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YouthMetre achievements and new opportunities

Innovative & interactive online tools to engage youth in policy making shall be widely spread and used

On January 1, 2016 the European consortium of five expert NGOs and one university academic department started working on the YouthMetre project – EUROGEO (coordinator), University of Zaragoza, Ars4Progress, ALDA, CESIE, and the European Youth Press. Tomorrow, after 2,5 years of research, development, testing, promotion, trainings and meetings, the project will be officially finished, as June 30, 2018 is the final day of project's funding.

At the beginning of whole project, a detailed research process was undertaken examining youth policy documents, research papers, reviews, books and other published sources. From this detailed research, the **State of the Art Report** has been written and 20 key areas have been identified and promoted. At the same time, European open data was reviewed and used to build a data dashboard and to communicate an index of youth well-being at NUTS 2 level in the EU. **Dashboard and visualization** of EU Policy achievements in the field of youth gave the project its name – the YouthMetre. It allows simple insights into open data as well as provides an inspiration to young people by showing best practice projects and initiatives.

The work on the ground was also important to reach project's goals, therefore the YM team organised live trainings and discussions. A series of **15 Study Groups** of young people in 15 European countries have contributed to the development of the project. See their diaries (<http://youthmetre.eu/study-groups/>) and their blogs (<http://youthmetre.eu/blog/>). Study Group members also evaluated implementation of EU Youth Strategy and EU Youth Indicators, which are used to measure the "performance" of authorities in youth policy fields. Some members even proposed new indicators.

The YouthMetre team organised **launch and final conferences** in Brussels, both of them being hosted by the European Committee of the Regions and attended by high-level decision makers (for example Luc Van den Brande from Belgium). There were also other events focused on usage of e-participation tools, communication with decision makers, and youth advocacy organised by the team: **Training of multipliers** after launch conference and workshop during European Week of Cities and Regions (both in Brussels) as well as seminars in Strasbourg (during the EYE 2018 in the European Parliament), Vilnius, and Prague. **Training materials** are also available [online as open source](#).

In 2017, the YouthMetre team has begun cooperation with developers of mobile application **GeoCitizen**, as its functions perfectly match YouthMetre's goals. GeoCitizen allows its users to put their ideas on the map, discuss, and vote on best solutions improving various issues. The results – supported by data from YouthMetre – can be used to advocate for a change. The app can be also used by public authorities who want to launch public consultation and ultimately effectively communicate with their citizens.

The YouthMetre has been funded by the **European Commission's Erasmus+ Program** (Key Action 3) as one of the Forward Looking Projects. These projects are innovative and have a potential to be multiplied and further implemented. Any results of any project can be sustainable and without their authors making efforts to keep them visible and ensure their wider usage. Having this potential in mind, the YouthMetre team has identified several future opportunities for the YouthMetre.

They are networking with local public authorities and encouraging them to share local data on youth, and working on **follow-up projects** that would allow them to implement the tool at local level in the EU, as well as outside (for example in the Balkans). YouthMetre influencers from Germany and Slovakia (members of local Study Groups) are also working on local initiatives improving dialogue with decision makers and applying for relevant funding in their countries and at international level. Last but not least, the YouthMetre tools and approach can be applied to other issues that (not only young) people care about, for instance in the field of environment or monitoring the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information about the YouthMetre, contact the Project Coordinator Karl Donert, President, European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO) — kdonert@yahoo.com.

The YouthMetre team believes that citizens, and not only the young ones, need access to information and especially suitable insights into matters that concern them, should be connected with other citizens and receive their feedback, and be involved in discussions with decision makers in order to effectively promote and advocate for their ideas for public good. The YouthMetre (including mobile application GeoCitizen) is addressing all these needs and providing solutions to them. By combining online and offline tools it aims at helping all citizens to get their voice heard and make a change.

The YouthMetre provides accessible information to young people living in the EU and empowers them with tools so they are able to interact with policy makers as well as other citizens, and use these connections and information to make a positive change in areas that concern them. Also public authorities shall use the YouthMetre tools to get feedback from citizens and connect with them.