



Youth: Ready, Steady, Participate!

Youth participation – models,
mechanisms and practices

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Introduction

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About the project

The "Youth Policy Backpack" project was implemented by the Croatian Youth Network (CYN) and the National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS) during 2010 and 2011. We have been cooperating together for several years in the fields of youth participation and strengthening youth organizations.

The idea for the project came out of our common needs expressed by our member organizations. We are aware that youth participation in Europe is very diverse and complex and that young people participate in social and political processes more than ever. Young people are the force which makes our societies leap forward and which contributes to positive social change. However, there are also numerous challenges which impede young people in exercising their right to participation. Youth are still facing resistance and widespread misunderstanding when demanding to participate in decision-making processes.

Therefore, we wanted to bring together young people from across Europe to share knowledge and experiences on youth participation processes and youth policy developments. With this in mind, we organized several events where more

than a hundred young people had the opportunity to interact, learn, share and cooperate.

The international conference which took place in Zagreb proved to be an excellent platform for young people to share their national and organizational realities regarding youth policies and youth participation in decision-making processes. The training which ensued gathered young people from grass-root youth organizations from Croatia and Slovenia and focused on empowering participants for better and stronger participation in local contexts, tackling local youth policy framework, advocacy and volunteering.

Another important part of our project was the process of harvesting the accumulated knowledge and the shared experiences and practices. What we learned in the course of the project was valuable and we wanted to share it, not only with more young people, but also with other stakeholders who play an important part in youth policy processes.

The final output of the "Youth Policy Backpack" project are three publications (one of which you are leafing through your fingers). One focuses on national processes in relation to a wider European youth policy framework; the second tackles local youth participation, and the third, in the form of a practical glossary, unravels the most common terms

related to youth policy, active citizenship and youth participation. We hope that we managed to our goal: to produce materials which are youth-friendly but also policy-oriented at the same time.

Our wish is that the “Youth Policy Backpack” project will have a long-lasting effect on the promotion of youth participation and contribute to a more democratic, inclusive and youth-friendly Europe.

The National Youth Council of Slovenia and the Croatian Youth Network

Youth and active citizenship

Empowering active participation of young people

Tea Jarc, Kamal Izidor Shaker

Participation in the democratic life of any community is much more than giving a vote at the elections. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to co-create and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities to contribute to building a better society. It is vital, if participation is to be meaningful for young people, that they can actually influence and shape decisions and actions when they are young.

We perceive youth participation as a crucial contribution to:

- the development of skills and knowledge of young people and youth organisations in the area of democratic decision making processes;

- understanding of young people by the decision makers and opportunity for them to create better policies;
- visibility and positive public image of young people;
- the development of concrete youth policies.

Participation can also result in many positive implications in the lives of young people. It contributes to the development of their personality, their social integration and to their ability to face challenges and pressures of youth.

However, for youth participation in life to be successful, lasting and meaningful it requires a youth-friendly environment. Any policy or action designed to promote youth participation must ensure that the cultural environment is one of respect for young people and must also consider the diverse needs, circumstances and aspirations of young people. And it should also involve the elements of creativity, fun and enjoyment.

The National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS) as an umbrella organisation of national youth organisations in Slovenia is striving to foster greater participation of young people in the democratic structures and processes of our society with active involvement in creation of policies and decision making.

In the past years the National youth council of Slovenia has been working, promoting and strengthening youth participation at different levels: international, regional, national and local. Especially in the field of participation in decision making processes on the national level. In 2009 we established the MSS Commission for Youth Policies, a working structure consisting of approximately 50 young activists, mostly from our member organisations. The Commission is responsible for preparing policy papers on youth-related issues and participates in other policy making processes, such as responses to the legislative proposals on youth-related issues.

Within the Commission there are 10 working groups, each working in a certain area: education, employment, housing, association, participation, volunteering, mobility, informa-

tion, health and environmental issues. Until 2010 we have produced 4 major policy papers: on youth employment, education, housing and association. The issues exposed as most problematic in the policy papers have been almost completely confirmed later by the national research on youth 2010. This fact clearly demonstrates the importance of having young people involved in youth policies; they are the best experts on their own status.

MSS also supports the development of local youth structures, especially youth councils which are still underdeveloped. We believe the participation in the life of local or regional community to be basic for young people and their contribution essential to the social and political life on the local level. By involving young people in their policies local and regional authorities can ensure that young people not only hear and learn about democracy and citizenship, but rather have the opportunity to start practicing it.

Active Youth Participation and Youth Policy

Peter Matjašič

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those that do evil but because of those that do nothing.”

Albert Einstein

In this article I would like to focus on the different aspects of participation, explain the different forms and meanings of participation, share with you why I believe young people should be active and finish with the type of culture of participation that we promote in the European Youth Forum.

The million euro question is always why bother being active. A simple answer would be because young people know best what they need. Because adults underestimate what young people can achieve. Because only by being active you might affect a change.

Definition of participation

Participation originates from the Latin word “participare” which means both to take part in and to take part of something, being involved in as well as sharing something.

Participation of young people takes place on all levels from the local to the global, from informal settings such as groups, networks and communities to formal structures such as youth organisations, municipal youth councils, school councils, elections.

Forms and meanings of participation

Different forms of participation can be distinguished with respect to a multitude of dimensions:

1. voluntary (e.g. youth event, demonstration) versus non-voluntary (e.g. unemployment scheme);
2. bottom up, top down or in a cooperative form;
3. active (e.g. charity work) versus passive (citizenship, membership in voluntary organisation);
4. conscious or unconscious;

5. socially or institutionally sanctioned, conforming (voting, charity work) versus non-sanctioned, challenging, "bad" participation (riots; resistance; political extremism);
6. collective (institutionalised: e.g. activity in a trade union; non-institutionalised: e.g. local pressure group) versus individual (e.g. talking to school teacher to sort out things by myself).

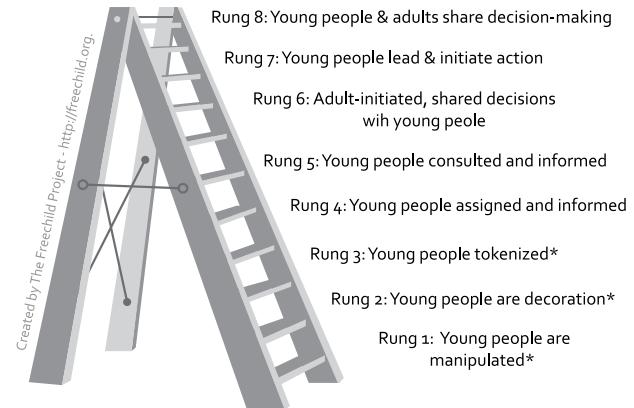
Different meanings and forms of participation are related to different societal contexts and arenas:

1. political participation,
2. social or associative participation,
3. civic participation,
4. user or consumer participation,
5. participation in and through education,
6. participation in employment.

The most important question is the level of participation of young people in decision-making processes. A great illustration of the different levels of participation of young people

was developed by Roger Hart with the so-called ladder of young people's participation (see the image below).

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Too often young people do not reach higher than the middle of Hart's ladder. But we do have best examples of reaching the highest rung of this ladder in Europe. And the European Youth Forum is such a best example.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is a platform bringing together 99 international youth organisations and national youth councils, representing the interests of dozens of millions of young people in Europe.

As a core issue of youth policy, youth participation in society and in the shaping of youth policies at European level – be it in the framework of the Council of Europe (CoE) of the European Union (EU) – is one of the priorities of the European Youth Forum. The participation of young people in their community, in society and in politics is of key importance if we want to improve young people's living conditions, their opportunities in life and strengthen democracy and active citizenship in Europe.

Participation is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support, to participate in and influence decisions, to engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society. In particular, the YFJ believes that a 'culture of participation' needs to be created. This means that a youth policy

agenda at a given level has to develop hand in hand with the increased participation of young people in the decision-making processes on the matters that concern and affect them. Mechanisms and methodologies for the engagement of young people have to be further elaborated and should be of a participative and democratic nature.

To mainstream this 'culture of participation', youth organisations have a great role to play, providing a solid and democratic representation of the interests of young people through their wide-ranging networks and democratic decision-making procedures.

Moreover, youth NGOs are the main service delivery agencies in soft sector youth work and therefore are the key actors in making policy happen on the ground. Youth NGOs provide information centres, training opportunities, clubs and groups where young people can meet and socialize, and specific social services for young people in distress.

They are at the forefront of implementing youth policies and have served as the engine of policy development over the years.

Encouraging and facilitating the active participation of young people in non-governmental youth organisations should be a central element of a youth policy.

The participation of young people and representative youth organisations in the design and in the delivery of youth policy is not only an aspect of good governance, but also necessary to ensure that their views and concerns are properly identified and understood – and that youth policy meets the needs of young people.

Volunteering as a driving force of youth organizations

Anamarija Sočo

Volunteering and participation of young people in youth organizations and initiatives contribute immensely to the development of democracy, social cohesion and active citizenship. Millions of young people across Europe volunteer in youth organizations and provide added value to their communities by investing their free time and energy into activities which aim for the common good. Volunteering offers young people opportunities for personal growth and empowerment. Through volunteering they acquire new skills, knowledge and attitudes which may prove valuable to their future social or professional engagement.

The European Union recognizes the value of volunteering and the importance of investing into volunteering infrastructure. Therefore, it has designated 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering, with the following goals:

- To create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU;
- To empower volunteer organizations and improve the quality of volunteering;
- To reward and recognise volunteering activities; and
- To raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

The European Commission expects that the European Year of Volunteering will lead to an increase in volunteering and to greater awareness of its added value, and that it will highlight the link between voluntary engagement at local level and its significance in the wider European context.

The European Year of Volunteering (EYV) will enable volunteers and volunteering organizations to meet and share ex-

amples of good practices from different European countries. Public institutions will be able to acquire new understandings of volunteering and find out how to make volunteering more accessible. Citizens will also be able to learn more about volunteering and become volunteers. Finally, this year is also about celebrating volunteers and their immense contribution to our societies.

European youth sector is one of the main stakeholders in the field of volunteering and is actively involved in creating volunteering policies. It is involved in marking the EYV through the European Youth Forum's active participation in the EYV 2011 Alliance. Young people in Europe continue to face numerous challenges in volunteering, from obstacles to mobility (visas) and lacking legal framework on volunteering, to insufficient financial support to volunteering organizations and lacking mechanisms for recognition of volunteering. Young people, therefore, advocate for a common European framework on the rights of volunteers so that young generations can contribute even more to democracy and solidarity in Europe through their voluntary engagements.

European Integration and the challenges these processes pose for youth participation in South-Eastern Europe

Rory Archer

When youth participation and active citizenship care considered in the context of European integration there is generally a focus on the positive opportunities that European integration offers – and rightly so. However I believe it is also important to bear in mind some of the challenges such processes can also pose.

European integration, in the form of EU accession and processes like the Schengen free travel zone and the Council of Europe institutions offer incentives and opportunities to

young people and political elites alike. They also provide “carrots and sticks” for conservative elites and in the case of Balkan Europe have helped to transform political agendas; which has to a certain degree revolved around ethno-nationalist state building projects since the collapse of the common Yugoslav state. These “carrot and stick” methods, the application of pressure and incentives for social and political transformation in the context of European Integration is not unique to the Balkans, nor post-socialist states in general. This is something pre-2004 EU members also encountered, albeit to a less systematic extent.

For example in Ireland the European Union (or the European Economic Community as it was known in 1973 when Ireland entered) played a crucial role in transforming deeply conservative and discriminatory legislation and social policy. Prior to 1973 legislation required that women employed in the public sector give up work upon marriage. In the early 1990s the European Court of Human Rights prompted the legalization of homosexuality – prior to 1993 this was a criminal offence. Through the 1970s, 1980s and 90s EU direc-

tives helped improve some of the worst excesses of deeply conservative and discriminatory Irish legislation and social policy. It almost goes without saying that European integration has helped to embed and deepen a range of positive social and political norms. To me (and I presume to nearly all interested actors in youth policy) that there are many benefits and to processes of European integration is blindingly obvious.

However I still contend that processes of European integration still pose some problems and challenges to youth participation which I could like to elaborate on. Specifically I would like to highlight two factors which may hinder youth participation.

The first challenge I consider is that of practical barriers which exist to transnational youth participation caused by uneven processes of European integration which hinder regional (i.e. pan-Balkan or South East European) integration. By this I mean the negative fallout that occurs when the accession of one country to the EU or entry to the Schengen agreement

creates inflexible and firmer conditions (like more rigorous border controls and tighter visa regimes) upon neighbouring countries which have not entered EU or Schengen or been given the benefit of visa free travel in the Schengen area. "Entry to Europe" for one state can (and does) curtail free travel for citizens of neighbouring states.

By regional cooperation I am referring loosely to flexible types of interaction among states, economies, cultures and individual actors which take place in a spirit of openness and interdependence. It appears that uneven European integration in a region can actually damage regional cooperation and provoke a situation of increased structural inequality. European integration and regional cooperation are two processes which are necessarily not well connected in the minds of Balkan political elites. Other recent EU member states appear more regionally connected (for example the Visegrad states and the Baltic states)

Obstruction to regional cooperation and participation is particularly acute when as a result of European integration

borders become closed for visa free travel. Formerly “soft” borders become “hard” and thus transnational political, economic, social and cultural life, an integral “value” of European integration, become more difficult and constrained along the borders of new EU member states and non-member states.

Many citizens of former Yugoslav states are acutely aware that the 2004 EU accession blocked visa free entry to Slovenia and Hungary for all citizens of the former Yugoslavia (other than Slovenia and Croatia). While the citizens of Slovenia and Hungary may take advantage of the benefits of EU membership, the gap with neighbouring non-member states is all the more apparent, particularly in multi-ethnic border regions like in Vojvodina people became accustomed to increased trans-border activities in the 1990s using borders as resources to mitigate the political and socio-economic difficulties of Milošević’s Serbia.

The Euroregion of Duna-Maros-Koros-Tisza unites parts of southeast Hungary (Szeged), south-west Romania

(Timișoara) and Vojvodina. Shortly after the fall of Milošević in Serbia in 2000 Hungary imposed a visa regime on Serbia, the first time since the 1950s that Yugoslav citizens could not freely enter. This occurred as a condition for Hungary’s 2004 EU accession. By doing so Hungary complicated travel for the 300,000 strong Hungarian minority population of Serbia who gravitated towards the border city of Szeged. It also impeded some economic and cultural activities for its own citizens who were accustomed to the status quo of border life. Similarly Romania’s 2007 EU accession and Hungary’s entry to the Schengen zone resulted in a constantly changing and fluctuating border regime in the Euroregion. Ironically the very processes of Europeanisation impeded cooperation and strengthened a nationally framed asymmetry in the Euroregion.

The second challenge is broader, less tangible and more contestable. This relates to dominant pro-European discourses which I argue can depoliticise, demoralise and provoke ambiguous reactions amongst citizens of Balkan states due to the specific type of European integration taking place. “Eu-

ropeanisation South East European style" can be considered a demanding, externally driven, and coercive process of domestic and regional change brought about by EU institutions and internalised differently by state or national actors across the region. Its degree of success (the way in which it is measured) relies on the ability and willingness to change by conforming to the particular EU demands. This is an asymmetrical relationship which gives the EU coercive channels of influence in domestic policy making processes while the potential member state has very little power to affect the course of the process.

Accompanying such processes is a "rhetorical arsenal" of clichés and rhetoric commonplace in both member and non-member state alike. Terms like "the road to Europe" calls for "European values" and "Europeanisation", are often positioned against pejorative terms like "post-communist", "transitional" and "Balkan". This depoliticises and devalues citizens by contrasting a "good" European self against a "bad" half-European other and avoids badly needed reflective debate and discussion which should be part of the processes of European integration.

A critique of hyper-Europeanist discourse does not have to be expressed in nation centric terms – articulations of people worried about losing national identity, language or being forced to eat straight EU standardised bananas and the like. Such worries are already expressed by Eurosceptics in every European state in these terms.

Why is the discourse of Europeanisation a challenge? Of course a rhetorical focus on human rights, political pluralism, democracy and accountability hardly negative in itself. However I believe the degree to which Europe is fetishised as an abstract concept bypasses much participatory debate. Certain reforms and policies rather than properly being debated and evaluated on their own merit are enacted because of the abstract "Europe" which demands them. A danger exists that transformations do not hold normative weight on their own merit and exist as "paper tigers" to appease a demanding Europe – laws and policy are adapted but not implemented or internalised due to a lack of debate or even comprehension of what they entail.

The states in this region where hyper European discourse is most prominent and problematic are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (which also happen to be the most precarious states in the region by a number of measures). The particular institutional set up of both states which sees international actors (represented chiefly though not exclusively by the EU) partly set the political agenda and contribute hugely to the everyday running of the state. Even though (or perhaps in part because) these states have the most external involvement in their daily running by international representatives they are the furthest in the Balkan region in practical terms from joining and independently participating in the various institutions of European integration.

What do the abstract “Europe” and European values mean? They are elusive and flexible terms. In the case of Croatia for example, both the conservative nationalist regime of Franjo Tuđman and the liberal political opposition both deployed European rhetoric but from sharply diverging viewpoints. For The Tuđman regime Europe represented a legitimisation of national policy – finding Croatia’s rightful place amongst

Christian nations. For opposition it may represent human rights standards, democratisation and a counterpoint to Tuđman’s regime.

Across the region there seems to be very little political dissent to the European idea but it is understood in extremely different ways. Research of European discourse in Slovenia undertaken by Mitja Velikonja paints a similar picture; advocates of the Catholic Church, secular democracy, Slovene linguistic nationalism and transnational cosmopolitans all identify with and support an abstract Europe but with massively divergent understandings of what this represents.

When Milorad Dodik, former Premier and current President of the RS entity of BiH announced in 2010 that he would back legislation banning the burka in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina this was justified in terms of European values. “Such law has been adopted in several European countries and we believe that we need to get closer to these European standards.” Dodik was referring to bans in Belgium and France.

These examples show that despite discourse to the contrary Europe may be a source of liberalism articulated as European values. While “Europe” is often represented as a final destination on a linear journey from the “bad” to the “good” the everyday experience of many EU member states tells otherwise. This idealised Europe is the home of right and left wing extremism, political violence, racism and xenophobia, great disparities between rich and poor, a floundering welfare state and unemployment. The abstract notion of a “good” Europe and the practical notion of joining EU is not a cure in itself for political and social problems as evident by the conditions in many EU member states.

Active citizenship education

Ružica Jurčević

The world today is moving into (or has already passed) a new phase in world's development. This new phase is characterized as a phase of rapid changes, innovations and new technologies, all combined under one name – globalization, which shape the economic, political and cultural relationships between people across the world. It is also a time with major changes in knowledge – in how people see knowledge and how they use it. Knowledge has become the key for economic prosperity and one of core axes of internal policy. This is the reason why this time is called the «knowledge age». Turning a world into a world of knowledge demands new patterns of work and new profiles of workers, with new and different skills, but it also includes encouraging people to be actively involved in various processes at all levels. Promoting a broader idea of active involvement strengthens the mean-

ing of belonging in a shared social and cultural community and leads to development of active citizenship, which has the aim of making people take the project of shaping the future into their own hands. Given the nature of economic and social changes in globalized world, there is the need to teach people how to live their lives in the changed cultural and political environments they find themselves. Hence the mission of education becomes empowering the people to take on one of the greatest challenges of all time- to democratically construct together a peaceful and integrated world, because, as American Civic Forum (1994) claim, this is the time that cries out for civic action and without it, we will become a nation of spectators. Assuming that the participation in public life is necessary for the development of participatory democracy, the question is whether people, especially young people, have the necessary knowledge, skills and values to act in social life? What must be done if we want to encourage both capacity and motivation to develop democratic and active people? The answer is logical – we need to educate people.

Active citizenship education

Recognizing the education as a key not only for prosperity and economic growth, but also as a key in enabling all citizens to participate as fully as possible in cultural, economic, political and social life in order to live in a democratic society, brings out the questions of active citizenship education. Active citizenship acknowledges that in a democratic society “all individuals and groups have the right to engage in the creation and re-creation of democratic society; have the right to participate in all of the democratic practices and institutions within that society; have the responsibility to ensure that no groups or individuals are excluded from these practices and institutions; includes all relationships and structures throughout the social arrangement” (education.qld.gov.au). It is important here to mention two types of citizenship education. The first is citizenship education intended to prepare noncitizens to become legally and socially accepted as citizens, mostly carried out by a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations (www.docstoc.com). The second one is citizenship education taught in schools, as an academic subject similar to politics or sociology, on which we focus in this paper. Here, the teaching

VALUES	Cultural diversity/ Multiculturalism; Democracy; Human Rights; Gender equality; Minority Rights; Environment and quality of life
KNOWLEDGE	Understanding specific terminology and main characteristics of certain values; Awareness of civic rights and duties; Awareness of gender issues; Understanding diversity
ATTITUDES	Tolerance; Responsibility and autonomy; Cultivation of interpersonal relations; Curiosity; Motivation; Valuing diversity; Confidence to act; Empowerment
SKILLS	How to raise issues; How to design action; Problem definition; Strategic thinking; Project design and management, Organisational skills, Leadership; Facilitation, Dialogue; Making changes; Team work; Demand driven action...

of citizenship is not enough - it is the learning of citizenship which is essential. This must comprise not only the development of intercultural understanding (the affective level), but also the acquisition of operational competence (the cognitive level)- and both are gained through practice and experience (the pragmatic level) (<http://ec.europa.eu>). However, learning for active citizenship demands much more than the develop-

ment of these levels. It also includes 4 main stages: 1. the fundamental values underlying active citizenship; 2. the awareness of these values; 3. the attitude towards these values, and; 4. the engagement and activation to promote the values. The task of spreading these values certainly lies on young people. Young people must be educated in order to rebuild their sense of belonging and engagement in the societies in which they

live. This becomes mission of school. In order to achieve re-engagement of young people in public life school needs to change its policies and meaning to become more open and flexible in order for young people to feel as a part of the community and to feel they can influence the policies of school. Participation in school through cooperation in class or involvement in school planning activities will lead to participation in community, and to development of critical attitudes. In that way participation and active involvement in society will become a habit of a responsible and active citizen. Such education was first introduced in England, in a subject called Citizenship. The main goal of such education was to learn the values, knowledge, attitudes and skills shown in the previous table.

But from the early start this subject has been criticized on theoretical basis and practical performance. Critics argue that such a form of education leads to unnecessary politicizing of the school system and that is too demanding for teachers and whole system. Other emphasized the questions of the actual impact on the development of active citizenship, content of the course, fear of indoctrination, necessary professional train-

ing for teachers. With regard to evaluation, many authors have questioned how to assess skills, values and attitudes, asking questions like: "What does it mean rating received by the student in that subject - is a good citizen or not?" or "If the subject is not assessed, will the students take it seriously enough?" These questions and many others clearly show that active citizenship education requires more re-thinking and have provoked wider questions about this form of education, like: *Why is there an emphasis on the development of active citizenship and the question is whether they want to be active citizens in general? Are there possibilities in society for such participation? Are these opportunities available for everyone or just certain groups in society? Can active citizenship be imposed an ideal? What about those who don't want to be active? Can a concept of democratic citizenship and its education be a guideline for individuals' search for identity in globalized world?*

Regardless of these questions, active citizenship education is certainly education we need in order to adjust to fast but necessary changes in today's world. This form of education needs to be in all levels of schools system, not only in pri-

mary schools but also at universities. Universities are not just creators of knowledge or trainers of young minds and transmitters of culture, but are also a major agent of growth. Higher education institutions are more important than ever as mediums for a wide range of cross-border relationships and continuous global flows of people, information, knowledge, technologies, products and financial capital (Higher Education to 2030), and they can certainly influence the flow of active citizenship education: "... colleges and universities have a civic mission, which includes being good institutional citizens that serve their communities in multiple ways; providing forums for free democratic dialogue; conducting research on democracy, civil society, and civic development; and educating their own students to be effective and responsible citizens" (www.aishe.org).

Higher education and active citizenship

At a time when higher education creates great challenges, university recognizes its role as an institution involved in the problems of the community and promises to change the meaning and purpose of higher education. Higher educa-

tion institutions are an integral part of our communities and are central to the development of civil society and the promotion of social inclusion and active citizenship. In addition to developing individuals to participate in civic society and realise their full potential, higher education academics and researchers have a crucial role to play in informing public debate and policy on matters of cultural, social and economic importance (www.aishe.org). The promotion of democratic public life through research and education becomes an institutional priority. Simply put, university attempts to make a good citizen, with widening its debates and discussions about social, cultural, economic, political, health, ethical, legal and religious issues, so that citizens face the world in which they live.

The extent of the social and civic benefits of higher education have been analyzed and recognised in many studies. The main goals of the researches were to examine whether higher education promoted civic activity and whether the social class associated with a particular career. They also investigated the relationship between education, social status

and civic engagement. Research in the US found that those with a higher education degree were more likely to report volunteering (36% compared to 21% of the population with a high-school diploma). Civic involvement, as indicated by voting rates, was also positively correlated with higher education participation; the research showed that 56% of the population with secondary education had voted in the most recent presidential election, compared to 76% of those with a higher education degree (www.aishe.org). Research conducted in the UK, called British Household Panel Survey; 1991-1999 showed similar results, indicating that higher education graduates were more likely to vote in elections and more likely to be members of charitable organisations than non-graduates.

School is a place of beginning of participation and it is necessary to ensure systematic knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that youth need in order to participate in public life. A sense of citizenship will emerge from the new social relations that people establish between themselves, in a plural and humanitarian society in which all can take a responsi-

ble part in the debates and the choices to be made. As Orit Ichilov says: "citizenship education should help to redefine the public place, and to create conscientious, interested and caring active citizens". To make this challenge work, education and training must become a positive ally in promoting active citizenship. But, one of the difficulties with the current structure of schools is that the schools still don't have a clear image of what should active citizenship education involve nor what knowledge should be implemented in this subject. The issue of the crowded curriculum will also need to be addressed if schools are to accept additional subject. Nevertheless, it is a challenge both schools and young people have to take and make their own way in becoming a modern society with democratic values.

Starting points for introducing the Subject “Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship” into a formal educational system

Emina Bužinkić

When the Croatian Government in 1999 brought the National Program for Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship (hereinafter: the National Program), contents of the civic education, human rights education, peace and non violence in democratic system were formally introduced within the educational system. The National Program encompasses the following contents: human rights education, civic education, education for identities and interculturalism, education for peace and conflict resolution, education for sustainable devel-

opment, education for combating discrimination, research of humanitarian law, etc. We consider National Program as comprehensive, but in the last ten years no basic conditions were ensured for its implementation.

Main disadvantages of the current program are related to its non obligatory character, insufficiently and unequally designed content and methodology, as well as the insufficient education of teachers. Up to now, no evaluation was carried out that would demonstrate the results of the program's implementation in primary and secondary schools in regard to all its contents, but also to what extent all envisaged contents of the National Program are being represented. Ministry of science, education and sport, and Agency for Education and Teacher Training organize smaller occasional educations as well as festivals of human rights programs, which is insufficient when we take into account high sensibility and thematic variety of the program. A systematic approach, evaluation, as well as qualified, dedicated and continually trained staff (teachers) for successful implementation must be ensured.

Human Rights Center research "Democracy and Human Rights in Primary Schools: Theory and Practice" shows insufficient implementation, non systematic and unequal implementation of the National Program, even though majority of the teachers, school principals, students and parents consider the elements of the Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship as the most important goals of the education.

The implementation of the "Human Rights Education and Civic Education" subject

A number of civil society organizations and institutions came together in an informal coordination to advocate the introduction of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship into the formal education system. They also emphasize the need for development and revision of the existing National Program which should include all four components of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship: **political participation and political literacy, human rights and human rights protection, education for peace and non-violence** and democratic citizenship (with integrated contents

of interculturalism and diversity susceptibility), in accordance with the definition of the Council of Europe, thereby enabling all students to acquire these basic skills and knowledge that are crucial for coping in society. They emphasize that the definition of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship as wide as this one, gives us an opportunity to include topics like sustainable development, consumer protection, volunteer program development, encouraging corporate social responsibility and anti-corruption education into this subject.

The organizations mentioned advocate **a more detailed elaboration and preparation of "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" as a separate compulsory subject that will in a cross-curricular way be connected with other subjects.**

Reasons for recommendation to make "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" a separate compulsory subject, specific technical recommendations for implementation and the importance of the implementation will be explained hereafter.

It should be emphasized that implementation of this subject is specified in the National curriculum framework and it is in accordance with basic EU competencies, and a more detailed strategy for its implementation could be developed from here. Implementation of this subject would systematically empower children and young people, develop their social skills and contribute to decrease of violence, as it would contribute in transforming a school to a community.

Recent events of youth violence, which got huge media and public attention, lead to building an increased concern of the public and political authorities because of the increase in seriousness in youth violence which made them declare their determination in dealing with the situation. But reactions of the political structures and wider public are usually such that they wish to find a quick solution and use "magic pills" that will transform the bullies, while general social causes that favor violence increase are rarely spoken about and even less is being worked on their elimination. For long-term success in decreasing violence and other social problems, it is essential that a wider group of young people sees

violence as unacceptable. That is possible by developing civil and social skills of young people, which is the objective of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship. The importance of such contents has also been recognized in the educational system and education in this field is being organized for children and young people. However, this education happens occasionally and unequally and it is left for the initiative of certain enthusiasts, making thus its positive effects disperse and minimal.

It is also very often that these contents are presented as extra-curricular or optional, enabling children and young people that live in more incentive, quality conditions and which are more interacting with their surroundings participate more than children and young people that live in particularly risky conditions. They usually don't participate in these contents that can help them develop basic skills of conflict resolution and coping in society.

Content and duration of "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject

The advocates believe that "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject should be introduced at the beginning of primary education and continued until the end of university education, and (but) the contents should be customized according to development potentials of each student.

From the first grade of primary school onwards, students should be exposed to contents that develop social skills, especially skills of successful communication and conflict resolution, tolerance and accepting diversity, human rights and gender equality, responsible behavior and other similar contents in specific experience-based learning that is appropriate to student's age.

As students grow older, contents can focus more on developing critical thinking, understanding social processes, political systems, democracy and active citizenship, introducing them to mechanisms of protecting human rights and

the responsibility every person has to respect them, understanding multiculturalism and interculturalism, knowing how to start an NGO and how they function, volunteering program, youth activism, entrepreneurship skills, consumer protection, anti-corruption education, etc.

It is important to integrate this subject into regular curriculum because it teaches children and young people to basic concepts and it develops basic skills of democratic society – civic competencies we need for successful participation in the society. Subject shouldn't be an optional one because that way we can only deepen social inequality. It can also happen that students living in risky conditions, who at the same time participate less in school events, have additional limitations in participating in this educational subject that in great measure focuses on preventing violence and helps with more successful integration of the children and young people in the society. This subject shouldn't be organized at the same time as other optional subjects, e.g. "Religion", because civic education and religion education are not the alternatives.

It has to be said that in a smaller number of high schools contents of this subject will coincide with other subjects, especially with contents of "Politics and economy". But "Politics and economy" is not in the curriculum of every high school and it usually lasts for a shorter period (e.g. one academic year), while "Human Rights Education and Civic Education" encompasses more content.

In relation to students' time schedule, we can introduce "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject without further burdening the students, e.g. this subject can be held every other week instead of weekly class community hours. When we talk about content burdening, we should emphasize that contents that are dealt with in the scope of this subject are basic civic competencies which every person living in a democratic society should master. Besides, choosing the right methodology to introduce these contents can partly unburden the system because it motivates students to be more independent and responsible.

Development of professionals and methodology

It is essential that teaching "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject is entrusted to professionals with special education. The subject should be leveled in content and methodology with the scope of the subject so that it doesn't additionally burden the students, but that it enables them to understand and participate in social processes.

"Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject should be taught by educators and teachers whose basic education can be obtained in different social studies, but they should go through an introductory (intensive, multidisciplinary) education (with the purpose of acquiring certain skills and knowledge) to associate it with the content of the subject. Teachers should be enabled to organize professional assemblies and continue their professional development according to current directives for professionals in education and their need for permanent development. It is necessary to educate future education professionals during their studies by organizing courses that will enable future teachers and instructors to apply the content and

methodology of "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship".

Already there is staff in educational system that acquired certain knowledge on content related to "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" through their basic education, primarily students of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Political Science or Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. Nonetheless, it is essential to additionally educate that staff for implementing "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject by organizing introductory educations, giving them an opportunity to develop professionally and through professional assemblies that are focused on ensuring professional implementation of these contents.

In that sense, it is encouraging that the conclusion of the Rector's Assembly held in the city of Pula in April 2010 endorses the initiative for systematic education and research in human rights protection. Also, plans have been made for constituting a special committee for this topic at Rec-

tor's Assembly level, in which all universities will have representatives along with one representative from a Polytechnic. Meanwhile, new members of the National Committee for Human Rights Education are being elected. We feel that it is necessary to systematically act in the scope of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship, and it is important to coordinate, on a higher level, the work of relevant government institutions, universities, NGOs and other reliable participants in this field.

Experiences from Europe and around the world show that, when teaching "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" subject, teachers should use different methods: from direct teaching to interactive workshops, using additional resources, AV materials, etc. One of the required preconditions is that students attending the class aren't just passive "information recipients" but also active participants in the learning process, as they should be according to the current National Program. Variety in teaching methods and encouraging students' participation in the learning process are specified in other education related directives. We feel

that variety of methods in teaching students should be advocated in all subjects, which is according all education related directives in force..

The role of NGOs and cooperation with education institutions

Numerous education institutions and NGOs have already implemented partial educational programs and their experiences will largely contribute in devising the curriculum for Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship.

NGOs have the needed capacities and knowledge that can contribute to permanent education of the teaching personnel in this field. Many of them have successful tradition in organizing educational programs and can offer quality assistance to the teaching personnel that will be involved in cooperation with the Agency for Education and Teacher Training. They can help by organizing professional training for the teaching personnel but also in the teaching process so that they can directly contribute to the civic education and human rights education of the young people. We feel that Agency for Education and Teacher Training should offer

professional support in developing program to the teaching staff by offering catalogs with listed quality programs and organizations that can educate them in this field.

NGOs can and should take part in the teaching as guest lecturers, which will give students an opportunity to learn by experience, interact with active citizens and a chance to get acquainted with their activities. NGOs can also work with schools in which students show interest in volunteering by enabling them to join volunteer programs in their organization, which are in line with their age and capabilities. Law on Volunteering includes such directives and they are recommended by the National board for volunteer development. To make this cooperation more successful, teachers and educators of "Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship" should be aware of the importance of working with NGOs and besides, the program of the subject should include introducing NGOs scope of work to students. Besides the significant experience that NGO experts can share with the facilitators of similar contents in class and educations that they can organize for teachers, we feel that the need for

implementing independent programs of informal education, and the need to continue the implementation of similar contents under extra-curricular and optional activities in schools for students that wish to undertake additional education in mentioned field will only grow..

Conclusion

Finally, we would like to stress that implementation of such an important subject can last long and involves undertaking several steps. It is only realistic to expect that the implementation will start by devising a more concise program for the subject that will last for one or two years, and that will include only basic contents. It can then be developed so that students of all age groups can participate and that it includes all key skills and knowledge related to human rights and democracy.

When this socially important subject is implemented, it is crucial to evaluate the very process of the implementation of the program.

It is also very important to point out that along with advocating the implementation of educational contents related

to civic education, we need to advocate the democratization of the educational institutions alone. That can be done by empowering students' and parents' councils more and by strengthening democracy management, so that during their education students experience and learn how the democracy functions in real life. This can help reduce the discrepancy between the contents that students learn in class and their real life. In this way, we will also ensure greater familiarity with the democratic and a more participative model which we will then be able to apply to our everyday life.

Youth participation – Focus on Greece

Lazaros Petromelidis

Recent research findings indicate that, like other groups in Greek society, youth in Greece is extremely sceptical and cautious when it comes to the public sector. There is a high level of distrust in public institutions.

Another field that reflects the distrust of youth and the problematic relationship with the wider social participation is the involvement in civil society organizations. The majority of young people (around 60%) are not involved in any kind of collective action organizations or initiatives. Therefore, more effort is needed to promote active citizenship of young people and to ensure their involvement in re-building the trust between citizens and the state.

Here are some of the institutions that promote - or should promote if operating properly - the participation of youth, either by designing or planning or by working directly in the field.

1) Inter-ministerial Committee for Youth

Formed by a Presidential Decree, this special Committee is composed of representatives of six ministries (Education, Development, Employment, Health, Rural Development, Culture). Its main aim is to contribute to the coordination of the work of public authorities responsible for or involved in the efforts to create and adopt a state youth policy. The Committee has to cooperate with youth NGOs as well as other civil society organizations. Since its formation, this special Committee has not met yet.

2) Special Parliamentarian Committee for Equality, Youth and Human Rights

This Committee, composed of 13 deputies of the Hellenic Parliament, has the task to discuss relevant proposals at a parliamentarian level, in order to create new laws and policy. There is no

information available on the website of the Greek Parliament on the Committee's meetings or relevant actions during 2010.

3) General Secretariat for Youth

The General Secretariat for Youth was set up in 1982 as a governmental institution with the primary task of shaping, monitoring and coordinating governmental youth policy and its connection with the society.

The General Secretariat for Youth develops a set of activities and programs aimed at the core of youth policies. Among others, it has to organize programs for participation and information.

Although the Secretariat was created in order to develop youth policy, currently its role seems to be more informative and managerial. Being the official public authority for the Youth in Action programme, the Secretariat only manages its implementation. It also informs and updates on events and programs for young people, but has not – till now - developed systems to promote active participation and citizenship.

4) The Children's Ombudsman – Youth Advisory Panel

Since 2003 the Greek Ombudsman has undertaken the role of Children's Ombudsman. According to the law, the mission of the Children's Ombudsman is to defend and promote the rights of children and youth.

Based on his experience, the Children's Ombudsman deems that young people are capable of expressing their views with maturity, creativity and commitment when they are given the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in such processes, and to take initiatives in matters that affect them. Moreover, it has become imperative that children's and young people's voices be heard and taken into account seriously on all issues affecting their daily life, especially in the field of education.

After a great number of visits to schools around Greece, the Ombudsman organized "Days of Dialogue" in 2007 and 2008. These were consultation meetings with youths in Athens and Thessaloniki. Out of all these meetings arose the proposal of forming a group of young people who would systematically

assist the Ombudsman in his work by bringing in their views and experience on various matters regarding the implementation of children's rights in Greece.

In September 2008 the Children's Ombudsman decided to form a pilot Youth Advisory Panel with a view to developing a stable relationship with a group of youths who would interact, advise, and work with the Ombudsman so that he would be able to listen and systematically take account young people's views on the issues and topics pertaining to his work.

Through the Youth Advisory Panel and the on-line Community of Young Advisors, the Children's Ombudsman puts to good use the opinions and experiences of young people as impetus and inspiration in fulfilling his work and mission. At the same time he aims at establishing this process as a good practice to be followed and copied by other agencies and services dealing and working with young people.

5) Local Youth Councils

Created by the law, local youth councils target to support youth participation and involvement at the local level. The first councils of this kind started working in the middle 90s at some cities in Greece, as an initiative of General Secretariat of Youth.

According to the relevant law, local youth councils are elected every two years by young persons aged 15-28 in every municipality. Their goals are to observe and analyze local needs and problems concerning young people, to cooperate with the local authorities in facing and solving such problems, to carry on measures necessary for the active involvement and participation of youth at the local level.

According to the relevant legal framework, a National Committee of local youth councils has to be elected by the local councils. This has not happened yet.

According to a recent survey, local youth councils operate in less than one third of the municipalities in Greece. The evaluation of their work is rather negative, as they were transformed, in most cases, to a kind of cultural associations acting at local level. Their activities seem to be very poor, re-

flecting the problems of the legal framework as well as of the entire decision-making system in Greece. However, a public debate on the need of reconstruction of the framework was organized by the National Secretariat for Youth and the results of the debate have not been announced yet.

6) National Youth Council

The national Youth Council of Greece (ESYN) was founded in 1998. It is a non-governmental, non-profitable federation of youth organizations. ESYN is the social partner of the government and relevant decision-making bodies for the youth-related issues. It has about 60 member organizations, included youth sections of the main Greek political parties.

One of its main targets is to encourage the involvement of young people in issues of common interest and contribute to the development of youth organizing, as well as the promotion of young people and youth participation in the political, economical, social and cultural life of Greece.

Their plans for 2011 include, among others, a campaign for strengthening local youth councils and a campaign for voting at the age of 16.

7) Youth Parliament

The Youth Parliament is an educational program of the Greek Parliament. It has been organized on an annual basis since 1995, with the cooperation of the Ministries of Education of Greece and Cyprus and the Ministry of Employment. The program invites students in the second grade of high schools. It aims at foster positive attitudes towards the value of citizenship and democracy.

The challenges

According to ESYN website, Greece is the only country of the European Union that has not officially announced a national youth policy. Moreover, according to the National Working Group for the Employment of the Youth, active citizenship of young people is more than problematic, having the following characteristics:

- A great lack of representatives in the decision-making procedures
- Underrepresentation in institutions, political parties, trade unions, etc
- No national youth policy
- No institutional representation of youth, apart from the local (municipal) level
- Lack of institutional dialogue structures - the structures of social dialogue do not include youth representatives
- The voice of youth is not officially taken into account in the decision-making process

The few policies on citizenship which do exist do not seem to be widely known and recognized in the society. On the other hand, in response to the crisis, young people organize their daily life by themselves, raising new claims. Especially in big cities, new initiatives and collective actions of young people do appear outside of the official institutions and a new notion of participation seems to be developing outside the formal procedures.

Youth participation in Italy – snapshots

Virgilio Falco

In Italy the young people participate in the social life of the country through associations or youth movements. Experience of student organizing in schools and universities is often a starting point for many young activists.

Youth Councils (Youth Forums) are active in every municipality, province and region. The National Youth Council of Italy is active on the national level.

Political participation

Young people in Italy are also involved in the public life at the level of municipalities. 23,146 young people are representatives in municipal bodies. They make around 20% of total political representation on the municipal level.

Year of birth	Mayor	Deputy	Alderman	Councilman	Total
1975	95	103	612	2.009	2.819
1976	76	106	609	1.939	2.730
1977	67	70	523	1.779	2.439
1978	48	69	498	1.754	2.396
1979	27	54	435	1.533	2.049
1980	22	46	342	1.480	1.890
1981	13	38	335	1.402	1.788
1982	12	36	258	1.270	1.576
1983	7	22	219	1.123	1.371
1984	8	14	166	925	1.113
1985	5	7	144	806	962
1986	1	10	80	686	777
1987	0	3	52	479	534
1988	0	1	29	334	364
1989	0	0	19	224	243
1990	0	0	4	90	94
1991	0	0	1	27	28
Total	381	579	4.329	17.860	17.860

However, the representation of young people in the national parliament is much lower
 – with only 3.5% of deputies younger than 35.

High-school student participation in Croatia - Student Councils

Hrvoje Bašić, Filip Markanović

The Student Council is a body of students in each elementary and high school in Croatia. Its members are students - representatives of each class - and they participate in all matters pertaining to student life.

The Council has many roles:

- representative - it represents the student body
- advisory - it advises school authorities in all matters which concern students
- organizational - it organizes debates, meetings, info-points
- democratic - it promotes democracy and active citizenship

- informational - it informs students about their rights and the activities of the National Student Council

The Council also cooperates with other bodies outside the school context (local authorities, civil society organizations...).

Local Student Councils come together and form County Student Councils - bodies which represent students on the county level and contribute to the work of the National Student Council. The National Student Council is the highest representative student body in the country and it is also an advisory body the Minister of Science, Education and Sports.

Student organizing and representation faces many challenges. It is necessary to foster motivation and commitment among students and teachers in order to make the councils truly alive and the voice of students articulated and heard.

Youth voice through initiatives and actions

Speak Out! Campaign – Participation of unaccompanied, minor migrants in social discourse in Switzerland

Swiss Youth Council

In 2009, close to 400 unaccompanied minor migrants – children and youth who arrive in the country unaccompanied by their parents or other legal representatives – applied for asylum in Switzerland. Speak Out! Campaign aims to give these young people a voice and to raise awareness of their situation and their lives in Switzerland. These young migrants take part in advocacy activities, shape and develop their social skills and their knowledge about the functioning of the Swiss administrative system.

Aims:

- Unaccompanied minor migrants living in Switzerland have the opportunity to participate in societal and political discussions that influence their living conditions
- In this process they acquire competences that will be helpful for their lives in Switzerland and their future. They engage in active dialogue with other youth in Switzerland
- Through Speak Out!, they can raise awareness of their situation and facilitate their integration into Swiss society

The pilot project Speak out! is being implemented in three stages. In the preparatory stage (capacity building), which started in 2009, the group was formed and its members' competences were being strengthened. Five workshops, each with more than 25 young migrants taking part, were organized. After an introductory part about children's rights, participants developed positive and negative aspects of their stay in Switzerland.

In the implementation stage, advocacy and socialization activities are being carried out. Their aim is to present the young migrants' concerns to the relevant political and societal stakeholders (parliament, police, UNHCR, media, etc.) and to encourage contacts between them and Swiss youth.

In the empowerment stage, in addition to taking part in advocacy activities, participants are encouraged to act as multipliers and to spread the knowledge they have gained to other youth living in asylum centres.

More than 20 unaccompanied, minor migrants living in the cantons of Zurich, Basel, Vaud, Fribourg and Geneva are regularly taking part in monthly workshops.

Votes at 16

British Youth Council

Lowering the voting age to 16 has been an advocacy topic for youth organizations on national levels in many European countries. They believe that the participation of young people in democratic life should be promoted, in particular that of 16- and 17-year olds who already have responsibilities within society, but do not have the right to vote. They invite their states to create the necessary preconditions for the participation of young people in civic life, through education and the promotion of community involvement, and to lower both the voting age to 16 and the minimum age to stand for different elections. There is also a coordinated advocacy action on the European level carried out by the European Youth Forum.

In 2007, Austria became the first European country to adopt a voting age of 16 for all municipal, state and national elections. Some other countries also followed suit.

We will present in more detail the activities of The Votes at 16 Coalition in the UK. The Votes at 16 Coalition campaigns for 16 and 17 year olds to be able to vote in all UK public elections. Launched in 2003, the Coalition is made up of over 40 leading youth and democracy organisations from across the UK and led by the British Youth Council (BYC).

The Coalition demands that the UK political system recognises the abilities of 16 year olds and to properly include young people in the society by giving them the right to vote. The reduction of the voting age to 16 was first given serious consideration in Parliament in 1999. This was the first occasion that the question of a voting age lower than 18 had ever been put to a vote in the Commons. The government opposed the amendment, and it was defeated by 434 votes to 36.

There are over 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds in the UK denied the vote. The Coalition advocates for votes at 16 because it will:

- engage 16 and 17 year olds at the ballot who hold many responsibilities in our society
- empower 16 and 17 year olds, through a democratic right, to influence decisions that will define their future
- inspire young people to get involved in our democracy.

The long advocacy process started in 1998 with BYC's report 'State of the Young Nation', surveys 1000 young people across the UK about their participation in society and their understanding of political processes. It reinforced BYC's determination to campaign for lowering the voting age to 16. In 2000 the Coalition started to build up and its official launch followed in 2003 in Parliament. Since then the Coalition has lobbied numerous institutions and members of parliament for the cause. It also implemented a number of awareness-raising and educational activities targeting young people

and the public. The Coalition encourages young people to campaign for votes at 16 at local levels (in their communities, schools, universities) and also empowers them to personally lobby their political representatives and other decision-makers.

Their efforts are still ongoing as the political debate over votes at 16 continues.

Free Belarus

JEF Europe

JEF is a supranational, politically pluralist youth NGO with about 30,000 members in over 30 European countries. The goal of JEF is the creation of a democratic European federation as a guarantee for peace and a more free, just and democratic society. JEF fosters European citizenship, works for the widening and deepening of the EU and aims at bringing Europe closer to the citizens.

JEF spreads its ideas by the following means:

- Campaigns to lobby over a longer period of time for a specific federalist cause.
- Street actions mobilising the entire network to raise awareness of burning European issues among the general public.

- International events such as seminars and trainings on a wide range of topics in different EU and non-EU countries.
- A multilingual, interactive webzine “The New Federalist” where youth can voice its opinion in articles on current European affairs.
- Projects that implement a specific goal and for which specific funding was received.
- Press releases for the advocacy of our objectives towards both public and private organisations.

Consequently, the organisation encourages debate on European affairs and EU policies while fostering youth mobility and exchanges throughout the continent. JEF thus advocates for a culture of active youth participation and volunteering in Europe and draws on methods of intercultural learning and understanding. Working towards bridging the democratic deficit in the EU, the organisation seeks to involve European Citizens, in particular young people, from all across the continent in the process of European integration.

One of the most successful and visible JEF campaigns is Free Belarus action. It is transnational, public action which is held every year on 18 March, the day when Alexander Lukashenko was elected president of Belarus for the third time in 2006. Jeffers take to the streets and symbolically gag all major monuments in cities all across Europe and the world that night in order to highlight the lack of civil liberties in Belarus and the violation of human rights in general. More than 100 cities across Europe and the world participated in the action.

For the past five years, JEF has campaigned for a true EU engagement to ensure that democratic elections are brought to Belarus for good. JEF actively seeks political support and has brought on board several members of European Parliament.

GET VISABle

European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum is made up of 99 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.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) launched in 2006 a campaign for the removal of visa obstacles in Europe entitled GET VISABle. It was aimed to influence European and national regulations governing visas, while raising awareness on the importance of youth mobility as a crucial element to build stable and democratic countries in Europe.

In the framework of this campaign, youth organisations all over Europe organised visibility events and lobby activities to demand from decision-makers more transparent visa regulations; lower costs for youth visas; the introduction of a special youth work visa; and the end to human rights violations in embassies and at border points. In this context, the European Youth Forum sent a petition to the Austrian EU Presidency, with the aim of asking the European Union to uphold the principles of democracy, civil society, transparency and good neighbourhood relations, by ensuring the mobility of young people.

A website, www.getvisable.org, has been created with the purpose of being a reference point gathering all informa-

tion on the activities taking place in Europe as part of the campaign; as well as containing news and updates on visa issues, a forum for exchange of ideas, and YFJ demands in this regard.

Lights on the rights

OBESSU

OBESSU – The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions is a platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together member and observer organisations from more than 25 European countries. All member-organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations.

OBESSU stands together:

- to represent the views of the school students in Europe towards the different educational institutions and platforms
- to uphold and improve the quality and accessibility of education and educational democracy in Europe,

- to improve the conditions in the secondary schools in Europe to promote greater solidarity, cooperation and understanding among the school students
- to put an end of the discrimination and injustice where they exist within the educational systems in countries in Europe

In spite of diversity and variety of educational systems around the European continent, students of Europe have a common stand on one thing – students' rights equal for all. In order to voice out their demands, OBESSU initiated a campaign titled "Light on the rights".

"Light on the rights" is a joint European campaign by OBESSU and European Student Union for the recognition of the Declaration of School Students Rights and Students' Rights Charter. The aim of the campaign was to contribute to the greater social cohesion amongst European student population and thus create a stronger European students' movement as a necessary step towards a more democratic and participatory society in which young people have a say.

The main activity was the two-month Lights on the rights Bus Tour. The opening event took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, and the final stop was in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. In between, the OBESSU bus visited various European countries and, together with its members, organised different public activities dealing with the topic of school student rights. On the way, the OBESSU filed the activities which and this resulted in a documentary at the end of the tour. The film offers a closer insight into student activism in Europe.

Action Week Against Racism

UNITED for Intercultural Action

UNITED for Intercultural Action is a European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees.

UNITED coordinates, supports and strengthens a network of 560 organisations (many are youth organizations and initiatives) from 46 European countries. They all share values such as intercultural communication, diversity and Human Rights. We are concerned about the international situation and about the direct and indirect forms of discrimination, hate crimes and intolerance and highlight intercultural understanding, equal rights for all and a Europe without racism. UNITED enables NGOs across Europe to have access to information, support, contacts, advice and the possibility to participate in the most exciting and effective network in Europe.

Voluntary cooperation is the main principle of UNITED. Hundreds of organisations are linked through the broadest and largest pan-European network of NGOs sharing similar targets. Every organisation is welcome to join common activities. From large, international youth organisations to small, but active antifascist groups, various organisations with many different approaches and focuses take the opportunity of UNITED's international and intercultural campaigns to stand together and contribute with their very own activities. The supply of grass-root organisations with professional campaign material (posters, stickers, postcards) for free ensures a broad visibility throughout the continent and stronger local impact and media coverage. If a group decides to make its activity part of a UNITED campaign, it can benefit from the network's experiences as well as from its infrastructure and materials. Every UNITED campaign is dedicated to a special topic in the general context of anti-fascism, pro-diversity and against the discrimination of asylum seekers and refugees and is linked to an important date.

European-wide Action Week Against Racism is one of the best-known UNITED campaigns. March 21 was declared International Day for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a reaction to the murder of 69 anti-apartheid demonstrators in Sharpeville, South-Africa, in 1960. During the annual European-wide Action Week, which centres around March 21, thousands of people actively engage themselves for tolerance, equal rights and celebrate the diversity of Europe. This campaign aims to highlight the issues of racism from a non-governmental perspective on all levels - local, national and European. A great number of organisations take part every year in the campaign by organising concerts, conferences or workshops, street actions, performances, sending protest letters to policy-makers, etc. UNITED supports interested organizations by providing them with ideas and materials for actions and a space to showcase their results.

National Youth Councils

Anamarija Sočo

To make their voices heard and to pass their needs to policy makers, youth NGOs gather under umbrella structures at national level, establishing National Youth Councils (NYCs). It is at the national level that youth policy and youth work is developed, coordinated and monitored, and countries where national consolidation has taken place are the ones with a strong and inclusive youth policy process. In countries where youth NGOs have not yet gathered under one national umbrella structure, youth NGOs often lack ownership over youth policy and the accountability of the state in the field is low.

Besides external (historical and geographical) influences, it was the internal aims and objectives of NYCs that led to their establishment. These aims shape the structure and work of an NYC and they can be divided into several main groups.

One of the key reasons to establish an NYC, is the wish of youth NGOs in the country to have an umbrella organisation. Youth NGOs realise that the interest of young people and youth NGOs can be better defended and promoted when joining efforts on a national level.

Similar to the need for an umbrella organisation, a wish to create a platform that could act as a link between youth and the government is one of the reasons to establish an NYC. For some countries, this was important in order to ensure a better communication and cooperation with state institutions, as well as a smooth implementation of youth programs in the country. Other countries regarded a permanent body on youth that maintains direct relations with the state as a better way to influence youth policy.

Yet another impetus is the notion that youth issues and youth participation could be better promoted through the establishment of an NYC. In some cases, establishing an NYC was a way to deal with major obstacles to meaningful youth participation in the country. In some countries, the youth

sector found in the establishment of an NYC a way to ensure international participation and cooperation.

Whatever the circumstances leading to their creation may be, NYCs are the moving force which shape youth policies across Europe and sustain the vitality of the youth sector.

The National Youth Council of Slovenia

The National Youth Council of Slovenia is an umbrella organisation uniting all national youth organisations irrespective of their various interests or ideological and political orientations. Its efforts and activities are based on the premise that the association of young people should be autonomous and integrated into a free and democratic society. Since its establishment (April 1990), MSS has made a valuable contribution to cooperation among youth organisations at the national, local and international levels.

Since 2001, MSS has been registered on the basis of the Youth Councils Act, which regulates its status, operation, activities and financing and imposes on the Government, ministries and other state authorities the requirement to inform MSS about the drafting of laws and regulations that have an immediate impact on the life and work of young people.

Purpose and tasks

The purpose of MSS is to help create an environment that facilitates young people growing up into mature personalities that society will need in the future. We want young people to become, as individuals and as members of society

- autonomous, capable of making decisions and running their own lives
- capable of showing solidarity with others and of actively caring for them;
- responsible for and capable of accepting the consequences of their own decisions;
- capable of commitment, and living in harmony with their values and supporting the ideals they consider worthwhile.

The tasks of MSS are defined as follows:

- facilitating the participation of young people in the adoption of laws and implementing regulations that impact on the lives and work of the young;
- providing conditions for the work and development of interest-focused association of young people;

- acting as an advisory body on all questions related to youth and their organisations and influencing the content of youth policy so that it complies with the interests of MSS member organisations;
- implementing activities in the fields of social policy for children and youth, education, leisure-time activities, culture, public information, and international cooperation;
- promoting the development of youth organisations as an instrument of the young and of their active participation in public life;
- promoting the development of young people's voluntary organisation and strengthening the activities of youth organisations, irrespective of their different interests and ideological or political orientations in their operation;
- representing youth organisations at home and abroad.

Croatian Youth Network

Croatian Youth Network (CYN) is an alliance of 59 non-governmental youth organizations acting as the National Youth Council in the Republic of Croatia. CYN is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-partisan association founded in December 2002. It advocates and promotes interests and positions of young people following the principles of tolerance and understanding, and by respecting young peoples' rights and needs. CYN is a member of the European Youth Forum.

CYN is democratic, representative and inclusive, and has national and international recognition as such. It gathers national and local non-governmental youth organizations in the Republic of Croatia which have voluntarily joined the Network.

Mission: Croatian Youth Network develops public youth policies through informing, advocating, thematic networking, international cooperation, supporting youth organizations and building partnerships with government institutions.

Vision: Active young citizens involved in creating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating youth policies in the Republic of Croatia.

CYN was established out of the need for cooperation and improved communication among youth organizations, regardless of their programme identifications, organizational structure, and in full respect of their political, world-view, racial, national, sexual, religious and cultural identifications and identifications of young people which they represent or advocate, for the purpose of effective and efficient advocating of interests and needs of young people in Croatia and building partnerships with governmental institutions in creating and implementing youth policy.

CYN is based on democratic decision-making and public work, openness to all interested youth organizations and initiatives, respect for integrity and independence of its members, support to local youth organizations and initiatives, building responsible partnerships with other interested organizations, institutions and bodies of national and local governments, affirmation of youth and their interests and needs, promotion of tolerance and mutual respect, protection of human and minority rights, promotion of healthy life styles, affirmation of self-awareness and interest of young people for active and responsible participation in society and public decision-making.

The Spanish Youth Council

The Spanish Youth Council is a platform of youth organisations formally set up by law in 1983. Its members are the regional youth councils operating in Spain as well as other national youth organisations. Our main goal is to promote youth participation in the political, social, economic and cultural development of Spain within the global context, as provided by article 48 of Spain's Constitution. Currently, there are 76 youth organisations involved in this joint project.

We strive towards achieving a plural platform so that the various ideologies and sensitivities which make up the Spanish youth organisation movement can work together and exchange ideas and experiences. Furthermore, we want to channel all the proposals, vindications or claims made by our member organisations to the Authorities, the social partners and mass media. Ultimately, our work is aimed at finding an answer to the problems, concerns and aspirations of the Spanish youth and improving our quality of life.

Our values are the democratic and plural participation, as a mean to fully implement our citizenship; social commitment; equal opportunities; dialogue; and respect to diversity in its broadest sense.

Participation in the Spanish Youth Council is both a right and a commitment: on the one hand, to participate in the design of policies which directly or indirectly affect youth and on the other hand to provide solutions to youth problems.

Objectives

- To co-operate with the social partners in order to achieve a global youth policy that effectively covers the problems and concerns among young people,
- To encourage participation, foster the youth association movement and support the consolidation of initiatives targeting non-associated youth,
- To channel proposals made by young people towards authorities and society at large.
- Raise public awareness on youth-specific problems,

- To undertake surveys and research leading to enhanced understanding of the real nature of young people and their circumstances,
- To represent young Spanish people within international youth organisations,
- To provide services and support to youth organisations,
- To provide the instruments required to respond to the demands from young men and women to enable them to develop their individual and collective goals.

The Swiss National Youth Council

The Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC) is the umbrella organisation of about 70 youth organisations in Switzerland and represents their needs at the governmental level, within political bodies, and publicly. The SNYC was founded in 1933.

Centre of competence for children and youth politics

Children and youth politics is the core business of the SNYC. The SNYC works toward equal opportunity and supports holistic health promotion. The SNYC consists of 120 honorary and 16 staff members. It is nondenominational, independent of political affiliations and not-for-profit.

Participation: The youth having a voice and taking responsibility

The SNYC participates in the most important political bodies as an expert on cantonal, national and international levels.

Its task is to make young people heard so they can participate in political decisions. At the moment the SNYC is working on a law providing guidelines for the coordination of youth politics on the federal level.

Voluntary work is increasingly valuable

The backbone of all youth organisations is volunteerism. The SNYC is therefore working for the political and social betterment of volunteer work.

The Italian National Youth Forum

The Italian National Youth Forum, recognized by the legislative decree number 311 of the Italian Parliament of 30th of December 2004, is the only national platform of Italian youth organizations which grants the representation of more than 4 millions of young people. It is composed of 77 different organizations. Since May 2008 it is full member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) which represents the interests of young Europeans by international institutions.

Objectives:

- to create a space of debate and sharing of experiences between youth associations of different typology and nature and Italian and European institutions;
- to play a role as consultative and proposal body in the framework of Youth Policies;

- to commit itself for the involvement of young people in the social, civil and political life of the Country, involving them also in the decision making process;
- to promote the creation of youth forums and youth councils at local, provincial and regional level.

The mission:

To involve young people in the social and political debate creating opportunity of active citizenship, youth participation and European awareness.

The personal growth and the integration of new generations represent, in concrete, the deciding challenges to grant the social quality and the democracy in our Country.

FNG works through 13 thematic commissions which represent our daily work. They give to young participants the opportunity to take part in different projects, campaigns and events on different issues.

National Youth Council of Luxembourg

The "Conférence Générale de la Jeunesse luxembourgeoise" (CGJL), also called the National Youth Council, is the umbrella organisation, gathering youth organisations in Luxembourg.

The CGJL was founded in 1960 and is a member of the European umbrella organisation for youth organisations, the European Youth Forum.

The CGJL is a privileged partner of the public administrations and defends the rights and interests of young people in Luxembourg on the national and European level. In this context the CGJL is regularly consulted regarding youth-related issues and is seen as a competent discussion partner for the government and other actors in decision-making. The Youth Council coordinates initiatives of the different youth movements and creates working groups on specific topics.

The CGJL gathers four different kinds of youth organisations:

- young political organisations,
- young trade union organisations,
- Guides and Scout organisations,
- Social, educational and leisure organisations.

Together they give the Luxembourgish youth a strong voice on national and international level. One can therefore say that the CGJL is an organisation for and by young people.

The main objective of the CGJL is to increase the active participation of young people in society. The youth council, which mainly works with youth aged between 12 and 35, tries to improve young peoples' competences in the area of participation and active citizenship and wants to enable them to show initiative, by offering them thematic workshops, projects, activities and by creating spaces and supporting measures for their active participation.

Lithuanian Youth Council

Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) is the biggest non-governmental, non-profit umbrella structure for Lithuanian national youth organizations and regional unions of youth organizations. LiJOT was founded in 1992. At present LiJOT has 62 members (non-governmental youth organisations), that means more than 200 000 young people in all Lithuania.

LiJOT is a full member of the European Youth Forum, one of the biggest non-governmental organizations in Europe; a full member and a founder of the Baltic Youth Forum and Agency of International Youth Co-operation, which coordinates European Union program Youth in Action.

LiJOT is coordinator of EURODESK Lithuania – a network of the European information services, which works in 31 Europe countries and gives exclusive European information which is up for young people and youth workers.

The mission of LJOT is to accurately represent the interests of numerous Lithuanian youth organizations. By serving as a platform for dialogue and initiatives we continuously observe and adjust to the political changes of young people.

The vision of the Lithuanian Youth Council: Self-confident, active citizen and happy young people in an open and successful Lithuania based on democratic and civic values.

Values of the Lithuanian Youth Council:

- Voluntary service,
- Citizenship,
- Openness,
- Responsibility,
- Cooperation,
- Democracy,
- Initiative.

Aims of the Lithuanian Youth Council:

- Promote youth initiative,
- Promote youth mutual understanding and co-operation,
- Promote activities useful and constructive for the state and society,
- Youth policy formation,
- Youth leaders preparing,
- Youth conveyance,
- International contacts.

Policies of the Lithuanian Youth Council:

- Awareness of the needs and difficulties of young people and youth organizations and representation of their interests,
- Strengthening potential of youth organizations,
- Empowerment of young people,
- Reducing social exclusion among young people.

Structure

LiJOT Assembly is the supreme governing authority of LiJOT. All organizations interested in LiJOT activities can take part in LiJOT Assembly. Only members of LiJOT have the right to vote. LiJOT President and LiJOT Board are elected during the Assembly and lead everyday work of organization. The Board under the President's proposal constructs the executive body – LiJOT Bureau.

Estonian National Youth Council

Estonian National Youth Council promotes the cooperation of youth associations and active participation of young people in society, and works for the recognition of their participation.

Mission

The Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) is a recognized organization protecting the interests of youth associations and enhancing all forms of cooperation between them, so that youth participation and youth initiative would be valued in the society.

Vision

Each journey begins with a dream. We dream of strong and competent youth associations. We see many active young people who influence the society and change it for the bet-

ter. We know that the decisions concerning youth are not made for them but with the contribution of young people. We want to guarantee that not a single good idea that young people have would be lost due to lack of funds, interest or skills. We want the voice of our young people to be heard far beyond Estonia. We dream that there would always be dreams!

ENL was founded in 2002 by 25 active youth associations in Estonia. Since then we have almost doubled our size, our members are national, political, school student and student associations, but also local and hobby organizations.

Activities

ENL is a partner for the state representing the opinion of youth. We advocate for the youth associations interests in legislation and for better financing of youth organisations. We also hold more than half of the seats in the Advisory Council of Youth Politics, giving advice to the Minister of Education and Research regarding youth politics and financing of youth organisations. ENL is also represented in several

other governmental and local level committees, working groups and round tables related to youth and civil society issues.

ENL promotes the cooperation of youth associations on local level and supports the creation of round tables or cooperative organisations necessary for achieving that.

To our members we provide:

- Advocacy for the interests of youth associations
- Opportunity to have a say in youth policy development
- Training to develop leadership skills, increase the capacity of youth organizations and assure their sustainable development
- Contacts, exchange of experience and cooperation with other youth associations
- Exchange of information in the field of youth and civil society
- The possibility of using the resources of ENL, such as office space and equipment for meetings, etc.

Structured Dialogue

An Overview

**Source: The European Youth Forum website (www.youthforum.org)*

The structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European co-operation in the youth field, should be pursued and developed [...] The dialogue should be as inclusive as possible and developed at local, regional, national and EU level and include youth researchers and those active in youth work.

(Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018) Council of the European Union, 2009)

Origins of the Structured Dialogue

The structured dialogue brings together institutional decision-makers and young people, in order to jointly reflect on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field.

It was first mentioned in a Resolution of the Council of Ministers, adopted in 2005, which invites both the European Commission and the Member States to develop a structured dialogue with **young people and their organisations, researchers in the youth field and policy-makers**. The need for a structured dialogue was further supported by a Council Resolution in November 2006 and by the Commission Communication on 'Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society' adopted in September 2007.

The Structured Dialogue at European level is established between the European Commission, the Member States and the National Youth Councils as well as the European Youth Forum and takes place during the European Youth Weeks, Youth Conferences organised by the EU Presidencies and the Informal Fora organised on the fringes of the meetings of the Council of Youth Ministers. During these European events, young participants discuss topics related to EU youth policy with politicians and officials of the EU institutions and Member States.

A Stronger Dialogue

In the Council Resolution on a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field adopted in November 2009, the ministers responsible for youth of the 27 EU Member States agreed that “the structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field, should be pursued and developed”. In this document the structured dialogue is associated with a multi-level consultation mechanism: consultations with young people and youth organisations at all levels in Member States, and consultations at EU Youth Conferences organised by the Presidency countries - and at the European Youth Week. To implement these consultations new structures have been created at national and European level:

In order to reach out to young people at local, regional and national level, Member States were invited to set-up small National Working Groups, composed of, among others, representatives of Ministries for Youth Affairs, National Youth

Councils, local and regional youth councils, youth organisations, those active in youth work, diverse young people and youth researchers. Member States are encouraged to, whenever possible, give National Youth Councils a leading role in these groups. These National Working Groups have the task of organising consultations on youth employment in the Member States in order to feed into the EU Youth Conferences to be organised on the same theme by each Member States of the Trio Presidency of the Council.

At European level, the European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue coordinates the implementation of the process. It is composed of representatives of the Ministries for Youth Affairs from the Member States of the Trio Presidency, National Youth Councils and National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, as well as representatives of the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. The European Youth Forum is the Chair of the European Steering Committee.

The First Phase of the Structured Dialogue

A first round of national consultations took place from January to April 2010, where young people all over Europe were asked to identify the challenges they face related to youth employment. During the Spanish EU Youth Conference in Jerez, Spain, 13-15 April 2010, representatives of youth and policy makers in the youth field used the results of the consultations to identify together the priorities on which to focus during the second phase of the process.

The Second Phase of the Structured Dialogue

The second phase of the Structured Dialogue cycle built on the first phase by asking young people to propose recommendations to the priorities identified at the EU Youth Conference in Jerez, Spain. Coinciding with this aim, a second round of national consultations was conducted by 26 National Working Groups, from May to September 2010. Once compiled by the European Steering Committee, the results of these consultations were used as background documents for the discussion at the second EU Youth Conference in Leuven, Belgium in October 2010.

The Third Phase of the Structured Dialogue

The consultations of the third phase of the Structured Dialogue are now open, with a deadline in February 2011 for the results to be included in the preparation of the Hungarian EU Presidency Youth Conference.

What lies ahead?

The upcoming Trio presidency Poland-Denmark-Cyprus presented their programme for the Structured Dialogue, starting in July 2011. The overall theme for the 18 months of the Trio Presidency will be youth participation. It is important to practise what we prize!

Polish Presidency

- cooperation between young people from the EU and from Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries, particularly regarding youth mobility,
- promotion and validation of informal and non-formal learning for young people, in context of European Year of Volunteering,

- promoting Active Citizenship and the results of mid-term evaluation of the Youth in Action programme.

The EU Youth Conference is scheduled in early September 2011. The Polish Presidency is planning to propose a Council Resolution on mobility with a focus on Eastern Europe and Caucasus.

The Cypriot Presidency

- participation of NGO's and young people in general in decision-making,
- encouraging the participation of local youth.

The EU Youth Conference is scheduled in September 2012.

The Danish Presidency

- creativity, innovation talent of young people as part of active citizenship, increase employability,
- drawing on initiatives launched as results of European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2008,
- exchange of good practices of involving young people into decision-making.

The EU Youth Conference is scheduled in April 2012.

Structured Dialogue in short

A resolution of the Council of Ministers invited European Commission and Member States to develop a structured dialogue with

Young people and their organizations

Researchers in the youth field

Policy makers

Why?

- Active citizenship of young people is the key to building democratic and inclusive societies
- Young people and their organisations have a crucial role to play in the development of the European Union
- Contributing to the Lisbon goals of boosting jobs and growth

Structured dialogue at European level is established between

- European Commission
- Member States
- National Youth Councils
- European Youth Forum

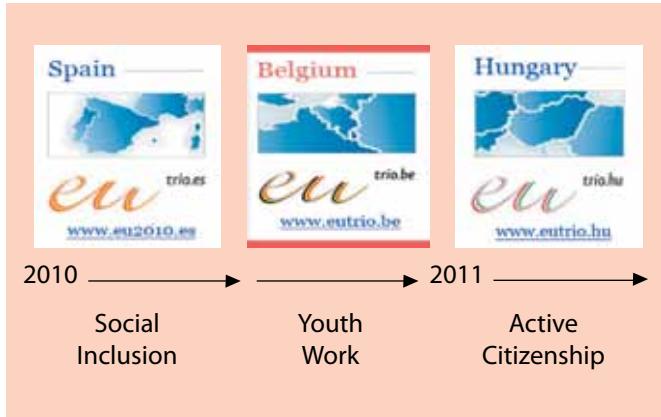
European Steering Committee

- Coordinates the implementation of the process.
- Composed of representatives of the Ministries for Youth Affairs from the Member States of the Trio Presidency, National Youth Councils and National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, as well as representatives of the European Commission and the European Youth Forum.
- European Youth Forum chairs the ESC.

National Working Groups

- One in each Member State
- Organizing consultations in order to feed into the EU Youth Conferences.
- Composed of representatives of Ministries for Youth Affairs, National Youth Councils, youth organizations,

- youth researchers, diverse young people...
- If possible, National Youth Councils have the leading role.



Structured Dialogue in Romania

Radu Oprea

The Structured Dialogue, as proposed in the New EU Youth Strategy, has yet to occur in Romania. Although the National Working Group was set up in 2010 at the initiative of the National Authority for Youth and Sports, consultations happen only sporadically, in the form of surveys and online forms. Usually, various forms of consultations are organized at the initiative of youth organizations, like the Romanian Youth Council (RYC), where the governmental representatives attend. RYC ended in November, 2010 a nationwide consultation process in 8 regions of Romania, directly reaching over 240 young people, out of which 120 were youth leaders, 50 were with fewer opportunities and approximately 70 were unaffiliated youth. The goal was to have a Structured Dialogue about socio-economic and cultural problems of young people, in order to develop local and national youth policies and secure proper representation at European and international levels.

In September 2010, a new tool for Structured Dialogue was launched at the Information Office of the Council of Europe in Bucharest, Romania, at the initiative of SMART Development Centre. The tool is called "SMART Method of Public Policy" and is aimed at engaging people in providing valuable, sustainable and feasible solutions to problems of public concern. It is also a way to assist governments and civil society organizations disseminate knowledge and information regarding the role of institutions and the democratic mechanisms in order to solve economic, social and cultural challenges.

Young people can now make the first simple step towards change, visiting the citizen engagement platform serving the method of participation at www.politicipublice.ro for engagement at a local and national level in Romania, or at www.public-policies.eu for participation at a European level. This way they can raise a problem of public concern that is affecting a given community. In the next step, it is up to every day citizens to offer constructive feedback, publishing solutions and possible lines of action to address the problem. Once the problem receives a good number of solutions, SMART Development

Centre is selecting the valuable, sustainable and feasible solutions and issues a policy paper. The paper makes an analysis of the problem, presents a couple of alternative ways to solve it and recommends the best solution given by citizens, to the relevant public authority in order for it to allocate resources and implement the solution. Once the policy paper is officially sent to decision makers for community action, it is archived on the participation platform, on a page especially created for the problem. In the next step, an answer is received from the targeted public institution and the person who had raised the problem can either agree with the answer or action of the institution, or not. If agreed, the problem is closed and a success story of citizen engagement is generated. If not agreed, then the participation process is started again, until a new policy paper is issued and a new response is received.

There is a need for political will in order for the Structured Dialogue to be efficient and inclusive in Romania. Also, there is a need for success stories of Structured Dialogue, when ideas of young people are actually transformed into community action by the decision makers, as a result of the consultation process.

Structured Dialogue in the French-speaking Community of Belgium

Caroline Alofs

Methodology

First of all, we took the opportunity of the Belgian presidency to make a request to the Youth Minister for an additional staff member who would be specifically in charge of the structured dialogue, and it has been granted. Having a person working full time on the running of the consultation enables us to put a lot of time and energy on the Structured Dialogue which has become one of the main priorities of our Youth Council.

We have also applied for a Youth in Action grant which is designed with the aim of supporting the involvement of young people in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue. Having a specific budget for the Structured Dialogue ena-

bled us to effectively implement the process by organising youth meetings, conferences, etc.

Finally, a Youth Panel composed of 10 young people was set up to run the consultation. Its role is to collect young people opinions and synthesize the consultation's results.

Concerning the methodology used to run the consultation, we have organized several decentralized debate-meetings with young people, all over the French community of Belgium. Those meetings enabled us to reach youth at the local level which is very important to target at as much and as diverse possible young people. Specific meetings are time- and resource-intensive but it allows an in depth consultation.

As it is hard to reach out to a large number of young people through this method, we have combined those meetings with a survey in order to remedy the issue of lack of representativeness of small scale meetings. The results of debate meetings were used as basis for an online and paper survey which is an effective method to reach out to a large amount

of young people and to reach youth at the regional and local levels. We also interviewed some young people in festivals to collect their opinion on the different topics.

At the end of each phase of consultation, we have consulted experts (advisory councils of youth organisations and youth clubs, experts on employment and experts on youth work) to have their view on the results of the consultation. They provided relevant facts, information and observation which helped us to finalise and prioritize the issues faced.

Finally, as we have three parallel processes in the three Belgian Communities, we have established a process of coordination between the 3 Belgian Youth Councils at the end of each phase. It took the form of a 'Belgian Youth Conference' at the end of the second phase.

Results

The recommendations reached as a result of the process were addressed at the community level, the national level and the European level.

The Youth Council has communicated the recommendations to political representatives (Ministers of the French Community, Ministers at federal level, and Belgian members of the European Parliament).

We also presented the results to political representatives on several occasions: meetings with Ministers, Belgian Youth Conference, and presentation at European Parliament.

A total of 300 young people have been consulted during the two first phases of the process at both local and Community levels. We managed to reach organized and non-organized youth by various consultation methods (debate-meetings, interviews in festivals, online survey...).

A special focus was put on the representativeness of the consultation, in order to consult youngsters from 16 to 30, from every part of the French-speaking Community, students, jobseekers and workers, from different education and professional backgrounds and youngsters with fewer opportunities.

National Working Group

As requested, we have established a National Working Group, whose task is to define the methodology of the consultation. The NWG is composed of 16 people: eight representatives of the Youth Council, four representatives of Youth Organisations, two representatives of National Authorities, one representative of the National Agency and one expert from the Observatory for Youth. The Youth Council has a leading role in this group.

The NWG has decided to set up a panel of young people whose task is to run the national consultation. An open call for participation has been launched in December 2009. The panel is composed of about 15 young people and is led by the Youth Council.

Challenges

The main challenge we faced was the consultation time schedule. The three consultation phases were held during very inconvenient periods for young people (exams, holidays...). We realized that the best periods to consult young people would be from February to April and from September to November. Another challenge was to reach young people with fewer opportunities.

Structured Dialogue in Slovenia

Borut Cink

The process of implementation of structured dialogue in Slovenia, as a tool for enhancing youth participation, began before renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field that was adopted in November in 2009. It is important to note that the process was sporadic and based on implementation of projects within 5.1 Action of Youth in Action programme and other projects implemented on the sole initiatives of different youth organizations or National Agency for Youth in Action programme.

With the adoption of renewed framework of European cooperation in the youth field situation in Slovenia moved from previously mentioned sporadic model towards more structured and planned approach. The National Youth Council took over the role of the coordinator of the implementation of guidelines of the renewed framework. Notably, this was done with

agreement of the governments Office for Youth and in cooperation with National Agency for Youth in Action programme.

The process of implementation of the Structured Dialogue in Slovenia went in accordance with the renewed framework. The process resulted in establishment of the national working group. The aim, when structuring the working group, was to ensure the representation of various actors from youth field (youth organizations and organizations for youth, national youth council, youth councils), as well as representatives of different governmental bodies and researchers dealing with youth issues.

Furthermore the National Youth Council of Slovenia organized a 5.1 Youth in Action project called Youth about Employment. The project consisted of a series of local and regional events and a national conference as the final event of the process. The aim of local and regional events was to identify problems, issues and possible solutions for youth employment starting from personal experience of the participants and continuing to the policy position of various Slovene youth organizations. Throughout local and regional events more and more outcomes were gathered on

one hand and participants for national conference were identified on the other. The project culminated with the final two day conference where position of Slovene youth was defined in accordance with findings and outcomes of local and regional events and upgraded by with debates, analysis and conclusion of the Conference. The process resulted in a document with recommendations that were presented at the European Youth Conference in Brussels by the Slovene delegation that consisted from the selected participants of the national Conference. Both, local events and the national conference provided the participants with a non-formal learning experience and contributed to young people's education, as well as to greater understanding of the social circumstances which they live in.

The role of the national working group was to guide and monitor the process of implementation of structured dialogue in Slovenia. The National Youth Council of Slovenia proposed a plan of activities that would implement the Structured Dialogue and provide representatives of Slovenia with relevant conclusions on the topic covered by the EU Youth Conference. This model worked, despite the difficulties caused by late adoption of the renewed framework and lack of financial resources in 2010.

Structured dialogue in Estonia

Marian Vares

The target group for the consultation process were young people aged 15-30 and the overall topic of the consultations was youth employment. The main aim of the process was to provide young people opportunities to participate in policy-making on EU level. For this purpose we used the following methods: two rounds of online consultations, a seminar and five roundtables/working sessions. The total number of consulted young people was 2230.

How did we reach young people?

- We offered attractive prizes for the participants in online consultations.
- We made use of social networking tools to promote the process (Facebook, Twitter).

- Whenever possible, we did not organise separate events for the consultations but rather took advantage of events that would take place regardless of the process.
- Online consultation is the best way to reach unorganised young people; seminars are mainly for organised young people.

Input and coordination

The implementation of Structured Dialogue was coordinated by the national working group. It consisted of representatives of the National Youth Council, the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme, local/regional youth councils, youth researcher, Ministry and the Estonian Youth Work Centre. Report was compiled with the help of University of Tartu.

Main challenges

- Young people thought that the three rounds of consultations took too long. Since there are no visible immediate outcomes, it was difficult to convince young people to participate.
- It proved difficult to reach certain groups of young people (Russian-speaking and other minorities, young men).
- The timing of the consultations proved very inconvenient for most young people.

Structured Dialogue in Luxembourg

Luc Klonski

The working group was composed by the main actors of the youth sector in Luxembourg:

- Ministry for Family and Integration,
- National Youth Service (SNJ),
- National Youth Information Centre,
- National Youth Parliament,
- National Youth Council.

The consultation process in the 1st cycle

Objective: identify problems and needs of young people in all areas linked to employment

Methods: quantitative survey (online and paper questionnaire)

Target groups: pupils and students, young employees, young people in transition.

Information tour: schools, youth centres, training structures

Number of consulted young people: 1752 (March – April)

The consultation process in the 2nd cycle

Objective: discuss the questions raised and define concrete proposals for solutions

Methods: focus group with young people in transition, round table with young people from youth organisations, Youth Parliament and trade unions experts.

Target groups: pupils and students, young employees, young people in transition

Number of consulted young people: 25

The consultation process in the 3rd cycle

Objective: discuss the 40 recommendations and select the 10 the most important

Methods: three focus groups

Target groups: professionals and youth workers in structures related to youth employment, pupils and students, young employees, young people in transition.

Structured Dialogue in Hungary

Viktor Szabados

Methods

- mini interviews,
- focus groups,
- e-questionnaires.

Number of young people involved in consultations:

- 1st round: 174 persons,
- 2nd round: 320 persons,
- 3rd round: 440 persons..

National Working Group:

Young people

- 1 national youth delegate to ES-BE-HU trio presidency,
- 2 young consultative delegates from National Youth Consultation Cycle.

Authorities

- 1 delegate of the Ministry of Human Resources,
- 4 delegates of Mobilitas National Youth Service,
- 2 delegates of The Institute for Social Policy and Labour,
- 3 delegates of NGOs.

Challenges:

- What exactly happens with the outcomes of the EU Youth Conferences?
- Would it not be useful to involve professionals in the Consultation process?

HOW TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

*Source: www.structureddialogue-nwg.eu

A seminar on 'How to improve the Structured Dialogue' was held in Brussels in December 2010 with the aim of sharing best practices, creating new tools for the future and stimulating countries where the Structured Dialogue is difficult to establish. We share here some of the practical findings intended to help National Youth Council to organise the consultations required by the Structured Dialogue and how to reinforce the role of young people in the Structured Dialogue.

What is the Structured Dialogue?

- Possibility for youth in Europe to have influence on frame work of EU.
- Space for youth participation on European, National, Regional and Local level.
- Link between the EU framework and the voice of the youth in the different member states throughout Europe.

Is it necessary that the Structured Dialogue will be visible within the civil society?

It is not necessary that the Structured Dialogue is visible. However, the underlying idea must be visible, and that is to let young people know that they can participate in society and that it is important to participate.

The structured dialogue is just one way of participation.

Some reflexion about "representativeness"

- Consultation could be direct (through surveys delivered in schools, employment agencies, youth centres, etc.) or indirect (through national youth councils and their member organisations). Most of the time, a combination of methods is used.
- Do we have to include everyone? If yes, how?
- How to take into account the diversity of young people? How do we understand the word "representativeness"?

- How to reach minorities, young people with fewer opportunities, disadvantaged young people, non-organised youth, and people from suburbs, rural areas? If not reached, the national working group has to acknowledge that.
- There is a need to translate the questions into a more youthful language (beyond the translation into the mother tongue) in order to reach young people.
- Gathering data in the survey in a passive way should not be the aim. Structured Dialogue is a tool to reach those who want to be active.
- Structured dialogue can be representative of all young people, but it doesn't have to be. It is only a product of consultations.

RESOURCES

Tips to mobilise human resources

- Utilizing existing structures and resources is a great way to fill in the gaps of human and financial resources and improve efficiency where needed. Managing better the available resources can improve to a great extent the work of the National Youth Councils and the Structured Dialogue itself.
- Hiring a long-term project manager can prove effective in reducing costs and better managing human resources. It may also provide some continuity and help to increase the expertise of the organisation and the quality of the results (volunteering has limits). Many National Youth Councils expressed the desire to hire such a manager but the lack of finances proves to be an obstacle in fulfilling this goal.
- Providing Incentives for volunteers can improve the work of volunteers and possibly

have a positive effect on attracting new much needed volunteers. However, the need for motivated, useful and well prepared volunteers is an issue when it comes to the quality of the work done by them.

Existing ways of financing:

- The Youth in Action programme has been one of the most frequent and reliable sources of financing. However, the bureaucracy that most NGOs face in the Youth in Action processes tends to play a very discouraging role among organizations and non-formal groups of youth alike. Crucial projects do not get the appropriate funding or are not allowed to use the funds in a more flexible and appropriate way and, therefore, are faced with compromises with their end objectives, target groups, extent of youth involvement etc.
- National and local (municipal) subsidies are

a great way for governments to sponsor and help realize projects for different youth organizations. However, in the current financial situation, one of the first subsidies that have been cut or dramatically reduced is the support for youth projects.

New means of funding:

- Private companies,
- International NGOs and foundations,
- Lottery funds.
- Individual donations.

Role of National Youth Councils

NYCs voice the interests of many young people in their respective countries and are responsible to establish and maintain as many links as possible with them in their national context.

This implies that they must have a leading position within the national working group, but also that they other actors in the national working group should support them in fulfilling their task as the chair of the national working group. This, above all, implies the need to reach out to a diverse young audience through diversified channels inside and outside the youth organizations. However, not all NYCs have the resources to answer the needs of the national working group.

The transition period between two trios provides the opportunity to change the constellation of the national working group. This endangers the continuity of the Structured Dialogue since the group partially needs to start from the scratch and to rethink the concepts and methods used.

The only possibility to ensure the continuity of the process is to provide additional financial and human

resources within NYCs and insure follow-up and its political implementation.

Role of researchers and experts

- Expectations must be clearly communicated to the experts (feedback on the process, priorities...).
- You can motivate experts to join in by suggesting they might get ideas for their future work.
- Search for the “good” experts, the ones who are usually consulted by policy makers, and get them on your side because they can indirectly influence the policy makers.
- Experts can take over the process from young people – you need good facilitators to balance the inputs.
- Don’t forget that youth organisations are also experts.

METHODOLOGIES

Structural overview of the most important methods used

1. Quantitative

1.1. Representative surveys

1.1.1. Online

1.1.2. Paper

1.2. Non-representative questionnaires

1.2.1. Online

1.2.2. Paper

2. Qualitative

2.1. Representative

2.2. Non-representative

2.2.1. Focus groups/panel/young ambassadors (experienced/expert/young people interested in the topic)

2.2.2. Interviews

a. Personal

- b. Via telephone
- 2.2.3. Vox populi

3. Secondary research

4. Consultations (usually on-site, but in some cases online)

- 4.1. Meetings with decision-makers
- 4.2. Consultations among young people, youth organizations
- 4.3. Expert consultations
- 4.4. Consultation days (specific methodology, adapted for organised youth)
- 4.5. Workshops/conferences

5. Collection of best practices

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Here is a list of key actors who can be involved

- Youth Organisations,
- Schools,
- Youth centres and clubs,
- Non-organized youth,
- At-risk youth (homeless, school drop-outs, youth in detention...),
- Interest-based young people,
- Disabled youth,
- Minorities,
- Student organisations,
- Young professionals.

Tips on communication

- Give face to the Structured Dialogue (create a slogan, a logo...).
- Do not hesitate to adapt the questions re-

ceived by the European Steering Committee to make them clearer to your public and to make them fit to your national situation. It is easier to collect information with youth-friendly questions. It is then your work to format the material collected to fit in the form sent by the European Steering Committee.

- Use a newsletter.
- Appear where young people gather (festivals, schools, leisure centres...).
- Organise a big event (a conference, for instance) and give it some visibility in the media.
- Use several networks to spread the information/the questionnaires.
- Use a specific communication for your members/youth organisations, clarifying everything and motivating them so that they can become your allies in the process.

- Advertise the process/your events in different media (radio, websites, written press, and social media). In most cases, a personal contact is the best way to raise awareness about the process
- You can organise street activities.
- Have a specific website to which you can refer to in your communication.
- Place a nice video on your website to explain the process.
- Use a connection point/info bus/info box (physical or virtual, fixed or itinerant).

HOW TO ADVOCATE AND LOBBY WITH THE RESULTS OF THE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE?

Who can you lobby?

- Policy makers on youth at local, regional, national and European level,
- Policy makers on other topics at local, regional, national and European level,
- MEPs and members of the regional and national parliaments,
- The European Commission.

Lobby check list

Timing?

Political timing: Is it the right moment for bringing forth the message? Shortly before or after the election

is a good moment. Do you want to set an agenda or influence the existing or upcoming legislation? Do you know the process of passing a piece of legislation? Take advantage of circumstances – International Year of Youth gives you more legitimacy to speak loud and be heard.

Timing within Structured Dialogue: Do you have enough results to present?

Concrete?

Is your proposal concrete enough? Is it clear what you aim for with the recommendation? Is it based upon relevant and credible information? Can the policy makers use it for their policy work?

Face to face contact?

Did you pass the message via a young voice? In this way you show that your proposal is an answer to real problems young people face. Bear in mind that not

every person is suited for lobbying. Young people can be the face of the recommendation.

Consulting experts and policy makers?

Have you consulted experts or policy makers on the recommendation? This can be an extra argument to sell your recommendation. An example could be involving a policy maker in the national working group.

Consultation of / cooperation with other (civil society) organisations?

Have you consulted other relevant civil society organisations, employers' organisations, trade unions? Do you lobby together with other related organisation?

Attractive?

Is the message attractive? Is the message nicely visualized? Do you have a concrete lobby action to stress the message.

Relevant level and institution?

Do we lobby to the relevant level? Did we adapt the recommendation to the appropriate level? Did you direct the recommendation to the right people who can really use it?

Unique selling proposition?

What is your unique selling proposition in the recommendations you address? In this way you have more chance to get attention by politicians or media.

Preparation?

Did you prepare some arguments for defending your recommendations? Did you think which positive and negative reactions you could get? Do you know the person you are going to lobby to (including their personal life, their background, their ideas...)?

Repetition?

Do you repeat your message in all your communication? Repeating the message will maybe put the issue on the agenda.

Networking?

Did you network or attend specific events related to the topic in the preparation of your recommendations? This can be an opportunity to announce that you are working on a topic or already highlight your opinion on something. The basis for lobbying is laid in informal meetings. Lobbying does not happen on the first meeting. Lobbying happens at the second and third meeting.

Win-win?

Think about what you can offer the policy makers in return

Combination of different lobby tools?

Did you use different lobby tools?

Media?

An open letter can highlight the subject or put it on the public or political agenda. A press release with your research or interesting findings can get you on the headlines. Can you find support for your idea using the social media?

Ambassadors?

They are important people who support your idea and can give it extra attention. Reach out to some opinion makers or important people for young people to have a wider impact and outreach in society.

Be yourself?

Don't step into the bureaucracy trap like many politicians do. Stay yourself when lobbying.

Co-management

What is Co-management?

Co-management is decision making tool which unites capacities (resources) of young people and authorities in a way which ensures equal power distribution, responsibility, mutual trust and respect.

Co-management is a process of collaboration between young people and elders based on equality. The main purpose is setting the common goals and making a strategy of implementing them.

Co-management is an ideal concept in which people of all generations are cooperating in decision making and sharing responsibilities equally in order to make the group more productive. Both elders and youth support each other.

Co-management is a process in which different actors (age, nationality, backgrounds...) share equal power and responsibility in decision-making process in order to achieve the common goal.

Co-management is cooperation between government and young people that are equally represented and have equal shares of power.

Co-management is common responsibility for implementation of policies created jointly.

Co-management: How does it work?

Sever Džigurski

Over the last few years co-management has become a popular concept though proven only to be used as a useful method of cooperation in very few examples. However, practical question on how to develop concept implementation and structure that would serve equality, respect and democracy while involving young people in decision-making, have been arising.

In order to ensure common understanding of the term and concept, it is important to also refer to other definitions. „Co-production“ appears to imply a more restricted service delivery role for civil society organizations in the provision of community services, i.e., that of a service agent or provider. Other terms, such as ‘co-management’ or ‘co-ordination’, refer to a broader role for civil society in local service management. Co-governance, on the other hand, refers to the role of civil society in policy formulation and community governance”. In this con-

text, co-management as used by the Council of Europe could also be seen as co-governance.

Concept of co-management draw attention of the ‘All different - All equal’ organisation and in partnership with the Croatian Youth Network, the Forum MNE, Montenegro and the Association of Secondary school students in Bosnia and Herzegovina the international conference “Co-management: How does it work?” was organised with the aim to create an opportunity for a wider international group to examine this concept and propose recommendations for its’ further development.

At the end, as final outcome of the conference there are new perspectives and attempts to define co-management in light of all findings from the conference. First dilemma addressed was related to defining co-management as process or concept, an idea or as tool, or only as structure. Here are some of the products:

- Co-management is decision making tool which unites capacities (resources) of young people and authorities in a way which ensures equal power distribution, responsibility, mutual trust and respect.

- Co-management is a process of collaboration between young people and elders based on equality. The main purpose is setting the common goals and making a strategy of implementing them.
- Co-management is an ideal concept in which people of all generations are cooperating in decision making and sharing responsibilities equally in order to make the group more productive. Both elders and youth support each other.
- Co-management is a process in which different actors (age, nationality, backgrounds...) share equal power and responsibility in decision-making process in order to achieve the common goal.
- Co-management is cooperation between government and young people that are equally represented and have equal shares of power.
- Co-management is common responsibility for implementation of policies created jointly.

low number of youth organisations; mechanism for selection of youth representatives).

- Mandate and roles of stakeholders (clarity is needed in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness).
- Conditions for work of the co-management body (space, finances, technical support, etc.).
- Decision-making power inside the body (political influence, motivation of members of the body, etc.).
- Sustainability and continuity of work (capacities of members of the body; political support from decision makers; budget allocation; internal policies).

Priority issues	Solutions
Legislation is not consulted with pupils/ students/ youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide participation • Legislative flexibility and thus sustainability (in line with the developments in the field and practice) • Law on national level ensuring consistency at different levels
Lack of motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness campaigns • Recognition mechanisms of their work and achievements • Stories of activism and good practices shared with focus on "What's gain?"

Challenges in practical application of co-management and potential solutions

- Selection criteria and accountability of youth representatives (i.e. lack of clear definition of youth NGO;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivating youth to motivate authorities Research on youth needs Alliance building 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involved in deciding on representatives Strive for gender balanced and diversity of organisations/ backgrounds
Lack of acceptance by decision makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the gains of youth activism Identifying individuals with capacities to co-operate in developing co-managed structures Recognition of their work 	Representativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same number/equal representation Diversity of organisations/ backgrounds Involve youth from political parties Involve youth that's not recognised (at least 1 place reserved for them) Ensure that the possibility to get involved is used by young people of different backgrounds/from different organisations
Election criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter mandate still ensuring continuity (2-3 years with circulation mechanisms so that only few members are new each year) Trusting each "side" to choose own representatives Agree on competences of all members of co-managed structure: Young person (for youth representatives, not necessarily for authorities) Active, Experienced, Dedicated, Enthusiastic Knowledge of youth issues All interested parties should be 	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Info-sharing strategy involving media (building partnerships and capacity of media on the youth issues) Minutes from the meetings publicly available and accessible Publish budget for functioning of the co-managed body

Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish CVs of all members • Members need to share understanding that transparency is needed • Mechanism of monitoring the system to check achievements • Fair procedures available and accessible to everyone 	<p><i>Applicability and benefits: arguments for different actors</i></p> <p>The co-management concept need to be further promoted in order to be understood and applied. Following arguments can be used to promote the concept:</p>
Coordination of process of creation of co-managed structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create network – core activist leading group to start up process • Get to know legislation (official and non-official procedures) • Create strategy to start up co-management structure that would ensure youth policy implementation (who should be involved, how to involve them and how to inform/motivate others to join) 	<p><i>Arguments towards Governments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of democratic values / EU and CoE standards • New (youth) perspective / inside on social issues • Eligibility/possibility for additional funding • Image (closer to people) • Distribution of responsibility? <p><i>Arguments towards youth NGOs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governmental support for youth policy development and implementation • Credibility and legitimacy of youth NGOs increasing (constituency, society, authorities) • Bigger influence (and greater capacity to reach aims) • Create synergy and avoid overlapping • Access to resources (funds) • Ensuring transparency of governmental work
Lack of experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity through know-how transfer 	

One of the outcomes of this work is the motto “Nothing about co-management without co-managed process”.

Development and sustainability of co-management

Final conclusions of the conference were also targeting important issues of sustainability and indicators:

Sustainability

- Regular evaluations – discussions, external reports, public notes, target group feedback
- Capacity building of members
- Coordination with other bodies/processes
- Long-term strategy across mandates (clear mandate) in synergy and coordinated with other strategies
- Budget line for youth policy implementation
- Budget line for functioning of body
- Shorter mandate and continuity (at each moment some “new” and some “older” members)
- Institutionalized exchange of experiences through hand-over

- Legal framework
- (Internal) Documents regulating work of co-management structure
- Setting accountability mechanisms
- Equal access to information/sharing knowledge between all members
- Setting up recognition mechanism (keep motivation of members)

Indicators of efficiency

- Number, relevance and diversity of parties involved
- Number and relevance of decisions made/meetings held
- Gender and age balance of members
- Level of implementation (achievements) of action plan
- Level of satisfaction of beneficiaries/members
- Level of interaction with base/beneficiaries
- Level of values and principles respected

Co-management in the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's commitment to fostering greater youth participation can be demonstrated through its system of co-management. This involves representatives from youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sitting down in committees with government officials who together then work out the priorities for the youth sector and make recommendations for future budgets and programmes. These proposals are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making body.

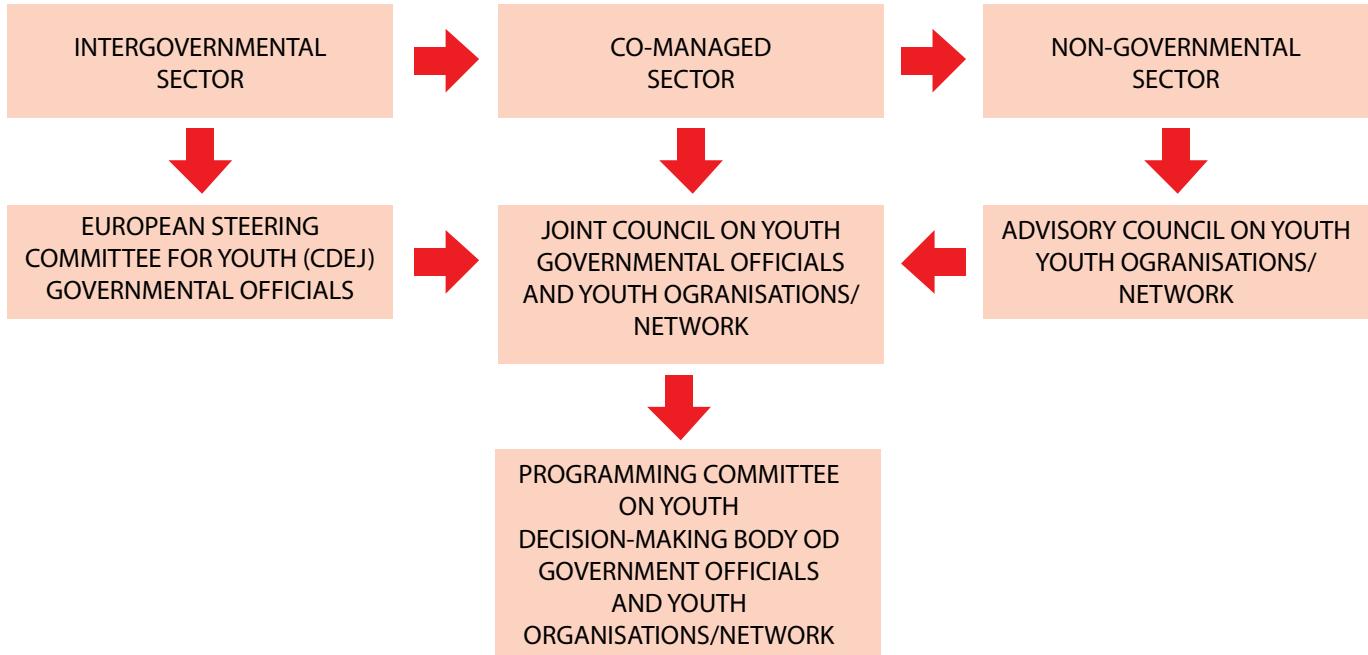
Decision-making structures

The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) brings together representatives of ministries and organisations responsible for youth matters from the 49 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. It encourages closer co-operation between governments on youth issues and provides a forum for comparing national youth policies, exchanging best

practices and drafting standard texts such as Recommendation R(97)3 on youth participation and the future of civil society and the Convention on Transnational Voluntary Service for Young People. The CDEJ also organises the Conferences of European Ministers with responsibility for youth matters and drafts youth policy laws and regulations in member states.

The Advisory Council on Youth is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks that provide opinions and input on all youth sector activities. It also ensures that young people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe.

The Joint Council on Youth brings the CDEJ and the Advisory Council together in a co-decision body which establishes the youth sector's priorities, objectives and budgets. The Programming Committee on Youth is a subsidiary co-decision body made up of eight members each from the CDEJ and the Advisory Council. It establishes, monitors and evaluates the programmes of the European Youth Centres and of the European Youth Foundation.



Examples of co-management and joint cooperation structures

The basis for co-management streams from the assumption that youth are a resource and therefore a real partner. Within the Council of Europe, youth representatives are recognised as stakeholders taking equal part in the decision-making processes of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. The members of the Advisory Council for Youth have the right to follow youth policy processes and actions, presenting, deciding and monitoring the implementation of these. While civil society representatives are generally consulted by governments,

Co-management means to be given the responsibility to develop policies and agree on programmes together with government representatives.

Co-management is an inclusive process that balances the power of the authorities with the influence and inclusions of the youth representatives. The state administers the national youth policy and provides funding for projects and administrative purposes. The Youth NGOs offer activities, representation and services to youth and the state. Apart from the exchange of benefits, the system is based on a stakeholder relationship between the main actors. The actors have to make decisions and achieve goals in a balanced and synergised way. The inclusion and the interaction between the state and youth stakeholders in a country differ qualitatively and quantitatively depending on the capacity and the level of trust between the two main partners: state and Youth NGOs.

The Council of Europe model has been taken up at national and local level by some Member States. A certain level of co-management has been reached between **Lithuanian Youth Council** and the Lithuanian government, and within the Nordic Ministers Council's "**Nordic Youth Committee**". The "**Nordic Youth Committee**" has representatives from the Nordic NYCs and the Nordic governments.

Joint cooperation structures

Youth representation towards the state differs. Some countries have no joint youth coordination structures on the national level which makes it difficult for youth organizations to cooperate or co-manage with the state. This happens for two main reasons; for non-inclusion of youth in the consultation and decision making process by the state, or because of the will of the organisations themselves. The **Swedish Youth Council** identifies taking part in such structures as a possible danger for its independence. Nonetheless, the Council is involved and included in the process but more as a consultation provider than as a part of a formal structure.

There are different levels of institutional incorporation of youth in decision making on youth issues. Depending on the administrative organisation of the state, joint cooperation structures exist at local, regional and/or national level. Such joint structures dealing exclusively with youth issues exist, for example, in **Iceland, Slovenia or Lithuania**. In addition, often youth organizations are involved in thematic working groups that encompass youth as a target group, such as education,

sports, health, addictions, sexual education etc. This is the case of **French Youth Council** that takes part in different state and local bodies that decide on the TV programme, health and education programmes and many other issues that are directly or indirectly tied to youth and young peoples' realities.

In **Portugal** there are two different bodies for youth organizations/state cooperation: (1) Youth Consultative Council, and (2) Portuguese Youth Institute Administrative Council. The state includes the Portuguese Youth Council (CNJ) representative into more fora that decide on different spheres of society like education, health, entertainment or social affairs. The Youth Consultative Council is a governmental structure composed by representatives of Youth NGOs, including CNJ, responsible for the analysis of global youth policy and young people's civic participation and social integration; and for the evaluation of youth-related legislative proposals. The Portuguese Youth Institute Administrative Council is responsible for the adoption of the Action Plan, the budget and activity reports, as well as for the follow-up of the activities developed by the Portuguese Youth Institute.

The **Armenian** youth policy model has a slightly different way of cooperation composed by a National Youth Consultative Council chaired directly by the prime minister of Armenia. **Macedonia**, as a country with no national youth organization coordination, has formal youth inclusion into the state youth policy. There is a Steering Committee on Youth consisting of Youth organizations elected by youth. This body serves the purpose of consultation and it is foreseen by the law and the National Youth Strategy for the country.

In most cases, the cooperation structures represent a consultative body and a forum for the youth voice to be heard. Co-decision or power sharing in the field of youth between the youth organizations and the state rarely exists. Still, inputs given by the youth organizations and the ideas are often taken in consideration by the state. Sometimes, even if there is no official and formal co-management structure, the process of cooperation, consultation and liaison is in place (e. g. Sweden). Netherlands is a similar case where the state recognises the Dutch Youth Council as the main national coordination body in the country but it does not build co-management

structures. The Council is taken in consideration and consulted on youth issues even though not on a regular basis.

Other Actors

Apart from the youth organizations and the state, there are other actors in the field of youth. Some organisations are not registered under laws on associations. Such an example is the student unions or different sectorial organisations. These organisations are active in the field of youth and carry specific responsibilities regarding a sector or aspect of youth policy and youth work.

In some countries, especially the ones in transition or a post-conflict period, external funding providers are a strong actor in the field of youth. Foundations, intergovernmental organisations, embassies of other countries or international NGOs have proven to be significant actors in the process of civil society and youth work development in transition countries. Youth organizations from the EU Member States often identify the EU institutions, especially the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, as important external youth actors in their countries.

Focus on Lithuania – National and regional co-management structures

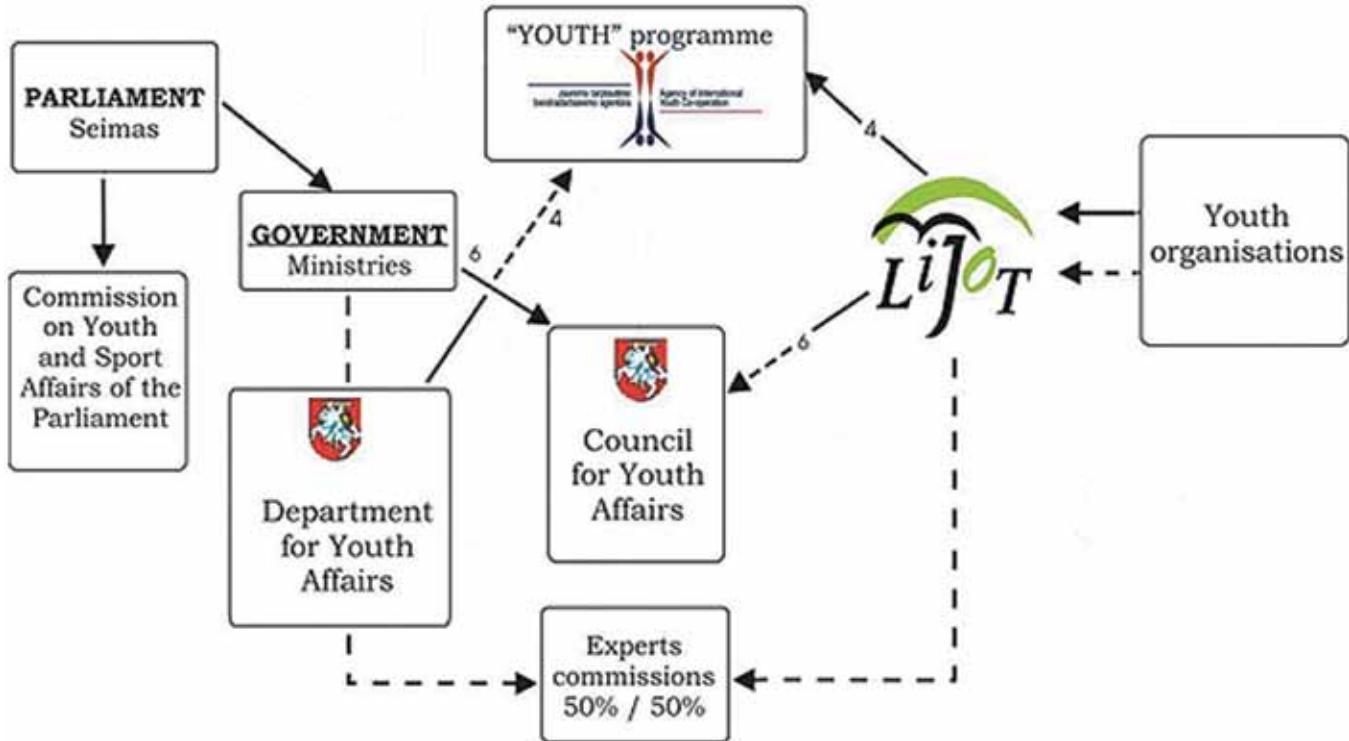
Guoda Lomanaitė

Lithuanian youth policy structure was legitimized in 2003 when the Law on the Youth Policy framework was adopted by the Lithuanian Parliament. The law was revised in 2006 and the current youth policy implementation and management structure is set as follows in the graph:

The main co-management structure on the national level is the Council for Youth Affairs. The council has 12 members, half of which is nominated by the governmental institutions working with youth related issues (representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs and a representative from the Prime Minister's of-

fice), the other half is elected in the General Assembly of the Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT). The Council is formed by the principle of equal partnership between the youth NGO representatives and the representatives from the institution side. Though there is no formal provision on who should chair the Council, it has been agreed that the President of the Lithuanian Youth Council or any other youth representative will hold this position. Though the Council is a very powerful tool for raising questions that affect young people on the policy level, after 2006 revision of the law, it has lost formal decision making power and currently acts as an advisory board to the Department for Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. As written in the Law "The Council for Youth Affairs shall consider the main issues of youth policy and submit proposals to the Youth Department on the implementation of a youth policy meeting the needs of youth and youth organisations".

The Department for Youth Affairs annually publishes calls for funding opportunities for youth organizations. In order to evaluate the project proposals every year new expert com-



missions are formed. The number may vary every year, but half of the experts are selected by the Department and half by the Lithuanian Youth Council, to ensure transparency in the system. The criteria for funding programs and the evaluation procedure for the projects have been proposed by the youth organizations via LiJOT.

the duration of the term of office, involving the Regional Youth Councils or youth representatives to give advice on the youth policy framework in a particular municipality. From 60 existing municipalities in Lithuania only around 30 have established such a structure, however the process continues and the perspective looks promising.

Another important co-management structure involves the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme. The Lithuanian Youth Council together with the institution currently called the Department for Youth Affairs established the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme back in 1999. Until this day both institutions have a half of the seats in the Board of the National Agency. The board decides most of the strategic priorities for the work of the Agency including the national priorities of the Youth in Action.

On the regional level Municipalities are responsible for formulation and implementation of local youth policy. According to the recommendations by the Department for Youth Affairs they may form Municipal council for youth affairs for

Focus on Croatia – Council for Civil Society Development

Katarina Pavić

Council for Civil Society Development is a consultative body to Croatian Government.

Composition – 27 members

- 12 representatives of NGOs
- 12 representatives of State institutions
- 1 representative of trade unions
- 1 representative of employers association
- 1 representative of foundations

Council members – procedure of selection of NGO representatives

12 areas of activities:

1. Protection and promotion of human rights
2. Health protection and improvement of quality of life
3. Disabled persons care
4. Child care
5. Environmental protection and sustainable development
6. Social welfare
7. Youth
8. Democratization and social development
9. Culture
10. Homeland war-veterans care
11. Sports
12. Technical culture

Council members – procedure of selection of NGO representatives

Two-stage procedure

1. Public call for nominations of candidates for members of the Council
 - Each NGO nominating only one candidate (for its particular sub-sector/ area of activity)

- Nominations sent by post using a standard nomination form with a set of required supporting documents
- Independent Commission checks the eligibility of candidates
- List of candidates with valid nominations published on the Internet

2. Public call for voting for eligible candidates

- NGOs voting for eligible candidates – submitting a standard voting form available on the Internet (1 organization - 1 vote) by regular post
- Independent commission counting votes
- Candidates with the biggest number of votes proposed to be appointed members of the Council
- Detailed information on all valid and not valid votes by candidates available on the Internet

- civil society development in the widest sense
- President elected from among Council members (from NGO representatives)
- Three Standing Working groups
- Administrative and expert support provided by the Office for cooperation with NGOs

Increasing number of structures for civil dialogue

- More than 100 Government advisory bodies involving around 800 representatives of civil society organizations
- 25 Parliament working committees involving more than 100 representatives of civil society organizations
- Increasing number of local charters of cooperation between civil society organizations and local governments

How the Council works?

Monthly meetings

- Own initiative opinions and statements on draft laws, national programmes and plans regarding

The Conference Declaration

Active and strong youth for a better tomorrow for all generations

Representatives of youth organisations from all over Europe met from 26 to 28 November 2010 in Zagreb, Croatia at the Conference "Youth Participation and Active Citizenship" to discuss the role of young people in the society and to contribute to the vision of a youth-inclusive Europe.

Young generations of Europeans have always played an important role in local, regional, national and European development but the recognition of youth as a stakeholder in European policy is relatively new. Prior to 2001 activities of the EU institutions mainly focused on specific programmes and no wider concepts of youth participation, active citizenship or co-management were developed.

Recalling that White paper on Youth¹ was adopted in 2001 which resulted in the establishment of a framework for European cooperation in the field of youth, which was updated in 2005 to take into account the European Youth Pact². The process continued in 2009 when the Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in youth field³ was adopted and a renewed EU Youth Strategy⁴ was established.

Recognizing that many mechanism and tools have been introduced since youth participation as a concept in European policies is emphasized through different methods such as open method of coordination, structured dialogue and co-management.

1 White Paper on Youth - http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11055_en.htm

2 European Youth Pact - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/archive/policies/youthpact_en.html

3 Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in youth field - http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11059_en.htm

4 EU Youth Strategy - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1458_en.htm

Regretting that many governments and institutions on local, regional and national level still have not fully implemented the tools for youth participation, which leads to marginalisation of young generations in their respective countries.

Emphasising the importance of implementation of instruments and tools related to youth participation such as:

- structured dialogue⁵,
- renewed open method of coordination⁶,
- co-management⁷.

Acknowledging that many countries in Europe share a common vision of youth participation in society and, furthermore, that many young people do not engage themselves to be actively involved in the processes of shaping our common tomorrow, we call upon European leaders to support and to empower

young people to become equal partners in the society by implementing and adopting the existing instruments and tools.

Recent developments in redefining the youth participation have also been visible in the adoption of the Europe 2020 – a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth⁸, which envisaged an important flagship initiative for European youth – Youth on the move⁹. Instruments and tools to increase youth participation will only be useful if they are used to propose concrete measures which will have real effects on the young concerned.

Recalling that only recently youth and youth organisations have been recognised as an important part of civil society and, consequently, as an equal and competent partner in developing new and enhancing the existing models of democratic systems in Europe. The crucial role we have to play is not connected only

5 Structured dialogue - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc1707_en.htm

6 Renewed method of open coordination - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1458_en.htm

7 Co – management - http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp

8 Europe 2020 - <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%200007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

9 Youth on the move - <http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/>

to the evolution of youth participation vis-a-vis governments and institutions but also to the commitment for constant advancement of youth organisations and youth participation as such.

Thus, we gathered at the Conference in Zagreb to further strengthen the cooperation of youth civil society organisations, disseminate relevant tools and knowledge among us in order to empower our role in cooperation with our governments on local, regional, national and European level in building a more democratic and inclusive Europe.

Active citizenship in Europe – Empowering young people to become active citizens

Active citizenship of all generations is the key concept in inclusive societies and a prerequisite for functioning of any democratic system. Recent events have shown that proverbially passive youth is “waking up” all over Europe and demanding their voice to be heard and recognized.

Youth involvement in youth organisations, school councils, student, cultural, sport, political, and many other organisations represents different manifestations of youth participation and creates a voice of young people. But is this voice heard?

Structures and frameworks which enable and enhance youth participation are not sufficiently developed, especially on national levels. Existing good practices such as the Council of Europe co-management system, or European mechanisms such as structured dialogue, and financial schemes such as the Youth in Action programme which support youth work and youth cooperation, are greatly appreciated and should continue to develop and upgrade. However, more should be done in order to increase the participation of young people.

The role of youth organisations and national youth councils should be further supported through the development of institutional frameworks and mechanism for co-management and cooperation. Additionally, governments and institutions should increase their support to youth organisations and

national youth structures as pillars of youth participation, to ensure their sustainability, continuity and capacity.

Participation should be taught and learnt. Therefore, more emphasis should be given to the development of programmes of active citizenship in formal education systems and to the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal education. Youth work should be supported and researched in order to support the processes of active citizenship among young people in Europe.

Youth policy – Structured dialogue and youth participation

The renewed framework for European cooperation in youth field was established in 2009 and since then structured dialogue has been recognized as the key instrument for increasing youth participation among European youth. After two presidency cycles and two Youth Conferences the process of structured dialogue is well underway.

However, only 22 countries have formed national working groups on structured dialogue and different national youth councils report about the lack of political will and general ignorance of policy makers towards this process. Additionally, young people do not have sufficient information about what structured dialogue is, how it works and what is its impact on their daily lives. With no concrete results after a year-long process focusing on one topic, the value of the outcomes has been undermined and the motivation of stakeholders to continue to participate in the structured dialogue processes has decreased.

Therefore, youth organizations need to identify more ways of how to attract more young people (such as representative of young people with fewer opportunities, minorities, non-organized youth) to the table. At the same time, governments should put more focus on the implementation of structured dialogue on local, regional and national level while acknowledging the leading role of national youth councils.

Many innovative ideas and projects are born while the implementation of structured dialogue is underway. Therefore, the need for the exchange of good practices in this field among youth organisations, national youth councils, institutions and experts is greater than ever.

In addition, national youth councils must engage in informative and other projects in order to present to them the results of the structured dialogue processes and involve them in future activities, thus creating a stronger link between peers and various phases of structured dialogue.

Many lessons have been drawn from the implementation of structured dialogue and it would be wrong to deny that in the past 12 months the process has been heading in the right direction. A clear roadmap for the next presidency trio should be made as soon as possible in order to give time to all stakeholders for preparation for the implementation of structured dialogue.

Organized youth and cooperation with governments – Co-management in practice

Many different models of cooperation between organized youth and governments are implemented all over Europe. Results vary but the common denominator for all models is their merely consultative nature. Therefore, the voice of young people is often listened to, but rarely truly heard.

The co-management of youth-related issues should be a clear objective for local, regional, national and European authorities, as well as for national youth council and youth organisations.

The development of a co-management framework requires solutions for various challenges, such as setting the criteria for representation, ensuring quality decision-making processes, strong monitoring of implementation of decisions and thorough evaluation of all processes in order to improve and upgrade the framework in the future.

There will never be a single framework which corresponds to different societies and national realities, so an attempt to outline an ideal model would be impossible. Nevertheless, there are few principles which could help as guidelines for establishing different co-management frameworks across Europe:

- promotion of youth participation and creation of autonomous and independent national youth councils recognized by legal framework,
- establishing democratic and inclusive models of co-management structures on all levels,
- ensuring equal representation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes
- ensuring quality functioning and decision-making powers in consultative bodies,
- ensuring good coordination among institutions and cross-sectoral approach to youth-related issues.

Youth participation now – a better today and a more promising tomorrow

The Conference in Zagreb recognised the importance of youth participation and youth issues for inclusive and democratic societies. Active and strong youth is one of the answers for the challenges that future hold for us all. Our responsibility and the responsibility of governments and institutions is to implement and evaluate existing programmes, mechanisms and frameworks in order to ensure their fullest potential. Within this effort some key steps must be made to upgrade the current situation and this Declaration identifies them as the following:

- empower youth structures (youth organisations and national youth councils),
- further develop the framework of EU cooperation in the youth field, evolve the main tools of the framework to correspond to the needs and resources of the youth sector,
- promote cooperation and establishment of the co-management system in the field of youth policies and youth-related issues.

Conference Youth Participation and Active Citizenship

Zagreb, 26-27 November 2010

PROGRAMME

Friday, 26 November 2010

09:00 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 11.00	<p>Conference Opening</p> <p>Nikola Pandurić, president of the Croatian Youth Network Kamal Izidor Shaker, president of the National Youth Council of Slovenia Slađana Novota, president of the Council for the Development of Civil Society to the Government of the Republic of Croatia Igor Vidačak, head of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia Marija Lugarić, member of Parliament of the Republic of Croatia Zdenko Žunić, head of the Directorate of Family, emissary of the minister of Family, War Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity</p>

11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:30	<p>Peter Matjašič, Young European Federalists</p> <p>Active Participation of Young Europeans</p> <p>Rory Archer, Centre for South East European Studies, University of Graz</p> <p>European Integration and the challenges these processes pose for youth participation in South-Eastern Europe</p> <p>Moderated discussion</p>
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch Break
15:00 – 17:00	<p>Active Participation of Young People</p> <p>Presentations 1</p>
17:00 – 17:30	Break
17:30 – 19:00	<p>Active Participation of Young People</p> <p>Presentations 2</p>
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner

Saturday, 27 November 2010

09:00 – 11:00	Structured Dialogue National Presentations of the Structured Dialogue processes
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:30	Aleksandar Bogdanović, Council of Europe, Advisory Council on Youth Co-management in the Council of Europe National Presentations of Co-management practice
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch Break
15:00 – 17:00	Working Group 1 Recommendations Working Group 2 Conference Declaration
17:00 – 17:30	Break
17:30 – 19:00	Presentations of the Recommendations and the Conference Declaration Closing Evaluation
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner

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Youth Participation and Active Citizenship

Zagreb, 26-27 November 2010

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