



# EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF

MYPLACE

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## MYPLACE: Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (European Summary Brief)

*This FIRST policy brief, February 2013, introduces the Framework 7 Programme MYPLACE research project involving partners in 14 countries, coordinated by the University of Manchester. Two future Briefs, in January 2014 and July 2014 will highlight results and policy recommendations.*

**Ongoing project**

**Commenced June 2011**

**February 2013**

## INTRODUCTION

**MYPLACE** ([www.fp7-myplace.eu](http://www.fp7-myplace.eu)) is a major 7.9 Million Euro EC funded project, running from June 2011 to May 2015 which explores young people's civic, political and social participation in 14 European countries, and particularly how it is shaped by the past, present and future shadows of totalitarianism and populism in Europe.

**Conceptually**, it goes beyond the comparison of discrete national 'political cultures' or rigid classifications of political heritage, such as 'post-communist' or 'liberal democratic'. It is premised rather on the pan-European nature of a range of radical and populist political traditions and the cyclical rather than novel nature of the popularity they might currently enjoy.

**Empirically**, MYPLACE employs an impressive combination of survey, interview and ethnographic research methods to provide new, pan-European data that not only measures levels of participation but captures the meanings young people attach to it.

**Analytically**, through its specific focus on 'youth' and the historical and cultural contextualization of young people's social and political participation, MYPLACE replaces the routine, and often abstract assumptions of presumed 'disengagement' from politics with an empirically rich mapping of their understandings and orientations towards European civic and political spaces

**In policy terms**, MYPLACE identifies both the obstacles and facilitators for young people's reclamation of the European political arena as 'my place'.

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY BRIEF

This Policy Brief is the first of a series of 3 which MYPLACE will produce between now and the end of the project in 2015. In addition, a fuller evidence based policy review will be published synthesizing policy relevant findings from the project. Since at this early stage the project is actively gathering data for its Work Packages, the purpose of this Brief is to highlight the work of the project and the opportunities for involvement by policy makers and practitioners. With this end in view it therefore highlights the research outputs that will emerge from its 6 interlocking research-based Work Packages, and be reported in Policy Briefs 2 and 3, along with specific policy recommendations.

## EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

MYPLACE contextualises the appeal of far right, radical left and populist movements holistically within the total profile of youth consciousness and action, rather than simply focusing on the most publicly visible aspects. MYPLACE goes beyond restrictive conventional definitions limited to electoral or 'party politics' that exclude too many youth actions that have political implications and effects, by mapping a wide array of socio-political activities engaged in by young people and their associated preferences, expectations and values. It seeks to analyse international, cross national features and influences, and contextualises contemporary youth actions against national and European 'historical memory'.

It is a large scale project which is unusual in combining survey, interview and ethnographic case study research methods to capture both levels of civic, political and social participation and the subjective meanings young people attach to it. Through a specific focus on 'youth' and the historical and cultural contextualization of young people's social participation, MYPLACE challenges over-generalized concepts of 'disengagement' from politics by documenting the wide range of young people's understandings and responses to civic and political spaces. It examines these processes across 14 countries which represent a wide variety of historical, social, political and administrative conditions that shape the lifeworlds of young people in different countries and their social and political actions. Five of the countries joined European Union relatively recently or still are in the accession process: Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Croatia. Georgia and Russia, which have rather different cultural-historical backgrounds, represent countries from the outside of European Union, The more 'central' countries of Europe and Scandinavia are represented by Denmark, Finland, and Germany (former Western and Eastern parts of the country being treated separately). The three main countries of Southern Europe, Spain, Portugal and Greece also feature, and the Anglo-Saxon world is represented by England. The project is therefore well situated to uncover how common European and contrasting national political and cultural traditions and economic circumstances shape the ways in which young people respond in similar and different ways.

MYPLACE's ambitious scope and research reach thus ensures considerable policy relevance at European and national levels, capturing emerging trends within and between a large number of European countries, through a wide set of quantitative and qualitative research methods, to:

- Measure attitudes to, and participation, in political organisations, social movements and civic action programmes among young people in Europe and understand how these attitudes and engagements are differentiated along lines of gender, ethnicity, class and region;
- Measure views on legitimate forms of political representation and action in the context of different forms of democratic heritage;
- Map the range of youth activism across Europe and the ways in which young activists are networked inter-regionally and trans-nationally;
- Analyse the extent to which young people may be following established traditions or developing/adapting them to innovative forms of activism based on the internet and social media;
- Understand the appeal of radical, extreme or populist movements to young people and the linkage to forms of regional, national and European transmission of political heritage;

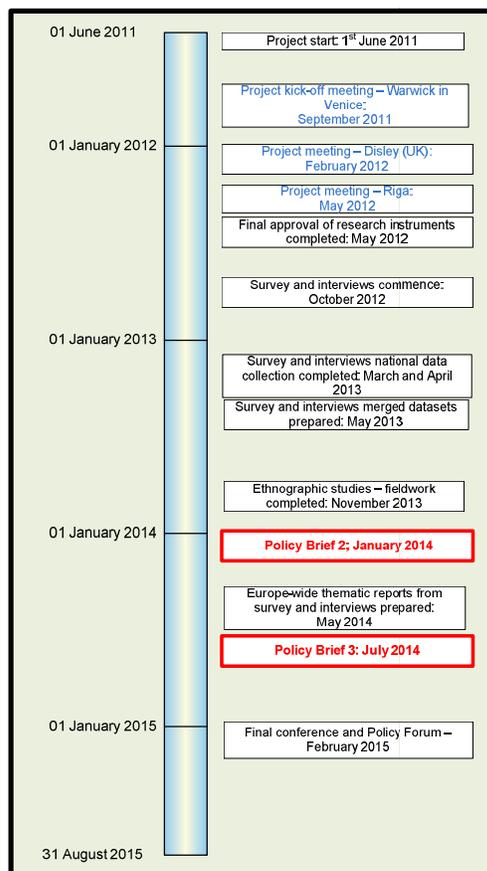
- Understand how broader political issues, such as the 'Arab Spring', global economic pressures, immigration, public sector retrenchment, reform of higher education and welfare restructuring may to varying degrees be affecting young people and shaping their perceptions and responses.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As well as producing high quality theoretically informed research findings, MYPLACE is firmly committed to ensuring that these help to inform national and European level policy discussions and deliberations. With this end in view, Youth Policy Advisory Groups (YPAGs) with wide stakeholder membership of experts and policy actors, have been set up from the start of the project in each partner country. These have already been meeting and have made some initial inputs into the research design. As the project proceeds, YPAGs will be increasingly influential in interpreting the results, analysing their policy implications, and helping to translate these into forms that are useful and relevant for a wide range of policy actors in youth work and youth policy circles at national and EU levels.

For more information or to enquire about the work of MYPLACE YPAGs, please contact Martin Price, MYPLACE Project Manager ([m.r.price@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:m.r.price@warwick.ac.uk))

## RESEARCH PARAMETERS



MYPLACE is:

Exploring the construction and transmission of historical memory with focus groups and around 30 inter-generational interviews.

Measuring young people's participation using a survey delivered in 14 countries with 18000 respondents...

...and understanding that participation using 900 in-depth follow up interviews.

Interpreting young people's activism through at least 42 ethnographic case studies.

Informing policy through development of close links with policy makers.



MYPLACE countries

## PROJECT IDENTITY

**PROJECT NAME** Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (MYPLACE)

**COORDINATOR** Professor Hilary Pilkington, University of Manchester, United Kingdom  
[hilary.pilkington@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:hilary.pilkington@manchester.ac.uk)

**CONSORTIUM**

*Caucasus Research Resource Centre  
Tbilisi, Georgia*

*Centro Investigacao e Estudos de Sociologia  
Lisbon, Portugal*

*Daugavpils Universitate  
Daugavpils, Latvia*

*Debreceni Egyetem  
Debrecen, Hungary*

*Friedrich-Schiller Universitaet Jena  
Jena, Germany*

*Institut Drustvenih Znanost Ivo Pilar  
Zagreb, Croatia*

*Manchester Metropolitan University  
Manchester, United Kingdom*

*Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences  
Athens, Greece*

*State Institution of Ulyanovsk Research and Development Centre "Region"  
Ulyanovsk, Russian Federation*

*Syddansk Universitet  
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Barcelona, Spain*

*University of Eastern Finland  
Kuopio, Finland*

*Univerzita sv Cyrila a Metoda v Trnavae  
Trnava, Slovakia*

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<b>DURATION</b>	June 2011 – May 2015 (48 months).
<b>BUDGET</b>	EU contribution: 7 994 463 €.
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.fp7-myplace.eu">www.fp7-myplace.eu</a>
<b>FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	Contact: Martin Price (Project Manager) – <a href="mailto:admin@fp7-myplace.eu">admin@fp7-myplace.eu</a>
<b>FURTHER READING</b>	Deliverable 2.1: Country based reports on discourse production (publication via European Commission and MYPLACE website pending).