

## Shadow Report

### Implementation of the common objectives on Information and Participation

In November 2001 the European Commission presented its proposal for the open coordination in the youth field (White Paper "A new impetus for European Youth"). On 27 June 2002 the Council Resolution (2002/C 168/02) established the process of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and four common objectives: Information, Participation, Voluntary Activities and great knowledge and better understanding of young people.

The main objective of the White Paper on Youth field is to promote the participation of young people in the decision making process and to propose a new framework of cooperation between the different stakeholders on youth field.

Following the commitment taken in the November 2003 Council Resolution, the Member States produced a National Report on the implementation of the two common objectives by the end of 2005.

The European Youth Forum asked the National Youth Councils to elaborate their own report in order to balance the official results.

Therefore this report produced by the Portuguese National Youth Council will focus on Common objective Information and Common objective Participation, and will express our evaluation on the implementation of these two common objectives in Portugal, our concerns expectations and proposals.

Portuguese National Youth Council was actively involved in the White Paper Consultation process, having participated in the different moments of preparation of this document at national and international level (meetings, conferences - Santa Maria da Feira, Paris - during the French Presidency of EU ...).

Although the European Commission has invited member States to involve Youth Organisations fully in the preparation of member states national reports on how they have implemented the Open Method of Coordination Common Objectives, the Youth Organisations and particularly the Portuguese National Youth Council was not invited to participate in preparation of the national report.

It is important to remark that from 2001 to 2006 Portugal had 4 different Secretaries of State responsible for Youth that obviously originated instability at youth policies level, with permanent changes on priorities, programmes and also on the relation between Government and youth organisations. In our opinion this had negatively effects on the implementation of the Common objectives, not allowing the definition and implementation of a medium-long term strategy on youth policies.

In Portugal the main players and stakeholders in youth field are:

Governmental: Secretary of State for Youth and Sports

Portuguese Youth Institute (national and regional delegations)

NGO: National Youth Council

National Federation of Local youth organisations

Youth organisations

Students Organisations

## INFORMAÇÃO

We agree and believe on the importance to improve the information available for young people as a tool to increase youth participation in civic life and to the development of an active citizenship. We support the overall sub-objectives of the common objective on information: promote access for young people to information services, ensure quality information and increase participation by young people in information.

Before the adoption of the main objectives, it was in study phase the implementation of a new Youth portal and it was in its last phase of deactivation the Youth Information station. It was working the Information Services of the Regional Delegations and the central services of the Portuguese Youth Institute.

After the adoption of the common objectives we can stress out the following implemented actions on Information level:

- 1) Opening of the regional Delegations of the Portuguese Youth Institute, 19 Shops "Ponto Já" - spaces of youth information with high speed Internet spots.
- 2) Implementation and development of the new youth portal: [www.juventude.gov.pt](http://www.juventude.gov.pt)

These two measures were clearly developed to create integrated information services, coherent and coordinated and accessible to youth, what contributes to promote the access of youth to the information services. Although it's important to refer that there is still allot of Portuguese youngsters without access to the new Technologies and without knowledge of programmes and instruments of youth support, because of economical, educational or even geographical reasons. This way we think over the great importance of the opening of the "Ponto Já" spots in different places than the ones where it already exists and to facilitate the youth access to the information technologies. In other hand, it is important the enlargement of the Youth Portal to other areas of interest, having in consideration that it is an important tool of easy, fast and economical way of communication.

If in national level it was created the Youth Portal, in regional or local level nothing was developed, existing a clear lack in the Youth information systems in the local plan.

In the education and formation spectrum it is a need for the ones who work and develop activities in the Youth information areas. There is a need of an articulated strategy of formation not just for the workers of the IPJ, but as well for municipality and youth organization workers.

There is no strategy to “improve the link between information and counselling, with the aim of encouraging a learning and capacity-building process among young people on how to obtain, select and evaluate information in order to become informed users of information”.

About promoting the dissemination of specific information for young people through all information channels, particularly those most frequently used by young people such as internet, mobile phones, video films and cinema, it is being done only through internet.

There is not concrete and specific funding for youth information.

The 3rd Sub objective of youth participation in the information is it far away to be achieved; any action plan was put in practice till now. Nothing was done to involve the youth organizations or general youth in the preparation and implementation of strategies of youth information as predicted in the lines a), b) e c) of this sub-objective.

As a conclusion we can say that big steps were given in the sense of improving the information available from the government to the youth, essentially through the new Portal e and the “Ponto Já” spots. In other hand there is no articulation with the municipalities and with the youth organizations to develop one strategy of promotion of the youth information networks in a local level; it was not even promoted the participation of the youth organizations and the youth in information creation and dissemination.

## PARTICIPATION

### Implementation process

The Portuguese National Youth Council is not informed of the creation or even, was not invited to participate, in any committee or workgroup, to follow, or to implement a common objective about participation. It is still important to refer that the white book, the open method of coordination and the common approved objectives are not, still, well acknowledged, especially in the local authorities' level.

### Characterization/measures/implementation

After the adoption of the common objective about participation we should stress the following measures:

- 1) Re-activation in 2005 of the Consultative Youth Council, organ of Government consultation, where the national youth organizations participate. This organ is predicted in the Legislation since 1996 but it was not active since 4 years.
- 2) Approving of the law that defines the juridical status of the Portuguese Youth Council in 2005
- 3) In 2005 the elaboration of the process of a new law took place. This law will regulate the youth associativism in Portugal, as well the rights and duties of the youth leaders and ways of finance.
- 4) In 2006 the National Youth Programme was started. This programme objective is to receive contributions from the youth organizations, students and

specialist, through debates, journeys and conferences, in the sense to define a Youth action plan 2007 / 2013.

Besides the Youth Consultative Council, in Portugal the Youth are represented by the youth organizations in the National Youth Council and in the Local Youth organizations Federation. Still there is the Consultative Council in Madeira and Azores.

In terms of the sub objective "Participation by young people in civic life", promoting the youth involvement in the organizations, encouraging the YNGO's and local councils work; increasing the projects development that involve directly the youth in a local and regional level; the clear identification of the obstacles in the youth participation of less opportunity youth groups, almost nothing was done. It was not created a new financial system, it was not increased the financing to support youth associativism (the opposite was done, still this year the Youth Council's financing was decreased in 13%). In other hand, with the exception of new volunteering programmes, any strategy, programme was defined to increase the youth participation in active civil life, in school, work or in organizations.

In the sub objective "Participation in representative democracy" we have to refer:

- The local and regional Councils, practically don't exist, any strategy was defined in its' implementation.
- Rarely the youth organizations are involved in the definition of Youth Policies in local and regional level.
- Still, there is no regular, defined and structural dialogue between the State entities and the youth Organizations. There is still a lot to be done in the sense of the youth representative structures, especially CNJ, in the participation in the definition and implementation of the policies that affect the Youth in general. It still exists, a paternal vision over the youth and its' organizations.

Lastly in relation of the sub objective "Support various forms of learning to participate" we should register the good example of the "Hemiciclo" programme, that interconnect the formal education and the promotion of a civic conscience, but it was existing even before the White book and the general objectives. Besides those programmes nothing else was done.

In conclusion we can say that in the participation level, the recently taken steps are barely connected with the White Book and that there is still a lot to be done to increase the civic participation, to increase the youth participation, through its representative structures in the decision making processes and to structure a regular dialogue between them and the local and national bodies.

We believe that for a real implementation of the objectives of the white book, it is important:

- The creation of a national committee, where it will be obliged the presence of the National Youth Councils, to follow and to implement the Common Objectives.

- To be obliged for the Government to assume the responsibility of engaging the Municipalities so the Common objectives can be implemented in a local level.

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