

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015

(2014/C 183/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES,

I. INTRODUCTION

1. RECOGNISE that, since the adoption of the Resolution on a Renewed Framework for European cooperation in the Youth field 2010-2018, the crisis has presented new challenges for youth policy and that there is a need for reinforced cooperation in the youth field at EU level to adequately deal with these challenges.
2. RECALL that the 2012 Joint EU Youth Report called for stronger links and more cohesion between the Renewed Framework for European cooperation in the Youth field 2010-2018 and the Europe 2020 Strategy.
3. RECALL the Council conclusions of 16 May 2013 on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy⁽¹⁾, where the Council agreed to develop, within the framework of the Renewed Framework for European cooperation in the Youth field 2010-2018, a medium-term work plan to guide youth policy and youth related policy work in response to current youth and youth related themes and trends and to highlight relevant areas for coordination and collaboration with education and training and employment policies with a view to ensuring youth policy input into the European Semester.
4. Consequently AGREE to establish an 18 month EU Work Plan for Youth for Member States and Commission action for the period 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2015, as a pilot phase and as a contribution to the implementation of the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

II. PRINCIPLES

5. CONSIDER that the Work Plan should be governed by the following guiding principles:

- to give impetus and prominence as appropriate to EU level work in the youth field.
- to ensure through cross-sectorial cooperation that other EU policy domains (e.g. employment, education, social affairs, health) are made aware of the specific issues faced by young people.
- to contribute to the overarching priorities of the EU economic and social policy agenda, in particular the Europe 2020 Strategy and its implementing mechanisms.
- to work towards knowledge and evidence based youth policy
- to remain a flexible framework which is capable of responding when appropriate to ongoing developments.
- to promote a cooperative and concerted approach among Member States and the Commission to delivering added value on the priority themes set out in paragraph 6 below.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 224, 3.8.2013, p. 2.

- to incorporate the existing informal structures, where appropriate into the structures established in this Work Plan.
 - to make full use of the consultative procedures established by the Structured Dialogue to ensure that the Work Plan addresses the issues that are relevant to young people.
6. AGREE that, in light of the current crisis, the following themes should be given priority by Member States and the Commission in their cooperation at EU level for the period covered by the present work plan up to the end of 2015:
- Development of youth work and non-formal and informal learning and its contribution to addressing the effects of the crisis on young people;
 - Enhanced cross-sectorial cooperation within the framework of EU strategies;
 - Empowerment, with a special focus on access to rights, autonomy, participation and active citizenship within and outside the EU.

Agree that the work plan may be revised by the Council in light of results achieved and policy developments at EU level.

7. AGREE on a list of specific actions in line with these priority themes and a timetable for their implementation, as set out in Annex I.

III. WORKING METHODS AND STRUCTURES:

8. RECOGNISE that:

- There is a need to reinforce youth mainstreaming and the cross sectorial cooperation within the Council in order to guarantee that policy making takes into account young people's conditions and needs.

9. AGREE that:

- This Work Plan will be supported by working methods agreed in the renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field as well as a limited number of informal expert groups and flexible framework of peer-learning activities.
- The expert groups will be requested to focus their work on the priority themes outlined in Section II, paragraph 6 and on actions and target dates listed in Annex I. The actions in Annex I may be revised by the Council and the Representatives of Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, in the light of results achieved and policy developments at EU level.
- The principles relating to membership and functioning of the expert groups are set out in the Annex II.
- With respect to the right of young people to participate in the development of policies affecting them, the structured dialogue will be a means through which young people are engaged in joint reflection on the priority themes of this Work Plan.
- The informal meetings of Directors General for Youth shall examine strategic issues arising in connection with this Work Plan, as well as those relating more generally to EU youth policy.
- In the second half of 2015, the implementation of the present Work Plan will be evaluated by the Council on the basis of an assessment of its implementation provided in the context of the general overview of the youth sector contained in the EU Youth Report prepared by the Commission by July 2015.

10. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, INVITE:

the Member States and the Commission to establish or maintain expert groups on the following subjects for the duration of the current Work Plan:

- Youth work quality systems in Member States and the role of common indicators or frameworks.

- Defining the specific contribution of youth work and non-formal and informal learning to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment.
- Peer-learning activities among the Member States and the Commission aiming at identifying best practices and recommendations for cross-sectoral youth policymaking at EU and national level.

IV. ACTIONS

11. INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- work together with the support of the Commission and using the working methods of the Renewed Framework specified by this Resolution.
- further to the Council Conclusions on 'Maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of Europe 2020 Strategy', continue promoting the active involvement of youth perspectives in national policy-making related to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester.
- whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity consider taking due account of the Renewed Framework for European cooperation in the Youth field 2010-2018 and of this Work Plan when developing policy at national and regional level.
- inform young people and youth organisations, where appropriate, on progress made in implementing the EU Work Plan, in order to ensure the relevance and visibility of the activities.

12. INVITE THE PRESIDENCIES OF THE COUNCIL TO:

- take into account, in the context of the Team Presidency, the EU Work Plan priority themes when developing their programme.
- at the end of the 18 months covered by the present Resolution, and on the basis of an assessment to be integrated in the EU Youth Report prepared by the Commission on the basis of voluntary contributions from Member States, consider whether to propose a new Work Plan for the following period.
- propose to the Directors General for Youth in their customary informal meeting to discuss and take up the results obtained in the Work Plan, to organise extraordinary joint cross sectorial Directors General meetings when appropriate, and to disseminate widely the results.

13. INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

- support and work with the Member States in implementing this Work Plan, in particular the actions outlined in the Annex.
- inform the Member States on ongoing or planned initiatives in EU youth policy and other relevant policy areas impacting on youth and respective developments in the Commission.
- examine means to facilitate the widest possible participation of Member States at the expert group meetings.
- include, by July 2015 in the proposal for the EU Youth Report and on the basis of voluntary contributions from Member States, an assessment on the implementation and relevance of the Work Plan. This report will be the basis for the preparation of any subsequent Council Work Plan during the second half of 2015.
- seek to ensure coherence between this work plan and the work plan of the Partnership agreement with the Council of Europe in the field of youth.
- propose a flexible framework for peer-learning activities among the Member States.

14. INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

- continue close cooperation at expert level in accordance with Annexes I and II of this Resolution.
 - encourage other sectors to take the youth dimension into account when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other policy fields, with particular attention to ensuring early and effective inclusion in the policy development process.
 - promote better recognition of the contribution of youth policy to the overall goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy given the sector's strong potential to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and new jobs and considering its positive effects on employment, social inclusion, education and training as well as health and well being.
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ANNEX I

Actions based on priority themes

Action	Working method / Instrument	Output and target date
Development of youth work and non-formal and informal learning and its contribution to addressing the effects of the crisis on young people		
Develop Youth Work in Europe	<p><i>Evidence-Based Policy-Making:</i></p> <p>Study 'Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union'</p> <p><i>Expert Group</i> on youth work quality systems in EU Member States and the role of common indicators or frameworks</p>	<p><i>2nd half of 2015:</i> (poss.) Exchange of views in the Council and consideration of next steps following the outcome of the exchange of views</p> <p><i>1st half of 2015:</i> Expert Group to prepare a set of indicators or frameworks describing quality in Youth Work systems.</p> <p><i>2nd half of 2015</i> (Poss.) Council conclusions</p>
Promote the contribution of youth policy to address Europe's challenges	<p><i>Expert Group</i> on defining the specific contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing in particular the transition from education to employment.</p> <p><i>Evidence-Based Policymaking:</i> European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKYCP)</p>	<p><i>1st half of 2015:</i> (poss.) Council conclusions on how youth policy and cross-sectorial cooperation can address the EU's main challenges, in particular with regard to young people.</p> <p><i>1st half of 2015:</i> Report on best practices of cooperation between formal and non formal education including policy recommendations</p>
Enhanced cross-sectorial cooperation within the framework of EU strategies		
Strengthen cross-sectorial youth policymaking at EU level	Council and its preparatory bodies (Youth Working Party)	<i>1st half of 2015:</i> Possible recommendation on the contribution of the youth sector to the European Semester's important policy-focused steps.
Strengthen cross-sectorial youth policy-making at national level	<i>Peer-learning exercise</i> among Member States	<i>2nd half of 2015:</i> Intermediate report on best practices and recommendations for cross-sectorial youth policymaking at the national level.

Action	Working method / Instrument	Output and target date
Empowerment, with a special focus on access to rights, autonomy, participation and active citizenship within and outside the EU		
Empowerment of young people with a special focus on access to rights in order to foster autonomy and participation to social life	Structured Dialogue with young people	<i>2nd half of 2014</i> (poss.) Council conclusions on young people's access to rights in order to foster autonomy and participation to social life.
Empowerment for political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe	Structured dialogue with young people results <i>Evidence-Based Policy-Making:</i> — The London School of Economics and Political Science: Youth Participation in Democratic Life — Flash Eurobarometer 375 - European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life — EACEA - Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviors of Young People	<i>2nd half 2015:</i> (poss.) Council conclusions

ANNEX II

**Principles relating to the membership and functioning of expert groups established by the Member States and the Commission in the framework of the EU Work Plan for Youth
(1 July 2014-31 December 2015)**

Membership

- The participation of Member States in the work of the groups is voluntary and Member States can join them at any time.
- Member States interested in participating in the work of the groups will nominate experts as members of the respective groups. Member States will ensure that the nominated experts have relevant experience in the relevant field at national level and will ensure effective communication with competent national authorities. The Commission will coordinate the nomination exercise.
- Each expert group can decide to invite other participants: independent experts, representatives of youth organisations and other stakeholders, as well as representatives of European third countries.

Working procedures

- Expert groups will concentrate on delivering a small number of concrete and useable results on the subject requested.
- To implement this Work Plan, each expert group will be responsible for appointing its chair or co-chairs at the first expert group meeting after the adoption of the Work Plan. Each expert group will prepare a work schedule according to this Work Plan.
- The Member States will be given an opportunity to give guidance to the expert groups in order to guarantee the desired outcome and timeline, as well as the coordination of the groups' work.
- The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, will decide whether it is appropriate to propose new actions for the expert groups.
- The Commission will provide expertise, as well as logistical and secretarial support to the work of the groups. As far as possible, it will support the groups by other suitable means (including studies relevant to their field of work).
- Expert groups will meet in Brussels as a main rule, but can organise meetings outside Brussels when invited by a Member State.
- Expert groups will meet as a main rule twice a year, but can adopt a different timetable if needed.

Reporting and information

- The chairs of the expert groups will report to the Youth Working Party on the progress of work in the respective expert groups and present recommendations on possible future actions to the Youth Working Party.
 - The meeting agendas and meeting reports of all groups will be available to all Member States, irrespective of their degree of participation in a given area. The reports of the groups will be published.
 - The reports from the expert groups will feed into the assessment prepared by the Commission on the implementation of the Work Plan.
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