

Shadow Report

**on the Evaluation of the
current Framework of
European Cooperation in the
Youth field**



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WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM?

Independently established by youth organisations, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is made up of more than 90 National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, which are federations of youth organisations in themselves. It brings together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe, organised in order to represent their common interests.

Representation, internal democracy, independence, openness and inclusion are among the main principles for the functioning of the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations.

The European Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in the shaping of Europe and the societies in which they live, and in improving the living conditions of young people as European citizens in today's world.

Foreword	7
1) Evaluating the current framework of European cooperation in the youth field at both European and National level.	8
• The YFJ evaluation of the current framework of European cooperation in the youth field	8
• The European Youth Forum’s proposals for the revision of the European Framework of Cooperation on Youth Policies	10
• The consultation process with National Youth Councils	10
• The outcomes of the consultation in a nutshell	11
2) The views of the National Youth Councils.	12
• A focused framework for a better implementation of the existing policies	12
• The need for a monitoring system	12
• More cross-sector youth policies	13
• More local level for youth policies	13
• Consultation of the youth organisations on the youth policy-making and the implementation	14
• Information and knowledge of youth	14
• Youth Active Citizenship	15
3) Contributions of the National Youth Councils on the scheduled revision of the European Framework of Cooperation on Youth Policies.	16
• Austria / ÖJV	16
• Belgium - Flanders/ VJR	19
• Czech Republic/ CRDM	22
• Denmark/ DUF	24

• Estonia/ ENL	26
• Finland/ Allianssi	28
• France/ CNAJEP	30
• Italy/ FNG	35
• Lithuania/ LiJOT	40
• Luxembourg/ CGJL	44
• The Netherlands/ Jeugdraad	49
• Malta/ KNZ	52
• Portugal/CNJ	54
• Slovakia/ RMS	58
• Spain/ CJE	59
• Sweden/ LSU	61
Conclusion63

List of abbreviations

National Youth Councils:

ÖJV: Austrian National Youth Council (Austria)

VJR: Flemish National Youth Council (Belgium – Flanders)

CRDM: Czech Council of Children and Youth (Czech Republic)¹

DUF: Danish Youth Council (Denmark)

ENL: National Youth Council of Estonia (Estonia)

Allianssi: Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi (Finland)

CNAJEP: Committee for the National and International Relations of Youth and Community Education Associations (France)

FNG: National Youth Council of Italy (Italy)

LiJOT: Lithuanian Youth Council (Lithuania)

CGJL: General Confederation of Luxembourg Youth (Luxembourg)

Jeugdraad: Dutch National Youth Council (The Netherlands)

KNZ: National Youth Council of Malta (Malta)

CNJ: Portuguese National Youth Council (Portugal)

RMS: Youth Council of Slovakia (Slovakia)

CJE: Spanish Youth Council (Spain)

LSU: National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (Sweden)

Frequently used acronyms:

EU: European Union

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NYC: National Youth Council

OMC: Open Method of Coordination

YFJ: European Youth Forum

¹ CRDM is not a Member Organisation of the European Youth Forum.

The European Youth Forum has been involved in the design, the definition and the implementation of the White Paper on Youth and subsequently, the Open Method of Coordination, from the beginning phases up to now, when the current framework of European Co-operation in the field of Youth is being evaluated, before a new cycle begins.

The aim of the present report is to give an overview and a thorough analysis of the current situation and the experience gathered throughout the years of the implementation of the framework, and to offer a vision for the future. The publication thus includes an evaluation of the European level of cooperation and concrete ideas for the future framework, which aim at improving its functioning. In parallel, from the national point of view, National Youth Councils bring forward their own views, based on how they assess the implementation of the current framework at the level of Member States of the European Union.

Several proposals are made, and while some can be put in practice faster than others, they all merit attention. It is hoped that through this report the ideas will reach the responsible decision-makers, and that they will contribute to an enhanced, strengthened future framework, which will be not only implementable but also implemented.

I) EVALUATING THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD AT BOTH EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Following the publication of the Shadow Reports on the implementation of the Common Objectives of the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) in the youth field, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is following its commitment to contribute to the assessment and shaping of European Framework for Co-operation in the Youth Field.

1) THE YFJ EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD

The current framework for European Co-operation in the Youth Field was adopted in 2002, when EU Member States agreed upon a resolution establishing both the framework itself and OMC in the youth field. As new initiatives and policies have been developed further, the landscape subsequently evolved.

The framework, set forth by the Council resolution of 24 November 2005¹, urges the promotion of active citizenship among young people through the Open Method of Co-operation, the European Pact for Youth, and the incorporation of youth dimensions in other European policies. Particularly, the OMC encourages Member States to join forces and advance issues centred on youth - such as youth participation, youth volunteer activities, and youth resources.

At the institutional level, the Council resolution has scheduled an evaluation of the aforementioned framework for 2009.² To best prepare for the next era of youth policy, the European Youth Forum has prepared its own assessment of the current framework's outcomes and developments.

The 2001 publication of the European Commission's White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth" in 2001 has opened up many avenues in areas concerning youth. To ensure that the voice of young people and youth organisations is acknowledged, the YFJ and its Member Organisations have been consistent in contributing, evaluating, and providing input into youth policy. For this reason, a mid-term evaluation of the framework and OMC has been undertaken by the YFJ. Through various documents and reports produced by the YFJ, the YFJ has already highlighted needed improvements and expressed its visions, expectations, and disappointments regarding the current framework.³

The YFJ fully supports the new institutional processes set up since 2002 - such as those outlined in the Council's March 2005 European Youth Pact and the European Commission's Communication 'Promoting Young People's Full

² Ibid.

³ These documents include a Policy Paper on the Future of EU Youth Policy Development (0116-06), two Shadow Reports on the implementation of the first, second and third priorities of the OMC, information, Participation and Voluntary Activities (0401-06 and 0985-06), and the Evaluation Study of the OMC in 2006

¹ Council Resolution of 24 November 2005 on addressing the concerns of young people in Europe -implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship [Official Journal C 292 of 24.11.2005].

Participation in Education, Employment and Society' (COM (2007) 498 final). The European Youth Pact both highlights the need and demonstrates the political will to have a strong focus on youth within the Lisbon Strategy. The Pact additionally identifies employment, access to the labour market, qualifications, and training as major issues to be tackled. Following the request from European Commission President José Barroso two years after the pact, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers released a comprehensive, strategic report "Investing in Youth: an Empowerment Strategy" (April 2007). The document states that *"the key for successful youth policies are to ensure that people can make the most of the opportunities they have"*. It also notes that *"youth is the future, and timely and effective investment in youth is the key to making that future prosperous, both economically and socially"*. In order to respond to the needs and hopes of young people,⁴ this reasoning consequently led to another European Commission Communication in September 2007 stressing the need for transversal youth policy within the EU.

At the end of 2007, the European Youth Forum agreed to dedicate 2008 to the understanding and evaluation of the framework in order to prepare the foreseen revision process. Various consultative meetings have been held throughout the year with National Youth Councils (NYCs) and the YFJ's institutional partners. The YFJ paid special attention to informing Member Organisations about the main issues to be covered within the framework in the upcoming years. The assessment concerns not only the implementation of the Open Method of Co-ordination in the youth field but also more generally speaking the

whole European framework of co-operation in the youth field.

In its key principles for the new framework⁵, the YFJ suggests guidelines for the revision process. Particularly, the YFJ calls for a reformulated framework that allows for a more focused and structured approach better suited to account for the real situations and needs of young people. To this end, the revised framework calls for a coherent Structured Dialogue that involves all relevant institutions and actors on an equal basis. To assess with quantitative indicators and involve all actors in the youth field, the OMC should, hence, be maintained as the course process and associated with a stronger monitoring system, by concentrating on fewer priorities and clarifying the role of all players, these objectives could be easily reached. The YFJ believes that adopting these principles as cornerstones of the EU Youth Policy would allow the establishment of a genuine youth policy fulfilling the expectations of young people across Europe.

In addition to encompassing the cross - sector nature of youth policy through the creation of links within other relevant policy areas, the YFJ believes that the new framework should not only build upon previous experience, but encompass other related policy areas as well. For this reason, each avenue related to youth issues should be considered in the future framework. The YFJ has consequently established cornerstones necessary for the future of EU Youth Policy.

⁴ This is acknowledged and reinforced by the Member States in their Conclusions of the Council of Ministers on 20 November 2007 (Council document 14426/07)

⁵ Key principles for the new framework for the European Co-operation in the Youth Field, European Youth Forum, 0781-08_FINAL, November 2008

2) THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM'S PROPOSALS FOR THE REVISION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF CO-OPERATION ON YOUTH POLICIES

Assessing the current EU Framework of Co-operation in the Youth Field, and considering its upcoming revision, the European Youth Forum calls for:

Designing the new framework

- A more focused framework: fewer priorities, fewer objectives, as adding new priorities would challenge the effective implementation of the current priorities.
- The implementation of the cross-sector nature of youth policy by creating links with other relevant policy areas that affect young people. In terms of policy content, the YFJ refers particularly to education and lifelong learning, employment, social integration, culture, health, youth autonomy, mobility, fundamental rights and non-discrimination.
- Maintaining the Open method of Co-ordination in the youth field (OMC) as a core process in order to provide Member States with a mechanism to meet and discuss youth issues. The OMC should keep priorities, but focus on the following:
 - Participation
 - Information
 - Voluntary activities
 - Cross-sector approach to policies affecting young people

The governance of the new framework

- A coherent Structured Dialogue, involving the relevant institutions and actors in a participatory and meaningful

process. The Structured Dialogue should ensure that the agenda and the priorities are decided together.

- A clarification of the role of the European Institutions, for a better decision-making.
 - A role for the European Parliament allowing it to provide input in the decision-making.
 - A group of Commissioners for Youth to favour the coherence of the EU youth policies in all relevant policy fields.
 - An efficient system within the Council of Ministers ensuring the exchange of information, analysis and content between the actors working on issues affecting youth.
 - The involvement of local and regional authorities through the Committee of the Regions for a better implementation at all levels.
- A monitoring and evaluating system for the framework: the Structured Dialogue should be the governing body of the framework, supported by quantitative indicators. Regular consultation among young people and their organisations should take place, both for inputs and feedback on youth policy.

3) THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS

The YFJ has gathered contributions from its Member Organisations in order to better facilitate the assessment process. National Youth Councils – both in and out of the EU –, as well as International Youth NGOs were fully involved in framing the new dialogue of

youth policy. These organisations were invited to report on the situation and gaps they have noted, as well as the campaign and strategy which they implemented in relation to their institutional partners.

More than half of the NYCs represented in the YFJ (15 out of 24) and the Czech National Youth Council (CRDM) have taken the opportunity to present their views and their ideas for the upcoming agenda. The NYCs received guidelines and guiding questions regarding the consultation process. The guidelines particularly focused on the establishment of contacts within the government, the implementation of the OMC at a national level, and the understanding of other procedures - such as the European Youth Pact. Moreover, the National Youth Councils were asked to present their proposals for improvements. To avoid influencing the National Youth Councils contributions, no pre-established format was imposed.

4) THE OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION IN A NUTSHELL

The contributors welcomed the improvements in youth policies achieved thanks to the EU framework. Specifically, they acknowledged the increase of visibility and emphasis put on the EU priorities, at both the European and national level, and the launching of a cross-sector approach of youth policies. The NYCs therefore called upon the EU and the national governments to further take into account the cross-sector nature of youth policies.

However, most NYCs were disappointed by the lack of policy implementation at the national and local levels. Expressing their desire to maintain the OMC, they called for

a more focused framework and stressed the importance of Structured Dialogue to take place at both national and local levels.

In general, the NYCs did establish an increasing amount of contacts within their own national governments. It is nonetheless disconcerting to note that the level of co-operation on youth issues between the NYCs and national governments only worked well in countries where minimal co-operation already existed; in countries where such co-operation did not already exist, inadequate improvements were made.

Unfortunately, the European framework has thus not played its expected function in the development of youth policies in the Member States. Though minor improvements were made in Member States where there was already a positive emphasis on the development of sustainable youth policies, it is difficult to determine whether it is a result of the framework or national aspirations. Consequently, the Youth Councils call for an overall better implementation of the Open Method at the national level, a cross-sector approach to youth policies, and the creation of a monitoring system in order to follow the development of youth policies in the Member States.

II) THE VIEWS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS

In their contributions, the NYCs outlined seven issues which merit attention when evaluating the existing framework and formulating a new one.

1) A FOCUSED FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING POLICIES

'A change in policy - sure! In the situation for young people - not yet!' (LSU, Sweden)

The NYCs urge proper implementation of the current for objectives included in the Commission's White Paper. In some instances, various NYCs have observed that the priorities of the EU are either only minimally implemented or not at all implemented. For some NYCs, it is due to national specificity. RMS (Slovakia), for example, has noticed a lack of implementation due to the recentness of youth mainstreaming in Slovakia.

Therefore, in addition to properly implementing the current for objectives, the NYCs call for more concrete and detailed objectives and strategies. To reach this goal some NYCs propose to focus on fewer priorities, emphasising participation policies, in particular. Diversely, other NYCs would like new issues - such as mobility, employment, social inclusion, and media education - to be addressed. Most NYCs, however, agree on the need for simplified processes and policies. A proposed solution could be to consider the OMC as the central instrument with which to

extend youth policy into to other policy areas included in the European Youth Pact.

'Symbiosis instead of co-existence' (ÖJV, Austria)

In Luxembourg, **upcoming and implemented ideas on European level have been included in evaluation and revision processes as quickly as possible** and the government picked them up for discussions within the consultation processes. In order to implement the priorities set by the European process, the Ministry presented **national action guidelines** in 2004, **based on the revision and the evaluation of the previous youth policy and on the proposals of the youth sector itself.**

2) THE NEED FOR A MONITORING SYSTEM

'Youth policy does not entail the setting of targets, and it is up to the Member States to decide on objectives without the need for any European-level co-ordination of national action plans.' (European Commission)⁶

Concerned by the insufficient results of the European youth policies, some NYCs suggest a monitoring system in which youth policy implementation is assessed. They propose the utilisation of indicators in which to evaluate the extent of goal achievement in Member States. The CNJ (Portugal) suggests having a national implementation and monitoring

⁶ European Commission, [Open Method of Co-ordination](#), Scad-plus fact sheet, Europa website.

strategy in which set goals for each country can be reviewed on a regular basis.

'Governments are not keen on highlighting the input of the European level when something positive is happening' (Allianssi, Finland)

As individual governments do not necessarily refer to the European Framework for Co-operation, a monitoring system would also allow NYCs to better assess the progress achieved on a case-by-case basis for each national level. By making the Structured Dialogue the governing body of such an assessment, the NYCs would be able to better evaluate the impact of the ongoing European processes regarding youth policies.

The existing reporting mechanisms, such as the **Lisbon National Report Programmes, should be maintained** (up to the new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy) as they are of the utmost relevance and provide information on an essential aspect of the policies affecting young people. (FNG, Italy)

3) MORE CROSS-SECTOR YOUTH POLICIES

'The cross-sector approach is lagging behind and represents crucial barrier to the successful implementation of diverse youth policies.' (RMS, Slovakia)

A cross-sector approach of youth policies is essential. All policies which impact youth must be co-ordinated with each other. In this manner, LSU (Sweden), for example, acknowledges the positive impact made through multi-level governmental co-operation that the Youth Pact has allowed.

Most of the NYCs regret the lack of visibility and coherence induced by the division of youth policies into different ministerial portfolios. NYCs stress the need for a greater co-ordination between all government departments dealing with youth policy. Currently, where such inter-ministerial co-ordination exists, NYCs regret the lack of a clear leadership and of an optimal repartition of competencies.

Generally speaking, youth policies are not yet approached in a transversal dimension.

In Portugal, **the government established an inter-ministerial Commission for Youth policies whose mission is to co-ordinate, track and evaluate youth policies** (but there was no reference to the OMC objectives when this commission was created).

4) MORE LOCAL LEVEL FOR YOUTH POLICIES

'Youth policy needs a local focus.' (Jeugdraad, the Netherlands)

Regions and municipalities should be more involved in the implementation of youth policies. More local implementation of youth policies is the general consensus of most NYCs. However, the NYCs have generally observed that local authorities have been given little information about the framework for the consultation processes. The NYCs call for the use of subsidiarity at all levels and better co-ordination between local, national and European authorities.

Luxembourg's Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration encouraged the communities to organise **local forums, held in order to identify the needs of young people**. However, there were very few feedbacks from the local authorities themselves in answering these identified needs.

5) CONSULTATION OF THE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS ON THE YOUTH POLICY-MAKING AND THE IMPLEMENTATION

'The participation and involvement of all young people should be the aim [of the Structured Dialogue]' (ÖJV, Austria)

Although the European Framework acknowledges the role that youth and civil society organisations need to be given, NYCs feel that they have not been consulted enough. National Authorities rarely give them opportunities to provide input in consultative procedures. Moreover, Jeugdraad (The Netherlands) and CNAJEP (France) also consider that participation and representation of all young people in youth policies should be put on the agenda in all policy areas.

Welcoming the events organised in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue, NYCs nonetheless regret their lack of concrete outcomes. In response to the expectations of both non-organised youth and youth organisations, NYCs call for more focused more targeted meetings. By creating an open dialogue between groups, these meetings could lead to a better understanding of the Open Method and a better implementation of youth policies at the national level by creating an open dialogue between groups in response to the expectations of both non-organised youth and youth organisations. Creating a real debate, these events could lead to a better understanding of the Common Objectives of the Open Method of Co-ordination and more generally a better implementation of youth policies at the national level.

In Finland, Allianssi has been very well involved in the implementation of the priorities of the Open Method of Co-ordination. **All the 110 member organisations of Allianssi have been consulted each time the government was producing a national report** related to the White Paper process.

6) INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH

'At the time of building and implementing their life project, young people are often confronted with uncertainties and questions to which the existing information networks and guidance devises have difficulties to answer in a totally satisfactory way.' (CNAJEP, France)

The lack of an effective information high-way among public authorities, young people, and youth organisations is a major concern for NYCs. Young people still find it difficult to find information on youth policies at all levels. Through the introduction of national implementation guidelines that actively involve youth organisations and ad-hoc informational structures, the evidenced lack of visibility and coherence on youth policies could be partially deterred.

To re-enforce their role as information relays, youth organisations should be granted appropriate support through increased resources.

In Finland, extra funding was provided for the priority areas. As such, **the youth information services developed tremendously in few years** (in 2001: youth information services in about 30 municipalities and in 2008: in more than 200 municipalities), whereas in Portugal **the government set up 19 information spots for young people** throughout the country and developed **a new youth portal** in line with the Common Objectives.

7) ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

'Young people are more than numbers in a statistic on unemployment or university graduates' (DUF, Denmark)

The quick-paced nature of the labour market demands skills and competencies that young people can acquire during voluntary activities. The YFJ and its Member Organisations recognise the importance of youth volunteer work as essential to active participation in society. The YFJ and its member organisations, therefore, call for a formal recognition of volunteering through the establishment of a legal framework. If established correctly, this framework could supply the necessary means in which to provide information on available projects, rights and responsibilities available to volunteers, and improved conditions for both the organisations involved and the volunteers themselves. Such a framework

could potentially simplify the procedures and obstacles necessary for volunteer activities.

NYCs further reorganise the value youth have as actors in democracy. Logically, it only makes sense that youth should thus contribute to policies which affect them. NYCs therefore welcome initiatives such as the creation of Municipal Youth Councils and Youth Parliaments in various countries. Such creations could facilitate the integration of youth in civil society. To show that young people need to be taken seriously and encourage active participation in youth, the DUF (Denmark) supplements this idea by calling for the lowering of the voting age to 16 in all European Countries.

In Luxembourg, an **“Education leave”** set by the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration allows young people to have **the opportunity to work on a volunteer project.**

III) CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS TO THE SCHEDULED REVISION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION ON YOUTH POLICIES⁷

AUSTRIA / ÖJV

INTRODUCTION

We consider the recent evaluation of the cooperation framework and the four Common Objectives to be an appropriate possibility to build perspectives and fields of action for the future.

The review seems to be very important. Nevertheless we want to stress that we brought the chances for development in the youth sector into focus of this contribution.

REVIEW

White Paper – Open Method of Coordination

The implementation of the White Paper had a measurable effect on youth policy in Austria. To mention a few improvements:

- Working Group White Paper – network of all stakeholders in the youth sector (2002-2005)
- Constitution of “Jugendinfo.cc”, the National Youth Information Agency
- Raised awareness of youth topics
- Strengthened National Youth Council

Nevertheless we have got a notion that the promising implementation of the White Paper has got stuck half way:

- From our point of view, from 2005 on, more priority was given to the implementation of the Youth Pact than to the implementation of the White Paper.
- Volunteering: there is still no sustainable solution that covers the costs for the social insurance and other relevant aspects of a reliable framework for volunteers; we propose legislation similar to the one existing in Germany. This would enhance the accessibility to volunteering for young people.
- We miss the sustainable effect on structures and institutions. Only adequate funding would enable structural improvements.
- A Europe-wide survey in the youth sector would be of great value. An agreement on definitions is needed first, however. At national level there is a lack of consistent standards and cross-linked research.

European Youth Pact

We welcome the fact that an inter-ministerial working group has been set up for the implementation of the European Youth Pact. Nonetheless, we want to stress a few important details:

- The members of the working group do not constantly participate in the meetings, this makes continuous work difficult.
- The approach of the working group is, more or less, cross-sector – only four ministries (Health, Family Affairs and Youth; Education, Arts and Culture; Science and Research;

⁷ The NYCs contributions are presented in alphabetical order of countries

Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) attend the meetings regularly. We consider it to be a major problem to not constantly have the Ministry for Economics and Labour taking part in the inter-ministerial working group.

- As mentioned above, the inter-ministerial working group is not included in the competencies of the Ministry of Economics and Labour, but in those of the Ministry of Health, Family Affairs and Youth. We consider this to be a constructional error. We are convinced that the Youth Pact would have more political importance/power if the Ministry of Economics and Labour could have the leading role in the inter-ministerial working group.
- In the beginning, the inter-ministerial working group needed a lot of time for raising awareness on youth issues and the Youth Pact in general. Recently, we have seen new initiatives to work on such topics. Unfortunately, the chosen strategy (finding a framework for internships of highly-qualified young people) is not that very much oriented towards the Youth Pact.
- From our point of view, the main problem of the inter-ministerial working group is the following: the members of the inter-ministerial working group are civil servants and not political decision makers. Therefore, the work of this group will always be in danger of getting stuck on its level and to remain without consequences.

We think that more attention should be paid to the transition from school system to vocational training or from vocational training to labour market. We still request a general reform of the Austrian education system. We want to see more measures in the prevention of youth unemployment. Most of the current measures

for unemployed youth are not sustainable enough.

What we criticise in general:

- The implementation of Youth Pact and White Paper should not be done separately. Furthermore, the Youth Pact should not replace the White Paper; while the White Paper is youth policy-oriented, the Youth Pact is connected to labour market and economics – although young people need to be its main focus.
- In Austria there is no strategy and no programme for the implementation of the Lisbon Process. The so-called strategy reports (LNRP) of the government are only a summary of intended measures of different political sectors.

Structured dialogue

We welcome the initiative of the Structured Dialogue and think it has big potential.

In a first review, the following points seem important to us and should therefore be taken into account in the further development and implementation of the Structured Dialogue:

- The participation and involvement of all young people (not only a few privileged or specially marginalised ones) should be the aim. Therefore, a broad variety of forms of participation and adequate conditions should be implemented. Only stable funding will create the appropriate qualifications of young people to take part in the Structured Dialogue.
- Youth organisations should have the right option for active participation and involvement.
- As the constitutional framework of the Member States is very different, the implementation of the Structured Dialogue at national levels cannot be the same in

every Member State (e.g. federalism in Austria). Consequently, European level should focus on quality standards, like continuity regarding the involvement of young people, for example.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Symbiosis instead of coexistence.

As we mentioned in our review, we see great chances for the further development of youth policies on both national and European levels if the White Paper, the Youth Pact and the Structured Dialogue are implemented in an integrated way in the future.

From our point of view, this would result in less bureaucracy. We think that if topics and methods would be used in an interactive way, new issues could additionally be raised.

Continuity

We consider this point to be crucial for the successful implementation of the OMC, the Youth Pact and the Structured Dialogue on national and European levels.

Selective, short-term forms of participation can only be taken into account if they are thematically linked to ongoing processes. Otherwise, the aims of structure and sustainability will not be reached. On the national level, we propose cooperation between the Ministry for Health, Family Affairs and Youth, the National Youth Council and all relevant stakeholders in the youth sector.

More funding

The reduction of bureaucracy should be accompanied with an increase of resources. In that way, the challenge of making youth

policies more cross-sector can be taken on, and the framework for a broad participation of young people can be created (as mentioned above).

The National Agencies' role

The National Agencies can and should strongly support the Structured Dialogue. Tendencies to reduce the implementation to actions of the National Agencies do not seem useful. Cooperation with the National Agencies cannot replace the involvement of youth organisations.

Regardless of the funding which exists within the "Youth in Action" programme, the Structured Dialogue needs adequate financial support at all levels.

Guidelines for the Member States

Last but not least, we want to emphasise, once more, the importance of quality standards. While we think the guidelines should in that point be as strict as possible, we do not see the need for a great pressure through timelines. Also, the different resources that exist in the member states should be taken into account when creating new guidelines.

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<http://www.jugendvertretung.at>

BELGIUM - FLANDERS/ VJR

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS

The Flemish Youth Council (VJR) was involved from the beginning in the implementation of the Framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field and in the implementation of the Common Objectives of the four priorities of the OMC in the youth field. From the beginning, a steering group was set up to report on the progress made on the priorities. A seat within this group was granted to the VJR. This gave us the possibility to be involved in all the proceedings concerning the Common Objectives of the White Paper.

Whereas the contacts with the Flemish government were perfectly good for the implementation of the Common Objectives, there was very little contact with the government for the implementation of the Youth Pact. Even though the VJR asked the Minister of Youth several times to get involved, no positive feedback was given to this request. We could even say that the Minister of Youth was not involved at all in the implementation of the Youth Pact. The VJR wanted him to take up a coordinative role in this process, but this was never assumed.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS

In general, one can say that the VJR and the Flemish government have the same perspective on youth policy. We both consider youth policy as a cross-cutting issue. Young people are stakeholders in almost every discussion- as decisions taken in most policy areas also affect young people. For instance, if the Minister of Environment takes a decision concerning the sustainable development of

nature reserves, both our government and the NYC consider young people as partners in this debate.

Regarding the age limits of youth, the governments and the NYC think very much alike. We consider children and young people (from 0 to 30 years old) as being the equal recipients of youth policy.

An overall strategy that comprised all the aspects of the European cooperation in the youth field (European Youth Pact, Common Objectives, youth mainstreaming) was not developed. However, the different aspects of the cooperation in the youth field were dealt with in the different parts of government and their administrations. The Minister of Youth and his administration did develop a comprehensive approach towards the implementation of and reporting on the Common Objectives. Initiatives in order to implement the Youth Pact, however, were initiated by the minister of Work and Education. The minister of Youth wasn't implied at all in this work. So, we could say that no conscious strategy was developed to implement the objectives of the Youth Pact as these weren't coordinated by the minister of Youth. The minister of Work and Education didn't do this either as no reference to the Youth Pact has been made when implementing its objectives.

The influence of the European process and the OMC in the development of youth policy is very limited. The priority areas of the OMC were already earmarked as important themes regardless of the European cooperation in the youth field. A policy in the field of information, participation, voluntary activities and a better knowledge of young people had already been set up. In that perspective, European

cooperation in the youth field didn't bring new initiatives to achieve the Common Objectives. The same can be said for the European Youth Pact. Some measures were taken independently from the implementation of the Youth Pact.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

The Flemish Government developed policy initiatives to implement the Common Objectives. However, their link to the Common Objectives remains to be clarified. Rather, the VJR thinks that they have been developed without regards to the Common Objectives.

The Flemish Government set up a steering group in which all stakeholders at Flemish level were involved. This steering group was composed of representatives of the Flemish government, the National Agency and the National Youth Council. These stakeholders acted as equal partners and were responsible for the follow up of the OMC process in Flanders. The VJR was very pleased with the input of youth organisations. Not only through the VJR in the steering group, but also during open information and discussion days, youth organisations had the possibility to feed into the OMC process and the different reports that were drafted by the Flemish government.

While it may be a local competence, national governments should assume their responsibilities in view of the guidelines, on which they agreed, for the implementation of the OMC: there should be a basic strategy at the national level to ensure that everybody has information on youth issues.

The Flemish government often communicated to the local level concerning its development of youth policy. Doing so, the government

referred several times to the Guidelines and Common Objectives. However, no consequent referral was made to the OMC, mainly because the developed action was produced more or less regardless to the Common Objectives.

OTHER PROCESSES

Since 2002 and the establishment of the Framework of Cooperation in the Youth Field, some other European processes linked to youth have been adopted, such as the European Youth Pact.

The European Youth Pact did not bring any change to youth policy in Flanders. Despite the Youth Pact, measures to implement the objectives of the Youth Pact were developed. However, these measures were not consciously linked to the Youth Pact.

RESULTS

Things have changed over the past 6 years. Whether these changes were initiated by the European Cooperation in the Youth Field is still to be clarified. It is very difficult to measure the changes and to attribute them to one or another initiative. Are these changes a result of domestic action? Or are they a result of the agreement reached at European level?

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

The VJR considers it crucial to simplify the way the cooperation in the youth field is conducted. Now, there are too many instruments that are not tuned to each other. That is why the VJR proposes to use **the OMC as the central instrument**. Some changes to the current OMC are, however, necessary:

- The OMC can only be effective if each Member State has a horizontal youth policy. The Minister of Youth can then take up a coordinating role in the implementation of future Common Objectives.
- The VJR wants clearer and more ambitious objectives, measurable or at least comparable.
- The OMC has to outline requirements for the participation of young people and their organisations.
- The VJR wants less red tape and easier questionnaires (which are at the basis of the reports produced by the Member States).

The VJR suggests abolishing the Youth Pact as an instrument. ***We would rather like to see the objectives of the Youth Pact included as Common Objectives in the OMC.*** This would force Ministers of Youth to work together with their colleagues responsible for Education and Labour.

For the VJR, the current priorities of the OMC are part of the DNA of the youth work. Therefore, we suggest keeping **at least information, participation and voluntary activities as priority themes** in the OMC. A better knowledge of young people is very important for policy development, but is less important for youth organisations. A new OMC with new and more ambitious Common Objectives will allow the Member States to further develop youth policy.

The VJR proposes to keep youth mainstreaming as an instrument for all important issues, but not as a priority.

THE VJR PROPOSES TO GIVE YOUTH EVENTS A DOUBLE GOAL

On the one hand, they have to be kept as the European implementation of the Structured Dialogue. Indeed, they are the final step in a process of participation that starts at the local level up to the European level. The youth event has to be a place where new ideas can emerge, rather than a place where consensus has to be reached among young people. Producing texts that are agreed upon by everyone is a task of policy makers rather than of young people. Bring young people together in what they are good at: producing creative ideas!

On the other hand, youth events should be linked to the OMC and should serve as moments to compare the reports of Member States made in the framework of the OMC. The advantage is that this will allow young people to take a look at the reports of their own country, but also to compare it with other reports and to learn from each other. Moreover, if the relevant policy makers are invited to the youth event, young people could enter into discussion with their governments. Doing so, young people and their organisations would be more involved in the OMC.

Young people attending youth events have to be split up along these two goals of the youth events. For the first goal, any young person can take part in the youth event. For the second goal, it is important that the young people have a background within a National Youth Council in order to discuss the very technical issues of the OMC.

CZECH REPUBLIC/ CRDM

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD

We believe that the main positive impact of the European framework was to increase the visibility and the emphasis put on the selected topics and priorities. The European Framework started the discussion at the national level on how to promote youth participation, youth information, volunteering and a better knowledge of youth.

The European Framework also provided a platform for discussion among decision-makers, at both European and national level, with representatives of young people and youth NGOs.

However, clear indicators for measuring the success of the methods were missing and thus, the implementation of the priorities at national level depended upon the goodwill of Member States. The evaluation reports about implementation of the respective priorities were not public, which caused low transparency of the process at a national level. We appreciated the organisation of events such as the European Youth Week or the Youth Events during the EU Presidencies. However, there was no serious follow-up and thorough evaluation of implementation of the conclusions of these events. The conclusions were self-repeating, instead of monitoring the progress of their implementation.

Several European reference documents were not implemented to the extent they would have deserved. The implementation of the European Youth Pact in many Member States is not sufficient and the Pact remains more a declaration, rather than a real working plan.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE CRDM IN THE FORMULATION OF CZECH STRATEGY

The CRDM was involved in the process of formulating the Czech strategy for the implementation of the Framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic elaborated a State Policy Conception in the field of Children and Youth until 2007 ("Koncepce státní politiky pro oblast dětí a mládeže do roku 2007"). Youth participation was one of the priorities of this policy. The document included an analysis of the current situation and the tasks of the respective ministries.

A new document has been created for the period of 2007 – 2013, called State Policy Conception in the field of Children and Youth for 2007 – 2013 ("Koncepce státní politiky pro oblast dětí a mládeže na období 2007-2013"). This policy document includes all the 4 priorities of the White Paper in separate thematic fields – Information about Youth and for Youth (field 1), Participation of Young Generation in the Social and Political Life (field 7), Research about Youth (field 8) and Volunteering (field 9). It contains overall the aims of the government's policies in these four fields, as well as concrete goals for the relevant ministries.

The current State Policy Conception contributes to implementing the priorities of the European Framework and highlights their attention at the national level. However, concrete indicators for measuring the success of their implementation are missing. Many objectives are not specific or rename former government policies as new objectives. Therefore they are not innovative and do not set tools for their implementation. The policy document does not schedule any increase in the budget for the implementation.

Thus, the ministries are not encouraged to take new and further actions to promote the European priorities.

The Czech Council of Children and Youth was involved in the elaboration of both strategies. We participated intensively in both National Conferences about Youth (in 2002 and 2007), where the government policy was discussed. The CRDM was also involved in several expert groups and regularly voiced the interests of young people in the Czech Republic to the government. The youth council appreciates the effort of the government to reflect the European priorities in the policy documents and identifies itself with the overall orientation of the strategy. However, we would prefer more specific and measurable objectives and a valuable increase in the financing of their implementation.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

We think the European Union should continue to stress the current 4 priorities of the previous round of the Open Method of Co-operation and encourage Member States to implement these priorities to a greater extent.

The CRDM believes that other very important challenges should be considered when planning the strategy for the new policy cycle in the field of youth:

- **Support of volunteering** – The continuing support of volunteers should concentrate rather on improving the conditions for organisations working with volunteers on long-term basis than just supporting volunteers' mobility. The three main goals connected with volunteering should be:
 - Improving the legislative and financial conditions for voluntary youth leaders and youth workers, as well as other

functions in the youth NGOs performed on a voluntary basis.

- Greater recognition of the competences gained by voluntary activities in the youth NGOs and exchange of good practices in this field.
- Improving the social status of volunteers and the social recognition of non-formal education.
- **Development of value orientation of young people** – Development of values for children and young people is crucial, as they are necessary for a successful life in today's society. Spiritual and intellectual values should be promoted as an alternative to today's prevailing material values. A source of inspiration can be found in the Big Five personality factors:
 - Openness - appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience.
 - Conscientiousness - a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement; planned rather than spontaneous behaviour.
 - Extroversion - energy, positive emotions, surgency, and the tendency to seek stimulation and the company of others.
 - Agreeableness - a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others.
 - Emotional Stability - a tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability.
- **Responsible parents behaviour** – The responsible behaviour of parents should be promoted. They should:
 - Lead young people to an active and responsible life.
 - Support them in choosing appropriate free time and educational activities.

- Be aware of their impact on the personal development of young people.

- **Young people and media** – We should promote “media literacy” of young people, i.e. lead them to critical thinking, educate them in collecting, processing and analysing information, etc. Media must be made aware of their social responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES

The CRDM supports the Structured Dialogue of young people and policy-makers. This dialogue should lead to the creation of a European cross-sector strategy in the field of youth, as proposed by the European Commission in September 2007. The Structured Dialogue with young people should also make the best use of existing tools, such as the Youth Events in the framework of EU Presidencies or the European Youth Week. These events should be used for discussion about the progresses achieved in the European cross-sector strategy in the field of youth, instead of systematically publishing new declarations without real impact.

The Member States should be obliged to consult young people, particularly from youth NGOs and from the National Youth Councils, when preparing the evaluation reports. The evaluation process should be as transparent and open as possible. The different proposals and arguments should be discussed publicly. Public administration officers should get more acquainted with the NGO sector to be able to better assess their real needs, e.g. through internships in NGOs, consultation meetings, etc.

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DENMARK/ DUF

DUF: VISIONS FOR A NEW EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY

EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY INSTRUMENTS

1) The OMC: DUF has not been able to identify any significant improvements or changes related to the OMC in our national youth policy. This, we believe, is due to the somewhat reluctant handling of the OMC by both national authorities and European institutions.

If the OMC is to continue being a central part of the European youth policy in the future, we believe that a new approach is needed, both from the Commission and the national authorities. Also, it would be valuable to cut down the numbers of priorities in the OMC - and maybe even reintroduce some of the priorities that have already been dealt with within the OMC. We would especially like to re-focus on the issues of *participation* and *volunteering*.

2) In the future, DUF would like the EU to focus on organised youth when consulting young people on youth issues.

3) DUF has a wish to further strengthen the structure in the Structured Dialogue. At the moment, it seems that too many resources are used too little.

3a) In general, we would like the EU , Commission/Parliament, to increase the use of the European Youth Forum when consulting young people on issues of interest.

3b) DUF regrets that the Youth Weeks, have generally been dominated by the Commission's wish to put the spotlight on success stories within the Youth in Action

Program. This is somewhat understandable, but it blurs the role of National Youth Councils (and the European Youth Forum) at these events.

3c) DUF considers that Youth Presidency Events have had a tendency to be too influenced by the host country's national agenda. This blurs the efficiency of the Structured Dialogue. The fact that the meetings in the Council of Ministers following the Youth Presidency events have a different agenda than the ones discussed by the young people confirms this tendency.

WISHES FOR A NEW EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY

1) We wish to see a different approach towards young people in European youth policy. Instead of considering young people as old-school economic human instruments in the struggle to ensure European economic growth – as it is especially the case in the European Youth Pact, a European youth policy should put an equal focus on the other values that young people contribute to in European society.

Young people are more than numbers in a statistic on unemployment or university graduates. Young people have something special to offer in terms of development of democracy, know how, creativity and entrepreneurship – something that is crucial for the future of Europe, and makes Europe different from other regions in the world and enables it to compete in a globalised world economy.

This should be acknowledged in European youth policy.

2) *Support to youth organisations*: Apart from being a valuable asset in the lives of young

people all over Europe, youth organisations are central mechanisms in the development of competences such as understanding of democracy, creativity and development of leadership and organisational skills amongst young people. This has been proved in a number of surveys, both European and national, during the last couple of years.

Therefore, a European youth policy should focus on improving conditions for volunteering and supporting the development of youth organisations, in order to enable them to include as many young people as possible.

Also, a central part of the European youth policy should be a strong focus on the recognition of competences that young people gain by being active in youth organisations. The EU is already active in this field, but we would like to see a more direct and out-going approach. A European Youth Policy should include a plan to make every European university, company, ministry and politician aware of the competences that young people gain participating in a youth organisation, and how these skills can be used. Such a campaign would involve advertising, development of information material, etc.

3) *Promotion of democratic participation in society*: It is crucial that the future European youth policy focuses on promoting democratic participation amongst young people.

This includes lowering the voting age to 16 in all European countries. Lowering the voting age would show young people that they are taken seriously and encourage them to participate in democracy.

Also, it is important that the European youth policy supports youth organisations' efforts to

increase participation amongst other young people. Youth organisations have better qualifications to reach young people than, for instance, ministries or the European Union. But youth organisations need proper resources to make proper work in that respect. These resources should be provided by EU.

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ESTONIA/ ENL

ESTONIAN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL'S (ENL) ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD, 11 NOV 2008

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT

The Ministry of Education and Research funded a nationwide “Youth Participation Campaign” (2007-2008), which was co-ordinated by the Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) and whose main aims were to promote participation and make it easier for young people to participate. As a result of this campaign, we developed a concept of youth participation which is now also successfully adopted by our Finnish colleagues. The government is also funding youth councils in the regional (county) level and is supporting their cooperation (meetings, trainings etc). The Ministry of Education and Research gives about € 580 000 every year to support bigger youth organisations at the national level, as well as youth projects. There is a Youth Policy Council which will make proposals, related with financing youth organisations, to the minister of education and research. Six out of its eleven members are representatives from youth organisations. Generally, ENL can confirm that youth organisations have been involved in the processes which are encouraging young people's participation in the exercise of active citizenship and civil society.

In the field of youth information, ENL has been involved in discussions related to career guidance and career information for young people. ENL also had its representative in the national roundtable on youth information.

In 2008, ENL was given funds to research financing of the youth work by local governments. Until then, the ministry cooperated only with the Estonian Institute of Youth. As a result of achieving a higher level of competence, ENL is ready to participate more actively in the youth research field. The government has done little to encourage a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. ENL and youth organisations were the most committed to this issue. Other ministries (excluding the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs) have not been taking the Estonian Strategy of Youth Work into consideration in their work. The general tendency seems to be that youth involvement is not the main priority of decision makers.

The Estonian National Youth Council was established in 2002, so this is the beginning of its cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research. A productive bilateral relationship was soon established. The Ministry's youth department itself supported the foundation of ENL. At the beginning, the cooperation was reactive rather than proactive but it has changed over the years, as the result of the growth of ENL's ability and competences. In recent years, the cooperation with other government institutions has improved. ENL's main partners are the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the State Chancellery. Unfortunately, the cooperation between ENL and the other ministries (except those two) is still almost non-existent. There are two main reasons:

1. Governmental institutions cannot see the efficiency and opportunities that young people involvement can provide;

2. As a large number of young people (which according to Estonian Youth Work Act is a person aged 7-26) are not old enough to participate to the elections, young people are not the priority of politicians.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS

The ministries' vision is often that youth policy only concerns the Ministry of Education and Research. In recent years, the situation has improved a little and this attitude is changing. For example, ENL has its representative in the Government of the Republic's HIV/AIDS committee. But the problem still remains; the government consults young people mainly about the issues that are strictly (and only) linked with young people, whereas ENL would like to be involved in the discussions of all kind of issues related to youth (whether it is environmental, social, economic, etc).

The government has adopted the "Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013", which defines the main perspectives, goals and methods to achieve those purposes. There are many links between the Estonian Youth Work Strategy and the European Commission's White Paper, other priorities based on the European Cooperation Framework in the field of youth and the principle of integrated youth policy (or mainstreaming).

The impact of the EU processes into Estonian youth policy has been quite marginal.

Other processes (European Youth Pact)

The European Youth Pact has not been taken into account during the composition process of the Estonian Action Plan for Growth and Jobs 2008-2011.

RESULTS

Young people are now more involved in different councils and working-groups than 6 years ago. The Government is supporting the work of regional youth councils and their cooperation. The cooperation between EU institutions, other Member States and the Estonian Government in the youth field has developed a lot, as well as ENL's cooperation at European level. Since Estonia only joined the EU in 2004, it is quite normal that the government is still making efforts to follow the EU strategies in their work.

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FINLAND/ ALLIANSSI

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS

The Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi was part of the **national working group**, following the implementation of the White Paper. We have two members in that working group. Every year, Allianssi has organised events and hearings to member organisations and to other actors in the youth field on issues relevant to the White Paper.

Allianssi has been very involved in the implementation of the Common Objectives of the 4 priorities of the OMC in Finland. Since the beginning, we have taken part in the drafting of all the national reports on the White Paper, and we have had our representatives in the White Paper working group of the ministry. Also, all the 110 **member organisations of Allianssi have systematically been consulted** when the government has produced any national reports related to the White Paper process.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS

There is no real new strategy linked to the European process in the youth field. The government has rather the same working method they have always used when something important is happening, i.e. to invite all the relevant actors (youth organisations, youth workers, youth researchers, etc.) to discuss together how to proceed.

The influence of the European process and especially the OMC in the development of youth policy was very useful. We achieved good results in many areas-- such as youth information and youth participation. Of course, it is difficult to evaluate which part of the developments are due to the European

process and which parts are due to the national policy, but they complemented each other very well.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

A lot of new tools were developed, to name a few an extra funding for the priority areas, a new Youth Act (approved in 2006), a governmental policy programme in the youth field, etc. As an example, we could mention the development of youth information services: in 2001 there were youth information services in about 30 municipalities and in 2008 in more than 200 municipalities.

A lot of efforts were made to spread out the information about the White Paper process at national and local levels, but it is a difficult task in which a lot of work remains to be done.

To be honest, when any government does something positive, usually the credit is not given to anyone else, not to the Guidelines, nor to the Common Objectives, nor to the EU in general.

Also, other policies were set up, e.g. The Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007–2011 and the Policy Programme for the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families.

In general, the state funding of youth work in Finland has more than doubled in the last 6 years (2003 = 22 million€ to 2009 = 52 million€)

OTHER PROCESSES

Although we had high expectations about the European Youth Pact, it did not have any major

effects on the youth policy. No other major processes were identified.

RESULTS

A lot of changes have taken place over the past 6 years, at all levels. How much of this is due to the implementation of the Common Objectives and the European framework is difficult to estimate, but it has certainly been a boost in the process. The biggest obstacle remaining to many good ideas is of course the lack of funding. Also, at least at European level, one difficulty is the different levels of development between Member States. To a certain extent, the lack of visibility (e.g. the national reports are not public in all Member States) has made it a bit difficult to complete the objectives. We are also aware that, although we do not have any complaints in Finland about the involvement of the youth organisations in the process, there are other Member States where they have not been consulted at all or not involved enough.

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

In general, we estimate that the 4 priorities have been good and that the OMC has been useful and brought good results in Finland. The Youth in Action programme is considered as a useful tool. The development of the structured dialogue is positive too, although it still needs to be improved. The recognition of the role of youth organisations and other existing structures (e.g. EYCA, ERYICA in the field of information) should be stronger.

Some negative points could be raised as well. There have been too many events with an unclear focus and target group, e.g. presidency youth events with no continuity and the

problem of representation (organised vs. non-organised youth in the same events). There should be a clear policy-making meeting for organised young people and some other events for less experienced participants with more educational aims. The effects of the European Youth Pact have not been seen yet, somehow this should be strengthened.

For the future, we encourage a stronger cross-sector approach in issues like health, employment, education, etc. More resources should be given for the Youth in Action programme, in general and within the programme, for group exchanges. The OMC should continue and youth organisations should be more involved. The current priorities are relevant and should be deepened. Maybe mobility could be added as a new priority.

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FRANCE/ CNAJEP

INTRODUCTION: MANAGING YOUTH POLICIES IN FRANCE

Youth policies in France suffer from a lack of visibility and coherence. The transversal nature of these policies is embodied in the repartition of youth competences between various Ministries – Health, Youth, Sports and Associative Life; National Education; Employment and Social Affairs. However, today there is no inter-ministerial cooperation structure that enables us to coordinate the youth activities of these different ministries.

Besides, the transfer of many youth competences to territorial and local collectives (notably the regions) adds to the confusion and to the difficult articulation between the different public actors and actions targeting young people.

I/ Consideration of the organised young people's word

In France, young people are confronted with a democratic emergency. Low youth participation in trade unions and political parties, limited access to important positions within associations, almost non-existent representation in the different places of consultation and decision: our country has difficulties to grant a place to young people as full citizens. Hence, between the members of the French Economic Social and Environmental Committee (ESEC), youth is represented only slightly or not at all. CNAJEP does not claim for the creation of any 'youth' group, but they would like to see more young people have a seat in the different groups. Although we welcomed the declaration by President Sarkozy in favour of the opening of ESEC to young people and associations, we are now waiting for concrete actions.

In the context of low youth representation, organised youth's opinion are not taken into consideration enough. Consequently, if the Structured Dialogue implemented by the European Commission seems to be a good approach to recognise the opinion of young people, we are still missing its national implementation.

Besides, the question of a representative space for youth remains problematic in France. Indeed, two structures coexist and claim the legitimacy for French youth's representation: the French National Youth Council (CNJ) and CNAJEP (the Committee for National and International Relations of Youth and Popular Education associations). The CNJ is an instrument of the State since it is chaired by the Minister responsible for youth and as its members are nominated by ministerial decree. CNAJEP is an independent association, representative of civil society, composed of associations directed and moderated by young people and associations which work for and with young people. It is indeed CNAJEP which is the member of the YFJ and represents the French youth towards the European coordination bodies. However, the coexistence of the two national structures (CNJ and CNAJEP) does not seem favourable to the initiation of a sustained and transparent dialogue with the organised youth.

II/ Sector transversality

As mentioned in our introduction, no governmental structure in France fulfils the need for a cross-sector approach to youth policies.

• OMC (Open Method of Coordination)

As regards the different areas concerned by the OMC, CNAJEP wants to remind what the supposed priorities of an ambitious youth policy are.

- on youth information
At the time of building and implementing their life project, young people are often confronted with uncertainties and questions to which the existing information networks and guidance devices have difficulties to answer in a totally satisfactory way.

It is therefore important to rethink the articulation and coherence between the different actors of information, orientation and guidance (public bodies, associations, etc) in order for young people to be better informed and oriented with regards to rights, access to employment, housing, health, education, culture, and leisure time.

Hence, the 'youth information' networks need to be optimised. It would be good to develop a 'youth information' network which would further recognise youth and popular education associations as major actors in youth guidance. Besides, a better information and access to information places and services should be considered.

- on youth participation
Young people are generally excluded from consultation and decision-making processes. However, they regularly show their willingness to assume their destiny, but this endeavour is, unfortunately, not followed within the spaces that structures French democracy.

Noting that fact, CNAJEP wishes to see the implementation of proposals that favour youth participation in democratic life: development of youth organisations in France, strengthening of youth

participation in all associative activities, support to commitment experiences at European and international level, recognition and promotion of the experiences of youth commitment.

While the recent governmental announcements related to the creation of a civil savings book for volunteers may be a first encouraging sign, a lot remains to be done to strongly promote and fully recognise youth commitment and participation.

- on youth volunteering

Despite many volunteering systems existing in France, only few young people have access to voluntary activities. Lack of readability, insufficient information, weakness of granted means are all factors that can explain this situation.

The necessity to create a civil service enabling young people to commit themselves for the service of the general interest was reborn following the dramatic events of 2005 which saw the French suburbs on fire. In this framework, Luc Ferry was mandated with a mission. Most of the conclusions of Ferry's report (handed in on 10/09/2008) favourably meet the expectations and proposals of CNAJEP:

- A voluntary civic service
 - of a significant length (6 months, with a possible prolongation), in principle not divisible;
 - open to all and reaching out to a significant proportion of young people (10% of a certain age category after 5 years of progressive rise)

- A unified plan, dealt with by a structure devoted to civic service, with simplified certification procedures
- Ambitious communication, adapted so as to reach out to a sufficient number of young people since 60,000 young people should have the possibility to be welcomed each year in the framework of a civic service.

Whatever the difficulties are (current national and international context), we call for the implementation of such a civic service, supported by a strong political will and adapted financing.

For society as a whole to understand and support the implementation of an ambitious civic service, reflections must be exchanged, debates must take place-- before a bill is submitted to an exclusive parliamentary debate.

Therefore, we insist on the implementation of the conditions of a real public debate on a topic which engages the whole society in a new relation of trust with its youth.

- **The European Youth Pact**

- on employment, social integration and social promotion policies

The unemployment rate of young people of 15-24 years old in the EU 27 is presently 15.4%. The French rate is particularly high, even above the European average, at 19, 4%.

In order to try and decrease this rate and facilitate the access of young people to their first job, in 2005, the former government proposed a new working contract called 'Contrat Première Embauche (CPE)'. It then imposed it

without any previous consultation with youth organisations (political, trade unionist, associative), provoking a massive mobilisation against what was perceived as a threat to the right to work and leading to a delay in the project.

Finally, the underemployment and professional precariousness of young people seem to be inseparable, at least in France, from the employment difficulties the 'seniors' face. It seems that these questions reflect the view of labour markets, and more widely of the society, on the skills and competences of identified age categories.

- on the policies related to education, training and mobility
First, the issue of the articulation of education with the labour market needs to be clarified. Indeed, although it remains necessary to adapt initial education and training systems to the new needs of competences and to the requirements of the labour market, attention must be paid to the fact that education and training are not only considered as tools at the service of integration in the labour market.

It would actually be extremely harmful if this conception resulted in the ousting of education or training patterns judged 'little profitable' or not directly leading to employment, regardless of their positive impact on young people's move towards their autonomy.

With regards to traineeships, a better organisation is imperative. The charter on traineeships in enterprises implemented in France since 2006 is a first step towards a better organisation

and a better recognition of the work of trainees. However, this charter remains unsatisfactory (gratification/compensation only from the third month) and only targets companies. Despite their high consumption of traineeships, administrations are not subject to this charter.

- **Integration of a youth dimension in other European policies**

The Commission has decided to prioritise the following two reflection and action axes: healthy lifestyles and fight against discrimination.

In France, questions of health and youth are taken in charge by one Ministry (Health, Youth, Sport and Associative Life). Beyond its symbolic character, this link between 'health', 'youth' and 'sports' is explicit of the will of a government to grant a central position to the sanitary approach to youth issues. These intentions were notably translated on the occasion of the French Presidency of the European Union; young people's health being one of the themes promoted by the Ministry.

Concerning the fight against discrimination, the HALDE (High Authority of Fight against Discrimination and for Equality), created in 2004, is the French declension for the independent bodies wanted by the EU to fight against discrimination and to promote equal treatment in each Member State (Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and 2002/73/EC of 23 September 2002). At present, the role of this institution seems limited to an inventory of the discrimination facts and acts' its concrete actions against discriminatory practices have a limited visibility and impact. The permanent character of discrimination in France (may it

be linked to sex, age, religion, social or ethnic belonging, etc.) illustrates it perfectly.

On the other hand, the Acsé (national agency for social cohesion and equal opportunities) was created in March 2006, following the suburbs' crisis of the autumn of 2005. It is a national public institution in charge of implementing the governmental guidelines in terms of the city's policy, of integration, fight against discrimination, and equal opportunities. It is under the joint leadership of the Ministers for integration and the city policy; this organisation may weaken its action and the coherence of its financing.

In 2008, its major interventions were mainly the prevention of discrimination on the ground of origin, the promotion of equal treatment, the promotion of civic commitment, of citizenship and of associative life.

III/ Future perspectives

Beyond the political priorities already set at European level, it seems to us that three challenges should be the object of a coordinated, ambitious and volunteer European policy, in the field of youth:

- **The employment and social inclusion of young people:** while the integration of markets is achieved in Europe and while the European citizenship is on its way, social Europe has remained docked. Employment and social insertion are, nevertheless, major challenges for the future of Europe. Social questions have a major role in the emergence of a European consciousness. The fact of omitting a coordinated political treatment of employment issues weakens the European project. The extent of unemployment and the precarity amongst young generations imposes a real answer to meet these challenges.

- **Sustainable development education:** the threats brought by climate change raise the need to enter an era of sustainable development. Young people have a crucial role to play in the emergence of this new era. This issue of sustainable development cannot be limited to an environmental approach. It also includes economic, social and cultural questions. Sustainable development education should enable everyone to be a responsible actor and to be aware of the environment where they live.
- **Media education:** we currently live in a society of communication and information. Although being pillars of democracy, media may also become powerful tools of propaganda and misinformation. The extraordinarily high number of information channels and flows makes the deciphering of media messages and their representations more complex. It is therefore important to enable every young person to develop critical thinking towards the media but also to 'educate' the media so that they spread less caricatured and stigmatising representations of youth.

Finally, and more globally, youth and popular education associations wish to be fully part of the Structured Dialogue which has been set at European level, but which has difficulties finding a national declension. CNAJEP would like to be involved in the elaboration of the national policies related to youth and popular education, as well as in the elaboration of laws transcribing European directives concerning youth, popular education, and associations working in that field.

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ITALY/ FNG

At the European level, the main achievement has been to start considering youth policy in its cross-sector dimension, as an integrated framework of actions taken in several fields (education, employment, information and so on). It has been also the chance to set a first framework of cooperation among different actors involved in youth policies (Member States, European institutions, social partners and youth organisations.) focused on the OMC. This was very important also for youth organisations at the national level in understanding how it would have been possible to influence the decisions taken on youth policy at the European level and identify the decision-making bodies eligible to implement them.

MAIN DIFFICULTIES

We feel that the current cycle of structural dialogue was not as successful as expected for the following reasons:

- Too many objectives were set, making it difficult to monitor all of them.
- The structural dialogue did not bring additional resources but only a stronger commitment and a new methodological approach to youth policy-making. The presence of varying levels of political will to implement the Pact at the national level proved to be a serious obstacle to delivering outcomes for young people especially in a period of budgetary restrictions.
- Youth organisations were not involved enough in the setting of the strategy, monitoring, and reporting on the achievements

THE IMPACT OF THE CURRENT EU COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

As FNG, we regret the lack of a coherent national framework to answer the challenges of the current European youth policies framework in Italy.

This does not mean that nothing has been done in the youth field, but nevertheless the actions taken were not linked to an overall strategy able to fully set priorities and objectives at national levels.

We have the strong feeling that, in the youth field, what has been agreed at the EU level (Common Objectives, White Paper, European Youth Pact), including by the Italian Government, did not manage to affect the political objectives and strategies at national level.

This affects also the information and cooperation with youth organisations. Indeed even though the current framework of cooperation was adopted in 2002, it is the first time that we are discussing the challenges related to the strategy itself with the ministry. Even though the OMC requires, as one of the main pillars, the involvement of youth organisations and other civil society partners in setting the national strategy and the reporting, we experience a lack of dialogue between the ministry and the youth associations. As far as FNG knows, there has been no consultation process on the actions implemented by the Government in order to answer to the Common Objectives.

So far this is the first time that FNG is working with the government on the questionnaire and we really welcome this willingness to cooperate with youth organisations.

Therefore, the first priority of the Italian Government should be to open a broad round of consultations among youth organisations, social partners, and local and regional institutions on how Italy can fulfil the challenges driven by the framework of cooperation.

We believe that a real Structured Dialogue needs to be established on an equal basis between youth representatives and decision-makers.

This should be implemented in all political structures from the local to the national and European level.

Young people should be involved in every aspect of the decision-making process, from the beginning to the end. This is only possible if the structures allow their participation in a democratic and transparent way.

ASSESSMENT OF THE MAIN POLITICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK. (OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION, EUROPEAN YOUTH PACT, MAINSTREAMING)

In principle, we consider the Open Method of Coordination, European Youth Pact, and mainstreaming as three appropriate instruments. They gave for the first time an innovative cross-sector approach in EU youth decision-making, implying greater coordination between the different institutional actors working on policy issues affecting youth. In terms of governance, it **acknowledged the decisive role that youth and civil society organisations need to be given to improve youth policy-making.** This was done especially through the European Youth pact.

Now the point is that it seems after some years that there was no real cooperation

on the different instruments, especially in defining the priorities. We had the impression that the cooperation was based on too many and broad priorities which did not help the Member States to define strategies and areas of intervention in a clear and transparent way.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

We welcome the revision of the current cooperation, as it gives us the chance to reformulate it in favour of a more focused and structured approach.

Together, with the European Youth Forum, we would like to submit the following proposals:

- A more focused framework: fewer priorities, less objectives
If priorities are identified in the course of a process such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the youth field, adding new priorities to the framework challenges the possibility of achieving the previously determined priorities.
Nonetheless, the Team Presidency of the European Union, as the political body responsible for all policy processes, should be able to set one or two priorities for the 18 months. European Years should be considered as priorities only when they are relevant for youth policy.
- Implementation of the cross-sector nature of youth policy by creating links with other relevant policy areas affecting young people. This implies, as suggested in the governance paragraph, that relevant connections need to be set up with relevant administrations. In terms of policy content, the YFJ refers particularly to education and lifelong learning, employment, social integration, health, youth autonomy, mobility,

fundamental rights and non-discrimination. The genuine implementation of youth priorities could also be ensured via specific “youth pacts” in relevant EU strategies e.g. the European Youth Pact and the Lisbon Strategy.

- Maintain the Open method of Coordination in the youth field (OMC) as a core process in order to provide Member States with a mechanism to meet and discuss youth issues. The OMC also provides youth organisations and other relevant actors in the youth field with the opportunity to contribute, give input, and discuss with decision makers, both at the European and national levels. Nonetheless, this still needs to be genuinely implemented in all Member States.

The OMC should keep priorities, but focus on the following:

- Participation
- Information
- Voluntary activities
- Cross-sector approach to policies affecting young people

MAIN CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUTH POLICIES

Also, in accordance with the European Youth Forum position, we consider the following issues as being the cornerstones of youth policies in Europe:

Participation

Participation is about having the rights, means, space, opportunity and, where necessary, the support, to participate in, influence decisions, and engage in actions and activities, so as to contribute to building a better society.

It includes key issue like:

- Good governance in schools, administrations, authorities
- Volunteering
- Guaranteed and supported associative life
- Support and capacity building of civil society and youth NGOs

Youth autonomy and well being of young people

Youth organisations want to make sure that every young person is integrated into society and is fully equipped to contribute as a citizen. Autonomy signifies young people having the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to choose to live independently; to run their own lives; enjoying the possibility of full social and political participation in all sectors of everyday life; and being able to take independent decisions. Therefore, the following sector policies should be seen as priorities and full components of youth policy:

- Equality and non-discrimination.
- Employment: fighting precariousness in the labour market and ensuring the availability of adequate, suitable employment.
- Social protection and poverty eradication.
- Quality and efficient public services with equal access at the point of delivery.
- Housing.
- Transport.

Personal development for a knowledge based society

Education is a broad and critical term, which does not simply cover the definition used by most governments; i.e. referring only to schools or universities. Indeed, youth organisations understand education not only as the acquisition of professional skills in order to be able to become employed, but also as a necessity to provide everyone with the means and opportunities for integration into society as a member of the active work force

and also as a citizen. Education should feature in all environments and spheres of life, and during childhood, youth and adulthood. Youth organisations stress the need to recognise the skills acquired through non-formal education which greatly contributes to the development of the individual as a citizen, and, therefore, to the development of society.

Thus, the following sector policies should be seen as priorities and full components of youth policy:

- Quality education tailored to the needs of young people in terms of personal development but also in terms of the demands of the labour market.
- Entrepreneurial education .
- Links in order to develop the synergies of closer cooperation between the formal and non formal education systems.
- Recognition of non-formal education and of exchange periods.
- Access to culture.

These priorities have to be implemented in their cross-sector and intergenerational dimension.

FUTURE PRIORITIES OF THE EU COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

We believe that the very first challenge in the future is to increase the feeling of ownership of the process by all the relevant actors involved, first of which are the Member States, the youth organisations and the social partners. We tried to give an overview about our priorities regarding the new cycle in the question three above.

Furthermore, we believe the role of the European Social Fund is fundamental, for one of the basic pillars of the framework, such as

the implementation of the European Youth pact. We have to increase the focus on youth, not only in relation with education and training, but also in fighting youth unemployment and precariousness in the labour market.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS OF THE EXISTING INSTRUMENTS OF COOPERATION

We believe that one of the main challenges regarding the new cooperation framework is related to the governance of the whole process. This means that the relevant institutions and actors are involved, leading to a common goal, with mutual respect for the partners (whether institutions, interest groups or youth organisations); that the process is participatory and meaningfully structured (in order to ensure coherence between the actors consulted and the consultation process). To ensure ownership of the dialogue process by all the actors involved, its agenda and priorities should be decided together.

Furthermore, together with the European Youth Forum, we call for the following measures to be taken in order to strengthen the governance of the new cycle:

Clarification of the role of the European Institutions: Member States, as well as other relevant actors, need to feel ownership of the new framework, and its added value. The role of the European Commission, though crucial, should be moderate, while the European Parliament should be more present, in the framework itself, but also in view of the Treaty of Lisbon (particularly given the youth article).

At the European level, the YFJ therefore calls for:

A role for the European Parliament: the European Parliament should be given the time to share its opinions and provide input

in European processes related to youth policy. The purpose is not to affect the subsidiarity principle, but to give opportunities for relevant, necessary and diverse input and support to processes related to youth policy by a key European institution.

A group of Commissioners for Youth:

Commissioners dealing with policies that affect young people - especially education and lifelong learning, employment, social integration, health, youth autonomy, mobility, fundamental rights and non-discrimination - should coordinate their work to ensure the exchange of expertise and coherent policy developments related to policies affecting young people.

An efficient system within the Council of Ministers: ensure an exchange of information, analysis and content between the actors working on issues affecting youth. The Youth Working Party (the working body of the Council of Ministers) can be the coordination point in order to gather relevant and meaningful knowledge and data on the situation of young people.

Involvement of local and regional authorities:

the Committee of the Regions should be given a role in the definition, as well as in the implementation, of European processes related to youth policy, especially regarding youth participation.

A monitoring system for the framework:

the Structured Dialogue, to be agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders, should be the governing body of the framework. Nonetheless, mechanisms to ensure the involvement of all actors in the youth field, especially young people with their organisations, as well as to provide input and feedback on the on

going implementation of the priorities of the framework, should be established. A stronger monitoring system does not necessarily imply more reporting from the Member States (rather, more transparent and publicly available reporting) or the other actors, but points to a longer period for implementation, of at least five years, and a period for in-depth evaluation and definition of the following framework – lasting, for example, two years. Quantitative indicators should duly support the monitoring process.

The existing reporting mechanisms, such as the Lisbon National Report Programs, should be maintained (up to the new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy) as they are of the utmost relevance and provide information on an essential aspect of the policies affecting young people. Any other reporting mechanisms for future youth-related processes should be set up and feed into the understanding of the actual situation and needs of young people.

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LITHUANIA/ LIJOT

HOW INVOLVED WAS YOUR ORGANISATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD?

Lithuania is a good example of the system of Structured Dialogue on national and local levels already for a long time.

On the national level, youth interests are ensured via the Council of Youth Affairs which is formed at the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter – the Department of Youth Affairs) and is an advisory body to this institution. The council mentioned above is composed of representatives of state institutions, agencies and other Lithuanian youth organisations. It operates on a voluntary basis. It examines the most important issues of youth policy and puts forward suggestions to the Department regarding implementation of the youth policy, meeting the needs of youth and youth organisations. Participation of youth in this council ensures proper representation of youth interests as well as solutions of issues and problems.

40

This way, youth is granted the right to participate directly in the decision-making process while solving issues associated with them. Moreover, this is a good example of how the Lithuanian Youth Council has the right to participate equally in the implementation of the framework of European cooperation in the youth field.

HOW INVOLVED WAS YOUR ORGANISATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON OBJECTIVES OF THE 4 PRIORITIES OF THE OPEN METHOD OF COOPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD?

First of all it is necessary to mention the structure responsible for all the youth policy implementation in Lithuania, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The aims of the Department are: to implement youth policy in Lithuania and develop actions, which can improve youth situation in the country; to strengthen youth non-governmental sector, encourage young people to participate in youth activities, and to ensure the representation of national youth policy on the international level. The Department was responsible for the implementation of the Common Objectives of the 4 priorities of the Open Method of Cooperation in the youth field.

Lithuanian Youth Council (LijOT), as the main partner of the Department, was involved in various discussions and decision-making processes. Moreover, LijOT has been asked for contributions for the creation of various governmental programmes and strategies for youth. LijOT's opinion is always taken into account when making a new step in the field of youth policy. All the 4 priorities were taken into consideration while creating different measures of implementing youth policy. On one hand, those 4 priorities were very important; on the other hand, Lithuania had as well national priorities that were created with respect to the situation at the national level.

HOW DID THE CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT EVOLVE SINCE THE START OF THE PROCESS IN 2002?

The contacts with the governmental sector became different from 2002, as the structure of youth policy implementation changed a lot from that time. It is rather due to internal changes in the field of youth policy, than to the influence of the EU and OMC. The Department of youth affairs was established in 2006 and

this is how LiJOT lost part of its influence in the governmental sector, because the Council of Youth Affairs became a mere advisory body without decision-making powers.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE AND THE NYC PERSPECTIVE ON YOUTH POLICY?

Generally speaking, both perspectives pursue the same objectives. Both seek to create a better environment for young people, allowing them to use their potential and live happily in the society. Still, there are some differences on the measures and methods necessary to achieve those goals. Youth organisations would like to have more space to work and provide the tools young people need for a better living. Government also sees its place in all these processes. Another concern is that not all the structures responsible for youth are working properly. We regret that the Council of youth affairs is not able to do its best because of governmental representatives not participating in the meetings. It is obvious that sometimes youth and youth policy are much more important for youth NGO's than for the government. On the other hand, the long time established structured dialogue enables the different actors to share the visions and measures of youth policy. In conclusion, Lithuania's government is always welcoming the advices of youth NGO's especially from the Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT).

DID THE GOVERNMENT DEVELOP A STRATEGY LINKED TO THE EUROPEAN PROCESS IN THE YOUTH FIELD?

There were and are some strategies and programmes created which are oriented towards young people. Here are the most important:

- Programme "Active youth citizenship, initiatives and leisure activities of young people from rural areas development";
- Programme "Youth socialisation, creative self-expression and participation in creating knowledge society";
- Programme "National drug control and drug addiction prevention";
- Programme "Analysis, coordination and implementation of interdepartmental and cross-sector activities for youth and youth situation";
- The programme of youth policy development in municipalities;
- The programme of youth potentiality development;
- The national programme of youth entrepreneurship development;
- The programme of children and youth public spirit, morality and voluntary activities stimulation.

All of those programmes are somehow related to the 4 priorities of OMC. There is no general strategy covering all the youth policy areas.

HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE INFLUENCE OF THE EUROPEAN PROCESS AND ESPECIALLY THE OMC IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH POLICY?

Looking at the different programmes and various measures and tools used to implement youth policy in Lithuania, it is possible to affirm that OMC priorities are strongly taken into consideration. It is especially the case when it comes to fostering youth participation, access to information, promoting volunteering and better knowledge of youth. These goals are highly important when making the main decisions in the youth field.

PLEASE COMPARE THE COMMON OBJECTIVES AGREED BY THE MEMBER

STATES WITH THE ACTIONS TAKEN IN YOUR COUNTRY/AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL TO IMPLEMENT THEM?

The Government of Lithuania has paid valuable attention to youth issues in the country and taken the OMC priorities into consideration. Youth participation is a major issue for the Lithuanian government. It has done a lot in favour of youth participation and several state programmes have been adopted. Information and youth access to information have been another important topic. There are lots of different measures helping young people get the needed information. Nevertheless, according to independent annual surveys, young people still feel a lack of information and still have problems of access to it. In conclusion, all the priorities have been taken into account when deciding on national measures and tools which create better conditions for young people.

DID THE GOVERNMENTS DEVELOP NEW TOOLS?

Lithuanian government has been developing new tools and measures for the youth policy, constantly. At the moment, a new government of the state is to be nominated as there were parliamentary elections in autumn 2008. It is extremely important to keep youth policy as an important state policy area and develop new and better tools for it.

DID YOUR ORGANISATION SEE OTHER POLICIES SET UP AND WHICH WERE NOT PART OF THE OMC COMMON OBJECTIVES?

As it has been mentioned above, the Lithuanian government has several youth programmes on various topics. Some of them are closely linked to OMC priorities, other are more oriented to the national situation and promote such topics as youth potentiality development,

drugs prevention, youth entrepreneurship development, etc. Lithuanian formal education system has entered a reform period as well. Despite these policies, there is still a misunderstanding between government and youth organisations concerning non-formal education and youth NGO's as main providers of non-formal education. Volunteering is not so developed. The majority of young people do not participate in any kind of youth NGO's and do not tend to do it.

DID THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PACT BRING ANY CHANGES IN THE YOUTH POLICY? WAS IT LINKED TO THE WORK REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK IN THE YOUTH FIELD?

The European Youth Pact, as well as other European Union instruments related to youth and youth policy, have had a great impact on the development of youth policy at the national level. The guidelines and recommendations from the EU are extremely important for creating measures and tools for young people's better living conditions in Lithuania. Focusing on the European Youth Pact, a greater involvement of youth NGO's to the process of implementation of priorities and directions in implementation of the agreed text would have led to more visible change. This lack of cooperation could be explained by the youth sector not being strong and capable enough on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the lack of a visible and clear willingness of the governmental structures.

DO YOU IDENTIFY ANY OTHER PROCESSES THAT AFFECTED OR CHANGED THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK IN THE YOUTH FIELD?

In addition to the changes in the European youth policy, there were several internal changes as well that influenced youth policy in Lithuania.

First of all, it is worth noticing that the legal situation of youth policy changed a lot during the last 6 years. The Law on Youth Policy Framework has been adopted. It describes all the processes and stakeholders as well as the structure of governmental implementation of youth policy. The Department of Youth Affairs has been established according to this law and has become the main structure responsible for youth policy implementation and creation of measures, tools and programmes for youth.

On the one hand, such a law allowed a clear description of youth policy implementation system at the state level, but on the other hand, Lithuanian youth organisations have lost a clear co-management of youth policy as the Council of Youth Affairs only has an advisory voice now. Nonetheless, Lithuanian youth NGOs are happy to have clear definitions and concepts regarding the main areas of youth policy at state level.

DO YOU KNOW IF THINGS HAVE CHANGED OVER THE PAST 6 YEARS?

Youth policy has changed a lot over the past 6 years at both European and national level. New policy papers and other documents have been adopted at both levels-- describing priorities, tools, measures and programmes for young people. Despite these achievements, a lot remains to be done. The most efficient and productive youth policy will only be achieved if governmental and non-governmental youth sectors work together.

IF YES, IS IT BECAUSE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON

OBJECTIVES AND THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK?

It would not be fair to evaluate the success of the implementation of youth policy only by taking into consideration European Union measures and priorities in the youth field. It is as well important to recognise the commitment of the national government, as well as work of the non-governmental youth organisations.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE OBSTACLES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION?

Governmental actors identify obstacles in some areas, such as culture, health, etc. As these are very close, they find it difficult to integrate youth issues. They also face a lack of human resources. When seeking cooperation with specialists from other fields, they regret the lack of initiative and goodwill in developing particular aspects of youth policy in these fields. The fact that particular priorities have been envisaged at the European level does not ensure that they will be implemented in the Member States. It is hard to implement horizontal projects due to the closeness of other systems.

In the opinion of LiJOT, seeking to enhance understanding and knowledge on youth, continuous activities of the youth non-governmental sector, and enhancement of its quality should be ensured. It is especially important to maintain high-quality cooperation on the setting of the directions of activities, but also on implementation.

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ON HOW THESE OBSTACLES COULD HAVE BEEN OVERCOME? (N.B. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.)

A priority for the better implementation of youth policy is the existence of strong and

competent youth organisations. It is still a problem in Lithuania. Governmental actors should pay more attention to strengthening the quality of non-governmental sector. This would help to increase youth participation, information and other important priorities set by the European Union. Another important point is to maintain the Structured Dialogue as a tool to better understand young people and consider youth organisations as equal and competent partners in the implementation processes.

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LUXEMBOURG/ CGJL

CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENTS

The National Youth Council of Luxembourg (CGJL) has always been a privileged partner of the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration, responsible for youth issues, within the discussions in the framework of youth policy. The consultation process in the frame of the White Paper process started in 1995 and included all actors of the youth field, the Ministry, the CGJL and other youth organisations. A caravan toured the country and stopped at schools and youth centres in order to discuss Europe and the needs of young people. As a result, a national action plan "Premières lignes directrices pour la politique de la jeunesse: Pour les Jeunes! Avec les Jeunes! » was published in 1996. After the revision of youth policy in Luxembourg by the Council of Europe, the Ministry launched a second consultation round. The CGJL and other relevant youth organisations were contacted in order to cooperate. In 2002 the CGJL organised a national forum and consulted its member organisations with the aim to define priorities for youth policy and to elaborate concrete proposals for the implementation of these key ideas. After the discussion and the amending of the document by all involved partners, the Ministry presented the new national action guidelines "Deuxièmes lignes directrices pour la politique de la jeunesse: Jeunes et société" in February 2004. These guidelines follow the action lines of the European Commission in a, for Luxembourg, adapted form and tackle, amongst others, all proposed priorities of the OMC. The CGJL has been involved in the process of implementation, especially when it comes to the area of participation and voluntary activities. The second national guidelines underline the importance of a good

working collaboration with youth organisations on a local, regional and national level, and this is what the CGJL has been experiencing all through the process. The CGJL and the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration have always enjoyed excellent relations. Since 2004, the CGJL has been consulted at multiple occasions and has met with the representative of the Ministry at several formal and informal occasions. The Ministry puts a lot of effort into keeping the main actors of the youth sector informed on the latest news on European level.

Although the CGJL has always been a partner in the definition and the elaboration of priorities and concrete proposals for youth policy, the CGJL has, apart from a secretary, not had any confirmed staff members until 2005. In 2004 the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration accorded a full staff member to the CGJL, in order to assure the Luxembourg's Presidency in 2005. Having been satisfied by the work of the CGJL throughout this period, the Ministry has confirmed that staff member for an undefined period of time. Apart from that, the Ministry signed a Convention with the CGJL through which all administrative, functioning and staff costs are taken care of. In 2008, in the context of the implementation of the structured dialogue in the form of a National Youth Assembly, the Ministry assigned another staff member to the CGJL, who was scheduled to start working on the implementation of the project on the 1st of July 2008. This evolution shows that the Ministry has more than ever recognised the CGJL as an official partner in the elaboration and putting into practise of youth policy on the national terrain and it acknowledges the representative role of the CGJL on international level within structures such as the European Youth Forum. We would not, though, say that it is the European Youth Pact that is at the origin of

this good collaboration. It appears to us being more like the result of the good cooperation within the whole process of readapting and reorienting youth policy. The European Youth Pact has thus contributed to an expansion of the contacts to other ministries.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

From the very beginning of the White Paper process, the Ministry responsible for youth affairs, has always tried to involve the perspectives and ideas of the different actors in the youth field itself. Upcoming and implemented ideas on European level have been included in evaluation and revision processes as quickly as possible and have been picked up for discussion within the consultation processes. As a consequence, there has always been a basic agreement on the key ideas for the needed direction of youth policy in Luxembourg. When it comes to the field-implementation, the Ministry has always searched the direct contact to the actors in order to include their perspective. A good example for this consultation of actors on the terrain is the National Youth Assembly that is to be created. The CGJL is supposed to implement this instrument in the framework of the Structured Dialogue. The National Youth Assembly has been adopted in May 2008, but is only vaguely described in legislation. All other project details have been discussed and planned directly with the CGJL and its member organisations during several consultation meetings.

In order to implement the priorities set by the European process, the Ministry has presented national action guidelines "Deuxièmes lignes directrices pour la politique de la jeunesse" in 2004, based on the revision and the evaluation of the previous youth policy and on the

proposals of the youth sector itself. These guidelines refer to all of the proposed priorities of the OMC: participation, information, voluntary activities among young people, and greater understanding and knowledge of youth. Other issues covered by the guidelines are, for instance, social cohesion, multiculturalism and integration – a subject of great importance in Luxembourg, due to the high percentage of foreign citizens – identity and mobility, well-being, self-development and autonomy, the development of a transversal youth policy, and the networking of all actors on local level. The guidelines make concrete proposals for action in the different areas.

Many subjects covered by the EU process had already been addressed by the Ministry responsible for youth affairs, many years ago, before the actual implementation of the European Youth Pact and the OMC. In 1996 the Ministry presented, after a vast consultation, the first national action guidelines. These were meant to be seen as a first attempt to present a global concept for youth policy in Luxembourg. In this context three different action plans were issued, tackling subjects that also became part of the priorities of the OMC in 2002: “Participation des Jeunes », 1997; « Communication avec les Jeunes », and « Travail de jeunesse, bénévolat, partenariat », 1999. On local level a « Plan Communal Jeunesse » had been created, a planification and coordination instrument which aims at a collaboration between the national and the local level, in order to make a mid-term youth policy in the different communities. This youth policy gets its orientation from the needs and conditions of the lives of young people in their community. These examples show that the priorities of the OMC have already been addressed for a long time by the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

Since the implementation of the Common Objectives, the Luxembourg’s government has taken many actions in order to reach the set goals.

Participation

So far, the Ministry is supporting all attempts to improve participation of young people in society. In this context, projects such as the Youth Conventions, the Action-Teams project and the project in the framework of improving the functioning of the student committees in high schools find the full support from the Ministry and the National Youth Service, overall projects of the CGJL that want to give young people the possibility to express their needs and demands, which encourage them to act and help them to be more autonomous.

In the framework of involving young people in decision-making, and in accordance with the objectives of the structured dialogue, the Ministry responsible for youth affairs has, for a long time, been working on a frame law on youth (*loi sur la jeunesse*). This law was adopted by the parliament in May 2008 and will be the beginning of an important step towards giving young people the possibility to be part of the decision-making process-- this by the means of a National Youth Assembly. This National Youth Assembly is supposed to be composed of delegates from youth organisations and unorganised young people. The Assembly is meant to give them the possibility to participate in the debate and make concrete proposals on national and European questions that are related to youth.

In order to give young people a voice on local level, the Ministry supports and encourages the communities to organise local forums,

held in order to identify the needs of young people. Many of these forums have been held in the last years. Unfortunately, according to youth and youth workers in youth centres, only with little feedback from the local authorities themselves. It seems as if in many cases the results of these forums get lost in drawers and do not really lead to concrete action. This creates frustration on the side of the young people, who are afraid of being victims of pseudo-participative projects.

In order to give civil society the possibility to participate in the debate on all questions related to youth, the existing "Conseil supérieur de la jeunesse", an organ which is composed by members of the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration and different actors of the youth sector and civil society, including the CGJL, analyses and discusses all questions related to youth. The Council can make proposals to the government and be consulted. At this point, it is undergoing a reform, due to the new law on youth, and will be changing its composition in order to give more weight to the actors of civil society.

Information

The National Youth Information Centre (Centre Information Jeunes) CIJ has launched an information kit "Les cahiers du CIJ" for both youth workers and young people, containing 80 thematic booklets in 6 thematic areas, such as "health", "education and training", "practical life", "holidays, sports and leisure", "employment", and "Europe and international". The information kit is meant to be a complete information source, containing furthermore detailed contact lists and web references. It can be bought in the form of three ring binders or downloaded on the official website of the CIJ: www.cij.lu. The information kit was to be distributed to schools and youth centres

all over Luxembourg in June 2008. Besides the subjects that have already been tackled in the framework of this information kit, the CIJ will be extending the information database in close collaboration with organisations and institutions in the upcoming years.

In addition to the information that youth workers can use in their daily contact with young people, the CIJ is planning to use the kit as a networking tool. The CIJ will be offering trainings for youth workers and will, together with them, elaborate concrete projects in order to disseminate the information to the young people in their structure, this by finding ever new innovative ways in order to address the young (quizzes, board games, and concrete projects work).

Voluntary activities among young people

As a follow up to the International Year of Volunteering, during which several activities were organised in order to promote volunteering, the government decided to implement a National Council for Volunteering in 2002. This Council, in which all major organisations, working with volunteers (of all ages), including the CGJL, are represented, meets on a regular basis in order to reflect the situation of volunteers and voluntary activities in Luxembourg. In addition to this Council, a Volunteering Agency has been set up, with the mission to receive, inform about possibilities, offer guidance and training opportunities, and give support to all people interested in volunteering.

In order to support volunteer activities and remove obstacles for young people under the age of 30 who have already settled in professional life, the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration and the National Youth Service have developed the "education leave". A young

person can be granted “education leave” (congé d’éducation) to give, him or her, the opportunity to work on a volunteer project during the time of his or her regular working hours.

In 2006 the government developed a new concept for a “voluntary service for orientation” (SVO). This concept addresses all young residents, aged between 16 and 30, who finished compulsory education and who are motivated to make a commitment in a project of public utility in a cultural, socio-cultural, socio-educational domain or in the area of environmental protection. This concept gives the young person the opportunity to acquire specific competences, to benefit from a strengthened quality frame support, and to think about his/her own professional goals through a voluntary service in a specific organisation with a personal follow-up. Since October 2007, over forty young people are to make their SVO in one of the approved organisations.

In 2007 the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration has launched a promotion campaign on volunteering. This campaign has been planned with different actors of the youth sector, including the CGJL and the volunteering Agency. The result of the collaboration was a DVD, with statements of young active people and a flyer as well.

Within the framework of the fast evolving labour market, it is important to consider the skills young people can acquire during voluntary activities, as essential basic competences to the active participation in society and as key qualifications in the frame of the employability of young people. In this context the SNJ and the FNEL (*Federation des Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses du Luxembourg*) elaborated a device to provide

young volunteers with a certificate of skills they acquired within the framework of non-formal education (*Attestation des compétences acquises dans le cadre de l’éducation non formelle*). This certificate can be delivered to all young people, at the age of at least 18, who have continuously and at least for a year been active in an organisation or a youth movement, or within the framework of a project and who did a training course in the youth sector.

Furthermore, in October 2007, the law on the voluntary service has been adopted by the parliament. This law gives the volunteer service a concrete frame, simplifies procedures and removes obstacles.

Greater understanding and knowledge of youth.

In order to facilitate studies on youth and to make sure that they are done on a regular basis, the new law on youth foresees an observatory of youth (Observatoire de la jeunesse). Its mission will be to prepare, coordinate, and initiate research, position papers, surveys and reports of the different aspects of the situation of young people in Luxembourg. Furthermore, the law stipulates that the minister responsible for youth has to present a national report on the situation of youth in Luxembourg every 5 years. These measures will contribute to getting knowledge of youth in order to adapt current youth policy. So far the CESIJE (Centre d’études sur la situation des jeunes en Europe), the research and documentation centre on the situation of youth in Europe, has lead the research in the youth area. Since 2007, the CESIJE has been integrated in the research unit INSIDE, the integrative multidisciplinary research group committed to the study of individual and social development in the times of social change of the University of Luxembourg.

A lot of things have happened over the last 6 years. So does the new law on youth, for example, install an inter-ministerial committee, in order to tackle the transversality of youth policy. It is very difficult to talk about results at this point, however. The new law has just been adopted by the parliament. Many initiatives are about to be, or have shortly been launched, so that their outcomes are unknown yet.

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THE NETHERLANDS/ JEUGDRAAD

The Dutch national Youth Council is not very optimistic about the results of the cooperation in the field of youth in The Netherlands. The positive approach to youth policy that is propagated by the European policies has not been followed in The Netherlands, where the approach is still very negative: youth that cause society problems remain the centre of attention. However, participation is getting more attention. The Dutch NYC does not dare to say whether this is despite the White Paper or whether the European policies contributed to it.

Decentralised responsibilities for youth policy meant that the level that negotiated and signed resolutions and that had to report to the Commission and the level where the broad and vague European framework had to become reality were separated. The national government did too little to guide and help municipalities. Only if local authorities accidentally found the White Paper on the internet, could the local level know that there was such a thing as cooperation in the youth field. The reports the national government sent to the European Commission were nothing more than a cover up that nothing had been done in the implementation of the White Paper.

It therefore remained a hobby for a few enthusiastic persons at the European Commission, governmental representatives and youth activists. The targeted young people did not benefit from this time, money, and environmental absorbing circus in Brussels.

In the future, the cooperation should not be expanded to new areas. Youth policy needs

a local focus. Subsidiarity prescribes a very limited role for Brussels. Nevertheless, the European Union made sure participation and positive youth policy remained on the national agendas, and there is much to learn from each other. The current priorities are, by no means, implemented in the Netherlands. The challenge, therefore, is not to find new areas for the EU, but to improve the current framework to make the current priorities reality.

This is the current position of the activists of the Dutch NYC. But, in the coming year we want to use the new cycle of the Structured Dialogue to involve as many young people as we can in this discussion in a meaningful way.

EVALUATION

The Dutch National Youth Council thinks...

the European cooperation so far has been a farce.

The most important added value has been that positive youth policy did not drop from the agenda totally and might have contributed to an increased attention for participation.

The main problem has been that the national government is responsible for the European negotiations and reports, but claims that local authorities are responsible for implementation. Nice words were spoken in Brussels, but the whole cooperation ended when the Dutch delegation took the train back to The Hague.

The Dutch National Youth Council thinks...

The positive approach of the European framework has been referred to in the programme of the Ministry for Youth and Families, but cannot be found in actual policies.

It has been a valuable tool to structure discussions and to make sure that what presidencies do is at least a bit connected to what other presidencies do. But it is mainly a toy for hobbyists in the Brussels circuit, as it ends there, too.

The Dutch definition of participation still seems different from the European definition. What means 'giving opportunities for deployment' in Europe, in The Netherlands means 'taking part in what is organised and not causing trouble.' It only led to very little progress at the local level - only when a pro-active civil servant or elderman accidentally found the White Paper somewhere. Even then, the White Paper is too vague and abstract to be implemented at the local level right away. Its implementation needs national coordination, which is still lacking.

With the European youth policies and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in our hands, organisations like the Dutch NYC have at least an entry point to advocate for positive, youth centred policies.

Because there was only ex-post reporting to the EC ('this is what we have done: nothing') instead of ex-ante ('this is what we will do, this is what we won't do and this is what we need more ideas about'), thinking about the policy started in the reporting phase instead of in the phase where policies are made. Instead of a valuable tool, it was perceived as an administrative burden. The reports to the European Commission were only meant to conceal that nothing was done. Things that were done anyway were re-written in European jargon.

FUTURE

The Dutch National Youth Council thinks...

attention should be paid to creating opportunities for young people.

All young people should have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making and implementation processes of policies that affect them.

It is a positive trend that youth policy is getting decentralised. More Europeanisation should only be considered if it has a clear added value to national policies, not because governments need a European success, the EC wants to expand its power or youth activists who fail to have their demands met nationally seek it higher up. However, subsidiarity means 'most effective level', not 'every European initiative is bad by nature'.

European policies are essential for preventing that 'participation' falls off the policy-agenda. Also, in a converging Europe – a space without borders and integrating labour market – there needs to be at least a minimum for the opportunities young people will get.

Peer-learning can be improved a lot.

Instead of adding new priorities, making the current priorities a reality should be the main goal.

The Dutch National Youth Council thinks...

Agreeing = implementing. Governments should only accept a framework they support and not think 'whatever, to keep them happy we just agree and when we come home we put the whole thing in the shredder because it is not binding anyway'.

The focus on ex-post accountability should be moved to ex-ante policy-programming. Now, the policies are only considered when there are reports that have to be written, while it

should be an inspiration beforehand. However, European obligations to make action plans might be counter-productive; they might be used to conceal that they will do nothing. When voluntary, but recommended, it might lead to more honest and feasible action plans. Local authorities need to be integrated in the process. It should no longer be accepted that the Dutch minister reports 'I have no clue what has been done with this priority as I'm not responsible' and gets away with it.

PROCESS

The Dutch National Youth Council thinks...

Young people should be consulted in all aspects. Not only the handful of professional young people that have no other hobby than youth-politics, but all young people. That demands a strong coordinating role from the Commission and the YFJ: clear and demarcated questions that can be compared and are meaningful and enough time for consultations. Putting a group of usual suspects in a room without clear questions they can have prepared is fake-participation.

In the beginning of the new cycle of the Structured Dialogue, the YFJ, National Youth Councils and the Commission should therefore focus on the questions that need to be asked to young people locally and on the process to facilitate this consultation in order to have meaningful results. They should make a clear agreement on that. Only then they should move to the content.

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CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS

Contact with the government is always improving. In general, KNZ has a very good contact with the government. In the last legislative period (before March 2008), there was a ministry for Education, Employment, Youth and Sport. Due to the wide portfolio, specific attention to youth was not constant. However, the previous minister was consulting us on a regular basis, and KNZ always stressed the need of having at least a dedicated parliamentary secretary on Youth. In late 2007, KNZ escalated the request and shared the thought with the Prime Minister.

The government listened to this proposal and after last election, a parliamentary secretary for Youth and Sport has been appointed. This improved drastically the contact with the government, since there are regular meetings with the Parliamentary secretary himself and other members of his secretarial staff too. KNZ also presented its proposals on the revision of the national youth policy in June 2008. The government is using this document in the main resource library of the committee responsible to revise the National Youth Policy.

In this same committee, the government chose three individuals, who are currently serving the Youth Councils amongst the members, together with other young people who were in the council's executive in the previous years. This is an improvement, since in 2004 when the National Youth Policy was written, there was only one representative from the youth council. KNZ fully supports the philosophy of the government of having a youth policy created "by young people for young people".

There is constant presence in the committee revising the policy. Furthermore, the government is acknowledging KNZ's proposals about the youth policy.

There is no specific mention of the European process; however, main guidelines are followed.

The strategy is to first revise the National Youth Policy. In the meantime, research to list all organisations is being conducted. Once the National Youth Policy is revised, the government-- together with the NYC-- will build a network of communication between organisations.

The main background target is the dissemination of information through the network mentioned and inciting the participation by having a revised national youth policy.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to this, the Structured Dialogue had its momentum during the youth week. The government had prepared it in the previous months, working on a survey for young people. This survey explored the knowledge of young people on stakeholders in the youth field. The methodology to collect this information included a team of young people going in places frequented by young people.

OTHER PROCESSES

Since 2002 and the establishment of the Framework of Cooperation in the Youth Field, some other European processes linked to youth have been adopted, such as the European Youth Pact.

There is no specific mention of the Youth Pact until now. However, it was kept as a base document by KNZ when forming our proposals on the revision. The main priorities are also being kept into consideration by the revision committee. At this stage it is early to measure its implementation, since the policy is currently being revised on these principles.

RESULTS

The results are not linked to the implementation of the Common Objectives; it is due to effort put in by KNZ to involve itself in policy and to the goodwill from the government to involve the council in the processes and projects.

Like any other area, the main remaining obstacle is the lack of financial resources. Another possibly helpful concept is the better acknowledgement of youth workers and further motivation for young people to be involved in organisations. If these are facilitated, implementation will significantly improve.

In addition, support to young people who are deeply involved by giving them something such as minimal pocket money to cover personal costs being currently borne to make the present implementation present. Such initiative would further motivate young people to increase participation and thus reach quality in implementation. An increase of human resources would make the implementation wider and thus more effective.

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

Minimisation of priorities to just two main ones as stated by OMC: Participation and Information. A long priority list is no longer a priority list. Presidency priorities and other

priorities which have youth at heart should be designed around these fundamental two priorities.

In our opinion, the system is failing since there are a number of documents discussing the youth theme, with each document having a different priority. This makes implementation very difficult, since it is more difficult for stakeholders to follow up. All the documents should be revised, and relevant content should be extracted. Instead of creating a new document (which would complicate things further), we suggest that the most recent one shall be also revised in a way of having the two priorities, mentioned above, as fundamental starting point and extract main points from documents, such as the Youth Pact, to facilitate implementation and making it more concrete.

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PORTUGAL/CNJ

The Portuguese National Youth Council (CNJ) was not effectively involved in the implementation of the Framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field, including the Common Objectives of the four priorities of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

No significant consultation process was conducted by the Portuguese government with young people and youth organisations specifically on the process, and despite CNJ contacts proposing to cooperate closely with the government, namely in the preparation of the National Reports on the OMC, so far no opportunity was given to CNJ to participate.

However, there was an important enhancement in CNJ contacts with the Portuguese government in the last few years. This improvement has likely been due to:

- The recall of the Youth Consultative Council, a governmental structure composed by representatives of youth organisations, including the NYC, which is responsible for the analysis of global youth policy, young people's civic participation and social integration and for the evaluation of youth-related legislative proposals;
- The launch of the National Youth Programme, aimed to identify the needs and expectations of young people and to set out the priority strategies for youth policy for 2007-2013, where a debate process with young people and youth organisations over the European Youth Policy, among other issues relevant to youth, took place;
- The National Youth Event, organised by CNJ in 2006 with government support under the theme "Youth and the Future of Europe";
- The Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union that emphasised

the CNJ involvement in the youth agenda, promoting the partnership work between the Portuguese government and CNJ in the organisation of the European Youth Event and the Africa-Europe Youth Summit, adding force to the Structured Dialogue and exemplifying the benefits of a partnership approach;

- The establishment of the Consultative Council of the Portuguese Youth Institute where CNJ has a seat, as a body of consultation, support and participation in the definition of the action lines of this public institute which mission is to support the definition, implementation and evaluation of the youth governmental policy. Still, from our perspective, this represents a regression, since this Consultative Council replaced the former Administrative Council, which was a co-management structure.

Moreover, CNJ highlights its appointment as member of the projects' selection panel of the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS

The political guidelines, strategic priorities, and key measures set out by the Portuguese government for youth policy are coherent with CNJ perspective, but do not fulfil it entirely. The major differences between CNJ and government perspective on youth policy exist at policy implementation level.

We outline the progress made by government in developing a strategy linked to the European process in the youth field with regard to information. In line with the Common Objectives settled for this priority, the government set up 19 information

spots, covering all the country districts, and developed a new youth portal.

The establishment, in 2007, of an Inter-ministerial Commission for Youth Policies-- with the task of coordinating, tracking, and evaluating youth policies-- is also of significant relevance in sight of the European process in the youth field. This instrument was an important step forward to integrate the youth dimension in other governmental policies and initiatives. Although seeking for cross-sector youth policy, this legislative initiative did not include any reference to the Framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field.

It is likewise not clear to what extent government initiatives taken on participation and promotion of volunteering activities among young people are linked to the Framework of European Cooperation, since no reference is made to the OMC Common Objectives for these two priorities in government youth policy documents.

Therefore, we find it more difficult to measure the influence of European processes, including the OMC, in the development of the Portuguese youth policy, taking into account that throughout its strategic documents made available few references are made to the process. However, looking to the government political guidelines, strategic priorities, and key measures on youth policy, we can suggest that the process prompted positive changes.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

While it may be a local competence, national governments should assume their responsibilities in view of the guidelines, on which they agreed, for the implementation of the OMC; there should be a basic strategy at

the national level to ensure that everybody has information on youth issues.

Although there has been noticeable progress over the last years towards the achievement of the European objectives, the measures moved on by the Portuguese government in the youth field remain insufficient to implement them.

The involvement of young people and youth organisations in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of youth policy has been neglected. From the CNJ perspective, working together with young people and youth organisations is essential to develop effective actions and bring successful results. Therefore, more efforts should be made to ensure their wider and deeper participation at all levels: national, regional, and local. CNJ does not perceive the youth policy from a different perspective.

Policy development on participation has been insufficient to meet the Common Objectives. Improvements on the civic participation by young people, as well as on their participation through its representative structures in the decision-making processes, were not significant. Likewise, there is much more to do on the development of a Structured Dialogue between young people and the local and national authorities and on the financial and political support to youth organisations.

Regarding the support to various forms of learning to participate, we underline the "Training" Programme, which provides support to training in non formal education settings to leaders of youth organisations, with the aim of improving the efficiency of its activities and of the youth work on the whole, as well as the "Youth Parliament" programme which is also helping to accomplish this Common Objective,

interconnecting the formal education and the promotion of a civic conscience.

We highlight the project of creation of the Municipal Youth Councils, an important participatory initiative that strengthens the structured dialogue. The next step shall be the creation of the Regional Youth Councils that will complete the Structured Dialogue between youth organisations and decision makers at all levels: local, regional, and national.

Government's actions focused on information, particularly the creation of 19 information spots all over country and the development of a new youth portal. These actions have contributed to the improvement of the information services, making them more coherent, coordinated, and accessible to youth. However, they failed to promote the participation of young people and youth organisations in the creation and dissemination of information. In addition, no strategy to improve the link between information and counselling has been developed.

Volunteering activities among young people are a major objective of the government's youth policy. To this end, the government has implemented two instruments: the Youth Volunteering Information System and the European Voluntary Service. The Information System provides an online database for volunteers, promoters, and sponsors and gathers information on the available projects and on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers-- including their legal status. Additionally, the development of an enhanced information service for young people has significantly contributed to increasing the awareness of the existing possibilities of volunteering. Still, no reference is made to the OMC Common Objectives on the government

youth policy documents with regard to this Priority.

In line with the fourth priority, concerning a greater understanding and knowledge of youth, the government took as a main goal the monitoring of youth policy in Portugal through research studies. The partnership work between the Portuguese Youth Institute and the "Permanent Observatory on Youth" for the development of research programmes, such as surveys, statistical analyses and monographic studies, is the most relevant measure adopted.

OTHER PROCESSES

According to its Programme, the Portuguese government is committed to: promoting and encouraging the mobility of young people in Europe, for educative, labour market or leisure activities opportunities; supporting young entrepreneurship; fighting against youth unemployment and precarious working conditions; and making the access to housing by young people easier, in order to promote youth autonomy. The establishment of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Youth also represents a new approach to youth policy, promoting the cross-sector work, in which lays the Youth Pact. In addition, there was also a concern in integrating the Lisbon process in the National Youth Programme.

Two programmes have been launched in this framework. One aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among young people and got together the Ministry of Economy and the Secretary of State on Youth (Finicia Jovem). The other programme has been established by the Ministry of Health (Cuida-te) and aims to develop a health strategy among young people.

As noted above, since no mention is made to the European Cooperation Framework or the Youth Pact, we find difficult to assign this initiatives to the work done in these processes, although we recognise they embrace their priorities and objectives.

RESULTS

We can say that important developments were made in the youth policy. Although few references are made to the Common Objectives of the European Cooperation on policy documents, we believe this progress benefited from the process.

The main obstacles to the implementation of the Common Objectives of the European framework correspond to the lack of an effective information strategy on the OMC process among public authorities, young people, and youth organisations and a structure where these actors could work in partnership. These obstacles could have been overcome through the development of an action plan for the implementation of the OMC Common Objectives and the creation of a partnership working mechanism where youth organisations were engaged.

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

If the OMC is to be achieved, a national implementation strategy must be drawn up to ensure that the process is put into practice by consistent and coherent initiatives, integrated into the national youth policy. To further increase the efficiency of policy making and its impacts, government, local authorities and youth organisations must work in partnership to ensure the ownership of the process.

This shall happen not only on a consultation basis but on an effective participation by youth organisations in policy making, designing, implementing, and evaluating the youth policy at local, regional, and national levels. Therefore, we propose the creation of a formal working structure for a real partnership on the European Cooperation in the Youth Field. This working structure should fully engage young people and youth organisations. This partnership working mechanism should also be implemented on initiatives and policies outside the youth field but related to youth, as education, employment, social inclusion, health, mobility, and fundamental rights and non-discrimination, which we believe would help to mainstream youth policies. This implies an adequate financial support to youth organisations that would enable their meaningful participation in the OMC implementation process.

Furthermore, Common Objectives can only be effective if information is efficiently disseminated at all levels – European, national, regional, and local. To this end, governments should improve its information strategy in coordination with youth organisations and local authorities.

The European process should be a topic of public discussion and parliamentary debate. It is also an issue to be worked on in seminars and trainings for young people and youth organisations. The Youth in Action Programme has a key role in the promotion of these initiatives.

Moreover, to achieve the Common Objectives of the OMC, a permanent monitoring and frequent reviews of youth policy must take place in cooperation with youth organisations, to assess how effectively it is being implemented and to identify the ways in which

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the existing obstacles can be overcome. The definition of measurable indicators to monitor the achievements is thus essential.

In order to contribute to its effectiveness, the framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field should be linked to the European Employment Strategy, the strategic framework of cooperation in the field of education and training and to the social protection and social inclusion process.

Regarding the future framework of cooperation, we outline the importance of the inclusion of youth autonomy as a priority of the OMC, since it represents a major challenge and concern for young people. This will do much to link the European Framework in the Youth Field to the Youth Pact, helping to make its implementation more effective.

A fundamental step towards a cross-sector youth policy would be the effective participation of young people and youth organisation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of youth policy and youth related policies and initiatives. A strong coordination between the different government departments is also a vital measure for achieving it successfully.

SLOVAKIA/ RMS

Open method of coordination – we welcome the fact that, on the European level, this concept has been put forward. However, for several reasons (limited human resources, willingness, time, pressure) the cooperation between the main stakeholders remains very low. We consider youth mainstreaming as a very important concept that needs to be further reinforced in the next framework. In Slovakia, it has been brought up into the debate quite recently, and therefore it is not implemented yet in all the policies affecting young people's life.

European Youth Pact and the youth employment are being dealt by Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Due to a non-existent cross-sector dialogue and to the limited communication between the Ministry and the National Youth Council, it is difficult to measure the developments. The Ministry of Youth is dealing with the European Youth Pact to a very limited extent. This limited implementation has not brought great successes so far; youth unemployment rates still remain extremely high.

As already mentioned in the above paragraph, the cross-sector approach is lagging behind and represents a crucial barrier to successful implementation of diverse youth policies. Concerning the **Structured Dialogue**, we very much welcome regular meetings between NYCs and EC representatives. However, the money spent for presidency youth events and youth events could be spent more efficiently. These events lack a clear goal, clear requirements and a "final product".

Generally speaking, we can conclude that the European framework brought attention of national authorities, NGO sector and other

stakeholders to the topics that would have normally stayed overlooked. However, many activities lacked appropriate quality and were carried out in order to formally reach the Common Objectives. The problem within the Structured Dialogue remains insufficient transparency, limited feedback, and limited scope of youth participation on decision-making and implementation of policies on the national level.

Our recommendation towards new framework:

- Less quantity – more quality!
- Clear and measurable goals and proper/regular evaluation of youth policies implementation.
- Structured dialogue (efficient in time and quality) as an initiator of real cooperation with young people!
- More stress on cross-sector approach.

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SPAIN/ CJE

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS

CJE was invited by the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) in August 2002 to answer the first questionnaires about the situation of the participation and the information in Spain. CJE distributed this questionnaire among their organisations and collected their answers. Since the consultation took place during the summer period, most of the MOs were in vacation and CJE did not get as many answers as expected and INJUVE told us that our contribution had not been as useful as they first thought.

After the Commission elaborated the joint report, we held several meetings to decide the most suitable form to organise this co-operation process, the proposal of the CJE being the creation of a joint working group composed by representatives of the CJE and the INJUVE.

Nevertheless, no decision has been taken on how to organise this process. We continued to maintain periodical meetings on the process of the OMC and the implementation of these objectives (among other subjects), but they were informative meetings, and not decision-making ones.

The CJE was invited to participate in the writing of the final report to the Commission, with the same status as the regional governments. Since then, not many other attempts have been made in favour of coordination in this field.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS

In our opinion, there has not been any specific strategy related to the European dimension on

youth policy. Some measures have been taken or steps given but not so much as an answer to the Common Objectives of the OMC, but rather as an answer to the identified needs.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

In Spain, the regional decentralisation system makes it difficult to develop a national strategy on youth issues. Furthermore, the fact that some of the issues the OMC deals with are out of the INJUVE's competences makes it even more difficult yet to have a clear strategy. The same phenomenon applies at the regional level, where the OMC objectives belong to a different department. In our opinion all these circumstances have made a proper co-ordination among all the involved agents (Spanish Youth Institute, Spanish Youth Council and the regional level) difficult. We are aware that INJUVE has sent information and has tried to get some feed back from all the Regional Youth Directions/Institutes, but it seems that the answer has been quite scarce.

OTHER PROCESSES

At the national level, we have not identified any development regarding the European Youth Pact; At least none has been explicitly identified. Nevertheless, during the last four years, facilitating access to housing and improving the information on labour market conditions and access for young people have been two focus priorities for the Spanish government, both from INJUVE's and other department's policies.

RESULTS

In our opinion, the whole process of the Open Method of Co-ordination has not been assumed as a basis to develop a national and

regional youth policy. It may have served as a general framework to be referred to when presenting some measures (such as the Youth Plan prepared by the Spanish Youth Institute in 2005), but has not been kept as a permanent guide as far as we know.

Maybe the whole process should have been simplified and made more concrete, giving the Member States clear tasks to develop, with more counselling from the Commission on how to manage them.

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

Regarding this last question, and in accordance with the answer given to the former one, our suggestion would be that the process has to be simplified and made clearer.

Concerning the Objectives, priority should be given to all the aspects related to youth autonomy (employment, housing, etc). The 4 priorities of the last period can be kept but only complementary measures. Participation and volunteering should merge in one priority, as volunteering is just one way of participation, complementary to many other existing ways.

The European Commission and the different Youth Departments at national level should be able to achieve commitments and "real pacts" with other Commission or governmental departments dealing with issues affecting youth, in order to make it possible to develop a true youth empowerment as the one claimed in the Declaration presented by the European Parliament Members and supported by the YFJ and its Member Organisations.

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CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

We have, on the national level, a very good cooperation with our governmental youth unit. On local levels it is a bit different. 46% of the municipalities in Sweden have local youth council of some sort. There is no real record of how youth organisations are taken as a resource on the local arena.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

In general, there is no difference between the government perspective and the NYC perspective on youth policy. Still, there remain some debated issues. The framework for governmental support to youth organisations is one example. However, Sweden has a cross-sector youth policy and there are many players in the government. Unfortunately, all of them do not take youth policy as the priority it should be.

LSU does not think that the European process made a difference at a strategic level. But the European process is linked with the rest of the youth policy.

The OMC did not have much influence in the development of youth policy. Sweden's national youth policy has not changed for this reason- probably because it was already covering most of the European requirements before.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION

The Common Objectives were already targeted by the national youth policy. In this sense, there was no new action taken. When

reading the national reports from Sweden on implementation, most aspects of the European youth policies are covered, although some areas still lack of implementation.

The government did not develop or adapt tools in this regard. Nevertheless, the National Board of Youth Affairs, the National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme, supports municipalities in implementing it. LSU and one of our member organisations have been involved in this process.

The other policies set up by our organisation which were not part of the OMC Common Objectives were mostly related to the Youth Pact and to health.

OTHER PROCESSES

The European Youth Pact was linked to the work regarding the implementation of the European Framework in the Youth Field but also made a difference in policy. Since it is linked to the Lisbon Strategy, it came up on the agenda in other departments than the youth policy unit. It also showed that Sweden is no longer best in class, contrary to what we thought when the White Paper was launched.

RESULTS

A lot has changed during the past six years. These changes are not due to the Common Objectives. Because of the demographic challenge, Europe stands before youth policy have taken another dimension. Especially with the Youth Pact. Today, has young people's participation increased? Are there more jobs for young people now? Is it easier to handle both family and education/work? Are we healthier? A change in policy - sure! In the situation for young people - not yet! Hopefully

this change will come--although it takes time. Furthermore, new challenges have risen, and there is still no policy to answer them.

We think in one sense, the fact that national governments do not have all the implementation power is an obstacle. However, the solution is not to give them all power. It is crucial that the regions and municipalities become much more involved at both the European and national levels.

The existing OMC in the youth field is rather a light structure and is not binding enough. Even if legislation does not seem necessary, a stricter OMC would probably make a change. In this view, the Education OMC could be a good source of inspiration for the youth field

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

- The implementation of the policies at all levels is essential! Policy makers and policy implementers!
- We would like to link the new Health Strategy, 'Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013' with the youth policy. Mobility policies could also be added to the framework.
- We would keep participation and knowledge as European priorities and concentrate on these only two, stressing that these are not objectives but means.
- The cross-sector nature of youth policy implies to use the good examples of the Youth Pact and work to get other bigger strategies of the EU integrating a youth dimension, reported like the Youth Pact. As suggested above, LSU thinks Health and mobility are one of those possible strategies. Another issue could be migration. The role of youth ministers would then be clearer

and reveal a truly cross-sector approach. It would show how we young people are affected by political decisions in various fields and would supply more knowledge on the life situation of young people, finally guaranteeing their constant participation, their continual influence, and their power. A youth perspective and policy worth their name contain an understanding that young people are not merely a target group but also initiators, participators, decision-maker, and leaders here and now. A youth perspective must impact all sections and levels of public life and its development.

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CONCLUSION

The recommendations presented by the YFJ and the NYCs in this report aim at achieving the increased effectiveness and sustainability of the revised European Framework of Cooperation in the Youth Field. To reach this objective, it seems necessary to the European Youth Forum that the European institutions reformulate the Framework of European Cooperation in the Youth Field-- to allow a more focused and structured approach. This reformulated framework should maintain the Open Method of Coordination in the Youth Field as the core process. A more structured framework should ensure a genuine cross-sector youth policy at the European level. To this end, the revised European Framework of Cooperation should encompass the cross-sector nature of youth policy creating links with other relevant policy areas that affect young people.

The new framework should also put in a place a better monitoring system to allow a better implementation. This monitoring system should involve all actors in the youth field, to assess with quantitative indicators the proper implementation of the European youth policies in the Member States.

These revisions of the framework need to be based on the Structured Dialogue, which should be the governing body of the framework of cooperation. Only together, with all the relevant actors involved on an equal basis in the definition of the priorities and the agenda - namely the political stakeholders both at the European level but also in the Member States, and the young people of Europe - can a successful new term be guaranteed.



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