



**“Local and Regional Dimension  
of European Youth Work”**

**Adopted as amended by the Executive Committee,  
Potsdam, Germany, 26-28 March 1999**

## FOR INFORMATION

### Background

The local and regional dimension of European policy has become of increasing importance. <sup>1</sup> With the Maastricht Treaty the European Union created the Committee of Regions (CoR). The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) in the Council of Europe system has a long tradition of linking the values of the Council of Europe to the work of local and regional government.

In the last years the concept of a "Citizen's Europe" began to take shape. The notion of a "Citizen's Europe" comprises both the involvement of the citizen on a local level in European projects and the increasing recognition of non-governmental organisations in European policy-making.

The youth field has become a particular area of interest for the development of a "local and regional dimension". Both the European Union and the Council of Europe have in a number of documents stressed the importance of youth participation in democratic processes from local to European level.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this context "regional" is to be understood as a sub-national level of government or organisation.

<sup>2</sup> Reference documents:

- European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life
- "Involvement of Young People: youth citizenship", conclusions of the CLRAE Conference "Young people in their towns: what involvement? Comparing policies", Budapest 23-25 October 1997.
- 5th Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Youth, Bucharest 27-29 April 1998, Final Declaration, point 11 "on the political front, to foster consultation and co-ordination, internally with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe and externally with the various international organisations, for the purpose of promoting youth policies form local to European level."
- Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council of 08 February 1999 "On Youth Participation" (published in the Official Journal of the European Communities 1999/C42/01).
- European Council, Vienna, December 11-12, 1998, conclusions of the Presidency point 46 "Member States and the institutions of the European Union also need to address the concerns of the young people in Europe in a more general fashion, thus sending a positive political message to the citizens of Europe. The European Council therefore welcomes the initiatives to put the issue of youth participation on the agenda of the EU institutions ... "

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**Key words in this process are "youth participation", "involvement in local communities", "bi- and multilateral exchange on local level", "access to European programmes, funding and information".**

**The European Youth Forum has decided to further develop the "Local and regional dimension of European Youth Work" at its General Assembly in October 1998 in Salzburg (Austria).<sup>3</sup> In 1999 a first conference on the issue will be organised in Germany. The following document shall lay the ground for the conference and foster further policy development of the European Youth Forum in this area.**

## **Youth Forum Policy "Local and Regional Dimension of European Youth Work"**

**The European Youth Forum is committed to develop a stronger local and regional dimension of European Youth Work.**

**The European Youth Forum is convinced that this can only be achieved by taken into account the different historical, political and cultural realities in Europe. Developing rigid patterns of involvement that do not respect the diversity of European realities cannot strengthen the local and regional dimension of European Youth Work. The process will therefore have to be an open and flexible one, involving a maximum range of actors active in the field of local and regional youth work.**

**For the European Youth Forum as organisation acting on European level it is a special challenge to reach the actors involved. As a principle the European Youth Forum shall ensure a pluralist approach, including as many actors as possible without excluding anyone ex ante.**

### **1. The aims of the European Youth Forum concerning local and regional youth work**

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<sup>3</sup> Reference document :

- CENYC Seminar on "Local and Regional Youth Policy", June 1996.

The local and regional youth work has to be seen in a wide dimension. This is to say that the European Youth Forum on the one hand has the opportunity to get in touch with local and regional youth work and initiatives through its member organisations. On the other hand it can be a way for local and regional initiatives to gain perspectives on the European dimension and its context.

The European perspective demands a local and regional co-operation. Communication channels are essential to the building of local and regional co-operation and therefore needs to be promoted.

## **2. Reaching out to the actors**

The European Youth Forum will address and involve in the process a number of actors. These actors will be addressed mainly:

- In consultation and co-operation with National Youth Councils wherever these actors are not members of national youth structures.
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- In consultation with National Youth Councils where ever these actors are not member of national youth structures
- Through International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, taking into account the variety of ways for co-operation at a multilateral level in an international context
- In co-operation with networks of local and regional initiatives

## **II. The target groups**

The target group is mainly composed of democratic, representative and non-governmental structures that can be described as:

- Regional youth platforms (regional youth councils)
- Local youth platforms (local youth councils)
- Other groups (governmental, semi- or quasi-governmental advisory or expert bodies to the local/regional government composed of young people, and "Youth Parliaments", as well as topic oriented projects)
- Regional or local branches of national or international organisations are the indirect target group as they may be part of the above mentioned structures