

## Summary of the General Comments of the Working Groups

- Young people welcome the new EU Youth Strategy.
- The document is relatively general. It lacks concrete objectives, measurable indicators as well as precise definitions of terms.
- The EU should not adopt a strategy for youth, but strategy with youth. It should be specified how young people will be involved in achieving the aims in each field of action. Youth participation should be considered a method to implement the other fields of action.
- The document does not specify concrete methods of implementation and ways to measure the progress at the European and Member States level. Member States should adopt national implementation plans.
- Young people welcome the cross-sectoral approach and long-term orientation of the strategy for the youth field.
- Young people as well as national youth councils and the European Youth Forum should be involved more in the structured dialogue about ways of implementing the new strategy.
- Young people identified several other areas which should be tackled as well:
  - Intercultural dialogue
  - Equal opportunities
  - Peace education
  - E-participation and e-democracy

## Participation, Outreach and Information

We believe participation should be the underlying principle of the entire Youth Strategy and its implementation under each field of action should be made explicit. Important fields of action should be:

- Create a link between youth and politicians on local, regional and national levels in order to increase the opportunities to affect the politicians and to inform the youth about the benefits of being an active citizen, for example through youth councils and NGOs;
- Develop equal balanced dialogue between youth and local politicians about issues on which youth should be consulted;
- Provide relevant and objective information understandable for young people by developing youth information standards on European level. This information should be communicated through youth organisations and young people should be given the possibility to communicate back and discuss in local, national and international youth meetings. Existing media should be encouraged to present topics in a way that they are relevant for young people;
- In order to avoid the negative and problematic categorization of “non-organized” young people the objective should be rephrased as “encouraging the voluntary participation of more and more diverse young people”. This should be achieved by:
  - recognising the schools’ role and responsibility and promoting participation by including non-formal elements of education and youth organisations;
  - supporting organisations and networks under grass-root level to reach out to new young people through, among others, training capacity building and exchange of best practices;
- Youth work should be financially, infrastructurally, mentally and politically supported. It should be recognized for its multidimensional contributions and common European quality standards should be developed through member states dialogue;
- Regardless of party affiliation or a lack thereof, providing financial support and infrastructure for youth organizations, as well as ensuring that the feedback on the outcome of the participation process will be communicated to the decision makers and back, resulting in motivating participation as a means to being heard.

# Social Inclusion and Health

## Social Inclusion

- Effective **antidiscrimination policies** and legislation should be put in place, including the protection against discrimination on the grounds of age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, poverty, education as a non-exhaustive list; keeping in mind that social exclusion can have many faces and multiple grounds;
- Recognise and use the potential of **youth organisations** that are already working on social inclusion;
- Development of social inclusion policies should be based on a **broad dialogue** among the stakeholders and actors in the field, including youth organisations;
- Tailored information and support on the **available EU funds** for initiatives of socially excluded young people and for organisations working on social inclusion projects;
- **Mobility** of young people should be facilitated both within the EU and outside of it;
- Terms such as **e-inclusion** that don't have a clear commonly known definition should be avoided if they are not defined; effective access to new technologies is important for social inclusion of young people;
- **Indicators and benchmarks** such as eradication of youth poverty by 2018 should be developed to monitor that the social inclusion policies are effectively implemented;
- The Member States should
  - set up **effective mechanisms** to guarantee that young persons are not facing homelessness, unemployment or financial exclusion,
  - guarantee **the right to combine parenthood and working life** by providing access to childcare for all families,
  - promote equality in parenthood by dividing **parental leaves** equally between the parents,
  - provide **minimum social support** and equal **social protection** for all young people,

## Health and Sports

- We would prefer to settle the title as Health and Wellbeing as we consider Sport rather as a tool to achieve wellbeing then a goal;
- By wellbeing we mean for example to be able to achieve good health, to be able to enjoy your rights and not to suffer under stress;
- We found the actions not very clear in terms of target groups;
- We consider health and wellbeing as a precondition for active citizenship and vice-versa;
- We want to stress that schools and youth organisations are important stakeholders and should be included in fulfilling the goals;
- We want to stress the cross-sectoral approach and to recognise that other policy areas are linked (like: education, participation, employment etc.) and important to achieve good health;
- To achieve good health and wellbeing it is important not to be discriminated, for example based on the sexual preferences;
- The states should promote the Convention of the right of the child, for example the right to control your own body;
- There should be tools or ways for young people to be able to communicate their problems or concerns regarding their mental and physical health and they should be listened to and guidance should be offered;
- The states should create opportunities for leisure activities and sports through youth and sport organisations;
- The states should, in cooperation with youth, set up national action plans on how to achieve good health and wellbeing, the plans should be followed up by statistics.

# **Volunteering and Education**

## **Non-formal Education**

- Recognition of NGOs as main providers of NFE and promotion of NFE at all levels;
- Developing a quality assurance framework for NFE providers at EU and national level;
- Young people should be involved in all processes concerning their education.

## **Volunteering**

- Recognition of individual skills gained from voluntary experience on local, national and European level;
- Voluntary youth work should be recognised as an important element of civil society policy;
- Rather than creating new youth voluntary opportunities, the focus should be put on lowering the barriers for participating in existing volunteering activities.

# **Employability, Entrepreneurship and Developing Potential**

## **Developing Potential**

- We request that the term „talent“ should not be used and be replaced with „potential“ since we believe that all people do have a potential which can and should be developed;

## **Employability**

- Ensure that youth employment remains a priority by creating more and better jobs, fighting precariousness and implementing active employment policies;
- Youth work and volunteering should be recognized across Europe as an eligible way to acquire competencies and experience for employment (youth pass, euro pass etc);
- Equal opportunities for young people to access and stay in the labour market should be ensured.
- We urge cooperation between social partners, policy makers and youth organisations in shaping and implementing employment policies;
- The reconciliation of work and private life should be supported by childcare, flexible working time and other similar mechanisms;
- Career guiding and counselling should be accessible for all young people and start at school; it should be maintained after formal education in other public institutions in places;

## **Entrepreneurship**

- Entrepreneurship programmes should be available at all education levels;
- The process of setting up a business or a non-profit organisation should be facilitated by centralising information in one institution and easing of the procedure (one window policy);
- Easily accessible and understandable information should be made available;
- Mentoring programmes for start-up business (entrepreneurship) should be created;
- New technology should facilitate administration services and be citizen-friendly;

## Evidence-based Policy Making

### Recommendations:

#### Point 5 - Delivering the vision in a new integrated cooperation framework.

#### 5.0

- Cross-sectoral approach, which means including a youth perspective throughout all EU-policies, should be a part of all implementations tools, developing a concept of youth mainstreaming that should be applicable to all regulations and policy areas.
- The structured dialogue should be the governing body of the framework.

#### 5.5 Evidence-based Policy Making:

We propose to:

- Develop more coherent structure of the point 5.5, i.e.:
  - a) existing tools to update (Eurostat, EKCYP, Research Framework),
  - b) existing tools to be improved (Eurydice, regular Eurobarometer),
  - c) new tools (working groups, dashboard design, participatory research).
- Define how and why the Eurydice (existing trends for the priorities) should be reviewed.
- Give clear indications of the composition, scope and term of references of the working group.
- Connect working groups mentioned in 5.2 and seminars mentioned in 5.3 with the working groups from 5.5- structured dialog.
- Establish links and foster participation throughout the entire process with research and practice in cooperation with all stakeholders, which implies policy makers, researchers and young people on all levels.
- Define clear indicators and concrete objectives in order to ensure the comparability of the data for all member states.
- We welcome and support the launch of studies, yet, we strongly advise to set up a transparent agenda for all studies design, for example the Baby Bonds.

#### 5.6 Simplified Reporting

- We strongly advise the Commission to urge rather than recommending the member states to publish the reports, for example as a part of the EKCYP (website).