

Non-paper for the joint positioning of the Member States for an independent EU youth programme from 2014

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1. Evaluation of Education Europe

Closure of the programme

- **Disintegration of all existing programme structures.** Education Europe intends to discontinue or merge all existing programmes in the fields of education and youth. As a result, YOUTH IN ACTION would no longer be visible as an EU youth policy initiative and its impact would be lost.
- **Uncertainty over funding.** It is not likely that the proposed funding increase of 70% for the Education Europe programme will be equally divided among all programme elements. Consequently, the financial consequences that Education Europe would bring for the youth programme cannot be foreseen.

Challenging the EU's youth policy aims

- **Jeopardising the aims of the Lisbon Treaty.** Without youth policy responsibility in an autonomous programme, the implementation of the youth policy mandate enshrined in Art. 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the Union would be weakened.
- **Loss of youth policy instruments.** The youth policy co-operation framework threatens to lose its implementing instruments that have so far been promoted mainly through YOUTH IN ACTION, among them the Structured Dialogue, Peer Learning, the European Youth Report or evidence-based youth policy.
- **Abrogation of youth policy's holistic approach** (encouraging informal learning, shaping democracy, strengthening youth work, exchanging good youth policy practice). The instruments and procedures of the education sector and of Education Europe are not in line with youth policy necessities.
- **Danger for diversity in youth work.** YOUTH IN ACTION benefits a multitude of diverse large and small, local, regional or national organisations, institutions, organisations and civil society associations that use it to Europeanise and professionalise their work. If formal education were to dominate in the future, this diversity would be in jeopardy.

Out of touch with the actual needs and reality of youth work.

- **Loss of the target group of young persons with a special need for education.** YOUTH IN ACTION also reaches young people who cannot or no longer be reached by the formal education system and need new perspectives. Education Europe threatens to lose such instruments of promotion.
- **There is more to youth work than the production of human capital.** Education Europe sends the wrong signal to all young persons for whom the words 'youth' and

'being young' means more than just the development of human capital and to enter the labour market as soon as possible as highly qualified members of the workforce.

Loss of successful funded projects

- **Uncertain future of youth organisations.** The support of European youth organisations and the European Youth Forum in Education Europe is uncertain.
- **Reduction of further training and continuing education projects in the youth field.** Education Europe does not say whether or not an annual 30,000 specialised staff throughout Europe will retain the opportunity to professionalise and further develop their youth work activities through trainings, seminars, conferences etc..

Risk to necessary structures in the youth field

- **Disbanding of the programme committee.** The YOUTH IN ACTION programme committee would be disbanded. The programme decisions in the Education Europe committee would then be made by the representatives of the Education Ministries and not by the Youth Ministries that are the competent agencies in many MS.
- **Merging of the national agencies.** Due to the lack of professional proximity to the field of youth policy and youth work, the merging of the national agencies and the abolition of a specific national agency for YOUTH IN ACTION would imperil the programme's current high effectiveness.
- **Loss of competence without comitology.** Without a separate comitology, youth activities would be removed from the competence sphere of youth policy which means that youth policy would relinquish part of its competence.
- **Loss of young people as a direct target group.** YOUTH IN ACTION is the only EU programme that also addresses young people *directly* and offers them immediate promotion of their commitment and their individual ideas. It is to be feared that the promotion of youth initiatives will find no place in Education Europe.

2. Positions on a new EU youth programme

European Parliament

The European Parliament's report on the Multiannual Framework (A7-0193/2011) "*Stresses that youth should represent a strong priority for the Union and that the youth dimension should be visible and reinforced in EU policies and programmes; believes that youth should be perceived as an EU cross-cutting theme, developing synergies between different policy areas relating to youth, education and mobility; welcomes the 'Youth on the Move' flagship initiative as a cornerstone of the Europe 2020 Strategy underlines in particular that youth-related programmes like Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action, which bear low cost per beneficiary and therefore have high efficiency, should be maintained as separate programmes in the next MFF and that they deserve a much stronger investment*".

Civil society

In the online consultation held by the European Commission on the future of the YOUTH IN ACTION programme, 6,787 individuals and organisations came out in favour of its

continuation and believed "...that the future programme should continue being implemented separately, although, according to some, this should be while developing a more integrated approach." The foregoing and the extremely positive outcome of the interim evaluation of the ongoing YOUTH IN ACTION programme obliges the Commission, Council and Parliament to initiate the corresponding design of the new programme generation. .

Member States

DG Letter

In the letter of 6th April 2011 from the Directors-General to Director-General Truszczyński, the representatives of altogether 13 Member States declare that *"The overall common position is based on our long-term expertise and a direct experience with an impact of both Youth Programme and Youth in Action Programme on young people in our respective Member States, as well as on our responsibility which we feel for maintaining as much as possible the time-proven procedural practice especially the current Programme's uniqueness in ensuring an equal access of all groups of young people to projects supporting non-formal learning processes as well as promoting and developing key-competences."* As a consequence, they called for a new EU youth programme that

- *should be independent and oriented on the specific needs of the EU youth field*
- *should be built on the positive foundation established by the current Youth in Action Programme and continue existing activities for and with young people and keep the positive impact on young people and youth work in Member States;*
- *should focus more strongly on creating equal opportunities for all young people and continue efforts to integrate young people with fewer opportunities in all areas of the programme, in particular as it proved its capacity and capability to provide mobility opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities, and on fighting with social exclusion and youth employment;*
- *should maintain the positive impact YiA has on young people in terms of their identification with the democratic life and active citizenship in Europe;*
- *should continue supporting small scale projects;*

Youth Council of 19th May

Within the context of a debate ahead of the adoption of the Council Conclusions on the Structured Dialogue, a total of eight Member States pointed out the need to have an independent EU YOUTH IN ACTION programme post 2013. If support for YOUTH IN ACTION were to be discontinued, many measures under the Structured Dialogue could no longer be implemented.

3. Outline of a new programme

Independent programme

The youth programme 2014-2020 must build on tried and tested foundations. The holistic design of YOUTH IN ACTION, including its work and target group specifics, has resulted in a high degree of effectiveness that must be further enhanced.

Dedicated budget

A dedicated and visible budget line, specifically to support activities and campaigns undertaken by young persons in the field of non-formal education, is essential. This budget line must build on the amounts envisaged for 2013 and must be seen to acknowledge the achievements of the YOUTH IN ACTION programme within the past programming period.

Independent programme implementation

To be able to rise to the challenges of the youth field, an autonomous comitology is required within the framework of independent programme implementation.

Brand name preservation

YOUTH IN ACTION should be retained as a brand name even in the programme generation 2014-2020 and thus remain visible as a youth programme in Europe.

Effective youth strategy instrument

The youth programme 2014-2020 should be an effective instrument for the implementation of the youth policy co-operation framework adopted by the Council.

Push ahead with inclusion

The youth programme 2014-2020 must increasingly focus on the aspect of fair chances and make further efforts to integrate disadvantaged and otherwise impaired youth into all elements of the programme.

Strengthening the youth-specific dimension

The youth programme 2014-2020 must be oriented in terms of substance and support to the specific needs of the EU youth field - youth policy, youth work.

Refining existing practice

New generation programmes must not only develop existing practices further and continue the activities in place, but also cut the number of sub-actions for the sake of simplification.

Separate agency

The youth programme 2014-2020 must allow the continuation of a separate national agency for youth and properly ensure this through the funding of programme structures.

Further development of youth-specific structures

Thanks to their valuable contributions to the programme and policy development, additional structures, such as SALTO resource centres, the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field, Eurodesk and Ex-EVS must be continued in an enhanced form and in a new programme.