



PARTNERSHIP

COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**11th meeting of experts on youth research
15-16th September 2005
Strasbourg
Report**

Introduction

The activities of the research partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe are based on the recommendations of the White Paper on Youth especially on the chapter on the better understanding of youth. The Partnership on research started in April 2003 and is now part of a single Partnership agreement, comprising the following areas: training of youth workers, cooperation in EuroMed and youth research. The current Partnership contract has been signed for the period 2005 to 2006 with the view of being continued. The main aim of the research partnership is to strengthen the role of youth research through the interaction of NGOs, youth policy and research. The main activities of the partnership are the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), the organisation of thematic research seminars, including publications on the results of these seminars, and the networking of experts.

The network of experts on youth research is a group of nominated national correspondents from the European countries, both the European Union as well as the Council of Europe. The experts in the network meet once a year. Although the Council of Europe has a tradition of working with researchers to promote and facilitate evidence-based youth policy, the involvement of the network has decreased due to a lack of financial resources. The network itself has a long history but had become almost nonexistent three years ago. It was revitalised through the research partnership in the youth field between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Today, the network again plays an important and active role as an interface between national networks in the youth sector and the European level and as a resource pool for the partnership projects. It should support the partnership activities and foster the national networks on youth in order to foster a better understanding of youth. The network of experts should also be actively involved in activities in the youth field other than research such as the upcoming "all different, all equal campaign". This would serve not only to inform the national networks, but also to contribute scientific knowledge to the design of the campaign.

To date, five research seminars were held on the topics "Resituating Culture", "The New Generation of YOUTH Programme", "Youth Political Participation", "Non Formal Learning" and "Voluntary Activities". Upcoming seminars will treat the subjects of "Social Inclusion" (2005) and "Diversity" and "Youth and the European Construction" (2006). Future topics of seminars may also be related to the themes of the European Youth Pact: employability, education, mobility, family.

The results of the seminars are published in series of books. The seminars are a means of giving young researchers a platform for exchange and the opportunity to publish their results. The seminars should also provide contact opportunities between research, NGOs and youth policy.

Participants are selected on basis of a call for applications, published in the EKCYP news page and distributed to the network correspondents. Researchers who are known to work on specific topics may also be directly invited to participate. 20-25 people can participate in each seminar.

In the discussion it became clear that the network correspondents do not feel sufficiently informed on all areas of the Partnership and were not sufficiently involved in deciding the research seminar themes organised.

It was agreed that all network correspondents should register on the EKCYP to receive all the information and should also receive information by e-mail, at least for a transition period.

International reviews and advisory missions

Advisory missions and international reviews have been carried out by the Directorate of Youth and Sport in the CoE since 1997. 12 reports have been completed so far: Finland, Netherlands, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Romania, Estonia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta,; the latest reports were those from Cyprus and Slovakia. The Hungarian and Armenian reports have been planned for 2005/6. It became evident that national hearings for the presentation of the reports are good means for increasing the recognition as well as the relevance of the reviews. The hearing in Slovakia was a big success since the whole academic community and policy makers were present. The teams of the reviews consist of one governmental, one youth work and two youth research experts.

The reports have become more and more comparable so that after the first 7 reports a synthesis of all these was produced by Howard Williamson. Now a break has been planned after the review on Hungary to decide the direction the international reviews should take.

The purpose of advisory missions is to provide competent advice to a country on a particular strand of their youth policy or an intended revision of their global youth policy. These advisory missions are carried out on the request of governments. The groups for the missions consist of one person from the youth policy sector, one from the NGO field and one researcher. The latest advisory missions have been carried out for Hungary, the Czech Republic, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and, in 2005, the UN administered region of Kosovo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. An advisory mission to Georgia is planned. A mission to the Ukraine had to be postponed.

A decision on the future of the advisory missions is needed. To date, the results of such missions have been exclusively presented to the governments; it is up to them to use results for decision-making in their youth policy implementation. It could be interesting to provide the donors and sponsors in the respective countries of the advisory missions with the results as well.

In the discussion the question was raised as to whether and how far the researchers should be involved in a follow up to the international reviews and the advisory missions and what would be the consequences of advisory missions .

It was underlined that the CoE cannot control what is done with the results of the reviews and the missions. Most of the reviews had a follow-up, but the complete team involved was not invited to participate in it. In the future, a "review package" could cover a preparation meeting, the national hearing, an international hearing and a follow-up meeting.

For the advisory missions it was stated that the CoE cannot monitor the consequences and follow-up. In some countries the suggestions were forgotten for some time, in others some proposals were implemented and in another case the results were returned as a suggestion of the government.

The new campaign "all different - all equal"

The European youth campaign "all different- all equal" will focus on diversity, human rights and participation. It shall be implemented by actors from the youth field in the member countries. It will not be a repetition of the old campaign. Rather new formats of campaigning are needed. 10 years ago, the main approach was to give prominence to minorities. But one of the results of the research seminar on Resituating Culture was that, by reifying and essentialising different cultural groups, this could also be interpreted as a form of racism. A new campaign should perhaps be more strongly focused on the participation of all people living in Europe and not on the relativity of narrowly defined cultural groups.

European Commission Youth policy: The European Youth Pact and the follow up of the White Paper on Youth

Following the White Paper, the active citizenship of young people is one of the most important topics for the Commission. The question of how young people can be better

involved in social life has to be addressed by both the member states of the European Union and at the wider European level. In order to coordinate the various processes the White Paper has proposed to apply the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Within this process 14 common objectives on participation, information, better understanding and voluntarism were adopted by the Member States. The implementation of these objectives is ongoing and Member States have to report back annually to the European Commission regarding the progress of national youth policies.

The European Pact for Youth was an initiative of the Heads of State and Governments Chirac, Schröder, Zapatero and Persson; it was adopted at the Spring European Council 2005 and is now part of the revised Lisbon strategy. The Youth Pact reflects horizontal topics of youth policy, such as employment, education and training and social inclusion and requests that the member states implement the lines of action in these three areas:

Similar to the OMC, the member states will report back to the European Commission about the progress achieved. The Commission will submit a synopsis of these reports and will also contribute to the annual progress report within the Lisbon strategy. Bringing the topic of youth onto the agenda of the Lisbon process is a chance to widen the youth policy perspective.

With regard to the further involvement of the European network of experts on youth research in the White Paper process and the European Youth Pact it was stressed during the discussion that researchers had been consulted during the development of the questionnaires and that this principle of consultation should be continued. It is also important to create national networks between the various stakeholders in order to make the implementation of the common objectives effective.

How the European Youth Pact can be transmitted beyond the EU 25 to the Council of Europe Member States was also discussed as there is an interest in these countries to be involved in these political processes. If such countries, which are not obliged to report to the European Commission, consider it important to involve youth research and see the benefits of a dialogue with youth policy and NGOs this will be highly significant. Of course, the dialogue can be organised in different ways in the different countries. Nevertheless, it should be the task of youth policy at all levels and in all countries to leave room, space and opportunities for discussions with youth researchers.

In the future, it will be important for researchers to find a balance between autonomy, usefulness and cooperation. Research must step out of the academic ivory tower without at the same time becoming instrumentalised.

In the further exchange of views some participants presented examples of individual countries and how the national networks on youth are organised:

- In Portugal, a youth observatory has been in existence for ten years with the task of collecting the different studies that deal with youth issues. However, more than one institute is needed on the national level.
- In Finland, 11 youth researchers developed an informal network in 1987. Much progress has been made. It is well financed and delivers good results in debates with youth policy. The network is well established.
- In Poland, there is a board of experts coming from different professional but youth-based backgrounds and dealing with cooperation between researchers and governmental units.
- In Luxembourg, Cesije is the co-ordinator of a board of experts on youth. Within the new law on youth policy, youth research will benefit from a legal backbone and formal recognition.
- In San Marino, an observatory for young people exists which is primarily concerned with demographics. There is also cooperation with the university and private donors.

The participants came to the conclusion that a workshop on the topic of "how national networks and a dialogue between youth research, youth policy and NGOs can be best

organised” would be beneficial and asked the Partnership to plan such a workshop for 2006.

Implementation of the common objectives on a better knowledge and understanding of youth and the role of the European Youth Research Network in the creation of national networks on Youth

The member states of the EU agreed on 4 common objectives – participation, voluntary activities, information and better understanding – and, in particular, to identify and diffuse knowledge in these areas. This agreement led to a process of reporting on the implementation of the common objectives in the member countries.

One of the common objectives is related to the development of knowledge on youth. In the first phase, the identification of knowledge on the core issues, the priority topics of the White Paper, is needed. In the second phase, new areas of knowledge such as autonomy, non formal learning, health and the themes of the youth pact will be relevant. The quality of information and knowledge is important for the common objective of better understanding. On this issue the research network is highly relevant and the correspondents can be of help for assuring quality standards.

With regard to a better understanding of youth, established and well functioning national networks are of high importance. The research network correspondents should support these national networks. From the European Commission’s point of view, legitimated networks are needed as well as legitimated correspondents who are in contact with national networks in order to report back to the national levels. For the establishment of the national networks, models of good practice should be made available for all correspondents and all those involved in the national networks. These networks have to fulfill some basic requirements and standards such as organised structures, independence, continuity and legitimacy.

It was proposed to follow the example of the Charta on information for young people, signed by the Youth Information Centres as members of the EYRICA network and dealing with quality standards on information; a similar Charta could be developed for the national networks that provide knowledge on youth.

European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

The EKCYP is an online state of the art knowledge management system that provides data on the core topics of the White Paper on Youth: participation, voluntary activities, information, and better understanding of youth; it also includes basic information (ABC) on national youth policy.

The EKCYP is a userfriendly and fast online method to disseminate research results and statistical data on youth for policy makers and the research community alike. The need of an instrument like the EKCYP was highlighted not only by the EU member states in the questionnaires on Better Understanding of Youth. The EKCYP is one of the main outcomes of the partnership of European Commission and CoE. It can be found at the internet address www.youth-knowledge.net. This page is directly linked to the website of the partnership itself.

Besides the database of research data from 16 European countries so far, the knowledge centre hosts an expert database where all interested experts, including the national correspondents of the research network, are invited to register. It also provides a glossary of terms on youth policy and a news system that can be customised following personal preferences after registering. It is also possible for every registered user to submit stories and news that are disseminated to all users and to upload texts and papers. The EKCYP also allows a full text search and delivers the whole text to the user.

The knowledge centre is based on the data provided by the participating countries through a network of EKCYP correspondents. In the pilot phase, 16 countries participated. The EKCYP was officially launched and presented to the public during a conference in Luxembourg in June 2005. In the mid-term, English will stay the only working language in the EKCYP for

cost and capacity reasons. For 2006 an extension of participating countries is planned, later on as well an extension by topics. For the future the EKCYP aims at least at involving all European countries. Besides the extension of the EKCYP to new countries a consolidation phase for the current phase is needed. This includes seeing how the work of the established members can be maintained and stabilised. Future projects also deal with quality matters concerning the knowledge centre. On the one hand, the quality of the answers on the core content has to be evaluated. A quality group will be established dealing with quality standards and developing quality criteria for the provided data. In addition, a template on how to best answer the core content questions will be prepared. On the other hand it will also be essential to develop a common understanding of the questions and of the realities in each country for answering these questions. For this purpose, the glossary on youth policy is a first step.

For the future it will be important to find a new structure for the validation of the provided data as the back office alone will be unable to fulfill this task.

For the evaluation of the knowledge centre as such a method has to be developed. The aim of such an evaluation will be an analysis of the usability of the knowledge centre website and the provided databases as well as the needs of the users.

For the second phase, the EKCYP aims at the creation of a virtual community and a discussion platform.

The discussion focused on the question of the difference between an EKCYP correspondent and the network correspondent and how these two can work together. The task of the EKCYP correspondents is to put collected research data into the EKCYP database. The network correspondent has the task of supporting the development of a national youth network and linking it to the European level. S/he should also disseminate the news from the knowledge centre to the national networks and other interested people in the countries. The research network correspondent can support the EKCYP correspondent for finding and collecting the correct answers and figures.

Participants had a number of questions concerning the actual amount of work entailed in providing the data for the knowledge centre and the costs arising from this task. The role of the ministries for youth in the further development of the knowledge centre was also discussed.

Each of the Council of Europe Member States is asked via the Ministries responsible for Youth Policy to nominate a correspondent to the EKCYP. Since the members of the EU25 are committed to submitting annual reports on the implementation of the common objectives to the Commission it is easier to get them on board. For new countries, beyond the 16 already involved, letters of request were sent out and the newly nominated correspondents will be trained in February 2006 in order to be able to input the data later in 2006.

The amount of work differs from country to country according to the given structure. If data on youth is collected in a centralised way the job requires only the input to the EKC; normally a network of people is needed for providing all the data to the national EKCYP correspondent.

The participants came to the conclusion that for continuing the work in the EKCYP network it will be important that some basic principles are fulfilled in the future:

1. A structured relationship between national networks on youth and the EKCYP correspondent
2. A strategic plan for the continuity of the work
3. A realistic global budgeting
4. A set of quality standards satisfying the needs of the users and realistically achievable given the expected and calculated costs.

CRELL – Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning –

The new established research centre, situated in Italy, is part of the joint research centre of the European Commission. It aims at forecasting developments in the field of lifelong learning, education and training. It will develop indicators for quality evaluation of the education system and works with methods like econometrics and macrometrics. The CRELL is looking for cooperation within the member states. The setting up of networks and databases similar to the research network and the EKCYP is envisaged in relation to the quality of education.

In the discussion some participants stressed that, for a long time, indicators on education have been developed by non-EU structures like the OECD. It was recommended to cooperate with these other institutions. At the same time it was felt that indicators in the field of education with a European dimension are needed.

Results of the conference “Dialogue ...” in Luxemburg

In June 2005, the international conference on dialogue between the main actors in the youth field took place in Luxembourg. 95 participants from 26 countries were present at this warm and friendly conference. It was also a positive experiment because of its structure as a scientific conference, with workshops that included both policy makers and youth workers. The conference provided a meeting place for researchers, policy makers and NGOs and opportunity for scientific exchange, in particular on the complexity of the dialogue between the main actors in the youth field, the magic triangle of youth research, youth policy and NGOs. The idea of youth knowledge agencies that help organise the dialogue was raised.

One of the highlights of the conference was the official launch of the EKCYP.

In the discussion a number of convergencies in the area of knowledge became apparent:

- Knowledge exists and/or has to be collected on different levels – local, regional, national, European – why networking, working together and supporting each other is essential at all levels.
- Knowledge exists also in other fields – mainly in the form of practical knowledge; it is the task of research to order and to systematise it. A mapping of existing knowledge has to be created, new projects have to be launched and an evaluation of youth work is needed. Researchers should play a crucial role in this respect.

It became clear that the link between research, policy and NGOs exists but is hard to prove. Policy dynamics and research dynamics may influence each other as was the case of the White Paper on Youth that both influenced the research field and was influenced by research. The youth pact and the aims of the Lisbon process will also point the way for further research yet, at the same time, requires research results on these topics. The research network should be actively involved in the definition of research themes and approaches. A meeting once a year seems to be insufficient for these purposes. Therefore, additional workshops should be foreseen.

The role and function of youth research in relation to youth policy has to be made clear once more: it needs a democratic, participative approach with a clearly defined ethos.

Future needs of the research partnership

The continuation of the partnership between the EU and the CoE is an important issue for both institutions but needs a formal agreement for the period after 2006.

One of the main strands for the continuity of the partnership is the knowledge area. This includes ongoing activities of the network of experts on youth research, the development of future thematic seminars (diversity, anti-racism, employment, work life of youth, the construction of Europe etc), the extension of the EKCYP to other countries and topics as well as the uploading of models of good practice and its use as a communication platform.

Besides the traditional pan-European approach of the partnership, a stronger accent will be placed on regional projects. The cooperation with Euromed can serve as an example. In both South-East-Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States joint projects will be intensified.

The partnership publications – T-Kit, Coyote, the website – will be continued in addition to the publications of seminar papers and results. Fact sheets on various items are also planned. This kind of newsletter should provide users with brief information about partnership activities. For 2006, a T-Kit on better knowledge on youth could be scheduled. In this T-Kit standards on knowledge and on national networks could be defined.

Another issue for the partnership is the elaboration of a survey on training offers for youth workers in Europe. It should cover offers in the EU, in South-East-Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The management structure of the partnership has to be broadened: Beside the partnership, secretariat partnership sectorial groups are going to be established in cooperation with different stakeholders. These sectorial groups are planned for the areas of “European citizenship”, “Euromed”, “youth research and youth policy” as well as on “information and publications”. It is necessary to integrate the research network into these sectorial groups. Interested network members should contact the partnership secretariat.

Main conclusions

For increasing co-operation in Member States and at European level it is important to nominate a correspondent that will report back to the researchers' community in his/her country but also to the policy makers and youth organisations (e.g. youth councils). Hence the necessity of setting up a national network of actors in the youth field to ensure representativity and to facilitate reporting duty of network correspondents is crucial. Stress should also be laid on the importance of ensuring the continuity of this function in order to make discussions within the researchers network fruitful. Furthermore, consulting of the researcher's network by the Commission would get have greater legitimacy and representativity.

Following the discussions in the network meeting a number of recommendations can be made:

- To produce coherence between the different circles of researchers, in particular between the EKCYC correspondents and network members, and fostering the relationship between European and national research structures through,
 - well developed and regular communication and reporting systems;
 - continuity in cooperation based on a strategy plan;
 - a solid budget for the central (partnership) unit as well as for national structures;
 - quality assurance (in relation to costs).

- To create a regular dialogue and communication system between researchers and other audiences (policy-makers, youth work) through,
 - conferences and events at European level (EU-Presidencies, CoE campaign...);
 - working groups for various purposes and topics.

- To define the needs for dialogue, the roles and functions of network members and the standards for networking (organised, independent, legitimate, continuous) and develop a strategy for building national networks between youth field actors (researchers, policy makers, youth organizations) through,

- Organising workshops and developing a training plan on this issue;
 - Developing guidelines on structured relationships and dialogue;
 - Developing a long-term strategic plan including budgets based on defined quality criteria.
- To make the network a place of substantial discussion on youth policy and youth research. Such thematic topics should be the main points on the agenda once discussions on representativity and continuity have been solved.
 - Give more room for content-related and network member issues;
 - Focus on key questions for an increased in-depth discussion.
- To activate the researchers network for partnership activities in the field of research and policy and inviting them to participate in,
 - the selection of seminar themes and dissemination of call for participants of the seminars;
 - the management of structures of the Partnership (Partnership Sectorial Groups);
 - the development of the EKCYP (Quality Group, uploading documents, researchers pool...);
 - the publication and information activities (COYOTE concept meeting, quality check of translated T-Kits, T-Kit on a better knowledge of youth...);
 - the elaboration of a survey on training offers in Europe.
- To develop a “European Framework Convention on Youth Policy”, based on Youth Policy Reviews and Advisory Missions as well as on the priorities and common objectives of the White Paper on Youth; thus setting youth policy standards through recommendations including a number of “principles of knowledge” outlining essential criteria for evidence-based youth policy.
- To associate the research network to the campaign “Participation, Human Rights, Diversity” through,
 - participation in the clarification process for focusing of campaign;
 - organising a research seminar early spring 2006.
- To develop the EKCYP as a tool for communication and expert information addressing a specific public within the triangle of youth policy, youth work practice and youth research through,
 - extending the EKCYP by countries and themes;
 - building national correspondents’ networks;
 - creating understandable and useful questions;
 - organising a quality check and profound evaluation.

Practical issues:

- Creating an E-mailing list (COE: EYC, Point I, other Directorates, CDEJ; EU institutions: COM, EP, Ecosoc, CoR, Council incl YWP; researchers network, EKCYP-correspondents; EYF; NA’s / SALTO’s, trainers, seminar participants) for dissemination of information
- Distributing information on COM/DG Research 7th Framework Programme;
- Making questionnaires of EKCYP public and available;
- Creating a researchers pool (similar to the trainers pool) via the EKCYP to enable people to get in contact with competent experts;

- Extending the research network to all European countries and raising this issue at the next CDEJ and General Directors meetings;
- Participating in upcoming events,
 - Conference on young citizens, professional power & responsibility of youth research 2-4 Nov 2005 in Finland;
 - 9th Nordic Youth Research Information 12-14 January 2006 in Sweden;
 - EU seminar meeting on Young European citizenship 2-4 July 2006 in Finland.

Report: Manfred Zentner and Hanjo Schild

Annex:

Programme

Participants list



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EUROPEAN COMMISSION

YOUTH RESEARCH

Eleventh Meeting of Experts on Youth Research and Information

15-16th September 2005 Strasbourg

Programme

15th September

- 9.30 Opening of the Eleventh Meeting of Experts
Ralf-René Weingärtner – Director of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe
Hans-Joachim Schild – Coordinator of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field
Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 10.00 Introductory round European Research Network Correspondents
- 10.30 Introduction and update Research Partnership (European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, Social Inclusion Seminar and Publications)
Bryony Hoskins, CRELL - Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning - European Commission - Joint Research Centre (former Research Officer, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe)
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Discussion
Chair Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.00 National Reviews and Advisory Missions
Peter Lauritzen, Head of Department for Education, Training, Research and Communication, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe
- 15.00 Discussion
Chair Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 16.00 Coffee Break
- 16.30 European Commission Youth Policy: The European Youth Pact and the follow-up of the White Paper on Youth
Nathalie Stockwell, Youth Unit, European Commission
- 17.00 Discussion
Chair Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 18.30 Reception
- 20.15 Dinner in Town

16th September

- 9.30 European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy
Bryony Hoskins, CRELL - Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning - European Commission - Joint Research Centre
- 10.00 Discussion
Chair Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Implementation of the common objectives on a better knowledge and understanding of youth and the Role of the European Youth Research Network in the Creation of National Networks on Youth
Nathalie Stockwell, Youth Unit, European Commission
- 12.00 Discussion with special emphasis on relevance for CoE member states and the potential role of the partnership
Chair Anthony Azzopardi, University of Malta
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14:30 Presentation of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning CRELL
Bryony Hoskins, CRELL - Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning - European Commission - Joint Research Centre
- 15.00 Information:
- Results of the conference “Dialogue...” in Luxemburg – Charles Berg;
 - Any other relevant activities -
- 16.00 Coffee Break
- 16.30 Future needs and initiatives of the partnership
- 17.00 Closing of the Seminar
Peter Lauritzen - (Head of Department for Education, Training, Research and Communication, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe)