda in 2022. After the Year, the challenge is to maintain the same level of cooperation and active synergies.

The EU Youth Coordinator has already facilitated the dissemination of knowledge and information and contributed to the mainstreaming of youth perspectives in EU policies by speaking prominently about the youth perspective, participating in numerous events and exchanges with internal and external stakeholders, and facilitating the integration of the youth perspective in different policy areas. The EU Youth Coordinator participated in and organised more than 300 meetings and events on youth mainstreaming and facilitated half of the 27 policy dialogues with European Commissioners as part of the European Year of Youth.

The EU Youth Coordinator function shows high potential and, despite the short time of existence of the role, already **contributed to the EUYS' medium-term impact to mainstreaming of youth policies and amplifying the voice of youth within the European Commission**.



Communicating the EU Youth Strategy: aims to raise awareness and understanding of the EUYS through a combination of communication channels.

While the EU Youth Report contains useful information on different activities implemented under the EUYS, the three years period between publications present a challenge as tailored and concise updates on youth are not made available between two editions of the EU Youth Report. Furthermore, while the EU Youth Reports present information on different actions contributing to the three core areas of the EUYS, the breadth of information may be too wide for certain stakeholders who require specified information.

While overall respondents to the different surveys are relatively aware of the EUYS, when questioned in more detail it appears that the EUYS is perceived differently among different groups. Very often stakeholders associate their perception of EU programmes in the field of youth with the EUYS. Others have a fragmented view of the EUYS and focus on the EU Youth

Dialogue. Young people interviewed during focus groups were also rather critical about some communication materials they recalled having been exposed to, for instance some social media posts. This has resulted in the need of a better targeted dissemination strategy for the different target groups.

The communication activities have targeted multiple audiences and channels. For instance, young people receive information about opportunities for engagement and participation while decision makers might be more interested in information on funding, cooperation opportunities, youth policy developments as they are directly engaged in activities of the EUYS. On the other hand, CSOs might be interested in receiving information on both.

While overall the different stakeholders appear to have a positive opinion of the EUYS, this is largely linked to the positive view they have of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. The communication activities therefore succeeded in providing information and raising awareness about the funding opportunities and opportunities in broader sense. The extent to which the communication activities are at the service of the EUYS goals around youth mainstreaming and influencing of youth policies is less clear, and the contribution to these objectives seems more limited. Subsequently, so far communication activities **somewhat contributed to mid-term impacts of the EUYS.**



The mobilisation and monitoring of EU programmes and funds: The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes remain the main and best-known instruments of the EUYS among stakeholders and young people. The EUYS has effectively fostered a stronger alignment of programmes actions with the EUYS objectives, promoting coherence in the funding opportunities offered. The mobilisation of these youth programmes promoted cooperation between different administrative levels and optimised the allocation of resources. According to national stakeholders, the EUYS has strengthened the links between different EU funding programmes, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, which now more strongly emphasise the importance of youth and youth work.

There are also many other programmes and initiatives benefitting youth, e.g. the ESF+ promotes the social integration of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by supporting equal access to education and employment, and the ERDF contributes to strengthening equal access to employment, education and training, social inclusion, social and healthcare, sustainable tourism and culture, through investments in infrastructure and equipment, from which young people will benefit. Through the European Technical Support Instrument, the European Commission supports EU Member States to design and implement reforms that are geared towards supporting young people's participation in education, training and their further integration into the labour market. Examples of support include the implementation of the European Child Guarantee Action Plan and fostering the mental health and wellbeing of youth. A mapping of these programmes, initiatives, and instruments was carried out during the European Year of Youth.

Efforts taken under the mobilisation and monitoring of EU programmes and funds have **fully contributed to the EUYS' medium-term impact to achieve youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion, support and supporting youth in transitioning into adulthood and working life.**



Youth Information and Support: the contribution analysis carried out for this evaluation shows that information activities have been delivered through the European Youth Portal and also in combination with the communication activities (see above) and through the National Erasmus+ Agencies, Eurodesk network, multipliers and other stakeholders. Young people are quite aware of EU opportunities as well as of the relevant EUYS tools. Similarly, CSOs are well aware of the opportunities as well as of the EUYS and related instruments.

Participation in youth activities has been growing over the past years. While information barriers about opportunities to take part in different youth-focused activities are still ranked among important reasons for not participating, financial barriers are far more important. The youth survey shows that 47% of young people agree or strongly agree that they and their peers are offered sufficient opportunities to learn or work abroad through EU programmes, while 19% disagree or strongly disagree.

Subsequently the youth information and support instrument **fully contributed to the level of information and awareness of young people**. This in turn contributes to their decisions to participate in such activities as a result of which they become empowered and more fulfilled.



The **European Youth Work Agenda** builds on and benefits from the developments in the field of youth work which are supported by EU programmes in the field of youth. Combined, these tools are seen to fully contribute to fostering innovation and recognition of youth work, as well as its quality. Through the work on and implementation of the recognition tools of the EYWA, cooperation and commitment to efforts in taking up the recognition tools were accelerated across Member States. This in turn results in better support to young people. The CSOs surveyed also held a positive view of the contribution of the EUYS to the quality and recognition of youth work. The Youth Work Agenda therefore **fully contributes to foster quality and inclusive youth work** and thus supports young people in their transition to adulthood. The EYWA is implemented through collaborations between various stakeholders, in particular the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, Member States and the youth work community. Several Transnational Cooperation Activities in the area of youth work development under Erasmus+ involve a broad range of stakeholders and contribute to strategic progress in the field, one example is the work on local youth work resulting in the European Charter on Local Youth Work⁷⁹.

Adaptability of EUYS to unforeseen circumstances

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted some EUYS instruments notably those linked to events which prior to the pandemic were largely face-to-face, such as mutual learning activities, youth events, and stakeholder interaction. EU programmes in the field of youth were also affected and were flexible in adapting to the situation by allowing modification of project activities, changing into online activities, postponing, or cancelling some activities. Youth work provision was also affected more generally as well as young people who suffered from social isolation and whose mental health deteriorated during the pandemic.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine resulted in an inflow of refugees and led to a general movement of solidarity. In time, however, this faded in some countries and gave course to more

⁷⁹ [European Charter on Local Youth Work | \(ec.europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/european-charter-on-local-youth-work/)

polarised positions. This was accompanied by the spreading of mis- and disinformation, in particular in countries neighbouring Ukraine. It also led to an increase of energy prices which in turn translated into an increase in costs of living, harshly affecting young people in particular students or in early careers, but in particular those with low or no income. Inflation and increase of interest rates negatively affected access to loans including for young people.

During the period covered, EU countries also had to face major challenges due to climate change such as wildfires, floods or draughts. Young people have been mobilised in movements related to climate justice and calling for more action including through actions taken under the European Year of Youth (e.g., Green Track campaign).

The EUYS instruments were most directly affected by the pandemic as some activities planned in the EU Work Plan for Youth 2019-2021 were modified, postponed, or cancelled. indicating a successful adaption to some degree. The EUYS was able to replace some of the activities by online formats. The pandemic and its effects on youth were also covered as a topic for research and mutual learning relatively rapidly. Overall, the EUYS adapted reasonably well to the issues created by the pandemic, including through exchange of good practices.

Similarly, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, through their in-built flexibility, EU youth programmes were quickly adapted to help out people from Ukraine fleeing the war, many of which were young people. The European Youth Portal published information for young people fleeing Ukraine and for young people wishing to help, providing trusted sources on EU actions, and debunking disinformation.

When asked about the degree of adaptability of the EUYS to unforeseen circumstances, national stakeholders mentioned that the flexibility shown by the European Commission in adapting the rules for the implementation of programmes and projects was highly appreciated.

In general, the main consequences of COVID-19 pandemic were the digitalisation of meetings, consultations, and events, as well as a stronger focus on mental health and well-being of youth. Overall, the EUYS' underlying principles and goals remained relevant and resilient during the crises, although it was considered that it was not fully effective in directly addressing real needs such as cost of living, housing and employment, which become more acute during crises.

Contribution of the EUYS to the promotion of social inclusion and equality

The contribution of the EUYS to the promotion of social inclusion and equality at EU and national levels has taken place through several mechanisms:

- The EUYS has promoted participation and monitoring of participation of youth with fewer opportunities through the EU youth programmes as well as in the EUYD. In the EUYD, the participation of youth with fewer opportunities, such as young people from minority groups and LGBTIQ youth, has increased over time as shown in the section on implementation. This indicates that the EUYS has been successful in making the EUYD more inclusive, although efforts should be maintained for young NEETs and young people living in rural areas. Inclusion is a horizontal priority in both Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps and the common framework of inclusion measures as

well as common inclusion strategy of both programmes and the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity help strengthen social inclusion and equality in these programmes.

- Studies, evidence-based tools, mutual learning and other activities under the EUYS regularly cover issues faced by youth with fewer opportunities. Examples include the work of the Expert Group on mobility of young volunteers and cross-border solidarity, which was supported by a study on removing obstacles to cross border solidarity activities; the study identified a need for better recognition of volunteering experience, inclusion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, a need for stable funding and capacity-building opportunities for organisations. Subsequently, the 2022 Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers⁸⁰ provides measures to promote inclusive volunteering opportunities.
- Through the EYWA, specific attention has been paid to inclusion and providing quality youth work to youth with fewer opportunities with a specific focus on youth in remote or rural areas.

Overall, most respondents at national level agreed that the EUYS has promoted or influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. They also note that this is not a new priority in national youth policies, but it is one that needs to continuously remain present and be pushed forward. Therefore, even in countries where youth strategies or policies already have a strong emphasis on the issues of inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities, there is still space for progress. In this regard the EUYS contributes to making the case for even greater inclusiveness.

The survey carried out among youth shows that **financial resources continue being a major barrier** for young people to take advantage of opportunities to learn, work and volunteer abroad. The EUYS can contribute to address this barrier through the actions of relevant funding programmes and specific support provided to participants with fewer opportunities. The EUYS is also an important mechanism to continue highlighting the challenges faced by youth and pushing the political discussion about support measures forward.

Contribution of the EUYS to the green and digital transitions

The contribution of the EUYS to the green and digital transitions at EU and national level has been made through several mechanisms. It should be noted that the EUYS 2019-2027 addresses the digital transition and its implications for youth in each of the three core areas. The EUYS, however, does not directly refer to the promotion of the green transition, except through the EYG 10 Sustainable Green Europe. The evaluation found that the contribution to the twin transition during the 2019-2023 period was made in the following ways:

- The protection of the environment and the fight against global warming are a horizontal priority for the selection of projects under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. The EU youth programmes also integrate green practices into projects and encourage environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants and participating organisations.

⁸⁰ [Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union 2022/C 157/01 \(2022\)](#)

- The contribution of the EUYS to the green and digital transitions through EU programmes is also linked to the EYWA, where opportunities are provided for young people and youth workers to improve their digital literacy and to recognise their digital youth work skills.
- The alignment has also been strengthened through the creation of two cross-sectoral SALTOs - SALTO on Green Transition and Sustainable Development and SALTO Digital - which specifically address the issue of green and digital transitions.
- The EUYS has contributed to the green and digital transitions by addressing these issues in the EUYD and allowing young people to express their voices and needs related to the twin transitions. In the seventh cycle of the EUYD, special attention was given to the digital transition in the context of youth employment. In the ninth cycle of EUYD the specific focus was on the EYG 10 Sustainable Green Europe. The discussion on youth and the green and digital transition has also been accelerated in national events as part of the EUYD national process. The examples of national activities organised under the EUYD on green and digital transition has been found across 15 Member States.
- The green and digital transitions were also addressed through the EU Work Plans for Youth and the FNAPs. The EUYS has also worked towards addressing the knowledge gaps regarding the digitalisation as part of the evidence-based tools, for example, through the EU-CoE Youth Partnership's publications on digitalisation and digital literacy among youth.
- The digital transition is being addressed under BIK+ through active participation of BIK Youth Ambassadors and Youth panellists, including via youth-led events⁸¹ targeting decision-makers, industry and NGOs.

Transversal considerations on the EUYS as a catalyst of change

The role of the EUYS extends beyond the specific contribution it has to the effects which have been discussed earlier in this section. It also goes beyond the effects of the different instruments individually and combined. During the period covered by this evaluation, fewer countries had high level or overarching youth strategies than in the baseline period. Nevertheless, the **EUYS still positively influenced youth policy and youth strategy developments in many Member States**. In many cases the influences were very concrete and covered the ways in which specific aspects of youth policy evolved and in some cases the EUYS acted as an example/inspiration, e.g. giving legitimacy to youth stakeholders pushing for youth strategy/youth policy developments at national level. The evaluation found examples of influence across all three core areas of 'Connect', 'Engage' and 'Empower'.

The EUYS has an important role as a catalyst of change in youth policies in that it emphasises both:

- The specific vulnerabilities and challenges of young people across different issues and which are tackled by a diversity of policy areas. In this regard the EUYS call for cross-

⁸¹ [Safer Internet Forum](#)

sectoral youth strategies sends an important signal to all stakeholders involved with issues related to youth and invites them to consider youth in a holistic perspective across policy domains; and

- The importance of youth work, youth activities and non-formal and informal learning in building young people who are fulfilled and engaged. In that regard it also underlines the importance of these activities for the building of cohesive, accepting, diverse and inclusive societies.

This catalyst role of the EUYS is highly welcomed by all stakeholders interviewed. National policy makers and youth CSOs have a positive view of the EUYS because they see it as a mechanism which keeps youth high on the very busy political agenda, where many issues compete for policy makers' attention and focus. The consistency of the EU in having an EU Youth Strategy and in dedicating activities and resources to it is in itself seen as a positive outcome and a signal to other stakeholders of the value of this sector.

Efficiency

This section presents the mid-term analysis of the efficiency of the EUYS, covering the cost-effectiveness of the EUYS instruments, structures, processes and activities, and the proportionality of resources devoted to the implementation of the EUYS.

It is possible to identify the following **key findings** related to the efficiency criterion:

- **The EUYS as a whole has been cost-effective** delivering adequate value for money at the EU level.
- The total costs of the EUYS are small but appear **sufficient and proportional** given its character as a cooperation framework and what the EUYS has set out to achieve.
- **The EUYS has not imposed significant administrative burdens** on public administrations or other stakeholders. For example, in the survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups, 65% of, found the administrative burden associated with being involved in EUYS activities and instruments to be proportionate to their benefits.
- **The cost-efficiency differed between EUYS instruments.** As it was not possible to uniquely allocate costs and benefits to single instruments, no precise comparison was made between the EUYS instruments. Some benefits are best considered as a combined effect of diverse EUYS instruments.
- **Minor improvements in cost-efficiency are possible.** These could be achieved through different measures, including changes to the format and modalities of some outputs (e.g. FNAPs where the evaluation found scope for simplification and reducing Member States reporting burden), reviewing resource allocations or clarifying scope (e.g. for communication activities and for the EU Youth Coordinator role which the evaluation found broadly formulated).

The analysis used committed budget data for selected activities in Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Annual Work Programmes 2019-2022.

It shows an increase in the total budget allocations in 2022 compared to the previous years (2019-2021), with a noticeable rise in 2022. The increase in budgetary commitments can be traced to the transition from the 2014-2020 programme generation to the current programme 2021-2027. The rise in 2022 can also be attributed to the additional reinforcement to some actions within the programmes due to the European Year of Youth.

Considering the diversity of instruments implemented through these budgets and the fact that some Strategy activities are implemented also at national level (EUYD), or that some activities require IT infrastructure that necessitates maintenance and updating as well as generation of content (youth information), the resources allocated to the EUYS appear small in absolute terms and proportionate.

Stakeholders at the EU and national levels broadly agreed that the costs can be described as small or even minimal compared to the benefits brought about by the EUYS. It was however not possible to obtain precise estimates from Member State authorities on the cost of implementing the EUYS at national level.

Suggestions were also put forward by stakeholders for how the cost effectiveness of the EUYS and its instruments could be further improved. CSOs and youth researchers, for example, highlighted that instruments such as the EUYS stakeholder platform and the EU Youth Coordinator role could be further expanded both in scale and resources allocated to their implementation. In the case of the Youth Strategy Platform, it was specifically reiterated that despite there being a wealth of information available about the EUYS, there continued to be limited awareness and understanding among stakeholders. Thus, to improve the cost-effectiveness of this instrument, it was suggested to improve the communication and promotion of available resources to ensure broader awareness and encourage their active usage by youth and stakeholders.

Furthermore, CSOs and youth researchers also emphasised the benefits of collaborative partnerships and grassroots involvement in the effective implementation of the EUYS, underscoring the role of local organisations and stakeholders in the EUYS' success. Thus, it was suggested that even with a small increase in funding for collaborative partnerships and grassroots initiatives for local organisations and stakeholders could yield significant benefits.

Considering the benefits (e.g. better co-ordination and alignment of youth-related strategies, policies and programmes and mainstreaming youth actions across several policy areas) that have been brought about by the EUYS at mid-term, the analysis points towards the EUYS as a whole being cost-effective and proportionate to the resources allocated. Similarly to the predecessor (2010-2018 EUYS), the EUYS has been able to generate impacts at the EU and national levels with relatively minimal resources. The following sub-section provides further insights into the cost effectiveness of the EUYS at the level of the instruments, structures, processes, and activities.

Selected actions of high relevance for the EUYS	2019	2020	2021	2022
European Youth Portal European Solidarity Corps Portal	390,913	1,238,965	906,029	1,900,658
Support to better knowledge in youth policy	1,353,386	1,098,928	1,013,985	2,239,798

Studies	281,415	600,000	0	650,000
Presidency events in the field of youth: conferences, meetings of ministers and directors-general	498,004	399,370	494,265	500,000
Cooperation with the Council of Europe	600,000	600,000	600,000	1,600,000 ⁸²
EU Youth dialogue: support to National Working Groups	2,108,599	n/a	1,028,292	3,539,590
Dialogue: Meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth ⁸³	7,868,227	8,029,769	10,784,276	19,361,344
Youth events	587,189	0	12,445	3,385,766
Networking and communication activities and events organised at European level	399,373	24,827	12,250	487,759

Table 3 Committed budget (in EUR) for selected actions under the Erasmus+ (youth chapter) and European Solidarity Corps 2019-2022 Source: compiled by Kantar Public, 2023

Cost-effectiveness of the EUYS instruments, structure, processes and activities

The analysis of the functioning, potential administrative burden, and cost-effectiveness of the EUYS and its instruments, structures, processes, and activities at the EU and national levels revealed an **overall positive picture**. The table below illustrates the estimated cost-effectiveness classification of the different instruments. Those that remain **undetermined** due to the time lag between outreach and measuring outcomes or the unavailability of cost data for precise estimates.

High cost efficient	Adequate cost-efficiency	Undetermined
EU Youth Strategy Work Plans	Future National Activities Planners	Mutual Learning and Dissemination
Mobilising and monitoring EU Programmes and Funds	Evidence-based Youth Policymaking and Knowledge Building	Communicating the EU Youth Strategy
European Youth Work Agenda	Participatory Governance	
	EU Youth Dialogue	
	Youth Information and Support	

*Table 4. Cost-effectiveness of the EUYS instruments, structure, processes and activities.
Source: Kantar Public*

The analysis of the proportionality of the resources dedicated to the implementation of the EUYS and its instruments, found **the costs to be overall sufficient with an adequate cost-benefit ratio**. The EUYS Work Plans, for instance, were found to exhibit a favourable balance between their relatively low costs and the positive impacts they generate in terms of promoting active citizenship and social inclusion. Similarly, the instrument for mobilising and monitoring EU programmes and funds relied on using existing initiatives (e.g. Erasmus+), thus no significant costs were incurred. However, challenges arise in instruments such as the FNAPs,

⁸² Budget cover two years 2022 and 2023 (aligned to the work programme)

⁸³ From 2021 this is part of a broader action: the youth participation activities.

where stakeholders at the national level questioned the usability of the information provided in relation to the burden of providing it.

At the national level, mixed views were expressed by national policy makers and CSOs on the cost-effectiveness of the EUYS' instruments, structure, processes, and activities. For CSOs, 65% of those responding to the targeted survey agreed that the administrative burden associated with being involved in activities under the EUYS was proportionate to the benefits that were brought about. However, analysis of the written responses found diverging ways of understanding the EUYS and in particular its relations with its specific instruments or programmes. For example, 45% of the respondents to the survey to CSOs noted that they face challenges in relation to limited financial resources to participate in Erasmus+ and 45% to participate in the European Solidarity Corps. This sheds a negative light on the perception of the EUYS by these stakeholders, even though not directly linked to the EUYS as such.

Despite this, national policymakers and CSOs emphasised the need to further emphasise initiatives with proven impacts. One notable example was the Erasmus+ programme which has demonstrated its effectiveness in supporting educational, professional, and cultural exchanges, leading to marked improvements in skills development, employability, social inclusion, and active citizenship of young people. Similarly, strengthening integration and leveraging existing initiatives, such as the EUYD, was another recurring theme in stakeholders' views. Increasing the awareness and recognition of existing initiatives was thus seen as a way to not only improve the visibility of the EUYS, but also improve its cost-effectiveness.

In addition, CSOs contributing to the group interviews raised challenges in accessing and utilising information and resources from EUYS instruments (e.g. European Youth Portal, Youth Wiki, DiscoverEU and the EUYS platform), primarily due to the sheer volume of information which has been made available. They express a certain degree of information overload which suggests that there is scope to streamline and simplify information that targets this user group. Moreover, while instruments such as evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge building were assessed as having adequate cost-effectiveness, stakeholder views outline that the usability and user-friendliness of the instruments may also hinder their potential cost-effectiveness.

In assessing the cost effectiveness of the EUYS, it was often challenging for stakeholders to delineate potential burdens that may stem from specific funding programmes compared to those potentially generated by the EUYS as a cooperation framework. Nevertheless, **most consulted stakeholders considered the EUYS' associated costs and burdens to be minimal and** the overall conclusion points to negligible or low burdens at EU and national levels related to the EUYS.

Coherence

This section presents the assessment of the coherence of the EUYS, including its external coherence with wider EU policies and the internal coherence of the EUYS' core areas and instruments, as well as an assessment of the influence of the Year on the EUYS' coherence. **Overall, a positive assessment is made of the EUYS' coherence.**

It is possible to identify the following **key findings** related to the coherence criterion:

- **The EUYS aligns with multiple EU policies and strategies**, through shared priorities, objectives and values. A positive example is the synergies between youth participation and child participation actions⁸⁴. The new EU Children's Participation Platform⁸⁵ involves children (0-17) in EU decision-making and supports the active participation in democratic life from an early age, contributing to youth participation and active citizenship under the EUYS. The Commission's Citizenship Package⁸⁶ aims to support democratic participation by raising awareness on EU citizenship rights, including with a Guide to EU citizenship targeted to young EU citizens (who start being democratically engaged). The Defence of Democracy package⁸⁷ includes relevant Recommendations: the Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes underlines the importance of promoting the participation of young people and children in democratic life in the EU and refers to best practices of existing children and youth councils and processes, including the EU Youth Dialogue. Another example is the synergy with demography policies prioritising gender equality, non-discrimination and intergenerational fairness; in this regard, the Communication from the Commission "Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action" called for the support of policy solutions mutually benefitting several or all generations across various policy areas such as education and, housing and care and in the workplace⁸⁸. Youth participation is a key feature of the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+): in 2023, around 960 activities organised by the Safer Internet Centres and the BIK platform⁸⁹ with funding under Digital Europe, involved actively children and young people.⁹⁰ However, although there are many synergies across EU policies, there is limited evidence on concrete actions of complementarities and synergies, highlighting **existing room for enhanced cooperation at EU level**.
- **The EUYS ensures coherence with international obligations** by reflecting some of the priorities contained in the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter referred to as 'UN SDGs'), notably inclusion (UN SDG 16), reducing inequalities (UN SDG 10), decent work and economic growth (UN SDG 8), and the green transition (UN SDGs 12 and 13). Nevertheless, there is scope for further highlighting linkages and for developing the communication around these.
- **The instruments and core areas of the EUYS are largely internally coherent**; the EU Youth Dialogue, Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes in particular emerged as the instruments fostering the most synergies.
- **The European Year of Youth positively influenced the coherence of the EUYS**, by enhancing coordination and mobilisation in the area of youth and around the EUYS,

⁸⁴ Communication from the Commission on the EU strategy on the rights of the child, COM(2021) 142 final.

⁸⁵ EU Children's Participation Platform | (europa.eu), set up under the EU Strategy for the rights of the child, which creates a space for children and young people below the age of 18 to participate in EU decision-making

⁸⁶ Citizenship Package - European Commission (europa.eu)

⁸⁷ Protecting democracy - European Commission (europa.eu)

⁸⁸ Communication: 'Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action'

⁸⁹ BIK Portal: www.betterinternetforkids.eu; BIK Youth Portal: www.bikyouth.eu.

⁹⁰ Communication from the Commission on "A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+), COM/2022/212 final

and by contributing to the launch of multiple initiatives that are relevant to the implementation of the EUYS.

Coherence with wider EU policies, strategies, priorities, and with international obligations

The first aspect of the coherence assessment of the EUYS focuses on its external coherence with wider EU policies, strategies and priorities, as well as international obligations. Youth mainstreaming is an explicit objective of the EUYS and relies on cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels of decision-making, promoting synergies and complementarities, and youth involvement.

Similarly to the predecessor (2010-2018 EUYS) the EUYS is broadly coherent with wider EU policies, strategies, and priorities. Such links and complementarities largely emerge through shared common objectives, priorities and focus areas, and sometimes through explicit references to the EUYS and its instruments.

Examples of policies and strategies which explicitly reference the EUYS (or its instruments) and/or the European Youth Goals are:

- the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025⁹¹, which makes direct reference to the EU Youth Dialogue and the European Youth Goals;
- The EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025⁹², which emphasises the important role of young people in combating racism and discrimination and directly refers to the EU Youth Dialogue, the EU Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+;
- The Defence of Democracy package⁹³, which underlines the importance of promoting the participation of young people and children in democratic life in the EU and refers to best practices of existing children and youth councils and processes, including the EU Youth Dialogue.⁹⁴
- the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child⁹⁵, which makes a reference to the EU Youth Dialogue as a way to promote democratic participation;
- the European Democracy Action Plan, which builds on the EUYS focus on promoting active citizenship among young people and foresees the use of EU funds and opportunities under the EUYS (among others) to foster access to democratic participation and trust in democracy;
- the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health⁹⁶, adopted in June 2023, has a strong focus on boosting the mental health of children and young people, with several flagship initiatives, including a child and youth mental health network, a prevention toolkit, and activities to protect young people in the digital sphere, and makes reference to the EUYS and European Youth Goals;

⁹¹ [The LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) | (europa.eu)

⁹² [The EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#) | (europa.eu)

⁹³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6453

⁹⁴ [Commission Recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society \(C\(2023\) 8627 final](#)

⁹⁵ Communication from the Commission on the EU strategy on the rights of the child, COM(2021) 142 final.

⁹⁶ [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a comprehensive approach to mental health COM\(2023\) 298 final](#)

- the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action, which mirrors the structure of the EUYS around the core areas of ‘Engage, ‘Connect’ and ‘Empower’, and contributes to the international dimension of the EUYS.
- The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA), has set up since 2017 the European Apprentices Network (EAN) to involve young people in vocational education and training, in particular apprentices in the development of the Alliance

More frequently, external coherence of the EUYS is about alignment (rather than explicit references and mentions). Such an alignment materialises through the fact that the other policies and strategies concern (some of) the same priorities and values as the EUYS, the European Youth Goals and/or the EUYS’ core areas and guiding principles.

The coherence of the EUYS’ focus areas and priorities with the broader EU policy framework was confirmed by the consulted stakeholders. One of the factors contributing to this is the **transversality of youth as a topic**, which intersects with multiple policy areas, for instance education, employment, health, culture and environment. As such, the EUYS was found to be successful in encompassing and highlighting multiple policy priorities - for instance relating to sustainability, youth employment, lifelong learning, equality and inclusion. and allowed to create complementarities with other policy areas,

Key informant interviews also mentioned active efforts to promote synergies between the EUYS and other EU policies, in particular through the establishment of the internal Youth Network, and the EU Youth Coordinator, in increasing the visibility of the EUYS and promoting connections between policy areas. These efforts contributed to creating a better overview of initiatives and resources supporting youth and fostering the exchange of information and ideas across Commission departments. Overall, the alignment of the EUYS with the broader EU policy framework was largely visible in policy documents and some positive examples of collaborative efforts emerged.

Concerning the international sphere, despite evidence being relatively limited, **the EUYS appears to be broadly coherent with international obligations**, while also being considered as a relevant instrument at international level in the field of youth policy. Alignment with international obligations is primarily reflected by the fact that the EUYS encompasses some of the priorities contained in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (e.g. inclusion, reduced inequalities, decent work, the green transition), thus contributing to their achievement. Strengthening of the EUYS’ international dimension was also provided for by the Youth Action Plan in EU external action, which aims to promote the engagement of young people as a strategic partner in EU external action, to make progress towards international commitments such as the UN SDGs.

Nevertheless, some stakeholders at the international level considered that the EUYS could place more emphasis on promoting global themes like sustainable development, hunger, poverty, peace and security, and highlight linkage with the UN SDGs. This could also be used for communication, to increase the visibility of these linkages.

Finally, it is relevant to note that **most national youth strategies have a degree of alignment with the EUYS** in terms of policies and priorities. Even in countries where the existence of a

national youth strategy preceded the adoption of the EUYS, such coherence exists. Some of the aspects most prominently covered across national strategies, in line with the EUYS, are youth democratic participation and the reduction of social and cultural inequalities, aimed at promoting social inclusion. Complementarities between the EUYS challenges and objectives and national youth strategies were recognised by most of the stakeholders consulted. Specifically, the Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps programmes emerged to be by far the instruments showcasing the highest degree of complementarity with existing initiatives/policies at national level.

Coherence of the EUYS' core areas and instruments

The internal coherence of the EUYS' core areas and instruments was another focus of this evaluation. The final evaluation of the 2010-2018 EUYS reported mixed views on its internal coherence, with some stakeholders being unable to make a judgement on this aspect. This evaluation found that the focus on three core areas instead of eight thematic ones as in the previous Strategy resulted in strengthening the internal coherence of the 2019-2027 EUYS.

While it is important to note that stakeholders often lacked complete knowledge/overview of the instruments of the EUYS, they often found the EUYS' areas and instruments to be overall complementary and to allow for the creation of synergies, while providing different avenues for engagement and participation. In particular, the EUYD was the instrument most frequently mentioned as an enabler of synergies, specifically with the core areas of 'Engage' and 'Connect'. The instrument relating to the mobilisation and monitoring of EU funds, and particularly the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, also emerged as important drivers of synergies with each other and with the three core areas.

Influence of the European Year of Youth on the EUYS' coherence

The European Year of Youth had an overall positive impact on the coherence of the EUYS. It is important to note that evidence on this aspect is relatively limited yet and the impacts might take time to materialise fully as the Year was only closed in spring 2023. However, the feedback and information gathered so far reveal the coherence and synergies of the objectives of and activities carried out during the Year with the EUYS.

The Year contributed to enhancing coordination between different services in relation to youth and the EUYS, as it mobilised different Commission departments, as well as youth departments at national level. It also led to the mobilisation of young people and relevant stakeholders in the field, through the more than 13,000 activities organised at national, EU and international level across 67 countries. The Year thus allowed to increase the visibility of the instruments and priorities of the EUYS, promote engagement in the activities of the EUYS and enhance support for its implementation.

The Year allowed to establish connections and complementarities between the EUYS and other policy areas. Importantly, some key initiatives were launched in the context of the Year, such as ALMA, the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action 2022-2027, the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+), the 2023 Flagship Technical Support Project Youth FIRST supporting children and youth wellbeing, education, training, social protection and labour prospects, or the Green Track Campaign, which show coherence between the Year and the

EUYS, as well as with other EU level policy priorities. Moreover, several initiatives aimed at strengthening the voice of young people into the policy dialogue, such as the Youth Talks, the policy dialogues between young people and European Commissioners, the youth-led Safer Internet Forum ,and the Youth Voice Platform, positively contributing to the priorities and goals of the EUYS.

The Year was a highly politically visible initiative and created incentives for cooperation and coordination between the different parts of the European Commission. The Youth Network coordinated by the EU Youth Coordinator, and more than 30 European Commission departments and services contributing to the Year with more than 130 policy initiatives for young people, are testimony to this strengthened coherence in connection with the EUYS. The challenge and opportunity for the next phase of the implementation of the EUYS will be to continue and maintain the momentum created by the European Year of Youth and keep a high focus on youth mainstreaming in the coordination and cooperation at EU level, including across future policy developments.

4.2. How has the EU intervention made a difference and to whom?

EU added value

This section presents the findings on the EU added value of the EUYS as a strategic framework at the EU and national level and its impact in terms of scale, scope, role and process, its value in promoting cooperation between countries in Europe and beyond, the impact of the Year on the EUYS added value, and the consequences of discontinuing the EUYS. Overall, the desk research, stakeholder consultations and country research conducted allowed for a positive assessment of the EU added value of the EUYS.

It is possible to identify below **key findings** related to the EU added value criterion:

- The EUYS provided added value beyond what Member States could achieve on their own. For example, in the public consultation for this evaluation, 68% of the respondents⁹⁷indicated that the EUYS had provided additional value beyond what Member States could have achieved on their own to a great or certain extent.
- The EUYS generates added value by
 - providing a policy framework to funding programmes with strong youth focus, notably Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps;
 - facilitating knowledge sharing and exchange of experience;
 - acting as an example and catalyst for national and international youth relevant policy development;
 - creating collective responsibility in addressing youth challenges at the EU level;
 - increasing the understanding of youth as a complex target group that requires holistic approaches.

⁹⁷ Excluding young people as this question was not asked in the questions routed to young respondents.

- The **European Year of Youth** had a **positive impact on the added value** of the EUYS, as it raised awareness of available opportunities and improved the understanding of complementarities between policies and instruments.
- A discontinuation of the EUYS would have several negative consequences, like fragmented EU funding in the field of youth; decline in perception of the importance of the youth perspective among decision makers including from other policy fields; limited cross-sectorial cooperation at EU level; fewer opportunities for youth to input into EU level decision making; slowing down of progress of youth related policy development and actions in Member States.

EU added value of the EUYS as a strategic framework

The EUYS provides an overarching policy framework to funding activities at EU level through programmes with a strong youth focus notably Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps. The activities funded through the programmes are aligned with EUYS priorities (see effectiveness section) which ensures the funding contributes to a commonly agreed set of broad goals. Without the EUYS these EU funding programmes would still be providing funding towards actions in the field of youth, however it is highly likely that these actions would be more fragmented in terms of focus.

The EUYS provides stakeholders with a platform for exchange and sharing of experience which in turn influence the development of national youth policies (see section on effectiveness), albeit to a varying degree, and also the work of youth organisations.

The EUYS as a catalyst in youth policies brings benefits beyond what individual Member States and stakeholders could achieve on their own. The existence of a youth strategy at EU level signals, to youth stakeholders as well as other policy makers, that the youth perspective and considerations for youth impact are important for the development of all relevant policies. This catalyst role supports youth policy makers and other youth stakeholders in national agenda setting and policy making processes. The youth sector may sometimes suffer from being undervalued by stakeholders from other sectors. Having a youth strategy at EU level gives a boost to the way in which youth sector stakeholders can position themselves in decision-making at country level.

In parallel to its role as a catalyst in policy development noted above, the EUYS also strengthens the understanding among policy makers of the fact that young people are a complex target group facing possibly multiple vulnerabilities but also representing the future of our societies and therefore needing dedicated attention and holistic approach. Previously young people were often seen only through specific lenses, such as unemployment, education, and democratic participation. The EUYS has followed the dual approach as a guiding principle – specific actions in the youth sector and mainstreaming youth across different policies. Furthermore, the emphasis of the EUYS on youth direct participation was also flagged as value-added and supporting change, particularly in countries where traditionally young people were spoken on behalf of by persons from other age groups.

The EU added value of the EUYS as a framework for driving change for national youth policy making is evident but depends very much on the tradition and starting position of the country concerned.

The added value of the EUYS at the level of Member States is present, albeit to a varying degree, in terms of the scope and scale of the effects. The assessment showed that the EUYS represents a specific effort to empower and engage young people across Europe and beyond, with the goal of fostering active citizenship, social inclusion, and solidarity. However, the impact of the EUYS is not uniform across the diverse landscape of EU countries. The evaluation shows that even countries with a strong alignment between their national youth policy and EU-level policy see the added value of the EUYS. At the same time, the added value was also observed in countries without a national youth strategy.

Moreover, the general public via the public consultation, interviewed stakeholders from EU institutions and policymakers at the national level, and surveyed CSOs, also confirmed that the EUYS provided added value beyond what Member States could achieve on their own.

Q28. To what extent has the EU Youth Strategy provided additional value to what Member States could have achieved on their own? (%; LOGIC = To all other stakeholders, n= 91)

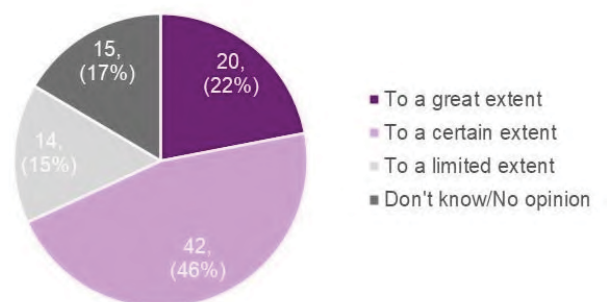
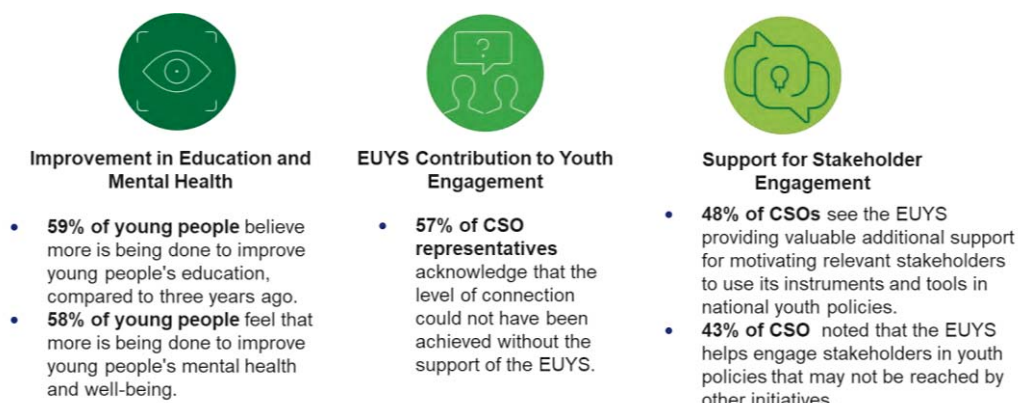


Figure 6. To what extent has the EU Youth Strategy provided additional value to what Member States could have achieved on their own? (N=91).

Source: Kantar Public – Public Consultation on the EU Youth Strategy, 2023.

The results from the surveys with young people and CSOs are condensed in the figure below, demonstrating the role of the EUYS in key areas, namely education and mental health, youth engagement, and stakeholder engagement.



Young people n=4011, CSOs n=144

*Figure 7. Role effects of the EUYS identified by young people and CSOs.
Source: Kantar Public – survey of CSOs and survey of young people, 2023*

In addition to its added value in terms of the scale of support to Member States and the range of issues addressed, the EUYS plays an important role in fostering cooperation between countries in Europe and beyond. It facilitates transnational exchanges, consultations, and dialogue between institutions and organisations in the Member States, thus promoting mutual learning and sharing of successful approaches. The EUYS encourages stakeholders to work together, creating networks and stimulating cooperation in youth work at the national and transnational levels. Mechanisms such as peer learning activities and dialogues deepen countries' understanding of youth-related policies and enable them to reflect on their own strategies. The EUYS also promotes engagement between policymakers and youth organisations, facilitating networking and cross-border engagement. By providing a platform for countries to share knowledge, exchange ideas and learn from each other, the EUYS enhances cooperation, coherence, and awareness of the youth perspective at regional, national and international level.

In addition, the contribution analysis shows that the mutual learning activities, which aim at strengthening cooperation between Member States, brought strong added value. The analysis also showed that the EU Youth Coordinator, the evidence-based tools, the participatory governance and the EUYD added value to what the Member States could have achieved on their own. This impact was also visible beyond the EU through the EU-CoE Youth Partnership and the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action.

Impact of the European Year of Youth on the EUYS added value

The Year had a positive impact on the added value of the EUYS. As pointed out in the coherence section, the Year and its objectives were fully in line with the EUYS objectives and EYGs. The volume of Year activities and their strong alignment with the objectives of the EUYS show that the Year has accelerated the visibility of opportunities linked to EUYS for young people and youth stakeholders. The interviews at EU and national levels showcased that the Year and its relevant initiatives provided a platform for coordination, networking, and information gathering on youth-related activities while at the same time raising awareness of available opportunities and funding and improving the understanding of policy complementarities. This contributed to the visibility and recognition of the EUYS.

At the EU level, the Year also facilitated internal networking within the European Commission, leading to improved youth mainstreaming, policy coordination, and reflection on tools to enhance the consideration of impacts on young people in legislative processes. It also raised awareness, promoted communication, and created a space for dialogue, fostering recognition and support for youth-related policies.

While the positive impact of the Year was recognised at the EU level, consultations with policymakers at national level revealed varying perceptions. The Year played an important role in shaping youth policy across the EU, but the perceptions of national policy makers on its impact varied among Member States. While many experienced significant positive changes (national policy makers from 13 Member States indicated that the Year had a strong or moderate positive impact), some observed limited positive impact or made no observation on

this. The figure below summarises the perception of the national policy makers on the Year, as gathered during national interviews.

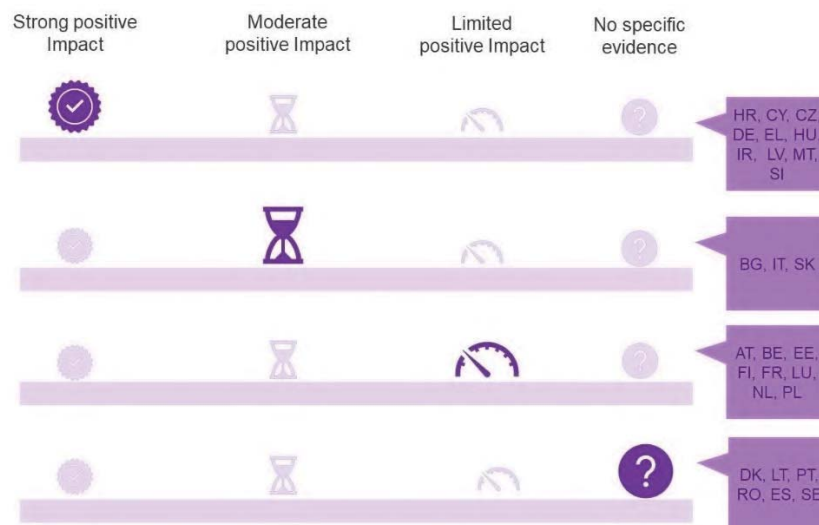


Figure 8. National policy makers' perceptions on the added value and impact of the Year.
Source: Kantar Public based on the country research.

Consequences of discontinuing the EUYS

The effects of discontinuing the EUYS at EU level would be largely adverse. The negative consequences are mainly related to the positive results of the EUYS in promoting cross-sectoral cooperation, mainstreaming youth in policy and strengthening the connection, engagement and empowerment of young people at EU level:

- Limiting the extent of cross-sectoral cooperation between the Commission services. There would be less attention paid to youth mainstreaming, possibly returning to a situation where each department would continue its own activities in the field of youth without there being coordination and active synergies.
- Decline in the perception of the importance of the youth perspective in the eyes of decision makers.
- Absence of clear and dedicated policy linkages and priorities for EU programmes in the field of youth – Erasmus + Youth and European Solidarity Corps.
- Substantially fewer opportunities for youth to input into EU level decision making.
- Less comparative evidence about the situation of youth and about youth policies.

At the national level, the discontinuation of the EUYS would have effects mostly due to its value as a catalyst nature, as explained above. Overall, national level policymakers stated that there would be less policy input on the youth perspective from Member States, leading to uneven levels of importance of youth policies and differences in support for young people across the EU. The absence of the EUYS could make it more difficult to achieve visibility and legitimacy for youth-related issues, especially in countries where the political context does not prioritise youth policy. National policymakers perceive varying degrees of consequences of a discontinuation of the EUYS.

	No specific negative consequences	Somewhat negative consequences	Negative consequences	Strong negative consequence
Member States where this level of negative consequences was observed	Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Sweden	Estonia, Greece, Malta, Netherlands,	Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia	Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia
What the negative consequences would be	Less negative influence due to strong national policies in place ensuring continuity	Limiting the alignment of national policies with EU level policies	Weakening the political agenda on youth	Influence on providing opportunities to youth via EU funding

Figure 9. Perceptions of national policy makers on consequences of discontinuing the EUYS.

Source: Kantar Public – country research, 2023.

4.3. Is the intervention still relevant?

Relevance

This section presents the findings on the relevance of the EU Youth Strategy, particularly regarding the extent to which the EUYS objectives remained relevant over 2019-2023; how well the EUYS objectives still correspond to the needs and challenges of youth today; and the extent to which the EUYS' relevance has been influenced by the European Year of Youth. Overall, the evaluation allowed for a positive assessment of the relevance of the EUYS.

It is possible to identify below **key findings** related to the EU relevance criterion:

- The EUYS was relevant in addressing diverse youth needs during 2019-2023, due to the **broad formulation of its objectives and the comprehensiveness of the EYGs and guiding principles**, and this is confirmed also by the perceptions of EU and national policy makers, and CSOs.
- Since the launch of the EUYS 2019-2027, **new needs have emerged** that have been addressed via the EUYS, albeit to varying degrees.
- The 2022 European Year of Youth brought a number of benefits **increasing the relevance of the EUYS**. In the survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups, 63% of respondents that were aware of the EUYS, considered that the European Year of Youth made the EUYS more relevant to their organisation.

Stakeholders' perceptions of the relevance of the EUYS objectives during 2019-2023

The focus of the EUYS has been broadened compared to the previous Strategy, to cover the complex landscape of youth challenges. During the 2019-2023 period, young people faced challenges in different areas of their lives, which were then exacerbated by unforeseen circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine which led to inflation and exacerbated costs of living challenges.

Generally, policymakers at EU and national level consider the EUYS relevant and sustainable because of its broadness and adaptability to specific youth needs over time. EU level policymakers also appreciated the EUYS' comprehensive nature for identifying interventions

to support young people, including the fostering of youth participation and engagement opportunities.

Similarly, national policymakers considered the EUYS to be relevant in addressing youth needs, either directly through EU level initiatives or by encouraging national initiatives. The main topics addressed by the EUYS considered particularly relevant by national policy makers consulted as part of the country research include youth engagement and participation, mental health and well-being, and inclusion: in most countries' views, these were aligned with the objectives of the EUYS. The relevance of the EUYS is highlighted by the way national policymakers used the EUYS as a framework to adopt their own initiatives. The national policymakers interviewed considered the EUYS relevant for addressing youth needs, particularly when it came to barriers to mobility, education, and digital skills development.

The stakeholders reached through the public consultation, and civil society organisations, further confirmed the relevance of the EUYS, and that the core areas of 'Engage', 'Connect' and 'Empower' capture most challenges faced by youth as well as the youth initiatives put forward. According to the results of the public consultation, the three main challenges faced by young people between 2019 and 2022 were the rising cost of living, mental health and well-being, and financial stability. The costs of living and financial stability were not seen to be specifically and directly addressed by EUYS instruments and activities in the period covered.

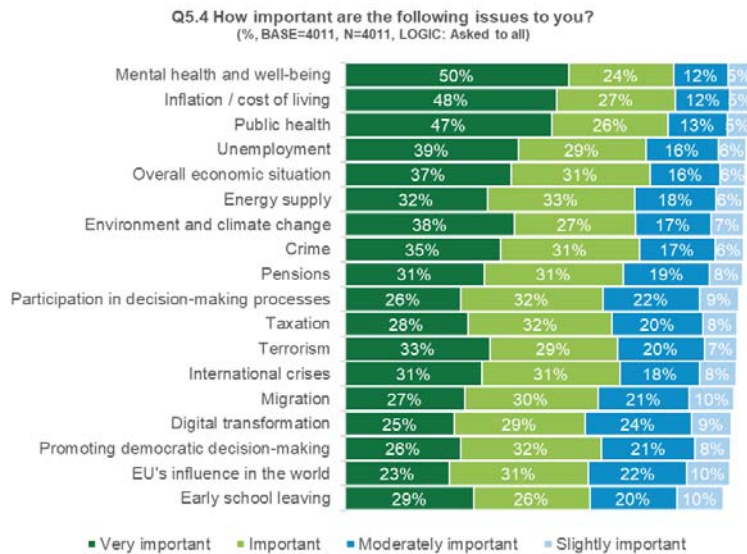
According to civil society organisations, at the EU level, the EUYS is most relevant to address insufficient youth participation and social exclusion or discrimination, followed by the green transition.

EUYS' correspondence with current youth needs and challenges

Many of the above issues were identified in the survey of young people and CSOs in the youth field, who overall converge about the fact that the highest priorities are:

- Inflation and costs of living;
- Mental health and well-being;
- Unemployment; and
- Environment and sustainability.

In general, the broadness of the EUYS objectives, core areas, principles, and European Youth Goals were found to respond to a range of challenges of young people. In particular, the results of the youth survey and the survey of CSOs on this question are shown below.



*Figure 10. Issues important to young people based on survey with youth.
Source: Kantar Public – survey of young people, 2023.*

According to the national policy makers, the three major youth needs identified at the national level include mental health and well-being, youth participation, and inclusion. In most countries' views, these were aligned with the objectives of the EUYS. The national stakeholders interviewed had mixed views about the extent to which these issues are tackled by the EUYS. While some consider the alignment is good, others have more temperate views about it.

Stakeholders at EU level identified several challenges currently facing young people. Among these, the lasting effects of unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine were the most frequently mentioned. At the same time, policy makers at EU level reiterated issues such as the increased cost of living, youth participation, challenges related to digitalisation, mental health and well-being, youth unemployment and mainstreaming of youth policies. At the same time, it was pointed out that challenges such as the cost of living are complex issues tackled by several policy areas and that the EUYS could not be the main framework for addressing such issues and providing direct solutions. In their view, the EUYS has been particularly useful in addressing youth participation and involvement, raising the visibility of the youth perspective and policies, promoting networking among young people, supporting young people with fewer opportunities, the green transition, youth work and volunteering. Based on the consultation activities, the EUYS could nevertheless more visibly address the impact of some of the new/re-surfacing challenges (e.g. cost of living).

Influence of the European Year of Youth on the relevance of the EUYS

The Year increased the relevance of the EUYS through several activities that made stakeholders **more aware of the opportunities available** to young people and youth

stakeholders. The Year was positively perceived by participants in the Year' activities and by the stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation.

Based on a survey conducted among young people, stakeholders, and national coordinators involved in the Year, the Year brought a number of benefits to the participants. These included higher involvement of young people in youth-related activities through conferences and awareness campaigns, increased youth empowerment to become active and engaged citizens, improved young people's awareness of opportunities and resources available to them, contribution towards better connection of youth through stronger networks, and increased participation by youth in decision-making processes. These results suggest that the Year brought several benefits in line with the EYGs, thereby contributing to the achievement of the EUYS' objectives.

In addition, consultations carried out as part of this evaluation, showed that national policy makers held a positive view of the Year, considering that it brought a number of benefits **boosting the relevance of the EUYS**, presented in the figure below. These benefits were also echoed by EU-level policymakers.

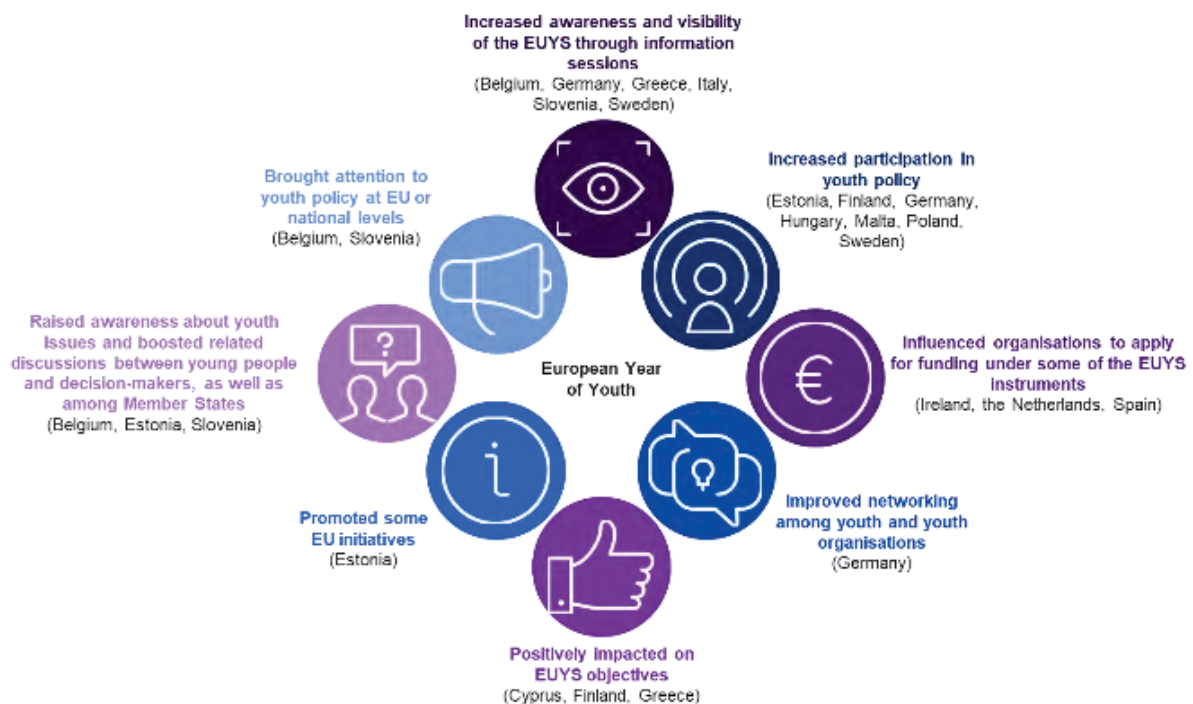


Figure 11. Perceptions on results of the European Year of Youth mentioned by national policymakers boosting the relevance of the EUYS.

Source: Kantar Public – interviews with national policymakers, 2023.

Both national and EU-level policymakers emphasised the need for effective engagement and long-term legacy. The Year created an important momentum around youth mainstreaming at EU level, with and among EU Member States, and other stakeholders such as civil society organisations and networks, international organisations, experts and researchers. The challenge for the EUYS going forward will be to maintain the level of commitment of stakeholders in the aftermath of the Year.

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

Overall conclusions and lessons learned

The evaluation underlined the **effectiveness and continued importance of the EU Youth Strategy as a strategic framework** for European cooperation, knowledge sharing and peer learning, channelling resources and concerted action towards common objectives in addressing youth challenges and complementing Member States action and initiatives. Notably, the EUYS remains vital as ‘catalyst’, i.e. acts as an example/model for national youth strategies/youth policy developments, in particular in countries without a national youth strategy or where it is being constructed or renewed, to support convergence of policy approaches. This role also extends beyond the EU as demonstrated in the Youth Action Plan in EU external action through which the EUYS can also inspire third countries to adopt similar approaches.

The evaluation has highlighted the **continued relevance of the EU Youth Strategy objectives** with a strong **focus on inclusion and diversity, and on youth participation and civic engagement**. Generally, the broadness of the objectives, and the European Youth Goals, were found to respond to a range of challenges and needs of young people. The instruments operate in an interlinked manner to contribute to the effectiveness of the EUYS and allow the EUYS to have influence at multiple levels, including on EU and national policies, civil society organisation practices and young people.

Nevertheless, consultation activities identified that there is scope to tackle more visibly and concretely the impact on young people of some **new/re-surging challenges**, notably cost of living, housing, environment and climate, digitalisation, physical and mental health and well-being, and challenges of rural youth. This underlines the importance of the dual approach of the EU Youth Strategy, i.e. to pursue **youth mainstreaming and cross-sectoral cooperation** across policy areas, while relying also on strong **youth participation and youth representation**, alongside continuing to mobilise and enhance the specific instruments and initiatives in the youth sector.

The **2022 European Year of Youth** brought the EU closer to young people, raising awareness of the many and diverse opportunities available to them. It **boosted youth participation and accelerated youth mainstreaming** and increased the relevance of the EU Youth Strategy. Sustaining and building on these positive effects of the European Year of Youth, as also outlined in the Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022⁹⁸, will further reinforce the performance of the EU Youth Strategy in the coming years.

The **main conclusions and lessons learned** from the evaluation are geared towards enhancing the influence of the EU Youth Strategy through further boosting some of its instruments. These have been grouped in blocks below covering 1) **youth participation and youth mainstreaming**, 2) **enabling instruments**, and 3) **scope for simplification**.

Youth participation and Youth mainstreaming

⁹⁸ [Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

➤ **EU Youth Dialogue: *becoming more inclusive, attention to follow-up***

The EU Youth Dialogue celebrates more than 10 years of existence and is the largest EU level participatory instrument for involving young people in policy making. Almost 90 000 young people have engaged in the consultation in the period 2019- (first half) 2023, of which 22 000 during the 9th cycle (January 2022–June 2023). The EU Youth Dialogue needs to continue evolving and growing. It is vital to **safeguard the good achievements on inclusion** over the last three cycles, to keep up the progress for involvement of young people from ethnic and religious minority groups, young people with disabilities, and young LGBTQIA, and increase the participation in the Dialogue process of any under-represented groups, including young people not in education, employment or training and rural youth, at national and EU level. **Finetuning outreach and communication** can be part of the measures here as well as better preparation and support of participants in the EU Youth Dialogue, in particular young people with fewer opportunities.

A key area for attention is to **further develop and support a process of sharing and channelling outcomes and recommendations** from the EU Youth Dialogue to all relevant stakeholders at EU and national level (or at all levels), in particular policy makers. There is also a need for **systematic mechanisms** for informing participants in the EU Youth Dialogue and stakeholders about the **follow-up planned** at EU and national level. At EU level, this could also imply seeking a closer alignment of the EU Youth Dialogue's focus with the Commission work programme.

It would also be opportune to create more **synergies with other child and youth participation instruments**, such as the EU Children's Participation Platform and the BIK Youth participation activities⁹⁹, at EU and national level for more transparency and joined-up efforts to engage young people and youth representatives, with the help of civil society organisations and networks.

Priority actions to further develop youth participation and the EU Youth Dialogue are outlined in the Communication on the European Year of Youth¹⁰⁰.

➤ **Youth Mainstreaming: *accelerate, build on and press ahead***

The evaluation revealed **examples of policy initiatives** at EU level that have incorporated a youth perspective, some of which also refer explicitly to the EU Youth Strategy, such as the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health, which was developed with input from young people¹⁰¹. However, although there are many synergies across EU policies, there is limited evidence of concrete actions in complementarities and synergies, highlighting existing room for enhanced cooperation at EU level.

Building on the achievements during 2022 European Year of Youth, and on its many legacy actions, there is an opportunity to **step up efforts at EU and national level** towards further progress in youth mainstreaming across all relevant policy fields, including **considering**

⁹⁹ www.bikyouth.eu/

¹⁰⁰ [Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰¹ For example through the Youth Cancer Survivors conference and the EU Youth Policy Dialogue on mental health in February 2023

concrete mainstreaming instruments at EU and national levels to tackle the complex challenges of young people.

When designing EU policies, the Commission will use the full potential of youth mainstreaming as part of the Commission's Better Regulation framework and toolbox, resulting in a youth check, as **outlined in the Communication on the European Year of Youth**. Efforts will also include better outreach to civil society organisations, networks and young people to encourage their taking part in consultations for new EU initiatives, including in citizen panels (one-third of whom are young people). A new youth stakeholders' platform will be set up to facilitate a continuous exchange with youth organisations, youth researchers, Member State representatives and other EU institutions. Continuing regular youth policy dialogues with European Commissioners, organising dedicated youth mainstreaming roundtables, and further mobilising the internal Commission Youth Network of youth correspondents, in particular through the EU Youth Coordinator, will also be important to enhance mainstreaming.

The European Commission can also support **national efforts** in this area by organising **mutual learning activities** on youth mainstreaming in cooperation with Member States, to exchange on how to involve young people and civil society organisations and better channel the youth perspective in policy making processes with an impact on youth. The European Commission also encourages Member States to establish **national or regional youth coordinators**, following the example of the EU Youth Coordinator.

Member States and the European Commission could also **identify specific areas for intensifying synergies and complementarities**, e.g. creating synergies between youth participation under the EU Youth Strategy and children participation under the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, and with national policies and initiatives in these areas, in line with measures for inclusive civic engagement and participation for European democratic resilience outlined in the Commission's Citizenship Package and Defence of Democracy package¹⁰².

Member States and the European Commission could also **collaborate on specific policies and initiatives**, such as targeting the mental health and well-being challenges of young people, considering interconnections with digital life, sport and culture, and pursuing holistic approaches on the basis of the Commission's Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health¹⁰³ and Council Conclusions¹⁰⁴. As an example, in the implementation of the youth-related flagship initiatives of the Communication on mental health, the Commission works closely with the Member States through the sub-group on mental health of the Public Health Expert Group¹⁰⁵. Public authorities at national and regional level can also request support under the EU Technical Support Instrument to design and implement policies targeted to young people, including in the form of multi-country/multi-regional projects involving several beneficiary authorities. Under this instrument, support has been provided to preserve and improve youth mental health and wellbeing in a number of EU Member States. Similar

¹⁰² [Documents on Defence of Democracy - European Commission \(europa.eu\) and Citizenship Package - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰³ [Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health, June 2023.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰⁴ [Council Conclusions on a comprehensive approach to mental health of young people in the EU, November 2023](#)

¹⁰⁵ [Expert Group on Public Health | \(health.ec.europa.eu\)](#)

collaboration can be facilitated on a range of other key areas, based on the challenges identified by young people and youth stakeholders.

There is also a need and potential for **engaging with stakeholders**, communicating better on the youth mainstreaming objective and cross-sectoral nature of the EU Youth Strategy, and disseminating and raising awareness about successful youth mainstreaming at EU and national level among all stakeholders.

Priority actions to strengthen youth mainstreaming are also outlined in the Communication on the European Year of Youth.

➤ **EU Youth Coordinator: *instrumental for youth mainstreaming, attention to role***

The evaluation showed that the EU Youth Coordinator function is **instrumental for youth mainstreaming achievements** at EU level, notably through the internal Youth Network, and has high potential and importance for the continuation of efforts. Stakeholder feedback indicated scope to **increase visibility and awareness of the role and work** of the EU Youth Coordinator to external stakeholders, and to better communicate on and **potentially further clarify the mandate** of the function which is very broad.

Regular and broad **stakeholder involvement** in the design, implementation and follow-up of the EUYS is vital for the participatory governance and overall performance of the EUYS. Building on the positive experiences with the European Year of Youth national coordinators and stakeholders' group, the EU Youth Coordinator will be able to rely on a more **permanent Youth stakeholder's platform group**, to be mobilised for consultations, discussions and exchanges, co-creation, dissemination of knowledge and outputs from different EUYS instruments, and as a community of practice, including also capacity building sessions on topics of interest to the community. This is also outlined in the Communication on the European Year of Youth.

Enabling instruments

➤ **EU programmes: *explore further synergies***

The Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes are key instruments for supporting the EUYS at EU level. It is therefore important to **safeguard links** between these programmes and the EUYS objectives and activities. There is also scope to further **explore synergies** between these programmes and other programmes/funds/instruments (e.g. Horizon Europe, cohesion policy funds and the Technical Support Instrument at EU level) as well as national programmes/funds. The Youth Network in the Commission as well as mutual learning activities can facilitate work on this.

➤ **Youth information and communication: *development of a communication plan***

Awareness of the EUYS among stakeholders is a precondition for its success as it allows the stakeholders to engage with the different activities and their outputs. The communication activities are primarily directed at young people and especially cover opportunities for young

people to participate in EU programmes and schemes and there is a lack of comprehensive communication towards policy makers and civil society organisations.

The evaluation found a good degree of awareness of the EUYS among all consulted stakeholders, however more often of some of the key instruments, in particular the EU youth programmes and the European Youth Portal. The European Youth Portal is in particular well known by young people and civil society organisations. There was less clarity over what the EUYS aims to achieve overall and how the different components of the EUYS fit together.

There is thus scope for clearer overall communication on the EU Youth Strategy and its interlinked components. At the same time, there is also a need for more targeted communication for policy makers and civil society organisations/practitioners, to strengthen communication on the EU Youth Dialogue consultations and recommendations and on youth mainstreaming, and to still finetune information and communication products on the European Youth Portal for young people. While there is a visible effort to use appropriate style, format and channels, the focus groups with young people suggested that even more could be done in this area, e.g. by testing communication products and means/channels with a panel of young people.

This could be addressed by **developing a communication** plan for the EU Youth Strategy, including user-friendly access and relevant resources for policy makers and civil society organisations. This can also involve specific communication products for communicating on implementation and performance of the EU Youth Strategy.

➤ **Evidence-based tools: *continuous improvement, attention to communication***

Continuous efforts are needed to **provide and communicate relevant data** on the implementation and performance of the EU Youth Strategy and on the evolving situation of young people to policy makers, civil society organisations, practitioners, young people and other stakeholders in a timely, user-friendly and digestible way. The websites and tools for knowledge- and evidence building, such as the Youth Wiki, the Eurostat EU Youth Dashboard, the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Dashboards, and for communication and outreach, such as the European Youth Portal, are highly valued and used. There is also a wealth of research, studies and data available through the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, the RAY network and the SALTOs in the EU youth programmes, stakeholder organisations such as the European Youth Forum, OECD and other international organisations.

The evaluation identified specific needs which could be addressed at EU and national levels to better capitalise on and use achievements so far and areas for further developments. There is e.g. potential to create an **‘entry-point’ and streamline/curate resources for policy makers and civil society organisations/practitioners**, today spread over several portals and websites. The Youth Wiki, already the most utilized platform by this audience, could be considered here, to create a clear distinction between channels for informing youth (European Youth Portal) and those more targeting policy makers and civil society organisations (Youth Wiki). Recognizing the differing needs of these audiences, it is advisable to use adapted and distinct resources. The **EU Youth Report** contains rich and useful information on activities implemented and progress under the EUYS, drawing on all evidence-based tools and sources, however the evaluation found that many stakeholders require more specified and more frequent information. This calls

for reviewing the **EU Youth Report** frequency, volume and form of information to cater for needs of different audiences and facilitate communication on the progress and evidence-base of the EUYS.

To facilitate monitoring and evaluation, the evaluation suggests **developing few key indicators** to help track progress and provide a bridge between the higher-level strategic objectives and the more direct sphere of influence of the EUYS (on the evolution of youth policies, practices of youth organisations, youth participation). The evaluation grouped the EUYS instruments in a simplified manner and elaborated medium-term impact pathways linked to the specific objectives, which could be useful to consider in the indicator development. Efforts should also continue on the availability of data, possibly considering also additional systematic surveys, based on the **proposals of the ad hoc expert group on youth indicators** for a unified monitoring framework of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Member States and the European Commission, also involving youth stakeholders, could **cooperate on further developing key indicators, methodologies, and data** for evidence-based monitoring of the EU Youth Strategy's implementation and performance.

Scope for simplification

➤ **Future National Activities Planners: consider alternatives**

The evaluation identified scope to simplify and reduce Member States' reporting burden for the Future National Activities Planners¹⁰⁶. In the consultations, policy makers found them burdensome to complete and with limited use, while most other stakeholders indicated limited involvement and awareness of the Planners. The number of completed FNAPs also declined in 2021 compared to 2019. This indicates a need to consider substituting the Future National Activities Planners by an alternative way of gathering information on national youth policy priorities and developments, in cooperation with Member States. Alternatives to explore could include the Youth wiki instrument and simplified ad hoc surveys of national representatives.

¹⁰⁶

[Future National Activities Planners | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

ANNEX I. PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Lead Directorate-General: European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, DG EAC

Agenda planning reference: PLAN/2022/1741

Organisation: The main preparatory steps for the evaluation in 2022 included the set-up of an Inter-Service-Group to accompany and steer the evaluation, publication of a call for evidence and preparation of technical specifications for a supporting external evaluation assignment (service contract EAC-2023-0086). The service contract was awarded under the DG EAC framework contract for evaluations and impact assessments to a consortium led by Kantar Public and started in February 2023.

The external evaluation assignment included a public consultation and multiple targeted consultations and provided the main evidence base for the Staff Working Document. The full final report of the service contractor has been published here: [Support study for the Interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#); [Annexes - Support study for the Interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#)

The factual summary on the public consultation and call for evidence has been published and is available here: [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 – interim evaluation \(europa.eu\)](#). The synopsis report on all the consultation activities in the evaluation is annexed to the Staff Working Document.

Timing (general chronology of the evaluation):

DESCRIPTION	TIMING
<i>First Inter-Service-Group meeting</i>	6 September 2022
Call for evidence on 'Have your Say'-portal	23 September-21 October 2023
<i>Second Inter-Service-Group meeting</i>	26 October 2022
Signature of contract for external evaluation assignment	3 February 2023
<i>Third Inter-Service Group meeting: kick-off meeting</i>	8 February 2023
Inception report	3 March 2023
<i>Fourth Inter-Service Group meeting: inception meeting</i>	14 March 2023
Public consultation on 'Have your Say'-portal	26 April-2 August 2023
Interim report	28 June 2023
<i>Fifth Inter-Service Group meeting: interim meeting</i>	5 July 2023
Draft final report submitted by contractor	September-December 2023
<i>Sixth Inter-Service Group meeting: final with contractor</i>	19 October 2023
Exchanges and written consultations of Inter-Service-Group (in dedicated Teams channel) on the draft final report versions	October-December 2023
Final version of final report by external contractor approved	January 2024
<i>Sixth Inter-Service Group meeting: kick off COM Report and SWD</i>	17 November 2023
<i>Seventh Inter-Service Group meeting: Draft COM Report and SWD</i>	13 December 2023
Inter-Service-Consultation on Draft COM Report and SWD	2 February 2024
Publication of COM Report and SWD	March-April 2024

DGs participated in the Steering Group (ISSG): An Inter-Service-Group of relevant Commission departments oversaw the evaluation and met regularly throughout the evaluation process. In addition to DG EAC, the Inter-Service-Group was composed of representatives of 17 Commission departments¹⁰⁷. In line with the Better Regulation guidelines, the Inter-Service-Group was involved in all the key steps of the evaluation work, including the evaluation mandate, call for evidence, evaluation questions, technical specifications for selecting the external contractor, the public consultation questionnaire and survey questionnaires, monitoring progress and steering the evaluation, providing comments to and ensuring quality and objectivity of evaluation reports.

In connection with the meetings of the Inter-Service-Group and key deliverables, consultations were carried out in the dedicated Teams channel. The feedback periods, deadlines and arrangements for managing comments and approval of deliverables were agreed in the meetings.

Work/studies carried out by the external contractors: The Commission's interim evaluation was supported by an independent external evaluation assignment. In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines the contractor analysed the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, added value and relevance of the EUYS at mid-point. The contractor used a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis, including qualitative and quantitative data and contribution analysis. The contribution analysis consisted of assessing the extent to which the EUYS contributed to the intended changes and included developing an intervention logic for the EUYS instruments, unpacking their implementation and using primary evidence validating the assumptions. In addition, a cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted using a defined framework to assess the costs associated with the EUYS.

The external evaluation assignment was carried out between February and December 2023 and included public consultation and multiple targeted consultations. The consultation strategy for the evaluation was based on a mapping of stakeholders and quantitative and qualitative data was mainly gathered through the following consultation activities:

- **Call for evidence** on the Commission's 'Have Your Say' portal from 23 September to 21 October 2022.
- **Public consultation** on the 'Have Your Say'-portal from 26 April to 2 August 2023.
- **Quantitative data** on awareness of the EUYS and engagement with its instruments, collected through:
 - Online survey of young people
 - Online survey of youth civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups
- **Qualitative data** on perceptions of the EUYS and examples of progress in its implementation, collected through:
 - Key informant interviews with policy makers at EU and national level and focus groups with national policy makers, from 3 May to 20 June 2023;
 - Focus groups with young people from 14 June to 8 August 2023;
Focus groups with civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups from 14 June to 23 August 2023.

¹⁰⁷ AGRI, BUDG, CLIMA, COMM, EMPL, ENV, HOME, INTPA, JRC, JUST, MARE, MOVE, REGIO, RTD, SANTE, SG, SJ

Overall methodology

The external evaluation assignment encompassed five tasks, as presented below, each contributing to support a comprehensive assessment of the EUYS performance and impact.

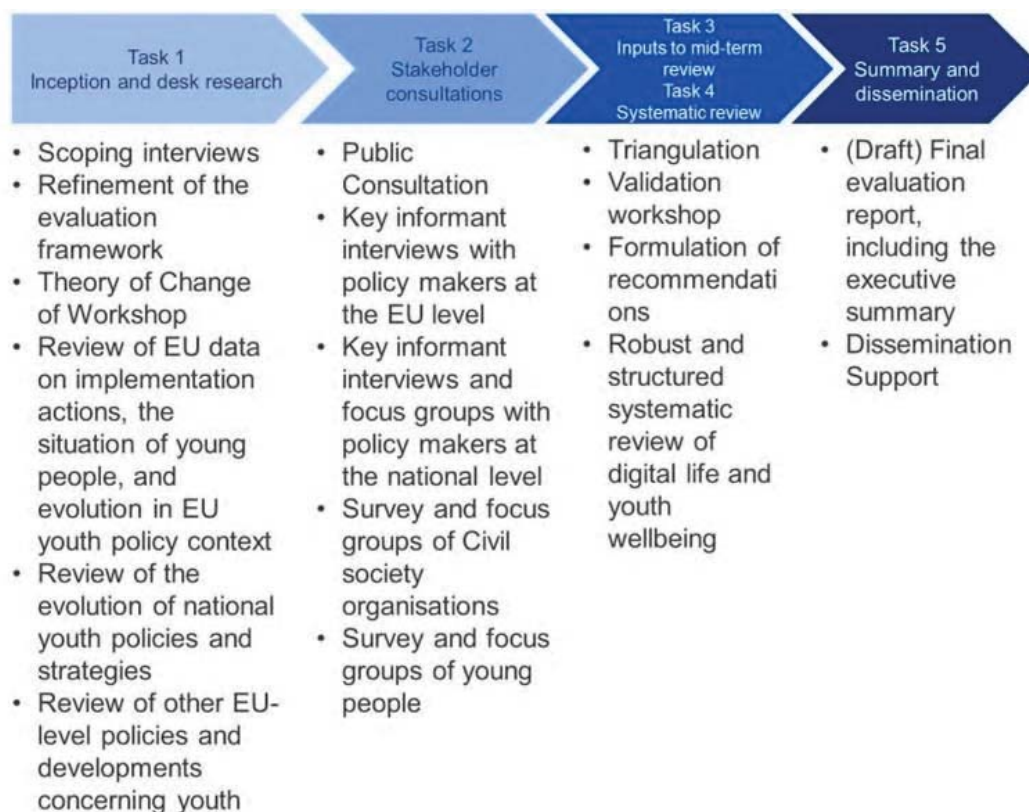


Figure 1. Overall process and methodology of this interim evaluation

Task 1 – Inception and desk research

Task 1.1 Inception phase

- **Kick off**

The kick-off meeting with members of the EUYS Inter-service Group (ISG) took place on 8 February 2023. During the kick-off meeting, the evaluation team introduced the objectives of the EUYS 2019-2027 interim evaluation, the intervention logic and the evaluation framework. Discussions with the ISG members and comments received helped to revise the stakeholder consultation approach in view of enhancing engagement of youth with different social, political, economic and cultural backgrounds in the youth survey and focus groups.

- **Scoping desk research and interviews**

The scoping interviews were conducted with representatives of DG EAC, DG INTPA and EACEA. The purpose of the scoping interviews was to better understand the EUYS and the instruments implementation. The interviews helped to refine the intervention logic and

evaluation matrix. Scoping desk research was carried out in preparation for the Theory of Change Workshop.

- ***Theory of Change Workshop***

The Theory of Change workshop was conducted on 20 February 2023 with representatives of DG EAC and EACEA. The purpose of the workshop was to gain better understanding to refine the intervention logic and evaluation framework and develop detailed impact pathways linked to the expected results and desired impacts of the EUYS. The implementation of the EUYS relies on multiple strands of activities. At the design stage of the interim evaluation, it was important to develop a solid understanding of the impact pathways linked to the EUYS implementation mechanisms. During the Theory of Change workshop, the evaluation team:

- Harnessed the thoughts and reflections of seven representatives from DG EAC working on different instruments of the EUYS;

The evaluation team documented the discussions on the intervention logic and on the policy context of the EUYS, which allowed the team to finetune the intervention logic and develop the impact pathways used in the evaluation.

Task 1.2 – Desk research

Under the task 1, the desk research was carried out at the EU and national level. The methodological and analytical process for the desk research contained two phases, firstly the scoping desk research and secondly the EU and national level desk research. The purpose of the scoping desk research was to analyse the information that exists around the EUYS to ensure that our understanding of the theory of change was soundly rooted in the policy context and backed up by existing academic or grey literature about the EUYS and youth-related policies and measures.

- ***Desk research at the EU level***

EU level desk research was based on the literature about EUYS activities, inputs and outputs. The EU level desk research mainly analysed Staff Working Documents, Communication documents and Reports, other documents on all the eleven instruments of the EUYS.

The study team gathered key documentation and DG EAC provided further literature which allowed the team to revise the list of preliminary secondary data sources and create a document repository containing over 300 documents. Analysis was carried out by analysing documents in line with the evaluation matrix and gathering the secondary data on indicators. The results of EU level desk research fed into identifying the EUYS implementation via its instruments. The results were also used to contextualise the evaluation findings presented in the final report.

- ***Desk research at the national level***

The national level desk research covered all EU Member States. The aim was to gather key insights that could be difficult to capture with quantitative tools about potential synergies between national youth strategies and the EUYS, and examples of EUYS effects. The national desk research was based on documentation gathered via FNAPs, YouthWIKI, national youth policies and strategies, national reports on youth policy area and other available documents. National desk research was also coupled with stakeholder consultations carried out under the task 2, such as:

- undertaking interviews with national youth policymakers in all the EU27 (described under the task 2 – stakeholder consultation);
- follow-up focus groups with national policymakers in three countries in Denmark, Germany and Slovakia (described under the task 2 – stakeholder consultation).

The first step was a review of available secondary data – reports and national youth strategies and policies implemented in the context of the EUYS. On this basis, we developed the template for the country research to collect evidence in a systematic way and the study team carried out interviews and focus groups with the national policymakers. The researchers elaborated country reports summarising key information from the interviews and national-specific literature, helping build a picture of the EUYS effects at the national level across EU27.

Task 2 - Stakeholder consultations

The consultation strategy for the evaluation was based on a mapping of stakeholders and included the following consultation activities to involve a broad range of EUYS stakeholders and the public:

- **A call for evidence** open to any stakeholder and the public on the European Commission's 'Have Your Say' portal during 23 Sep. - 21 Oct. 2022.
- **A public consultation** open to any stakeholder and the public, on the European Commission's 'Have Your Say'-portal during 26 Apr. - 2 Aug. 2023.
- **Quantitative activities** gathering data on awareness of the EUYS and engagement with different EUYS activities and instruments, collected through two targeted surveys:
 - Online survey of young people, reached through a general population sample in 10 EU Member States¹⁰⁸ during 10-29 July 2023;
 - Online survey of youth civil society organisations, youth researchers active at EU and national level, and youth informal groups, during 15 June - 14 Aug. 2023.
- **Qualitative activities gathering** perceptions of the EUYS and examples of progress made in its implementation, collected through:
 - Key informant interviews with policy makers at EU and national level and focus groups with national policy makers, during 3 May - 20 June 2023;
 - Focus groups with young people during 14 June - 8 Aug. 2023;
 - Focus groups with civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups during 14 June - 23 Aug. 2023.

The targeted consultation activities (surveys, interviews, focus groups) have involved stakeholders based on:

- The relevance of the EUYS 2019-2027 to them;

¹⁰⁸ Czechia, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden

- Their expertise in the subject;
- Their involvement in EUYS 2019-2027 activities and instruments.

Specific attention was paid to ensuring inclusion and diversity in the online survey of youth. Respondents were selected to ensure a distribution that reflected the population of each country in terms of age group (16-29), gender and region. In addition, during the survey implementation, the respondents were selected with respect to several characteristics such as educational attainment, employment status, rural/urban residence and self-reported disabilities.

Task 3 – Analysis and key issues for possible mid-term review

Contribution analysis

The EUYS tackles multifaceted challenges affecting young people during their transition to adulthood, spanning education and training, employment, social inclusion, and more. It also addresses broader concerns like youth unemployment, inequality gaps, and exposure to harmful content. Moreover, unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical shifts have significantly influenced the EUYS' operating landscape.

Given the complexity of the EUYS, which encompasses a diverse array of instruments and measures, assessing its impact demands a structured approach. In addition to the refined intervention logic - to capture this complexity, the impact pathways were developed for each of the EUYS instruments. The implementation of the EUYS relies on several strands of activities or different instruments. Each of these instruments has its own logic and a set of assumptions about key success factors.

- The following methodological steps were taken by the study team to carry out the contribution analysis:
- developing the impact pathways for each EUYS instrument and mapping what they were intended to achieve and under what assumptions;
- developing the assumptions associated with each instrument's activities, outputs and outcomes;
- gathering the secondary and primary evidence from this evaluation to determine the extent to which the intended activities, outputs and results have been achieved;
- assessing the validity of the assumptions using the evidence gathered.

Developing impact pathways and assumptions

To evaluate the EUYS, it was important to unpack the different implementation instruments, make assumptions about their own impact and carry out the contribution analysis - an assessment of how a given set of activities feeds into the overarching intervention logic of the EUYS. Impact pathways help us trace the connections between the EUYS' activities and the intended outcomes, illuminating how different interventions contribute to overarching goals.

In order to unravel the effects of the EUYS through impact pathways, we engaged in a twofold process. First, we dissected the different instruments and actions within the EUYS. Each of these instruments functions as a unique entity, targeting specific objectives and outcomes.

Developing impact pathways for these instruments involved outlining the sequence of actions, changes and influences that occur as a result of their implementation.

In essence, by outlining these pathways, we gain insight into how individual actions contribute to the broader picture of youth development, empowerment, and change. Following the four groups of activities of the EUYS, the impact pathways have been clustered, allowing us to unpack the impacts of the EUYS across its core areas.

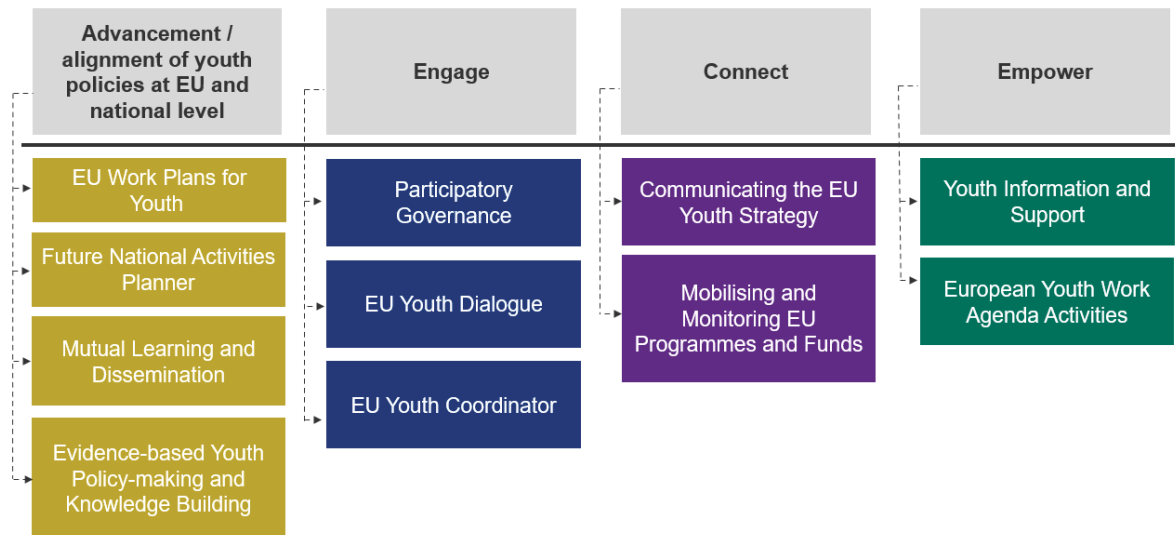


Figure 2. Clustering of impact pathways against four core areas of the EUYS.

Secondly, impact pathways require the identification and examination of assumptions. These assumptions are the underlying beliefs about how the instruments will lead to certain outcomes. By scrutinising these assumptions, we ensure a clear understanding of the logical links between activities and impacts. This process allowed us to validate the intervention logic of the EUYS, ensuring that the expected impacts are plausible and supported by evidence. We identify the critical elements and assumptions that need to be assessed during the evaluation. This approach allowed us to collect primary and secondary data to verify the existence of the impact pathways outlined and the accuracy of the underlying assumptions.

Validating the assumptions

Identifying the contribution of the instruments to the EUYS requires validation of the assumption. In order to validate the assumptions, the secondary and primary data collected in this evaluation were used in the translation. This process was carried out in four steps:

- Mapping which of the activities, outcomes and results have been achieved.
- Validating the assumptions based on the available evidence.
- Identifying the extent to which the instrument has contributed to the EUYS.
- Developing a contribution story for each instrument.

Task 4 – Systematic review

The purpose of the systematic review was to:

- produce an updated comprehensive assessment of the impact of the EUYS on the selected topic;
- attempt to provide a systematic overview of the direction and magnitude of the impact of EUYS on the selected topic;
- attempt to identify factors that may explain the heterogeneity of the results that have been found in individual studies or national evaluations.
- Based on the in-depth review of the comprehensive portfolio of documents and grey literature we have conducted, the systematic overview team together with DG EAC have chosen the following topic for the analysis: digital life and well-being of young people.

Context and research question

One of the overall objectives of the EUYS is to ‘improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education and training, health and social inclusion’. There has been an increasing impact of digitalisation on everyday work, education and training, and social life, which was intensified by the COVID-19 Pandemic and there is a call for a systematic overview of how this shift has impacted the well-being of young people.

On this behalf, it is interesting to investigate the topic further; hence, we proposed the following research question: How has digital life impacted well-being of young people?

Limitations of the chosen topic

The topic ‘digital life and well-being of young people’ is an emerging field. Hence, it is justified to conduct an up-to-date review of the topic. The subject is also fairly broad which provides several different sub-topics to choose from. However, it could also be seen as a disadvantage to select an emerging field, such as digital life and youth well-being, because of the presumably limited access to secondary data and research conducted. Also, the restricted availability of secondary data might be a drawback in terms of robustness, which is something we have considered when adjusting the method to a systematic review rather than a full-scale meta-analysis. The full systematic review is published as an annex of the external study report.

Conceptual framework

The concept of **well-being** is broadly defined as a state of “optimal psychological experience and functioning”.¹⁰⁹ Such definition leads to various interpretations on what aspects the well-being encompasses. Traditionally, the well-being is associated with mental health, although broader definitions of the well-being include the following dimensions¹¹⁰:

- **Physical well-being** – e.g., good state of (mental and physical) health and physical capabilities;
- **Cognitive well-being** – e.g., successful participation in a learning process (education and training);

¹⁰⁹ Deci, & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne*, 49(3).

¹¹⁰ Rees, G., Savahl, S., Lee, B.J. and Casas, F. (Eds.) (2020). Children’s worlds report 2020. Children’s views on their lives and well-being in 35 countries: A report on the Children’s 115 Worlds project, 2016-19.

- **Psychological/emotional well-being** – e.g., positive self-esteem, agency, satisfaction with life; hope for the future, sadness, anger;
- **Social well-being** – e.g., developing healthy relationships with others, participating in the community, and having a sense of belonging.

Such broader conceptualisation of the well-being is in line with the approach of the EU Youth Strategy, since it aims to support the health and well-being of young people with a focus on¹¹¹:

- Promoting mental and sexual health, sport, physical activity and healthy lifestyles;
- Preventing and treating injury, eating disorders, addictions and substance abuse;
- Education on nutrition;
- Promoting cooperation between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sport organisations;
- Making health facilities more accessible and attractive for young people;
- Raising awareness of how sport can promote teamwork, intercultural learning and responsibility.

Task 5 - Reporting and dissemination

The final task consisted in the analysis and synthesis of the data in view of drafting the final report. The report structure follows the Better Regulation Guidelines template for evaluation reports and includes the required annexes.

¹¹¹ [EU Youth Strategy: Health and Well-Being](#) | European Youth Portal.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX

Effectiveness

The approach to assess the effectiveness of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (Hereafter EUYS of the EUYS) uses a theory-based contribution analysis. Beyond the development of the intervention logic and related theory of change, this implies:

- Development of the detailed impact pathways between the individual components of the EUYS implementation and the expected results and impacts. This recognises that not all elements of the EUYS contribute to all the results and impact but that there is a more detailed set of pathways between the actions taken and the expected changes;
- Explicit formulation of assumptions that underpin the impact pathways. These reflect under what conditions we assume the changes will follow from the activities implemented;
- Identify the critical assumptions and critical segments of impact pathways and focus data collection and compilation on those elements of the theory of chain;
- Collect evidence from primary and secondary data against the impact pathways so as to confirm or disconfirm whether these pathways have materialised;
- Assess the strength of the evidence gathered and subsequently the credibility of the emerging narrative of contribution of the EUYS to the changes observed and measured; and
- Revise the contribution theory and present the actually achieved theory of change (rather than the expected one) showcasing what the EUYS has achieved to deliver.

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Methods/sources
<i>1. To what extent has the EUYS, at mid-term, proven to be an effective strategic framework, in terms of turning the objectives, priorities and actions into concrete and sustainable achievements (outputs, results and impacts) at European and national levels?</i>	Objectives, priorities and actions of the EUYS have been translated into concrete and sustainable achievements (outputs, results and impacts) at European and national level.	See other indicators for effectiveness below	This an overarching question that we answer through an overall assessment of all effectiveness questions
	<p>The outputs produced are thematically aligned with EUYS goals</p> <p>The outputs produced are used</p> <p>The outputs produced are considered as useful</p>	<p>Volume and thematic focus of outputs</p> <p>Stakeholders reached</p> <p>Use of EUYS outputs</p> <p>Extent of usefulness of these outputs</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews with stakeholders at the national and EU level</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Public consultation</p>
	There is evidence that the EUYS influenced national youth policies and priorities	<p>Analysis of examples of specific influence of the EUYS on national policies exist</p> <p>Analysis of contribution of the EUYS to shaping national policies</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews with stakeholders at the national and EU level</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>

			Public consultation
	There is evidence that the EUYS influenced EU-level youth policies and priorities	<p>Examples of specific influence of the EUYS on EU policies exist</p> <p>Identified contribution of the EUYS to shaping EU policies</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Public consultation</p>
	<p>Progress has been made in the three core areas of the EUYS</p> <p>Youth perspectives have been mainstreamed at national and EU level</p>	<p>Level of engagement and consultation of youth at EU and national level</p> <p>Extent of mainstreaming of youth perspectives in policy making</p> <p>Analysis of situation of young people in areas covered by the youth strategy goals</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p>
1.a What are the actual effects achieved (or progress made) at mid-term at EU and Member State level, in each of the 3 core areas ('Engage', 'Connect', 'Empower')?	The majority of Member States have in place clear actions in line with the three core areas of engage, connect, empower and implementation instruments.	<p>Analytical description of the type of effects achieved (or progress made) at EU and MS, civil society levels across four impact areas:</p> <p>Youth active citizenship, social inclusion, solidarity;</p> <p>Youth mainstreaming across policy;</p> <p>Continuous youth work</p> <p>International influence</p> <p>Via EUYS activities in the area of implementation instruments, engage, connect and empower</p> <p>Analytical description of success stories at the EU, National and civil society levels on how the EUYS helped young people to be more engaged, more connected and more empowered.</p> <p>Key stakeholders identifying the contribution of the EUYS to the Youth Goals</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p>
And in the contribution to the Youth Goals?	<p>Contribution has been made to the Youth Goals:</p> <p>Connecting EU with Youth</p>		

	<p>Equality of All Genders</p> <p>Inclusive Societies</p> <p>Information & Constructive Dialogue</p> <p>Mental Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>Moving Rural Youth Forward</p> <p>Quality Employment for All</p> <p>Quality Learning</p> <p>Space and Participation for All</p> <p>Sustainable Green Europe</p> <p>Youth Organisations & European Programmes</p>	<p>Analytical description of which Youth Goals and how the EUYS contributed to.</p>	
<p>1.b In what way and to what extent have the Guiding principles of the EUYS influenced its effectiveness?</p>	<p>The Guiding principles of the EUYS have influenced its effectiveness.</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p>Equality and non-discrimination</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Global</p> <p>European, national, regional and local dimension</p> <p>Dual approach</p>	<p>Key stakeholders recognise that these principles have been present in the implementation of the EUYS</p> <p>Extent to which the Guiding principles of the EUYS have influenced the effectiveness of the EUYS.</p> <p>Analytical description of how the Guiding principles have influenced the effectiveness of the EUYS.</p> <p>Key stakeholders recognise that these principles have facilitated changes at EU and national levels</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p>
<p>1.c To what extent has the EUYS already influenced or created synergies with Member States' youth policies?</p>	<p>The EUYS has influenced and/or created synergies with Member States' youth policies.</p>	<p>Key stakeholders recognise that EUYS influenced or created synergies with Member States' youth policies</p> <p>Analytical description of how the EUYS has influenced and/or created synergies with MS' youth policies</p> <p>Extent to which the EUYS has influenced and/or created synergies with MS's youth policies.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews with the stakeholders at the national level</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p>

1.d Which main factors have contributed to or limited the progress towards the objectives at mid-term?	The role of external factors in influencing the effectiveness of EUYS (covid-19, war in Ukraine, digital and green transition, globalisation, inflation)	Stakeholders' perception of the role of other factors and policies/ interventions in shaping the youth agenda	Desk research Key informant interviews with stakeholders at national level Civil society focus groups
	The role of other EU policies and actions in influencing the effectiveness of EUYS (European Year of Youth, European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ programme)	Identification of factors that have contributed to (or limited) the progress towards the objectives of the EUYS.	
How has the European Year of Youth contributed to progress?	The European Year of Youth contributed to progress towards the objectives of the EUYS.	Analytical description of how the European Year of Youth has contributed towards the objectives of the EUYS.	Desk research Key informant interviews Civil society survey and focus groups
1.e Have there been any unintended/unexpected effects?	Unintended/unexpected effects that have occurred are positive. No negative unexpected effects have been identified.	Key stakeholders identifying unintended/unexpected effects of EUYS Identification of unintended effects and their scope and scale. For example: instrumentalisation of youth engagement, divisive discourse between youth and older age groups	Desk research Key informant interviews Civil society survey and focus groups
1.f To what extent are the effects of the EUYS likely to last in the long-term?	The effects of the EUYS are likely to last in the long-term The EUYS has produced structural changes which are likely to last	Stakeholders identifying different EUYS impacts likely to last in the long-term Analysis of the nature of impact produced as a result of the EUYS Analysis of which EUYS effects of the EUYS are likely to last in the long-term Stakeholders' perceptions on which EUYS impact is to last long term Extent to which the effects of the EUYS are likely to last in the long-term.	Desk research Key informant interviews with stakeholders at national and EU level Civil society focus groups
2. To what extent have the EUYS' instruments proven to be effective in supporting the implementation at mid-term?	The EUYS' instruments have been effective in supporting the mid-term implementation of the EUYS. Instruments:	Extent to which the EUYS' instruments have been effective in achieving the outputs and outcomes of the EUYS.	Desk research Key informant interviews with stakeholders at the national and EU level

	<p>Evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge building</p> <p>Mutual learning and dissemination</p> <p>Future National Activities Planner</p> <p>EU Work Plans for Youth</p> <p>Partnership with CoE</p> <p>Participatory governance</p> <p>EU Youth Dialogue</p> <p>EU Youth Coordinator</p> <p>Communicating the EU Youth Strategy</p> <p>Mobilising and Monitoring EU Programmes and Funds</p> <p>European Youth Work Agenda</p> <p>Youth Information and Support</p>		
2.a Which instruments or combination of instruments stand out as particularly effective vs. needing adjustment at mid-term?	<p>There are instruments or combination of instruments that are particularly effective.</p> <p>There are instruments that need adjustments.</p>	<p>Analytical description of which instruments (or combination of instruments) are particularly effective.</p> <p>Analytical description of which instruments need adjustment, reasons for the adjustments and possible changes.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews Youth survey</p> <p>Civil society survey</p>
2.b Are the instruments and implementing tools regarded as sustainable and apt to continue facilitating the implementation of the EUYS and the main factors behind this?	<p>The instruments and implementing tools are sustainable and apt to continue facilitating the implementation of the EUYS.</p> <p>There are factors that enable the sustainability and implementation of the EUYS.</p>	<p>Assessment of whether the instrument and implementing tools are considered by stakeholders sustainable and apt to continue facilitating the implementation of the EUYS.</p> <p>Analytical description of factors which enable the sustainability and implementation of EUYS.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p>
2.c To what extent have the instruments supported a cross-sectorial approach and effective mainstreaming of youth issues and	<p>Youth issues have been integrated into other policy fields.</p>	<p>Extent to which the youth issues have</p>	<p>Desk research</p>

greater youth involvement into other policy fields?

<p>There has been a youth involvement into other policy fields.</p>	<p>been mainstreamed in other policy fields.</p> <p>Analytical description of how youth issues have been taken-into account in other policy fields.</p> <p>Analytical description of successful stories of how youth issues have been incorporated into other policy fields.</p> <p>Extent to which young people have been involved in other policy fields.</p> <p>Analysis of how young people have been involved in other policy fields.</p> <p>Analysis of success stories of how young people have been involved in other policy fields.</p>	<p>Key informant interviews Youth survey and focus groups</p>
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2.d To what extent have the EU programmes, such as Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, Horizon Europe, ESF+, RRF, Digital Europe, CERV, EU4Health, Creative Europe, etc., been mobilised and linkages, alignments and synergies created between them and the EUYS to effectively address the objectives of the EUYS?

<p>Links and synergies exist between the EUYS and other EU programmes (Erasmus +, ESC, Horizon Europe, ESF+, RRF, Digital Europe, CERV, EU4Health, Creative Europe etc).</p> <p>Links, synergies and alignments between the EUYS and other EU programmes allow for effectively address the objectives of the EUYS.</p> <p>There is room for improvement in synergies between EUYS and other EU programmes.</p>	<p>Extent to which links and synergies exist between the EUYS and other EU programmes (Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, Horizon Europe, ESF+, RRF, Digital Europe, CERV, EU4Health, Creative Europe, etc.).</p> <p>Analysis of links and synergies between the EUYS and other EU programmes.</p> <p>Extent to which links and synergies between the EUYS and other EU programmes support the effective achievement of the objectives of the EUYS.</p> <p>Analytical description of how synergies can be improved between the EUYS and other EU programmes.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews with the stakeholders at the EU services and at national level</p>
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Is there a need and how could synergies be improved further?

<p>3. How well was the EUYS able to adapt to the unforeseen developments and impact of Covid19-pandemic and of Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine?</p>	<p>The EUYS adapted well to the developments of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine.</p>	<p>Extent to which the EUYS adapted well to the development of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p>
<p>In what way did the unforeseen events impact the implementation?</p>	<p>The events impacted the implementation of the EUYS.</p>	<p>Analysis of how the EUYS adapted to deal with the Covid-19 situation and the Ukrainian crisis.</p>	
<p>What have been the enabling/limiting factors impacting the adaptability?</p>	<p>There are enabling/limiting factors that impacted the adaptability of EUYS to the unforeseen events.</p>	<p>Analysis of how the Covid-19 and the Ukraine's crisis impacted on the implementation of the EUYS.</p>	
<p>What has been the role of solidarity in the EUYS' adaptability?</p>	<p>Solidarity had a role in the adaptability of the EUYS.</p>	<p>Extent to which solidarity had a role in supporting the adaptability of the EUYS.</p>	
<p>4. To what extent and how has the EUYS promoted and influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and facing obstacles in life due to e.g. disability, health problems (incl. mental health, chronic health conditions), barriers linked to education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination, racism, and geographical barriers?</p>	<p>The EUYS has promoted and influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities e.g.</p> <p>people with disabilities, health issues (incl. mental health issues, chronic health conditions), low education, little training, low income</p> <p>People facing social barriers, cultural differences, discrimination and racism, and geographical barriers</p>	<p>Extent to which the EUYS has promoted and influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.</p> <p>Analysis of how the EUYS has promoted and influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.</p> <p>Analytical description of success stories of</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p> <p>Public Consultations</p>

In what way has the EUYS affected the inclusion of young people with diverse backgrounds in light of the recent health and political crisis?		how the EUYS has promoted and influenced the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.	
How have the actions stemming from the EUYS adapted to better support youth people with mental health issues?	<p>The EUYS adapted well to include young people with diverse backgrounds in light of health and political crisis</p> <p>The actions stemming from the EUYS targeted and supported young people with mental health issues</p>	<p>Analysis of how the EUYS adapted to include young people with the diverse background during health and political crisis</p> <p>Analysis of how the actions stemming from the EUYS contributed to improving the situation of young people with mental health issues.</p>	
5.To what extent and how has the EUYS promoted the green and digital transitions?	The EUYS has promoted that green and digital transition.	<p>Extent to which the EUYS has promoted the green and digital transition.</p> <p>Analysis of how the EUYS has promoted the green and digital transition.</p> <p>Analytical description of success stories of how the EUYS has promoted the green and digital transition.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth survey and focus groups</p>

Table 1 Evaluation matrix – Effectiveness

Efficiency

The EUYS is implemented through a range of instruments. These instruments are funded from different funding sources and in addition to budgets they also mobilise the time of different stakeholders. Time of stakeholders is needed for participation in different events and activities. This time constitutes an important indirect cost for the implementation of the EUYS. In our approach to evaluating efficiency of this strategy we therefore propose to not only assess the direct costs (expenditure on the different activities) but also indirect costs meaning:

- Headcount dedicated to EUYS in DG EAC; and
- Time spent by different stakeholders engaging with the EUYS.

These indirect costs are quantified and monetised using the EU standard cost model which will allow us to get a more comprehensive view of the costs of the implementation of this strategy. This is compared with the benefits of the EUYS as identified under effectiveness.

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Methods/sources
6. To what extent have the EUYS instruments, structure, processes and activities put in place at EU and national level for the EUYS proved well-functioning, non-burdensome and cost effective for their implementation at mid-term?	<p>The EUYS instruments, structures, processes and activities put in place at EU and national level have proved well-functioning, non-burdensome and cost effective.</p> <p>The budgets allocated and the time needed for these activities is proportionate to the results and impacts achieved</p>	Direct and indirect costs of the EUYS compared to benefits	Cost-effectiveness analysis
6.a To what extent, at what level and for whom do the instruments, and activities create (administrative or other) burdens for stakeholders?	<p>The instruments, processes and activities do not create excessive administrative or other burdens for stakeholders.</p> <p>Stakeholders agree that the burden is proportionate to the benefits of participation</p>	<p>Extent to which the instruments, processes and activities created administrative or other burdens for stakeholders.</p> <p>Description of which instruments, processes and activities created administrative or other burdens and for which stakeholders.</p> <p>Description of other burdens and for which stakeholders.</p> <p>Description of factors which create administrative burdens.</p>	<p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Costs data and time needed</p> <p>Survey of civil society organisations</p>
What are the main factors behind this?	The factors that create administrative or other burdens for stakeholders are understood and efforts exist to minimise them.		
6.b What is the scope for further simplification and burden-reduction in the instruments, processes and activities, at what level and for whom?	n/a	Description of how instruments, processes and activities can be simplified and for which stakeholder.	<p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p>
6.c Which instruments can be regarded as having the highest cost-benefits ratio?	n/a	<p>Description of costs and benefits of each instrument for different stakeholders.</p> <p>Description of instruments which have the highest cost-benefit ration.</p> <p>Direct and indirect costs per instrument</p>	Cost-effectiveness analysis at the level of different instruments
7 To what extent are the resources dedicated to the implementation of the EUYS proportionate to what the EUYS has set out to achieve?	The resources dedicated to the implementation of the EUYS are proportionate to the what the objective of the EUYS.	Extent to which the resources dedicated to the implementation of the EUYS are proportionate to the objectives of the EUYS.	Cost-effectiveness analysis

Table 2. Evaluation matrix – Efficiency

Relevance

As per the Better Regulation Guidelines¹¹², the criterion of relevance looks at the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention and hence touches on aspects of design. Analysis under the criterion of Relevance requires a consideration to how the objectives of an EU intervention (i.e. the EUYS) corresponds to wider EU policy goals and priorities. The analysis also requires the identification of possible mismatches between the objectives of the intervention and the (current) needs or problems.

<i>Evaluation question</i>	<i>Judgement criteria</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Methods/sources</i>
8. To what extent did the EUYS' objectives remain relevant over the 2019-2023 period?	Evidence demonstrates that the motivations of stakeholders to participate in the activities under the EUYS are in line with the EUYS objectives	<p>Evidence that stakeholders had (over the period 2019-23) an awareness of:</p> <p>Youth engagement tools at an EU level (e.g. the EU Youth Dialogue).</p> <p>Instruments to be connected to peers (e.g. EU Youth Portal and EU Youth Strategy Platform)</p> <p>Recognition tools of formal and informal and formal learning (European Youth Work Agenda).</p> <p>Existence of illustrative (qualitative) examples of how the EUYS responded to the needs of stakeholders over the period 2019-23 and youth problems addressed by the EUYS.</p> <p>Stakeholders' views about the EUYS' attractiveness to stakeholders, primarily to youth.</p> <p>Shares of different groups of consultees who consider that the EUYS addressed their needs in the period 2019-23.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth Survey and focus groups</p>
9. How well do the EUYS' objectives still correspond to the needs and challenges of young people and youth stakeholders today? And to the activities of	Evidence demonstrates that the EUYS continues to be visible and meet the needs of stakeholders (across all geographical levels and stakeholder types). The EUYS' ethos remains strong.	<p>Evidence / examples of alignment between Strategy's objectives and the current needs of stakeholders</p> <p>Evidence of new needs that emerged that were not covered by the EUYS' objectives</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the EUYS'</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth Survey and focus groups</p>

¹¹² [Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox, Tool #47, p.405-406](#)

national youth policy makers?

10. To what extent and how has the EUYS' relevance been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year?¹¹³

	<p>objectives meet their current / future needs</p> <p>Existence of no significant gaps in terms of how the EUYS responds to the current needs of specific stakeholder groups</p> <p>Share of different groups of consultees who consider that the EUYS addresses their current needs</p> <p>Evidence demonstrating that the motivations of stakeholders to participate in activities under the EUYS is in line with its objectives</p>	
There is direct/ indirect evidence that the European Year of Youth and its legacy increased the relevance of the EUYS	<p>Evidence / examples from activities under the Year of Youth (e.g. national initiatives, ALMA¹¹⁴, European Youth Event, debates held within the European Parliament, the European year of youth conference) having influenced the perceived relevance of the EUYS.</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the legacy of the Year of Youth had a positive or negative impact upon the EUYS' objectives.</p> <p>Evidence demonstrating that the motivations of stakeholders to participate in Year of youth impacted their motivations to participate in activities under the EUYS</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>

Table 3. Evaluation matrix – Relevance

Coherence

The methodological toolbox of the Better Regulation Guidelines is the baseline and the reference for the overall conceptual design of the framework for assessing coherence. In this sense, we will check:

- the 'internal' coherence: i.e. how the various core areas, instruments and guiding principles in different areas of the EUYS operate together to achieve its objectives. This also look at whether synergies have actively been sought across the EUYS' core areas and instruments, as relevant.

¹¹³ It should be noted that the original question from the ToR stated, "To what extent and how has the EUYS' relevance, coherence and added value been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year?". The decision was made at the tender stage to slit this question across each of the criterions so that they could be adequately addressed in turn.

¹¹⁴ [Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve.](#)

- the ‘external’ coherence: i.e. the relationship between the EUYS and other interventions, at different levels: for example, between EU interventions within the field of education, training and youth (e.g. European Education Area, European Strategy for Universities, Digital Education Action Plan, European Skills Agenda). Also, the relationship with other relevant EU policies and programmes with more high level and horizontal policy objectives such as the Green Deal, NextGenerationEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility).

<i>Evaluation question</i>	<i>Judgement criteria</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Methods/sources</i>
11. To what extent is the EUYS coherent with (current) wider EU policies, strategies and priorities¹¹⁵. To what extent is the EUYS coherent with international obligations, such as the Sustainable Development Goals? How could synergies be improved wherever gaps are detected?	<p>EUYS is coherent with existing wider EU policies, strategies and priorities which relate to the EUYS’ challenges and objectives</p> <p>EU Youth Strategy is coherent with international obligations, such as the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>Gaps and synergies are detected between the EUYS and wider EU policies, priorities or international obligations</p>	<p>Extent to which the EUYS is coherent with existing wider EU policies and EU strategies which relate to the EUYS’ challenges and objectives</p> <p>Extent to which the EUYS is coherent with international obligations, such as the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>Number of actions within the three core areas of the EUYS which refer directly to other EU policies</p> <p>Share of stakeholders which perceive complementarities with relevant EU policies and priorities or international obligations which relate to the EUYS’ objectives</p> <p>Share of stakeholders which perceive overlaps to relevant EU policies and priorities or international obligations which relate to the EUYS’ objectives</p> <p>Examples of gaps with EU policies and priorities, or international obligations as well as synergies to be improved</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth Survey and focus groups</p>
12. To what extent are the EUYS’ core areas and instruments coherent with one another?	<p>The EUYS’ core areas and instruments are coherent internally (i.e. with one another)</p>	<p>Extent to which the EUYS’ core areas and instruments are coherent internally</p> <p>Share of stakeholders which perceive the three core areas (i.e. ‘Engage’, ‘Connect’, ‘Empower’) of the EU Youth Strategy as coherent internally</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>

¹¹⁵ In particular, the evaluation will examine the coherence with the following strategies/ policies/ initiatives: European Education Area, European Strategy for Universities, European Research Area, New European Innovation Agenda, European Green Deal, Digital Education Action Plan, European Skills Agenda, NextGenerationEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Youth Action Plan in EU external action, EU Strategy on the Rights of the child, EU Human rights and Democracy Action Plan, Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation, Communication on an LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the EU Anti-racism Plan 2020-2025, EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life 2021-2030, EU Citizenship Report 2020 Empowering citizens and protecting their rights

13. To what extent and how has the EUYS' coherence been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year? ¹¹⁶		Share of stakeholders which perceive the instruments (Evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge building, mutual learning and dissemination, Future National Activities Planner, EU Work Plans for Youth, EU-CoE Youth Partnership, Participatory governance, EU Youth Dialogue, EU Youth Coordinator, Communicating the EU Youth Strategy, Mobilising and Monitoring EU Programmes and Funds, European Youth Work Agenda, Youth Information and Support) of the EU Youth Strategy as coherent internally	Youth Survey and focus groups
	The EUYS' core areas and instruments were coherent with the activities under the Year of Youth	<p>Extent to which the EUYS was coherent with the activities under the Year of Youth.</p> <p>Number of actions within the three core areas of the EUYS which interlinked directly to actions under the Year of Youth</p> <p>Share of stakeholders which perceived synergies with the Year of Youth (and its legacy) and the EUYS' objectives and actions</p> <p>Share of stakeholders which perceive overlaps with the Year of Youth (and its legacy) and the EUYS' objectives and actions.</p>	<p>Desk Research</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth Survey and focus groups</p>

Table 4. Evaluation matrix – Coherence

EU added value

To operationalise the analysis of EU added value, the evaluation assesses four main aspects:

- **Volume/scale effects:** the extent to which the EUYS creates additional volume effects (scale of cooperation) which would not be achieved through national actions.
- **Scope effects:** the extent to which the EUYS covers stakeholders that would not be covered by national interventions.

¹¹⁶ It should be noted that the original question from the ToR stated, “To what extent and how has the EUYS' relevance, coherence and added value been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year?”. The decision was made at the tender stage to split this question across each of the criteria so that they could be adequately addressed in turn.

- **Role effects:** the extent to which the EUYS and actions implemented through it allowed innovation and its uptake at national and organisational level. For example, the EUYS could emphasise focus on certain new priorities that are otherwise under-represented at national level.
- **Process effects:** the extent to which the EUYS created innovation in the process. This concerns notable spill-over effects such as how engaged, connected and empowered youth across Member States have become. The provision of tools for managing as well as recognising outcomes of the EUYS and their use are possible examples of process effects.

<i>Evaluation question</i>	<i>Judgement criteria</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Methods/sources</i>
14. How and to what extent does action at EU level add value in addressing the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy, beyond what individual MSs could achieve on their own?	The EUYS had added value over and above what could be achieved by Member States alone in its absence	<p>Volume/scale effects: the additional scale in terms of engagement, connection and empowerment of youth that has been influenced/ achieved through the EUYS.</p> <p>Scope effects: the relevant stakeholders across sectors were covered through the EUYS and relevant programmes/policies.</p> <p>Role effects: the coverage of new issues or priorities, as well as target groups, in addition to what is covered at national and/or regionals level.</p> <p>Process effects: the scale and nature of process innovation compared to what is done at national and/or regional levels.</p> <p>Evidence from stakeholders that the same results could have been achieved at national and/or regional levels without the EUYS.</p> <p>Evidence of impacts from other support schemes targeting youth at national and/or regional levels.</p> <p>Data on outputs from programmes under the EUYS (e.g. results of these programmes, data on youth engagement etc.).</p> <p>Number of participants in programmes under the EUYS at national and international level.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p> <p>Youth focus groups</p>
15. To what extent does the Youth Strategy promote cooperation between countries (in Europe and beyond)?	The EUYS outlined its added value through increased cooperation between countries on policies and matters relevant to youth.	<p>Evidence / examples of the EUYS having promoted cooperation between countries both within Europe and internationally (e.g. via EU-CoE youth partnership).</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which cooperation between countries can be attributed to the influence of the EUYS</p> <p>Evidence demonstrating that stakeholders were motivated by the EUYS to undertake actions and</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>

		cooperation across borders, both within the EU and internationally.	
16. To what extent and how has the EUYS' added value been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year? ¹¹⁷	There is direct/indirect evidence that the European Year of Youth and its legacy influenced the added value of the EUYS, over and above what could have been achieved by Member States alone in its absence	<p>Evidence / examples from activities under the Year of Youth (e.g. national initiatives, ALMA¹¹⁸, European Youth Event, debates held within the European Parliament, the European year of youth conference) having influenced the EU added value of the EUYS</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the legacy of the Year of Youth had a positive or negative impact upon the added value of the EUYS.</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>
17. What would be the most likely consequences of a discontinuation of the EU Youth Strategy?	Majority of stakeholders believe discontinuing (parts of) the EUYS would have negative consequences	<p>Stakeholder views on what would happen in terms of continuation of EU youth education, employment/social policies in the absence of the EUYS.</p> <p>Stakeholder views on what would happen to the different activities under the EUYS in the absence of EU funding</p>	<p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Civil society survey and focus groups</p>

Table 5. Evaluation matrix – EU added value

¹¹⁷ It should be noted that the original question from the ToR stated, “To what extent and how has the EUYS’ relevance, coherence and added value been influenced by the European Year of Youth and the legacy of the Year?”. The decision was made at the tender stage to split this question across each of the criteria so that they could be adequately addressed in turn.

¹¹⁸ [Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve.](#)

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS AND, WHERE RELEVANT, TABLE ON SIMPLIFICATION AND BURDEN REDUCTION.

The evaluation has not identified measurable potential for simplification and burden reduction, hence no table summarising this aspect is provided in this annex. It should be noted that due to interactions, overlaps and impossibility of precise attribution of costs to individual instruments, the data presented in the table cannot be used to precisely compare cost-effectiveness of various instruments.

Assessment typology

The table below provides a typology which has been applied across each of the instruments under the EUYS so to classify the overall cost-effectiveness at the level of instruments. The EUYS instruments considered here are the same as presented in impact pathways.

Assessment typology	Description
<i>High (+) cost effectiveness</i>	A high (+) cost effectiveness assessment suggests that the EU Youth Strategy is achieving positive outputs and outcomes at a relatively low cost. The EUYS' implementation is efficient, resulting in positive impacts for youth. Resources are being utilised better than one could have expected.
<i>Adequate (/) cost effectiveness</i>	An adequate (/) cost effectiveness assessment indicates that the EU Youth Strategy is achieving positive outputs and outcomes that correspond to the resources invested. The benefits obtained from the EUYS' implementation align reasonably well with the costs incurred.
<i>Low (-) cost effectiveness</i>	A low (-) cost effectiveness assessment implies that the EU Youth Strategy is not generating outputs and outcomes that justify associated costs. The EUYS' implementation might be inefficient or misaligned, resulting in benefits that fall short of the resources invested. Adjustments to resource allocation, design, or implementation practice may be needed to enhance its cost-effectiveness.
<i>Undetermined (~)</i>	An undetermined (~) cost effectiveness assessment arises when information gaps on either cost or benefit size make it challenging to definitively evaluate whether the EU Youth Strategy/ its individual instruments are cost-effective. This could be due to a lack of sufficient data or conflicting information. Further assessment and data collection may be necessary to determine the EUYS' efficiency.

Table 6. Assessment typology for the cost-effectiveness per instrument.

The table below provides the costs and benefits that were identified in this evaluation study. The table essentially summarises all the costs and benefits that are identified in the evaluation. The main source for the quantitative indications is the results from the cost-effectiveness analysis. Where quantitative indications are not available, information from all other sources used in this evaluation (interviews, desk research, focus groups, case studies) were used to give a more qualitative view on the costs and benefits for different actors.

Instrument	Anticipated output	Anticipated results/ impact	Costs	Benefits	Cost effectiveness assessment
EU Youth Work Plans	Individual: Stakeholders and policy makers at EU and national level are aware of workplan and activities to reach EUYS goals in a specific working period Product: EU Work Plans for Youth, including priorities and actions for working periods	Results Activities outlined in the EU Work Plans for Youth contribute to reaching the overarching goals of the EUYS during each working period Impact Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support	<u>Type - Recurring</u> At the EU level: some 0.33 FTE. At Member State level: some 0.7 FTE for all countries combined The calculations are based on an assumption of inputs in a range of around 1 FTE at the EU level in a year when a work plan is prepared (i.e. every three years). These calculations use FTE as equivalent of around 220 working days.	<u>Type – Output and Results</u> Published work plans – creating an opportunity to help focus and co-ordinate efforts of various stakeholders Stakeholders’ awareness of planned actions: results from the Public Consultation showed that 52% of respondents were aware of the work plans to a great/ certain extent, with more than half of CSOs and Public Authorities having the highest degree of awareness.	Assessment High CEA (+) Rationale The instrument incurred limited associated costs, hence cost benefit ratio can be assessed as high despite limited evidence on actual impact of the Plans. Among the CSOs that expressed a view in a targeted survey question on cost-effectiveness of EU Work Plans, a majority (60%) of respondents with a view considered benefits to outweigh costs to a moderate or a great extent.
Future National Activities Planners	Individual: MS policy makers learn from peers and engage strategically with them Product: FNAP connecting national and EU priorities, including funding programmes for youth	Results Member States refer back to and/or integrate objectives or tools of the EUYS in youth policies, plans & programmes at national level Impact Youth voices, needs of and impact on young people systematically taken into account in policy development on both national and EU levels	<u>Type - Recurring</u> At the EU level: some 0.07 FTE annually. At Member State level: some 1.4 FTE annually for all countries combined Borne primarily by public authorities at the Member State level. Country-level research suggests inputs in the range of 20-25 days per MS per round of FNAP development (i.e. once every two years) with the associated EU level input of some 30 working days. This adds up to around 1.5 FTE in total on an annual recurring	<u>Type – Output and Results</u> Reference source exists creating a possibility to learn on (planned) actions by other countries across a broad range of youth-relevant policy areas: large number of countries chose to participate and prepared FNAP Incentive to systematically reflect on national level youth policies in a format comparable across the EU; Limited evidence that FNAP was actually used by MS administrations to integrate EUYS objectives and tools into national level youth policies and actions.	Assessment Adequate CEA (/) Rationale Overall costs are limited. Effectiveness described as not fully satisfactory by stakeholders from several countries – benefits are limited as the format of FNAP outputs is not user-friendly for users looking for a reference source. On the other hand, a majority among an overall small number of CSOs that replied to a question on cost-effectiveness of FNAPs in an on-line survey considered that

Mutual learning and dissemination	Individual: Participants in the working group and peer learning activities learn about best/good/promising practices Product: Guidelines or principles at EU level	Results Participating organisations report positive influence of the guidelines/peer learning activities/practices on national policies and measures New or strengthened networks between policy makers and other stakeholders Impact Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support Increased levels of youth participation	basis, of which around 1.4 FTE falls on MS level (all countries combined).	<u>Type – Output and Results</u> Different outputs of expert groups, e.g. a proposal for a revision of the Council Recommendation on mobility of young volunteers across the European Union. Learning at individual level by participants of activities.	benefits outweigh costs to a great or very great extent
			No information available enabling precise estimate. Costs are primarily falling on organisers and participants of the expert groups, peer counselling, etc. Limited evidence gathered suggests that overall costs are likely to be low.	<u>Assessment – Undetermined (~)</u> Rationale Cost-effectiveness difficult to assess given small scale and dispersed character of actions Surveyed CSOs that expressed opinions on the balance of costs and benefits of mutual learning activities were fairly sceptical about benefits significantly outweighing the costs. The prevailing view was that benefits outweighed the costs to a moderate extent.	
Evidence-based youth policymaking and knowledge building	Quantitative and qualitative data on young people at the EU and national level Research and data available on youth via EU Dashboard of youth indicators, Youth Wiki and other platforms	Results Youth policies are developed based on the evidence gathered at EU and national level Data is used to feed into policy deliberation through participatory governance Inputs & information gathered from youth influence policymaking Evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of EUYS Impact	<u>Type - Recurring</u> Borne by EU budget (at the EU level): EUR 2.8 million annually (calculated as average of committed funds during 2020-2022 for work programme items: Support to better knowledge in youth policy; Studies & EU-CoE Youth Partnership). Member States' Administrations – generally small human resources inputs to update Youth Wiki and oversee or contribute to analytical and information sharing efforts.	<u>Type – Output and Results</u> Maintenance and updates of EU Youth Wiki https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 impact on the youth sector https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/covid-19-impact-on-the-youth-sector Easier access to evidence for design, implementation and evaluation of youth policies: youth-related data gathered together and presented on the platforms; an overview of national level policies and assessments related to youth; references to studies and	<u>Assessment Adequate CEA (/)</u> Rationale Among the CSOs that responded to a survey question on cost-effectiveness of evidence-based tools, a majority considered benefits to outweigh costs to a moderate or a great extent The difficulty in attributing effects makes the assessment cost effectiveness challenging.

Participatory Governance

	Voices of youth are systematically taken into account in EU and national policymaking Increased levels of youth participation		analyses gathered together. The completeness and updates of some data and information on the platforms remains uneven. It remains difficult to assess to what extent policy makers use data provided on Youth Wiki and similar platforms rather than relying on original sources of data (e.g. Eurostat). 30% of youth responding to the public consultation were of the view that young people had been sufficiently involved in the implementation of the EUYS. Of this group 47% were aware of evidence-based tools to a great/certain extent.	
Individual: Policy makers, young people and stakeholders learn and exchange information about policy developments Product: EU Youth Strategy Platform, civic dialogue, dedicated meetings offer opportunities to exchange	Results Mainstreaming of youth into other EU and MS policy areas Identifying and shaping specific initiatives in the youth sector Impacts Voices of youth are systematically taken into account in EU and national policymaking Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support	Type - Recurring Small costs overall, mainly related to time of preparing and participating in the EU Youth Strategy Platform.	Type – Results Policy-related initiatives and declarations related to EU Youth Strategy Platform activities. Examples include the Council Conclusion on a Sustainable Future for Youth (May 2023) and Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the intergenerational dimension in the youth field to foster dialogue and social cohesion (December 2022). 30% of youth responding to the public consultation were of the view that young people had been sufficiently involved in the implementation of the EUYS. 6 out of 16 Public authorities answering to the Public Consultation believed that the EUYS assisted them as a national or regional policymaker in their daily work, to a great/ certain extent.	Assessment Adequate CEA (/) Rationale Cost-effectiveness appears to be broadly satisfactory, mainly due to low costs. The perception of cost-effectiveness among CSOs is somewhat negative. Around half of surveyed CSOs that expressed a view, indicated that benefits outweigh costs to a small or moderate extent.

EU Youth Dialogue

Individual: Young people, policy makers and stakeholders participate in the dialogue Product: Set of recommendations and priorities are identified	Results Dialogue between youth and stakeholders The priorities are reflected in national and EU decision making Impact Voices of youth are systematically taken into account in EU and national policymaking	Type - Recurring Borne by EU budget (at the EU level): EUR 1.5 million annually (calculated as a sum of grants under Erasmus+ Youth to the national working groups of ca. EUR 1 million annually and Presidency grant of EUR 0.5 million that covers the costs of the EU Youth Conference).	Type – Results Three dialogue cycles completed since 2019. Tens of thousands of participants (a combination of in-person and virtual engagements) with a large share of participants from minority groups (well above shares in the total population). Diverse set of activities. Thematic focus of successive cycles created a forum for dialogue between youth and policy makers. Several activities also aimed at capacity building hence contributed to empowering young people to have a say, while no data have been identified to quantify the strength of that impact. It is impossible to determine the extent to which youth dialogue helped in having their priorities reflected in national and EU-level decision making. 7th cycle Youth Dialogue participants: 56 287 More than half, 58% of respondents to the youth survey declared knowing Youth Dialogue at least by name. Among respondents who indicated knowing the instrument at least a little, 35% declared having taken part in a Youth Dialogue, a high figure which suggests caution in interpretation (respondents may have had in mind other initiatives of a similar character or name) .	Assessment Adequate CEA (/) Rationale Among the CSOs that responded to a survey question on cost-effectiveness, a majority considered benefits to outweigh costs to a moderate or a great extent.
Individual: EU policy makers participate in cooperation and exchange with other COM services	Results Mainstreaming of youth into other EU policy areas	Type - Recurring 1 full time position, Brussels-based European Commission official	Type – Results A single contact point or a platform for sharing information; increased visibility of youth policies, also from Member States perspectives;	Assessment Adequate CEA (/) Rationale Small costs suggest favourable cost-effectiveness, given the

EU Youth Coordinator

Communicating the EU Youth Strategy

Product: Cross-sectoral cooperation on youth is established, Platform of sharing information	Knowledge development and exchange on youth issues within the European Commission services Alignment of activities within the EU services Coordination between different EU activities Impact Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support		contribution to mainstreaming of youth topics into other EU and Member State policy areas; successful coordination within the Commission services, primarily through the development of the Youth Network and the Year's National Coordinators and Stakeholder group. 65% of surveyed youth had heard of the EU Youth Coordinator by name only/ not at all. 40% of stakeholders responding to the PC were aware of the EU Youth Coordinator role.	output/results from one FTE. However, evidence from interviews at EU level suggests that an increase of resources allocated to this function could improve benefits more than proportionally, i.e. improve cost effectiveness CSOs that expressed an opinion in a survey, a majority of responses indicated benefits to outweigh costs to a moderate or a great extent.
Individual: Relevant stakeholders are aware of the EU Youth Strategy and ongoing implementation Product: Comprehensive and youth-friendly communication outputs around the EU Youth Strategy (e.g. posts, videos)	Result New and positive narrative of EU youth work policy and Youth Work in Europe Impact Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support	Type - Recurring No precise information identified; costs are expected to be small	Type - Results Multilingual material promoting the EUYS prepared in 2019; The primary channels used for communication include the European Youth Portal, various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, websites of National Agencies, Eurodesk, and Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (SALTO). Relevant stakeholders are generally aware of the EUYS. Indeed, 63% of respondents to the survey of youth indicated knowledge of the EUYS at least by name, including 13% declaring knowing very well or a fair amount about it (these figures are broadly similar to figures reflecting knowledge about national level youth policies declared by respondents). Indeed, 88% of surveyed CSOs were also found to be aware of the EUYS and its instruments.	Assessment Undetermined (~) Rationale Cost-effectiveness is difficult to assess due to time lag between more intensive information campaign and measurement of effects. Small costs would suggest broadly favourable cost-effectiveness.

Mobilising and monitoring EU programmes and funds

Individual: Better understanding of EU funding by policy makers and stakeholders Product: Better design of EU, national, regional and local level funding programmes for youth initiatives	Result Effective use of EU programmes and funds to tackle youth needs at EU, national, regional and local level Impact Youth active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity enabled through policies, promotion and support Youth transitioning into adulthood and working life through increased and inclusive opportunities in learning mobility, education and training and labour mobility.	Type - Recurring Close to zero. Gathered evidence suggests that the relevant mapping and monitoring activities take place as part of programmes such as Erasmus+ and is not an additional element brought by the EUYS	Type – Results EU programmes and funds are consistently found to have comparably high levels of awareness by stakeholder and youth. In turn, those who attended programmes such as Erasmus+ were found to have increased knowledge of the issues young people face and allowed them to feel that they could influence what happens in Europe (PC and Youth Survey)	Assessment High CEA (+) Rationale Favourable cost-effectiveness given the successful utilisation of EU programmes and funds to support the EUYS and youth initiatives, and no or negligible costs.
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Youth information and support

Individual: Youth are aware of their rights and opportunities available to them Product: EU Youth Portal, DiscoverEU, and EUYS platform is developed and used by youth	Result Equal access to quality information on youth rights, opportunities, services and EU programmes Impact Youth transitioning into adulthood and working life through increased and inclusive opportunities in learning and labour mobility	Type - Recurring The EUYS platform is covered under different activities mentioned above (e.g. EU Youth Coordinator). The average cost per year for the implementation of the European Youth Portal was EUR 771,999. This is paired with an average annual cost EUR 1.4 million for support to better knowledge in youth policy	Type – Outputs/ Results Information available at EU Youth Portal, EU Youth Strategy Platform, DiscoverEU and used by the youth. On average 22% of surveyed youth were aware of available youth resources (e.g. EU Youth Portal, DiscoverEU and EUYS platform) by name only. On average 14% knew of the resources very well or a fair amount. 45 out of 71 (63%) youth responding to the Public Consultation had used the European Youth Portal, while only 8 (11%) had used the EUYS platform.	Assessment Undetermined (~) Rationale Cost-effectiveness cannot be reliably assessed based on existing evidence. Evidence however suggests youth are broadly aware of available resource, and that the European Youth Portal and Eurodesk network provided information about opportunities for young people and encouraged their participation, leading to more active citizenship, enhanced skills, and personal fulfilment.
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European Youth Work Agenda

Individual: Young people are able to strengthen key skills and qualifications obtained through non-formal learning	Results Youth people are equipped with key skills and qualifications allowing them to transition to adulthood	Type - Recurring Negligible. Gathered evidence suggests that activities take place as part of programmes such as Erasmus+ or ESC and	Type – Outputs/ Results Improved skills of participants of activities and their recognition by	Assessment High CEA (+) Rationale
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Product: Recognition and quality tools are provided	Impacts Youth transitioning into adulthood and working life through increased and inclusive opportunities in learning and labour mobility	do not require additional resources at the EUS level.	qualifications (the scale of this is difficult to assess). Several policy documents; Council conclusions (e.g. on raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas (December 2020)) and Council Resolutions (e.g. on a EU Youth Work Agenda (June 2020)). The implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda was also seen as the second most relevant topic for cooperation in the 2021 FNAP, only quality youth work was viewed as more important. A part of the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda occurred through the Sub-Group on Youth Work that met six times between 2021–2022.	Favourable cost-effectiveness given no or negligible costs. The contribution analysis also found that the EYWA has strengthened the youth work policy framework in conjunction with other EU developments such as the SALTO network and EU youth funding programmes.
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Table 7. Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation

Introduction

This Synopsis Report summarises all consultation activities that took place in the context of the interim evaluation of the European Union Youth Strategy (the EUYS) 2019-2027 and presents the main results.

Consultation strategy

The consultation strategy for the evaluation was based on a mapping of stakeholders and included the following consultation activities to involve a broad range of EUYS stakeholders and the public:

- **A call for evidence** open to any stakeholder and the public on the European Commission's 'Have Your Say' portal from 23 Sep. to 21 Oct. 2022.
- **A public consultation** open to any stakeholder and the public, on the European Commission's 'Have Your Say'-portal from 26 Apr. to 2 Aug. 2023.
- **Quantitative activities** gathering data on awareness of the EUYS and engagement with different EUYS activities and instruments, collected through two targeted surveys:
 - Online survey of young people, reached through a general population sample in 10 EU Member States¹¹⁹ from 10 to 29 July 2023;
 - Online survey of youth civil society organisations, youth researchers active at EU and national level, and youth informal groups, from 15 June to 14 Aug. 2023.
- **Qualitative activities gathering** perceptions of the EUYS and examples of progress made in its implementation, collected through:
 - Key informant interviews with policy makers at EU and national level and focus groups with national policy makers, from 3 May to 20 June 2023;
 - Focus groups with young people from 14 June to 8 Aug. 2023;
 - Focus groups with civil society organisations, youth researchers and youth informal groups from 14 June to 23 Aug. 2023.

Stakeholder group	Call for Evidence and Public Consultation	Online surveys	Key informant interviews	Focus groups
General Public	✓			
Youth	✓	✓		✓
EU institutions/bodies	✓		✓	
Authorities at national level	✓		✓	✓

¹¹⁹ Czechia, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden

Experts and youth researchers	✓		✓	✓
CSOs/NGOs, platforms and networks representing or working with youth	✓	✓		✓
International organisations & bodies	✓		✓	

Table 8. Types of stakeholders consulted. Source: Kantar Public

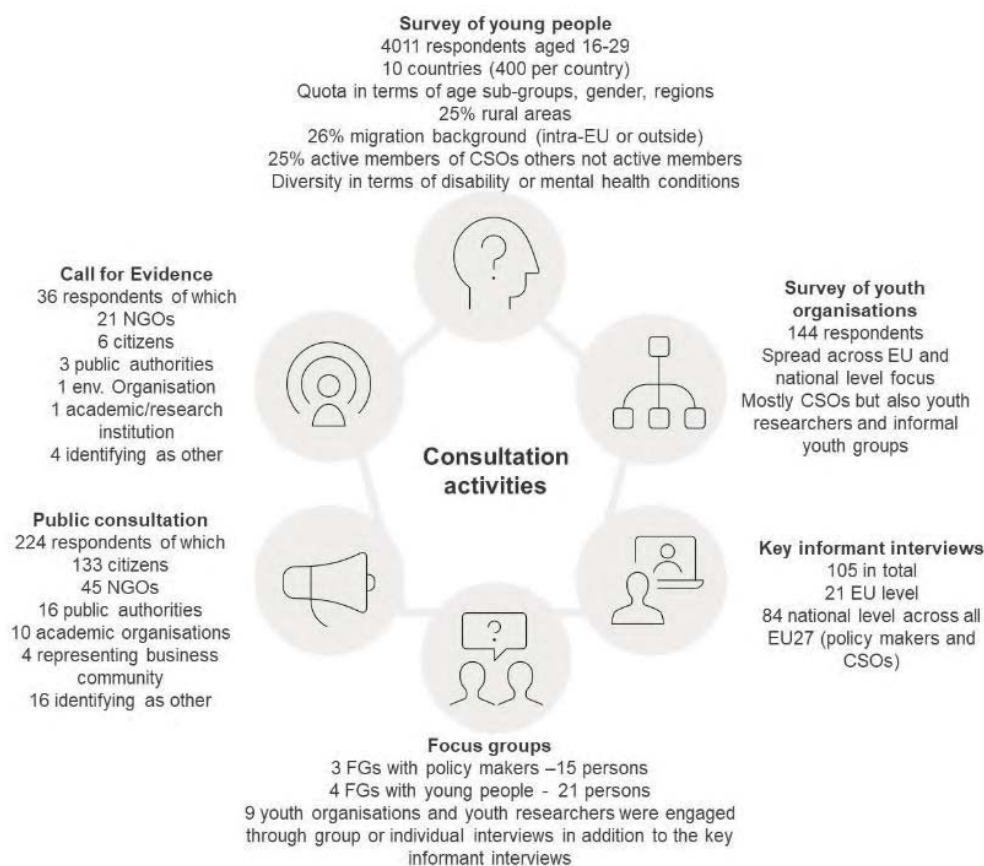


Figure 1. Stakeholders' participation in consultation activities.
Source: Kantar Public

Call for Evidence

Prior to the Public Consultation, a Call for Evidence was open from the 23rd of September until the 21st of October 2022 to gather opinions on the performance of the EUYS. Overall, 36 responses were provided, a majority from NGOs (58.3%, 21 out of 36) and EU citizens (16.7%, 6 out of 36). 12 countries¹²⁰ were represented across the respondents, with the largest proportion being from Belgium (28%, 10 out of 36) and Germany (14%, 5 out of 36).

Respondent category	Number of responses	% of total
Non-governmental organisation	21	58.3%

¹²⁰ N = Belgium (10), Germany (5), France (4), Portugal (3), Switzerland (3), Slovakia (2), Italy (2), Greece (2), Finland (2), Romania (1), Netherlands (1), Austria (1).

EU citizens	6	16.7%
Other	4	11.1%
Public authority	3	8.3%
Environmental organisation	1	2.8%
Academic/research institution	1	2.8%
TOTAL	36	100%

Table 9. Call for evidence overview. Source: Kantar Public

Respondents expressed their overall support for the EUYS, its aims, and its function in promoting youth engagement, social and civic involvement, as well as providing resources for young individuals. Recommendations for enhancing the implementation of the EUYS encompassed broadening the range of young people in the EU Youth Dialogue, making cross-border mobility initiatives more accessible, and concentrating on informal learning and youth work to empower young individuals. Emphasis was placed on amplifying the representation of vulnerable youth groups, maintaining a focus on inclusion and diversity, increasing the visibility of combating climate change and digital transformation, and addressing the consequences of digital technologies on mental and physical health and well-being of young people.

Public Consultation

The Public Consultation (PC) was launched on 26 April 2023 and remained open until 2 August 2023. The PC was based on a questionnaire, in all 24 official EU languages, and included four sections: [1] profiling questions, [2] questions to all respondents, [3] questions to youth, [4] questions to stakeholders (excluding youth), and [5] closing questions.

Respondent category	Number of responses	% of total
EU citizens	120	53.6%
Non-governmental organisation	45	20.1%
Other	16	7.1%
Public authority	16	7.1%
Non-EU citizen	13	5.8%
Academic/research institution	10	4.5%
Business association	3	1.3%
Company/business	1	0.4%
TOTAL	224	100%

Table 12. Public Consultation overview¹²¹ Source: Kantar Public

The largest group among EU and non-EU citizens were those aged between 18 and 23 years old (38% - 51 out of 133), as shown in the figure below.

¹²¹ As per the Better Regulation Guidelines, the responses were checked for the presence of campaigns or coordinated answers that could skew the overall answers per question. If 10 or more responses are identical across all open questions, they were considered to be part of a campaign. Upon review, no campaigns were identified.



Figure 2. Age of respondents under the PC.

Source: Kantar Public - Public consultation

While these findings offer insights into the participating respondents, it is essential to consider that the PC is not a representative sample of the entire EU. As the PC gathered 224 responses, the sample size is relatively small, which limits the generalisability of the results.

Summary of Public Consultation results

Under the criterion of **relevance**, the following main points were found in the PC:

- Three issues were recognised as challenges faced by young people in 2019-2022 consistently across all respondents. These were: the cost-of-living crisis (95%¹²², 213 out of 224), followed by mental health and well-being (91%, 204 out of 224), and financial stability (90%, 197 out of 224).
- The instruments of the EUYS that respondents were most aware of¹²³ were Erasmus+ (95%, 169 out of 178), followed by the European Solidarity Corps (80%, 143 out of 178), and the European Youth Portal (73%, 130 out of 178).
- Notably 52% (116 out of 224) of all respondents indicated that they were familiar with the EUYS to a great/certain extent.
- Among the youth respondents who indicated their familiarity with the EUYS (n=71), the three most renowned EUYS instruments were the European Youth Portal (63%, 45 out of 71), Erasmus+ (48%, 34 out of 71), and evidence-based tools (25%, 18 out of 71).
- Among respondents who identified themselves as public authorities (n=16), there were mixed opinions regarding the extent to which the EUYS was relevant to their daily work.

The following results were found from the PC in relation to **effectiveness**:

- Regarding the contribution of the EU and the respondents' country in mitigating the challenges¹²⁴, the PC revealed that both the EU and national authorities in the respondents' countries have primarily helped in tackling limited access to green transportation and to digital technologies (46%, 107 out of 230, and 48%, 108 out of 223 respectively). The primary contribution from the EU alone was found

¹²² Combination of the options "strongly agree" and "agree"

¹²³ Combination of the options "to a great extent" and "to a certain extent"

¹²⁴ Including Access to public services, Barriers to education, Barriers to learning mobility, Impact of the cost-of-living crisis, Financial stability, Job loss, Mental wellbeing, Risk of poverty, Differences in opportunities between rural and urban settings, Social exclusion, Youth unemployment, Barriers to youth participation, Limited access to digital technologies, Limited access to green transportation, such as public transport or bike lanes.

to be in mitigating barriers to learning mobility (48%, 110 out of 239), youth participation (43%, 105 out of 239) and education (42%, 99 out of 232).

- Youth policy cooperation between Member States (supported by the EUYS) was noted to have been effective to a great/ certain extent by 44% of stakeholders (40 out of 91, excluding youth). Among the respondents that held this view, the majority (62%, 24 out of 40) were NGOs.

The PC did not contain specific questions in relation to the **efficiency** of the EUYS, and only a few respondents provided some feedback in the open questions to the PC:

- Seven respondents called for enhanced funding flexibility in different youth programmes under the EUYS, including the possibility to transfer unused funds between Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, and to optimise resource utilisation¹²⁵.
- Six respondents¹²⁶ acknowledged in their input papers that the role of youth organisations in the implementation of the EUYS requires more financial support and empowerment. Engaging young people and their organisations in various instruments was considered essential for fostering ownership and effectiveness.

The following points were found from the PC in relation to **coherence**:

- Most respondents (70% - 64 out of 91, excluding youth) reported that the instruments under the EUYS were coherent and complementary to strategies and policies at the international/national level to a great/certain extent. Among these respondents, the majority (62%) were NGOs.

The main points from the PC on **EU added value** included:

- Most respondents (68%, 62 out of 91, excluding youth) indicated that the EUYS had provided additional value beyond what Member States could have achieved on their own to a great/certain extent. Within this group, the majority were NGOs (56%).

Online surveys of youth and civil society organisations

Online survey of young people

An online survey was conducted among young people, aged 16-29, in 10 Member States between 10 July and 29 July 2023, gathering 400 responses in each MS. The survey covered questions relating to all evaluation criteria, except efficiency.

¹²⁵ This point was raised by 7 stakeholders: Two business associations, four NGOs and one “other”.

¹²⁶ Including 5 NGOs and one International organisation.

Target	Sample size	Country coverage
Survey of young people aged 16-29 ¹²⁷	Sample of 400 respondents ¹²⁸ in each Member State	Sample of 10 EU Member States (CZ, DE, ES, FR, IT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE) ¹²⁹

Table 12. Youth survey overview.

Source: Kantar Public

The survey was completed by a diverse set of young respondents across several characteristics including gender, age, and region of residence.

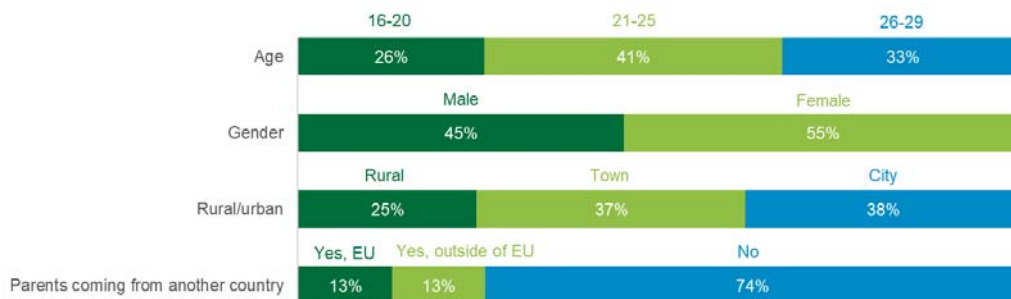


Figure 3. Survey respondents' characteristics.

Source: Kantar Public – Youth survey

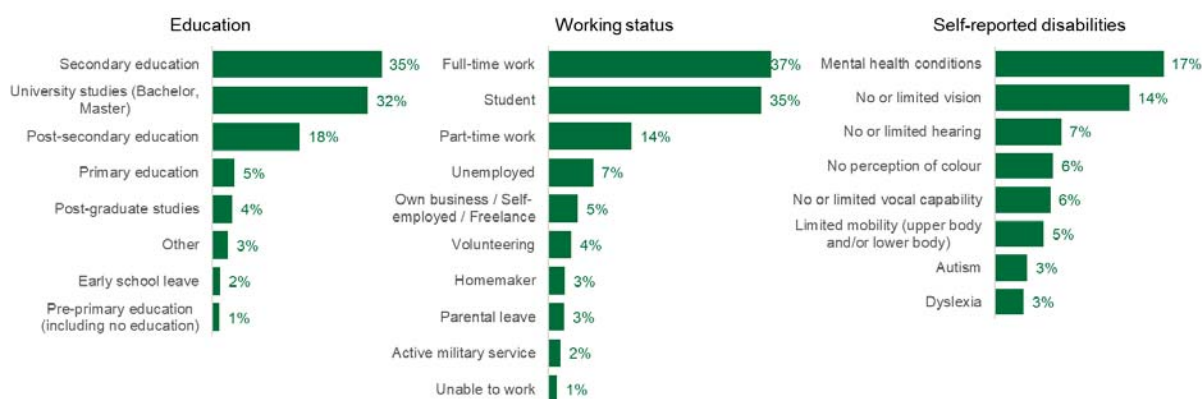


Figure 5. Survey respondents' characteristics in terms of education, working status and self-reported disabilities.

Source: Kantar Public – Youth survey

The survey of young people primarily explored two evaluation criteria relevant to youth: relevance and effectiveness of the EUYS.

¹²⁷ To capture the views and experiences of young people, the age group 16-29 was targeted by this survey to gather insights from both the younger population entering adulthood, as well as the young working population navigating the opportunities available to them.

¹²⁸ Respondents were selected to ensure a distribution mirroring that of the population of each given country with respect to age range (16-20, 21-25 and 26-29), gender, and region (NUTS 1). In addition, the pool of respondents was diverse with respect to a number of characteristics, such as attained education, employment status, residence in a rural/urban area, and self-reported disability. While a target of 400 respondents per country was aimed towards, in certain countries a few extra responses were collected prior to closing the fieldwork, leaving the overall number of responses collected at 4,011.

¹²⁹ These countries were selected to optimally capture the diversity of potential country effects that may affect the responses collected. The criteria used to select countries were the level of adoption and implementation of youth strategies and action plans at the national level, including the existence of a national youth strategy, the level of mainstreaming of youth policies in the national and local policy environment based on our initial assessment, geographical diversity ensuring a mix of countries from central, eastern, northern, western and southern Europe, and country size.

On the criterion of **relevance**, over a third of respondents reported knowing about the EUYS (38% responded ‘know very well’, ‘know a fair amount’ or ‘know a little’; 1538 out of 4011). The national youth policies were slightly better known (43% responded ‘know very well’, ‘know a fair amount’ or ‘know a little’; 1733 out of 4011). This is somewhat in contrast with the results of the PC, where 35% of the young people who participated were aware of the EUYS, while only 23% were aware of their national youth strategy. The best-known youth initiatives were:

- Erasmus+ for students, with 34% (1351 out of 4011) knowing it very well or fairly and an additional 28% (1121 out of 4011) knowing it at least a little;
- Erasmus+ for pupils, with 27% (1101 out of 4011) knowing it very well or fairly and an additional 27% (1083 out of 4011) knowing it at least a little;
- Erasmus+ for youth exchanges, with 26% (1026 out of 4011) knowing it very well or fairly and an additional 27% (1083 out of 4011) knowing it at least a little;
- Erasmus+ for apprentices, with 21% (885 out of 4011) knowing it very well or fairly and an additional 23% (907 out of 4011) knowing it at least a little;
- The European Youth Portal, with 16% (637 out of 4011) knowing it very well or fairly and an additional 25% (1011 out of 4011) knowing it at least a little;
- Different EU information platforms, known by 39% of respondents (combined responses ‘know very well’, ‘know a fair amount’ or ‘know a little’, 1580 out of 4011).

Despite the EU Youth Coordinator being in function only since June 2021, and with a focus on cross-sectoral cooperation within the European Commission, 35% of respondents reported knowing about this function (responding ‘know very well’, ‘know a fair amount’ or ‘know a little’, 1410 out of 4011).

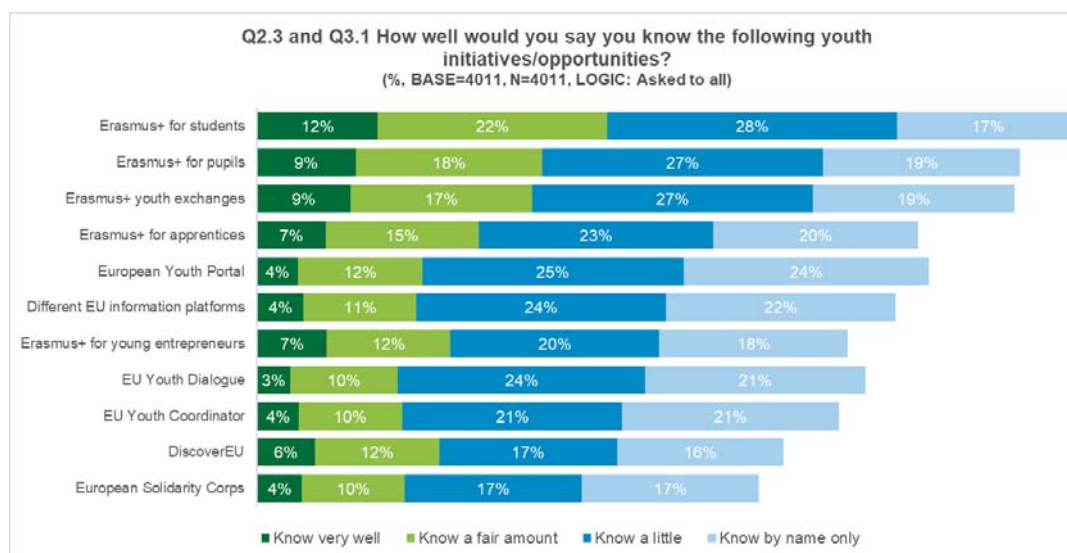


Figure 5. Awareness of EUYS initiatives.

Source: Kantar Public – Youth survey

The most important issue identified by the respondents to the youth survey was the rising cost of living (74%, 2987 out of 4011), followed by mental health and well-being (74%, 2970 out of 4011) and public health, including access to health services (73%, 2920 out of

4011). The overall economic situation was also an important issue according to 69% of respondents (2755 out of 4011), as well as unemployment, with 68% (2717 out of 4011) of respondents considering it important.

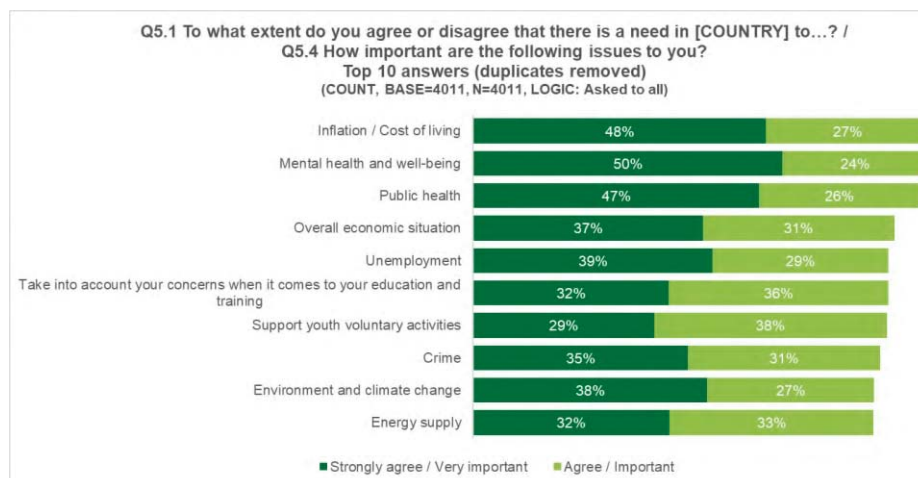


Figure 6. Youth needs at country level.

Source: Kantar Public – Youth survey

Regarding **effectiveness**, while the European Youth Portal was known by 41% of respondents (1648 out of 4011; combined responses ‘know very well’, ‘know a fair amount’, ‘know a little’), 42% of these indicated to have used it (698 out of 1648). Different EU information platforms were known by 39% of respondents (1580 out of 4011), of which 38% (605 out of 1580) indicated having used them.

Through involvement in different organisations (CSOs, NGOs) at the local level, most respondents agreed that they learned a lot of new skills (67%; 679 out of 1016), and a lot about youth-related issues (64%; 652 out of 1016).

Most respondents (67%; 2690 out of 4011) found that CSOs were at least somewhat effective at addressing their needs, followed by their local government (58%; 2343 out of 4011) and EU institutions (58%; 2324 out of 4011).

When it comes to being involved in EU programmes, the biggest benefit of taking part in Erasmus+ was making new friends and connections, with 65% of respondents agreeing (1053 out of 1625), followed by improving competences and skills (62%; 1007 out of 1625). The biggest benefit of participating in DiscoverEU was increased knowledge of the issues faced by young people (64%; 603 out of 941), and the biggest benefit of participating in the European Solidarity Corps was feeling the ability to influence what happens in Europe (64%; 574 out of 897).

Online survey of youth CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Group of at least four young people which does not have legal personality under the applicable national law, provided that their representatives have the legal capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf. These groups of young people can be applicants and partners in some Actions of Erasmus+ ([Erasmus+ Glossary of terms – Youth](#)).

An online survey was conducted between 15 June and 14 August 2023 targeting civil society organisations, youth researchers, and youth informal groups across the 27 Member States. The survey contained closed and open questions covering all evaluation criteria.

Table 14. CSO survey overview. (Source: Kantar Public)

Target	Sample size	Country coverage
Survey for CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups	144 respondents	The sample covered 27 EU Member States

Table 14. CSO survey overview.

Source: Kantar Public

The respondent distribution and key characteristics are presented in the figures below.

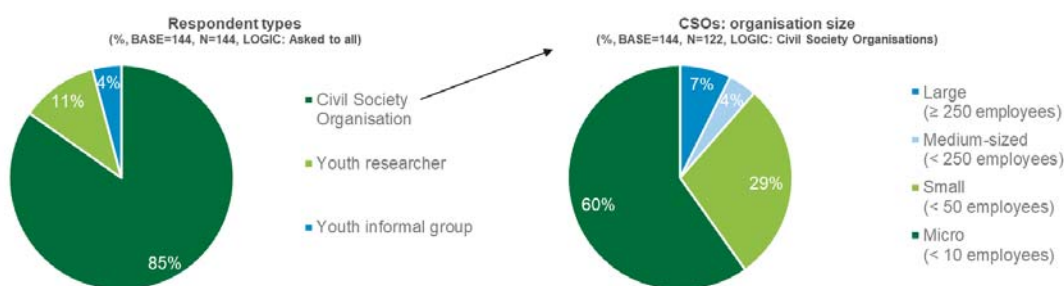


Figure 8. Respondent types.

Source: Kantar Public – Survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups

Looking into **effectiveness**, the EUYS instrument used most as part of respondents' activities is Erasmus+, with 93% of those aware of it (130 out of 140) using it (combined answer options 'always', 'often', 'sometimes' and 'rarely'), and 75% (105 out of 140) using it more often (combined answer options 'always' and 'often'). Out of the list of instruments proposed, the FNAPs were used the least by respondents who were aware of them (76%, 29 out of 38, combined answer options 'always', 'often', 'sometimes' and 'rarely').

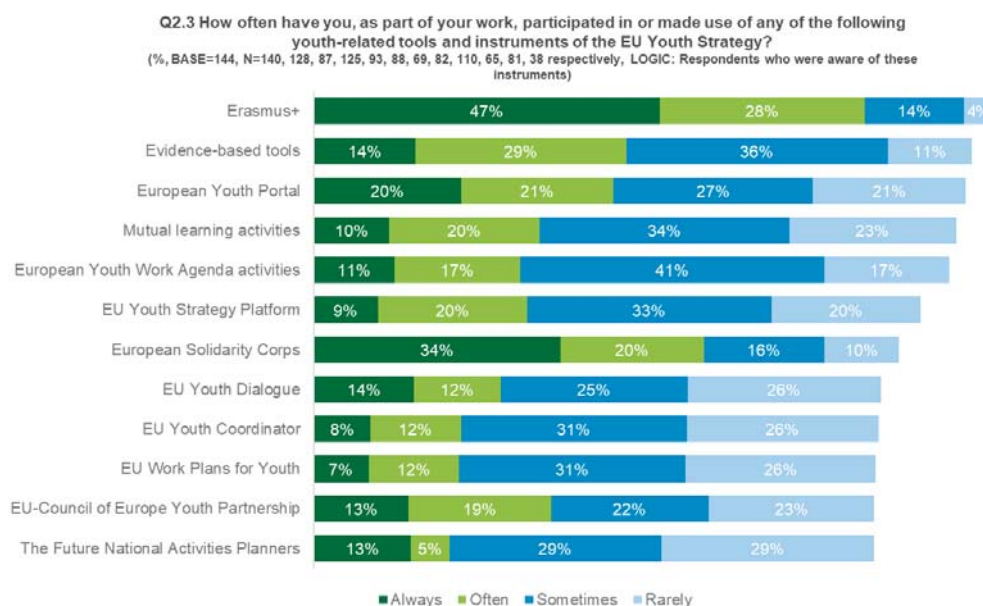


Figure 9. Participation or use of EUYS instruments.

Source: Kantar Public – Survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups

According to most respondents (73%; 92 out of 126), the EUYS brought young people together via learning mobility at the local, national or EU level, followed by youth work activities and volunteering (each 67%; 85 out of 126). At the international level, youth conferences and events are considered the most effective way in which the EUYS brought young people together (17%; 21 out of 126).

EUYS activities were deemed useful for their organisation's work by 77% of respondents who were aware of either the EUYS or any of its instruments (110 out of 143), with 47% (67 out of 143) finding them very useful.



Figure 10. Areas of youth empowerment fostered by the EUYS.

Source: Kantar Public – Surveys of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups

At all levels, 71% of respondents who were aware of the EUYS or of any of its instruments (102 out of 143) considered that the EUYS helped improve the quality of youth work, while 71% (101 out of 143) considered that it increased the recognition of youth work.

In terms of **efficiency**, the most cost-effective instrument, according to those respondents who have participated in it or used it, is Erasmus+, as 60% (78 out of 130) indicated that the benefits associated with it for their work outweighed the costs they incurred to a very great or great extent. The benefits that the participation or use of the European Solidarity Corps brought to respondents' work were also found to greatly outweigh the costs incurred by 55% of respondents (56 out of 102 responding 'to a very great extent' or 'to a great extent').

Regarding **coherence**, Erasmus+ is the instrument considered to be complementary to existing initiatives at the national level by the greatest number of respondents who are aware of it, as 61% (86 out of 140) indicated that it was complementary to a very great or great extent. Similarly, the European Solidarity Corps is considered greatly complementary with national initiatives by 60% of respondents (77 out of 128).

Concerning **EU added value**, European -level CSOs expressed that better engagement, increased connection, and empowerment of young people in the EU would not have happened to the same extent without the support of the EUYS. 57% of CSOs disagreed that increasing connection of young people at EU level would have been achieved without the EUYS. The pattern was very similar for the two other core areas.

Q6.3 Do you agree that better engagement, increasing connection and empowerment of youth could have been achieved to the same degree in the EU without the support of the EU Youth Strategy?

(%, BASE=144, N=78, LOGIC: Respondents who are aware of the EUYS and who work at the EU level or beyond)

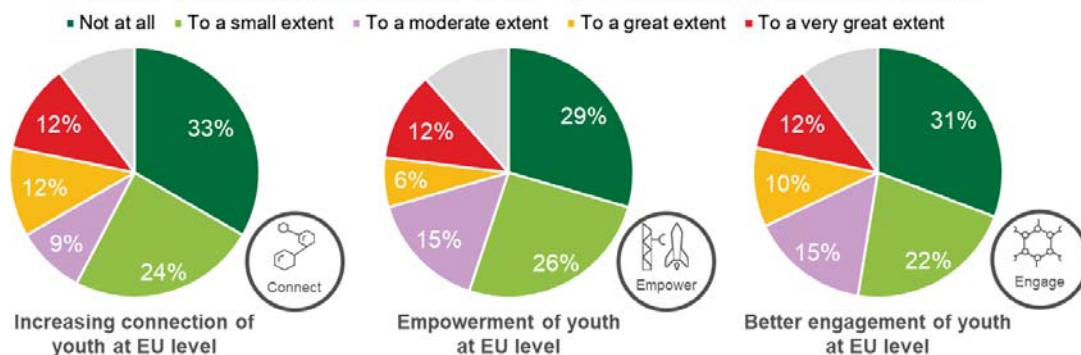


Figure 10. EUYS added value to youth engagement, connection and empowerment in the EU.

Source: Kantar Public – Survey of CSOs, youth researchers and youth informal groups.

On **relevance**, most of the respondents who are aware of the EUYS and work at the European level or beyond considered the EUYS relevant to address youth participation (82%; 64 out of 78), followed by social exclusion or discrimination (72%; 56 out of 78), and preparing for the green transition (68%; 53 out of 78), in the EU.

Most respondents aware of the EUYS found that the Year made the EUYS more relevant to their organisation (combined responses ‘to a very great extent’, ‘to a great extent’, ‘to a moderate extent’ and ‘to a small extent’) (63%; 80 out of 126).

Interviews and focus groups with policy makers, young people and civil society organisations

Key informant interviews with EU level and international organisations

A total of 21 key informant interviews with EU-level and international stakeholders were conducted between 3 May and 20 June 2023, comprising 14 interviews with representatives from EU institutions and bodies, interviews with representatives of EU Agencies, and interviews with representatives of international organisations.

Stakeholder group		Number of interviews
EU Institutions	DG CLIMA	1
	DG CNECT	1
	DG EAC	6
	DG EMPL	1
	DG ENV	1
	DG INTPA	1
	European Parliament	2
	European Economic and Social Committee	1
EU Agencies	EACEA	2
	Eurofound	1
International Organisations	OECD	1
	UNICEF	2
	The EU-CoE Youth Partnership	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS		21

Table 15. Overview of EU-level and International organisations interviews.

Source: Kantar Public

The primary objective of these interviews was to gain a better understanding of the evaluation criteria, especially by validating the correctness of the information previously gathered through desk research on the evaluation criteria.

Summary of results

Under the criterion of **relevance**¹³¹, the following main points were found in the interviews with EU-level and international organisations:

- Most interviewees were aware of the EUYS. However, 5 out of 21 interviewees, reported having limited knowledge of the EUYS and its key components.
- Six out of 21 interviewees highlighted the importance of the EUYS in providing financial support for youth organisations.
- Interviewees from international organisations remarked that the EUYS would become more relevant if it ensured better alignment with human rights, which, according to them, are not sufficiently highlighted in the current version of the EUYS.

Under the criterion of **effectiveness**¹³², the following main points were found in the interviews with EU-level and international organisations:

- Almost all interviewees uniformly agreed on the benefits of establishing the EU Youth Coordinator, whose role in knowledge-sharing on youth needs for cross-sectoral cooperation within the European Commission is seen as very effective.
- Interviewees from the Commission considered that the EUYS, in particular through the EU youth programmes, has been highly effective in responding to crises and advancing the green and digital transition among young people.

Under the criterion of **efficiency**¹³³, the following main points were found in the interviews with EU-level and international organisations:

- Almost all interviewees consider that the costs linked to implementing the EUYS are minimal and sufficient to meet the EUYS' objectives.
- It was also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the budgets of national youth organisations for implementing youth related projects, leading these organisations to rely more heavily on EU programmes.

Under the criterion of **coherence**¹³⁴, the following main points were found in the interviews with EU-level and international organisations:

- All interviewees agreed on the coherence of the EUYS instruments. For example, the interviewees reported that the EUYS' instruments complement each other

¹³¹ For a definition of relevance, please refer to the definition provided in the introduction of this synopsis report.

¹³² For a definition of effectiveness, please refer to the definition provided in the introduction of this synopsis report.

¹³³ For a definition of efficiency, please refer to the definition provided in the introduction of this synopsis report.

¹³⁴ For a definition of coherence, please refer to the definition provided in the introduction of this synopsis report.

and offer various means to achieve common objectives, such as ensuring youth participation through different instruments.

- 3 out of 21 interviewees noted that the EUYS would become more coherent with international obligations if it was more aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). For example, an explicit link could be drawn between the European Youth Goals (Hereafter EYGs) and the UN SDGs.

Under the criterion of **EU added value**¹³⁵, the following main points were found in the interviews with EU-level and international organisations:

- All interviewees believed the EUYS offered substantial value beyond what individual Member States could achieve on their own, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.
- Interviewees also commented that a discontinuation of the EUYS could lead to reduced investments from Member States in youth related initiatives at the national level, which could diminish the influence and empowerment of young people.

Key informant interviews with policy makers at national level

A total of 83 interviews were conducted across 27 Member States between 3 May and 20 June 2023 with national stakeholders, including ministries responsible for youth policy, national youth or education agencies, national youth councils, and agencies implementing EU youth programmes.

Concerning **effectiveness**, the interviewed stakeholders acknowledged positive outcome of the EUYS to mainstream the youth perspective across different policy domains at the national level. This was mainly possible via the instruments and by being used as an overarching framework for national youth policies. While stakeholders were generally satisfied with most of the EUYS instruments (e.g., Erasmus+, EU Youth Dialogue), they mentioned that certain instruments could be improved, such as the EU Youth Coordinator or the FNAPs.

National policy makers agreed that the EUYS is highly **efficient** but mentioned the need for more financial resources to better implement its objectives, namely in terms of the funding provided to various youth initiatives supported by the EUYS at the national level.

The EUYS was considered to be highly **coherent** within its own core areas and instruments, which, according to national policy makers, has been achieved through the EYGs and guiding principles of the EUYS. National policy makers also expressed that the EUYS is largely coherent with national policies in their respective countries.

In terms of **EU added value**, national policy makers mentioned that the EUYS positively affected youth policies beyond what individual Member States could achieve on their own. The broadness of the EUYS, its ability to be an overarching framework, and its capacity to mainstream youth perspective, were key in covering new topics in addition to those covered at national level. In addition, the EUYS has helped foster cooperation between Member States and across organisations working on youth within different policy areas.

¹³⁵ For a definition of EU added value, please refer to the definition provided in the introduction of this synopsis report.

With regards to **relevance**, a large share of the national policy makers interviewed across most countries confirmed alignment between the EUYS and national strategies. The EUYS' objectives have remained highly relevant for the national policymakers. However, some mentioned that the EUYS could only partially cover country-specific needs, such as youth unemployment in certain Member States.

		Number of interviews	Member States
Ministry responsible for youth policy at national or regional level		39	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK
National Governmental Agency responsible for the implementation of youth policy	Agency for Higher Education and Science ¹³⁶	1	DK
	National Agency for Education ¹³⁷	1	FI
	Landesjugendamt ¹³⁸	1	DE
	Agency of Youth Affairs (JRA) ¹³⁹	1	LT
	Agency for International Youth Programs (JSPA) ¹⁴⁰	1	LV
	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh ¹⁴¹	2	MT
	Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth ¹⁴²	2	PT
	National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM) ¹⁴³	1	SK

¹³⁶ The Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science is an agency in the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and handles tasks within preparation and administration of grants for research, higher education and research-based innovation, as well as the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme.

¹³⁷ The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) is the national development agency responsible for early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general and vocational upper secondary education as well as for adult education and training. Higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

¹³⁸ The Landesjugendamt supports the local youth welfare services, the youth welfare offices and the independent youth welfare agencies in their work.

¹³⁹ The Agency of Youth Affairs implements the established national youth policy measures which encourage young people's motivation to engage in active public life and take part in addressing youth problems. The key objectives of the agency include: coordinating the activities of state institutions and agencies with regard to youth policy, developing and implementing national youth policy programmes and instruments, and analysing the situation of youth, youth organisations and organisations working with youth in Lithuania.

¹⁴⁰ The JSPA is a direct administrative institution under the authority of the Minister of Education and Science, whose purpose is to promote youth activity and mobility, participation in youth voluntary work, non-formal education and youth information programs and projects, and non-formal education of young people in relation to lifelong learning.

¹⁴¹ Aġenzija Żgħażaġh provides information on services and opportunities for young people and listens to their views on issues that impact on their lives. It participates in Eurodesk, the European Youth Card and EU programmes. It manages, implements and coordinates the National Youth Policy, and promotes and safeguards the interests of young people. It is operating under the Government of Malta – Ministry for Education, Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation

¹⁴² The Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth's is a governmental body and its mission is to implement an integrated and decentralized policy for the areas of sport and youth, in close collaboration with public and private entities, namely with sports bodies, youth associations, students and local authorities.

¹⁴³ The National Institute of Education and Youth implements activities such as education and counselling for teaching and non-teaching staff, methodological guidance of schools and school facilities, applied pedagogical research, organization of subject Olympiads and competitions, external testing at schools, informal education of youth, and management of the library fund.

	INJUVE ¹⁴⁴	2	ES
	Agency for Youth and Civil Society ¹⁴⁵	1	SE
National Agency for the implementation of EU youth programmes		23	AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, HR, IE, IT, FR, LT, LU, PL, RO, SI
National Youth Council	Cyprus Youth Council ¹⁴⁶	1	CY
	Czech Council of Children and Youth ¹⁴⁷	1	CZ
	Bundesjugendring ¹⁴⁸	1	DE

Table 15. Interviews conducted for the country research

Focus groups with national level policymakers

Three focus groups were conducted with 15 national policy makers in Denmark, Germany and Slovakia¹⁴⁹ between 21 and 29 June 2023, to examine the extent to which there is alignment between the EUYS and national youth policies. As part of this activity, qualitative data was collected on perceptions on the relevance and effectiveness of the EUYS, success stories on achieving its objectives, and barriers to youth engagement and inclusion in policymaking.

The influence of the EUYS differs in these three Member States. Interviewed national policy makers in Denmark mostly set national youth initiatives independently of the influence of the EUYS, while interviewed national policy makers in Germany align national initiatives with EUYS core areas and objectives.

Effectiveness of the EUYS

DE Certain instruments are considered very effective in involving young people and promoting youth participation, such as the EUYD and the EYY. However, policy makers mentioned that the EUYD could have a greater reach, and that there could be more information about how the results of the national processes within the EUYD are dealt with at the EU level.

¹⁴⁴ INJUVE (the Youth Institute) is a public body, attached to the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, whose main activity is aimed at promoting actions for the benefit of young people.

¹⁴⁵ The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society is a government agency that works to ensure that young people have access to influence and welfare. It also supports the government in issues relating to civil society policy.

¹⁴⁶ The Cyprus Youth Council aims at promoting dialogue and cooperation between youth in Cyprus and also connecting them with youth in Europe and the world. CYC is in continuous cooperation with the European Youth Forum.

¹⁴⁷ The Czech Council of Children and Youth concentrates on advocacy of youth interests and lobbying within institutions, as well as involvement in the activities of the European Youth Forum, Youth Events of the European Union Presidency, and international youth exchanges, seminars and trainings.

¹⁴⁸ As a working group of youth organisations and regional youth councils (Landesjugendringe) in Germany, the Bundesjugendring represents a strong network of about six million children and young people who are members of youth organisations and youth councils. Youth organisations are places for children and young people to experience a sense of community, learn, spend leisure time and be active.

¹⁴⁹ These three countries were selected to ensure a diversity with respect to criteria including the size and complexity of the government structure, the presence of national programmes for cross-border mobility and youth volunteering, the presence and prominence of a strategy promoting the social inclusion of young people, the presence of initiatives fostering innovation skills through non-formal learning, the presence of measures furthering entrepreneurial competences through non-formal learning, and the mechanisms of quality assurance for youth work that are in place in the country. After initially planning to conduct a focus group with youth policy makers in Croatia as well, this was ultimately not possible due to their limited availability. They were, nevertheless, interviewed as part of the country research on Croatia, therefore their views are reflected in the analysis of interviews with national policy makers.

DK	Policy makers consider the EUYS instruments effective for engaging with youth and making youth engage with each other. However, they consider that there is room for improvement as some instruments, such as the FNAPs, require a lot of reporting and administrative processes in order to use them.
SK	The outcomes of the EUYD are considered applicable to national youth policy, and data from the EUYD were used in the creation of the national youth strategy. Youth Wiki provides inspiration for national policymaking based on what is being done in other countries.

Table 17. Policy makers' perceptions of effectiveness of the EUYS (DE, DK, SK).

Source: Kantar Public – Focus groups with national policy makers.

Youth engagement was encouraged through a range of initiatives introduced at the country level in Denmark, Germany, and Slovakia. These were considered successful and contributed to the EUYS' objectives.

Focus groups with young people

The participants in each country were divided into two groups: one composed of young people who are or have been involved in youth activities at the local, national or EU level, and one composed of young people who had not been involved in any youth activities.

Success stories were identified both for EU-level youth activities and national/local youth activities. All participants mentioned that their participation in these national and EU-level youth activities was an enriching experience that helped them feel empowered, engaged with policy making, or connected with people from other countries and cultures.

Concerning the **barriers** to accessing youth activities, the main issue mentioned across all focus groups was the lack of awareness of the different youth opportunities. All participants criticised a sub-optimal and inconsistent use of social media promotion of these instruments, which limits access to a smaller group of individuals who are intrinsically more motivated to learn about this topic and know where to look to find the information they need.

Group Interviews with CSOs and youth researchers

In addition to the CSO survey, CSOs were also able to express whether they would like to take part in a follow up interview as part of a group of CSOs. In total, 7 CSOs and youth researchers took part in three group interviews and two individual interviews. Three out of the 7 interviewed CSOs are active at EU level, two interviewed CSOs are active in Germany, one is active in France and one in Italy. Their areas of interest cover youth, students, and the intersectionality between youth and climate action.

Concerning **relevance** of the EUYS, the following main points were raised:

- The interviewed CSOs mentioned the challenges currently faced by young people relate to COVID-19 and mental health, as well as barriers to engagement in national youth strategies for the youth with fewer opportunities. There was a general consensus among all interviewees that the EUYS has played an important role in addressing such challenges.

- All CSOs mentioned the role of the EUYS in supporting their areas of work. For example, some CSOs mentioned the role of the EUYS in promoting the environmental and sustainability initiatives, and just transition.
- According to two CSOs, two emerging needs were not yet visibly addressed by the EUYS. One CSO highlighted the specific challenges faced by young people in rural areas and the importance of tailor-made measures to support them, while another CSO highlighted the need for a more inclusive approach to ensure access to opportunities for all young people, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Concerning **effectiveness** of the EUYS, the following main points were raised:

- All interviewed CSOs mentioned the valuable support provided by the EUYS through instruments such as the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+, which have served as pivotal means for engaging young people in their initiatives. Furthermore, all interviewed CSOs mentioned that they use the European Youth Goals as a reference point to assess whether their activities align with the EUYS when engaging with young people at the local and regional levels.
- One central theme from the interviews with CSOs and youth researchers, however, was a lack of awareness and accessibility of the EUYS among stakeholders, particularly among CSOs and young people themselves. Both interviewed CSOs and the interviewed youth researchers provided that their organisations and the youth they work with are not fully aware of the EUYS and its objectives, resulting in a possible divergence between EUYS' intentions and its actual impact.
- All interviewed CSOs and youth researchers noted the need for better support, collaboration, and synergies between different stakeholders, particularly at the regional and national levels.

Concerning **efficiency** of the EUYS, the following point was raised:

- Perspectives on the efficiency of the EUYS instruments revealed varying viewpoints and suggestions for improvement among interviewees. One concern shared by three interviewed CSOs and both youth researchers was the bureaucratic burden associated with applying for funding under the instruments of the EUYS.
- Only one CSO provided a concrete example of such bureaucratic burden, and they referred to Erasmus+ projects. They mentioned that the application process often entails filling out extensive documentation, sometimes up to a hundred pages, despite the relatively low chance of receiving funding for the applicant. This concern about extensive application requirements was also raised by three CSOs and one youth researcher for programs such as Erasmus.
- Two CSOs put forward the suggestion that simplifying the application processes for funding and enhancing communication on the opportunities for youth available under the EUYS would help improve the efficiency of the EUYS overall.

Concerning **coherence** of the EUYS, the following main point was raised:

- All interviewed CSOs and researchers considered the EUYS coherent with international/ national policies and initiatives. Nevertheless, four CSOs highlighted the importance of creating a strong alignment between the EUYS and national, regional, and local youth policies.

Concerning **EU added value** of the EUYS, the following main point was raised:

- All CSOs highlighted the added value of the EUYS in fostering international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and collaboration between various stakeholders across the EU.
- Two CSOs reiterated the value of the EUYS in providing opportunities for youth engagement and empowerment. Through for example the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+, the EUYS was considered to have facilitated the participation of young people in various initiatives, thus positively impacting their personal development and growth.
- Finally, one CSO and one youth researcher mentioned the EUYS' added value in promoting and improving the implementation and coherence of youth policies across Member States.

Cross-synthesis of results

The following section aims to synthesise and triangulate the findings across each of the stakeholder consultation activities with regards to each of the evaluation criteria.

Effectiveness

The **role of the EUYS in supporting youth empowerment and skill development** was highlighted across consultation activities. For example, both CSO surveys and focus groups, as well as youth survey, corroborate this finding. Respondents across each of the consultation activities consistently report that their involvement in EUYS activities has resulted in the acquisition of new skills and a deeper understanding of youth-related issues. The **effectiveness of the EUYS in addressing social and economic disparities among youth and ensuring inclusivity of youth with fewer opportunities** was also raised as another important theme across consultations. The consultations also underscored **the important role of the EUYS in fostering collaboration and partnerships**. The CSO survey and focus groups highlighted that the EUYS has been pivotal in fostering the creation of new partnerships among organisations.

Efficiency

With regards to the cost-effectiveness of EUYS instruments, the CSO survey outlined **disparities in the perceived cost-effectiveness of various instruments**. Erasmus+ was identified as the most cost-effective instrument, with 60% of respondents (86 out of 144) indicating that its benefits significantly outweighed the costs incurred for their work. In contrast, mutual learning activities were considered less cost-effective, with only 29% of respondents (22 out of 77) sharing the same perspective.

Coherence

National stakeholders expressed that the EUYS, through the EYGs and the guiding principles, is aligned with national level policies and that there are synergies between EU and national policies. The CSOs consulted also confirmed that coherence is also ensured through EU programmes. Stakeholders particularly highlighted the increased influence of the EUYS in ensuring the coherence of EU policies with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Council of Europe youth-related initiatives.

EU added value

Policymakers at EU and national level expressed the added value of the EUYS in terms of its benefits in generating exchanges on youth-related issues at EU and national level, and in mainstreaming youth policy.

Relevance

CSOs confirmed that the EUYS has been instrumental in **addressing the challenges faced by young people**, particularly in areas such as employment, education and training, health and social inclusion. CSOs who were aware of the EUYS also found it highly relevant to youth participation, social exclusion and the green transition.

Some **emerging needs of young people** were identified in different consultation activities. Public consultations highlighted that young people's main concerns were related to the cost of living, mental wellbeing, and financial stability.