



NETWORK OF EXPERTS ON YOUTH KNOWLEDGE

13TH ANNUAL MEETING

*European Youth Centre Strasbourg
24th -26th September 2007*

REPORT

Summary

The 13th meeting of experts on youth knowledge as every year acted as a platform for information exchange between correspondents of European countries, the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Up-to-date developments in the European Youth policy and in youth research were presented and discussed. In addition, the current context, role and function of the Network was discussed and the chair of the network was elected.

After official opening of the meeting and welcome words Howard Williamson explained that he was asked by the Partnership secretariat to take up the role of the chair of this meeting and that the network should democratically elect a chair during the very same meeting. It was taken into account when the agenda was adopted. At the end of the meeting Howard Williamson, who made himself available as a candidate for a chair of the network, was elected by acclamation.

In the opening Howard made some introductory remarks reminding of the history of the network, its original function and later developments. The *tour de table* proven that the variety of the professional/institutional backgrounds of the representatives from various countries increased. As every year there were several new faces. Please, see the [list of participants](#) enclosed.

The rationale and role of the network seemed to have evolved as much as its composition and context. Originally the network was based on individuals with firm connections to youth research and youth information (as it was underlined by Mafred Zentner). Currently it is more of a diverse platform, which does not seem to have a clearly defined common purpose other than exchanging information on innovative ideas and initiatives from both the European and national contexts, ensuring updates from the national level towards the international network and vice versa, at times a consultative role with regard to youth research issues discussed in the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, in the Youth Partnership and – to a lesser extent – in the Youth Unit of the Directorate General of Education and Culture of the European Commission.

The existing variety of research networks, especially the [Network of EKCYP Correspondents](#) and the [EuNYK](#), makes the situation even more complex. All three networks are interrelated by presence of several persons in two or all three of them and by involvement of the institutional partners. A brief description of the characteristics of these three networks are provided in the [Partnership Newsletter](#).

Considering all these aspects the network should review attentively its composition, role, purpose and corresponding activities. Although these were not discussed extensively during the meeting and the idea was to continue thinking about them and exchanging views before and during the next annual meeting, several provisional suggestions were made by the Chair, when he was concluding the meeting. He stated that there seemed to be four prospective central roles, which could constitute a legitimate basis for the network to continue to exist:

1. To contribute to youth research knowledge development across Europe (what is available, what is comparable, what is missing). This role is not tied exclusively to supporting the development of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (there is another network with that responsibility) but this should be a core aspect of it. In other words, the contribution to EKCYP should be both direct and indirect.
2. To serve as a platform for information giving about research activity in respective countries: what kinds of projects are currently under way (and why); what are the youth research priority agendas in different countries; how is funding and other support secured.
3. To provide research direction on youth issues - a conceptual and advisory role.
4. To play a stronger role in the 'triangle': there is a lot of rhetoric about the importance of the triangle of policy, practice and research, and there is a lot of political importance based on 'evidence based' approaches to youth policy and practice, but the research presence is often quite small in relevant debates. There is a role for the network in increasing its profile and contribution.

There was some more detailed discussion about the location of any wider engagement and the balance to be struck between proactive and reactive engagement – this needs to be further discussed.

Apart from the above mentioned discussion there were several points presented/discussed:

Council of Europe updates:

1. [White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/default_EN.asp), Ulrich Bunjes, DG IV (more information on http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/default_EN.asp)
2. Council of Europe youth policy:
 - [Agenda 2020](#) (prospective Strategy Paper on the CoE youth policy) André-Jacques Dodin, DYS
 - [National youth policy reviews](#) and advisory missions, [youth policy sythesis report](#) (work in progress on the second report), Howard Williamson, Glamorgan University, UK
 - [Campaign All Different – All Equal](#), Katrin Oeser, Campaign, DYS (more information available [here](#))
3. European Commission, Ekaterini Karanika, European Commission EAC/D1
 - [State of affairs on EC Common Objectives](#) on a Better Understanding of Youth (more information available [here](#)), including European Network of Youth Knowledge (EuNYK)
 - [Results of the Eurobarometer on youth](#) (more information available [here](#))
4. Research Partnership, Hans-Joachim Schild, Partnership Programme
 - [Youth policy seminars](#), Hanjo Schild
 - [Research seminars and publications](#), Marta Medlinska, Partnership Programme
 - [EKCYF](#), Philipp Boetzelen, Partnership Programme
 - [Study on economic dimension of youth work](#), Irina Bohn, ISS Frankfurt
 - [MA in European Youth Studies](#), Howard Williamson, Glamorgan University, UK
5. Updates on various other projects:

[Research on the history of youth work](#), Filip Cousse, Ghent University, Belgium

[Linking research, policy and practice](#), John Allegrante, School of Public Health and Education, Iceland

News of the [ICNYP](#) Researchers Network, Manfred Zentner, jugendkultur.at, Austria

[JOP-monitor 1., the most important findings of this study](#), Nicole Vettenburg, Ghent University

[Romanian Youngsters: from themselves to the others, Results of a recent opinion poll among the young people](#), Sorin Mitulescu, Division for Studies and Researches on Youth Issues, Romania

[Youth in Serbia and the new Ministry of Youth and Sport](#), Ms Mirjana Arsic, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Republic of Serbia