Evaluation of the European Commission - Council of Europe Youth Partnership Agreements 2007-2011/12

Final report

Client: DG EAC

Rotterdam, 6 November 2013
Evaluation of the European Commission - Council of Europe Youth Partnership Agreements 2007-2011/12

Final report on the evaluation of the European Commission – Council of Europe Youth Partnership Agreements

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Executive Summary

Introduction
This report presents an evaluation of the European Commission - Council of Europe Youth Partnership Agreements between the European Commission and the Council of Europe (EU-CoE) from 2007-2011/12.

The EU-CoE youth partnership was started in 1998 with the training of youth workers initiative, followed by Euromed cooperation and youth research in 2003. All three strands were brought together in 2005 in one single Framework Partnership Agreement. The current Framework Partnership Agreement covers the period 1st July 2010 to 31st December 2013.  

The objective of this evaluation was to assess how the activities of the EU-CoE youth partnership contributed to the objectives as set out in the Framework Partnership Agreement and the annual specific grant agreements in order to inform the development of the next Framework Partnership Agreement.

Methodology
The methodology was designed to address a set of evaluation questions, structured according to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. This included: quantitative data collection including financial data; desk analysis of annual reports, documents produced by the youth partnership; a review of website user statistics; interviews with stakeholders from the European Commission, youth partnership and Council of Europe; an online survey of 231 youth sector representatives; and 55 in-depth telephone interviews with youth sector stakeholders. Following data collection, a focus group was held with stakeholders to validate findings and to suggest recommendations.

Strengths and weaknesses of the method
The results of the survey should be interpreted with the following in mind. The email questionnaire was sent to 3,510 e-mail addresses, from lists of email contacts supplied by the Commission (including national governments, national youth councils, national agencies of the Youth in Action programme, research institutions, SALTO-Youth resource centres and non-governmental youth organisations). The 231 responses to the survey gives a relatively low response rate of 7% overall. Taking into account the proportion actually opening the email, the response rate rises to 17%. The results of the survey should therefore be interpreted as a snapshot of the opinions of the sector.

The desk research we could undertake was also limited due to data availability. The evaluation was intended to cover the years 2007-2011, with the aim of including as much information from 2012 as possible. However, the final report for the youth partnership for 2012 was not available at the time of the evaluation so although we make reference to the 2012 budget and the activities which took place in 2012, we are not able to assess the spend against the budget for that period.

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1 [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html)
2 The division between those organisations who responded to the survey were as follows: Youth organisations 130/ 56%, Ministries 32/14%, Research institutes 24/10%, Salto and National agency 29/13%, Other organisations 16/7%
The interviews with stakeholders from the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the youth partnership and other youth sector organisations have provided a wealth of information from a number of perspectives and opinions which have formed an important evidence base for the evaluation, particularly where data was missing or reports were not available. These interviews were able to cover events or experiences from the period 2011/12. Therefore in some places the evaluation is reliant solely on qualitative interviews for this period. The interviews have enabled us to explore some of the issues in more depth such as stakeholder’s views on the relevance of the objectives, complementarity and the types of activities which are important to sector stakeholders.

Relevance and Complementarity
The objectives and activities of the youth partnership are relevant and complementary to the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy, the objectives of the Youth in Action programme, and the objectives of the future Erasmus+ programme. In particular the partnership provides a valuable framework for strategic cooperation between the EU and Council of Europe. It provides a mechanism to exploit synergies, to address issues of common interest to both institutions and to achieve leverage effects.

Overall, the partnership’s objectives and activities are relevant to the needs of the target group, but the approach needs to be articulated more clearly in terms of multiplier effects and the extent to which individual young people and/or organisations and policy-makers should be targeted. This is particularly important in the light of the relatively modest amount of funding available; and the need to avoid duplication with other activities organised by other organisations or DGs in the European Commission.

The internal logic of the objectives and activities is satisfactory, but there is scope to rationalise the current framework to develop a clearer causal link between the specific and operational objectives (by formulating a set of intermediate objectives for example) and to strengthen the importance of the geographical dimension, by making it a specific rather than an operational objective.

The robustness of the youth partnership’s framework of objectives and activities would be enhanced by the development of a complete logic for intervention that specifies types and numbers of intended outputs (for example number of events, number of attendees at events); results and impacts in line with EU evaluation guidance and as recommended in the report on the cost-effectiveness of EAC interventions.

Spreading the partnership’s actions and activities widely may reduce impact and have a detrimental effect on effectiveness and efficiency. A better understanding and evidence of impacts, derived from the type of approach described above, would help focus on two or three key areas, such as supporting youth work and building capacity, and paying attention to the geographical scope.

Effectiveness
The general objective to establish a framework for cooperation has been achieved and this framework for cooperation has fostered synergies and achieved complementarity with related programmes and policies across a range of institutions and organisations.

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3 This programme will be known as Erasmus+. This was decided after the evaluation analysis work completed for this study.
The specific objectives are very broad and it is therefore difficult to assess the tangible contribution that youth partnership activity has made to each one. This also leads to a conclusion that the scope of the youth partnership’s activities may be too wide. Concepts such as human right and democracy are difficult to demonstrate a causal link in terms of effectiveness. Effects are likely to be more indirect than direct and rely on multiplier effects and the role of intermediaries. Overall the partnership is trying to address too many objectives and its target groups are too diverse. A more focussed set of activities and target groups might lead to a more effective and realistic programme of implementation. Exchange of good practice, work in third countries, training and dissemination of information were identified in the evaluation as the strongest activities.

These effects cannot be properly understood and acted upon unless a logic model or impact chain is developed for the youth partnership, including an inventory of intended effects coupled to measurable indicators. This challenge is compounded by the lack of a suitable system for monitoring and evaluating impacts.

A range of relevant activities has been delivered and these have generally been well received and rated as satisfactory by target beneficiaries who gave evidence to this evaluation. The wide range of activities caters to a variety of target groups, but there is also a risk of over-stretch, where resources may be spread too thinly. Work to build the strength of the youth sector and third country activity are likely to provide the strongest potential impacts, since they offer potential multiplier and added value effects.

Promoting knowledge based youth policy research was an effective area of joint cooperation. The evidence suggested that the youth partnership helped to foster cooperation and synergies in this area; however some of the methods used cannot ensure that information stays up-to-date.

Supporting youth work and capacity building of youth workers at a European level was an effective area of the partnership’s work. Building the capacity of youth workers and the recognition of non-formal learning were often referenced by stakeholders as an effective area of work for the partnership. The conclusion is that these are areas where the partnership’s internal logic fits best – where it is focussed on working with youth sector multipliers.

The geographical focus of the partnerships is effective, with strong linkages being developed with partners in third countries. This operational objective and the activities which result from it are appreciated by both institutions supporting the partnership, because of its strategic importance. The conclusion is that in future activities should focus more clearly on the target geographical regions.

The meetings, seminars, events and training run by the partnership were viewed positively by organisations in the sector. The publications and information provided were a useful resource to the sector. However, in order to become more effective in this operational objective the use of web-based tools and social media (moving the focus wider than the more traditional channels e.g. print) should be developed.

Another area for development is in the reporting of activities and achievements. The annual reports do not offer information about how effective the activities have been; only that an activity has taken place and any user or participant feedback is lacking. Internal reporting and monitoring are activity rather than results-based. The types of data needed to conduct an assessment of impacts (e.g. feedback from events or on the take-up of publications) were not collected, or reported on,
systematically. This made it difficult for the evaluators to assess the contribution of the various activities to the specific and general objectives.

When considering whether the results would have happened without the partnership the overall message is that it is a unique partnership with geographical reach that complements the activity that the two funding organisations offer. The work in third countries is highly valued, particularly by stakeholders based in those countries; the qualitative evidence suggests that this kind of support would not exist in the same form or with the same focus, without the youth partnership. Any potential for duplication with activities organised by other organisations or other Directorate Generals of the European Commission should be avoided by careful management and through sharing of work programmes.

Efficiency

The evidence indicates that the way the EU-CoE youth partnership is organised provides the basic tools to enable it to produce the intended effects i.e. through a joint working and joint funding model. This model is unusual compared with the way other partnerships operate between the European Commission and the Council of Europe; most others are based on a majority funded basis (90% European Commission funded) which makes lines of responsibility and reporting much clearer. There is evidence that the youth partnership model is not as efficient as it could be, and the operational effectiveness of the management and monitoring systems is not optimised, leading to significant delays. Activities are often postponed from one year to the next and annual reporting is prolonged.

Essentially, operational efficiency may sometimes be constrained by the administrative and management systems of the two institutions contributing to it, meaning in practice that the partnership has to address two sets of organisational (administrative) cultures. Subsequently there are two sets of reporting and monitoring systems, which are inconsistent and duplicate effort. This runs the risk of focusing too much on administrative detail and not enough on the impact of activity on wider strategic goals. Furthermore, the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation system and the absence of agreed targets or expectations linked to the activities and outputs is a significant weakness, which makes the impact of the activity (and therefore its cost-effectiveness) very difficult to evaluate.

Cost effectiveness analysis suggests that activities such as events were provided at a reasonable cost per participant and unit costs did not appear excessive. There is potential to simplify and streamline procedures in order to improve operational efficiency, thereby making more resources available for key strategic tasks including systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations:

The recommendations of the evaluation are as follows:

1. At this stage, the European Commission and its partner the Council of Europe should focus on improving the efficiency of the operation of the youth partnership, before considering any of the options for re-organising it more fundamentally. The youth partnership’s management and reporting structures should, in the longer term, then be reviewed. Alternative management and funding models are suggested in Chapter 6. The key objective should be to shift the use of staff resources from administration (duplication, parallel systems etc.) to management (monitoring and evaluation, risk management and measurement of impacts).
2. The European Commission, with assistance from its partner and the youth partnership should work through intervention logic for the partnership which demonstrates a clear rationale and context for intervention, and determines a clear, defined and realistic general objective. The general objective should then be clearly linked to specific objectives, linked in turn to operational objectives, activities/outputs, results and impacts. This will ensure all partners and stakeholders have a clear vision and goals for the work of the partnership.

3. The European Commission and the Council of Europe with the youth partnership’s assistance should develop a clear monitoring and evaluation framework for the partnership based on the logic for intervention, as outlined in point 2 above. The monitoring and evaluation framework should contain indicators and objectives that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) - as far as possible - which set expectations that the Council of Europe and European Commission agree upon. This monitoring and evaluation framework should then be the basis for monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting. The evaluation framework should be designed with the principle of proportionality in mind; taking into account the size of the funding and setting monitoring and evaluation requirements accordingly.

4. The European Commission should continue to review the general and specific objectives of the youth partnership on no more than a three yearly basis. Tri-annually appears to be the most proportionate timescale for frequency of the review of higher level objectives which are less likely to change greatly from year to year. Activities (outputs) should however be agreed on an annual basis; this approach will continue to give enough frequency of reflection to ensure annual work plans reflect the current needs and ensure there is enough flexibility in the work plan to enable the partnership to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and political contexts in the countries of focus.

5. The European Commission should assess its requirements alongside those of the Council of Europe, and consider those objectives or parts of the objectives that could be reduced or removed, enabling the partnership to focus on the most relevant objectives. Focusing the partnership’s work on a smaller, more focussed range of operational objectives (priorities) and on its work at the policy and strategic level and in specific geographical areas (namely third countries) may improve its effectiveness.

6. The European Commission could encourage the partnership to take a more systematic and realistic perspective to implementation risk (via a risk register for example). This would also enable the partnership to assess the potential risks associated with undertaking particular activities, such as the potential for delays or cancellations or dealing with changing political contexts. The partnership could then identify low/high risk activities at an earlier stage, take steps to minimise risks and therefore increase their overall impact and efficiency.

7. The European Commission could encourage the partnership to make greater use of the potential of web and social media for disseminating the work and outputs of the youth partnership. This is important given the nature of the target audience, researchers and policy makers as well as young people themselves.
1 Introduction

This is the final report for the Evaluation of the European Commission - Council of Europe - Youth Partnership Agreement 2007-2011/12. The evaluation was conducted between October 2012 and July 2013 by a team from Ecorys.

This report presents the results of the evaluation based on our research methodology, as presented in chapter two. Findings and evidence from all strands of our evaluation are brought together in this report and combined to provide conclusions and recommendations on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the European Commission - Council of Europe youth partnership (referred to herein as EU-CoE youth partnership).

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The focus of this evaluation was to evaluate the Youth Partnership Agreements made between the Commission and the Council of Europe from 2007-2011/12. The evaluation covers the time period 2007-2011 and, as far as possible, the first six months of 2012.

The objective of the evaluation was to assess how the activities of the EU-CoE youth partnership contribute to the objectives as set out in the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) and the annual specific grant agreements. The evaluation focussed on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

1.1.1 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions followed the common evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability). The Terms of Reference and a full list of evaluation questions are given in the annexes. The following key evaluation questions were covered:

- **Relevance** of the EU-CoE partnership to the Youth in Action Programme, needs of the target groups, the future Erasmus+ Programme and the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.

- **Effectiveness**:
  - To what extent has the EU-CoE youth partnership achieved its general and specific objectives?
  - Where expectations have not been met, what factors have hindered the achievement of the objectives?
  - To what extent has the EU-CoE youth partnership produced effects that would not have been obtained by alternative options?

- **Efficiency**: exploring the use of the multi-annual Framework Partnership Agreement and annual grant, efficiency of management, proportionality of the operational grant in relation to effects, effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms.

- **Sustainability** of the activities of the EU-CoE partnership (including exploration of continuation of results and dissemination of results).
1.2 Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 – Methodology;
- Chapter 3 – Overview of the EU-CoE youth partnership;
- Chapter 4 – Relevance and Complementarity;
- Chapter 5 – Effectiveness;
- Chapter 6 – Efficiency and Sustainability;
- Chapter 7 – Conclusions and recommendations.

The annexes contain a range of supporting information:

- Annex 1 Terms of Reference;
- Annex 2 Evaluation Framework;
- Annex 3 Literature;
- Annex 4 Overview of Activities of the Youth Partnership;
- Annex 5 Activities and Outputs Table;
- Annex 6 Research Tools;
- Annex 7 Survey Respondents and Results;
- Annex 8 List of Interviewees;
- Annex 9 Financial Information (provided in addition to the efficiency chapter).
2 Methodology

This section sets out the methodology for the evaluation and outlines the data and evidence collected. It also provides information on the limitations of the methodology.

2.1 Overview of Methodology

The methodology was divided into three phases: the inception phase, the main research phase and the reporting phase. The methodology contained a number of work packages combining quantitative data collection, desk research, a survey and interviews. Following data collection, a focus group was held with stakeholders to validate findings and to suggest recommendations. Figure 2.1 below provides an overview of the methodology adopted for this evaluation.

Figure 2.1 Methodology overview
2.2 Methodology

The initial phase of the research involved quantitative data collection and desk research. A list of documents and literature analysed is presented in Annex 3. In addition password access was provided to the evaluators to the youth partnership website to access user statistics.

A series of consultations were undertaken with relevant stakeholders at the European Commission and the Council of Europe who are involved in the youth partnership, as well as staff from the youth partnership (See list of interviewees in Annex 8).

An online survey was conducted, inviting organisations and individuals from across the youth sector to give feedback about their knowledge, views and experiences of the youth partnership. 84% of the respondents completed the questionnaire in English; 8% in German and 8% in French. The survey was designed to gather information on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the EU-CoE youth partnership. The questionnaire (see Annex 6) consisted of a set of questions on the EU-CoE youth partnership and some questions designed to gather responses from organisations that were not familiar with the activities of the EU-CoE youth partnership. Overall, 231 individuals responded to the survey.

In order to explore the results of the above tasks in more detail we undertook 55 in-depth telephone interviews with sector stakeholders, including Eurodesks (3), SALTO-Youth resource centres (4), researchers (4), members of the advisory council for youth (6) and national youth councils (12), as well as other youth NGO’s (See list of interviewees in Annex 8).

Finally, a focus group was conducted in Brussels, with participants from the European Commission, the youth partnership and the Council of Europe. This was initially intended as an opportunity to present research findings and test ideas for conclusions and recommendations. However further information came to light at the focus group meeting that was also used as evidence in this report.

2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the methodology

This section outlines the evaluator’s view of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology for this evaluation.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with the following in mind. The email questionnaire was sent to 3,510 e-mail addresses, from lists of email contacts supplied by the European Commission. The lists included national governments, national youth councils, national agencies of the Youth in Action programme, research institutions, organisations linked to youth work, SALTO-Youth resource centres, informal youth groups and national, European and international non-governmental youth organisations (NGO’s). The 231 responses to the survey gives a relatively low response rate of 7% overall. This level of response is to be expected given that it was in response to an unsolicited / unanticipated email invitation. Additionally, the survey software showed that less than 40% of those receiving the email invitation opened the email. Email addresses may have been inaccurate, out of date (the person had left the organisation), inactive/unused, or inboxes were joint / communal or organisational inboxes which were not checked regularly or not responded to.
Taking into account the proportion actually opening the email, response rates rise to 17%. The results of the survey should therefore be interpreted as a snapshot of the opinions of the sector. Not enough is known about the characteristics of the wider population of organisations and any differences between the sample of 3,500 organisations who did respond and those who did not. Therefore we are not able to assess how reflective the sample is of the total population, nor whether the content of the responses would have differed if the response rate had been higher. A number of actions were taken by the evaluators and with assistance from the Commission, to try to improve the response rate. This included sending out several email reminders and sending out a European Commission letter of endorsement for the survey. All survey data in this report should be considered in light of these limitations.

The desk research was also limited due to data availability. In terms of the evaluation period it was intended that the evaluation would cover 2007-2011, with the aim of including as much information from 2012 as possible. However, the final report for the youth partnership for 2012 was not available at the time of the evaluation so, although we make reference to the 2012 budget and the activities which took place in 2012, we were not able to assess the spend against the budget for that period.

A strength of the evaluation are the interviews with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the youth partnership and other youth sector organisations that provided a wealth of information and opinions from a number of perspectives. These have formed an important evidence base for the evaluation. These stakeholders were also able to refer to events or experiences from 2011/12 and therefore some places the evaluation is reliant solely on qualitative interview data for this period. The telephone interviews have enabled us to explore some of the issues in more depth such as stakeholders' views on the relevance of the objectives, its complementarity and the types of activities which are important to sector stakeholders.

2.3.1 Presentation of data in this report
In this report we draw on our synthesis and triangulation of evidence from the four evidence sources described in the methodology above, which was then triangulated to form our analysis. Throughout the report, the evidence sources are clearly referenced. Where the evaluator’s own judgement is presented this is stated. Where qualitative data from interviews is presented, this information reflects the opinions and perceptions of those concerned. It should not be taken to be statistically representative of all the views presented.

When presenting quantitative data, all percentages have been rounded for clarity to the nearest whole percentage. In this report survey results are reported for the whole sample responding to questions about the EU-CoE youth partnership (base size 231 responses). Tests have been used to identify any significant differences between sub-groups within the sample (i.e. for differences between types of organisation or by geographical location) and differences are only reported where they are statistically significant. Other differences have been pointed out, but should only be treated as 'indicative'.

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5 The division between those organisations who responded were as follows: Youth organisations 130/56%, Ministries 32/14%, Research institutes 24/10%, Salto and National agency 29/13%, Other organisations 16/7%.
3 The European Commission - Council of Europe Youth Partnership

3.1 Policy context

The youth partnership started in 1998 with an initiative to train youth workers, it was followed by Euromed cooperation and youth research in 2003. The youth partnership was formally established in 2005 by a single Partnership Agreement with the aim of providing a lasting framework and a coherent strategy in the field of youth worker training, youth policy and youth research. Prior to this the terms of the cooperation were laid down in two covenants, one on youth research and the other on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. The current Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) covers the period 1st July 2010 to 31st December 2013.


The political framework in terms of the Council of Europe is linked to the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of November 2008 on the future youth policy of the Council of Europe, based on the Declaration of the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth (October 2008), called “Council of Europe’s youth policy: AGENDA 2020”.

In practice the common framework for cooperation is based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both organisations in May 2007. This states that cooperation shall: “take due account of the comparative advantages, the respective competences and expertise of the Council of Europe and the European Union – avoiding duplication and fostering synergy, search for added value and make better use of existing resources”. Its predecessors are a number of arrangements and the “strategic vision” from the 2006 report “Council of Europe – European Union: a sole ambition for the European continent”.

3.2 Funding

The youth partnership has been funded by the two partner organisations; the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The financial contribution provided by the two institutions to the youth partnership in 2007 and 2008 was not equal. In 2007 the Council of Europe contributed €500,000 and in 2008 they contributed €550,000. The European Commission contributed a larger proportion of the budget in both years; €675,000 in 2007 and €600,000 in 2008. Since 2009 the European Commission and the Council of Europe have both contributed broadly 50% each to the

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6 [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html)
10 [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/index.html)
running of the youth partnership, approximately €600,000 each per year. The financial table in Annex 9 shows the broad descriptions of the expenditure, which includes knowledge based youth policy, support and development of youth policy, geographical focus and information and dissemination, as well as administration and staff costs. These lines of expenditure were changed in the 2009 Specific Grant Agreement, but have remained the same since then.

In terms of the European Commission’s contribution to the youth partnership, the 600,000 euros a year (over seven years) accounts for 0.47% of the overall budget of the EC’s Youth in Action programme, which is 885 million euros over seven years (2007-2013).  

3.3 Management

In terms of political priorities, funding, visibility and management the youth partnership is built on the principle of the balanced involvement of both institutions. All major decisions related to the youth partnership are taken by the EU-CoE youth partnership management board (PMB). The board is co-chaired by the two Directors of youth from the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Delegations are composed of representatives from the European Commission and the Council of Europe and from its statutory bodies. The manager of the EU-CoE youth partnership team is also invited to the meetings, and the European Youth Forum is invited as an observer. Meetings are held at least once a year, in Brussels and Strasbourg alternately.

In addition to the board, the Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) has been set up to involve other stakeholders. It brings together representatives from principal stakeholders, such as National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme, SALTO Resource Centres and researchers and the European Youth Forum. On an annual basis the group is invited to contribute to the definition of content of the partnership’s activities.

The Partnership Management Board decides on the size, scope and structure of the PAG, as well as its working methods and the frequency of its meetings. The group started its work at the end of 2009 and replaced the Partnership Sectorial Groups, namely the “European Citizenship, Quality and Recognition”, “Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation, Human Rights and Intercultural Dialogue”, “Better Understanding and Youth Policy” and the Partnership Consultation Meetings.

3.4 Objectives and activities

The current Framework Partnership Agreement states that the general objective for cooperation is: “…to provide a framework for the joint development of cooperation and a coherent strategy in the field of youth in Europe with the direct involvement of young people, youth workers, youth researchers and youth policy makers”. There are three specific objectives to;

- Create better opportunities and improve access for young people;
- Promote active citizenship;
- Foster solidarity.

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12 http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/about/managementstructures.html__locale=fr a the FPA.
Each of these specific objectives has a number of themes (or fields of cooperation as they are sometimes referred to), as set out in the table below:

Table 3.1 EU-CoE youth partnership themes / fields of cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social inclusion</td>
<td>• to strengthen the social inclusion of young people, particularly those most disadvantaged;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to combat exclusion, precarious social conditions and marginalisation;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to improve access to employment, entrepreneurship, education and training;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to promote intergenerational dialogue and solidarity;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to foster equal opportunities for all, especially those at risk of exclusion;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to promote young people's health and well-being.</td>
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<td>Democracy</td>
<td>• to share and promote democratic values;</td>
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<td>Human rights</td>
<td>• to make young people aware of human rights;</td>
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<td>Democratic citizenship and youth participation</td>
<td>• to foster youth participation, voluntary activities and democratic citizenship;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to promote gender equality;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to address sustainable development, environment and climate change.</td>
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<td>Intercultural dialogue and diversity</td>
<td>• to foster intercultural dialogue and youth work in a multicultural environment;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to promote responses to racism, intolerance and discrimination;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to support peace-building, conflict prevention and transformation;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to support global solidarity and inter-regional cooperation;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to support cooperation with regions outside Europe;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• to support young people's creativity and participation in culture.*</td>
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</table>

There is a wide range of activities which take place through the youth partnership on a three yearly cycle from 2007-2010 and from 2010-2013. A full list of completed and proposed activities can be found in Annex 4.

In order to ensure the implementation of the objectives in the Specific Grant Agreements of the youth partnership, its activities are organised along the following operational objectives or fields of action (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2 Operational objectives / Fields of Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I) Promoting knowledge-based youth policy by developing and providing efficient tools</td>
<td>• An improved European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An efficient and effective cooperation and networking structure in research, and Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thematic fora, seminars and events in order to enhance knowledge on youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II) Supporting youth work and building capacity of youth workers at European level</td>
<td>• Recognition of youth work and non-formal learning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovation of youth work related training;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• TALE - Train the trainer (2009-11);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exchange of good practice and supporting related policy measures (peer reviews).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III) Paying special attention to the geographical scope of its initiatives prioritising the following: candidate countries,</td>
<td>• CoE Member States which are candidate countries to the EU (South-East Europe);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CoE Member States which are part of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (including the Eastern Partnership and the Mediterranean) and the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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13 Terms of Reference - Evaluations of The European Commission - European Youth Forum operating grant agreements & The European Commission - Council of Europe youth partnership agreements for the years 2007-2011/12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhood countries and Africa</td>
<td>Russian Federation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other countries on demand, such as the current EU-Africa cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV) Gathering, disseminating and providing information and publications on youth</td>
<td>• The web portal, including the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy and its database on European youth policy topics and country specific information;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Training-Kits, the magazine COYOTE and the series of Youth Knowledge books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A knowledge-based approach and youth research is regarded by the institutions as essential in order to achieve the overall objectives of the partnership. The youth partnership therefore undertakes initiatives aimed at contributing to production, collection and provision of youth research and practice-based, as well as experiential knowledge on young people. Furthermore, the aim is to disseminate good practices and promoting cooperation and dialogue.

One of the key initiatives related to the knowledge-based youth policy is the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), which was launched in 2005. In line with the strategies of both the European Commission and the Council of Europe the EKCYP will continuously provide information as an on-line database on European youth policy. The EKCYP is an extensive network of national correspondents, designated by the national ministries responsible for youth policies. They draft and update country reports/fact sheets on youth policy in their country. They also contribute to fact sheets on cross sectorial issues such as employment, education, social inclusion etc. The network meets on a regular basis to exchange ideas and to improve the knowledge provision further.

Furthermore, the former European Youth Research Network has been replaced with a Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). Its aim is to provide a critical perspective and an active contribution to youth research. Its main objective is to provide an interface with broader research themes with other operational groups, contribute to the future direction of research within the field and to information exchange on both national and cross-national level. The group consists of 20 members who contribute when their expertise is requested by the European Commission or the Council of Europe. 14

Expert seminars and workshops are also used as a way to share knowledge, good practices etc. A selection of conferences and seminars organised by the youth partnership is presented below (a full list of activities is presented in Annex 4).

Table 3.3 Examples of conferences and seminars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>• Seminar “Youth participation”/Southern Mediterranean youth event in Malta (postponed from 2011);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6th Conference on Young people and societies in Europe and the Mediterranean (EKCYP cooperation project).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>• International conference “Framework, Quality and Impact of Learning Mobility of Young people in Europe”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference on “youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedom”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>• Seminar on youth policy in intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2009 | • Training seminar on youth policy cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean space.  
      | • Second Seminar "Youth Policy Development in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus";  
      | • Third Seminar "Youth Policy in South-East Europe". Employment and unemployment among young people in the South-East Europe. |
| 2008 | • The Second Joint Workshop on the Cooperation between the Youth Sector of the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation and the European Commission;  
      | • "Continue the Pathway towards Recognition". Expert workshop on the recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field. |
| 2007 | • Research Seminar on Equal Opportunities for All;  
      | • Seminar "Diversity, Human Rights and Participation in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation" at the University on Youth and Development. |

In order to fulfil the second operational objective in Table 3.2 (above) the youth partnership supports youth work and training at European level through the promotion of recognition of non-formal learning and youth work. In 1998, in the final declaration of their 5th conference, the European Ministers responsible for youth confirmed non-formal learning as a field of priority for the Council of Europe. The European Union has both in the European Commission's White Paper "A New Impetus for Youth" and the "Memorandum on Lifelong Learning" undertaken its own efforts to strengthen the recognition of non-formal learning. In 2005 the two institutions joined forces and published the working paper "Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training & learning in the youth field". The paper has now been replaced by the updated version Pathways 2.0.  

One of the tools used by the youth partnership is the creation and co-ordination of a platform for debate for stakeholders. Another important tool is innovative training activities. The publications such as t-kits (training kits) and the COYOTE magazine, published once or twice a year are ways of exchanging good practices and supporting policy measures by addressing key issues and priorities to both institutions of the youth partnership. These publications are particularly useful in the youth partnership’s work on geographical focus as described below.

Paying special attention to the geographical focus of its initiatives and activities is a key feature of the youth partnerships work. There are three geographic areas of focus; EU candidate countries, EU neighbourhood countries and Africa. This priority is addressed through the full range of activities, the publications as mentioned above, but also events, seminars and conferences in these countries and links with other organisations which operate in these areas.

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15 Pathways II Towards Recognition of Non-Formal Learning, January 2011.
4 Relevance and Complementarity

This chapter explores the relevance and complementarity of the objectives and activities of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, with respect to the:

- Objectives of the Youth Strategy;
- EU Youth in Action Programme;
- Needs of target groups;
- Future Erasmus+ programme.

The findings are based on the results of desk research, interviews with representatives from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership, the online survey and interviews with youth sector stakeholders. These different types of evidence have been triangulated and then presented along with the evaluator’s own judgements.

4.1 Internal logical framework

Firstly we examine the internal logic framework of the objectives, themes and activities set for the youth partnership. Figure 4.1 below, summarises this hierarchical relationship as the evaluators understand it.
Figure 4.1 Relationship between objectives, themes and activities

The internal logic of the EU-CoE youth partnership

The EU-CoE youth partnership aims to provide a framework for the joint development of cooperation and coherent strategy in the field of youth in Europe.

General Objective

Specific Objectives

- Creating better opportunities and improving access for young people
- Promoting active citizenship
- Fostering solidarity

Themes

- Social Inclusion
- Democracy
- Human Rights
- Citizenship and Participation
- Intercultural Dialogue

Operational Objectives (Fields of action)

- Promoting evidence-based youth policy
- Supporting youth work and capacity building
- Activities with a geographic scope
- Information and dissemination

Activities
The activities of the youth partnership are linked to its agreed general objective and the specific objectives, through the Framework Partnership Agreement, and the links between the operational objectives are set out in the Partnership Agreement every three years. The four operational objectives and five themes drive packages of relevant activities and there is a strong geographical dimension, in keeping with one of the key elements of the rationale for the establishment of the youth partnership (to facilitate and strengthen activity in third countries).

However it may also be argued that there is a gap between the specific objectives - which are in fact quite high-level and ambitious - and the operational objectives. The causal link between these is not made explicit. For example: how does supporting youth work and capacity building contribute to achieving the objective of promoting active citizenship or creating better opportunities and access for young people? Or, for example, how does gathering information and dissemination help contribute to fostering solidarity and boosting the active citizenship by young people? Also, the operational objective of supporting activities with a particular geographical scope does not sit particularly logically within the framework, since it is more of a horizontal provision (presumably it can involve any of the other types of activity – training, seminars and publications – but relating to a particular geographical location).

In addition the intended impact chain (what the desired effects are, how the activities will bring these about and what indicators might be used to measure success or failure) is not explicit. Crucially, the multiplier mechanism that underpins the youth partnership’s rationale is not clearly articulated (where it is assumed that given the relatively modest amount of funding the most effective approach is to target multipliers and not individual young people en masse, with the possible exception of information dissemination). As we will discuss later in this report, this also makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate effectiveness and impacts on the operational and specific objectives in particular.

The internal logical framework could be improved by:

- Formulating a set of intermediate objectives linking the specific and operational objectives and explaining the intended contribution of each.
- Adding a specific objective on geographical focus so this important component covers all of the operational objectives and activities (e.g. “Specific Objective: Identify and support activities with a specific geographical scope”).
- Adding a set of intended effects and indicators.
- Using these new elements to introduce and articulate a more explicit ‘multiplier’ or ‘cascade’ model to the framework.

The qualitative evidence suggests that the youth partnership is seen as an important political partnership ensuring the Council of Europe and the European Commission work together in this field. However, the objectives of the youth partnership and the number of activities being undertaken were questioned by some interviewees again in both institutions. For example, the desk review suggested the scope of operational objectives and activities have been broadened over the years to ensure the objectives remain relevant to both institutions and some European Commission stakeholders have suggested that this expansion of the objectives may potentially dilute the partnership’s focus. However, the general consensus of the youth sector stakeholders consulted is that the youth partnership does help to foster cooperation and synergies within the

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17 Interpreting the overall goal as supporting organisations and activities that directly involve young people, i.e. supporting young people by strengthening the capacity and capability of the youth workers and youth work organisations that act as intermediaries.
18 Of annual reports and Specific Grant Agreements.
youth sector, with the possible exception of the field of research which is particularly complicated and diverse.

It is clear that there are differing points of view amongst stakeholders from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership on the relevance of the youth partnership to the agreed objectives. In general Council of Europe representatives believed the activities of the youth partnership are relevant to the agreed objectives. Representatives from the European Commission are generally less content with the scope of the objectives. Finally, the sector stakeholders who were consulted felt that the objectives were relevant to them. Overall, the conclusion is that the objectives are currently very broad and therefore have the potential to be relevant to almost all stakeholders. It could be argued that this breadth and inclusiveness is a positive aspect of the youth partnership. However, it is worth considering the possibility that spreading the partnership’s actions and activities so widely across such broad objectives may reduce the potential impact.

4.2 EU Youth Strategy

The EU Youth Strategy (2010-18) guides all youth initiatives led by the EU. It has two overall objectives; to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market and to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society. The Youth Strategy proposes initiatives in eight fields of action: education and training; employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; participation; voluntary activities; social inclusion; youth and the world; and creativity and culture.

The EU-CoE youth partnership has strong links to the second overall objective of the strategy which is to encourage young people to be active citizens. The youth partnership has an important role in the democratic citizenship of young people and youth participation in the field of democracy, both within the EU and in third countries such as Euro-Mediterranean and the Caucasus.

In terms of the youth strategy’s fields of action, there is clear complementarity between the ‘social inclusion’ field of action and the ‘youth in the world’ field of action and the social inclusion and intercultural dialogue themes of the partnership. Participation is also key to the Youth Strategy which as previously mentioned is particularly relevant to the youth partnership’s work on democratisation and citizenship.

4.3 Youth in Action Programme

The Youth in Action (YiA) Programme has five general objectives, to:
- promote young people’s active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular;
- develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union;
- foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries;
- contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field;
- promote European cooperation in the youth field.

These translate into 26 specific objectives. In general the YiA is much broader in terms of scope with many more specific goals. In analysing the complementarity of the YiA programme to the youth partnership we have illustrated the links between the youth partnership and the YiA programme in Figure 4.2 below. The model presented only includes the YiA programme objectives considered most relevant to the EU-CoE youth partnership in order to demonstrate the most significant areas of complementarity.

Whilst the objectives of the youth partnership are broad, the objectives of the YiA programme have the same level of detail as the themes and operational objectives (fields of action) of the youth partnership. The figure shows that out of the 26 objectives of YiA 12 can be said to have strong relevance to the work of the youth partnership.

Our analysis indicates that there are strong links between the citizenship and youth participation themes of the youth partnership as there are four objectives of the YiA programme which deal specifically with these issues (participation in democratic life, active citizenship, youth organisations taking part in the development of society and young people’s participation in volunteering activities at a European and International level). The link between the democracy, human rights and intercultural dialogue themes of the youth partnership is also very relevant to the YiA programmes objectives of promoting fundamental rights and respecting human rights. The youth partnership’s theme of intercultural dialogue has direct relevance to the YiA objectives of developing intercultural learning, developing exchanges and intercultural dialogue and contributing to cooperation between youth voluntary activities. In conclusion the YiA programme has clear and in some cases very strong links to the themes of the youth partnership and its relevance is clearly demonstrated in the diagram below.
Figure 4.2 Relevance to the YIA programme

Themes of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership

Social inclusion of young people
- Fostering the mobility of young people in Europe
- Encouraging initiative, enterprise and creativity
- Improving knowledge and understanding of youth
- Exchanging good practices
- Providing non-formal learning and informal learning opportunities with a European Dimension and opening up innovative opportunities in connection with active citizenship

Citizenship and Youth Participation
- Encouraging the participation of young people in the democratic life of Europe
- Giving young people to and youth organisations to take part in the development of society in general and EU in particular
- Giving young people the opportunity to express their personal commitment through voluntary activities at European and international level

Democracy
- Promoting the fundamental values of the EU among young people, in particular respect for human dignity, equality, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination

Human Rights
- Developing intercultural learning within the youth field

Intercultural dialogue and diversity
- Developing exchanges and intercultural dialogue between young Europeans and young people in neighbouring countries
- Contributing to the cooperation between various national and international youth voluntary activities
4.4 Relevance to the needs of the target group

As described in the outline of the general objective of the youth partnership in section 3.4 above the target group for the youth partnership is fairly broad. It seeks to involve young people, youth workers, youth researchers and youth policy makers. The evidence from the desk review seems to suggest that the objectives of the youth partnership are so broad that they could be considered relevant to all the target groups. However, looking at the available documents such as the final reports and the information collated on the events held by the youth partnership in more detail it would suggest that the partnership caters less for the needs of young people as individuals than for policy makers and youth workers for example (see Annex 4). This is consistent with the multiplier approach employed by the youth partnership which is described in Section 4.1 above. Limited numbers of young people are directly involved in the partnership, such as youth researchers or those who are involved through the Advisory Council for Youth, but their role could also be described as multipliers.

At a strategic level, the evidence from consultations indicates that the youth partnership is seen by the majority of stakeholders from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership as a relevant mechanism for cooperation, since the joint working it has facilitated has ensured a certain amount of cohesion between the two institutions. As numerous stakeholders in both institutions have suggested, it has strategic political importance. The links that the Council of Europe has with non EU countries, through its own membership and the access this provides the European Commission to the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Caucasus for example, have been repeatedly commented upon by stakeholders as an important role of the youth partnership.

Youth sector stakeholders consulted also agreed that the cooperation the youth partnership facilitates between the Council of Europe and European Commission was very important. Some said this cooperation between the two organisations was the main added value of the youth partnership and that it was important that they work together to avoid duplication in policy development. Other stakeholders commented that it was a way of extending the reach of the European Commission and that it provided opportunities to cooperate with young people outside the EU. The evidence would suggest that the youth partnership has significant political relevance, the benefits of which neither side of the partnership would like to lose and nor would the sector stakeholders.

In terms of the partnership’s three specific objectives the results of the online survey suggest that the vast majority of respondents felt these were very relevant to their organisation/institutions. In terms of the relevance of the EU-CoE youth partnership’s priorities (operational objectives) to organisations and institutions, again the majority of online survey respondents thought all the priorities were relevant; with gathering, disseminating and providing information seen by most respondents (62%) as the most relevant. However, knowledge-based youth policy and the special attention to regional cooperation were considered comparatively less relevant, even though these are two areas seen by stakeholders from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership as being particularly unique to the youth partnership.

Online survey respondents also agreed that the activities, tools and products of the partnership were relevant to, and matched the needs of their organisation. Just over half (55%) agreed this was the case to some extent, with 32% indicating their needs were met to a large extent. Only 1% of respondents felt their needs were not being met. Almost half of the sample of respondents felt the

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20 There did not appear to be any significant differences in this response by type or organisation or by EU27 versus non EU27 organisations.
seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia were very relevant to their organisation, and 41% felt the publications were very relevant to their organisations (37% relevant). However, fewer respondents felt the Pool of European Researchers and the EKCYP were very relevant. This may indicate that organisations obtain their knowledge and research from other sources, or those completing the survey did not work specifically in the research field.

In terms of the youth partnership’s work, global citizenship, the building of partnerships with youth organisations, networking and the sharing of ideas and information were all mentioned as relevant by sector stakeholders. There was clearly seen to be added value in this type of cooperation at a strategic level by stakeholders working within the youth sector.

The online survey was also used to provide evidence on whether the activities, tools and products of the youth partnership fitted the needs of the young people in their country; and the majority of respondents said that it did to a great or some extent. Organisations in countries outside of the EU27 were slightly more likely to indicate that the tools and products met the needs of young people in their countries (35% compared with 27%). This might suggest that countries outside of the EU27 see the activities as more relevant to their young people and reflects the youth partnership’s priority to pay special attention to the activities outside the EU. Only 7% of respondents felt that young people’s needs were not met at all. When compared with the responses to the question on ‘relevance to your organisation’ this suggests that respondents felt the EU-CoE youth partnership was more relevant to organisations/institutions than to the young people that the organisation/institutions represented. This reflects the rationale of the partnership in the sense that it is targeted at youth sector organisations (i.e. multipliers) rather than at young people directly.

4.5 The future Erasmus+ programme

The future Erasmus+ programme will initiate projects and programmes specifically in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, and is intended to support capacity building projects. The legal base mentions youth work specifically in terms of promoting youth participation in society as well as sport, this closely links to the specific objective of the youth partnership (see figure 4.1 the Internal Logic Model above ) which is about promoting active citizenship.

In terms of complementarity, the youth partnership and the future Erasmus+ programme have a particular focus on education and training. Our analysis shows that the youth partnership contributes to and has strong links to five of the nine specific objectives of the future Erasmus+ programme, and only the most relevant objectives are presented in Figure 4.3 below.

The Democracy, Citizenship and Participation and Social Inclusion themes of the youth partnership have particularly strong links with the future Erasmus+ programme. This is because the objectives of the new Erasmus+ programme clearly state that young people should be encouraged to participate in democratic life in Europe as well as to promote social inclusion through the increased participation in sport. The intercultural dialogue and diversity theme of the youth partnership also has clear links with the ambitions of the new Erasmus+ programme to support sport in tackling a number of issues such as racism and intolerance. The promotion of linguistic diversity is also one of

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21 This analysis was conducted prior to Croatia joining the EU28 in July 2013.
22 Sample sizes were not statistically significant.
23 This programme will be known as Erasmus+, which was decided after the evaluation analysis work has been completed for this study on the basis of the European Commission proposal “Erasmus for All” COM 2011(788).
the key aims of the future Erasmus+ programme and is a theme which is likely to be embedded throughout the programme, as it has been in previous life long learning programmes.

Other objectives of the proposed Erasmus+ programme such as triggering policy reforms at national level to support the modernisation of education and training systems and promoting good governance in sport are much more difficult to link directly with the current themes of the youth partnership and therefore have not been illustrated in the diagram.

Figure 4.3  Relevance of Erasmus+ (proposed new programme)

4.6 Complementarity

The desk research shows that the youth partnership works with a number of other organisations and initiatives in the field of youth. The youth partnership often co-funds or jointly hosts events or conferences, particularly those based in third countries, which is an effective method of working
with other organisations to achieve multiplier effects. For example a meeting of youth leaders in 2011 held in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia was organised by the North South Centre in cooperation with the European Youth Forum, the youth partnership and the Pan-African Youth Union. The North South Centre organised the first gathering of the Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship in Tunisia, in July 2013, in co-operation with the National Youth Observatory of Tunisia and in partnership with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, the EU-CoE youth partnership, the League of Arab States and the Forum Nazionale dei Giovani. Other examples included a pilot seminar in 2011 organised in cooperation with the Consortium of Universities of the project M.A. European Youth Studies\(^\text{25}\) and the third workshop on the history of youth work in Europe, hosted by the Estonian Ministry of Education and research and co-organised by Finland.\(^\text{26}\) The youth partnership is a unique structure, which has a specific role and remit that is not duplicated by another organisation. However, it is more difficult to assess to what extent the youth partnership complements or contradicts the individual activities undertaken by other institutions and organisations throughout the EU in the youth field. For example, in the course of the research stakeholders repeatedly mentioned that DG EAC of the European Commission has its own programmes which fund research in the field of youth\(^\text{27}\) and other studies in the field are funded under the European Commission’s Research Framework programmes. There are also elements of the planned Erasmus+ programme which focus on capacity building for youth workers. Staff at the youth partnership also pointed out that DG DEVCO has started to initiate youth projects in some third countries in which the youth partnership is also currently working.

Therefore there is significant potential for there to be at least some duplication or cross over in the activities which are undertaken by the youth partnership and other European organisations. Overall, an improved planning and coordination process ensuring all relevant DG’s are involved when activities are proposed and a more focussed set of objectives and actions, reducing the number of ‘fields of actions’ would reduce the potential for duplication as much as is feasibly possible.

\(^{25}\) Pilot Seminar “Youth Policy and realities, youth research and theoretical foundations of youth”.

\(^{26}\) The Third Workshop on the “History of youth work in Europe and its relevance for today’s youth work policy.”

5 Effectiveness

This chapter explores the effectiveness of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership in achieving its general, specific objectives and operational objectives by looking in depth at the activities undertaken. It is based on desk research, interviews with representatives from the European Commission the Council of Europe and the youth partnership, the online survey and interviews with sector stakeholders. These pieces of evidence have been triangulated and presented along with the evaluator's own judgements. The chapter is organised around the key evaluation questions.

In evaluating the extent to which the general objective of the youth partnership has been achieved the measure of success is whether the framework has facilitated the joint development of cooperation and resulted in a coherent strategy; and has facilitated effective cooperation on delivery of the specific objectives. The achievement of the specific objectives depends on the effectiveness of the range of youth partnerships activities implemented to achieve the four operational objectives of:

- Promoting evidence-based youth policy;
- Supporting youth work and capacity building;
- Focusing activity on particular geographic areas; and
- Providing information and disseminating results.

In considering the effectiveness of the partnership we will therefore firstly assess the extent to which the activities have served to achieve these operational objectives.

5.1 Effectiveness of the youth partnership in delivering activities

The partnership delivers a range of activities including knowledge and research (via the EKCYP, PEYR), and multiple dissemination methods including a website, the T-kits, COYOTE magazine and Knowledge Books. This section evaluates the effectiveness of these activities. Before looking at the fields of action and each activity in turn, some general comments are made about the effectiveness of the activities.

The desk review reinforces the conclusion from Chapter Four that the partnership sets an ambitious programme of activities, which was not always delivered on schedule. Annual reports contained various examples of delays and postponements (e.g. events, meetings and dissemination outputs such as the EKCYP meetings in 2008 and 2009). The specific annual agreement underpinning the partnership's yearly activities regularly had to be amended to allow for slippage of events/outputs into the next calendar year. Another example was the country factsheets prepared by national EKCYP correspondents. These took a long time to be prepared and were eventually provided for only 41 out of 47 countries. Also, the document review showed that the PEYR took longer to establish than planned, which was due to high levels of interest to participate. The interviews with stakeholders at the Council of Europe and the European Commission also confirmed the above finding; that the wide programme of activities was ambitious and not always delivered on schedule. Annex 5 presents an activity summary table with an overview of which activities took place, which did not, and which were delayed in the years for this evaluation.

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28 Addressing evaluation question 11.
29 Source: Annual Reports of the Youth Partnership (unpublished).
The evidence from the partnership’s annual reports to the European Commission give the impression that the activities had been effective however the reports were mainly reporting what had been produced and when (noting any delays) and lacked evaluation evidence such as numbers of users or user feedback.

The online survey showed that youth sector stakeholders were satisfied\(^{30}\) with the activities, tools and products produced by the youth partnership: the majority (55%) agreed this is the case to ‘some extent’, and 35% to ‘a great extent’. Overall, the online survey results gave an indication that the activities, tools and products of the youth partnership were perceived to be effective.

We will now explore each of the operational objectives in turn to assess the contribution of the activities to their achievement.

5.1.1 Promoting knowledge-based youth policy

Both the European Commission and the Council of Europe recognise the importance of a knowledge-based approach, and youth research is regarded as essential in order to achieve the general and specific objectives. The youth partnership therefore has an operational objective to address this and undertakes activities that contribute to production, collection and provision of youth research and practice-based, as well as experiential knowledge on young people. Furthermore, there are activities to disseminate good practices and promote cooperation and dialogue.

One of the key activities related to knowledge-based youth policy is the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP). The document review showed that the EKCYP correspondents meet annually, however in some years meetings were delayed or postponed. The document review showed that the EKCYP correspondents find the meetings to be useful. In 2010 the youth partnership did some work to enlarge and reinvigorate the network of EKCYP correspondents; they aimed to get 47 correspondents but in the end got to the total of 41 countries covered by correspondents. On the youth partnership website the EKCYP experts are available in a searchable database which provides a useful summary of their interest areas and contact details. No data was available to enable us to evaluate how widely this database was used.

The EKCYP provides information on youth policy in general and also prepares a series of country reports / fact sheets which provide information about youth policy in particular countries. At the start of 2011 the youth partnership developed a new format for the factsheets on national youth policy and throughout 2011 there was a focus on collection of data on youth policies in countries where they did not have any data - especially South East Europe and the Eastern European and the South Caucasus regions.\(^{31}\)

Our desk review of a sample of the country reports / fact sheets shows that they include a context section, with statistics about the number of young people in the country, the actors and organisations involved in the youth sector within the country, national legislation on youth, the budget and expenditure on youth for each country, as well as links to further sources of information. Although these publications are a useful reference point for information on young people and youth policy in particular Member States and neighbourhood countries, the data and information in the reports is limited in some cases, and often appeared to contain only minimal data on some areas.

\(^{30}\) More than 30% were affiliated with national (16%), European (9%) or international (14%) non-governmental youth organisations. Another 14% were affiliated to an organisation or institutions linked to youth work, 1.5% were affiliated with a SALTO Resource Centre.

\(^{31}\) Source: Annual Reports of the Youth Partnership (unpublished).
Some reports at the time of our review also appeared to be four to five years out of date. The country reports are downloadable from the youth partnership website. They are static documents which cannot be easily updated and do not maximise the potential for web and social media to make them more interactive and up to date. Also, no figures on the level of usage or numbers downloaded were made available to the evaluators. A web based resource offering this information, which is not so static and can be updated on a more regular basis (i.e. providing links to official sources for national statistics and latest legislation on youth policy) would be easier to keep current, since links to data and information could be updated as soon as it is released, without having to produce an updated report. Overall, the factsheets now appear an outmoded way of sharing information on youth policy.

The EKCYP area of the youth partnership website also contains a Good Practice Database of youth related activities or innovative projects in areas linked to the areas of cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Our desk based review of a sample from the database shows that the criteria for inclusion in the good practices are clearly outlined and the partnership appears to vet all examples before they are made public. At the time of the evaluation there were only 29 good practice examples on the site, the most recent being added over a year ago. There was no data available from our desk review on the numbers of times the database had been accessed or how frequently examples were downloaded and used. It therefore appears there is scope for greater monitoring of this resource in future in order to understand how it could be further developed and greater dissemination to make it more widely known.

The Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) was another activity addressing the operational objective on knowledge based youth policy. The document review showed that the PEYR was created in 2010 after a selection process which took longer than anticipated due to high levels of interest. The document review shows that the PEYR took on 25 researchers instead of the originally intended 15. This process took longer than anticipated due to high levels of interest and thus the PEYR’s first meeting was postponed from 2010 to 2011. The document review then shows that throughout 2011 the European Commission and the European Council used the pool of researchers for various research tasks. Examples included work on intergenerational solidarity and work on Roma groups.

The document review showed that in the area of knowledge-based youth policy, there was some discussion that the PEYR should become more visible and used more by stakeholders (i.e. youth policy makers in countries). The youth partnership’s Partnership Advisory Group said “in the area of knowledge-based youth policy that the EU-CoE youth partnership should become more visible and used by stakeholders; it should take a proactive and service oriented approach; the latest research findings could be promoted to policy-makers to inspire them for further policy activities.” This suggests that while the above PEYR structure might be producing useful information, it is not being widely used enough by key target audiences.

Evidence from the survey showed that two in five respondents (44%) felt that the EU-CoE youth partnership promotes evidence based youth policy and supported youth work and capacity building to a great extent. Feedback from strategic and sector stakeholders on the activities of the youth partnership was that promoting knowledge-based youth policy is a clearly defined area of work for the youth partnership and interviewees believed the partnership is effective in this area.

32 Source: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/goodpractices.html
Evidence and opinions from the interviews with youth sector organisations showed that they felt the youth partnership does effectively support knowledge-based youth policy. In some countries sector stakeholders commented that they had used the research produced by the partnership to influence policy in their own countries. “The research produced by the youth partnership in the youth field provides very useful comparative analysis and evidence for [us] - it helps to influence the development of youth policy and new legislation in Slovenia.” Our analysis of the interviews showed that the area of research is generally seen as being effective in terms of joint cooperation – another respondent commented that they would be “hesitant to say it [the youth partnership] has supported joint development in all areas, but it has in the area of research”. This provides some evidence of the multiplier effect implicit in the intervention logic of the youth partnership and is evidence of effectiveness in respect of the operational objective on knowledge-based youth policy. However this was not the case across all countries. For instance, another youth sector stakeholder commented that some of the research “…is not that accessible, it is very academic. The Youth Partnership does not link its policy work to what a SALTO-youth centre or others could do to implement it”.

Overall however, the evidence suggested that stakeholders thought the youth partnership helped to foster cooperation and synergies in the field of knowledge-based youth policy. Overall it is the evaluator’s judgement that support for knowledge-based youth policy is an area of relative strength for the youth partnership but that more could be done to raise awareness among youth policy makers in all target countries of the activities. Also, outputs could be made even more accessible, and more up to date by rethinking the approach (linked to the fourth operational objective related to information and dissemination).

5.1.2 Supporting youth work and building capacity of youth workers at European level

The youth partnership addressed the operational objective around supporting youth work through activities focused on recognition of youth work and recognition of non-formal learning, innovation of youth work-related training and exchange of good practice and supporting related policy measures.

In 2010 it was agreed that a more coordinated approach was needed to recognition of youth work at EU level, and the youth partnership was invited to lead on this. A meeting of experts took place in 2011 (after being postponed from 2010). This issue was taken forward and viewed as playing ‘pivot role’ in the partnership’s work in 2011. The desk review showed that in 2011 a Symposium took place with 100 participants from youth policy, practice and research areas. It focused on future strategies and actions in the field of social, political and formal recognition of youth work and particularly of non-formal learning. The document review showed reported high levels of interest and engagement of the participants. The symposium adopted a ‘Statement’ and related ‘Plan of Action’, which were to serve as tools to monitor and steer further strategies in the field\(^\text{36}\). The statement and plan of action have reportedly been disseminated to all relevant stakeholders of the youth field\(^\text{37}\). No further information from 2012 and the first half of 2013 was evident on the youth partnership website.

The ‘TALE’ train the trainer training course was one example of capacity building work undertaken. It ran from 2008 to 2011 and comprised a series of training events. The desk review showed that the TALE training was highly rated by participants – they reportedly left feeling more able to take forward the issues covered in their own youth work (such as dealing with religion in youth work). The TALE was evaluated and this work was awarded the 2011 Outstanding Evaluation Award of

\(\text{36}\) Source: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/Youth_work_non-formal_learning/Recognition.html

\(\text{37}\) Source: Annual report (2011).
the American Evaluation Associations. The evaluation, which involved youth sector participants, agreed the training was a first step towards a more co-ordinated approach to training trainers of youth workers in Europe and the course benefitted from institutional recognition from all participating stakeholders.38

The desk review also provided evidence of the EU-CoE youth partnership providing support to work around a Masters Course in youth studies, in cooperation with a consortium of universities. The project reportedly received an Erasmus grant in 2011 for further curriculum development.

Feedback from sector stakeholders was that supporting youth work and capacity building of youth workers at a European level was effective. A number of sector stakeholders commented specifically that the work of the youth partnership on building the capacity of youth workers and around the recognition of non-formal learning has been particularly useful.

The evaluator’s judgement based on the triangulation of evidence from the desk review above, which reported high levels of support for this operational objective and related activities and the feedback from sector stakeholders together suggest that this is an effective area for the partnership and one which has shown some success.

5.1.3 Paying special attention to the geographical scope of its initiatives prioritising: candidate countries, neighbourhood countries and Africa

Geographical scope is one of the operational objectives for the youth partnership, aiming to deliver activities in third countries, outside of the EU including neighbourhood countries (especially the South Med region, South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus). In 2009 an additional emphasis was given to Africa-Europe youth cooperation. As a response to the Arab Spring, the partnership was able to prioritise cooperation with the South Med, (including North Africa) as this was felt by stakeholders to be an appropriate subject of cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.38 The youth partnership organises between three and five events per year with third countries, which gives them an opportunity to present EU priorities in the field of youth. Expert seminars and workshops in third countries particularly are also used as a way to share knowledge and good practices. For instance the document review showed in 2011 the partnership ran a symposium in Odessa on youth policy for Eastern Europe and Caucasus. A conference planned in Tunisia was postponed at first (due to delays) but eventually succeeded in having the Tunisian President as a key-note speaker and brought together the key actors from Arab countries at the time of the Arab Spring.40 The Partnership Advisory Group meeting notes from 2011 concluded that the geographical focus should flow through all work on evidence based youth policy and on youth work.41

The online survey responses showed that over a third of respondents (38%) felt that the youth partnership contributed to activities with regional cooperation ‘to a great extent’. The majority of respondents felt the international work of the partnership was ‘somewhat visible’ (53%), with one in six saying it was very visible (14%) and 18% feeling it was not at all visible. With 15% also feeling unable to comment, this suggests parts of this area of the partnership’s work is less well recognised among some target groups and there is potential for more dissemination of this aspect of the partnership’s work. This lower visibility amongst stakeholders is important, since the international

work is of particular importance to the youth partnership in terms of its specific objectives and is of significant political importance to both the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The interviews with sector stakeholders indicated they are particularly familiar with this objective/priority and the youth partnership’s efforts in this area are widely recognised by the sector in those regions where work is taking place. One respondent commented that in terms of third countries the partnership provides the European Commission with access to the countries which are not yet EU Member States, but are members of the Council of Europe. Sector stakeholders perceived that this work is effective, with strong linkages being developed with partners in third countries. This geographical focus is also welcomed by both organisations supporting the partnership.

Overall the evidence suggests that the partnership does foster cooperation and support complementarily particularly in cooperation with third countries, many of whom are members of the Council of Europe and accession partners to the EU and this appears to be an area of added value for the partnership’s fields of action and associated activities. The work is well known in the geographical regions but less well known across other countries covered by the partnership. Further dissemination could improve its visibility. The scope of work in terms of the geographical reach is somewhat ambitious and might be more impactful if it were more closely focussed on specific countries or regions each year or across each three year period. This aspect of the work also appears to the evaluators to be highly dependent on the cooperation and support of partner organisations which means it should be considered higher risk in terms of the partnerships ability to deliver it as planned each year – this is evidenced by some of the delays described above. This dependency needs to be recognised and taken into account when planning the partnership’s annual programme of activity.

5.1.4 Gathering, disseminating and providing information and publications on youth

The youth partnership’s operational objective focussed on dissemination activities included a number of publications including promotional brochures (for example a brochure on the EKCYP); the COYOTE magazine (about youth work issues, published annually); a newsletter about the youth partnership’s work (produced twice in 2011 and once in 2012); Youth Knowledge books (hard copy books based on the results of some of the other activities run by the youth partnership such as specific studies, and covering themes such as youth work history and intercultural learning) and the T-Kits (Training-kits for youth organisations on a series of themes like volunteering, intercultural learning or conflict management). Under this objective, the youth partnership also runs a website which includes details of the EKCYP and a database with examples of good practice.

Our document review of the youth partnership’s annual reports showed that activities have taken place but do not offer more detailed information that would be useful for assessing effectiveness – for example there was no quantitative data provided to the evaluators on how many people used the publications such as the T-kits, COYOTE or the Knowledge Books) and there is often limited systematic information available on whether participants found them useful or not. No data was available in the annual reports on the readership and distribution lists for these documents and so it was not possible to assess who was using the publications and how wide or extensive the readership was. The annual reports only provide numbers of outputs; information on the outcome or results of those activities is more limited. This is an important gap as the multiplier effect of the partnership (i.e. through its focus on multipliers such as youth sector stakeholders and their effectiveness within their networks) is an important implied feature of its intervention logic. Monitoring is discussed further in the following chapter on efficiency.
Evidence from the survey showed that 42% of respondents felt the youth partnership contributed to information and dissemination activities ‘to a great extent’. Overall, more than half of respondents felt that the dissemination activity of the youth partnership was effective; with 59% rating it as very effective or effective. A quarter rated it as ‘slightly effective’ and only 6% rated it as not effective. There were some differences in the opinions of specific groups of stakeholders in the survey results. Ministries and SALTO-Youth resource centres / national agencies were more likely to say they felt the dissemination activities were very effective than other youth organisations (41% and 45% compared with 21% overall), but sample sizes were too small for differences to be significant and results should be seen as indicative only. The exchange of good practice undertaken by the youth partnership was also rated comparatively highly in the survey (42% rated this aspect as very effective).

Views from the in depth interviews with strategic and sector stakeholders on the effectiveness of the dissemination work were generally very positive; stakeholders felt the publications and information provided/disseminated were useful.

Overall, when taken with the desk research, survey results and stakeholder evidence above, it could be concluded that activities have been well received among those responding to the survey, however there is not enough quantitative evidence to be convinced of the reach of these activities and this indicates several areas where dissemination (and its monitoring and evaluation) could become more strongly evidenced and even more effective. Further analysis of specific dissemination activities is described below.

**Events, meetings and seminars**

Meetings such as network meetings and seminars, events and training run by the partnership were viewed positively by organisations in the sector in evidence from in depth interviews. The document review demonstrated that an ambitious programme of events was planned each year. Events appeared to have been followed up by some form of dissemination activity which was designed to ensure wider audiences can access the results, if they did not attend. This demonstrates elements of good practice. However concerns about the sustainability of the outcomes from seminars were raised by European Commission representatives (i.e. how far the outcomes of the seminars were continued or acted upon afterwards).

From the desk review there did appear to be a rather large number of face to face meetings organised each year – and it did not appear from the desk review that there was extensive exploration yet of the use of online alternatives. Additionally the desk review indicated that a number of events were intended to be organised each year but frequently events or meetings did not happen and were postponed for various reasons. It also appeared the partnership hosted or organised preparatory meetings to plan or prepare for later meetings, and then often concluded with summative meetings to evaluate the success of meetings. The approach overall appeared quite heavily focussed on face-to-face meetings, which are time consuming and expensive to organise; though obviously offer the highest quality opportunities for interaction.

**Publications**

The document review showed that publications like the T-kits were often in high demand and had to be re-printed. There was however evidence from the document review that the T-kits and other publications, particularly the knowledge books had been subject to some delays during editorial and translation processes or because of a lack of high quality content. The desk review showed a promotional leaflet had been produced to promote the EKCYP but there was no further evidence on how effective this had been in raising its profile (for instance no numbers were available of how many were distributed).
Of all the publications, the T-kits were highly rated and were frequently mentioned by sector stakeholders as a particular success. One sector stakeholder reported that the publications produced by the partnership are highly regarded and are used to inform youth work approaches across the Euro-Mediterranean region, but in particular the T-kits. For example they have just sent out a call for tender and most of the replies have used the training method set out in the T-kits from the youth partnership.

Some sector stakeholders felt the level of detail in some publications was too technical and the effective dissemination of this information was sometimes questioned. One or two questioned the effectiveness of specific publications such as COYOTE and in the focus group some reported these publications were not easily visible when visiting the website. Our review of the website showed that the newsletter was not produced at frequent intervals and gave the impression that the content was not up to date.

The Knowledge Books provided by the youth partnership are provided in print media/hard copy. There were no figures available to show how popular these books were; but qualitative feedback in the focus group suggested there was still high demand for the books from some countries.

Some stakeholders from the Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership suggested that the partnership’s effectiveness in gathering, disseminating and providing information and publications on youth could be further improved by using different methods, for example including more innovative approaches to knowledge sharing; and by connecting it better to the interests of target groups, e.g. tailor made approaches to meet the needs of specific countries. (See also below discussion of web and social media).

Based on triangulation of the above it appears that the dissemination methods are generally well received among those receiving them. But there are inconsistencies in terms of the frequency of delivery. The T-Kits in particular appear to be highly effective among informing practice in youth organisations. However there was no quantitative data from a monitoring framework to allow the evaluators to quantify the extent of the publications’ reach. It is clear that the audiences the youth partnership works with would prefer a mixed method approach involving more scope for innovative approaches alongside more traditional print media where appropriate.

**Website and social media**

Our independent assessment of the website, based on data supplied by the partnership (for the period 2009-2012) and access to the site’s user statistics showed that the website follows a ‘traditional’ web design and structure; and provides users with access to a range of different information and publications. There is also a general section which describes the activities, objectives and management structure of the youth partnership. The website has other sections for disseminating information about the youth partnership, such as an area specifically related to the research undertaken by the Pool of European Researchers (PEYR), which gives detail on the previous seminars and work undertaken in this field. There is also a specific section of the website dedicated to the geographical focus of the work, providing information on the events which have taken place in the regions in which the youth partnership focuses and a calendar of events which is current. The bottom section of the menu offers links to the publications (the COYOTE magazine, T-kits and newsletters etc.). However, this section of the website is only visible by scrolling to the bottom of the page and does not appear to be particularly current. For example, in the section on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation some of the publications date back to 2003 and the latest publication is from 2009. Although these documents may still be relevant, this does give the

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42 Conceived in April 2013.
impression that the work in this field is not particularly current. There is a similar issue with the COYOTE publication and the newsletter. The website states that the COYOTE magazine is published once or twice a year; however, there was only one edition published in 2010, another in June 2012 and so far in 2013 there has not been another edition published. There is a lack of currency on the newsletter pages as well, in 2012 only one newsletter was published, in 2011 there were two and in 2010 four were published. Again, not having any newsletters published thus far in 2013 does not give the impression that the website is up to date and it also indicates to the user that information is not produced on a regular basis by the youth partnership.

In terms of the numbers of visitors to the website, the monitoring data provided to the evaluators is of poor quality. The web statistics provided have been produced using log files, which can inflate visitors due to the difficulty in differentiating ‘real’ visitors from ‘computer robots’. Our analysis suggests many of the visits are actually being made by robots, because the number of visits recorded below 30 seconds (67% in 2009) rose to 77% of visits in 2012. We would expect that ‘real’ visitors (as opposed to computer robots) would spend a longer time on the website. To try and confirm this, we would recommend using an additional web statistics software package to run alongside the current software, in order to compare visitor data. A software or website analytics package e.g. Google Analytics will help to provide a more accurate visitor count. The visitor statistics show that apart from in 2009, France has been the origin location of the majority of visitors over the past four years, with five different countries coming in at 2nd and 3rd place – this shows that the website, although mostly visited by the host country (France), is reaching visitors from different countries and mainly within the EU.

There has been an increase year on year in unique visitors, with a significant increase from 2011 to 2012 which could be accredited to the adoption of social media, because Facebook became the top referring website in both 2011 and 2012. This indicates the potential for such media. Facebook has proven the most popular social media channel for the EU-CoE youth partnership and there has been regular posting activity to sustain this. Twitter activity is low; within three days of opening the account, all tweeting had stopped.

There is a significant audience within social media, most notably Facebook – which has proven the most popular network – however there are no social media icons on the website itself to signpost visitors to the different channels. Visitors can only therefore follow, like or subscribe to social media channels if they are notified of their existence or decide to search for them. We would recommend adding social media icons to the website that are visible on every page as visitors to the website may not always land on the homepage. As not all visitors and target groups will prefer social networks, we would also suggest offering a more visible email subscription option; in order to be notified of any new content e.g. news articles. At present, the only mailing address option we can identify (http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/jsp/registration/register.jsp) implies that some kind of membership is required by asking for a username and password – however it is not clear what the visitor is signing up to until visiting the register link (see Figure 5.1 below).
The table below provides our evaluation of the youth partnership’s social media activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Joined Network</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>13 November 2011</td>
<td>968 likes, Last post 17 April 2013</td>
<td>Facebook has proven the most popular social media channel for the EU-CoE Youth Partnership and there has been regular posting activity to sustain this. Facebook has been used to promote specific events with a good degree of success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>13 November 2011</td>
<td>34 followers, Last tweet 16 November 2011</td>
<td>Twitter activity is low; however within 3 days of opening the account, all tweeting had stopped. It may be that a decision was made to not use Twitter and focus more on Facebook where the younger audience are. However, some people may prefer Twitter and as accounts are free it may open up a new, albeit smaller, audience. If administration of two accounts is a concern, there are free software packages e.g. HootSuite that can update several social media accounts at once. Followers may also increase if icons are placed on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>25 October 2012</td>
<td>4 videos, 119 views, 0 subscribers, Last video uploaded 6 months ago</td>
<td>YouTube is not an official channel and would perhaps attract more visits if the name was something related to the youth partnership to the other social media channels e.g. EU-CoE Youth – at present, the channel is named Agora67075 and there is no clear link to the youth partnership once you are on the YouTube page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To conclude, the EU-CoE youth partnership website is too static and does not provide enough interaction with the visitor e.g. there is a lack of up to date information, lack of scope for comments, lack of subscription methods. We do understand from the focus group that a new youth partnership website was being planned. Development was delayed for a year due to negotiations with the two funding organisations. But now negotiations are concluded, the partnership will reportedly launch a new website in time for the new programming period. There is scope for greater use of social media. While optimal use of website and social media require investment to make them work.

Source: focus group in Brussels.
efficiently (both in terms of hardware, software and staff time) they offer the greatest potential for widest reach of the partnership’s activities. Social media also offers the advantage that it can be user-led and content is provided by multiple users, this would reduce the reliance on all content and interactivity needing to be led by the partnership staff themselves. Social media are also a useful mechanism for engaging with diverse target groups and with younger people. However it should be noted that the main target of social media work is youth workers and not all youth workers across the countries of interest will have sufficient web or social media access. There is however further potential for these to be used to effectively disseminate and promote the youth partnership’s work.

Overall it is the evaluator’s judgement that there is scope for the youth partnership to become more effective and focussed in its work, particularly in some areas of activity described above. Specifically this concerns improving the visibility of its work on evidence-based youth policy and in improving dissemination – particularly web based and social media dissemination.

We now consider the extent to which the achievement of the operational objectives contributes towards the achievement of the specific objectives of the youth partnership.

5.2 Effectiveness of the youth partnership in meeting specific objectives

The specific objectives of the youth partnership are: creating better opportunities and improving access for young people; promoting active citizenship; and fostering solidarity. These link to the operational objectives through a series of themes: social inclusion, democracy, human rights, citizenship and participation, and intercultural dialogue.

The causal link between the operational objectives (and the associated activities) and the specific objectives were unclear. As discussed in Chapter Four, this was because there was no clear intervention logic for the youth partnership. For example there was no clear expression available in documentation about the partnership on how operational objectives contributed to better opportunities for young people, citizenship or solidarity, and no clear logic chain of what we have interpreted to be the intended model - whereby multipliers (youth sector stakeholders) are engaged to have multiplier effects in respect of the objectives. As previously stated, the specific objectives are extremely broad and ambitious and not linked to clear measurable indicators. Furthermore our review of annual reports of the partnership showed that the reports focussed only on the four operational objectives and the themes of activity and did not report back on contribution to specific objectives (this point is also made in Chapter Six which discusses the administrative ‘bureaucracy’ and tendency for the partnership to focus on smaller details rather than the bigger picture). The only source of evidence on specific objectives therefore was opinions from interviews and again the evidence here was limited. In the stakeholder interviews no particularly strong opinions were expressed about the evidence of effectiveness against the specific objectives. Sector stakeholders were not aware of the specific objectives and unable to comment. This may be because there is no clear intervention logic and therefore the objectives and themes are not regularly articulated or discussed. Therefore, for all these reasons, it was very challenging for the evaluators to draw conclusions about the extent to which the youth partnership was effective in meeting its three specific objectives. The evidence that was available on two of the three specific objectives and the themes is discussed next.

Evidence from interviews with both staff and sector stakeholders felt the specific objective on fostering solidarity was strongest where there was cooperation in themes such as social inclusion. Half of survey respondents agreed that the activities of the youth partnership contributed to cooperation between international youth organisations (46% to ‘a great extent’).
The objective to foster solidarity clearly underpins the youth partnership’s work and is embedded in its ethos, but it was difficult to evidence how far the youth partnership actually fostered solidarity because the link between the specific objective and the operational objectives was intangible.

Findings were similar around the specific objective on active citizenship. Another sector stakeholder suggested the partnership had effectively developed training modules and publications on issues related to active citizenship as well as human rights, democracy, and again was having an indirect effect on this objective. However the size of the effect was not quantifiable and difficult to pinpoint.

The final specific objective on creating better opportunities and improving access to young people was not commented upon specifically by stakeholders in interviews, again for the reasons outlined above, and again effects here were felt to be more indirect than direct.

In terms of the themes of the youth partnership’s work, social inclusion was tackled by the partnership through various activities, including a research seminar in 2007 on ‘Equal Opportunities for All’. However this was a challenging theme to demonstrate achievement against since the objective was too general and too broad to be effectively impacted upon by the youth partnership.

Another theme focusses on intercultural dialogue. Cooperation between international youth organisations reflects the theme of the youth partnership ‘to foster intercultural dialogue and diversity in the sector’. In the stakeholder interviews, intercultural dialogue was viewed as an integral part of the youth partnership’s work, a theme that ran through everything they did rather than an explicit focus of their work/activity. Stakeholders felt that this theme was therefore addressed effectively by the partnership. Sector stakeholders also felt that the part of the objectives focussed on intercultural dialogue is a more central element for the European Commission compared with other objectives, such as human rights and social exclusion for example, which were more central to the Council of Europe.

Stakeholders interviewed at the Council of Europe and European Commission felt the partnership is more effective when addressing the themes of democracy and human rights. Democracy and human rights were viewed by stakeholders from a range of organisations as being the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe and as such, firmly embedded in the youth partnership’s approach. In these themes stakeholders felt the partnership contributes to influencing policy makers and setting the policy agenda, particularly through the work they do in providing knowledge and the research needed to base the policy initiatives upon; and by sharing information about the democracy and human rights agendas. The interviews undertaken with sector stakeholders were also of the opinion that the youth partnership does achieve its specific objectives around promoting democracy through its activities: by helping to promote participation and democratic citizenship and their involvement in elections. Other sector stakeholders felt the partnership does deal with democracy and human rights issues, for example through the themes of events and conferences it organises.

However it was felt the effectiveness of the partnership in respect of democracy and human rights was indirect rather than having direct effects on the democracy of countries in which they worked. A comment by one respondent sums up this finding "there was an emphasis on the Mediterranean, especially during the Arabic spring, but I am not sure it [directly] fostered democracy; though it was clear that was the intent" (Sector stakeholder.). The level of effect is therefore more at the strategic level and promoting awareness of these themes, rather than having an effect on these issues directly.

Overall it is the evaluator’s judgement that the specific objectives and themes of the youth partnership are too broad and ambitious and appear to be a reflection of trying to include multiple
requirements from both the European Commission and the Council of Europe. This has made the specific objectives very all-encompassing, because they cover a range of concepts such as citizenship, democracy, human rights. These concepts are very difficult to demonstrate a causal link of effectiveness against. The work of the partnership instead has a more indirect effect in terms of fostering active citizenship or democracy for instance, because it focuses on policy makers and intermediaries rather than directly on young people themselves. Taking this into account we suggested in the earlier chapter that the specific objectives are made more specific and less wide ranging, and that the logic for intervention – that the youth partnership intends to have an indirect influence on the objectives of concepts such as democracy rather than direct effect – is more clearly expressed. This would help the partnership establish causal links and demonstrate effectiveness in a more tangible way.

5.3 Effectiveness of the youth partnership in reaching its general objectives

The general objective of the youth partnership is: to provide a framework for the joint development of cooperation and coherent strategy in the field of youth in Europe. The general objective is linked to the partnership’s specific objectives, which were discussed above.

The Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) which underpins the partnership provides a strong and clear framework for cooperation in the youth field between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The current FPA (2010-2013) clearly states that the EU-CoE youth partnership aims to “provide a framework for the joint development of cooperation and a coherent strategy in the field of youth in Europe with the direct involvement of young people, youth workers, youth researchers and youth policy makers.”

Feedback from stakeholders suggests that overall, the EU-CoE youth partnership is effective in reaching its general objective to provide a clear basis for cooperation. The joint development of cooperation in the field of youth is widely seen as the core business of the partnership, through cooperation between the two organisations: the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Stakeholders on both sides agree a partnership based approach is an effective way to achieve the objectives.

Stakeholders on both sides agreed the partnership fostered particular synergies particularly around its work to promote and professionalise youth work and to provide youth research, through for example the PEYR. The partnership also designs and implements activities such as events which bring together youth workers, youth researchers and policy makers and therefore provides a basis for cooperation (see previous discussion of operational objectives for more details).

Staff from both the Council of Europe and the European Commission suggested that the added value of the partnership lies in bringing together the joint expertise of the two organisations. For example, one stakeholder from Council of Europe commented that, “It does provide a very positive framework, so that the two organisations can work together and aim for the same goals; it also helps to prevent duplication”.

Overall it is the evaluator’s opinion that the youth partnership between the two organisations offers an effective framework for cooperation on youth policy, particularly in respect of its work in countries outside of the EU. It therefore meets the general objective. There is evidence that parts of the partnership’s work are more effective (as discussed earlier in the chapter, for example events to

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44 Source: Terms of Reference, see annex 1.
bring together youth workers and events in geographical regions have been successful whereas there is room for improvement in some of the dissemination activity). Overall however, we have concluded that the programme of activity is probably too broad, ambitious and wide ranging and the internal logic for how multiplier effects are achieved is not set out.

5.4 Effectiveness of the youth partnership against the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and Youth in Action (YiA) programme

The annual reports of the youth partnership and documents provided on its website do not provide any further evidence on the evaluation question around the effectiveness of the youth partnership’s activities in relation to the EU Youth Strategy and Youth in Action (YiA) programme, aside from the evidence discussed above on each operational objective. Stakeholder interviews therefore form the main source of evidence for this evaluation question. There is general agreement among the stakeholders interviewed that the work of the EU-CoE youth partnership was effective in meeting some of the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and the Youth in Action programme in the areas where it is aligned and relevant (as outlined through the desk review and analysis in Chapter 4).

The youth partnership is effective in contributing to the EU Youth Strategy’s overall objective to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society through the work it does with youth workers encouraging active citizenship and participation. The youth partnership is less effective in contributing to the EU Youth Strategy’s other objective which is to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and employment because employability is not a particular objective or theme of the youth partnership’s work. The activities of the youth partnership contribute in an indirect way to the objective through working with multipliers such as youth workers and youth policy makers rather than directly in creating education or employment opportunities. Sector stakeholders also reported that the youth partnership does contribute to this aspect of the Youth Strategy, in an indirect way, because improving employability is an important part of the work the youth partnership is doing around the recognition of youth work. Sector stakeholders also pointed out the youth partnership has long experience in informal education and their work here effectively supports the EU Youth Strategy.

At the focus group stakeholders also reinforced this view; they felt that the youth partnership could not directly evidence its effects in terms of improving levels of youth employment for instance, but that its general principles underpinned the same overall policy objective. Overall, the youth partnership was felt to be more effective in terms of the EU Youth Strategy’s objective around fostering citizenship, solidarity and social cohesion among young people in Europe, through its work on democracy, inclusion and participation and through its work in third countries.

In terms of the Youth in Action (YiA) programme, the same position was evident. Again the youth partnership was contributing indirectly to all its high level objectives through its work with multipliers (such as youth researchers, youth policy makers, youth workers). Its work could be seen as effective in terms of 12 (or around half) of the more specific objectives within the programme, as outlined in Chapter 4. Activities such as sharing good practices and fostering cooperation in the youth field are being delivered effectively by the youth partnership though, as outlined above, there were areas for improvement (such as the website).

The evaluator’s judgement is that overall the youth partnership was effective in an *indirect* way through its work with multipliers (youth sector stakeholders and intermediaries) rather than working directly to provide opportunities and access for young people. The youth partnership tends to focus on youth workers, policy makers and researchers - disseminating knowledge based policy development in support of many of the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and YiA. The evaluator’s interpretation of the intervention logic is that the partnership targets multipliers to influence policy making to influence youth work in the longer term rather than directly targeting young people.

5.5 Extent to which results would not have been obtained by other alternative options

According to survey results, one in five sector stakeholders surveyed felt the effects created by the youth partnership would not happen at all without the youth partnership existing (22%). Seven in ten (69%) felt these effects would happen to a *small* extent; possibly referring to the European Commission’s work via DG DEVCO and DG EAC or the Council of Europe’s own work in the youth field. Fewer than one in ten (9%) felt these effects would happen anyway - to a *great* extent. There were no significant differences in this response by geographical location (EU27 versus third countries outside of the EU27).

Stakeholders reported in interviews that the youth partnership is a unique partnership in the field of youth and has a large geographical reach that brings together the reach of the two partner organisations. The work in these third countries is highly valued by stakeholders (particularly those based in third countries) and a number of stakeholders from the youth sector commented that this kind of support on youth policy and youth work would not exist to the same extent without the youth partnership. One sector stakeholder suggested that "There won't be any other organisation to help the Caucasus if not the youth partnership". And another sector stakeholder commented that "Without the youth partnership the training would not have happened in Romania as there are no other organisations to provide this type of training in this country".

Some sector stakeholders summed this up in interviews: "*I think the partnership is in a very unique position as it is a connection point between the policies of the two institutions (CoE and EC)...It connects and is helping to develop knowledge and disseminate it. It also provides a connection to practice, policy and knowledge, so it is working in a triangle and doing that very well although it is not an easy position to be in*" (Sector stakeholder).

Stakeholders commented in the interviews that a clear area of additionality was the activities and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean and other third countries. They felt this was the real added value of the partnership’s work on youth policy and youth work issues.

Stakeholders from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership recognised that the youth partnership has very good relations and an excellent network in the youth sector, which complements the work of the European Commission. They also felt the partnership is very effective at organising conferences and bringing together the key stakeholders on important topics. They were viewed as being able to gather high-quality experts from the different target countries. However there is also some evidence of concerns over potential overlap and/or duplication between some European Commission funded activities in the countries where the partnership is also working.

The overall evaluator’s judgement on this evaluation question is that the importance of the partnership between the European Commission and Council of Europe lies in providing a forum for
cooperation on youth issues which fits with both organisations’ objectives and provides the EC with a parallel route to link with partners in non-EU countries. There was general agreement that the youth partnership includes some effective areas of work (particularly through its work in third countries) which would not be obtained to the same extent by other options. The extent of overlap and duplication between activities is likely to be fairly small given the size of the resource attached to the youth partnership’s work in these areas. Any potential for duplication should be carefully managed through regular exchange on the operational objectives and planned activities.
6 Efficiency and Sustainability

This chapter explores the efficiency and sustainability of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership. It is based on desk research, interviews with representatives from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership, online survey and interviews with other stakeholders. These pieces of evidence have been triangulated and then presented along with the evaluator’s own judgements. The chapter is organised around the key evaluation questions (Annex 1). It looks at efficiency in terms of: the size of the annual grant and how cost-effectively it is spent (outputs achieved compared with inputs applied); how the partnership is managed, the administrative procedures employed, the decision making process and use of human resources; how well joint activities and cooperation with third parties and advisory structures are functioning; the appropriateness of the current arrangements for funding and structuring the partnership (via multi-annual Framework Partnership agreements and annual grants to support a partnership Team); and the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms, including indicators.

6.1 Overview of inputs and outputs

Funding for the partnership amounted to €1.2 million per annum for the period 2007-2012. Financial contributions from the EC and the Council of Europe are roughly matched in equal share every year\(^46\). The summary table in Annex 9 has been compiled from partnership final reports, amendments and specific grant agreements provided by the European Commission\(^47\). The estimated (planned) budget varied between €1.15 million in 2008 and €1.25 million in 2010. The data shows that, overall, actual spend has been consistently within budget: under-spend (actual versus total planned expenditure) over the period 2007-2011, ranged from 3 to 6%.

Grouping budget headings into four main categories (thematic activity, management and administration, information and publication and staff costs). More detail can be found in Annex 9.

The figure below shows the way expenditure has been split for the whole period 2007-2011:

**Figure 6.1 Actual expenditure by cost category 2007-2011**

![Chart showing expenditure by cost category]

Source: Data from annual reports (2007-11).

\(^{46}\) See Annex 9.

\(^{47}\) Full information is available for 2007-2009. For 2010 the budget year is divided into two periods, 1 January to 30 June and 1 July to 31 December. In the table the two have been combined to provide an overview and simplify comparisons, apart from the amendments to the Specific Grant Agreement for 2010, which only cover the second half of the budget year.
Staffing and administration/management costs together make up about 50% of the total budget. Between 2007 and 2011 staffing levels are estimated as between 8 and 9 FTE\textsuperscript{48}.

Overall, actual expenditure for the categories Youth Policy Development, Publication and information and Development of EKCYP has consistently been below the budget estimate. However, some categories have varied widely; for example, Youth Policy Development was 3% below the estimate in 2009 and 52% below in 2010. In the last two years the ‘geographical focus’ category has become a significant proportion of the budget alongside knowledge based youth policy and information and publications.

Information on activities implemented and outputs generated by the partnership is presented in Annex 5 and Annex 9. This includes quantitative data extracted from the youth partnerships annual reports, such as numbers of participants and publications, reports, meetings and seminars.

6.2 Cost-effectiveness

6.2.1 Activities

The Financial Regulation defines the principle of efficiency as: “…\textit{the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved}”\textsuperscript{49} whilst the European Commission defines efficiency as: “…\textit{the extent [to which] the desired effects are achieved at reasonable cost}”.\textsuperscript{50} For most EAC programmes, the question is whether a measure has produced (or will produce) the highest level of effects for the (fixed) budget available. This concept can be termed “yield maximisation” and implies the use of ratios that relate effects to costs. This however requires a choice to be made whether to analyse the relationship between inputs and outputs or between inputs and higher-level outcomes (results and/or impacts). This will determine the data to be gathered (and what is available) as well as the type of conclusions that will be drawn. A table with full details can be found in Annex 5 and Annex 9.

According to the Ecorys CEA Report\textsuperscript{51}, there are three basic levels of efficiency analysis. For the evaluation of the youth partnership, Level 1 is most appropriate, and is defined as follows:

\textbf{Level 1:} identify the potential to improve the efficiency of a particular intervention; since this level of analysis does not compare the relative efficiency of different interventions, it cannot inform the overall choice of interventions; Level 1 analysis therefore offers less potential to improve the efficiency of the overall “portfolio” of EAC programmes than does Level 2; however, this level of analysis is likely to be easier and less resource-intensive to undertake, not least because it need only offer a partial assessment of efficiency, e.g. by focussing on a particular part of the implementation process and/or a particular link in the cause-and-effect chain; at the same time, the reliability of any partial assessment is dependent upon other factors being equal, i.e. any suggested improvements would not be derailed by factors that were not included in the assessment; Level 1 analysis can highlight the potential to improve both the production efficiency and allocation efficiency of an intervention, even where ratios or net quantities cannot be calculated.

\textsuperscript{48} Note that figures are not provided in terms of FTE in the Annual Reports, so this may be an over-estimate. For example, the 2010 report noted that there were 8 staff, of which it says some are part-time.


\textsuperscript{50} Evaluating EU Activities: A practical guide for the Commission services; November 2003, European Commission DG Budget.

The same CEA report developed four possible approaches to the analysis of efficiency of EAC programmes:

### Types of intervention for which each approach is applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach 0</td>
<td>Involves describing and providing an opinion on some efficiency-related aspects of an intervention.</td>
<td>Interventions that are not spending programmes, such as flagship, emblematic and symbolic actions (e.g. events, prizes) or information, dissemination and programme support actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach 1</td>
<td>Involves identifying and, where possible, benchmarking unit costs, which can then be compared with other interventions.</td>
<td>Interventions that produce tangible end products, where a unit cost can easily be identified and thus compared with other projects/approaches.</td>
<td>Literary translations (based on number or readers), distribution of films (based on number of viewers), theatre productions (based on audience numbers); likely to include sub-programmes that offer support for production, distribution and promotion of products or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach 2</td>
<td>The main feature of Approach 2 is to use beneficiary feedback to produce evidence on how projects have impacted on capabilities.</td>
<td>Interventions that develop capabilities of individuals or organisations, e.g. mobility placements, training courses, capacity building measures, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach 3</td>
<td>Involves analysing clusters of case study projects that produce tangible outcomes which can be quantified or at least assigned rated against a scale, which might then allow comparison against other projects or alternative approaches.</td>
<td>Interventions that produce multiple and diverse effects, but which are nonetheless tangible (perhaps even quantifiable) and that relate well to the lower-level objectives of programmes (i.e. specific or operational).</td>
<td>Sub-programmes that support multilateral cooperation projects and partnerships, organisations and networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach 4</td>
<td>Involves analysing clusters of case study projects and attempting to draw some general conclusions about the efficiency of processes and the value added compared to: i) the previous situation; ii) discontinuation.</td>
<td>Interventions that produce multiple and diverse effects that are very intangible and that relate mostly only to the higher-level objectives of programmes (i.e. general) if at all and where comparisons with other approaches are difficult.</td>
<td>Sub-programmes that support multilateral cooperation projects and partnerships, organisations and networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of the EU-CoE youth partnership, and with reference to the logic model (see Figure 4.1, above), elements of all these approaches are applicable to particular aspects of the intervention:

- **In terms of Approach 1**, data is available on costs and in terms of a number of specific activities (events for example), although benchmarks are not readily identifiable and the end results are activities rather than products.

- **Given the emphasis of youth partnership activity on knowledge sharing, training, capacity building, mobility and good practice exchange**, elements of Approach 2 can be used to examine effects on participants and beneficiaries in the light of the costs involved and alternatives for delivering similar outputs.

- **Approach 3** can be used to explore particular activities corresponding to specific or operational objectives e.g. events, databases, newsletters/website and again look at costs and potential for improvements.
• Approach 4 can assist in capturing higher-level effects associated with the partnership (e.g. raising issues such as intercultural dialogue and diversity, democracy and human rights and social inclusion).

Data on costs is available and suggests overall that the cost per beneficiary is relatively low (see Annex 9). The data suggests a global cost per participants of just over €1,000 and per activity of €34,800. If staff costs are not included (since not all of these are directly applied to specific activities) the ratios are €640 and €21,800, respectively. Taking individual types of activity gives direct cost ratios\(^\text{52}\) of about €200 per participants for conferences, €580 for seminars, €380 for workshops and €560 for training for example. These figures probably also reflect leverage effects, where the funding contribution from the partnership budget is one of potentially a number of funding components from different sources. For example this was the case for training and other events organised within the overall portfolio of activity within the Europe-Africa youth cooperation framework.

The data for individual activities itemised in partnership reports shows direct unit costs ranging from €134 to €2,681, with most in the range €250-600 per participant.

Examples include:
• 2007 Symposium on participation in Schengen, Luxembourg (five days) with 136 participants from 43 countries, unit cost €649;
• 2008 seminar on Intercultural dialogue: the global youth perspective (5 days, Mollina, IT) with 30 participants, unit cost €352;
• 2009 Training TC in HRE, Euro-Med context (Lebanon, 1 week) with 25 practitioners, unit cost €1098;
• 2010 Long term training course for trainers on Africa Europe Youth cooperation - 2nd residential seminar in Cape Verde, 1 week, 30 participating trainers, unit cost €1181;
• 2010 TALE 3rd residential seminar (Budapest, 1 week), 42 participants, unit cost €936.

Examining the costs for the information and communication outputs produced by the partnership, the following direct unit costs may be calculated:
• 2008 – three COYOTE Magazine at a unit cost of €7,594 each;
• 2008 – five T-kits at a unit cost of €6,300 each;
• 2009 - Development of EKCYP study, extended to additional country sheets and issues: 29 country sheets produced at a unit cost of €1,460 each.

Caution should be exercised in comparing these costs with benchmarks to assess value for money. Especially given the frequency of match and part-funded activity used by the partnership. However, taking into account the findings on effectiveness set out in Section 5 above, the overall trends and sample of activities suggest that the direct costs of most activities and outputs are in line with norms or market rates\(^\text{53}\) and may therefore be considered cost-effective. In cases where certain outputs appear limited in their content (country reports for example - see Section 5.7.2, above) the costs do not appear excessive.

Applying Approach 2, the intervention logic clearly includes objectives related to capacities and capabilities, but as already noted above, provides insufficient detail in terms of intended outcomes

\(^{52}\) i.e. excluding staff costs.

\(^{53}\) Printing and publication costs are comparable to average commercial rates (LLP National Agency UK 2013); other costs which are specified in the budget and relate to events such as translation and interpretation are also comparable to standard commercial rates;
and impacts. This poses a potential challenge when assessing cost-effectiveness, which requires clear articulation of objectives (“...identify the one (specific) objective of the programme to which the intervention responds”), specification of “…the set of capacities/capabilities that are to be considered” and “Confirmation that these clearly relate to the intended effects of the programme”.

Here a case study approach offers additional insights. If for example we consider a cluster of a single type of activity – the nine events held in 2012 set out in the table below, these clearly address capacity and capability, although there is no data on whether or not capabilities and capacities have been enhanced (e.g. beneficiary survey evidence directly from attendees).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symposium on Well-being of Young People in Eastern Europe and Caucasus</td>
<td>11-12 June</td>
<td>Tbilisi, Georgia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symposium “Arab spring: Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms”</td>
<td>28-29 August 2012</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symposium on Youth Policy Cooperation in South East Europe: focus on recognition of youth work &amp; non-formal learning</td>
<td>1-3 October 2012</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Meeting of Correspondents to the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy</td>
<td>18-19 October 2012, Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert group on Indicators for Intercultural Dialogue in Non-formal Education Activities</td>
<td>10-13 December 2012, Hammamet, Tunisia</td>
<td>Hammamet, Tunisia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop on national knowledge networks</td>
<td>17-19 December 2012</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert group on recognition of youth work and non formal learning</td>
<td>29 January 2013</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Current Crisis and Youth – Impact and Ways Forward</td>
<td>20-21 February 2013</td>
<td>Strasbourg</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning meeting for the seminar on youth policy making based on evidence and participatory principles</td>
<td>13–14 May 2013</td>
<td>Frankfurt/Main</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The themes covered by the nine activities directly relate to the objectives set by the partnership; with a strong focus on for example social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, non-formal learning, participation and youth policy development. A comparison of the lists of participants for the activities in question suggests that the events in general include diverse profiles. Only a few participants have been present at more than one or two events. Similarly, there are only a few organisations that have been represented at more than one. In terms of countries there is some evidence that events hosted in neighbourhood countries are over represented, in particular for large events (61-125 participants).

Evidence from stakeholder interviews generally supports the finding that the activities delivered are satisfactory and few concerns are raised about their cost-effectiveness (or quality): the amount of money invested in the youth partnership is generally perceived by stakeholders to be a satisfactory investment in terms of efficiency. A number of interviewees from the European Commission, the
Council of Europe and the youth partnership commented that the partnership carried out a wide range of different activities for a fairly moderate investment, particularly when viewed as a percentage of the European Commission’s overall budget for youth.

However, in the interviews, both partners (European Commission and Council of Europe) mentioned a need for reconsidering the scope / scale of the activities. These activities were established fourteen years ago, and research was always the key element. Youth work and education is only a small element of the youth partnership.

6.2.2 Management and administration

The desk review showed there have been efforts to simplify the management structure of the youth partnership, in particular by establishing a single advisory group (PAG) to replace four previous bodies (namely three Partnership Steering Groups (PSGs) and an annual Partnership Consultative Meeting or PCM\textsuperscript{54}). However the interviews with stakeholders suggested that the management arrangements and roles and responsibilities are not always clear to those outside the immediate structures. There is also evidence that some stakeholders are concerned the PAG is not able to function effectively in the current set up, for example in terms of how well the partnership is able to set priorities, and communicate and implement these to others.

The management arrangements operate within the framework of a set of multi-dimensional and complex interactions with external partners: the annual reports identify that the partnership works with a range of relevant partners including the European Youth Forum, the structures of the Youth in Action programme (i.e. the National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres), the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, the North-South Centre in Lisbon, the Anna Lindh Foundation and other governmental and non-governmental structures and networks. In the Euro-Mediterranean region the partnership works with the League of Arab States. The 2008 annual report notes that “an increasing number of activities” were being implemented in cooperation with other organisations that have relevant experience.

In terms of operational efficiency, the evidence from interviews suggests that the concerns of external stakeholders tend to revolve around the ‘bureaucracy’ involved in working as a partnership with two institutions, rather than the cost-effectiveness of the activities and outputs themselves. Indeed the general view, reinforced at the stakeholder focus group, is that this administrative ‘bureaucracy’ tends to have a negative impact and there is a tendency for the partnership to be ‘micro-managed’ and therefore for staff resources not always to be used to best advantage. Stakeholders have reported examples of duplication, lack of common reporting formats and monitoring approaches for example.

The evidence from those tasked with implementation also suggests some dissatisfaction with the management and administration of the Partnership. For example, the reporting timetables and processes are different for the two institutions; there is no common framework for monitoring and evaluation of the activities funded, and no internal monitoring of tasks (which would enable management to see where staff resources are being applied). We have also seen that face-to-face meetings are a very common tool for a variety of purposes (see section 5.7.1, above) which do not necessarily require this concentrated use of resources. These factors are bound to make duplication of effort and delays more likely and increase the administrative burden on those concerned. Examples of these types of negative effects identified include the postponement of activities, the prolonged annual reporting process and the delays in the development and

\textsuperscript{54} Annual Report 2009 (page 16).
implementation of the new website (this was stalled for a year by protracted negotiations and will now be launched with the new programme in 2014).

From the European Commission’s side, there is a perceived lack of European Commission visibility\(^\text{55}\) and that the youth partnership is often seen as a body belonging solely to the Council of Europe. The EC has no involvement in recruiting partnership staff for example. In addition, difficulties are emphasised by those interviewed in terms of how both organisations manage their finances, as a result of operating different accounting systems and tools that are not always compatible.

Although the youth partnership is accountable to both organisations, implementation is based at the Council of Europe, so staff are recruited and managed by the Council of Europe. Indeed the employment and recruitment arrangements seem to have caused some difficulties over the period being evaluated: it has been reported that due to Council of Europe employment rules there has been relatively high staff turnover as many employees are now on short term contracts. This may cause disruption, lack of continuity and potential loss of tacit knowledge – factors that have the potential to reduce operational efficiency. However, we understand from the focus group that this requirement was in the process of being changed by the Council of Europe.

Although both partners (EC and Council of Europe) value the political advantage of the cooperation and there is a strong political will from both sides to continue the EU-CoE youth partnership, interviewees in both partner organisations agree there is scope to review the day-to-day operation of the youth partnership to make cooperation and implementation easier. It is inevitable that where two organisations are compelled to apply two sets of processes and controls, this will tend to result in duplication and delays. Efforts have been made to agree protocols and joint procedures, but the evidence suggests there remains scope to improve process efficiency. The recruitment of two Brussels based staff in 2011 was undertaken to improve cooperation and communication between the two institutions.

As we have seen above, the proportion of the partnership budget spent on staff and on management and administration is about 50%. It is difficult to find suitable comparators for that figure; which would provide a fair benchmark\(^\text{56}\). Based on the evidence from stakeholders and those involved in implementation, we suggest that parallel cultures and processes, and delays and duplication result in relatively high investment of staff time in administration rather than management\(^\text{57}\). There is therefore potential to improve efficiency, through simplification and streamlining of processes, including monitoring of staff inputs on individual tasks and reducing the number of face-to-face meetings\(^\text{58}\). Minor changes in staffing levels might not produce significant changes in efficiency, unless the underlying changes in structures, governance and monitoring are addressed.

\(^{55}\) Examples include the EC’s role not being referred to in reports from major events etc.

\(^{56}\) It is also likely that similar challenges are faced by a number of international bodies working in partnership and serving a range of stakeholders and political masters, including UNESCO and the OECD for example.

\(^{57}\) Which here would encompass monitoring and evaluation as well as closer inspection of the impacts of activities.

\(^{58}\) Likely to be one of the consequences of the delays and duplication identified. Also, a number of staff commented that the number of meetings held was excessive.
6.3 Efficiency of the multi-annual framework

There are two issues to be considered here: the appropriateness of the size of the grant in relation to the objectives; and whether the multi-annual framework (MAF herein) and annual grant are the most effective/efficient solution.

Firstly, in terms of the size of the grant, the range of activities is generally appropriate and value for money is likely to be enhanced by leverage effects (where a number of organisations are making contributions)\(^ {59} \). There is a strong argument to focus on a smaller number of themes and activities, based on developing a better understanding of the intended impacts. Overall, there appears to be no strong argument to increase the budget, especially given the tendency to underspend on activity and outputs year on year. The staff resources allocated are sufficient to meet the task in hand, but as we have seen there remains scope to improve operational efficiency.

Secondly, the stability of funding provided by the MAF offers advantages in terms of scope for forward planning, and continuity. The approach is not in itself necessarily the cause of any of the weaknesses identified. However the MAF model might be used more effectively to assess and agree priorities, increase process efficiency (e.g. through simplification, streamlining of decision-making etc.) and adopt a more systematic perspective on risk (for example through a risk register where events that are likely to struggle to attract enough participants or outputs take too long to be delivered can be identified). Critically, this goes hand in hand with the need to introduce the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of activities, as discussed above.

Looking at alternative models these would include:

- 100% funding by the Council of Europe, which would therefore disband the youth partnership and result in the loss of any associated benefits;
- altering the split from 50/50 to some other share in favour of one or the other partner;
- moving the day-to-day operation of the partnership from the Council of Europe to the European Commission;
- setting up a separate legal entity to deliver the partnership.

None of these is without its own set of challenges (and costs) and none appears to attract uniform support from stakeholders. Any legal entity would have more autonomy and its own bespoke (and simpler) governances structure and set of procedures. However this would do nothing to address concerns that the EC in particular currently has that the partnership is ‘too independent’). Setting up such an entity might also entail lengthy negotiations and diversion of resources in the short term.

Another, more radical option would be to operate the partnership via a service contract with an outside provider, secured through a competitive tendering process for example. Conventional arguments for this route would include reducing and controlling the cost of management and administration, potentially increasing operational efficiency (by securing technical skills or harnessing processes not available within the existing organisation for example) and to permit re-allocation of resources to strategic core functions. However this model may run the risk of losing valuable skills and experience and diminishing the political capital generated.

At this stage, efforts should focus on improving the underlying efficiency of the current system, before implementing any of the options above is contemplated. The key objective should be to shift

\(^ {59} \) Although firm quantitative evidence on this factor is not available.
the emphasis in terms of using staff resources from administration (duplication, parallel systems etc.) to management (monitoring and evaluation, risk management and measurement of impacts).

6.4 Effectiveness of the monitoring system and the indicators

Effective and systematic monitoring is a fundamental requirement for tracking value for money, the efficient allocation of resources and continuous improvement in terms of understanding impacts and targeting types of activity. However, the evidence from desk review, stakeholder interviews with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership and the focus group indicated that there is significant scope to improve the monitoring system and how the success of the youth partnership is measured and evidenced.

Currently, monitoring is principally via an annual report to the European Commission, which describes the activities undertaken as well as any follow up work. The evaluators understood from stakeholder interviews and the focus group that there is also a monitoring / reporting system to the Council of Europe but we did not receive or review any of those documents as part of this evaluation. As far as the evaluators can conclude, there is no common framework for reporting, nor is there a common report format. The limited information provided in terms of beneficiary satisfaction or impacts is not presented systematically in the annual reports we reviewed (and is therefore probably not collected systematically), and there is no separate chapter or section devoted to these issues in the annual reports we reviewed. This lack of systematic monitoring information and multiple reporting structures leads to duplication of effort and delays (as already alluded to above). The annual reports presented to the European Commission simply report that activities have taken place and do not offer information about how effective they have been (i.e. how many people used the T-kits, or read the COYOTE or the Knowledge Books) and there is often limited information about whether participants found them useful or not. Impacts (of events or dissemination activities for instance) are seldom identified or reported upon. Our understanding is that some of this more detailed information does exist but it was not presented in annual reports to the European Commission. The information in annual reports is therefore only reporting numbers of outputs; information on the outcome, results or impacts of those activities is much more limited. The annual reports are therefore of limited use in terms of any meaningful assessment of effectiveness and impact of partnership activity. More helpfully, the annual reports do present information on the website which is monitored for traffic although collection of these statistics could also be enhanced.

In interviews, partnership managers have suggested that they sometimes do not receive feedback from either institution on the annual reports; although they would find this very useful. These reports also often take a considerable amount of time to be finalised. There was also a general feeling that the partnership was being ‘micro-managed’, which we interpret as meaning too much focus on administrative details, potentially at the expense of more strategic decision-making and effective delegation. This would result in ineffective use of resources and a tendency to measure performance against indicators that can be easily satisfied internally (reports, meetings etc.), rather than metrics that relate to the overall goals of the organisation (making a measurable impact on the target groups etc.).

More broadly and fundamentally, it appears there is no common framework to monitor and evaluate the outputs, results and impacts of the partnership. There are currently no performance indicators for the youth partnership, and no targets to set out agreed expectations. Given the wider focus from the European Commission’s side, linked to the EU Youth Strategy, there is a growing need to address youth unemployment and be able to demonstrate results and impacts. It was also noted at the focus group that evaluation in the youth sector is not well-embedded and is not easy to do.
Many youth sector outcomes are intangible and qualitative in nature making them harder to measure. However good practices and models for evaluating softer and intermediate outcomes could be further explored and adopted. For example models such as Social Accounting\(^60\), Social Return on Investment\(^61\) and a range of softer outcome measures exist which could offer useful ideas.

Given the above, we recognise the difficulties in evaluating the impact of the partnership. The intervention logic of the programme is not well developed (see Relevance Chapter), so that there is no agreed definition of outputs, results and impacts for the partnerships’ work. The partnership’s intervention model is based on work with multipliers, rather than directly with young people. This means that results are more likely to be harder to measure, more qualitative in nature and interventions are based on an inference that doing ‘x’ will build the capacity and expertise of youth organisations, thus indirectly improving the situation of young people. It may help to set agreed indicators or measures which set out expectations through the use of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) objectives. For instance an example of an output indicator could be targets for numbers and types of participants at events. Data collection, surveys and qualitative research such as case studies can then be used to evaluate results and impacts accordingly.

Any monitoring and evaluation design also needs to be proportionate to the size of the investment; it would not be proportionate to survey young people to find out about the effects of the partnership as this would be costly and the line of influence is more indirect. Instead a more nuanced approach will be required to demonstrate results and impacts in a smaller proportion of the partnerships’ target groups and then an inference method can be used to extrapolate from the sample to the population. Further work on this will be required between the EC and CoE with the partnership to agree an overall intervention logic and accompanying monitoring and evaluation framework to accompany it for the new programme.

6.5 Sustainability

6.5.1 Extent to which activities would be likely to continue without European Commission support

The issue of sustainability concerns the type, reach and scale of activities. We have also already identified the valuable leverage effects that derive from the Partnership working with a range of external partners in delivering joint activities. Although it is difficult to say with any certainty, it is likely that a proportion of the activities would continue without EC support; because many are organised by third parties (especially events and training for practitioners). However, the European Commission would lose the range of benefits associated with involvement in the initiative, and their reach and scale would be reduced (in particular in terms of links to third countries and key geographical regions outside the EU).

The qualitative research revealed that both strategic and sector stakeholders felt that it was important the European Commission continued to fund the youth partnership; while a number commented that there was a lack of resources within the Council of Europe and therefore the EC’s contribution was important to ensure the type of work currently undertaken by the youth partnership continues. The importance of a strategic partnership between the two institutions is also an important consideration. When asked which activities would continue without the funding to the youth partnership, stakeholders were unable to pin point particular activities which would be reduced, although the general consensus was that activities would be discontinued.

\(^{60}\) http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/.
\(^{61}\) http://www.thesroinetwork.org/.
6.5.2 Extent to which the results have been properly disseminated to stakeholders and the public

A key aspect of sustainability is the dissemination activities undertaken to share knowledge and results. A final evaluation question related to sustainability concerns communication and dissemination: namely, to what extent have the results of the actions been properly (effectively) disseminated to stakeholders and the public? This question is addressed in the effectiveness chapter, Section 5.1.4 since dissemination is one of the activities / proprieties of the EU-CoE youth partnership.
7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section sets out conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation, drawing on all the evidence sources and the evaluator’s judgements.

Relevance and Complementarity
The objectives and activities of the youth partnership are relevant and complementary to the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy, the objectives of the Youth in Action programme, and the objectives of the future Erasmus+ programme. In particular the partnership provides a valuable framework for strategic cooperation between the EU and Council of Europe. It provides a mechanism to exploit synergies, to address issues of common interest to both institutions and achieve leverage effects. However, the process for identification of common themes and objectives could be further streamlined and improved.

Overall, the partnership’s objectives and activities are relevant to the needs of the target groups (policy makers, youth researchers, youth organisations and young people themselves), but the approach needs to be articulated more clearly in terms of multiplier effects and the extent to which individual young people and/or organisations and policy-makers should be targeted. This is particularly important in the light of the relatively modest amount of funding available and the need to avoid duplication with other activities organised by other organisations or DGs in the European Commission.

The internal logic of the objectives and activities is satisfactory, but there is scope to rationalise the current framework to develop a clearer causal link between the specific and operational objectives (by formulating a set of intermediate objectives for example) and to strengthen the importance of the geographical dimension, by making it a specific rather than an operational objective.

The robustness of the youth partnership’s framework of objectives and activities would be enhanced by the development of a complete logic for intervention that specifies types and numbers of intended outputs (for example number of events required and numbers of attendees at events), results and impacts in line with EU evaluation guidance and as recommended in the report on the cost-effectiveness of EAC interventions.62

Spreading the partnership’s activities widely may reduce the impact and have a detrimental effect on effectiveness and efficiency. A better understanding and evidence of impacts, derived from the type of approach described above, would help focus on two or three key areas, such as supporting youth work and building capacity, and paying attention to the geographical scope.

In terms of complementarity the youth partnership is a unique structure, which has a specific role and remit that is not duplicated by another organisation. However, it has been difficult to assess to what extent the youth partnership complements or contradicts the individual activities undertaken by other institutions and organisations throughout the EU in the youth field. In the evaluator’s opinion an improved planning and coordination process ensuring all relevant DG’s are involved when activities are proposed and a more focussed set of objectives and actions would reduce the potential for duplication as much as is feasibly possible.

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**Effectiveness**

The general objective to establish a framework for cooperation has been achieved and this framework for cooperation has fostered synergies and achieved complementarity with related programmes and policies across a range of institutions and organisations.

The specific objectives are very broad and it is therefore difficult to assess the tangible contribution that youth partnership activity has made to each one. This also leads to the conclusion that the scope of the youth partnership’s activities may be too wide. Concepts such as human rights and democracy are difficult to demonstrate a causal link of effectiveness against. Effects are likely to be more indirect than direct and rely on multiplier effects and the role of intermediaries. Overall the partnership is trying to address too many objectives and its target group is too diverse. A greater focus of activities and target groups might lead to a more effective and realistic programme of implementation. Exchange of good practice, work in third countries, training and dissemination of information were identified in the evaluation as the strongest activities.

These effects cannot be properly understood and acted upon unless a logic model or impact chain is developed for the youth partnership, including an inventory of intended effects coupled to measurable indicators. This challenge is compounded by the lack of a system for monitoring and evaluating impacts.

A range of relevant activities has been delivered and these have generally been well received and rated as satisfactory by target beneficiaries who gave evidence to this evaluation. The wide range of activities caters to a variety of target groups, but there is also a risk of over-stretch, where resources may be spread too thinly. Work to build the strength of the youth sector and third country activity are likely to provide the strongest potential impacts, since they offer potential multiplier and added value effects.

Promoting knowledge based youth policy research was an effective area of joint cooperation. The evidence suggested that the youth partnership helped to foster cooperation and synergies in this area, however some of the methods used cannot ensure that the information stays up-to-date (for example the country reports / fact sheets) and the conclusion is that this aspect could be further improved and modernised.

Supporting youth work and capacity building of youth workers at a European level was an effective area of the partnership’s work. Building the capacity of youth workers and the recognition of non-formal learning were also often referred by stakeholders as an effective area of work for the partnership. The conclusion is that these are areas where the partnership’s internal logic fits best – where it is focussed on working with youth sector multipliers.

The geographical focus of the partnerships is seen by sector stakeholders as effective, with strong linkages being developed with partners in third countries. This operational objective and the activities which fall out of it are appreciated by both institutions supporting the partnership, because of its strategic importance. The conclusion is that in future activities should focus more clearly on the target geographical regions.

The meetings, seminars, events and training run by the partnership were viewed positively by organisations in the sector. The publications and information provided were useful and a unique resource to the sector. However, in order to become more effective at disseminating its work the youth partnership needs to make more effective use of web based tools and researches such as the website and social media, where appropriate to the needs of target groups. For example youth workers or policy makers in target countries will use social media to varying degrees depending on
levels of access. Other target groups such as young people may be able to make greater use of social media.

Another area for development is in the reporting of activities and achievements. For example the annual reports do not offer information about how effective the activities have been; only that an activity has taken place and any user or participant feedback is lacking. Internal reporting and monitoring are activity rather than results-based. The types of data needed to conduct an assessment of impacts (e.g. feedback from events or on the take-up of publications) are not collected or reported on systematically.

When considering whether the results would have happened without the partnership the overall message is that it is a unique partnership with geographical reach that complements the activity that the two funding organisations offer. The work in these third countries is highly valued, particularly by those stakeholders based in third countries; the qualitative evidence suggests that this kind of support would not exist in the same form or with the same focus, without the youth partnership. Any potential for duplication with other activities organised by other DGs should however be carefully managed through sharing work programmes.

Efficiency

The evidence clearly indicates that the way the EU-CoE youth partnership is organised provides the basic tools to enable it to produce the intended effects i.e. through a joint working and joint funding model. This model is unusual compared with the way other partnerships operate between the EC and the CoE - most others are based on a majority funded basis (90% EC funded) which makes lines of responsibility and reporting much clearer. There is evidence that the youth partnership model is not as efficient as it could be, and the operational effectiveness of the management and monitoring systems is not optimized, leading to significant delays. Activities are often postponed from one year to the next and annual reporting is prolonged.

Essentially, operational efficiency is constrained by the administrative and management systems of the two institutions contributing to it, meaning in practice that the partnership has to address two sets of organisational (administrative) priorities. Subsequently there are two sets of reporting and monitoring systems, which are inconsistent and duplicate effort. This runs the risk of focusing too much on administrative detail and not enough on the impact of activity on wider strategic goals. Furthermore, the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation system and the absence of agreed targets or expectations linked to the activities and outputs is a significant weakness; since this makes the impact of the activity (and therefore its cost-effectiveness) very difficult to evaluate.

Cost effectiveness analysis suggests that activities such as events were provided at a reasonable cost per participant and unit costs did not appear excessive. Staff, management and administrative costs count for large part of the budget (around 50% of total budget), it is difficult to find suitable comparators for that figure, which would provide a fair benchmark. There is potential to simplify and streamline procedures in order to improve operational efficiency, thereby making more resources available for key strategic tasks including systematic monitoring and evaluation.

It was clear that without the co-funding of the European Commission and the Council of Europe the youth partnership would not be able to continue activities with the same scope, scale and geographical reach.
Recommendations:

1. At this stage, the European Commission and its partner the Council of Europe should focus on improving the efficiency of the operation of the youth partnership, before considering any of the options for re-organising it more fundamentally. The youth partnership's management and reporting structures should, in the longer term, then be reviewed. Alternative management and funding models are suggested in Chapter 6. The key objective should be to shift the use of staff resources from administration (duplication, parallel systems etc.) to management (monitoring and evaluation, risk management and measurement of impacts).

2. The European Commission, with assistance from its partner and the youth partnership should work through an intervention logic for the partnership which demonstrates a clear rationale and context for intervention, and determines a clear, defined and realistic general objective. The general objective should then be clearly linked to specific objectives, linked in turn to operational objectives, activities/outputs, results and impacts. This will ensure all partners and stakeholders have a clear vision and goals for the work of the partnership.

3. The European Commission and the Council of Europe with the youth partnership's assistance should develop a clear monitoring and evaluation framework for the partnership based on the logic for intervention, as outlined in point 2 above. The monitoring and evaluation framework should contain indicators and objectives that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) - as far as possible - which set expectations that the Council of Europe and European Commission agree upon. This monitoring and evaluation framework should then be the basis for monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting. The evaluation framework should be designed with the principle of proportionality in mind; taking into account the size of the funding and setting monitoring and evaluation requirements accordingly.

4. The European Commission should continue to review the general and specific objectives of the youth partnership on no more than a three yearly basis. Tri-annually appears to be the most proportionate timescale for frequency of the review of higher level objectives which are less likely to change greatly from year to year. Activities (outputs) should however be agreed on an annual basis; this approach will continue to give enough frequency of reflection to ensure annual work plans reflect the current needs and ensure there is enough flexibility in the work plan to enable the partnership to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and political contexts in the countries of focus.

5. The European Commission should assess its requirements alongside those of the Council of Europe, and consider those objectives or parts of the objectives that could be reduced or removed, enabling the partnership to focus on the most relevant objectives. Focusing the partnership's work on a smaller, more focussed range of operational objectives (priorities) and on its work at the policy and strategic level and in specific geographical areas (namely third countries) may improve its effectiveness.

6. The European Commission could encourage the partnership to take a more systematic and realistic perspective to implementation risk (via a risk register for example). This would also enable the partnership to assess the potential risks associated with undertaking particular activities, such as the potential for delays or cancellations or dealing with changing political contexts. The partnership could then identify low/high risk activities at an earlier stage, take steps to minimise risks and therefore increase their overall impact and efficiency.

7. The European Commission could encourage the partnership to make greater use of the potential of web and social media for disseminating the work and outputs of the youth partnership. This is important given the nature of the target audience, researchers and policy makers as well as young people themselves.