



# **WORK PLAN 2017-2019**

ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM  
VARNA, BULGARIA, 17-19 NOVEMBER 2016

## **PREAMBLE**

*In line with the European Youth Forum Strategic Priorities, this Work Plan strives towards the following goals:*

- *Greater youth participation*
- *Stronger youth organisations*
- *Youth autonomy and inclusion*

*This Work Plan follows the means and the methods laid down in the European Youth Forum Strategic Priorities, meaning:*

- *Strengthening its position as an agenda-setter on youth affairs*
- *Base its work on a rights-based approach*
- *Further empower Member Organisations and increase ownership of the platform*

*Furthermore, to ensure our impact through efficient advocacy, the European Youth Forum will implement this Work Plan according to the following principles for actions:*

- *Good governance, by ensuring transparent and democratic decision-making;*
- *Effective and transparent communication towards the membership and all other partners, by ensuring accessible information and a strong echo for our advocacy;*
- *Independence, by ensuring sustainable and diverse funding for the platform;*
- *Legitimacy and representativeness, by ensuring a diverse, inclusive and increasing membership;*
- *Ownership, by ensuring strong coordination of Member Organisations' actions and allowing space for them to build their capacity and contribute to advocacy.*

*By following these principles for actions, the European Youth Forum commits to becoming a driving force in European civil society, leading by example, and ensuring the voice of young people and youth organisations is heard and taken into account in Europe.*

*This Work Plan is divided in different clusters:*

- *Youth Rights*
- *Strong youth organisations*
- *Sustainable development*
- *Social and economic inclusion*
- *Participation*

*The European Youth Forum “notes”, means it acknowledges facts and situations which are incentives for action;*

*The European Youth Forum “resolves to”, means it will implement specific actions in order to achieve the objectives laid down;*

*The European Youth Forum acknowledges that important, unpredictable societal changes can occur and could require action from the European Youth Forum that is not included in this Work Plan.*

# YOUTH RIGHTS

## The European Youth Forum notes:

- Young people face specific discrimination and increasing barriers in accessing their rights. Recent work of the European Youth Forum has highlighted this, particularly in relation to civil, political, economic and social rights.
- Young people are diverse, and youth in vulnerable groups face additional barriers in accessing their rights, which requires special attention and action.
- Mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on human rights often overlook the specific issues faced by young people. Moreover these mechanisms are not accessible to young people and youth organisations.

## The European Youth Forum resolves to:

- Advocate for the recognition, fulfilment, advancement of and access to youth rights through legal tools and policy change.
- Build the capacity and the expertise of the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations on advocacy for access to youth rights.
- Advocate for policies in Europe that ensure young people are a cross-cutting priority, following the European Youth Forum quality standards for Youth Policy.
- Support the development of systems for specific evaluation of youth policies and access to rights.
- Speak up against all forms of discrimination that young people face and that prevent them from accessing their rights.

# STRONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

## The European Youth Forum notes:

- That every young person has the right to freedom of assembly and association.
- There are increasing tendencies to try to limit the activities, impact of and investment in civil society. The need to strengthen civil society in Europe is now stronger than ever before.
- Youth organisations are a crucial part of civil society in Europe.
- Youth organisations play a vital role in empowering young people, developing competencies and representing their voice towards decision makers.
- Youth work is increasingly considered by decision-makers as essential to society and is thus a key focus in many policy areas.
- Youth organisations require sustainable and appropriate financial, legal resources and political recognition to function autonomously. Increased support to youth organisations is necessary for them to have a more impactful role in society and for them to contribute to positive change.
- The benefits of youth organisations being diverse and inclusive and the need to abolish barriers to participate.
- As providers of Non-Formal Education, youth organisations are committed to the recognition of Non-Formal Education and the competencies acquired in these settings.
- Volunteering plays a fundamental role in society and is an added value to personal and professional development of young people.
- The importance of global and inter-regional cooperation in achieving our common goals.

## The European Youth Forum resolves to:

- Advocate for the recognition of the role of youth organisations and youth work in maintaining and working towards peaceful societies and as actors for positive change in society.
- Strive for inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender-equal practices within youth organisations and common efforts to spread these values to other parts of society.
- Advocate for an enabling legal and political environment for the development and functioning of youth organisations.
- Advocate for accessible funding programmes for the sustainability of the diverse range of youth organisations.
- Advocate for a stronger EU Youth Programme that reflects the views and concerns of young people and youth organisations.
- Empower Member Organisations to be diverse and inclusive of all young people.

- Cooperate with relevant stakeholders to provide collaborative spaces where youth organisations can debate, share their ideas and have their voices heard.
- Build capacity of Member Organisations, based on their needs.
- Advocate for the recognition of Non-Formal Education and competencies gained in youth organisations.
- Advocate for the recognition of the value of volunteering and the development of better conditions for volunteers.
- Strengthen the European Youth Forum's cooperation with regional youth platforms and networks through better mutual exchange, capacity building and the direct involvement and informing of Member Organisations.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## The European Youth Forum notes:

- Sustainable development is a process and practice of vital importance for young people and future generations, for environmental, economic and social sustainability, the present and the future of the planet and for intergenerational solidarity.
- Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, there is unprecedented momentum for working towards sustainable development. Yet this momentum needs to be translated and pursued within Europe at all levels, where it is not yet being taken seriously enough by governments and institutions.
- There is an urgent need to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, what it means for young people, and to work on its implementation.
- While there is increasing attention to the role of youth in sustainable development, meaningful youth participation in the process is not yet guaranteed and some youth organisations lack the capacity and resources to be involved.

## The European Youth Forum resolves to:

- Advocate for comprehensive implementation and effective review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within Europe and at all levels, and effective youth participation within all stages of that process.
- Engage together with member organisations in monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda, including through the official regional and global processes.
- Build capacity of the European Youth Forum and of its Member Organisations through coordination and exchange of knowledge and best practices on how to engage and advocate in sustainable development processes at the relevant levels.
- Empower members to raise awareness on climate change, its consequences for young people and how its effect can be mitigated, using the Paris Agreement as a key instrument.

# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

## The European Youth Forum notes:

- Regional, national and European answers to social and economic challenges are threatening young people's access to their social and economic rights.
- Excluding young people and denying them protection at vulnerable periods of their life have consequential costs for the individual in these periods and throughout their whole life, as well as for the entire society.
- In order to address the critical social situation in Europe, which is particularly negatively impacting the younger generation, there is a strong need for investment in youth.
- In the context of an ageing European population, there is a need for intergenerational solidarity.
- The development of digitalisation and the changing nature of work and the consequent risks and opportunities for young people.
- The voice of young people is under-represented in discussions related to investment strategies and economic policies and the role of young people as key actors in job creation is underestimated.
- Social inclusion is a process that ensures that all young people gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a decent standard of living and well-being. Therefore, we are emphasising the need for structural changes in social protection of youth and social security systems in general.
- Reforms of welfare systems are often done without considering the interests of young people, leaving them without adequate social protection, including access to unemployment benefits, physical and mental healthcare, care services and housing support.
- Young people are not a homogeneous group and youth from disempowered backgrounds and vulnerable groups face additional barriers to social and economic inclusion.
- These social and economic challenges affect all genders differently, calling for a gendered solution.
- Responses to migration that fall short of human rights standards put the inclusion of young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at risk. Youth organisations are spaces where every young person can unite on the basis of equality.

## The European Youth Forum resolves to:

- Advocate for investment into quality job creation for young people, paying particular attention to the changing nature of work.
- Advocate for quality transitions from education to work focusing on the Quality Charter for Internships and Apprenticeships, a strengthened and sustainable Youth Guarantee and a continuous development of skills.

- Advocate for quality and inclusive education.
- Coordinate and support membership to promote an environment that enables young people to become entrepreneurs.
- Advocate for sustainable welfare systems adapted to support young people, free of any kind of discrimination. In the equal access to housing, education, credit, universal health care cover and social protection, pay special attention to youth with fewer opportunities: minorities, migrants, people with diverse abilities, women and LGBTIQ+.
- Advocate for a rights-based approach to migration, focusing on the specific situation of young refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.

# PARTICIPATION

## The European Youth Forum notes:

- Every young person has the right to participate in society.
- Social exclusion is hindering participation. Increasing inequalities prevent a wide range of young people from playing an active role in society.
- That young people are questioning political systems they see as unrepresentative, unresponsive and out-dated and are embracing alternative forms of political engagement such as volunteering, social movements, and public debate both online and offline.
- The emergence of new means of political engagement, including digital tools, social movements and participatory policy-making structures, which provide citizens who have access to them with more opportunities to input into decision-making.
- A rise in xenophobic, polarising populist political discourse and hate speech in Europe, which is challenging the basic concepts of democracy and human rights, and a growing attention to the dangers of violent extremism.
- Young people and youth organisations are important partners in efforts to counter violent extremism and contribute to peaceful societies.
- Young people's involvement in decision-making is essential for the future of Europe.
- Youth organisations play a crucial role in empowering young people for political participation.

## The European Youth Forum resolves to:

- Advocate for participation of all young people and youth organisations in all democratic processes at all levels especially focusing on shaping Europe and European institutions.
- Advocate for quality citizenship education and critical thinking in youth organisations and formal education.
- Develop expertise, share knowledge and best practice on how to increase the participation of all young people in policy-making through participatory policy-making in institutions from local to global level-
- Support and develop political participation through the development of the European Youth Capital.
- Provide support to and coordinate member organisations during elections-focused campaigns for and by young people, including the 2019 European Elections.