



EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM **WORK PLAN 2013-2014**

ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MARIBOR, SLOVENIA, 21-25 NOVEMBER 2012

INTRODUCTION

2013-2014: CRUCIAL TIME FOR YOUTH IN EUROPE

This work plan will be implemented in an uncertain political and social context that affects young people living in Europe: a weakening economy that marginalises more young people, puts at risk their full integration in society, and widens the gap between them and decision-makers. In addition, the resulting growth in political cynicism delegitimises political processes and leads to potential growth in extremism. More resistance towards a rights-based approach from the institutions, due to its costs and binding power, as well as more cuts in grants and funds from public bodies to the NGO sector, could lead to an even more difficult situation for youth organisations and young Europeans.

The European Youth Forum believes, however, that young people are catalysts of positive change towards a sustainable development of Europe. Young people can contribute to finding innovative ways to overcome Europe's challenges. This is why the Forum's Strategic Priorities 2013-2018 seek to achieve the goals of increased youth participation, stronger youth organisations, and more youth autonomy and inclusion. The Forum will do this through being an agenda-setter in youth affairs in Europe, empowering its members, and adopting a rights-based approach in its work.

It would be crucial for the Forum to further develop broad and strategic partnerships with all the key actors that can contribute to this. These could include traditional institutional actors and partners in other regions of the world, but also new stakeholders and movements that the Youth Forum actively engages with and are committed to youth development and an improved (political and legal) framework for young people. Furthermore, the Forum will enhance its work by empowering its member organisations and involving them further in its work.

Until 2014, there will be a number of opportunities to achieve these goals: the European Parliament elections in 2014 will be the chance to highlight the need for an ambitious political agenda for the youth generation; the 25th Anniversary of the first EU Youth Programme will reinforce the importance of youth work; the 60th Anniversary of the entry into force of the European Convention on Human Rights will be the time for reflection on the status of youth rights. Other milestones will include the work towards a post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable development goals and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's five-year action plan.

STRUCTURE

The work plan 2013-14 is structured following three headings. This corresponds to the way the budget of the platform is organised.

A. Advocacy and Policy Development. This is the core area of work of the European Youth Forum as an agenda-setter in youth affairs and from its adoption of a rights-based approach. Special attention will be given to monitoring the quality of the policies and advocacy initiatives. The budget percentage includes the total costs of the work that will be executed under this heading: activities, advocacy, policy development, communication actions, and human resources.

Budget allocation: 47,52% in 2013 and 44,35% in 2014

B. An Inclusive Platform. Governance shall be further strengthened in order to empower member organisations as stated in the Strategic Priorities, as well as implement and monitor the progress of the Strategic Priorities. The budget percentage includes the total costs of the work that will be executed under this heading: statutory meetings, the various working structures, and membership services.

Budget allocation: 19,33% in 2013 and 22,13% in 2014

C. An Operational Platform. Organisational structures have to be permanently adapted so

as to best support the work of the platform. The budget percentage includes the total costs of the work that will be executed under this heading: structural functioning of the Forum in terms of office administration, human resources, partnerships, and legal development.

Budget allocation: 33,15% in 2013 and 33,52% in 2014

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This work plan is a result-oriented document. The expected results to be achieved are listed under each objective. Moreover, for each heading, a Critical Success Factor (CSF) is identified. According to its definition, CSFs are the essential minimum conditions to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the plan's implementation. This means that CSFs are the crucial achievements in order to consider the plan successful where no others are applicable. The implementation plan, adopted by the Board and publicly available, will define the detailed activities and the Key Performance Indicators in order to reach the results set by each objective and the Critical Success Factors.

The outcomes of the work plan will be monitored by the Forum's membership through regular progress reports presented by the Board to the members every six months during statutory meetings. At the same time, the Board will regularly monitor the progress of the implementation plan through detailed updates from the Secretariat at every Board meeting. This more detailed monitoring will be measured according to the concrete deliverables included in the implementation plan.

The Youth Forum will provide a space for Member Organisations to participate in the making process of the implementation plan.

A. POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The overall goal for the policy development and advocacy is, according to the Strategic Priorities, to make the European Youth Forum an **agenda-setter** in youth policy in Europe and beyond, to fulfil its role as a responsible stakeholder, and advocate for the rights of young people and access to rights of young people in particular. The Forum will do this by basing its policies on a **rights-based approach**, which means striving for legal and long-term changes to improve the situation of young people.

The Forum will continue to use its set of approved policies in its dialogue with the institutions, and will integrate communications tools to achieve the advocacy goals, such as the online and offline media, press work, branding, and positioning.

Three policy and advocacy chapters of the work plan correspond to the goals in the strategic priorities 2013-2018.

1. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Objectives:

- Strengthen the right to participate in elections. This should be done through lowering the voting age to 16 across Europe, through increased information about elections, civic education for all young people and also through encouraging e-participation.
Expected result: Increased amount of young people voting with an informed choice at the next European Elections.
- Increase the impact and equal access of young people in decision-making structures on youth: the co-management in the Council of Europe; the Structured Dialogue on Youth of the EU; the Youth Delegates and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth

Organisations (ICMYO) in the UN, and other global settings.

Expected result: Translation in political actions and in legal documents of the youth inputs coming from the EU structured dialogue, the CoE co-management, ICMYO, and the UN Youth Delegates in all youth related topics.

- Strengthen the participation to regional and global cooperation through equal partnerships with youth civil society and strengthen the cooperation with already existing platforms in other regions of the world, especially the Euro-Arab and Mediterranean, EU-Africa and EU-Latin America and Caribbean.

Expected result: A youth friendly post-2015 development agenda based on equal global partnerships.

- Guarantee the recognition of the value of youth participation as an essential right at the core of democratic life at any level (local, national, European) as well as improve the links between them.

Expected result: Improved understanding of the processes for participation from local to European level, and reinforcing the impact of the European Youth Capital by formally recognising the title jointly by European Institutions and the European Youth Forum.

- Promote the value of non formal education and volunteering as a model of youth participation which contributes to citizenship education and the development of responsible citizenship.

Expected result: A wide societal recognition of participation as an inherent process in youth NGOs.

Critical Success Factor: *a strong European initiative to strengthen youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, and inclusion of a chapter on intergenerational justice in the programmes of political parties.*

2. STRONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Objectives:

- Promote the financial recognition and the capacity building of youth organisations at European and global levels, with young people co-managing the programmes and policies affecting their lives.

Expected result: Sustained funding and training for activities and every-day function of youth organisations provided by institutions and partners.

- Support the process of establishment, legal and financial recognition of National Youth Councils through continued support, especially in the regions of South-Eastern Europe (SEE), Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EEC), and in the countries most affected by the economic crisis.

Expected result: More national youth councils legally recognised and sustainably funded in Europe.

- Advocate for the recognition of the impact of youth work and volunteering in society.

Expected result: Concrete steps in the implementation of the Council of the EU 2010 Resolution on Youth Work and of the European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers, and recognition of the Volunteer Time Contribution as eligible co-funding in European programmes.

- Enable and empower youth organisations to reach out to, create safe environments and include more diverse young people outside of their membership, with special attention to

marginalized and disadvantaged youth.

Expected result: Qualitative growth of youth organisations by diversifying their membership.

Critical Success Factor: *more recognition and more and better targeted administrative funding for youth organisations, through the development of new and current European Union and Council of Europe financial programmes and other instruments (legal basis).*

3. AUTONOMY AND INCLUSION

Objectives:

- Advocate for the funding and the right to equal access to quality education, both formal and non-formal, as a focal point for the personal and social development of young people.

Expected result: Quality Education to be a priority of European Policies and a Non-Formal Education Quality Assurance Network contributing to this.

- Promote a smooth transition from education to quality jobs, and advocate for the adoption of policies and measures that ensure decent conditions for young people in the labour market, promote autonomy, and fight precariousness and work actively to put the youth unemployment caused by the current crisis at the top of the European political agenda. Promote and advocate for the creation of new quality jobs, support entrepreneurship and innovation. Advocate for the development of new and existing active policies of employment specifically aimed at youth at all levels and creating a dialogue between relevant stakeholders (youth NGOs, private and public sector, educational institutions and trade unions) at all levels.

Expected result: A European Youth Employment Package that raises the standards of access to the job market, including quality internships, a binding European youth guarantee, minimum wages, and support to entrepreneurship.

- Promote the recognition and improve the access to youth rights, including the fight against social exclusion and multiple discrimination, with particular focus on discrimination based on age.

Expected result: Adoption of legal tools for youth rights in the Council of Europe and the UN system and re-launch of the Anti-Discrimination Directive campaign at EU level and advocate for the recognition of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

- Promote the right to mobility for young people through sustained advocacy on the topic of Visa and residence permit liberalisation.

Expected result: Include a new visa category for all types of youth exchanges, volunteering and youth work activities as well as ease administrative procedures for issuing visas and residence permits for non-EU pupils, students and volunteers coming to the European Union in the revision of the EC Directive 2004/114.

Critical Success Factor: *a strong European institutional initiative that will increase political and financial investment in youth employment.*

B. AN INCLUSIVE PLATFORM

As stated in the Strategic Priorities 2013-2018, the essence of being a platform is to be more than the sum of its members and to achieve its full potential in its core work on policy and advocacy through **empowered Member Organisations**. The Forum will do so by strengthening its

coordinative and supportive role to its members, in order to use the expertise that lies within the platform more efficiently.

In this biennium, the Forum will specifically work on the following objectives:

- Strengthen the working structures to stimulate and enhance the participation of its Members in the development and implementation of policies and advocacy for the next two years. This will run in parallel to the active participation of its members in the Forum's activities and to the representation of the entire Platform in relevant external events.
Expected result: establishment of working structures and tools that allow flexibility in the contribution to the processes of all interested members, as well as allow a more horizontal cooperation among members on topics of their interest.
- Improve the coordination of the platform.
Expected result: efficient coordination between the different levels of the Platform in its advocacy work and communication strategy.
- Support the capacity of member organisations through the provision of training, networking, cooperation, and knowledge exchange.
Expected result: Increase the quality of membership services, of the Pool of Trainers and Facilitators, and of the contact system between the Board and the members.

Critical Success Factor: *strengthened inclusion of the Forum's members in its advocacy work and external representation, and increased pro-activeness of the members in contributing to the work of the platform.*

C. AN OPERATIONAL PLATFORM

An operational platform does not only preserve the functioning of the existing legal, financial, and management structures, but prospectively sets up new ways of working to be established by the end of the biennium.

In particular, the Forum will have the following objectives:

- Strive for an efficient and innovative administration, which operates to provide the best support to all the work of the structure, ensures the best use of the resources available in order to live up to the expectations and policies the forum promotes, and inspires other institutions and organisations to improve their own working standards.
Expected result: A standard-setter as employer in the European NGO sector.
- Developing new strategic partnerships. An organisation that is dynamic towards the future and innovative in its processes by networking and actively engaging with potential partners.
Expected result: A wider outreach and more resources for the platform and its members through partnerships with new actors, such as from the private sector, research institutes and think tanks.
- Ensure that the European Youth Forum has the necessary legal provisions to be better prepared for new needs.
Expected result: evaluation of the existing legal entities and creation of a set of recommendations on how they can better help the functioning and the future development of the Platform.

Critical Success Factor: *activities and administrative services delivered on time and effectively.*

The Work-plan 2013-14 will be a milestone towards the achievement of the Strategic Priorities 2013-2018 if the following Critical Success Factors are accomplished:

- A strong European initiative to strengthen youth participation in decision-making, and inclusion of a chapter on intergenerational justice in the programmes of political parties.

- More administrative funding for youth organisations, through the development of new European Union and Council of Europe financial programmes (legal basis).

- A strong European institutional initiative that will increase political and financial investment in youth employment.

- Strengthened inclusion of the Forum's members in its advocacy work and external representation, and increased pro-activeness of the members in contributing to the work of the platform.

- Activities and administrative services delivered on time and effectively.