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**EU Youth Report**

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Results of the first cycle of the Open Method of Coordination  
in the youth field (2010-2012)**

*Accompanying the document*

**COMMISSION COMMUNICATION**

**Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of  
the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field  
(EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018)**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

#### *The EU Youth Strategy*

In 2009, the Council endorsed the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), known in short as the EU Youth Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Its objectives are to:

- (i) create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and
- (ii) promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-cutting approach, branching out into eight different policy areas ('fields of action'), which are the following: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Culture and Creativity, Volunteering, and Youth and the World.

The EU Youth Strategy and its implementation are based on the Open Method of Coordination, addressing both the Commission and Member States to take specific actions in the above-mentioned 'fields of action'. To this end, it proposes a set of instruments which include: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting; dissemination of results and monitoring; Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations; and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds.

The EU Youth Strategy invited the Commission and Member States to implement the strategy by fostering cooperation that cuts across all of the various policy fields concerned. Such an approach should be pursued at all levels, and policies can be improved by sharing good practices. Youth work should be supported, developed and recognised for its economic and social contribution.

#### *EU Youth Report: reporting on progress and looking ahead*

The period covered by the EU Youth Strategy is divided into three-year cycles, with the requirement to produce an EU Youth Report at the end of each cycle, the first of which will be drawn up in 2012 and 'consist of [...] a joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices. [...] The EU Youth Report should also serve as a basis for establishing a set of priorities for the following work cycle.'

This Staff Working Document supports the Commission Communication which presents the draft joint report on the EU Youth Report to the Council. Summarising the results of the first cycle (2010-2012), it presents the actions taken at EU-level and in Member States, as well as initiatives taken by young people themselves. Separate chapters report on achievements in all eight 'fields of action' of the strategy, the general organisation and approach to youth policy,

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<sup>1</sup> Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.

and the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers. The references made to Member States' activities are based on National Youth Reports submitted by them<sup>2</sup>. Young people are represented in the report by the European Youth Forum, which is an umbrella organisation of approximately 40 National Youth Councils and more than 60 international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

A second Staff Working Document supporting the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report 2012 provides a comprehensive picture of the situation of young people in Europe based on the latest available data, statistics and research. It portrays trends and developments in young people's conditions in different areas, corresponding to the 'fields of action'. It builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, which is an overview of 41 indicators that measure the most crucial aspects of the lives of young people in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

### **Results of the first cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field (2010-2012)**

#### *Actions at EU level*

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth puts young people high on its agenda and embraces a number of concrete initiatives to support them in getting jobs and dealing with related challenges during this crisis. Young people are the target group of the flagship initiative 'Youth on the Move', which promotes mobility as a means of learning. They are also impacted by two other flagship initiatives, 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs', which aims to improve employability and employment opportunities for young people, and 'A Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion', the aim of which is to combat poverty and exclusion from an early age.

In response to the unacceptably high youth unemployment rates, the Commission proposed a comprehensive set of measures under the 'Youth Opportunities Initiative' and urged Member States to make better use of the European Social Fund (ESF). It also proposed tailor-made national approaches to youth unemployment through its Country Specific Recommendations under the European Semester and through dedicated action teams set up to assist those Member States with above average unemployment rates.

To better prepare young people for the labour market, including in the medium term, and in line with the Europe 2020 benchmarks on tertiary education and early school leaving, the Commission intensified its efforts to ensure that young people acquire the relevant skills for the labour market and to improve education and training. The main initiative in this field is the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training, which was adopted in 2009 for the period up to 2020 (ET 2020). In this context, the Commission presented a strategy for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems in 2011.

The Youth in Action and the Lifelong Learning programmes support learning mobility in both formal and non-formal education. Projects supported in 2011 under the Lifelong Learning programme involved more than 530 000 participants, while Youth in Action projects involved more than 180 000 young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>3</sup> SEC(2011) 401. This document presents 40 indicators. One additional indicator has since been added, bringing the total number of EU Youth Indicators to 41.

The Commission is also endeavouring to lift obstacles EU citizens, including the young, encounter when using their EU rights, notably their right to free movement within the EU be it for leisure, volunteering, study or work<sup>4</sup>.

The EU Youth Strategy contributed to these efforts by making youth employment the overall thematic priority during the first Trio Presidency. This resulted in recommendations and proposals for action through Council resolutions addressing the social inclusion of young people, and the role of youth work in employability and accessing jobs. During the same period, the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers focused on youth employment. The resulting recommendations culminated in a Council resolution and were used to develop policy measures within the Commission.

The Trio Presidency of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus chose ‘youth participation in democratic life’ as the overall thematic priority between mid-2011 and end 2012. Youth participation is important not only to increase citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity among young people; it also helps young people to acquire valuable cross-cutting skills that add to their employability. This work led to Council conclusions and resolutions that emphasised the need for an inclusive approach to participation and to broaden the range of tools for youth participation. It addressed interaction with young people from EU neighbouring countries, especially in Eastern Europe, and ensured better outreach to include young people with fewer opportunities. It also looked at the creative potential of young people themselves in terms of developing opportunities for youth participation.

#### *Actions in Member States*

All Member States submitted reports on how the EU Youth Strategy has been implemented at a national level during the period 2010-2012. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>5</sup>. Norway, Switzerland, Montenegro, and Croatia submitted such reports voluntarily. The National Youth Reports can be downloaded from the Commission's [website](#).

This report presents a summary of actions taken, including tables indicating the aggregate responses of all National Youth Reports to the various questions. It analyses trends in the ‘fields of action’ and provides an overview of national policies, the use of funds in each country, as well as specific projects and initiatives. As mutual learning is key to the implementation of the European Youth Strategy, examples of good practice from the Member States are highlighted throughout the report.

A majority of Member States have legislation specifically pertaining to young people, some of which has only relatively recently come into effect. The same applies to National Youth Strategies. Structures for cooperation across ministries or with researchers reflect the cross-sectoral approach of the EU Youth Strategy at national level. Member States indicate that the EU Youth Strategy has been generally well received, and have taken measures after it came into force in all eight ‘fields of action’. The most dynamic policy field seems to be Participation, in which 18 Member States have taken action since the EU Youth Strategy came into force in 2010, whereas Culture and Creativity had the fewest initiatives.

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2010) 603.

<sup>5</sup> The National Youth Reports cover the period from beginning of 2010 until end 2011 and provide a preview of intended activities for 2012.

Many measures relating to the 'fields of action' had been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force, which shows that the strategy ties in well with Member States' priorities. For example, 22 Member States responded that they had already taken measures to promote learning mobility of all young people before the EU Youth Strategy came into effect in 2010. This was also the case in the areas of combating homelessness and financial exclusion; support of youth organisations and recognition of their important role in promoting participation from an early age.

The Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers has been successfully established. National Working Groups have been set up and Member States are ready to enhance the transparency and visibility of the process and monitor its follow-up.

#### *Actions by young people*

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) also contributed to this report by describing its activities and appreciation of measures in all eight 'fields of action'. The YFJ is a key player in the Structured Dialogue, with its President acting as chair of the European Steering Committee.

YFJ has been very active in the field of Employment and Entrepreneurship, including the submission of various position papers that have fed into the Commission's policy preparations. As youth organisations are an important provider of non-formal learning, the YFJ has also been active in promoting better recognition and quality of non-formal education.

A wide range of activities were carried out in preparation for and during the 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship, during which YFJ organised a large volunteering convention in Brussels.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This part of the EU Youth Report assesses the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy at national and EU level during its first three-year work cycle. Separate chapters cover all eight ‘fields of action’ of the Strategy.

Each chapter consists of three sections. The first provides an overview of initiatives taken at EU level during 2010-2012. The second includes a summary and a brief assessment of the initiatives and action taken at national level. This section is based on National Youth Reports submitted by all Member States<sup>6</sup> and Norway, Switzerland, Montenegro and Croatia. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>7</sup>. The third section presents measures taken by young people themselves, represented by the European Youth Forum – a body which represents some 90 National Youth Councils and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

National Youth Reports can be downloaded from the Commission's [website](#).

## 2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF YOUTH POLICY

### 2.1. Youth policy: a policy based on evidence

This EU Youth Report has been drawn up thanks to a framework for reporting and monitoring of youth data, research and policy activities. This framework is anchored in the EU Youth Strategy, which stresses the importance of evidence as a basis for policy.

EU Youth Policy is measured through a dashboard of EU youth indicators, which was drawn up in 2011 on the basis of a mandate from the EU Youth Strategy. An expert group fed into this dashboard<sup>8</sup>, which presents 40 indicators in all eight ‘fields of action’ of the EU Youth Strategy. Eurostat set up a [sub-section on youth](#) on its website, displaying latest available data for the indicators. The expert group on EU youth indicators meets annually to review the dashboard. The Commission also released [a study](#)<sup>9</sup> showing how Member States work with youth indicators.

The Commission furthermore conducted a Flash Eurobarometer-survey on youth ([F1319a](#) and [F1319b](#)) in early 2011. The data collected further contributed to the dashboard of EU youth indicators and a Commission benchmark on mobility.

This evidence-base was further enriched by findings from a cluster of five youth-oriented socio-economic research projects supported under the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Research Framework Programme, focusing on marginalised groups of young people and their inclusion in society

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<sup>6</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>7</sup> The National Youth Reports cover the period from beginning of 2010 until end 2011 and provide a preview of intended activities for 2012 as Member States reports had to be returned early 2012.

<sup>8</sup> SEC(2011) 401.

<sup>9</sup> ECORYS, 2011. *Assessing practices for using indicators in fields related to youth – Final Report for the European Commission, DG Education and Culture*. Available [here](#)



(young homeless people; young people from a public care background; ethnic minority youth including Roma and young unemployed).

The results and recommendations of these projects are summarised in the forthcoming policy review<sup>10</sup> *Social Inclusion of Youth on the Margins of Society: More Opportunities, Better Access and Higher Solidarity* and were discussed at a European [Conference](#) by European and national policy-makers, youth researchers and practitioners in the youth field (November 2011).

The Commission is supported in its evidence-based approach to youth policy by its partnership with the Council of Europe (CoE) in the youth field. The [EU-CoE Youth Partnership](#) manages the Pool of European Youth Researchers ([PEYR](#)) and the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy ([EKCYR](#)). It also has a comprehensive online database with knowledge on the situation of young people in Europe.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) also provides support in monitoring data and statistics in the youth field.

**2.2. Legal framework and national youth policy environment**

This chapter provides a general overview of how the Member States and participating non-EU countries – 31 in all – structure their youth policy in terms of legislation, policy strategies and inter-ministerial cooperation. It also presents how these countries perceive the impact of the EU Youth Strategy at the national and local levels as well as other linkages between youth policy at national and EU level.

*2.2.1. Youth laws or national legislation on youth*

**Responses in National Youth Reports<sup>11</sup>**

Does your country have a 'youth law' or legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	27	3	3	21
No	◇	6		1	5

Although most Member States report to have legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people, the responses do not easily lend themselves to analysis. For instance, some countries which answer in the affirmative to the question whether they have specific legislation on youth make reference to legislation on children. Most countries operate with an overlap in age between children and young people (children defined up to the age of 18 and young people usually from the age of 15), and in some countries the division between children and youth is vague. It should be noted that several of the countries reporting that they do not have a 'youth law' or specific legislation on young people, may have specific legislation on children, defined up to the age of 18

<sup>10</sup> Kutsar, D. and Helve, H., 2012. *'Social Inclusion of Youth on the Margins of Society: More Opportunities, Better Access, and Higher Solidarity'* Policy review of the Youth Research Cluster on Social Inclusion (forthcoming). The policy review will be made available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Belgium appears in a separate column because there are different contributions from the three language communities of Belgium.

Many Member States refer to specific youth laws (see Table 2-A). In countries with a federal structure, the regions are autonomous on youth issues: In **Belgium**, the three Communities have separate youth legislation, and legislation on youth is in place in all 17 Autonomous Communities of **Spain**. In **Austria** and **Germany**, national legislation is supplemented by legislative acts at Federal State level. In **Italy** legislation in this area only exists at regional level.

Whereas most Member States have legislation on young people, such legislation is in most cases recent, which suggests that youth legislation is an area still under development.

**Table 2-A: Overview of youth laws or national legislation on youth**

(Web-links included where provided)	
<b>EU MEMBER STATES</b>	
BELGIUM:	Laws and legislative acts pertaining to young people's rights and well-being exist in all Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking).
BULGARIA:	The Family Code (2009, amended 2010) settles relationships between parents and children. Other legislative acts cover various issues relating to youth, among them employment, health, physical education and sport.
CZECH REPUBLIC:	A number of laws address young people's rights, welfare and care services, social protection, education, etc.
DENMARK:	There is no specific youth law or youth legislation.
GERMANY:	Legislation on child and youth (adopted 1990) available online at <a href="http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/">http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/</a> (in German).
ESTONIA:	The Youth Work Act was adopted in 1999; the renewed law came into force in 2010.
IRELAND:	The Youth Work Act was adopted in 2001: <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2001/en.act.2001.0042.pdf">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2001/en.act.2001.0042.pdf</a> (in English).
GREECE:	A number of laws concern young people's rights to education and information, health and social protection, youth participation in elections, entrepreneurship and employment, etc.
SPAIN:	At regional level, there exists specific legislation on youth, such as training, employment, health, housing, education, environment, culture, sports, tourism and recreation, associations, voluntary work, etc.
FRANCE:	There is no specific youth law. However, legislation which covers young people exists in various areas, such as education, employment, social affairs, health, justice, professional training, etc.
ITALY:	No national youth law, but some legislation exists at regional level.
CYPRUS:	The main legislation concerning youth is the Youth Board Law of 1994 (available in English). Additionally, there are other laws addressing the needs/rights of young people.
LATVIA:	The Youth Law is from 2009 and was amended in 2011: <a href="http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=175920">http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=175920</a> (only Latvian).
LITHUANIA:	The Law on a Youth Policy Framework (2003) outlines the main concepts of youth policy, defines youth policy areas and establishes principles of the implementation of youth policy.
LUXEMBOURG:	There is a Youth Law (2008) and a Law on Youth Volunteering (2007).

HUNGARY:	There is a law on the Children and Youth Fund (1995) and a Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the Functioning of the National Children and Youth Fund and the Regional Youth Services (1999).
MALTA:	No legislation on youth but a Commissioner for Children Act, Chapter 462 of the Laws of Malta: <a href="http://www.mjha.gov.mt/LOM.aspx?pageid=27&amp;mode=chrono&amp;gotoID=462">http://www.mjha.gov.mt/LOM.aspx?pageid=27&amp;mode=chrono&amp;gotoID=462</a> (English version).
NETHERLANDS:	The Youth Care Act 2005 and the Social Support Law 2007 address child and youth issues. A new youth law will soon replace the Youth Care Act. Youth Care Act: <a href="http://english.minvws.nl/en/folders/djb/2005/youth-care-in-the-netherlands.asp">http://english.minvws.nl/en/folders/djb/2005/youth-care-in-the-netherlands.asp</a> Social Support Act: <a href="http://english.minvws.nl/en/themes/social-support-act">http://english.minvws.nl/en/themes/social-support-act</a> (English version).
AUSTRIA:	There is a Federal Youth Promotion Act (2001): <a href="http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/Youth/YouthPromotion/Seiten/default.aspx">http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/Youth/YouthPromotion/Seiten/default.aspx</a>
POLAND:	The Act on promotion of employment and labour market institutions (2004) outlines special measures for unemployed under the age of 25.
PORTUGAL:	All youth legislation (latest revisions in 2011) is available online at <a href="http://juventude.gov.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/Legislacao_Juventude.aspx">http://juventude.gov.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/Legislacao_Juventude.aspx</a> (in Portuguese). There are youth protection acts in all nine regions. English versions are available upon request.
ROMANIA:	The Romanian Youth Law was adopted in 2006.
SLOVENIA:	Legislation on youth include the Youth Councils Act, <a href="http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1_ANG.pdf">http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1_ANG.pdf</a> , and the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, <a href="http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf">http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf</a> (English version).
SLOVAKIA:	Different legislation addresses needs and rights of young people. The legal act closest resembling a youth law is the Youth Work Support Act (2008).
FINLAND:	There is a Youth Act (2006), <a href="http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/?lang=en">http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/?lang=en</a> (in English), and several other acts that address welfare and health, rights, education and training.
UNITED KINGDOM:	There is the Children Act (2004), <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents</a> , and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009). Furthermore, in Wales there is the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (2011) and in Scotland the Commissioner for Children & Young People Act (2003).
<b>NON-EU COUNTRIES</b>	
SWITZERLAND:	There is a Federal law on the Promotion of extracurricular Child and Youth Welfare (2011).
MONTENEGRO:	There is different legislation pertaining to young people's rights and well-being. A separate Youth Law is planned, scheduled for adoption in 2012.
CROATIA:	Law on Youth Advisory Boards (LYAB), adopted in 2007.

### 2.2.2. National Strategies and Action Plans or cross-sectoral strategies specifically referring to youth issues

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your country have a National Youth Strategy and/or Action Plan, or a cross-sectoral strategy specifically referring to youth issues?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3	4	21
No	◇	5			5

Even in the absence of a National Youth Strategy or action plan, **Ireland** and **Spain** stress that strategies existed previously and that new strategies are expected to be in place by the end of 2012. **Portugal** and **Spain** are currently drafting a White Paper on Youth. All ongoing processes mention that consultations with young people are an inherent element in the development of youth policy. In **Austria** a national Action Plan for the Rights of Children and Youth has been in place since 2004.

As is true for youth legislation, National Youth Strategies and action plans are in many cases relatively recent. A substantial number of countries in which strategies are already in place, report ongoing processes to develop new strategies. This again suggests that youth policy is an area of increasing importance at national level.

### 2.2.3. Institutional mechanisms aimed at cross-sectoral youth policy

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or any other institutionalised mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such an institutional mechanism has existed since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ■		27	1	4	22
YES, such an institutional mechanism was established after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●		4	2		2
NO, but we have an ongoing initiative to establish such an institutional mechanism in 2012. ▲		1			1
NO, we do not plan to establish such an institutional mechanism. ◆		1			1

There are many examples of standing working groups or advisory bodies with representatives of different ministries. In the French community of **Belgium**, a permanent inter-ministerial Conference on Youth has existed since July 2011 at the level of Ministers. In **Cyprus**, an inter-ministerial Consulting Committee on Youth consists of representatives of 10 ministries and various government agencies. In the **Czech Republic**, the Youth Chamber, which is an advisory body to the Youth Minister and consists of representatives from various ministries and youth stakeholder groups, has been transformed into an efficient instrument for the implementation of youth policy. In **Spain**, the Inter-ministerial Commission for Youth comprises a senior representative of each ministry plus the president of the National Youth Council, and its role is to propose government programmes and measures in the youth field. The Council of Youth Affairs in **Lithuania** consists of 6 representatives of different ministries and 6 representatives of the Lithuanian Youth Council, and submits proposals on youth policy to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

Several Member States mention that the EU Youth Strategy's emphasis on a cross-sectoral approach has played an important role for the recognition of youth policies and strategies at national level.

#### FRANCE

##### Policy in favour of young people

The document of transversal policy 'Policy in favour of young people' is an annual annex to the draft of the budget law. It shows the policy pertaining to young people from the age of 3 to 30 with measures taken, indicators of performance and dedicated funding including costs of human resources (€ 74.9 billions). Documents of transversal policy allow another perspective on the budget, but are not subject to parliamentary decision. The document on youth policy is written according to an inter-ministerial procedure established by the Ministry of Finance. The policy is presented along five strategic axes. In addition to informing Members of Parliament, the document aims to harmonize the policies between the ministries involved in its preparation and to detect possible synergies. It can be downloaded [here](#).

## 2.2.4. Linkages between youth policy and youth research

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Is there an institutionalised and regular cooperation between the Ministry responsible for Youth and the youth research community in your country?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such cooperation has existed since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	22	1	3	18
YES, such cooperation was established after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	2	1	1	0
NO, but we have an ongoing initiative to establish such cooperation in 2012.	▲	6			6
NO, we do not have any initiative to establish such cooperation.	◆	3	1		2

Member States' governments take different approaches to institutionalised cooperation with researchers. A significant number of Member States fund Youth Institutes which often conduct research themselves. In the cases of **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, and **Portugal** these institutes are part of a university, whereas research centres in the **United Kingdom** have a stronger emphasis on secondary analysis.

**Germany** and **Austria** both issue youth reports outlining the situation of young people during each parliamentary term. **Estonia** refers to the organisation of cooperation seminars by the Youth Institute. In **Slovakia**, cooperation takes place in working groups. Facilitation of information exchange and stimulation of research is the focus of the Nordic Youth Cooperation Committee in **Denmark** and the Youth Institute in the **Netherlands**. The Nordic Youth Cooperation Committee derives new ideas also from the European dashboard of youth indicators. The Youth Research Society in **Finland** promotes of multidisciplinary youth research and was founded as non-profit organisation already in 1988, the earliest year referred to by Member States responding to this question.

With **Bulgaria**, **Greece**, **Italy**, **Latvia**, and **Lithuania** nearly all the Member States reporting ongoing initiatives are currently trying to establish a permanent network of youth researchers.

## 2.2.5. Strategies and measures to support youth work

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the Government of your country have a strategy to acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society, in line with the Council Resolution on Youth Work (2010) <sup>12</sup> ?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, we already had such a strategy in place since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	19	3	1	15
YES, we have set up such a strategy since the adoption of the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	3		1	2
NO, we do not have such a strategy in place, but the Government is planning to set up such a strategy in the coming year.	▲	4			4
NO, the Government is not planning to set up such a strategy.	◆	7		2	5

The Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany**, and **Finland** point out their long tradition of youth work, by referring to well established funding procedures at various levels and long standing laws. **Finland** not only underlines the importance of local, regional, and national youth work in its policy programme, but also of virtual youth work.

Several Member States refer to parts on youth work in their National Youth Strategies (e.g. **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, and **Hungary**). In **Slovenia** the notion of the entire youth work sphere

<sup>12</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

being in the public interest is anchored in law. **Spain** reports on efforts in the area of professional qualifications in the youth field; **Malta** refers to its university as an institution of higher education for the youth field also delivering courses leading to vocational qualifications. In the **Czech Republic** high quality NGOs are awarded the honorary title ‘Organisation recognised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the field of children and youth work’.

Even some Member States that report not having or planning such strategies are actively promoting youth work. In **Bulgaria**, the significance of youth work is outlined in the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020); in **Slovakia** there is a Youth Work Support Act and in **Sweden** – where youth work is a local responsibility – one of the main roles of the National Board of Youth Affairs is to provide relevant support to municipalities. **Cyprus** and **Poland** report that they provide active support to youth work through their policies.

The most frequently mentioned measure is the financing of non-governmental youth associations.

<p><b>MALTA</b></p> <p><b>Youth Information Portal</b></p> <p>Youth Information Malta consists of a web portal which includes general information compiled in Maltese and in English about a wide range of topics. A search function and accessibility features are also included. The information is continually updated and includes detailed contact information of various organisations together with embedded hyperlinks to access further details directly from the source. The portal provides also a showcase of news, music, and events pertaining to the youth field. The streaming music function is aimed primarily to promote local artists and their music with direct links to the respective websites. The events section is a showcase of events and besides informing young people, it assists youth organisations, agencies and groups in their promotions. Youth Information Malta aims also to be a common meeting platform for young people, institutions, organisations and youth workers. For more information click <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
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### 2.2.6. Using general EU funding opportunities for youth initiatives

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government carried out specific initiatives targeting young people or the field of youth policy utilising EU funding opportunities through the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and/or the Rural Development Fund, or any other relevant EU funds or programmes such as PROGRESS?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, we have carried out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above in the past, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, but they are now finalised.	■	13	1		12
YES, we are currently carrying out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above.	●	14	2	1	11
NO, we have not carried out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above, but we are planning to do so in 2012.	▲	1		1	0
NO, we do not plan to utilise the EU funding opportunities mentioned above to finance youth activities or projects.	◆	5		2	3

A majority of projects funded by the EU through the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund and/or PROGRESS focus on labour market integration of young people. Employability is strengthening e.g. through better recognition of non-formal learning and supporting youth work, training of youth workers, stimulating



entrepreneurship, improving information services and developing ICT skills. Other projects focus on developing networks of youth centres and regional youth policy, improving systems of formal education, and promoting rural development by working with young farmers. Diverse groups of young people at risk of social exclusion and poverty or with special needs (immigrants, disabled, early school leavers) are often targeted.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.3. Implementation of the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy

### 2.3.1. Impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national or local level

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy, adopted in November 2009, has influenced youth priorities in your country at the NATIONAL level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
It has reinforced existing priorities.	◀	27	2	2	23
It has led to a re-orientation of policy.	▶	3	1		2
It has had little or no impact on national youth policy.	—	3		2	1

Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy has influenced youth priorities in your country at the LOCAL and/or REGIONAL level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
It has reinforced existing priorities.	◀	24	1	2	21
It has led to a re-orientation of policy.	▶	2	1		1
It has had little or no impact on local and regional youth policy.	—	7	1	2	4

Member States will differ in national priorities and vary their emphasis on different policy areas linked to youth. However, the National Youth Reports show a strong coherence between national initiatives and areas of action which they committed to prioritise through the EU Youth Strategy.

Nearly all Member States report that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced their national priorities, with several stressing its direct impact. For example, the strategy was a guiding document for developing the National Youth Policy Programme in **Lithuania**, the link between youth policy and labour market policies was strengthened in **Austria** and the dialogue with youth was further developed in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**.

The EU Youth Strategy seems to have had less impact on local and regional youth policy, which is not unexpected given that the Open Method of Coordination focuses on cooperation between the EU and Member States. Implementation at regional and local level will require tailoring measures to regional and local circumstances, which probably requires more time.

### 2.3.2. Challenges in implementing the EU Youth Strategy at national level

According to the National Youth Reports, the EU Youth Strategy has been the subject of many conferences and meetings across Europe, and all national governments have actively promoted the Strategy. This is particularly true for the Member States which held the EU Council Presidencies during the first two years of the EU Youth Strategy: **Spain, Belgium, Hungary and Poland**.

<sup>13</sup> The question does not refer to EU programmes such as the Lifelong Learning or Youth in Action programmes.



When assessing the challenges in implementation, many National Youth Reports noted that the close links between the EU Youth Strategy and National Youth Strategies made it artificial to separate the two. Among the main challenges mentioned by most countries were:

- cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation;
- convincing local authorities to put ‘youth’ on the agenda;
- highlighting the added value of non-formal education and youth work for other policy areas;
- consequences of high youth unemployment and its social impact on young people.

The financial crisis only exacerbates these challenges.

Few countries carried out assessments on the impact of the EU Youth Strategy at national level and when it occurred, it usually coincided with assessing national policy (such as in the **Czech Republic, Slovenia and Finland** in 2011). In **Estonia**, the Estonian Youth Work Centre developed a youth monitoring system and since 2010 publishes a youth monitoring yearbook. **Germany** is the only country undertaking a separate evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy, focusing on its governance instruments.

### *2.3.3. Consultation of young people in the reporting exercise*

In line with the bearing principle of youth participation in the EU, nearly all Member States involved young people in developing the National Youth Report. The most common way has been to involve the National Youth Council, the National Working Group for the Structured Dialogue and/or other relevant youth stakeholders, but some have also organised specific events (**Ireland**), or had an online consultation (**Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia**). Several countries noted, however, that the format of the National Youth Report was not suitable for a wider consultation with young people.

**Table 2-B: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – legal framework, youth policy environment, implementation of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>14</sup>**

EU Member States	Does your country have a 'youth law' or legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people?	Is the document available in other languages, in full or abbreviated version?	Does your country have a National Youth Strategy and/or Action Plan, or a cross-sectoral strategy specifically referring to youth issues?	Is the document available in other languages, in full or abbreviated version?
Belgium German-speaking	▼	▼	▼	◇
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium French	▼	◇	▼	◇
Bulgaria	▼	◇	▼	◇
Czech Republic	▼	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	◇		◇	
Germany	▼	◇	▼	◇
Estonia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	▼	◇	◇	◇
Greece	▼	◇	▼	◇
Spain	◇	▼	▼	◇
France	◇		▼	◇
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	▼	◇
Lithuania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▼	◇	▼	◇
Hungary	▼	◇	▼	▼
Malta	▼	▼	▼	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	◇
Austria	▼	▼	◇	◇
Poland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Portugal	▼	◇	▼	◇
Romania	▼	◇	◇	◇
Slovenia	▼	▼	◇	
Slovakia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Finland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sweden	◇		▼	▼
United Kingdom	▼	◇	▼	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◇		▼	◇
Switzerland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Montenegro	▼	◇	▼	▼
Croatia	▼	◇	▼	▼

▼ Yes      ◇ No

<sup>14</sup> Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.

EU Member States	Does your Government have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or any other institutionalised mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy?	Is there an institutionalised and regular cooperation between the Ministry responsible for Youth and the youth research community in your country?	Does the Government of your country have a strategy to acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society, in line with the Council Resolution on Youth Work (2010)?	Has your Government carried out specific initiatives targeting young people or the field of youth policy utilising EU funding opportunities?
Belgium German-speaking	●	◆	■	●
Belgium Flemish	■	●	■	●
Belgium French	●	■	■	■
Bulgaria	■	▲	◆	■
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	◆	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	■	●
Estonia	▲	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	▲	▲	■
Spain	■	■	■	●
France	■	■	■	◆
Italy	■	▲	▲	●
Cyprus	■	◆	◆	■
Latvia	■	▲	■	◆
Lithuania	■	▲	●	●
Luxembourg	■	■	●	●
Hungary	■	■	■	■
Malta	●	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	◆
Austria	■	■	■	●
Poland	■	■	◆	■
Portugal	■	■	▲	■
Romania	■	■	▲	■
Slovenia	●	▲	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	◆	●
Finland	■	■	■	●
Sweden	■	◆	◆	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU</b>				
Norway	■	■	■	◆
Switzerland	■	■	◆	◆
Montenegro	■	●	●	▲
Croatia	■	■	◆	●

- Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- ▲ No, but plans 2012
- ◆ No, without plans

EU Member States	Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy, adopted in November 2009, has influenced youth priorities in your country at the NATIONAL level?	Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy has influenced youth priorities in your country at the LOCAL and/or REGIONAL level?
Belgium German-speaking	▶	▶
Belgium Flemish	◀	◀
Belgium French	◀	—
Bulgaria	◀	◀
Czech Republic	◀	◀
Denmark	—	—
Germany	◀	◀
Estonia	◀	◀
Ireland	◀	◀
Greece	◀	◀
Spain	◀	◀
France	◀	◀
Italy	◀	◀
Cyprus	◀	◀
Latvia	◀	◀
Lithuania	▶	▶
Luxembourg	◀	—
Hungary	▶	—
Malta	◀	◀
Netherlands	◀	◀
Austria	◀	◀
Poland	◀	—
Portugal	◀	◀
Romania	◀	◀
Slovenia	◀	◀
Slovakia	◀	◀
Finland	◀	◀
Sweden	◀	◀
United Kingdom	◀	◀
<b>Non-EU Members</b>		
Norway	—	—
Switzerland	—	—
Montenegro	◀	◀
Croatia	◀	◀

- ◀ It has reinforced existing priorities
- ▶ It has led to a re-orientation of policy
- It has had little or no impact on youth policy

### **3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **3.1. Commission initiatives and action**

##### *3.1.1. Youth employment: a priority for the European Union*

With the effects of the economic crisis on young people becoming ever more severe, youth employment is an on-going concern for the EU. Since 2010, the youth unemployment rate has increased to well over more than one in five young Europeans, with much higher rates for young people in a number of Member States or for young people with specific challenges, such as early school leavers.

The Europe 2020 strategy dedicates two of its flagship initiatives ‘Youth on the Move’<sup>15</sup> and ‘An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs’<sup>16</sup> to improving employability and employment opportunities for young people. ‘Youth on the Move’ was welcomed by the Council, thereby emphasising the particular relevance of its cross-sectoral nature<sup>17</sup>. In December 2011 the Commission launched the ‘Youth Opportunities Initiative’<sup>18</sup> to further stress the need for action on the high youth unemployment rates and the growing number of young people not in employment, education or training (so-called NEETs).

The [Youth Opportunities Initiative](#) emphasised the primary role of Member States in tackling unemployment and advocated mobilising the European Social Fund (ESF) to further support skills development and the transition from school to work. With strong backing from the informal European Council of 30 January 2012, the Commission set up youth action teams to support the eight Member States<sup>19</sup> with the highest youth unemployment rates. These teams worked together with national authorities and social partners to develop actions appropriate for each country, along with advising on the use of Structural Funds to support short- and long-term measures.

To supplement national efforts, the Commission initiated a number of measures at EU level, which included:

- The implementation of a preparatory action on ‘Youth guarantee schemes’ that will help Member States to ensure that all young people are in a job, further education or training within four months of leaving school.
- ‘A quality framework for traineeships’ scheme that aims to increase the transparency on the conditions for trainees throughout the EU.
- ‘Your first EURES job’, a targeted job mobility scheme in the form of a preparatory action that aims, in 2012-2013, to reach out to around 5 000 young people to help fill job vacancies in other Member States.

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<sup>15</sup> COM(2010) 477.

<sup>16</sup> COM(2010) 682.

<sup>17</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 9-11.

<sup>18</sup> COM(2011) 933.

<sup>19</sup> Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

The Commission also proposed to dedicate more EU funds to apprenticeships, student placements in enterprises, young volunteers and entrepreneurs under the ESF, the Lifelong Learning, the Youth in Action and the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs programmes. A significant share of the budget for social innovation will be targeted at youth in disadvantaged situations and areas.

To enhance transparency, the EURES European Job Mobility Portal gives access to over 1.3 million vacancies and 850 000 CVs, and the European Vacancy Monitor provides quarterly labour-market updates on the job opportunities available in different sectors and countries across the EU. The awareness-raising campaign ‘Youth@Work’ (April 2011-May 2012) was aimed to link up young people and SMEs.

Mutual learning and exchange of good practice on youth employment has taken place with support of the ESF. For instance, a Youth Employment Network on education, counselling mobility and entrepreneurship, (consisting of **Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, and Sweden**) which produced a [Benchmarking Report](#) in 2011 showcasing best practices based on studies and evaluation as a basis for a Common Reference Framework.

The EU placed further efforts into improving the quality of traineeships and work placements it supports through its programmes. A new study<sup>20</sup> provided a comprehensive overview of how traineeships are structured in Member States, from legislative frameworks, governance and financing, to target groups, sectors and professions. The study pointed out issues around the current arrangements where improvement is needed, including areas related to quality, and the need for new opportunities particularly for young people who are unemployed, low skilled or at risk of social exclusion. The outcomes of the study will be fed into on-going work related to moving obstacles to mobility and improving the quality of traineeships and work placements.

### 3.1.2. Youth employment: the priority of the first cycle under the EU Youth Strategy

Given the rising youth unemployment rates, the Trio Presidency during 2010 and the first half of 2011 (**Spain, Belgium and Hungary**) chose ‘youth employment’ as the overarching priority.

Within the Trio Presidency, each country focused on a national priority, proposing action contributing to labour market access and employability of young people from this specific angle. Under the Spanish Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on the *active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty*<sup>21</sup>; and under the Belgian Presidency a Resolution on *youth work*<sup>22</sup>. Under the Hungarian Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on *encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life*<sup>23</sup>, which stressed the value of participation in acquiring key competences. Several events explored concrete policy approaches, including e.g. a peer

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<sup>20</sup> European Commission, 2012. *Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available [here](#).

<sup>21</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, pp. 1-6.

<sup>22</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

<sup>23</sup> OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, pp. 1-5.

learning seminar on cross-sectoral youth policy cooperation in Madrid and a [seminar](#) on flexicurity.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ), in cooperation with the Trio Presidency, the Commission and National Working Groups, conducted a Structured Dialogue on youth employment which resulted in a number of concrete recommendations. The Council endorsed later a number of recommendations in a Resolution, which notably called for better labour market information, the recognition of non-formal learning, a quality framework for internships, the flexibility to reconcile work and private life, and more opportunities for mobility<sup>24</sup>. These recommendations were well received and taken further by Commissioners Vassiliou and Andor.

### *3.1.3. Entrepreneurship: another career option*

The Commission promotes entrepreneurship as a career option. Within education policy, peer learning activities and targeted funding of European projects aim to promote entrepreneurship as a key competence in the education systems. The '[Erasmus for Entrepreneurs](#)' – expected to finance around 600 exchanges in 2012 – offers new entrepreneurs learning experiences in businesses abroad. The [European Progress Micro-finance Facility](#)<sup>25</sup> financially supports potential young entrepreneurs and € 3 million of the ESF Technical Assistance will be used to support Member States schemes for young business starters and social entrepreneurs. The Commission organised meetings with youth representatives, stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss policy initiatives to cooperate on entrepreneurship promotion and share experience.

## **ROMANIA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

### **Learning how to help young people find their place in society**

The project trained youth leaders from Azerbaijan, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine in working with young people facing unemployment, marginalisation and social exclusion. It guided them in techniques to stimulate entrepreneurial skills among youth, and to interest unemployed young people in seeking qualifications, employment and involvement in society. 22 young people took part in this 10-day training course funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Romania in mid-2010. It was hosted by Kasta Morrely in Iasi, Romania, a human rights organisation that promotes skills central to the development of a democratic society. Through a non-formal approach, discussions addressed entrepreneurship and business strategies, social inclusion, youth unemployment in Europe, vocational qualifications, the socioeconomic situation in participants' countries and the challenges of engaging unemployed young people to participate actively in society. On the basis of this project, further cross-border cooperation has developed to reduce youth unemployment and support local communities.

## **3.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level**

### *3.2.1. Youth measures in flexicurity strategies*

#### **Responses in National Youth Reports**

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<sup>24</sup> OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, pp. 1-4.

<sup>25</sup> OJ L 87, 7.4.2010, p. 6.

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to take the specific situation of young people into account when devising flexicurity strategies?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	13		2	11
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	3		7
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	5			5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	5		2	3

**Flexicurity** is about optimising the balance between labour market flexibility and security for employees against labour market risks. Some countries adapted the legal framework regulating employment contracts to improve access of young people to the labour market. Others apply schemes to encourage employers to hire young people, e.g. through tax incentives, or grant special facilities for dismissed employees to find a job. Such measures are frequently combined with e.g. career guidance, counselling or opportunities to gain work experience.

### 3.2.2. Cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	3	1	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5		2	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	4		1	3

Many countries cite EU programmes such as Youth in Action and Lifelong Learning as key sources for opportunities to learn, train and work abroad. In **Sweden**, an evaluation of Youth in Action projects in the field of training showed their value in developing vocational, social and foreign language skills. In 2011 the **Malta** Qualifications Council started a Leonardo da Vinci [project](#) to test and implement the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training in a national context, facilitating the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes. There are also national cross-border programmes in vocational training open to students from a neighbouring country, e.g. between **Germany** and **France**, and programmes that organise professional training in other parts of the world.

The German ESF funded 'IdA Programme – Integration' offers work experience abroad focussing on helping young people facing difficulties to access the labour markets (e.g. disadvantaged youth, young unemployed, single mothers, and young people with disabilities).

Many countries actively promote opportunities to train or work abroad. The [EURES](#) network organises job days and campaigns around working abroad. One of the tasks of the [Eurodesk](#) youth information network, active in 33 countries, is to inform about mobility opportunities (e.g. in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, projects financed in this field include the website [www.gostrange.be](http://www.gostrange.be) and a bi-annual information fair the latter of which attracted 1 500 young people in 2011).

Other examples of policy initiatives to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for youth are a programme for supporting distance learning to young people in



remote areas of **Greece**, a ‘mobility semester’ for all undergraduates at the University of **Malta** and supporting young participants in ‘skills’ championships at national and international level in **Sweden**.

### 3.2.3. Career guidance and counselling services

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to develop career guidance and counselling services?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	1	4	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2		4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

Career and counselling services are frequently offered by education institutions as well as employment services. In some countries such guidance is guaranteed by law. Youth information centres can play an important role in counselling and provide information on job opportunities, e.g. in the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, where schools offer classes on ‘life planning’. The role of youth work is especially relevant for young people who are out of reach of regular education or employment systems and/or who need a second or third chance. In some countries, for example **Estonia**, career and educational guidance targets not only young people but also parents, teachers and youth workers. The ESF is often quoted as a source to develop career guidance services.

#### LATVIA

##### KIPNIS – Career education

In Latvia, the General Education Standard for secondary education includes career planning and development, integrated into the various teaching subjects. Subject teachers can themselves determine the methods for exploring this within the curriculum and schools can also integrate it in extracurricular activities. The ESF funded project KIPNIS provides career education guidelines and in-service teacher training on implementing such career education. For more information click [here](#).

Many countries offer targeted support, courses, counselling or work placements, to unemployed or vulnerable young people. A full year comprehensive counselling programme is available to young people in the French Community of **Belgium**, in which they can develop individual plans through, for instance, awareness-raising for jobs in promising sectors, sessions to explore one's own career path, information on job offers and, if appropriate, social support. Some countries use special approaches, such as one-stop-shops or online guidance. Other countries organise guidance on specific topics, such as in **Austria** where guidance centres advise girls on ‘non-traditional’ careers or in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** with its ‘Personal Development Trajectory’ for students in dual education and work. In **Bulgaria**, events brought together young jobseekers and employers to exchange expectations and requirements. This led to common criteria in selection procedures. There is also guidance for organisations that support young people, e.g. the **German** ‘Jobstarter’ for companies offering placements.


#### FINLAND

### **MAST – Common guidance**

The MAST project, supported by the ESF, developed a model for counselling at regional level for students in vocational training. It aims to lower drop-out rates and facilitate transition to work life. The project involved schools, youth workshops and others working with young people. Its success is based on strong cooperation between the partners involved and the use of a common guidance model, e.g. to facilitate the assessment of skills gained at work by the school. For more information click [here](#).

The ‘Career Card’ in **Greece** is designed to help young people choose training to complement their knowledge and skills, while the card will cover costs of counselling and training.

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network ([ELGPN](#)), supported by the Commission and bringing together experts from 26 countries, enhances better coordination of services, a common understanding of career management skills and making the most of new technologies.



## PORTUGAL

### Reflection for Action

The Portuguese NYC (CNJ) conducted a project ‘Reflection for Action – Towards Youth Employment’ to implement the third phase of the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. Seminars occurred from January to March 2011, through the implementation of five regional meetings and one national event. In the latter 300 young people living in Portugal took part, from different socio-economic, cultural backgrounds and geographical origin, side by side with decision-makers, politicians and experts. They identified concrete actions to be developed at EU level in terms of youth employment. Non-formal methods education was an integrated component of this project to ensure a participatory approach, focusing on young people's participation and cooperative work. The project produced a [website](#) and a Guide on the Rights of Young Workers.

### 3.2.4. Promoting quality internships and apprenticeships

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote quality internships and apprenticeships to facilitate the entry to, and progress within, the labour market?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	0			0

Traineeships are frequently available as part of formal education and several countries have dual track education systems combining classroom teaching with apprenticeships, sometimes tailored for young people with difficulties. The value of apprenticeships is supported by numbers: in Wales, **United Kingdom**, more than 75 % of apprentices achieve a full certificate. In **Malta**, 85 % of apprentices find employment or start a business.

Several countries have taken legal measures to promote apprenticeships. This is the case in **Finland** (to prevent replacing regular workers by interns and better protection of interns at work), **Germany** (to widen possibilities for corporate internships), **Romania** (to improve the framework for apprenticeships in the workplace), **Italy** (to improve apprenticeship contracts) and **Spain** (to make trainees eligible for social rights and benefits).

Broad policy programmes are also pursued. In **Germany**, specific measures include the ‘Wege ins Ausland’ working group, which has developed criteria and raised awareness for quality traineeships abroad; in the **United Kingdom**, a web-based apprenticeship vacancy system has been set up and apprentice-sharing between different employers is facilitated. Furthermore, **Austria** offers guaranteed placements in supra-company structures for apprenticeship-seekers in compulsory education and **Luxembourg** introduced a system in vocational training that transposes job profiles into learning profiles, listing all relevant competences to be acquired.

## PORTUGAL

### INOV – Training opportunities

To facilitate transition, Portugal's 'INOV' programme offers a range of training opportunities: INOV-CONTACTO offers international training to young graduates; INOV-Art offers internships in arts and culture; INOV-Energi@ aims to enhance socio-professional skills of unemployed graduates; INOV-Social promotes integration of young graduates in the non-profit sector; INOV-Jovem supports professional training in SMEs in innovation and business management; INOV-Mundus aims to promote involvement of young graduates in organisations active in development cooperation. In 2010, [INOV](#) attracted 35 100 participants.

**France** has developed a comprehensive strategy for vocational training. Measures include a card for apprentices with similar advantages as a student card, online facilities for partner search and completion of administrative procedures and the possibility to use temporary work agencies to hire apprentices. Financial support is available to individual companies as well as to improve the situation of apprentices and the vocational training system at large.

A number of countries offer graduates and unemployed young people opportunities to gain work experience and acquire further skills by extending unemployment benefits and/or providing financial compensation to employers who offer training opportunities. The job guarantee in **Sweden** targets young people aged 16 to 24 who have been enlisted with the governmental employment services for more than three months. The guarantee provides for professional orientation, work experience or even preparatory work to start a business. In 2010 on average 47 000 people per month participated.

In the National Youth Reports submitted by Member States, National Youth Councils in several countries call for further efforts to offer quality traineeships.

#### 3.2.5. Promoting sharing of responsibilities between partners

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote sharing of responsibilities between partners in order to facilitate reconciliation between professional and private life for both young women and young men?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1		1	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3			3

Support to young parents is available across Europe – albeit to different degrees – through access to childcare, along with financial support or tax deductions. Aside from maternity leave, paternity leave is increasingly available, which helps young women and men better share family responsibilities. There are also possibilities for longer 'parental' leave, income support, the right to part-time work and the promotion of flexible working arrangements. A number of countries run awareness campaigns and in some countries (such as **Denmark**, **Austria** and **Slovenia**) companies can perform audits to test their 'family-friendliness'.

## LUXEMBOURG

### Megafamily

In Luxembourg, the Megafamily campaign on the balance between work and private life was launched in 2011 by the Ministry responsible for equal opportunities. It offers online evaluation tools to check one's own situation, targeting both families and businesses. The 'familytest' reveals inequalities between a couple regarding household chores and inspires a discussion on the division of labour. Moreover a wide range of information helpful to reconcile private and work life can be found on the website, e.g. on maternity leave, social transfers, babysitters. Employers also have a space to exchange good practices. The [website](#) is also linked to a group on Facebook, which allows for communication on the subject.

### 3.2.6. Promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		1	1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

Support for potential or new entrepreneurs, including young people, in the form of information, coaching, business services, grants or loans, is available across the EU. In some countries, young entrepreneurs enjoy more favourable conditions to set up a business. Others address entrepreneurship within the education system to develop entrepreneurial skills and creativity. Programmes are available for young people to this purpose, such as the ones developed by [Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise](#); there is support for young people willing to develop their own 'junior enterprise' whilst still in education. [FINICIA-Jovem](#), developed by the Youth Institute in **Portugal**, stimulates creativity and innovation among young entrepreneurs, students, and young people in youth organisations.

Partners from **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Germany**, **Spain**, and **Lithuania** joined in a Community of Practice 'Learning network on inclusive entrepreneurship' ([COPIE](#)) to share experience on producing an environment in which entrepreneurship is a natural choice for people from all walks of life. This project (2009-2012) gathered representatives from ESF management and implementing bodies and was supported with a grant of € 630 000.

## UNITED KINGDOM – WALES

### YES – Empowerment

The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES) Action Plan in Wales seeks to equip young people with a 'can do' attitude and a drive to create opportunities for themselves. The YES Action Plan outlines measures for young people, education, business and community within three areas – Engaging: Promoting the value of entrepreneurship to create opportunities and develop young people – Empowering: Providing young people with entrepreneurial learning opportunities – Equipping: Supporting young people to create and grow businesses. For more information, click [here](#).

Most countries encourage sustainable activities. In **Greece**, training is available for unemployed to develop specific skills in sustainable economic development. **Cyprus** runs a scheme, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, for youth entrepreneurship, emphasising new technologies, innovative production and environmental issues to develop strong and competitive businesses. Programmes in some countries focus on certain economic activities, e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture in the **Czech Republic** supports young farmers who want to start their own business.

## LITHUANIA

### Rural Development

There are support possibilities for youth under the Rural Development Programme for Lithuania 2007-2013 consisting in setting up of young farmers, modernisation of agricultural holdings, improvement of economic value of forests, first afforestation of land, non-productive investments in forests, diversification into non-agricultural activities, support for business creation and development, encouragement of rural tourism activities. The applicants under these measures are young farmers (a farmer, who is less than 40 years old) and young people not less than 18 years old. For the implementation of the projects, priorities of the Rural Youth Committee in 2012 are: promoting entrepreneurship among rural youth; to organise the leisure time for rural youth; to encourage the community of rural youth; to encourage volunteering of rural youth; the development of rural youth-friendly spaces; to promote the ecological awareness. For more information, click [here](#).

Some countries support entrepreneurial initiative in the non-profit sector. The ‘Zakon o socialnem podjetnistvu’ (law on social entrepreneurship) in **Slovenia** promotes socially relevant activities or support to people from vulnerable backgrounds. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the project ‘Opinno’ encourages science students to orient themselves towards specific areas, including ‘energy and living environment’; ‘CORE’ encourages secondary school students to work around rational use of energy in cooperation with a start-up cooperative; and ‘VLAJO’ supports projects for secondary school students to start up their own business in fair-trade products. In **Italy**, micro-credits are available to develop social businesses or cooperatives that help increase jobs for disadvantaged or socially vulnerable groups.

### 3.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

Young people's voices were heard through the Structured Dialogue dedicated to this topic. The European Youth Forum (YFJ) built on this by providing further feedback to the Commission and the Council on the need for a strong youth dimension in EU policy activities. It also increased capacity building of youth organisations on youth employment policies through its [Youth Employment Action network](#).

The YFJ promoted a European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships, which sets the basic quality principles to ensure that internships and apprenticeships become valuable and quality experiences across Europe. The YFJ also launched a survey ‘Interns Revealed’ on the experiences of young interns in Europe, and [gathered signatures](#) from organisations on the website <http://qualityinternships.eu/> and from individuals via [Facebook](#). This support campaign continued in 2012 and the Charter was officially presented at the European Parliament in May 2012.

Youth organisations also expressed themselves on access to entrepreneurship in an opinion presented by the YFJ. This reaffirmed the need for stable, enabling, and supportive environments to engage in entrepreneurship. This was further discussed during the roundtable ‘Making Entrepreneurship a Real Option for Young Europeans’ organised in the European Parliament in May 2011.

The YFJ also issued an opinion on a [youth guarantee](#). This is important to improve the situation of young people being neither in education, employment nor training (NEETs), who often face poverty and social exclusion.

Young people gathered also at the ‘Youth Employment in Europe’ conference, co-organised by the YFJ and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris to express their opinions, concerns and suggestions on policy measures to support youth employment.

**Table 3-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives						
EU Member States	to take the specific situation of young people into account when devising flexicurity strategies?	to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people?	to develop career guidance and counselling services?	to promote quality internships and apprenticeships to facilitate the entry to, and progress within, the labour market?	to promote sharing of responsibilities between partners in order to facilitate reconciliation between professional and private life for both young women and young men?	to promote entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development?
Belgium German-speaking	●	■	●	■	●	■
Belgium Flemish	●	■	●	●	■	■
Belgium French	●	■	■	■	■	●
Bulgaria	●	●	●	■	●	●
Czech Republic	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Denmark	■	■	■	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	◆	■	■	●	◆	■
Greece	●	●	■	■	■	■
Spain	▲	▲	■	●	■	●
France	■	◆	◆	■	◆	◆
Italy	●	■	●	■	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Latvia	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lithuania	▲	◆	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	◆	■	■	●	●	◆
Hungary	●	●	●	●	■	■
Malta	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	●	◆	●	■	■	▲
Sweden	◆	■	■	●	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>						
Norway	◆	◆	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	◆	■	■	■	■	▲
Montenegro	■	●	■	●	▲	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans



## 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1. Commission initiatives and action

Education and training figures at the top of the EU agenda with one of the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy – the EU Strategy for jobs and growth – focusing on increasing tertiary attainment to at least 40 % and reducing the share of early school leavers to less than 10 % by 2020.

Through the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, adopted in 2009 for the period up to 2020<sup>26</sup> (ET 2020), Member States agreed that the long-term strategic objectives of EU education and training policies are (1) making Lifelong Learning and mobility a reality; (2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; (3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; and (4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Following up the Europe 2020 headline target of lowering the rate of early school leavers to less than 10 % by 2020, the Commission adopted in 2011 the Communication *Tackling early school leaving* which outlines policy measures aimed at reaching this goal. A policy handbook with examples of good practice accompanied the Communication, which was followed by a Council Recommendation in May 2012<sup>27</sup>.

The Commission also adopted in 2011 the Communication *Agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education*<sup>28</sup> which prioritises widening access of under-represented groups into higher education as a means to improve the attainment level.

Within the strategic framework, the first Joint Report<sup>29</sup>, adopted in 2012 by the Commission and the Council, finds that Member States are making slow progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 target of reducing the share of early school leavers below the 10 % benchmark. In 2011, the early school leaving rate averaged 13.5 % across the EU compared to 14.1 % the year before (with considerable differences between Member States). If current trends continue, the report states, the 2020 target will not be met. The share of low-achievers in basic skills in reading, maths and science, in contrast, is on track for meeting the EU target of less than 15 % by the end of the decade (20 % in 2009 compared to 24.1 % in 2006).

The report also shows that achieving the EU's tertiary attainment target – raising the share of 30 to 34 year olds who have graduated from higher education from the current EU average of 34.6 % to at least 40 % – cannot be taken for granted. Seven Member States score below 25 %. To support Member States' reforms and contribute to the goals of Europe 2020, the Commission published a new agenda for modernisation of Europe's higher education systems in September 2011<sup>30</sup>. The strategy identifies priority areas where EU countries need to do more to achieve shared education objectives and sets out how the EU can support their modernisation policies. EU-level initiatives will include a multi-dimensional university

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<sup>26</sup> OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, pp. 2-10.

<sup>27</sup> COM(2011) 18; Doc. 5242/11 – SEC(2011) 96; OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, pp. 1-6.

<sup>28</sup> COM(2011) 567.

<sup>29</sup> Annex I to the Annual Growth Survey 2012 COM(2011) 815.

<sup>30</sup> COM(2011) 567.

ranking and an ‘Erasmus for Masters’ loan guarantee scheme for students taking a full degree course abroad. The ‘Erasmus’ programme celebrated its 25 years’ anniversary with some 3 million European students having already participated. An Erasmus manifesto recently prepared calls to enhance the quantity of the programme (student numbers/targets and adequate funding, incl. for less well-off students) as well as its quality (especially regarding programme preparation and credit recognition).

The Commission encouraged learning mobility through ‘Youth on the Move’, one of the flagships of the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>31</sup>. ‘Youth on the Move’ was followed by a Council Recommendation on *learning mobility*<sup>32</sup> which provides guidance with regard to tackling administrative, institutional and legal obstacles to learning mobility. The new proposal for an integrated programme Erasmus for All<sup>33</sup> also devotes ample room to learning mobility, and the Council has adopted a new benchmark in this area<sup>34</sup>.

The EU Youth Strategy promotes youth work, which offers non-formal and informal learning environments. Youth work has been addressed during various events during 2010-2012. This included the first European Youth Work Convention in Ghent, organised by the Belgian Presidency with the support of the Commission (2010). The recommendations of this meeting were endorsed in a Council Resolution<sup>35</sup>. The youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe organised a symposium in 2011 on the recognition of youth work. The Commission has also launched a study on the value of youth work in the EU the results of which are expected in 2013.

#### **PORTUGAL – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

##### **Teach in order to learn**

This project took place in Luau, Angola, involving 12 volunteers from Portugal – along with Angolan young people – during one month in 2010. It started with an exploration of the education and training needs among local children and young people, to get to know the context they were operating in. On that basis, the volunteers built a library from scratch: 300 cases of books were delivered during the project, they classified and catalogued and incorporated them into the new library, which became a cultural centre for extra-school activities. They worked with local teachers in developing cultural and artistic activities and providing teaching materials ranging from health to information technology. They also gained a clearer sense of what European identity means – something that they continued to display on their return home, in meetings and presentations to their peers. The project also promoted international youth work and the concept and practice of volunteering. Local newspapers, newsletters, the radio, and videos made by the volunteers with their partners during the project and distributed widely on their return ensured its visibility.

Adult learning is a vital component of the lifelong learning continuum, covering the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities, general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training. Adult learning is important in

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<sup>31</sup> COM(2010) 2020.

<sup>32</sup> OJ C 199, 7.7.2011, pp. 1-5.

<sup>33</sup> COM(2011) 788.

<sup>34</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 31-35.

<sup>35</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

relation to the provision of second-chance opportunities and the acquisition of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, but also digital skills; in relation to targeted learning for early school leavers and young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) as stated in the recent Council Resolution on *a renewed European agenda for adult learning*<sup>36</sup>.

Intergenerational learning (IL) has been the main medium for the transfer of skills, knowledge and values between generations for centuries. Nowadays IL is increasingly taking place outside the family because of changes in structures of families and communities. IL in the workplace provides a means to imparting tacit knowledge and skills between older workers and apprentices and for younger workers to introduce new technical knowledge. Alongside its importance in the context of working environment, IL also has the potential to contribute significantly to promoting social cohesion in general and is admirably suited to addressing many of the key challenges facing Europe today, such as combating poverty, integrating young people at risk, environmental protection and intercultural harmony.

#### SPAIN, AUSTRIA, ROMANIA, SWEDEN – GRUNDTVIG

##### Seniors for Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

Once seniors leave the labour market, they neither have the opportunity to offer their know-how to others nor access to permanent learning processes (lack of motivation), leading to a kind of social exclusion. The project used NICT-based didactic methodologies to qualify seniors (coming from restructuring sectors) to take active part (via volunteer work) in training processes aimed at young people, thus giving value and transferring their knowledge to new generations. Through such efforts, they became experienced mentors and were offered the training they needed as well as the necessary tools and methodologies to enable effective knowledge transfer across generations. For more information, click [here](#).

To promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning, the Commission prepared a draft Council recommendation on this subject<sup>37</sup>. The Commission is also working on a tool to help individuals record and present skills acquired throughout their lives, particularly in non-formal settings, and will provide soon an updated inventory.

#### 4.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

This summary is primarily focused on non-formal learning issues, in line with the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy. It does not encompass all the priorities of the Education and Training Strategy.

##### 4.2.1. Developing non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving

###### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities as a way of addressing early school leaving?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24	1	2	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4

<sup>36</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 1-6.

<sup>37</sup> To be tabled in September 2012.

NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

Many countries present good practices around youth work activities targeting early school leaving. These include the Youth Coach initiative in **Austria**, the European Social Fund (ESF) co-funded ‘Developing youth work quality’ project in **Estonia** as well as youth centres in the **Czech Republic**, **Latvia** and **Lithuania**. Other examples include the project Learning for Young Adults in **Slovenia**, involvement of youth workers in the social guarantee scheme in **Finland**, special trainings for young people with fewer opportunities in KOMPrax project in **Slovakia** and activity agreements in the **United Kingdom**.

**Germany**, **France** and **Romania** mention second chance schemes, while the French Community of **Belgium**, **Luxembourg**, and **Poland** present specific voluntary services targeted at early school leavers (‘solidarité’ in **Belgium**, ‘service Volontaire d'orientation’ in **Luxembourg** and ‘Voluntary Labour Corps’ in **Poland**).

The need for an individual follow-up of the early school leaver by youth workers is often underlined in the National Youth Reports, e.g. by **France**, **Italy** and **Finland**.

The Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Spain** and **Sweden** put a particular emphasis on supporting the youth organisations or youth projects which address early school leaving.

Countries such as **Bulgaria** (with a project ‘To make the school more attractive’), **Greece**, **Italy** (National Guidance Plan) and **Malta** (with initiatives using non-formal learning within schools) underline the development of specific programmes in schools to prevent early school leaving.

**Denmark** and **Portugal** underline activities in favour of validation and recognition of non-formal learning.

## BELGIUM

### Time-Out – swap school for non-formal learning

‘Time-Out Projects’ exist for young people that come into conflict with teachers, with other children in their class or for those who have problems with formal education. During this time-out period, formal education or employment is replaced by non-formal learning opportunities. Young people are supposed to return to class after this time-out period. For more information, click [here](#).

#### 4.2.2. Use of EU tools for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to strengthen the use of the range of tools established at EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	1	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		2	1

Many countries present the state of play regarding the preparation of their National Qualifications Framework<sup>38</sup>, to be developed within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>39</sup>.

Besides the EQF, other European tools such as Europass, YouthPass, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are also often quoted.

The **Czech Republic**, **Estonia**, **Spain**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Slovenia** and the **United Kingdom** have chosen to focus their answer on validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning activities such as youth work, as there seem indeed to be many developments in this area. The **Czech Republic** has developed a Personal Competency Portfolio, which is a tool for recording key competences acquired in non-formal learning settings. **Spain** is currently working on the evaluation and recognition of competences gained via non-formal learning or work experience. A law on the validation and recognition of non-formal learning was adopted in February 2011 in **Latvia**. Non-formal education is being revised in **Lithuania** and the set of competences gained via these activities is being assessed. **Slovenia** also presents its ‘national occupational qualifications’, a scheme for recognition and assessment of non-formally obtained knowledge. In the **United Kingdom**, Wales has developed quality standards for youth work.

## ESTONIA

### Stardiplats – how to put non-formal learning into a CV

In 2010 the Estonian Youth Work Centre launched a non-formal learning recognition instrument ‘stardiplats’, which is a web-based online youth portal, where young people can gather and write down all of their formal education and working experiences and also all different kinds of non-formal education experiences. They can analyse and describe their non-formal learning experience in that portal and afterwards print them out on CV or Europass format if needed. The project is supported via the ESF co-funded state programme ‘Developing youth work quality’ initiated by the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and Research and carried out by the Estonian Youth Work Centre. For more information, click [here](#).

### 4.2.3. Promoting learning mobility of all young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote learning mobility of all young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	1	2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

<sup>38</sup> BE, BG, EL, CY, AT, PT, RO, SI, FI, SE, all indicate where they stand with this preparation.

<sup>39</sup> OJ C 111, 6.5.2008, pp. 1-7.

More than half of the Member States mention the key role of Youth in Action and other EU programmes, such as the Lifelong Learning programme, with a particular focus on Erasmus and Comenius, for promoting learning mobility of youth.

**Bulgaria** concentrates on the promotion of Erasmus, providing also additional financial subsidies for young people with fewer opportunities. **Spain** on the other hand presents a variety of grant schemes offered by ministries and the Commerce Office for internships, research projects and language courses all over the world. The main actor in **Sweden** in this field is the International Programme Office for Education and Training. This government agency awards grants and project funding but also runs communication initiatives.

## IRELAND

### National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) – sharing information on learning mobility

The Government provides and promotes learning mobility through support for agencies and in turn for young people to learn about each other in the form of national and international visits and cross cultural exchange and non-formal learning. The NYCI International Programme is supported to provide information and advice through sharing information, face to face meetings, development of partnerships and collaborations. It facilitates the learning mobility of young people and youth workers in youth organisations. NYCI shares information via youth.ie, e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, etc. NYCI works largely with youth organisations to ensure the learning mobility of young people. NYCI also works with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and dáil na nÓg, the Youth Parliament, which gives young people in Ireland the opportunity to represent the views of those under the voting age of 18 at a national level, and to call for changes to improve the lives of young people in Ireland. For more information, click [here](#).

#### 4.2.4. Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make the broader public aware of the value of non-formal learning?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	3	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	11	2		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3		1	2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Non-formal learning activities are promoted broadly across the Member States. They are often conducted through web-portals (such as [www.mitteformaalne.ee](http://www.mitteformaalne.ee) in **Estonia** and [www.hrdauth.org.cy](http://www.hrdauth.org.cy) in **Cyprus**), special events (Youth Work Week in Wales, **United Kingdom**), campaigns (e.g. connected with the European Year of Volunteering, such as in **Austria**) or projects (**Lithuania** for instance mentions a pilot project launched in 2011 for non-formal education of children, including a scheme of individual vouchers; ‘changing mentalities’ project in **Greece**; ‘Youth information network’ in **Latvia**, ‘Year with Passion’ in **Poland**, ‘KOMPrax’ project in **Slovakia**).

In this context, the National Youth Reports often<sup>40</sup> seem to imply that a better assessment and quality of non-formal learning, as well as its improved recognition and validation, can support promotion and awareness-raising of its value.

**Denmark** and **Sweden** stress the very lively role of non-formal activities in their society (Folkbildning activities in Sweden, volunteering in Denmark).

**Portugal** and **Hungary** mention their activities regarding training of trainers or youth workers.

<sup>40</sup> In particular Flemish Community BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, LU, AT, SI, FI.

## **IRELAND**

### **National Quality Standards Framework for youth work**

The National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) aims to ensure that youth work organisations provide quality services to young people. It also provides an opportunity to articulate their practice through the development of a common language within a structured framework. The NQSF is intended to be both practical and developmental, in that it will enable youth work organisations to assess service provision and to identify areas for development. The values underpinning the development and implementation of the NQSF are: (i) a clear understanding of youth work's educational purpose, methodology and context; (ii) commitment to continual improvement and best practice; (iii) transparency of governance and operation; (iv) equality and inclusiveness embedded in policy and practice for staff, volunteers and young people; (v) promotion of the young person's well-being by ensuring safe learning environments. For more information, click [here](#).

### **4.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Youth organisations are a key provider of non-formal learning. Youth organisations and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) contributed to efforts for a better recognition and quality of non-formal education by implementing a pilot project on quality assurance of non-formal learning experiences in youth organisations. To explore spaces for flexibility between formal and non-formal education, the YFJ regularly organises a 'Non-formal Education Week'. Based on the pilot project, the YFJ developed a European System for Quality Assurance of non-formal education, anchored in three strands: expertise building, capacity building and developing a political consensus with institutions and stakeholders on how to organise quality assurance on non-formal education at European level.



**Table 4-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Education and Training**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to support the development of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities as a way of addressing early school leaving?	to strengthen the use of the range of tools established at EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications?	to promote learning mobility of all young people?	to make the broader public aware of the value of non-formal learning?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	●	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	■	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	■	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	●	●
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	◆	■	▲
Greece	■	●	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	■
Italy	■	■	■	●
Cyprus	▲	■	■	■
Latvia	●	●	■	●
Lithuania	●	■	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	■	▲
Hungary	■	▲	●	●
Malta	■	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	●	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	▲	■	●
Finland	●	■	◆	●
Sweden	■	●	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	■	◆	◆	■
Switzerland	◆	◆	■	■
Montenegro	●	●	■	■
Croatia	■	■	●	▲

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 5. SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 5.1. Commission initiatives and action

Young people generally are among the most vulnerable groups in society, and this is especially true in the current crisis. The proportion of young people living at risk of poverty is several percentage points higher than for the total population. Youth unemployment rates are more than twice as high as for the total EU population, and the impact of the crisis risks being particularly grave for today's generation of young people<sup>41</sup>.

The Europe 2020 strategy advocates not only smart and sustainable, but also inclusive growth. One of its headline targets is to lift 20 million people out of risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. One of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives is the 'European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion'. Poverty should be combated from an early age; children born into poverty face a substantially higher risk of remaining poor throughout their youth and into adulthood.

Combating poverty and social exclusion is primarily a Member State competence; the Commission plays a supporting and coordinating role by identifying best practices and promoting mutual learning, setting up EU-wide guidelines and making funding available.

Social inclusion of all young people is a 'field of action' of the EU Youth Strategy and also a key priority of the Youth in Action programme. This programme supported more than 7 100 projects in this area for almost € 105 million in 2010 and 2011. More than 150 000 young people participated in these projects, of which more than one third young people with fewer opportunities.

In 2010 the Council adopted the Resolution on *active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty*<sup>42</sup>, emphasising the need for Member States to step up efforts to reduce social exclusion of young people and inviting them to act upon a number of issues.

2010 was the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The key objectives of the year were to raise public awareness about these issues and to renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to improve the situation. The Council Declaration on the 2010 European Year<sup>43</sup> signed at the end of 2010 concluded that: (1) The European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion has contributed to giving a stronger voice to the excluded. (2) The adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy was a major step forward. (3) The recognition of the fundamental human right for all women, men and children to live in dignity is at the heart of the EU commitment to social inclusion. (4) Taking into account lessons learned from the past, the EU has to provide concrete, satisfactory and urgent answers to the difficulties faced by people living in poverty or social exclusion, by removing obstacles and empowering women and men to change their situation. (5) The legacy of the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 will be further developed through the flagship initiative 'European Platform against Poverty'.

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<sup>41</sup> See also Chapter 3 'Youth Employment & Entrepreneurship'

<sup>42</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, pp. 1-6.

<sup>43</sup> OJ C 333, 10.12.2010, pp. 8-9.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUTH ON THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY – MORE OPPORTUNITIES, BETTER ACCESS AND HIGHER SOLIDARITY**

This policy review focuses on the situation of some specific youth groups in the European youth policy context, such as the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, migrant, ethnic minority youth and those young people with public care backgrounds.

The policy review is based on the findings of a cluster of five research projects on the social inclusion of young people, financed by the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities Programme (SSH) of the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme:

- YIPPEE: ‘Young People from a Public Care Background: pathways to education in Europe’. (DK, ES, HU, SE, UK [January 2008 – August 2010] <http://tcru.ioe.ac.uk/yippee>).
- CSEYHP: ‘Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless Populations: a comparative investigation of homeless paths among local white, local ethnic groups and migrant young men and women, and appropriate reinsertion methods’. (CZ, NL, PT, UK [May 2008 – April 2011] <http://www.movisie.nl/homelessyouth>).
- EUMARGINS: ‘On the Margins of the European Community – Young adult immigrants in seven European countries’ (EE, ES, FR, IT, SE, UK, NO [October 2008 – September 2011] <http://www.iss.uio.no/forskning/eumargins/index.html>).
- EDUMIGROM: ‘Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe’ (CZ, DK, DE, FR, HU, RO, SK, SE, UK [March 2008 – February 2011] <http://www.edumigrom.eu>).
- YOUNEX: ‘Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A multidimensional approach to understanding the conditions and prospects for social and political integration of young unemployed’. (DE, FR, IT, PL, PT, SE, CH [May 2008 – August 2011] <http://www.younex.unige.ch>).

Altogether, research evidence comes from eleven old and six new EU Member States, which suggests that this policy-oriented review is based on a good coverage of the countries of the EU.

More specifically, **the objectives of the review** are:

- to provide an overview of the reasons for the precarious situations of the examined youth groups and to formulate the policy issues;
- to visualise the policy challenges needed to produce greater social inclusion on the labour market and in the wider society;
- to highlight policy implications for cross-border policy transfer; and
- to contribute with research-based recommendations.

The EU financially supports initiatives against poverty and social exclusion through the European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>44</sup>, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund<sup>45</sup> and the PROGRESS programme<sup>46</sup>.

The ESF is dedicated to supporting employment and raising living standards throughout the EU. The guiding principle is investment in education and training. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund supports people who have lost their jobs as a result of globalisation. PROGRESS is the EU's employment and social solidarity programme whose aim is to encourage improvements in employment, social inclusion and protection, working conditions, non-discrimination and gender equality.

## ESTONIA, SPAIN, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, SWEDEN, UNITED KINGDOM – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Jump start – giving young people a new sense of motivation

This short-term European Voluntary Service (EVS) project took place in 2010 and involved seven unemployed young people from Spain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It helped participants acquire a new understanding of looking for a job during a three-week project at a vocational school in rural Estonia. They learnt something concrete under the supervision of qualified educators, overcame language barriers and, as unemployed young people from Estonia also became involved, they came into contact with other cultures. These were all young people with fewer opportunities, and half of them had related social or health problems. Through this project, they developed a new desire to plan for their future and identify objectives for themselves. When returning home, they displayed an interest in active participation in society: some got jobs, others went back to school, and some became involved in other reintegration programmes and international youth projects. Furthermore, for some of the school's staff and organisers of the village, this was a novel teaching method and their first experience of dealing with young people from different parts of Europe.

## 5.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 5.2.1. Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as means of inclusion?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	20	1	1	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4		1	3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

<sup>44</sup> For ESF Regulation, period 2007-2013, see OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, pp. 12-18; OJ L 126, 21.5.2009, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> For legislation establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund see OJ L 406, 30.12.2006, pp. 1-6; OJ L 167, 29.6.2009, pp. 26-29; OJ L 48, 22.2.2008, pp. 82-88.

<sup>46</sup> For legislation establishing PROGRESS see OJ L 315, 15.11.2006, pp.1-8; OJ L 65, 3.3.2007, p. 12; OJ L 87, 7.4.2010, p. 6.

Most Member States provide funding to youth work organisations and projects through a range of schemes and national programmes. Almost all have developed networks of youth work centres, which offer information, counselling services, leisure time and after-school activities for youth. The main focus usually is on socially vulnerable young people.

**Sweden** has initiated a specific training programme for youth workers and youth leaders on youth policy and methods for how to promote the social inclusion of young people at local level. **Finland** has realised the potential of youth work to combat social inclusion, but admits there is still room for improvement. In Finland, the risk of discrimination and unfair treatment against children and young people is particularly high in immigrant groups, the Roma, the indigenous Sámi people, sexual minorities and among youth with disabilities. **Slovenia** finances youth work measures by the National Youth Office while, simultaneously, the local level provides a number of initiatives for ensuring a holistic approach to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

### 5.2.2. Cross-sectoral approach to improve community cohesion and solidarity

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to adopt a cross-sectoral approach when working to improve community cohesion and solidarity and reduce the social exclusion of young people, addressing the inter linkages between e.g. young peoples education and employment and their social inclusion?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21		2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	2		6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	2	1	1	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

In view of the inter-linkages between e.g. young people's education, employment, health and their social inclusion, many Member States confirm the importance of pursuing a cross-sectoral approach and of including a youth dimension in these policy areas linked to social inclusion. Member States frequently mention the involvement of relevant ministries and stakeholders such as youth NGOs when deciding on youth related issues, strategies or action plans. Many put a strong emphasis on youth in their employment policies with the main goal to promote the integration of young people in the labour market and decrease youth unemployment.

The aim of **Malta's** 'Embark for Life' project is to provide support to young people, aged 16 to 24, who need assistance to integrate better into the workforce and society. Through this project, young people benefit from a number of individual sessions with a Professional Youth Support Worker. These experts help young people identify their strengths and weaknesses and outline areas they need to work on in order to improve their employability prospects.

In **Austria**, two federal ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Education) work together to improve the situation of young people at risk through the project 'Youth Counselling'. The project started in January 2012 in several federal states and its aim is to prevent early school leaving, to provide support for pupils/students at risk and those dealing with psycho-social or family problems. The youth coaches are mainly social workers who cooperate with teachers and school boards/directors in offering advice and helps solving individual problems for young people at risk of social exclusion.

## FINLAND

### Myrsky – social participation through arts in rural areas

The Myrsky project (The Storm), which was started in 2008 by the Finnish Cultural Fund, has financed youth art projects run by professional artists. During 2008-2011, over 14 000 young persons have participated. The objective is to offer young people in rural areas artistic activities. It is especially targeting young people at risk of social exclusion or marginalization, and aims at strengthening the social participation of these young people through creating art.

In the spring of 2011 Myrsky became a part of the Finnish Children and Youth Foundation's activities. For more information click [here](#).

### 5.2.3. Development of intercultural awareness and competences

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people and combat prejudice?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	3	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	2	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

A number of cited initiatives in this area target specific groups. **Germany** reports two federal initiatives with particular emphasis on disadvantaged youth and young people with migration background to promote tolerance and democracy, and strengthen civil society. **Portugal's** 'Escolhas' programme aims to mobilise local communities for projects of equal opportunities aimed at children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic contexts, particularly the descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities. School curricula in **Austria** include intercultural learning as a principle of teaching. It describes a holistic way of teaching students in diverse classes together with people using diverse first languages and having different ethnic backgrounds.

Many countries organise specialized training programmes for youth workers, youth leaders and young people to develop intercultural awareness and combat prejudice. In **Luxembourg**, a mandatory training for specialists in the youth field includes subjects on intercultural awareness and competences. The **Czech Republic** and **Latvia** report various non-formal learning activities for youth workers and young people on topics addressing prejudice and intercultural learning.

The ESF is, according to Member States, frequently used to co-finance initiatives to develop intercultural awareness. **Spain** communicates with youth and addressed the topic in a youth friendly manner through the launch of the initiative 'Rap Against Racism' – a song, a video and a campaign with the participation of leading representatives of the Spanish hip-hop scene. The government of **Sweden** has adopted a national action plan to promote democracy and combat violent extremism with a specific focus on young people.

### 5.2.4. Homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with focus on young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to address the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a particular focus on young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24		2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2	1		1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

A number of Member States cited examples of youth-targeted support measures related to housing. Apart from general measures concerning housing policy, **Cyprus** grants low priced ready-made dwellings to young people from low-income strata and tackles the accommodation problem of students through the construction of student residences and subleasing flats at lower prices. The **Czech Republic** provides shelter services for young homeless mothers and their children and ‘half-way houses’ which means temporary residence services for young persons up to the age of 26 years, who leave educational facilities for institutional or protection care. **Spain** provides technical and legal advice to young people under the age of 35 in buying and providing housing as well as grants, subsidies, state aid programmes, monthly allowances for covering rental costs and other kinds of financial support. **Finland** also ensures sufficient investment funding in order to improve the living conditions of young people on the brink of independence with a focus on youth homelessness and the prevention of social exclusion, as well as reinforcing social skills. In **Slovenia** young people are classified as a priority group in a number of state measures to improve the housing situation; however, their access to housing remains limited given that in the majority of cases the number of applicants for subsidies, financial assistance and non-profit housing far exceeds the funds available. State subsidies intended for first-time home buyers are specifically aimed at young people; however, the eligibility for such subsidies is limited to young families and exclude individuals.

From the National Youth Reports, it seems that there is a trend of tackling the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion of young people through the general social policies of the country and not through youth oriented policies in particular.

#### 5.2.5. Access to quality services

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote access to quality services e.g. transport, e-inclusion, health, social services?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24		3	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5	2		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2	1		1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

Some countries have incorporated the objective to ensure access of young people to quality services in their national youth strategies or action plans, whereas others mention the value of youth information offices and services providing tailor-made youth information.

**Belgium, Spain, Lithuania, Austria** and **Portugal** report discounts for young people on transport services. **Austria** furthermore offers e.g. free public schools and universities. In the

Flemish Community of **Belgium** it is common practice to make public services less expensive for young people.

The **Swedish** government developed an online youth clinic and a strategy with a long-term objective to gradually reduce the number of children and young people using tobacco, narcotic drugs, doping substances and alcohol.

## AUSTRIA

### Youth Coaching – counsel for special needs

BMUKK/Ministry of Education: In January 2012, the initiative Youth Coaching was started up in several federal states; the aim of the initiative is to prevent early school leaving, to provide support for pupils/students at risk and those dealing with psycho-social or family problems. The ‘Youth Coaches’ are mainly social workers offering counselling and overcoming individual problems in school. They are requested to co-operate with teachers and school boards/directors. For more information click [here](#).

Addressing social exclusion by promoting e-inclusion services, however, is rarely reported. Only **Estonia** and the Flemish Community of **Belgium** mentioned e-inclusion services in their National Youth Reports. The e-inclusion concept, in particular focused on youth, needs to be more developed in all countries.

## SLOVAKIA

### Emancipated young adults

Financial support for young adults (ESF) in order to help them to be more emancipated consists of activities which promote the availability and quality of care services (social services and measures of social protection and social guardianship), improve the position of vulnerable and marginalized population groups in the labour market and society. The project consists of several programmes: Social, educational and other programmes and methods designed to prepare children for emancipation before completion of a court decision about staying in an orphanage. Programmes and other training methods work to promote the emancipation of young adults after leaving an orphanage. Support programmes, professional activities and special methods of work for an adult person after orphanage leaving, focused on the ability to acquire and maintain a household. New and innovative programs focus on adaptation, integration, careers and facilitate entry into the labour market.

### 5.2.6. Specific support for young families

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote specific support for young families?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3			3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0



Wherever Member States provided examples of measures in this area, state guarantees and subsidies for young families to buy or renovate housing are most often mentioned. Some countries also mention well developed family policies and financial support to young parents. Young families in **Austria** benefit from paid parental leave for mothers and/or fathers (shared), direct financial child benefits or specific tax benefits for single parents, special access to cheap housing or no-interest-loans for building and a well-structured system of child-care. The **Czech Republic** has facilitated reconciling professional and family life by designing specific flexible measures in its labour law (e.g. reduced working hours upon request of pregnant women or flexible working time to young mother/father). The Housing Development Plan in **Estonia** sets out measures and financing to support young people and families to buy or renovate their homes. In addition a state guarantee for mortgage for young families aims to support young families to buy their own dwelling. **Italy** introduced a national fund for newborn babies, under which new parents can apply for bank loans benefiting from special refunding conditions. **Malta's** social marketing campaign targets young people to promote work-life balance. **Poland** aims at a well-developed nursery system co-financed by government and the establishment of clubs for children up to three years old. **Slovenia** reports to have a highly developed family policy comprising a lot of benefits and services for children and families with children.

#### 5.2.7. *Young people and youth organisations in the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to engage young people and youth organisations in the planning, delivery and evaluation of European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	12	1	1	10
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	1		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	10	1	3	6

Many countries report participation in and organisation of various events and projects in relation to the European Year 2010, whereby many projects addressed youth.

**Bulgaria** reports that various projects and initiatives were implemented under the Youth in Action programme and several national programmes. In **Hungary**, youth organisations, NGOs in the youth field and student unions were consulted on the topic of the European Year 2010. **Latvian** youth was widely represented in the majority of activities, and a 13 year old singer, involved in Latvian Child Forum activities, was one of the Ambassadors of the European Year 2010.

#### 5.2.8. *Cross-disciplinary research on active inclusion*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the government of your country support and promote cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions in line with the Council resolution on active inclusion, having regard to the socio-economic environment and the opportunities and obstacles this poses for the social inclusion and employability of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, the Government has supported and promoted such cross-disciplinary research since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	22	2	1	19

YES, measures were taken to support and promote such cross-disciplinary research after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	•	1			1
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	7		2	5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3	1	1	1

A number of Member States inform that they release regular evidence-based reports on young people's situation, including their living conditions. Some Member States have a monitoring system in place with a variety of youth indicators (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Estonia**, the **Netherlands**, **Finland**, Wales in the **United Kingdom**) or support longitudinal research on youth (socio-economic panel in **Germany**, National Longitudinal Study of Children in **Ireland**).

### 5.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

Young people and their representative organisations such as the European Youth Forum (YFJ) were actively engaged in promoting and implementing the 2010 European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing.

Youth, through the channel of their representative body, the YFJ were consulted prior to elaborating the flagship initiative ‘European Platform Against Poverty’<sup>47</sup>, and continues together with other civil society organisations, notably within the ‘Platform of European Social NGOs’, to be involved in its monitoring.

The YFJ is facilitating a project on the European coordination platform of young migrants and young people with migrant background (YM+). This project is supported by the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), and involves 20 organisations from different European countries. The YFJ organised two capacity building events for YM+ in spring 2011 on advocacy and EU institutions and on organisational and project development, and established a group of contact persons, which assisted in the organisational development of YM+.

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<sup>47</sup> COM(2010) 758.

**Table 5-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Social Inclusion**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives								Does the government of your country support and promote cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions in line with the Council resolution on active inclusion?
EU Member States	to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as means of inclusion?	to adopt a cross-sectoral approach when working to improve community cohesion and solidarity and reduce the social exclusion of young people, addressing the inter linkages between e.g. young peoples education and employment and their social inclusion?	to support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people and combat prejudice?	to address the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a particular focus on young people?	to promote access to quality services e.g. transport, e-inclusion, health, social services?	to promote specific support for young families?	to engage young people and youth organisations in the planning, delivery and evaluation of European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010?	
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆
Belgium - Flemish	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆	■
Belgium - French	■	▲	■	▲	▲	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	■	■	▲	●	■
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■	■	■	●	▲
Denmark	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Germany	■	●	■	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Greece	▲	■	■	■	▲	▲	◆	▲
Spain	■	■	●	■	■	■	◆	■
France	◆	●	◆	●	◆	■	●	■
Italy	■	■	●	■	●	●	●	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆
Latvia	●	■	●	■	■	■	●	▲
Lithuania	■	◆	▲	■	■	■	■	▲
Luxembourg	■	●	■	●	■	■	◆	■
Hungary	▲	■	▲	▲	●	●	●	■
Malta	●	■	■	■	■	■	●	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	■	●	■	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	■	▲	■	▲
Romania	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	■	■	■	▲	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	●	■	■	■	■	■	■
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>								
Norway	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	▲	◆	■	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Montenegro	●	▲	●	●	■	●	◆	▲
Croatia	◆	■	■	■	■	■	◆	▲

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 6. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### 6.1. Commission initiatives and action

The majority of young people in the EU enjoy good health; nevertheless, evidence shows that the current crisis risks to have an impact on the health and well-being of young people – in particular in low-income families<sup>48</sup>.

Although health is mainly a national competence, the Commission coordinates and complements these efforts through action at EU level.

Under the Youth Health Initiative and as a follow-up to the 2009 ‘Be healthy, Be yourself’ Conference, a number of actions were carried out around four priorities (empowerment and participation, inequalities and vulnerability, communicating health, and mainstreaming these principles across European health policy). The Commission organised a youth health event ‘Food for mind, mind for health’ in October 2010 in Torino, then European Youth Capital, together with stakeholders active on youth health<sup>49</sup>.

Young people are a specific target group in several EU health initiatives around smoking, alcohol abuse, nutrition, obesity and drug use<sup>50</sup>. In pursuing action in this area, the Commission cooperates with stakeholders such as the European Youth Forum (YFJ).

The ‘Together for Health’ Programme (2008-2013)<sup>51</sup> supports a number of youth-related projects. One was the publication *Preventing Injuries in Europe*<sup>52</sup> assessing progress by European countries implementing the WHO Resolution on *the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety*<sup>53</sup>. The [ProYouth](#) initiative promotes healthy eating, body satisfaction and preventing eating disorders in young people aged 15 to 25. Under the Drug Prevention and Information Programme, the Commission supports several projects focused on prevention of drug use and treatment of teenagers and young adults, among others a programme targeting young polydrug users, a resilience-based interactive drug education programme, and family empowerment and hepatitis prevention projects.

In 2011, the Commission launched a study ‘Making the case for investing in the health of young people: assessing the economic impact of poor health and actions to promote and protect better health of children in Europe’ together with the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children International Coordinating Centre within the University of Edinburgh.

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<sup>48</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2011. Impact of Economic Crises on Mental Health. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. Available here.

<sup>49</sup> The International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE-CIPES) European Centre, the European Youth Forum and other youth organisations.

<sup>50</sup> The [EX-Smokers Campaign](#) (2010-2013), the Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm (2006-2012); the strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues (2007-2013); and the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012).

<sup>51</sup> OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, pp. 1-12; OJ L 301, 20.11.2007, pp. 3-13.

<sup>52</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2010. Preventing Injuries in Europe – From international collaboration to local implementation. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. Available here.

<sup>53</sup> Resolution on the Prevention of injuries in the WHO European Region of 15 September 2005, EUR/RC55/R9, 54257.

## GREECE – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Board game about mental health

A group of young people from an NGO called ‘Athina’, in Greece, active in the field of mental health and de-institutionalisation mainly of children and teenagers, proposed the creation of the first educational board game aiming at informing young people and raising awareness on mental health issues through question and answers. The game is addressed to teenagers, students and secondary school pupils and one of the main aims is to combat social exclusion and stigma on mental health issues.

## 6.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 6.2.1. Implementation of the Council Resolution on the health and well-being of young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to follow up the Council Resolution on the health and well-being of young people and encourage youth fitness and physical activity by applying the EU Physical Activity Guidelines?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2		5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		2	1

Many countries undertake efforts to improve the health and well-being of young people through existing capacities within the sport movement or the education system. For instance, **Austria** enhanced its policy on the involvement of youth in sport. The Austrian Health Promotion Foundation implements ‘Guidelines to Physical Activity’ through a general call for fitness and physical activity and by funding projects, campaigns and activities. **Slovenia** addresses insufficient physical activity by ‘the National Sports Programme’ and ‘the National Health Enhancing Physical Activity Programme 2007-2012’, which established 11 goals targeting young people aged 15 to 29 years. **Finland** set up a cross-sectoral health-enhancing physical activity steering group at the end of 2011 to develop new strategic guidelines. **Cyprus** introduced several initiatives, e.g. Student Sport Label/Badge Scheme in 2011 and a Health Card is issued for all competitive sport athletes. **Latvia** is implementing the National Sports Development Programme 2006-2012 and **Bulgaria** the programme ‘sport for Children in their spare time’ targeting young people up to the age of 18.

### 6.2.2. Encouraging healthy lifestyles for young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles for young people via physical education, education on nutrition, physical activity and collaboration between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	1	4	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2		4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Most Member States promote healthy lifestyles for young people. Often they thereby focus on specific health issues, such as physical education, health education, prevention of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, healthy nutrition and sexual education. The government of **Spain** launched the ‘National Agreement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors’, which includes a manifesto signed by stakeholders from various social, educational and business sectors committing them to work side by side to achieve zero consumption of alcohol by young people under the age of 18. To prevent smoking by young people, the government launched an awareness-raising campaign together with the Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC), the National Youth Council and the Healthy Universities Network to mark the World No Tobacco Day on 31 May. The National Institute for Youth set up a new ‘Center for Sexual Health Injuve’, to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In **Poland**, the ‘Fruit at School’ programme promotes healthy nutrition, aiming to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by children and to shape their eating habits. Since 2011 the Ministry of Education provides funding for organisations promoting healthy lifestyle during ‘out-of-school’ activities.

A number of Member States emphasise prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles. For example, the **Bulgarian** National Health Strategy 2007-2012 raises the awareness for healthy lifestyles and health risks, whereby children and young people are targeted through Internet and social media. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** actively promotes the use of a health policy in every school. In **Slovenia**, the Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016 promotes healthy lifestyles, whereby placing considerable emphasis on awareness-raising in elementary and secondary school curricula. The **Hungarian** National Youth Strategy addresses health awareness in education and training and develops knowledge and methods within the national curriculum and school-based pedagogical programmes.

### 6.2.3. Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to increase knowledge and awareness of youth workers and youth leaders of health issues?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	18	1	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4			4
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3	1	1	1

Member States frequently mention close cooperation between public bodies and civil society stakeholders. In the **Czech Republic**, a specialised unit for preventing risky behaviour within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports coordinates policy and legislative initiatives and cooperates closely with regional specialists and schools. By law, youth workers and youth leaders, especially those who organise camps for children and young people, have to be trained in security and health issues.

The General Secretariat for Youth in **Greece** conducted a series of online debates on AIDS/HIV where young people had the opportunity to ask questions on HIV transmission and treatment to doctors, psychologists and relevant institutions and organisations. The questions and answers now constitute a guide on AIDS, which can be found on the web-portal of the General Secretariat for Youth and which is distributed to schools, youth workers and others interested in learning more about AIDS.

The National Youth Institute in **Portugal** runs the ‘Cuida-te’ (Take care of yourself) programme in partnership with public and private bodies to promote healthy lifestyles. It targets young people, but also others, such as teachers, parents, youth organisations and health professionals. The **Austrian** Nutrition Action Plan includes an on-going Structured Dialogue with young people on nutrition. The **Spanish** Youth Council is pursuing a campaign around HIV prevention and is active within the context of the national strategy against alcohol abuse.

#### 6.2.4. Encouraging peer-to-peer education

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage peer-to-peer health education?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	17	1	1	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	8	1	2	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	6	1	1	4

In almost every country where peer-to-peer education has been implemented, policy-makers see it as a crucial tool to reach out to younger people. Methods such as peer group education and peer counselling are seen as bringing added value into prevention work.

For example, the National Youth Service Strategy of Wales, **United Kingdom**, identifies peer education as a key youth work methodology and many local authorities and voluntary sector youth organisations have local initiatives. In order to transfer this concept into practice on a more ambitious and national basis, an apprenticeship programme has been established. A total of 26 apprentice youth workers are employed to engage with young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

#### 6.2.5. Making health facilities more youth friendly

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to facilitate access to existing health facilities by making them more youth friendly?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	17		2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	8	1	1	6



NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3	1		2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	5	1	1	3

Member States mention some concrete examples of how health facilities can be made more youth friendly. In 2010, **Bulgaria** maintained 19 consulting rooms across the country for anonymous and free of charge consultations and tests of HIV. Consulting offices are situated at regional health inspections, municipal hospitals and non-governmental organisations. Ensuring guaranteed health services with high quality and easy access is one of the goals of the National Health strategy 2008-2013. Primary and specialized aid practice is to be brought closer to remote areas and residential districts populated mainly by Roma people.

**Finland** takes efforts to reduce regional differences in access to pupil and student welfare services. School and student health services are now more easily accessible, e.g. services of school health nurses have improved during the last few years. The development will be assessed in cooperation with children and young people. To strengthen the youth perspective, discussion days were organised about 80 times in 60 different municipalities from 2009-2011 and involved 2 500 young people.

## LATVIA

### Health and safety at work

Within the ESF project ‘Practical application of the legislation on occupational safety and health and labour relations in sectors and enterprises’ (2008-2013) implemented by the Latvian Employers' Confederation, a computer game on occupational safety and health issues has been elaborated for young people. The game suggests to solve real problems related to health and safety at work in real Latvian enterprises (seven companies working in distribution of automobiles, retail trade, manufacturing and distribution of cosmetics, telecommunications, tourism and hotel services, construction, distribution of computer techniques).

Information about the game is available [online](#) as well as the [game](#).

### 6.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

After the launch of the Youth Health Initiative in 2009, the YFJ contributed to the development of a roadmap for the implementation of the initiative. The Youth Forum also followed the implementation of the EU Mental Health Pact and conferences on the link between mental health, social exclusion and employment. The Forum also participated in the advisory board of the Commission's [Help campaign](#) and supported the [Alcohol Policy Youth Network](#). It furthermore participated in the ‘Youthlink’ project on sexual and reproductive health and rights and developed its work on health inequalities. It also organised an event in October 2010 with the European Parliament Intergroup on Youth. The Forum continued awareness-raising and capacity building among its Member Organisations on health issues within non-formal education and health training.

The Youth Forum supported research from the University of Maastricht on the relationship between youth unemployment and mental health problems, and in its publication ‘[Youth Employment in Europe – A Call for Change](#)’ it emphasised the issue of mental scarring caused by youth unemployment and the social impact that the exclusion of young people is currently having.



**Table 6-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Health and Well-being**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives					
EU Member States	to follow up the Council Resolution on the Health and Well-being of Young People and encourage youth fitness and physical activity by applying the EU Physical Activity Guidelines?	to encourage healthy lifestyles for young people via physical education, education on nutrition, physical activity and collaboration between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations?	to increase knowledge and awareness of youth workers and youth leaders of health issues?	to encourage peer-to-peer health education?	to facilitate access to existing health facilities by making them more youth friendly?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●	◆
Belgium Flemish	●	●	◆	◆	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■	▲
Bulgaria	●	■	●	■	■
Czech Republic	■	■	■	■	■
Denmark	◆	■	◆	◆	■
Germany	■	■	■	■	◆
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■
Greece	▲	▲	●	◆	■
Spain	■	●	■	■	●
France	●	■	■	●	■
Italy	■	■	●	●	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■
Latvia	●	●	●	●	◆
Lithuania	●	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	▲	●	◆
Hungary	■	■	▲	▲	▲
Malta	●	●	●	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	●
Poland	■	■	■	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	●
Romania	■	■	▲	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	▲	▲	●
Slovakia	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	◆	▲
Sweden	■	●	■	◆	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>					
Norway	◆	■	■	◆	◆
Switzerland	◆	■	■	●	■
Montenegro	■	■	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	◆	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 7. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

### 7.1. Commission initiatives and action

Youth participation is about young people's initiatives, individually or as a group, to engage in societal activities, to freely express their views and to contribute to decision-making on matters affecting them.

Promoting youth participation is central to EU youth policy, it both is an underlying theme of the EU Youth Strategy and one of the 'fields of action' is dedicated to its promotion. It is incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon, where Article 165 TFEU stipulates that 'Union action shall be aimed at [...] encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe'<sup>54</sup>. The right of young people to participate in decision-making is also underlined in the Council Conclusion on *the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights*<sup>55</sup>. In addition, Article 24 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU stipulates that children may express their views freely and their views on matters which concern them must be considered in accordance with their age and maturity.

The Hungarian Presidency gave special priority to participation during its mandate. Under their Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on *encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life*<sup>56</sup>, emphasising a broad concept of 'participation' which covers not only social and political participation but also participation in the labour market and education. The Resolution also examines new forms of participation such as social media and online communities.

The Trio Presidency of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus built on this work, making 'youth participation in democratic life in Europe' the overarching priority for the second half of the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy between mid-2011 and end 2012. In 2011, under Polish Presidency, the Council adopted Conclusions on *the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility*<sup>57</sup>, calling on the Commission and Member States to promote exchanges and mobility for young people in the EU and their eastern neighbours.

The Structured Dialogue is one of the EU Youth Strategy's key initiatives bringing together young people and decision-makers around key issues all across Europe. Given its importance, Chapter 11 of this document is entirely dedicated to this process.

The [Flash Eurobarometer](#) on 'Youth on the Move' from 2011 addressed opinions and attitudes of young people also regarding participation, for example about their involvement in society as volunteers, as members of organisations, and as participants in international activities, cultural activities and political activities.

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<sup>54</sup> Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), OJ C 83, 30.3.2010, pp. 47-199.

<sup>55</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, pp. 1-5.

<sup>57</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.

The Commission also conducted a study on ‘Youth Participation in Democratic Life’<sup>58</sup>, which addresses: youth representation; promoting youth engagement; voting and deliberation; creativity, innovation and youth participation; (new) media and youth participation; and finally, youth exclusion. Among its conclusions are that there is indeed no crisis of democratic participation or disenchantment with politics among youth in Europe, but that young people lack attractive alternatives among established politicians and feel that their opinions are not represented<sup>59</sup>.

The Commission initiated efforts to restructure the [European Youth Portal](#), adding features to promote youth participation online. From providing information on opportunities for young people, the portal is being turned into a platform for young people to engage with each other and to have their say on the issues that affect them. The Youth Portal will also support the Structured Dialogue, with a view to stretching its outreach.

The Commission's ‘[Europa Diary](#)’ has received a major makeover, moving from a paper-based diary format to a completely online product. It aims to give information to school pupils about their rights, participation, health issues, personal safety, consumer issues, studying, and the environment. As announced in the [EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child](#)<sup>60</sup>, the Commission launched the ‘[Kids' Corner](#)’ website<sup>61</sup> in 2011, which aims to give children and young people information on their rights as well as information about the EU and its Member States. A key feature of the Kids' Corner is the [EU Website on the Rights of the child](#)<sup>62</sup>, where they can learn through games, quizzes and child-friendly texts in 22 EU languages. It works as a ‘one-stop shop’ so it is very convenient for the children, who can easily find all the different games at one place.

Young EU citizens can now use the new online tools provided by the Commission's ‘[European Citizens Initiative](#)’ (ECI), to come together to raise issues and make proposals for EU legislation. The ECI, was launched in April 2012, and is open to young people who are old enough to vote in European Parliament elections<sup>63</sup>.

Finally, the Commission is working on a Youth on the Move Card initiative, as part of the flagship initiative ‘Youth on the Move’. It launched consultation to hear stakeholders' views on an initiative to promote the use of youth and student cards making the lives of young people who are mobile within Europe easier, by giving them information, support and special deals.

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<sup>58</sup> European Commission, 2012. *Youth Participation in Democratic Life* (forthcoming).

<sup>59</sup> Other studies that concern the issue of participation of young people are for example the Study to collect data on children's involvement in judicial proceedings in the EU, (terms of reference available [here](#)) and the Study on the legal framework for child participation at EU Member State and EU levels which should be launched in 2012.

<sup>60</sup> COM (2011) 60.

<sup>61</sup> [http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_en.htm).

<sup>62</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/0-18/>

<sup>63</sup> 18 years old and above, except in Austria where the voting age is 16.

## BULGARIA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Engaging young people in decision-making

This project aimed to identify how to increase active participation and youth employment in small and remote towns in Bulgaria. Research was conducted on the factors that determine the choice of hometowns, and discussions were organised with decision-makers on their vision for employment, education and training, housing policy, transport, recreation, and healthcare. Participants became involved with local governments in the development of municipal youth strategies. At a national youth meeting in Sofia in October 2010, 70 young people presented and shared local level experiences and developed recommendations for the National Youth Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy. They discussed with decision-makers issues related to economic activities and entrepreneurship, employment and career development, recreation, youth volunteering, and political participation and civic activism at the local and national levels. The project activities demonstrated that youth policies are developed not only by organisations and institutions in the capital city but also with the participation of organisations from remote and small towns. A project video was produced and published on YouTube.

## 7.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 7.2.1. Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to develop mechanisms for dialogue with youth and youth participation on national youth policies?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	1	4	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2		8
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Member States are active in promoting youth participation mechanisms since already before 2010. From the range of activities, Member States quote some good examples of more recent activities. Some Member States initiated legal action. The **Bulgarian** Government is drafting a Youth Law, which allows for the creation of a national consultative youth council to assist the Minister for Education, Youth and Science in developing national policy. In Wales in the **United Kingdom**, pre-existing guidance on consulting with and involving young people in decision-making became legally binding in 2012.

Others enlarge possibilities for young people to participate in decision-making. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** started the ‘Youth Ambassadors for...’ project, in which youth representatives express their opinions on the thematic priorities chosen by the Trio Presidencies in the context of the EU Youth Strategy.

## 7.2.2. Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage use of already existing, or development of, guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in order to ensure the quality of these activities?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24	1	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1	1		0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Member States were already actively pursuing activities in this area prior to 2010 and continued to do so after the Strategy came into place. Some countries focus on ensuring a high standard of quality. The Ministry of Education and Science in **Latvia** launched an evaluation of existing youth participation mechanisms in 2011. To share best practice among practitioners and maintain a high quality of youth provisions, a biennial National Meeting in **Spain** in 2010 brought together over 200 youth information workers.

Several countries have produced information material. In 2011, in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** researchers developed a framework and a manual on youth participation, together with youth organisations. **Estonia** publishes a manual ‘Youth involvement and participation’, which focuses on practical issues around participation as well as evaluating the effectiveness of youth councils. In **Sweden**, the Ministry of Education and Research is producing guidelines for consultation with civil society organisations, including youth organisations.

## 7.2.3. Governmental support of youth organisations and Local/National Youth Councils

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support politically and financially youth organisations, as well as local and national youth councils and promote recognition of their important role in democracy?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	28	3	3	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5		1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Some Member States have recently developed youth consultation structures. The Ministry of Education in **Poland** supported the process of establishing the Federation of Youth Organisations (National Youth Council), whereby ensuring its independence free from state influence. In **Cyprus**, 20 new municipal and community youth councils were created in 2010 with the support of the Youth Board of Cyprus. The [board](#)<sup>64</sup> also signed a memorandum with the Cyprus Youth Council to cover expenses of young people who participate in seminars abroad.

<sup>64</sup> The Youth Board of Cyprus is a legal entity of public law (Semi-Governmental organisation), with representatives from party youth organisations and members who are appointed directly by the Council of Ministers in the Governing Board.

Following the earthquake of 2009, the **Italian** Government's 'Partecipiamo!' project created structures and opportunities for young people in the affected areas to help revitalise local communities. This enabled them to be involved in decisions around rebuilding facilities of importance to them, such as schools, leisure and sports centres, and other community buildings.

In some countries, efforts have been made to further recognise and support youth representative organisations. In the **United Kingdom**, the Westminster government and the devolved governments/assemblies in Wales and Scotland provide financial support to NGOs which allow young people to be heard by decision-makers, such as the UK Youth Parliament, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Funky Dragon in Wales.

**HUNGARY**

**Region legion – Youth for the South-East Hungary (DKMT) Euro-region**

The four day meeting with the participation of 30 young people took place in Szeged, Hungary. The goal of the meeting was to bring together young people and decision-makers from the DKMT Euro-region to initiate a discussion and a joint action plan on youth issues. Young people, who were already experienced in the implementation of youth projects, were involved, many of them being leaders of formal and informal youth organisations based in their home town. During the meeting youth projects, which had been previously realised in the DKMT region, were examined, then a joint action plan was drawn up with decision-makers – including the wording of a letter – to draw attention to the potential of young people in the region. A publication was edited as a follow-up summarizing the outcomes of the meeting. As a result a network of child and youth self-governments was established in the region that played a significant role in the re-creation of the National Council of Child and Youth Self-Governments in Hungary. For more information, click [here](#).

7.2.4. *Promote the greater participation of young people*

**Responses in National Youth Reports**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote the participation of more and a greater diversity of young people in representative democracy, in youth organisations and other civil-society organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	2	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2	1	7
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

National Youth Reports present several concrete activities to promote wider involvement of youth in participation since 2010. In **Lithuania**, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour approved a programme to develop youth volunteering as a means to get more young people involved in civic and democratic life. The **Swedish** Government has allocated funds for youth organisations and other civil society organisations to help them improve methods to stimulate non-organised young people to become active in the organisations of civil society.

Some activities focus on specific groups. In **Austria**, the National Youth Council has set up a project group on 'Intercultural Opening of Youth Work' to establish a model on how to enable the greater participation of young people from migrant backgrounds in youth

organisations. The Youth Council in the French Community of **Belgium** has contacted local youth clubs which work with young people from difficult socio-economic circumstances in order to raise participation levels of young people from all sectors of society. The Flemish Community of Belgium passed the ‘Participation Act’ which allowed financial support to youth initiatives working with young immigrants and young people living in poverty.

## SWEDEN

### Commitment guides

The purpose of the Commitment guides is to stimulate people living in areas with less organised inhabitants, in particular young people and women, and increase their contacts with civil society organisations in different areas of activity. Support to the Commitment guides has been allocated by the National Board for Youth Affairs during 2010 with converted € 1.4 million. The number of 91 applications received was above expectations. Of the 21 projects granted, 10 focused in particular on women/girls. Dialogue with parents regarding attitudes and values has had a great importance for involving young women. The Commitment guides have reached about 6 000 young people in various ages. The National Board for Youth Affairs will as a consequence of the very good results and big demand continue to support organisations in this field until 2013. For more information, click [here](#).

### 7.2.5. Use of ICT to broaden and deepen participation of young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen participation of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3	1		2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

A relatively high number of countries report that such initiatives were carried out after 2010. One reason for this may be that e-participation still is a concept under development.

Whilst most countries reported the use of websites to pass information to young people, with ministries either delivering websites themselves or supporting NGOs to deliver youth information websites, others mentioned using social networking sites to inform and engage young people.

In view of the fast evolving development in social media, there are some interesting new initiatives. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** awarded grants to projects developing computer games to help young people to cope with different challenges in life, and the Government and National Agency in **Italy** encouraging the use of internet radio to engage with young people. The Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth in **Germany** initiated the ‘Dialogue Internet’ project, one of the elements of which is promoting e-participation. In **Malta**, the Youth Agency created the Youth Information Malta website in 2011, as a result of needs identified during the consultation process for the country's new



National Youth Policy. In the **United Kingdom**, Young Scot<sup>65</sup>, working in partnership with local authorities and the Scottish Youth Parliament, developed an online platform to enable young people to vote electronically using Scotland's youth smart card. In a first round of elections for the Scottish Youth Parliament, over 21 000 votes were cast online. The e-Voting platform has also been used to support a participatory budgeting exercise in Shetland, with young people voting using their cards to choose projects to be funded.

### 7.2.6. Supporting 'learning to participate'

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support various forms of learning to participate from early age through formal education and non-formal learning?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	2	2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		2	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

In this field, most countries mention examples in formal education, as supporting school and pupil councils and adding citizenship education into the curricula. There were fewer reported examples from the non-formal sector. In **Bulgaria**, the National Centre 'European Youth Programmes and Initiatives' conducts annual training for young people, youth leaders and NGO representatives, with the aim to deliver greater participation skills. Wales in the **United Kingdom** supported the development and dissemination of participation training packages through networks such as the Participation Workers Network and Pupil Voice Wales.

Some initiatives cover both formal and non-formal education. **Luxembourg** is piloting education on participation to very young children through school reception classes, as well as to older children and young people through schools and non-formal education projects. In **Finland**, the Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme promotes the participation in everyday environments in early-years education, schools and educational institutions, and youth facilities, and states that youth facilities are there to support the voluntary activities of young people and increase the level of youth participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities.

### 7.2.7. Developing opportunities to debate with young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to further develop opportunities for debate between public institutions and young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	16	1	1	14
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	12	2	1	9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		1	1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Examples of concrete activities since 2010 include the involvement of local youth councils in evaluating the quality of local opportunities for youth participation in **Finland**, as part of the

<sup>65</sup> The national youth information and citizenship agency for Scotland.



national evaluation of basic services, and the ‘Participation Café’ project in **Estonia** in 2011 which brought together decision-makers and young people to discuss various topics affecting young people's participation, such as the right to vote at age 16, youth unemployment, and other important issues.

Some Member States link dialogue to long-term, strategic development. The new **Austrian** Youth Strategy will create new opportunities for dialogue between decision-makers and young people, and the Flemish Community of **Belgium** is planning a Youth Pact 2020 which will be the culmination of a large-scale debate between decision-makers and young people about making the Flemish Community of Belgium a place where young people like to live in 2020.

## **SLOVENIA**

### **Council of the Government for Youth**

This inter-ministerial working group (Svet vlade Republike Slovenije za mladino) was established in 2009. The Council is a consultative body that proposes measures and monitors the consideration of youth interests in various public policies at the national level. It gives the Government and the responsible ministries incentives and suggestions for the regulation of youth matters and promotes youth participation in these processes. The Council which comprises representatives of youth organisations and various ministries on an equal basis is chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport. For more information, click [here](#).

### **7.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Youth organisations and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) have been actively engaged in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue (see Chapter 10) and undertook their own efforts to foster the capacity of youth organisations to take part in decision-making processes.

Since 2010 the YFJ actively advocated lowering the voting age to 16 across Europe, and organised several meetings to further explore and raise awareness on the topic. This campaign led to the organisation of the European Parliament Roundtable on expanding democracy in Europe in December 2011 and enabled a discussion on this topic in an institutional forum.

Better youth participation at local level is promoted through the European Youth Capitals, a title awarded to a city for one year, during which it can showcase its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development. It is chosen by the YFJ based on a jury selection process.

The YFJ commissioned a study ‘The Impact of the New Provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on Youth’, conducted by Prof. Ponzano, which reported on opportunities and limits in the application of article 165 TFEU.

**Table 7-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth Participation**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to develop mechanisms for dialogue with youth and youth participation on national youth policies?	to encourage use of already existing, or development of, guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in order to ensure the quality of these activities?	to support politically and financially youth organisations, as well as local and national youth councils and promote recognition of their important role in democracy?	to promote the participation of more youth and a greater diversity of young people in representative democracy, in youth organisations and other civil-society organisations?
Belgium German-speaking	●	▲	■	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	■	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■
Denmark	●	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	●	■	■	●
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	●	●	■	●
Italy	●	●	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	●	■	■
Lithuania	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	■	●
Hungary	■	■	■	●
Malta	■	■	●	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■
Poland	●	●	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	●	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	▲
Sweden	■	■	■	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	■	■	■	■
Montenegro	■	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	◆

- Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- ▲ No, but plans 2012
- ◆ No, without plans

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives			
EU Member States	to make effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen participation of young people?	to support various forms of learning to participate from early age through formal education and non-formal learning?	to further develop opportunities for debate between public institutions and young people?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	▲	■	●
Belgium French	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■
Denmark	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	●
Estonia	■	■	●
Ireland	■	■	■
Greece	■	■	●
Spain	■	■	■
France	●	■	◆
Italy	●	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■
Latvia	▲	◆	▲
Lithuania	■	■	■
Luxembourg	■	●	●
Hungary	●	●	■
Malta	●	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	●
Poland	▲	■	●
Portugal	▲	■	■
Romania	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■
Sweden	◆	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>			
Norway	■	■	■
Switzerland	●	▲	◆
Montenegro	●	■	●
Croatia	■	▲	▲

- Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- ▲ No, but plans 2012
- ◆ No, without plans

## 8. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

### 8.1. Commission initiatives and action

A Council Recommendation on *the mobility of young volunteers across the EU*<sup>66</sup>, adopted in 2008, remains highly relevant when outlining EU initiatives during the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy. It aimed to create more cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people through cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities, complementing the European Voluntary Service (EVS). It recommends Member States to develop opportunities for cross-border volunteering, raise awareness and assure its quality, recognise learning outcomes and promote mobility of youth workers and young leaders while giving particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

The expert group established in 2009 to facilitate the implementation of the Recommendation, continued to meet in order to identify ways and means of cooperation and learn from each other through the exchange of information and best practices. Among the group's achievements are a multilateral cross-border volunteering project, a mapping of good practices, a conference on cross-border volunteering in central Europe organised by the Czech Republic, and a high-level seminar led by Germany. The active involvement of Member States experts has contributed to a deeper understanding of volunteering.

The EVS, one of the main components of the Youth in Action programme, facilitates every year around 7 000 young people between 18 and 30 to work as a volunteer abroad. The programme also includes measures to support youth workers and youth organisations to improve the quality of their activities, also in the field of volunteering.

Two European Years help raise awareness for youth volunteering: the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship [2011](#) and the [European Year 2012](#) for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. While the first one gave visibility to the work of many youth volunteers and drew attention to its value both for society and the individuals, the current Year highlights, among others, intergenerational volunteering.

#### MALTA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

##### **Disability is no bar to helping others**

An Italian volunteer spent three months in Malta with the NGO Razett tal-Hibberija, which helps children and adults with learning and physical disabilities to develop their potential. It offers an array of therapeutic, educational and leisure services to them, free of charge. The NGO initially hesitated, because the young Italian himself has suffered from a physical disability since birth. Working with a foreign volunteer who has a disability was a new concept for the centre's staff and volunteers. But the experience proved valuable to everyone. Through his responsibilities in the park, the volunteer overcame his physical barriers and strengthened his self-confidence and independence. Through his volunteering experience he impressed himself and inspired people around him, and proved to be an invaluable learning activity supplementing his university studies.

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<sup>66</sup> OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, pp. 8-10.

## 8.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 8.2.1. Opportunities for and awareness about mobility of young volunteers

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to create more opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	2	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	4		1	3

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to raise awareness about opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	18	1	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	11	2		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0

Many Member States quote the Youth in Action programme, particularly the EVS as an important, if not the main source for youth volunteering in another European country. In addition, a number of countries conduct bi-lateral or multi-lateral exchange programmes. **Germany** has several international agreements in the youth exchanges, and especially agreements with **France** and **Israel** are used as basis for pilot projects on cross-border volunteering. **Spain** and **Portugal** signed a protocol of cooperation in the youth field, which encourages the mobility of young people between both countries. **Italy** and **Montenegro** have an active youth exchange. The **Polish-Lithuanian** Youth Exchange Fund provides support for young people's engagement in activities across the border. **Denmark** refers to volunteering as part of different Nordic programmes.

**France** and **Luxembourg** launched new voluntary services, the service civique, which are open to young people from other European countries. Conversely, **Italy's** civic service allows young people to volunteer in another country. The **Czech Republic** launched a pilot call for innovative projects promoting cross-border volunteering. **Poland** focused on youth mobility in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus countries.

A number of Member States pursue strategic approaches to promoting youth volunteering. **Austria**, **Lithuania**, **Romania** and **Slovenia**, for example, prepared volunteering laws, as did **Croatia**. In **Bulgaria** volunteering is one of the main strategic goals of the National Youth Strategy and also **Hungary** promotes volunteering through its youth strategy. **Spain** and **Greece**, for example, have specific Volunteer Strategies. The **Czech Republic** adopted an Action Plan, which promotes a youth dimension in all forms of voluntary activities as well as cross-border volunteering. **Germany** initiated new opportunities for cross-border volunteering, such as a new format of the international youth voluntary services. Many countries also refer to the expert group on the Mobility of Young Volunteers as an important forum to advance the implementation of the Recommendation.

In terms of awareness raising for volunteering, many Member States referred to the value of the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Some refer to Eurodesk and its network as an important provider of information about volunteering. **France** has a Youth Portal with a specific ‘International Mobility’ section and young people share related information via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. In the **United Kingdom** the ‘Volunteer Scotland’ website offers numerous volunteering opportunities from small local to large scale international volunteering. **Bulgaria**, **Estonia** and **Spain** reach out to formal-learning institutions, such as schools or universities, to promote volunteering. **Italy** organised a promotional truck tour.

### 8.2.2. Quality assurance

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to assure quality through the development of self-assessment tools?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	13	2	2	9
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7		1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4			4
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	9	1	1	7

The ‘Youthpass Certificate’ from the Youth in Action programme is mentioned by some Member States as a tool in this context and a valuable starting point for further initiatives. Measures for quality assurance by self-assessment are generally closely intertwined with efforts regarding recognition of non-formal learning.

By way of example, in **Sweden**, where voluntary activities are primarily organised by civil society organisations, several self-assessment tools are in use, such as the ‘Experience, Learning, Development – ELD’ assessment tool, developed by the Centre for International Exchanges. **Finland** also reports considerations for developing criteria and tools for self-assessment. **Germany** is preparing to take concrete measures having provided central units for quality management in the International Youth Volunteering Programme.

### 8.2.3. Promoting cross-border mobility of youth workers and young volunteers

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote cross-border mobility of youth workers and young people in youth organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	20	2	1	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Several Member States cite how the Youth in Action programme, the main programme for mobility at EU level in this field, contributes to mobility in a concrete way. For example, in **Slovenia** the Youth in Action programme has prompted several pilot youth worker exchange projects. In addition, it developed youth worker exchange programmes in cooperation with partners from **Finland**.

In addition to the Youth in Action programme, there are nationally driven initiatives promoting exchanges between youth workers. The French Community of **Belgium** has a youth worker exchange with **France** and **Switzerland**. Its 'Tremplins Jeunes' programme offers internships in youth organisations. **France** encourages the mobility of youth workers through the law on the civic service.

#### 8.2.4. Particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to give particular attention in this context to young people with fewer opportunities?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3			3

In a number of countries, prevention of exclusion is part of broader youth strategies and funding schemes, also covering volunteering.

**Slovenia's** Volunteering Act stipulates specific attention to young people with fewer opportunities. **Hungary** made inclusion a priority of its volunteering programmes. In **Italy**, the EuroGames 2010 project, which focused on capacity building for volunteering and sustainable development, actively reached out to young people with fewer opportunities.

**Finland** stresses the importance of creating local working models and basic structures in the field of volunteering.

#### 8.2.5. Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities through instruments such as Europass, Youthpass and Member State instruments?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	5			5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Member States actively undertake efforts ensuring that the value of volunteering experiences is duly recognised. **Portugal** grants all young people who participated in voluntary activities a certificate, **Austria** developed a Volunteer Pass and the **Czech Republic** created a Personal Competence Portfolio ('Keys for Life' project). Youth Portfolio is a self-assessment tool available in **Luxembourg**. Youthpass gets mentioned as the primary means of recognition by the Member States and **Bulgaria** based its national document on the Youthpass.

A number of Member States are focusing on outreach to the labour market to have experiences gained through volunteering recognised by employers. **Denmark** states that the skills required through volunteering are highly recognised on the labour market. **Hungary** inserted the need to develop a validation system, in particular in view of future employment of young volunteers, into its National Youth Strategy. The **Slovak** KOMPrax network for the recognition of youth work is preparing a database which intends to function as an 'achievements platform' also accessible to employers. In the French Community of **Belgium** the Scouts raised awareness of volunteering outcomes in enterprises. **Latvia** aims at making Youthpass better known in the entrepreneurial world.



Social recognition, such as the ‘Volunteer of the Year’ in **Slovenia** or the ‘saltire Award’ in the **United Kingdom** are appreciated by volunteers. In **Germany**, former EVS volunteers promote through the EuroPeers programme volunteering in schools, youth clubs, and pedestrian zones but also in local and regional media.

#### 8.2.6. Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	14	1	1	12
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	6	1	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	8	1	1	6
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	5		1	4

Many Member States declare that the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 enhances their intergenerational activities, including volunteering. **Lithuania** aims at promoting volunteering under the European Year 2012.

There are a number of examples of youth organisations' involvement in projects around intergenerational solidarity. **Slovenia** reports on youth organisations participating in the ESF network for intergenerational solidarity. **Estonia** encourages joint voluntary activities of the young and the elder generation, especially at the local level. Also the **Czech Republic** supports joint volunteering at local level through projects such as ‘Volunteering - A Way to Development of Local Communities’ by Hestia, the national volunteering centre, and ‘Between Generations – Active and Together’ by the Network of Healthy Cities. In **Ireland** the National Youth Council cooperates with the organisation Age Action, in **Denmark**, the National Youth Council works regularly with organisations of the elderly, **Germany** and **Spain** promote intergenerational housing and **Slovakia** involves all generations in a project on road safety.

An example of a volunteering project whereby young people help elderly people can be found in **Portugal**, where the young run errands for and keep the elderly company in the framework of the project ‘Recados e Companhia’. Other fields of intergenerational volunteering are, for example, culture (**Austria**: music; **Malta**: theatre), social care (**Portuguese** voluntary programmes with the Institute of Social Security), environment (**Cyprus**: recycling; **Estonia**: garbage cleaning) and IT skills (**Denmark**: computer literacy and use of cell-phones).

#### BULGARIA

##### National volunteering campaign

In connection with the celebration of the European youth week in 2011 and the European Year of Volunteering, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science co-organised a National volunteering campaign. The main idea was to convince all of us, that together we can change the world to the better. This campaign started on Facebook 21 April and finished 31 December 2011. It targeted young Bulgarian people to generate ideas and to exchange them using the social network as well as to exchange practices in the sphere of volunteering. The Facebook application ‘The Change Starts with You’ had for each of the nine messages separate webpages (e.g. Help elderly people! Accept the different! Don't be aggressive!).

Users could there publish photos and descriptions of the initiatives realized in connection with the relevant ideas. For more information, click [here](#) or [here](#).

### **8.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Preparing for the 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) was represented in the 'European Year of Volunteering 2011 Alliance', an informal grouping of 39 European networks of Civil Society Organisations active in volunteering, working together on the advocacy for and promotion, preparation and implementation of the European Year of Volunteering.

The YFJ organised the II Youth Convention on Volunteering, the biggest civil society event of the European Year on Volunteering. Hosted by the European Parliament, it provided a space for young volunteers and youth organisations to work together, to discuss with European decision-makers and celebrate young people's commitment throughout Europe. The convention included a range of activities, from policy-debates, exchanges of practices, meetings of young European and Chinese volunteers to public concerts. This gave visibility to volunteering in youth work, showcased the impact of youth organisations, and provided youth organisations with a space to exchange and to learn from best practices.

The YFJ also called for the adoption of a European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers. This Charter was developed in an open discussion with stakeholders, and based on the collection, analyses and interpretation of existing studies, surveys and statistical data on the legal status of volunteers and volunteering organisations.

**Table 8-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Voluntary Activities**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to create more opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?	to raise awareness about opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?	to assure quality through the development of self-assessment tools?	to promote cross-border mobility of youth workers and young people in youth organisations?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	◆	●
Belgium Flemish	■	●	■	■
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	●	●
Denmark	■	◆	■	■
Germany	■	■	▲	■
Estonia	■	■	●	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	▲	●	▲	▲
Spain	■	■	◆	■
France	●	●	◆	●
Italy	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	◆	■
Latvia	◆	●	●	◆
Lithuania	◆	◆	◆	◆
Luxembourg	●	●	●	■
Hungary	■	■	▲	■
Malta	■	■	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	●	●	●
Poland	●	●	◆	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	●	▲	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	●
Slovakia	■	■	◆	●
Finland	◆	◆	◆	■
Sweden	■	■	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◆	◆	◆	■
Switzerland	■	■	■	◆
Montenegro	●	■	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	●

- Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010
- ▲ No, but plans 2012
- ◆ No, without plans

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives			
EU Member States	to give particular attention in this context to young people with fewer opportunities?	to promote the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities through instruments such as Europass, Youthpass and Member State instruments?	to promote intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	▲
Belgium French	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	▲
Denmark	◆	■	■
Germany	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■
Ireland	■	◆	■
Greece	▲	▲	▲
Spain	■	■	■
France	●	◆	◆
Italy	■	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■
Latvia	●	■	▲
Lithuania	◆	■	▲
Luxembourg	■	●	◆
Hungary	●	■	▲
Malta	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■
Poland	■	▲	▲
Portugal	■	■	■
Romania	■	▲	■
Slovenia	●	▲	●
Slovakia	■	▲	■
Finland	◆	■	◆
Sweden	■	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>			
Norway	■	◆	◆
Switzerland	■	■	▲
Montenegro	●	●	●
Croatia	●	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 9. CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

### 9.1. Commission initiatives and action

Member States and the Commission are working together to increase opportunities for young people to experience culture and develop their talent and creative skills. This includes making new technologies available to empower young people's creativity, promoting specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers, and encouraging partnerships between culture and creative sectors on the one hand and youth organisations or workers on the other.

Under the European Agenda for Culture<sup>67</sup>, some initiatives directly address youth creativity and culture. The Council adopted Conclusions on *promoting a creative generation* in 2009<sup>68</sup> and Conclusions on *cultural and creative competences and their role in building intellectual capital of Europe* in 2011<sup>69</sup>. Promoting accessible and inclusive culture is among the priorities of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 adopted by the Council in 2010<sup>70</sup>.

Under the EU Youth Strategy, a [study](#) on youth access to culture in Europe<sup>71</sup>, released mid-2010, highlights good practices. It also includes proposals for helping European institutions and Member States overcome common obstacles such as cost and distance and improve access of all young people to all forms of creative and cultural activity. Council Conclusions on *access of young people to culture* adopted in November 2010<sup>72</sup> underlined the need to promote the development of long-term coordinated policies for access of young people to culture on all levels and to deepen knowledge and exchange of experiences on the subject.

The Council also adopted Conclusions in May 2012 on *fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people*<sup>73</sup>, where it invited Member States to support young people's creativity through non-formal and informal learning activities. The Conclusions foresee the setting up of a peer-learning expert group on this theme.

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<sup>67</sup> More on the European Agenda for Culture on the specific Commission [website](#).

<sup>68</sup> OJ C 301, 11.12.2009, pp. 9-11.

<sup>69</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 19-23.

<sup>70</sup> OJ C 325, 2.12.2010, pp. 1-9.

<sup>71</sup> EACEA, 2008. *Access of young people to culture*. Brussels: EACEA. Available [here](#).

<sup>72</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3.

<sup>73</sup> OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, pp. 1-4.

## HUNGARY, ROMANIA, TURKEY – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Branch of olive

The project created a multicultural and multi-religious atmosphere by bringing together 20 young people belonging to Christianity, Judaism and Islam from Hungary, Romania and Turkey for 10 days in Antalya, Turkey in 2011. The project focused on intercultural learning, and each group planned its own activities for a designated culture day, at which it introduced its culture and religion. All participants were also involved in workshops on diverse activities such as Ashura, painting Easter eggs, the Shabbat ritual, or henna night, effectively removing prejudices among the participants. A kite workshop involved group work and the kites were flown together in a spirit of brotherhood and freedom. A visit to the ‘Garden of tolerance’, where a mosque, a church and a synagogue stand alongside one another, helped to reinforce the sense of co-existence, and each group had a chance to introduce its own rituals. An imam read extracts from the Quran and explained the meaning in English, answering questions from participants. Participants learnt about each other's religions and cultures, improved mutual understanding, and broke down stereotypes and prejudices.

## 9.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 9.2.1. Following up the Council Conclusions on promoting a creative generation

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of creativity among young people by following up the Council conclusions on promoting a creative generation: developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and wider access to culture?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	1	1	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	2	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		2	0

Many countries mention specific projects aiming at promoting youth access to culture and cultural expression: the French Community of **Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Spain** all have awards to stimulate and highlight youth creativity while **Estonia and Italy** mention student cards which promote access to culture. **Luxembourg** offers free access to museums for young people, **Malta** has a specific culture card, **Portugal** reports having a youth creative programme, **Sweden** has the Creative Schools initiative and the **United Kingdom** promotes the Welsh Young Creators' strategy.

Some countries also present broader programmes or strategies for youth cultural education (**Ireland, France, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia**) sometimes involving cooperation between Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Education/Youth.

## ITALY

### Io Studio – enable students to participate in culture

The project aims at establishing a public-private institutional network that can provide students with easier access to a variety of goods and services in the fields of cultural and natural heritage, ICT, travel, and sports. Introduction of students to various forms of cultural education outside school perimeter is the main objective. The project enables them to actively participate in the cultural realities of their territory, as well as nationally and internationally.

The established partnerships involve students in projects, which seek to stimulate their creativity by making them the protagonists of the creative and training processes as well as to encourage direct contact with the business world and cultural production circuits.

In the framework of this project a Student Card and a Student Portal [website](#) were developed.

#### 9.2.2. Making new technologies readily available to young people

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make new technologies readily available to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation, and attract interest in culture, the arts and science?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22		2	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	3	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

Some countries mention support of specific projects to make new technologies available to young people.

**Sweden** underlines the role of schools to stimulate youth creativity and mentions support to the use of ICT in teaching, while **France** stresses the role that cultural institutions may have in this regard and the need to raise their awareness.

Support of young people to achieve media literacy is indicated as an element of national strategies for youth by **Belgium, Italy, Austria, and Slovenia**.

## BELGIUM – FLEMISH COMMUNITY

### Nugames

This project is an initiative of the Flemish Youth Support Centre in cooperation with other youth organisations funded by the Government of the Flemish Community of Belgium. Nugames are recreational activities that use technology and digital media being at the same time linked to the surrounding physical space too. They are intended for group play. The activities are freely accessible and can be modified and spread widely. Nugames are modular, which makes them easy to adapt to different contexts. The use of Nugames and other digital technology can make youth work more attractive to young people and furthermore help bridge

the digital divide. New forms of play will lead to new creative forms of expression for young people. For more information, click [here](#) or [here](#).

**Estonia** and **Malta** stress that they set up schemes to highlight creative industries' activities that target young people.

### 9.2.3. Providing access to environments in which young people can develop their creativity

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to provide access to environments where young people can develop their creativity and interests and spend a meaningful leisure time?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■		26	1	3	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●		7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲		0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆		0			0

Free access to museums for young people (**Luxembourg**) or specific cards providing easier access to cultural products or facilities (**Italy, Malta and Austria**) are presented as measures to promote young people's creativity.

#### ITALY

##### Osthello

Since 2010 the Government promoted and funded with more than € 3 million ‘Osthello’, a pilot project carried out in collaboration with the Italian Association of Youth Hotels (AIG) intending to develop youth mobility and youth creativity. It consists of using hostels for young people all over the country which have been provided and equipped with appropriate spaces for artistic production such as recording studios, photographic laboratories, cinema sets, and theatre and multimedia laboratories. The pilot initiative is carried out in eight youth hotels and deal on five artistic subjects. This chance for young artists to produce free of charge and to meet important artists and teachers of various fields at relevant seminars could become even more proactive by creating a network of events, exhibitions and multimedia tools set up across the territory. For more information, click [here](#).

The role of youth/leisure time centres in providing creative environments for young people is particularly pointed out in the reports from the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia**, and **Finland**.

#### SPAIN

##### Youth Creating Spaces – places to develop a creative spirit

The Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE), from 2005 to 2009, has promoted the young artistic creation in collaboration with various local authorities, through the construction and rehabilitation of buildings to house Youth Creating Spaces. A Youth Creating Space is a place for sharing knowledge, meeting and learning, where young people can develop a creative spirit with means that are usually difficult to get. It is a network of ‘own spaces’ for young people with whom they can identify and turn it into a personal project. The versatile spaces



are eligible for rehearsal, performance, assembly, and other creative leisure of various types. It offers several areas fully equipped with the necessary for practicing creative activities, including services for the general operation such as buffet, offices, toilets, storage, and information about youth. For more information, click [here](#).

**Estonia, France, Italy, and Slovenia** mention that cultural institutions are encouraged to provide young people with access to facilities where they can develop creative activities.

The National Youth Report for **Sweden** underlines that the Swedish Arts Council allocates around 30 % of state cultural funding to operations and projects that directly benefit child and youth culture, while **Ireland** supports a National Youth Arts Programme which endeavours to set standards for quality youth arts work through the promotion and development of models of best practice.

#### 9.2.4. *Promoting specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	1	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1	1		0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Among measures that have been taken, some Member States emphasise training in intercultural competences of youth workers (among them **Belgium, Cyprus** and the **United Kingdom**) whereas others report that priority is given to training in new media or technologies (the **Czech Republic, Spain, Luxembourg, and Austria**). The National Youth Report of **Belgium, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Slovenia** mention the role of the Youth in Action programme in supporting training activities for professionals and volunteers in youth organisations and youth centres on cultural aspects.

### 9.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

Whilst creativity and culture are not currently within the strategic priorities of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), culture was nevertheless progressively integrated into its actions. In 2010 and 2011 particularly, the YO! Fest was organised and brought together an international array of young musicians to take part in a public youth event in Brussels.

The YFJ further contributed to the discussions on young people's access to culture during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, which led to the adoption of Council Conclusions *on access of young people to culture* 19 November 2010<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3.

**Table 9-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Culture and Creativity**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to support the development of creativity among young people by following up the Council Conclusions on promoting a creative generation?	to make new technologies readily available to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation, and attract interest in culture, the arts and science?	to provide access to environments where young people can develop their creativity and interests and spend a meaningful leisure time?	to promote specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	●	▲
Belgium French	■	●	■	■
Bulgaria	■	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	■	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	■	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	◆
Italy	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	■	■	●
Lithuania	■	■	■	■
Luxembourg	●	▲	●	■
Hungary	●	▲	●	●
Malta	●	●	●	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	●	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	●
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	■
Sweden	●	●	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◆	■	■	■
Switzerland	◆	◆	■	◆
Montenegro	●	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010  
 ● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010  
 ▲ No, but plans 2012                      ◆ No, without plans

## 10. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

### 10.1. Commission initiatives and action

The EU Youth Strategy ‘field of action’ Youth and the World aims at supporting the implementation of the EU's external policies in the youth field. It encourages young people's cooperation with regions outside of Europe through enhancing young people's participation in and contribution to global policy processes. Numerous activities of Youth and the World are implemented within the [partnership](#) between the European Commission and the Council of Europe (CoE) in the youth field. In the context of the EU-CoE youth partnership, [two symposia](#) were organised with Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries, including the Russian Federation. The first, hosted in Ukraine in 2011, focused on the Eastern dimension of participation and mobility of young people. This was followed up by a symposium focusing on the well-being of young people, hosted in June 2012 in Georgia. Both activities offered opportunities for exchanging views on youth policies, priorities and good practices. The European Commission maintains contact also with other international organisations in this field, such as the UN family and the World Bank. The Commission supported, for example, the [UN Year for Youth](#) and took part in the Youth World Conference in Mexico in 2010.

The priority regions for Youth and the World are in particular the accession and pre-accession states, the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation, the Southern Mediterranean (South Med) region and Southeast Europe. Other focus areas are Africa, Canada, and China. These priorities allow for a flexible response to political and societal developments, requirements, changes and opportunities in the youth sector.

Outreach to eastern European and Caucasus countries was a priority of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011. During this presidency, the Council adopted Conclusions on *the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility*<sup>75</sup> and the EU Presidency Youth Conference included participants from these countries. The Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which also included the formulation of concrete recommendations during the EU Presidency Youth Conference in Warsaw, was dedicated to this subject.

The South Med region was in particular brought to the global public's attention through the youth-led uprisings in some Arab countries during 2011, called the ‘Arab Spring’. In light of these events, the Commission organised a seminar on the empowerment of youth organisations and youth-led civil society initiatives in Malta in March 2012 followed by a youth policy conference in Tunis in August 2012. These events were organised in the framework of the EU-CoE youth partnership in cooperation with different partners such as the North-South Centre<sup>76</sup>, the League of Arab States, the Maltese and Tunisian governments, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and civil society organisations in the region. The aims of these events were to analyse the current situation and to identify future practical steps to promote youth participation. The ground for these events had already been prepared by a youth policy seminar in Egypt in 2010.

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<sup>75</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.

<sup>76</sup> The North–South Centre, officially the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, is an autonomous agency – called a [Partial Agreement](#) – of the [Council of Europe](#).

As a follow-up to EU-Africa Youth Summits held in 2007 and 2010, the first meeting of the Africa-Europe Youth Platform/Forum is envisaged for November 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This will bring together the Commission, the Council of Europe, the North-South Centre, the African Union (AU), the EU-CoE youth partnership, the YFJ and the Pan-African Youth Union.

The second EU-Canada [Youth Policy Round Table](#) on youth participation took place in Helsinki, Finland as a follow-up to the 2009 EU-Canada Roundtable on Youth Employment. It was organised in the framework of the EU-Canada Agreement in Higher Education, Training and Youth<sup>77</sup>. The main goals were to exchange good practices, policy models and experiences in the EU and Canada in the youth policy area.

The year 2011 was designated the EU-China Year of Youth with a view to further promote and deepen the partnership between China and Europe, promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between our youth. Several activities were organised throughout the year involving policy-makers and youth organisations, some even continued beyond 2011.

The policy efforts are supported by several programmes in the youth field. The Youth in Action programme has a special strand called '[Youth in the World](#)' which supports activities aimed at strengthening relations between the EU and its neighbours, as well as the rest of the world. A total of nearly 27 000 young people and youth workers participated in 2010 and 2011 in exchanges and other non-formal education activities supported by the programme in sub-action 'Cooperation with EU neighbours'.

The Commission is increasingly focusing on the youth dimension of EU development cooperation. The focus on vulnerable groups, including youth, is embraced in the Communication on the future of EU development cooperation *Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change*<sup>78</sup>.

Youth employment has also become a major issue in the post-Arab spring context in the Southern Neighbourhood region. A study by EuropeAid published in 2010 on 'Social Inclusion and youth in EC External Cooperation' focusing on ENP countries, provided key information and recommendations on how to streamline and better tackle youth challenges in our external financial cooperation. In line with the Joint Communications of 8 March and 25 May 2011, geographical interventions in southern neighbourhood will have a strong focus on youth inclusion. In this regard, in the 2011 SPRING programme (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth – € 350 million) youth employability and skills development are considered as priorities for ensuring democratic transformation, institution building and economic growth. An example of this greater focus is the forthcoming 'Jeunesse-emploi' (€ 23 million) programme in Algeria which will start in 2013. In the most recent Joint Communication of May 2012 *Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy*<sup>79</sup>, the EU reinforces its commitment to support partner countries reforms aimed at promoting social cohesion and employment, in particular for young people, in an integrated approach.

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<sup>77</sup> OJ L 397, 30.12.2006, pp. 15-21.

<sup>78</sup> COM(2011) 637.

<sup>79</sup> JOIN(2012) 14.

## EUROPEAID'S REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON YOUTH IN THE ENP REGION.

The regional Eastern Partnership Youth programme (2012-2015) will strengthen the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies. The programme has two components: capacity building to officials and civil society actors in the youth policy domain, conducted by a Youth Regional Unit; and a grants scheme which takes the shape of the 'Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window'. Priority in awarding grants under this window will be given to projects targeting disadvantaged young people living in rural or deprived urban areas.

In the Neighbourhood South area, the [EuroMed Youth IV Programme](#), with timeframe 2010-2013 and a total budget of € 5 million, aims to support and strengthen the participation and contribution of youth organisations and youth from the Euro-Mediterranean region towards the development of civil society and democracy. As a response to the recent events in the area, the programme has been granted with extra € 6 million top-up in 2012.

The 'field of action' Youth and the World also supports recent Communications from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission on *a new response to a changing neighbourhood*<sup>80</sup>, *a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*<sup>81</sup>, and the Commission Communication *Eastern Partnership*<sup>82</sup>.

## DENMARK, GERMANY, UNITED KINGDOM – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Global Youth and Sports Forum for the Millennium Development Goals

The Global Youth and Sports Forum project took place in 2010 involving seven promoters from three EU countries (Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom) and three partner countries (African and South-American). It gathered 100 young people to establish a platform for young citizens to debate and act upon the role of youth and sport to reach the Millennium Development Goals (exchange of good practices, dissemination of recommendations from participants to stakeholders at local, national and international levels, international networking and partnership-building between participants and among partner organisations for future initiatives). The promoters were international, member-based youth and sport umbrellas, international youth and sport foundations and regional 'sport for Social Change Networks'.

## 10.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 10.2.1. Raising awareness of young people about global issues

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to raise the awareness of young people about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	2	2	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6

<sup>80</sup> COM(2011) 303.

<sup>81</sup> COM(2011) 200.

<sup>82</sup> COM(2008) 823.

NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

Almost half of the Member States indicate that global issues are part of the education curriculum, a national youth policy programme or strategy, an action plan or a specific education programme. The important role of the Youth in Action programme as a means to support young people's initiatives and projects was also mentioned.

According to the National Reports, a number of key state institutions or non-governmental organisations are involved in raising awareness of young people about global issues (e.g. Youth Councils, youth organisations, National Authority for Youth, advisory councils, National Commission for Human Rights, specific ministries, General Secretariat for Youth, inter-ministerial working group, informal network of organisations and institutions active in the field, youth institutes, Environmental Education Centre). For example in **Sweden**, the International Development Cooperation Agency disseminates information about development cooperation and global issues and the Living History Forum works with young people on tolerance, democracy and human rights. With the support of the Spanish Institute for Youth, **Spain** organised an international activity called 'University for Youth and Development' where more than 300 young people from over 80 countries discussed current youth issues and focused especially on sustainable development.

## SLOVENIA

### Global Education Week

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates an inter-ministerial working group for global education, under the auspices of which various events are held for raising awareness of the importance of global education in schools and in general. Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by SLOGA, an NGO platform for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, a week of global education is organised every year in cooperation with a number of non-governmental organisations for young people. In 2011, the central topic focused on a responsible behaviour of individuals to our planet and its inhabitants. A number of events were held throughout Slovenia, also in cooperation with all kinds of organisations, schools, and associations that are engaged in global education in various ways. For more information, click [here](#).

### 10.2.2. *Providing opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues*

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/fora etc.)?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	2	3	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	3			3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

Most Member States mention that they provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/forums, etc.).



Member States use several channels for encouraging exchanges of opinions between young people and policy-makers on global issues. This includes international events organised by the government or NGOs (**Slovenia**), conferences, online live debates, various forums and exchanges at the international level either by the ministry responsible for Youth issues or through Youth Councils (Flemish Community of **Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Cyprus**). Some Member States (German-speaking Community of **Belgium, Latvia, Hungary and Sweden**) mentioned that the EU Youth Conferences function in a positive way in this matter through the Structured Dialogue as well as the National Working Groups. YFJ, Youth in Action programme (**Estonia and Ireland**), EuroMed Youth (**Malta**) Platform and International Advisory Committee were also referred to in this context.

### 10.2.3. Encouraging young people to go 'green'

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage young people to participate in green volunteering and 'green' patterns of consumption and production (e.g. recycling, energy conservation, hybrid vehicles, etc.)?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	6	1	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	3	1	1	1

Special websites for young consumers exist in **Ireland and Sweden**. Eco-friendly ideas, civic participation and social actions are promoted in **Lithuania** via the national event 'Let's do it'. **Luxembourg, Hungary and Finland** are developing agendas or action plans for education in sustainable development. Such an agenda (Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship) has been in place in the **United Kingdom** already since 2008 as well as in the **Czech Republic, Cyprus, Latvia and Slovenia**. **Slovenia** is also part of an international programme of eco-schools which encourages the education of children and is managed by the association 'Ecologists without borders'. In **Bulgaria**, the national programme underlines the use of green energy, environmental protection and recycling. In **Latvia**, its Green point organises a competition 'Green Night' event both for students and pupils.

### 10.2.4. Promoting entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	21	2	2	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	6	1	2	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	4			4

Several Member States indicate that they have inter-governmental or inter-organisational partnership agreements with strategic regions outside the EU. Such programmes contribute to the development of better relations and understanding between nations and facilitate educational cooperation and further youth exchanges. Some projects aim at youth work

professionals and training of young people for the creation of international youth networks. For example, **Spain's** Cooperating Youth programme serves as a gateway to the field of international cooperation for young university graduates by providing professional services at offices in Latin America, Africa and Asia. **Estonia** facilitates educational cooperation and youth exchanges between associations, young people, and specialists with China and Japan to promote mutual understanding, broaden the international perspectives and support young leaders in a global society. Some Member States, such as the **Czech Republic, Poland** and **Finland** have programmes run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Education. In the **Czech Republic**, the United Nations Volunteers Contact Point provides an opportunity for young volunteers to be actively involved in UN development programmes and peace missions. **France** created a platform '[France Volontaires](#)' which consists of public sector, international solidarity associations and young people and has an aim to support the development of international voluntary exchanges and solidarity. Within its Presidency in the second half of 2010, **Poland** granted a number of scholarships to several 'Meet your neighbour' projects. Under the **Hungarian** Presidency during the first half of 2011, the EU-China Youth Year promoted youth initiatives and exchanges, and a number of young people from China attended the EU Youth Conference and the European Youth Week.

To promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe, several Member States, for instance the German-speaking Community of **Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Finland** and **Sweden** stressed the importance of EU mobility programmes, such as Youth in Action (especially European Voluntary Service) and Lifelong Learning (primarily Erasmus – student exchange in higher education). They also underline the role of the National Agencies of these programmes (**Romania**) and the SALTO Resource Centres (**Poland**).

#### 10.2.5. Encouraging young people to participate in development cooperation activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities either in their country of residence or abroad?	Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■	23	2	3	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●	7	1	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆	2			2

A common way for young people to participate is to engage in civil society organisations concentrating on development, or by carrying out voluntary activities in their home country or in a developing country. Some Member States highlight the opportunities offered by the Commission's Youth in Action programme (**Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Austria, and Slovenia**) while others emphasise national programmes (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, French Community of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland, Finland** and **Sweden**). Many of the National Youth Reports also stress that projects supporting the participation of young people in development cooperation also help them develop a European identity and sense of solidarity. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that it supports both international youth projects in countries in need of humanitarian help as well as international projects that raise young people's intercultural competences and awareness of problems in developing countries. National programmes providing opportunities for young graduates and young people to obtain experience from working in international organisations and in developing countries include the Junior



Professional Officer programme in **Sweden**, the Aid Volunteering programme in **Poland** and the **Spanish** Cooperation Youth programme. The Development Aid Programme in the **Czech Republic** supports the development of the youth sector in specific countries and offers training courses concerning development projects at the national level. In **Bulgaria**, a national information campaign about volunteering and the Annual Ball of Volunteers are examples of activities aiming at awareness-raising among youth organisations on this subject. **Germany** and **Austria** offer school partnership programmes on development cooperation issues. **Lithuania** highlights ‘Green Capital’ a cooperation project focusing on climate change, sharing of knowledge and personal experience.

### **10.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

The inclusion of Youth and the World as a new ‘field of action’ in the EU Youth Strategy has been welcomed by young people. This ‘field of action’ reflects the aims of the Youth Forum's work in strengthening inter-regional and global youth dialogue and cooperation, supporting the development of youth work in other regions of the world and looking for synergies between European youth organisations and their counterparts elsewhere.

In 2010 and 2011, the Youth Forum's engagement in cooperation with other regions of the world focused on Africa-Europe youth cooperation, Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation, the EU-China Year of Youth, EU-Canada cooperation as well as other initiatives carried out by youth organisations with other regions of the world. The Youth Forum engaged in several processes with Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, China, Arab and Mediterranean regions. These include the ‘Universities’ on Participation and Citizenship in Uruguay, and on Youth and Development in Cape Verde and Spain; the Youth Leaders Meeting on Youth Policies in the context of Africa-Europe youth cooperation and the Euro-Latin American and Caribbean Youth Forum.

The YFJ was also active in the UN High-level Meeting on Youth, the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilisations, as member of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO) and as co-organiser of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Universities on Youth and Development (UYD), held in Mollina, Spain.

In the field of sustainable development, the Youth Forum adopted several policy positions linked to the UN Millennium Development Goals and prepared youth delegates for climate-related and social development-related international events.

In an EU-Canada roundtable in Helsinki in 2011, jointly organised by the Canadian government and the Commission, representatives of youth organisations had opportunities to exchange views with youth workers, researchers and officials from both sides of the Atlantic on the topic of youth participation.

The YFJ was actively involved in the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth, contributing to realising youth dialogue and achieving full involvement of young people and youth organisations in EU-China relations.

The YFJ contributed to the Structured Dialogue on the involvement of civil society and local authorities in EU Development Cooperation, organised in 2010.

**Table 10-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth and the World**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives					
EU Member States	to raise the awareness of young people about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights?	to provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/forums, etc.)?	to encourage young people to participate in green volunteering and 'green' patterns of consumption and production (e.g. recycling, energy conservation, hybrid vehicles, etc.)?	to promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe?	to encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities either in their country of residence or abroad?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	◆	●	●
Belgium Flemish	■	■	■	■	■
Belgium French	■	■	●	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	▲	●
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■	■
Denmark	◆	■	■	◆	■
Germany	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	●	●	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	●	●
Italy	■	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	●	■	●	●
Lithuania	◆	◆	■	◆	●
Luxembourg	●	▲	▲	◆	●
Hungary	●	●	▲	●	■
Malta	●	■	●	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	■
Portugal	●	●	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	▲	■	▲	▲
Slovakia	●	●	◆	◆	◆
Finland	■	▲	■	■	■
Sweden	■	■	■	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	◆
<b>Non-EU</b>					
Norway	■	■	◆	■	■
Switzerland	●	■	■	■	■
Montenegro	●	●	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	●	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 11. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

### 11.1. Commission initiatives and action

Structured Dialogue with Young People<sup>83</sup> is an operational tool of the EU Youth Strategy, which enables young people and youth organisations to contribute to policy-making. It is conducted in cycles of 18 months, coinciding with the terms of office of Trio Presidencies, on overall thematic priorities set by the Council. In addition, individual Presidency countries set national priorities for Structured Dialogue which, wholly or partially, contribute to the overall thematic priority.

Structured Dialogue is conducted at national and EU level:

- National Working Groups (NWG) manage consultations of young people and youth organisations within their respective countries on the basis of guiding questions set by the European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue (ESC) for each phase of the Structured Dialogue cycle. The guiding questions reflect the overall thematic priority of the Structured Dialogue cycle and the national priority set by the presidency countries for its phase of the cycle. NWGs may adapt the guiding questions to take account of national situations and report the outcomes of consultations to the ESC.
- Outcomes are collated and serve as a basis for debates conducted at EU Youth Conferences organised by each presidency country, where selected youth delegates and policy-makers representing national authorities and EU institutions will draw conclusions (in the form of joint recommendations) aimed, in most cases, at Member States and the European Commission. The conclusions are subsequently reflected in Council resolutions/conclusions adopted by youth ministers.

At the end of the first cycle (on *youth employment*) of Structured Dialogue, a Council Resolution was adopted to provide an overview of the process and its outcomes.

#### **HUNGARY**

##### **Compendium on Structured Dialogue**

In early 2012, the outgoing Hungarian Presidency published a compendium on the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. The Compendium provides an overview of the Structured Dialogue conducted on the theme of 'youth employment', with contributions from the main actors in the process. It contains facts and figures relating to the first cycle and lists its main outcomes and achievements. It is a useful reference point, which may inspire those entrusted with

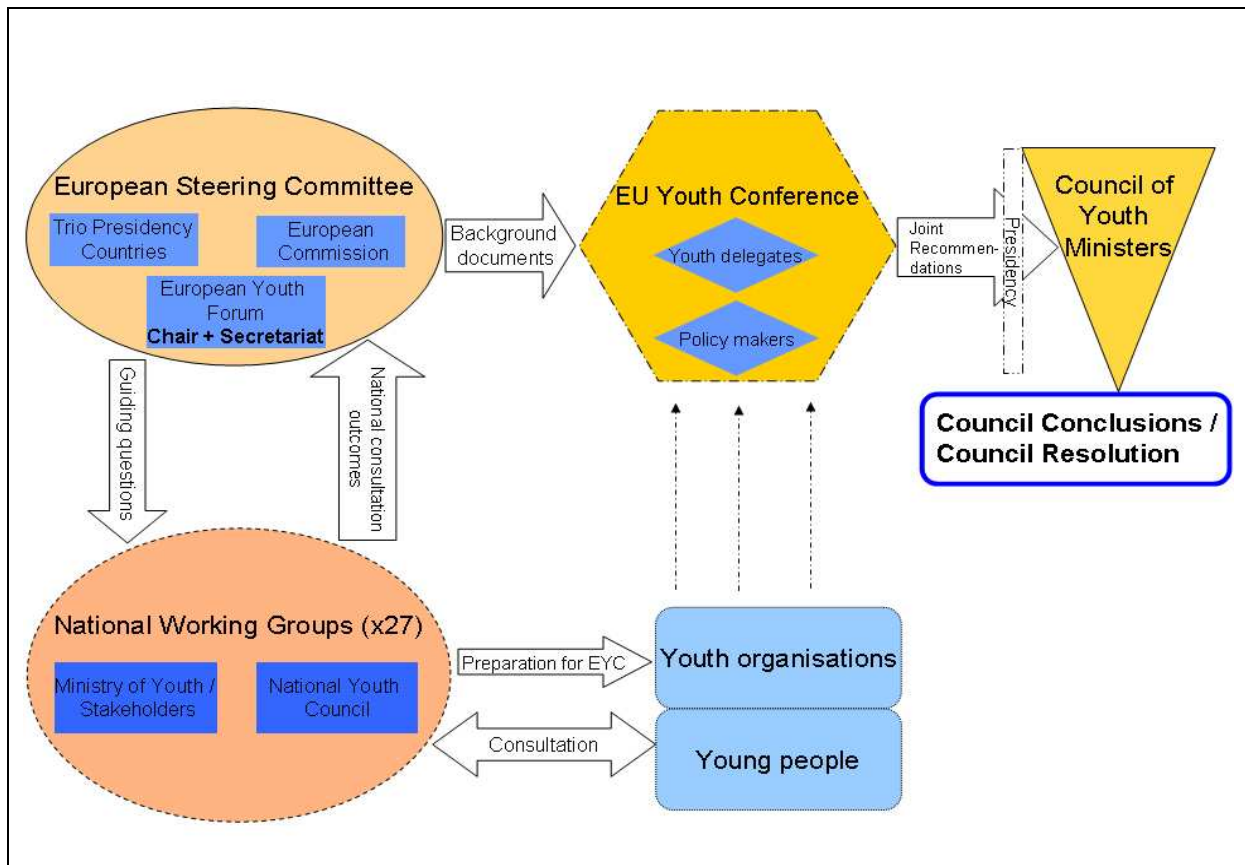
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<sup>83</sup> The implementation of Structured Dialogue is detailed in annex III of the Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 11, and in the annex of the Council Resolution on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment, OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, p. 4.

ensuring the successful conduct of Structured Dialogue in the years to come. The Commission has made this compendium available on the [European Youth Portal](#)<sup>84</sup>.

NWGs were established in all Member States during the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. In the second cycle of Structured Dialogue (on *youth participation in democratic life*<sup>85</sup>), NWGs in all Member States organised consultations of young people and youth organisations and reported on their outcomes.

**Table 11-A: Structured Dialogue with Young People and Youth Organisations**



**Structured Dialogue** enables young people and youth organisations to contribute to policy-making. Its cycles of 18 months coincide with the terms of office of **Trio Presidencies**.

Overall thematic priorities are set by the Council and may be supplemented by national priorities of individual presidency countries. The priorities are reflected in guiding questions set for each phase of the cycle of Structured Dialogue (18 months). The **European Steering Committee** for the Structured Dialogue (ESC) sets the guiding questions which form the basis of consultations in Member States. ESC consists of three representatives (national authority, National Agency for Youth in Action programme, National Youth Council) of each of the Member States of the Trio Presidency, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The latter chairs the ESC and provides most of its secretarial functions.

**National Working Groups** (NWG) manage consultations of young people, youth organisations and other stakeholders. NWGs may adapt the guiding questions to take account of national situations.

<sup>84</sup> Ministry of National Resources of Hungary, 2011. [Compendium of the Structured Dialogue with Young People and Youth Organisations on Youth Employment during the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian EU Presidencies](#). Available [here](#).

<sup>85</sup> The first part of the second cycle finished with Council Conclusions, OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.

Background documents for **EU Youth Conferences** are drawn up on the basis of a consolidated report of outcomes of national consultations. EU Youth Conferences are organised by each Member State holding the Council Presidency, where nominated youth delegates and policy-makers, representing national authorities and EU institutions, conduct debates and draw conclusions (in the form of joint recommendations).

Joint recommendations are generally aimed at Member States and the European Commission and are subsequently reflected in Council resolutions/conclusions adopted by Youth Ministers.

With a view to developing and refining the process, and as an integral part of the 5<sup>th</sup> European Youth Week in May 2011, the Commission took the initiative to host Structured Dialogue devoted to the conduct of the Dialogue itself. This Dialogue took stock of the process on the basis of experiences gained from the conduct of its first cycle. Youth delegates representing all NWGs and policy-makers from most national authorities adopted [45 joint recommendations on the future conduct and development of Structured Dialogue](#).

Dedicated pages have been added to the [European Youth Portal](#) to promote and enhance the visibility of the process.

## **GERMANY**

### **Online procedure for Structured Dialogue**

Together with the NWG the National Co-ordination Unit developed an online procedure to compile the dialogue results. In a first phase, the demands, concerns, desires and results of the dialogue processes are compiled. These contributions are published immediately on a website for all to see. Compilation is followed by a second phase during which the participants prioritise the input and thereby determine which content will flow into the National Youth Report.

For the purposes of this online procedure, a special tool (the ‘participation tracker’) was developed to offer the young people low-threshold access to participation and at the same time provide all participants with the highest degree of transparency. With the ‘participation tracker’, a nationwide eParticipation procedure was used for the first time and it also serves as a pilot project for further developments in this area. For more information, click [here](#).

Although Structured Dialogue is only conducted in Member States, youth delegates and government officials from EU Candidate Countries, European Economic Area (EFTA-EEA) and other non-EU Youth in Action programme countries have, at the discretion of Member States holding the Presidency, been invited to participate in EU Youth Conferences.

The first two cycles of Structured Dialogue on employment and youth participation fed into Council documents and were actively used by the Commission to further their policies in these areas. Worth mentioning are take up of recommendations in the several of the Commission's policy initiatives to fight youth unemployment and the opening of an Eastern Partnership Window in the Youth in Action programme aimed at cooperation with eastern European neighbouring countries. The results of these efforts are described in further detail in the relevant chapters addressing employment, participation and youth in the world.

## **11.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level**

### **Responses in National Youth Reports**

Has your government carried out any specific measures or is it planning to do so based on the conclusions from the European Youth Week, which present a number of recommendations on how the structured dialogue can be improved at the national and the European levels?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, the government has implemented specific measures responding to recommendations from the European Youth Week in May 2011.	▼	16	3		13
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	8		1	7
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◇	9		3	6

Most Member States have responded actively to the recommendations on how to improve the Structured Dialogue. The ESC for the Structured Dialogue and the Commission also responded to relevant recommendations from the conclusions drawn during the 2011 European Youth Week.

**Germany** believes that it has only limited means of exerting influence on the conduct of Structured Dialogue at EU level, but relies on contacts with the ESC to present proposals for improvements. Some Member States, including the **Netherlands** and **Lithuania** comment that efforts to improve the conduct of Structured Dialogue at national level are undertaken by the NWG, rather than the Government, which does not play a leading role in NWG.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government supported the establishment of a National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	29	3		26
No	◇	4		4	0

All Member States demonstrated their commitment to Structured Dialogue by actively supporting the setting up of a NWG during the first cycle of the process. NWGs in all Member States contributed to the consultations of young people undertaken prior to the EU Youth Conferences organised by **Poland** and **Denmark**, which completed the first two phases of the second cycle on ‘youth participation in democratic life’.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the National Youth Council play a leading role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	24	3		21
No	◇	9		4	5

NYCs do not exist in all Member States, but they have the leading role in most NWGs. **Slovakia** reports that in line with the recommendations adopted during the 2011 European Youth Week, the leading role of the NWG was transferred to the Slovak Youth Council. In **Bulgaria** and **Hungary**, where there are no NYCs, other youth representatives are members of the NWG. In **France**, CNAJEP, as the national representative of organised youth, is performing the leading role in the NWG during the second cycle of Structured Dialogue. In **Romania** the leading role is assumed by the national ministry, and in **Greece** the General Secretariat for Youth plays the leading role in the absence of cooperation with the NYC.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the competent national ministry play an active role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3		25
No	◇	5		4	1

The competent ministry for youth affairs plays an active role in all NWGs with the exception of **Finland**. Although the Finnish Ministry is represented in the NWG and finances its activities, the Ministry has chosen not to play an active role.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Is the competent national ministry aware of the process of consultations, and subsequent results, undertaken by the National Working Group in response to guiding questions issued by the European Steering Committee for the structured dialogue with youth?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3		25
No	◇	5		4	1

The competent ministry for youth affairs is aware of the tasks and achievements of NWGs in all Member States. **Finland**, however, reports that whereas the Ministry is aware of the consultations and results, it is difficult to estimate to which extent it has taken these into consideration.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy, have other national ministries played an active role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	6			6
No	◇	27	3	4	20

In **Bulgaria**, **Latvia**, **Hungary**, the **Netherlands** and **Portugal** ministries responsible for employment issues participated in the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. The active role of other national ministries in NWGs will inevitably depend on the relevant thematic priority of the Structured Dialogue, but the potential for their involvement may increase in the future given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government provide financial or other support for the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	25	3		22
No	◇	8		4	4

A significant majority of Member States' governments provides financial and other means of support for the activities of NWGs. Financial support is often given in the framework of subsidies to the NYC (e.g. **Spain**, the **Netherlands**, **Slovenia**, and **Sweden**), regular national grant schemes (e.g. **Denmark**, and **Estonia**), or the Youth in Action programme (e.g. **Latvia**).

The German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Cyprus**, and **Lithuania** refer to the provision of venues. For political support of the NWG, in the **Czech Republic** there is a civil servant in charge of close cooperation with its Chair.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government consider the National Working Group already established in your country to be sufficiently inclusive in its composition to ensure a participatory process open to all young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	19	1		18
No	◇	14	2	4	8

Although the majority of governments consider their NWGs to be sufficiently inclusive, others express suggestions for broadening outreach in future. **Latvia** reminds of the necessity to involve more young people, who are ready to be active. **Cyprus** argues that creative and innovative ways of reaching out to young people should be further explored, while **Sweden**

reports on the difficulty, as in other European countries, in reaching young people who are not part of an organisation. Although **Ireland** considers its NWG to be inclusive, its verdict is qualified by a reference to ‘in as far as it is practicable’.

**Belgium** established three NWGs (French Community, German-speaking Community and Flemish Community) to reflect its federal structure.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government taken any initiatives to follow up the points that were raised as priority areas in the conclusions of the structured dialogue on youth employment, as outlined in the Council Resolution on the structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	12	2		10
No, but we intend to take relevant initiatives/measures in 2012	▲	12		1	11
No, we do not have any current plans for a follow-up	◇	9	1	3	5

A majority of Member States responded positively to the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue on youth employment and have already, or are in the process of so doing, taken initiatives to ensure a follow-up of outcomes.

Several Member States refer to national strategies, which include some of the conclusions. In **Germany** the conclusions were picked up both by the federal and state governments. Namely the ‘Recognition of non-formal education’ is integrated into their work and influenced also the discussion regarding the development of an ‘Independent Youth Policy’. **Ireland** followed the conclusions mainly by establishing the ‘JobBridge’ national internship scheme. **Italy** in contrast undertook a reform of apprenticeships.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Would your Government support a structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other fields than those covered by the overall thematic priorities, and individual Presidency priorities, agreed at European level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	26	3	1	22
No	◇	7		3	4

A significant majority of Member States have embraced the concept of Structured Dialogue to the extent that they would support its extension at national level. Some Member States (the **Czech Republic Greece, Spain,**) argue such developments are already being implemented, whereas **Austria** feels that any extension should be partly funded by EU funds. **Sweden** reports that regular consultations with young people and youth organisations are a natural part of national youth policy. **France** explains that the means for having a continuous consultation process between the government and organised youth do not exist.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Do youth researchers and those engaged in youth work play a role in carrying out the structured dialogue in your country?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	26	2	1	23
No	◇	7	1	3	3

A significant majority of Member States report that researchers and youth workers are involved in the Structured Dialogue process, either as members of the NWG or as active participants in consultations – or both.

**Portugal** puts emphasis on the involvement of experts in workshops and the provision of information at the infopoint network ‘Lojas Ponto JA’. In **Germany**, scientific support comes from the research group ‘Youth and Europe’ at the Centre for Applied Policy Research.



**Responses in National Youth Reports**

Would your Government support efforts to enhance the visibility and transparency of structured dialogue at national level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	30	3	1	26
No	◇	3		3	0

All Member States support efforts to enhance the national visibility of the process. **Austria** reports that this is one of the core aims of its NWG, while **Spain** seeks greater ‘social visibility’. **Lithuania** emphasises the need to promote Structured Dialogue on the websites of important stakeholders. At EU level, the European Youth Portal now provides dedicated pages on Structured Dialogue and optional online functionalities are being added to support the conduct of future national consultations.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Based on the experiences gained since 2010, does your Government feel that the format and working methods employed at EU Youth Conferences contribute to a successful conduct of structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	23	1	1	21
No	◇	10	2	3	5

**Hungary** argues that the final outcome of the first cycle of Structured Dialogue proves that the working methods of three (linked) conferences are useful and can lead to a well prepared result. **Germany** calls for a greater role to be played by the outcomes of consultations and perceives that there is not sufficient time allowed for debates in workshops. **Estonia** feels that EU Youth Conferences should provide for more sharing of experiences and good practices between national youth organisations. **Spain** emphasises the importance of ensuring that non-organised youth and young people with fewer opportunities are represented, whereas **Finland** argues for continuity in the process and recommends that young participants be experienced in the field of EU policy. The French Community of **Belgium** reports that the language barrier is a major problem and obstacle, and Austria calls for new technology tools to be employed to give more young people a chance to participate in Conferences. Parts of the EU Youth Conferences organised in **Poland, Denmark** and **Cyprus** were made available to a larger audience through the use of web-streaming.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Based on the experiences gained from the first two cycles of the structured dialogue, does your Government have particular recommendations for the further development of the structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	23	3		20
No	◇	10		4	6

Structured Dialogue is an on-going and developing process. Building on the positive experience gained from the 2011 European Youth Week and the organisation of a Structured Dialogue with the main actors in the process, the Commission will ensure that such dialogues are conducted regularly to facilitate any future improvements of the Structured Dialogue.

#### NETHERLANDS

##### Local Structured Dialogue

In the Netherlands the NWG chaired by the NYC (NJR) has started a pilot project with Dutch local authorities/municipalities ('gemeenten') to organise the Structured Dialogue at the local level. This involves one kick-off meeting and five intensive local dialogue sessions between local policy-makers, professionals and young people to discuss how the Structured Dialogue can be implemented on a structural basis on the local level and to promote the European Youth Strategy with local administrators. For more information please contact the Dutch National Youth Council NJR at: [info@njr.nl](mailto:info@njr.nl); [jacqueline.baljeu@njr.nl](mailto:jacqueline.baljeu@njr.nl).

Several Member States are developing and defining their contribution to the Structured Dialogue. **Portugal** revised and redefined its execution of the process in cooperation with its NYC, and the NWG set up ambitious regional and national consultations in accordance with the joint recommendations issued during the 2011 European Youth Week. By adopting a new Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act, **Slovenia** defined Structured Dialogue as 'an open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between young people and the holders of power at the national and local level'. The Youth Department of the **Czech**

**Republic** identified Structured Dialogue as a priority area in the 2012-13 Action Plan on the Concept of Czech Youth Policy. Discussions were initiated with the National Council of Children and Youth to shape the functioning of the NWG and change its primary mission of responding to tasks set by the Trio Presidencies into one of being an equal partner to the Ministry in the preparation of a new concept for youth policy after 2013.

Some Member States are also reporting developments in the methodology employed when conducting Structured Dialogue at national level. In **Hungary** the joint recommendations issued during the 2011 European Youth Week were taken into consideration during the process of establishing a new NWG, which has created its own Facebook site, 'Have Your Say' to be able to address and communicate directly with young people and to enable youth to keep an eye on the process. In the **Netherlands**, the NYC makes a particular effort to involve unorganised youth as much as possible. Lessons and debates in schools organised by representatives of the NYC, as well as online questionnaires and polls, are among the consultation methods that have been employed.

The majority of Member States are satisfied with the format of the EU Youth Conferences organised during the first cycles of Structured Dialogue, **Sweden** reports that it nominates the same two youth representatives to participate in all three EU Youth Conferences organised during a cycle. Both the youth representatives and the NWG feel that this is a successful method to sustain consistency in the national consultations and the EU Youth Conferences.

## **POLAND**

### **Infopack for Structured Dialogue**

At the end of 2011 a new Infopack on Structured Dialogue was prepared by the National Agency of the Youth in Action programme and the Polish Council of Youth Organisations. That short guide on the Dialogue shows how the process works and how to implement it on a local level including advice on meetings at schools, universities or how to facilitate the dialogue in a youth organisation by creativity techniques. Find the InfoPack [here](#).

Most Member States issued recommendations for the further development of the Structured Dialogue, based on the experiences gained from the completion of its first two cycles. These recommendations include:

- A single overall thematic priority should be the focus of Structured Dialogue during each of its cycles, covering all three Presidency terms of office (the Flemish and the French Communities of **Belgium**, the National Youth Council of the **Netherlands**)
- A clear link between the three consultation cycles and the overall thematic priority is essential (**Hungary** and **Portugal**)
- More transparency is required to illustrate the follow-up to the outcomes of the consultation processes (**Germany**)
- New methods should be used to reach a larger number of young people, e.g. by consulting European Youth Card holders (**Finland**)
- Member States should explain to young people the importance of participating in a Structured Dialogue consultation (**Cyprus**)

- The Youth in Action programme and its successor must be construed to meet the needs of Structured Dialogue, in terms of application deadlines, eligibility of expenses and recognition of in-kind contributions and volunteering time as eligible elements of co-funding (National Youth Council of **Austria**)
- A consistency in the nomination of youth representatives attending EU Youth Conferences (**Sweden**)
- The term ‘Structured Dialogue’ needs to be explained, as young people do not understand what it means (**Estonia**)
- Solicit the opinion of young people before setting thematic priorities for Structured Dialogue (French Community of **Belgium**)

As the Structured Dialogue only involves Member States, questions relating to this ongoing process have not been answered in National Youth Reports submitted by non-EU countries.

### **11.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

The YFJ regards the Structured Dialogue as one of the most important developments for EU cooperation in the youth field since 2010. It has created a direct communication channel between young people and decision-makers at European level, as well as in all Member States. From the very beginning, the YFJ has been one of the key stakeholders and played a leading role in the implementation of the process within the ESC.

Since 2009, the YFJ has been involved in preparing and developing the process and defining the structures needed for its implementation, namely NWGs and the ESC. Holding the Chair and secretariat of the ESC, the Forum has until today been in charge of communication with NWGs.

During the first and second cycles of Structured Dialogue, the YFJ selected a group of facilitators to ensure continuity and efficiency in the preparation and methodology of EU Youth Conferences. Likewise, it contributed to the organisation of the European Youth Week 2011, in which an interim assessment of the process was made and a set of joint recommendations regarding its future was drafted.

After each phase of national consultation, the YFJ collected reports from NWGs and synthesised them thematically. These compilations were used as background documents for the discussions at the consequent EU Youth Conferences. The YFJ additionally used NWGs' feedback to put together an overview of methodologies used for consultations in Member States, allowing NWGs to build on each other's experience. This was also used to identify challenges NWGs face and address them within the ESC.

During these two cycles, the YFJ has been successful in engaging NYCs to take part in Structured Dialogue, and is now working towards more involvement of international non-governmental youth organisations. In addition to broadening the scope of the process, the Forum also worked on the visibility of Structured Dialogue, by publishing information on it on its webpage.

After each EU Youth Conference, the YFJ ensured political follow-up of the recommendations put forward during the process, both within the youth field and in other fields, for example the employment field during the first cycle of Structured Dialogue.

**Table 11-B: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Structured Dialogue**

<b>EU Member States</b>	Has your government carried out any specific measures or is it planning to do so based on the conclusions from the European Youth Week, which present a number of recommendations on how the structured dialogue can be improved at the national and the European levels?	Has your Government supported the establishment of a National Working Group?	Does the National Youth Council play a leading role in the National Working Group?	Does the competent national ministry play an active role in the National Working Group?	Is the competent national ministry aware of the process of consultations, and subsequent results, undertaken by the National Working Group in response to guiding questions issued by the European Steering Committee for the structured dialogue with youth?
Belgium German-speaking	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium French	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Czech	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Germany	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Estonia	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	◇	▼	◇	▼	▼
Spain	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
France	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Italy	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Lithuania	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Malta	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Poland	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Portugal	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Romania	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Slovenia	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovakia	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Finland	◇	▼	▼	◇	◇
Sweden	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
United	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
<b>Non-EU</b>					
Norway	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Switzerland	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Montenegro	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Croatia	▲	◇	◇	◇	◇

▼ Yes      ◇ No

▲ No, but plans 2012

◇ No, without plans

EU Member States	Given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy, have other national ministries played an active role in the National Working Group?	Does your Government provide financial or other support for the National Working Group?	Does your Government consider the National Working Group already established in your country to be sufficiently inclusive in its composition to ensure a participatory process open to all young people?	Has your Government taken any initiatives to follow up the points that were raised as priority areas in the conclusions of the structured dialogue on youth employment, as outlined in the Council Resolution on the structured dialogue?	Would your Government support a structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other fields than those covered by the overall thematic priorities, and individual Presidency priorities, agreed at European level?
Belgium German-speaking	◇	▼	▼	◇	▼
Belgium Flemish	◇	▼	◇	▼	▼
Belgium French	◇	▼	◇	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	◇	▼	▼	▼
Czech Republic	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Denmark	▼	▼	▼	▲	▼
Germany	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Estonia	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	◇	◇	▼	▲	▼
Spain	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
France	◇	▼	◇	◇	◇
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Lithuania	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Luxembourg	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Malta	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Poland	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Portugal	▼	◇	◇	▲	▼
Romania	◇	▼	▼	▲	◇
Slovenia	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Slovakia	◇	▼	◇	◇	▼
Finland	◇	▼	▼	◇	▼
Sweden	◇	▼	◇	◇	◇
United	◇	◇	▼	◇	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>					
Norway	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Switzerland	◇	◇	◇	▲	◇
Montenegro	◇	◇	◇	▲	◇
Croatia	◇	◇	◇	◇	▼

▼ Yes      ◇ No

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◇ No, without plans

EU Member States	Do youth researchers and those engaged in youth work play a role in carrying out the structured dialogue in your country?	Would your Government support efforts to enhance the visibility and transparency of structured dialogue at national level?	Based on the experiences gained since 2010, does your Government feel that the format and working methods employed at EU Youth Conferences contribute to a successful conduct of structured dialogue?	Based on the experiences gained from the first two cycles of the structured dialogue, does your Government have particular recommendations for the further development of the structured dialogue?
Belgium German-speaking	◇	▼	◇	▼
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	◇	▼
Belgium French	▼	▼	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	▼	▼	◇
Czech Republic	◇	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	▼	▼	▼	◇
Germany	▼	▼	◇	▼
Estonia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	▼	▼	▼	◇
Spain	◇	▼	◇	▼
France	▼	▼	▼	▼
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Lithuania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▼	▼	◇	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	▼	▼
Malta	▼	▼	▼	◇
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	▼	▼	◇	▼
Poland	▼	▼	▼	◇
Portugal	▼	▼	▼	▼
Romania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovenia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovakia	▼	▼	◇	▼
Finland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sweden	▼	▼	▼	▼
United Kingdom	▼	▼	▼	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◇	◇	◇	◇
Switzerland	◇	◇	◇	◇
Montenegro	◇	◇	◇	◇
Croatia	▼	▼	▼	◇

▼ Yes      ◇ No

## 12. ANNEX

### 12.1. ANNEX 1: Table of abbreviations

#### EU Member States<sup>86</sup>

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

#### Non-EU Member States

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<sup>86</sup> Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.



HR	Croatia
ME	Montenegro
NO	Norway
CH	Switzerland

### **Other Abbreviations**

CoE	Council of Europe
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EKCYP	European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESC	European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EU-27	27 Member States of the EU
EVS	European Voluntary Service
GP	General practitioner
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MS	Member State(s)
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NWG	National Working Group
NYC	National Youth Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme – a network of eight resource centres
South Med	Southern Mediterranean region
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organization
YFJ	European Youth Forum

## **12.2. ANNEX 2: Council Resolutions/Conclusions on youth (2010-2012)**

**11 May 2010**

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty

OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, pp. 1-6

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:137:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work

OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:327:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on access of young people to culture

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0002:0003:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0001:0001:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on the Youth on the Move initiative – an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 9-11

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0009:0011:EN:PDF>

**19 May 2011**

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the structured dialogue with young people on youth employment

OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, pp. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:164:0001:0004:EN:PDF>

### **19 May 2011**

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe

OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, pp. 1-5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:169:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

### **28 November 2011**

Council Conclusions on the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility

OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:372:0010:0014:EN:PDF>

### **11 May 2012**

Council Conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people

OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, pp. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:169:0001:0004:EN:PDF>