



## **WORK PLAN 2015-2016**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY /  
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The work plan 2015-2016 reflects the second period of the Strategic Priorities 2013-2018 of the European Youth Forum. It is formulated based on the discussion with membership at the Council of Members in spring 2014, two online consultations and a face-to-face consultation held in Brussels in September.

The political context that youth currently face has remained the same for some time and will still be relevant in the coming years. This includes challenges in participation of young people to democratic life and decision-making, lack of sufficient recognition of youth organisations and linked with that, insecurity around their sustainability and funding. But most of all, there has been only negligible improvement in social and economic conditions of the young people in Europe over the past years.

The premise of the work that needs to be carried out by Youth Forum in 2015-16 is thus closely connected to agreed strategic priorities. In these two years, the Forum will continue advocating for empowerment of youth participation at all levels, will step up efforts to secure stable funding for youth organisations in Europe and will begin looking at macro-economic and social policies to advance youth autonomy and inclusion.

In all the work of the Youth Forum, it is crucial to promote a coordinated, fair and constructive relationship between the platform and the membership, which would acknowledge the expertise of the membership. The platform, whenever working with national authorities, will involve the membership based in the country. As a novel element, the work plan also distinguishes between different policy objectives through clarifying whether the Youth Forum will act as an advocator, where capacity still needs to be developed, where we can act as a platform for membership, and where the Forum is mostly concerned with follow-up and monitoring of specific policy fields. This distinction of four different ways of seeing policy objectives aims to provide clarity and focus to the work-plan based on the following understanding of advocacy, capacity building, coordination and monitoring:

- **Advocacy** is where the Forum has targets of directly influencing policy in mind; this naturally requires most time effort. Advocacy on an issue involves also the need to monitor developments, to coordinate membership and give space as well as build the capacity of the members and the Forum so that we can be effective in our advocacy work. It is under these priorities, where new initiatives, research and campaigns will be run.
- **Building capacity** is really where the Forum puts efforts into developing our capabilities, which includes the need to involve members as well as keeping up to date on developments in the policy field. Due to the way strategic priorities have been established, this type of work is most intensive in fourth and fifth chapters as these chapters are mostly about how do we do things and how we can further improve.
- **Coordinating membership** is about giving space for member organisations to discuss and take issues forward, where the Forum provides some support of information, communication channels and space for meetings, acknowledging the expertise of the membership, but we do not really lead any campaigns or initiatives in that area. This is also sometimes meant to be a follow-up to our previous campaigns or concerns specific issues that need mostly addressing at the national, regional or local levels.

- **Monitoring** is only about follow-up to previous work or keeping up to date with developments in a certain areas, especially where monitoring would need to be planned into the work of the Forum. No new initiatives should be run under these objectives, not to mention any campaigns etc. However, much of monitoring and reacting on emerging issues, depending on external factors, will happen at a general level and that will be reported under these priorities.

The Work Plan will be complemented by an implementation plan that the Board of the Youth Forum will decide upon after a consultation process with the member organisations. The implementation plan will include all measurable targets and will be made transparent to the membership.

The six chapters of the work plan correspond to the Strategic Priorities 2013-18, of which the first three chapters are more linked to the external goals, while the last three chapters are more linked to internal goals of means and methods that the Forum applies in its work.

## **1. YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

### ***Advocate for***

- 1.1.** A more participatory democracy by making use of Article 165-2e<sup>1</sup> of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), a renewed framework for the European cooperation in the Youth Field and the Recommendation (2006)<sup>1</sup> to the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Role of National Youth Councils in Youth Policy Development.
- 1.2.** Increased impact and equal access of youth organisations and young people in new and existing decision-making structures towards all Youth Forum institutional partners such as the co-management system.
- 1.3.** Stronger youth mainstreaming and youth participation in meaningful processes such as the implementation of World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and of a youth-relevant global development agenda (Post-2015/Sustainable Development Goals).
- 1.4.** Permanent mechanisms on youth participation at the UN with the UN Youth Delegates, Regional Youth Platforms and international youth-led organisations.

### ***Build capacity on***

- 1.5.** The right to participate by providing fact-based information about democratic processes, active and passive voting rights, and the role of young people in democratic life at all levels through the League of Young Voters.
- 1.6.** The involvement of the Forum and member organisations in the structured dialogue process, ensuring a better inclusion of youth organisations and promoting effective implementation and follow-up of recommendations.

### ***Coordinate membership***

- 1.7.** In order to strengthen and promote the legitimacy and representativeness of national youth councils and youth organisations while reaching out to other forms of participation such as social movements and online participation.
- 1.8.** In order to include more young people in formal democracy by further improving efforts to lower the voting age to 16 across Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> TFEU Article 165-2e: 'Union action shall be aimed at: encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe'.

### ***Monitor and follow up***

- 1.9. The development and advancement of the value of non-formal education and volunteering as a model of youth participation that contributes to citizenship education.

## **2. STRONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

### ***Advocate for***

- 2.1. More investments in youth in relevant policies and better programmes, while promoting an active role for youth organisations in shaping, implementing these instruments and monitoring their implementation.
- 2.2. Stronger support structures such as increased sustainable and structural funding for youth organisations.
- 2.3. The recognition of youth work, volunteering and non-formal education through evidence while highlighting their impact on society and individuals.

### ***Build capacity***

- 2.4. To reinforce the platform and its members' to contribute to the policy dialogue on youth work.
- 2.5. Of existing and new youth organisations and networks in Europe and support their development, meanwhile encouraging them to become involved in the European Youth Forum.

### ***Coordinate membership***

- 2.6. On their initiative and expertise in promoting social inclusion and developing their outreach to different youth groups, also through multilingual campaigns, and encourage member organisations to be more inclusive, accessible and promote equality in order to ensure the representation of all young people.
- 2.7. To support the development of a clearer set of standards for the creation of quality youth policies at the level of the entire platform, having in mind the advocacy efforts and mechanisms developed by the member organisations.

### ***Monitor and follow-up***

- 2.8. On the fair and consistent distribution of Erasmus+ Funds by National Agencies and report to the members.

## **3. YOUTH AUTONOMY AND INCLUSION**

### ***Advocate for***

- 3.1. Access and the right to quality jobs for all young people, ensuring a decent living while providing access to housing, credit, universal health care coverage and social protection.
- 3.2. Better transition of young people to work, by ensuring the Youth Guarantee principle along with quality internships and apprenticeships.
- 3.3. The integration of citizenship education in curricula of educational systems in Europe.
- 3.4. The right to youth mobility on the national and European level, as a transversal issue of all young people, by dealing with barriers to mobility and the topic of visa and residence permit liberalisation across Europe.

### ***Build capacity***

- 3.5. To ensure sustainable development: the fair-use of resources between people, address inequality between generations, while promoting sustainability, in an economic, social and environmental way.
- 3.6. To develop sustainable and fair economic and fiscal policies for young people, taking into account the macro-economic perspective, that support sustainable economic growth for the creation of quality jobs, solidarity, and a strong and supportive welfare state that enables their complete physical, social and mental well-being.

### ***Coordinate membership***

- 3.7 On preserving a healthy environment by reminding civil society and politicians about the need for direct action for environmental sustainability and against climate change as a strong joint voice.
- 3.8 In fostering the promotion of social inclusion along with the fight against any form of discrimination, ensuring the full cooperation with the Advisory Council on Youth.
- 3.9 To promote access and the right to quality inclusive education, including formal and non-formal, as a focal point for the personal and social development of young people.

## **4. YOUTH FORUM AS AN AGENDA SETTER**

### ***Build capacity***

- 4.1. Develop and build on the contacts established on thematic processes among institutions to create a strong and sustainable network of partners involving our members across policy areas.
- 4.2. Focus on relations with the Presidency of the Council of the EU, the renewed European Parliament and continuation of Youth Intergroup, the European Commission; the Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Committee of Ministers and the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and developing a common youth strategy with the Advisory Council.
- 4.3. Deepen the Forum's working relations with the United Nations (UN) to strengthen the engagement of young people and youth organisations in the UN system.
- 4.4. Strengthen youth participation in regional, interregional and global cooperation, through the political processes with all relevant civil society and institutional stakeholders with a focus on positioning youth organisations as actors of development
- 4.5. Maintain the high profile of the European Youth Forum and act as a valuable partner towards institutions, Civil Society and the private sector. Engage in strategic partnerships in line with human rights approach, our values, and that support the organisational and advocacy work of the Forum

### ***Coordinate membership***

- 4.6. To strengthen their presence in the UN System through among other ways the development of the UN youth delegate programme.
- 4.7. To foster processes of interregional cooperation, in particular with the Network of Universities.

***Monitor and follow up***

- 4.8. The European Youth Capitals as a showcase for local participation of young people in Europe.

**5. A STRONG FORUM AND EMPOWERED MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

***Build capacity***

- 5.1. Good governance by setting up tools to reinforce the accountability and transparency of the platform along with efficient and responsible management.
- 5.2. Develop an environment of participation in the platform through improved cross-pillar cooperation, communication and user-friendly and easily accessible tools and structures.
- 5.3. Of the platform to provide a non-discriminatory, safe and inclusive environment for contributing and participating to all.
- 5.4. Of the membership to reinforce their organisational, structural, legal and financial sustainability including the diversification of their income sources.
- 5.5. To support policy and advocacy work through evidence based policy research that is reinforced through the use of relevant aggregated and non-aggregated data on youth.
- 5.6. To promote peace-building and conflict resolution, solidarity programmes and campaigns for European youth, supporting the development of intercultural, interreligious, interethnic, international dialogue and mutual respect.

***Coordinate membership***

- 5.7. To ensure peer-to-peer exchanges and capitalise on the existing know-how of member organisations to broaden the area of expertise of the entire platform.

***Monitor and follow up***

- 5.8. Ensure a relevant level of compliance of the Youth Forum service providers with the policies and values of the platform and the respect for human rights.

**6. A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN ALL OUR WORK**

***Advocate for***

- 6.1. A rights-based and cross-sectorial approach youth policy that integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system, with a special focus on gender equality, into the development, implementation and evaluation of youth policy.
- 6.2. Recognition and monitoring to ensure young people's access to existing rights.
- 6.3. Developing and utilising legal tools to advance youth rights and to monitor their implementation.

***Build capacity***

- 6.4. The European Youth Forum and its member organisations to integrate the rights based approach in their work.
- 6.5. On addressing intersectional issues and multiple-discrimination faced by young people and implementing these perspectives in all aspects of the European Youth Forum's work.
- 6.6. On the use of legal tools to monitor the respect of the rights of the young people and improve accountability.