# YouthMetre

**Project "YouthMetre: a tool for forward looking youth participation"**

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## D1.1 State-of-the-art Report

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### ABSTRACT

The present report collects and analyses the latest EU policies and programmes for youth as well as published scientific researches investigating the impact of those policies on young Europeans.

The document envisages the production of a state-of the art report on the situation of youth policies across Europe **with particular focus to the eight "key areas"** identified by the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018: Education & Training, Employment & Entrepreneurship, Health & Well-Being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Social Inclusion, Youth & the World, Creativity & Culture.

The research is particularly addressed to European policy and decision makers, youth workers and youth leaders and aims at providing them with a solid background on the present framework of youth policies in Europe and its impact on the target population. With the view of supporting the ongoing research for better policies and initiatives to empower young Europeans.

Erasmus+

**With the support of the Erasmus Plus Programme of the European Union**

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# YOUTHMETRE - Project aims

**Youthmetre** is an initiative funded by the European Commission through its Erasmus Plus Programme – Key Action 3: "Forward-looking cooperation projects". The project lasts 24 months, starting from January 2016 and it involves six partner organizations originating from diverse fields but all committed to the need to engage young citizens in European policy making processes.

In line with the objectives of the Erasmus+ Programme and in order to foster the achievement of Europe2020 goals, the YouthMetre project **aims to support EU Member States, municipalities and regions in carrying out effective policy reforms in the field of Youth**, in line with the indications provided by the EU Youth Strategy and according to the priorities perceived by its target population: young Europeans.

To this scope **an e-tool will be produced** to close the gap between youth and institutions by collecting the perceived needs of youth in key policy areas and providing guidelines to public institutions that help address them.

**A benchmarking process** leads to the establishment of a **data dashboard** and visualization of EU Policy achievements using innovative but now mainstream technologies.
YouthMetre is competitive encouraging the outcomes of public authorities' actions to be measured and compared. It contributes to the Open Method of Coordination in the field of youth since it envisages the establishment of a set of indicators measuring the "performance" of local authorities in youth policy fields and fosters the exchange of good practices.

The project approach derives from the acknowledged difficulty for policy makers to develop ideas and implement initiatives in youth policy fields that respond to the self-perceived needs of youngsters living in their target territories.

# Purpose of the report

**The EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018)** emphasises an evidence-based approach to youth policy. Cooperation takes place under the **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)**. This is a non-binding intergovernmental framework for cooperation and policy exchange, which provides a flexible framework for setting joint agenda, exchanging best practices, and improving the current evidence-base for youth policy.

EU Youth Policy has been developed in a coherent, overall framework. **However OMC has been criticized**, in particular for failing to set common targets and benchmarks and to coordinate national action plans at European level.

Therefore in order for YouthMetre to monitor the impact of soft policy, the development of indicators is required. To do this, the project undertakes an initial examination of EU Youth policy and initiatives as well as published research, to produce a state-of the art report on the situation of youth policies across Europe **with particular focus to the eight "key areas"** identified by the EU Youth Strategy: Education & Training, Employment & Entrepreneurship, Health & Well-Being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Social Inclusion, Youth & the World, Creativity & Culture.

This report thus sets the scene for YouthMetre actions and activities, establishing tendencies and trends, exploring key issues in the field of Youth policy and some potential responses to them.

# Key demographic trends in the European youth population

## Introduction

The period when a person is considered to be **'young'** differs across Europe according to the national context, the socio-economic development of society and time. Common to all countries is that the period of youth - the transition from being a child to being an adult - is marked by important life changes: from being in education to having a full-time job, from living in the family home to setting up one's own household, and from being financially dependent to managing one's own money.

In **2009**, the Council of the European Union endorsed a **renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018),** also known as **the EU Youth Strategy,** which targets **young people between 15 and 29 years of age**. The **EU Youth Report 2015,** drawn up by the European Commission at the end of the first six-years cycle and built on the dashboard of EU youth indicators - a selection of 41 indicators which measure the most crucial aspects of young people's lives in Europe - focuses on the most recent data and information on the current situation of young people in Europe and illustrates **trends which have emerged since the publication of the previous Youth Report in 2012**.

**Besides the specific indicators and trends related to the** eight 'fields of action' **of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 (Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Creativity and Culture, and Youth and the World),** the EU Youth Report 2015 **includes an** introductory overview of the key demographic trends in the European youth population **over the last few years in relation to the ratio and composition of young people in the total population and patterns of youth mobility across the continent.**

## Ratio and composition of young people in the total population

According to the EU Youth Report 2015, on 1 January 2014, almost **90 million young people aged between 15 and 29 years lived in the European Union**. This represents around 18% of the total population of EU-28. The proportion of young people in the total population varies across countries. While it is comparatively smaller in Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia, it reaches the highest levels in Cyprus, Malta, and Slovakia. Albania and Turkey report the highest figures in neighbouring states outside of the EU.

In line with the long-term trend over the last three decades (see the previous edition of the Youth Report), the proportion of young people continued to decline between 2010 and 2014 (Figure I). On average, the 15-19 age group has been the most affected by the decline: it registered a 7% decrease over the three years considered. Over a period of only 4 years, it was evident that the proportion of teenagers who entered the 15-19 age group did not fully replace the proportion that moved out of the 25-29 group. This decline in the total number of young people in the European Union affects countries to a different extent. Central, eastern and southern European countries have seen comparatively larger drops in their youth populations than northern ones. However, Ireland is the country recording the highest fall in percentage points since 2010. On the other hand, a few countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) have witnessed slight increases in the proportion of young people in their population.

According to population projections developed by Eurostat (Europop2013), while the total EU population is expected to grow through 2050 reaching approximately 525 million in that year, it is projected that the proportion of young people will decrease from almost 18% in 2013 to below 16% in 2050, equal to over 7

million individuals. The steady decrease in the youth population living in the EU over the last decades and the related augmentation of the old-age dependency ratio has been subdued by the growth of immigration from non-EU. The contribution of non-EU immigration is not enough to reverse the general decline in the youth population living in the EU, but has nonetheless made it less sharp.

Figure I: Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population, by country, 2010 and 2014.



Source: Eurostat [demo_pjanind]
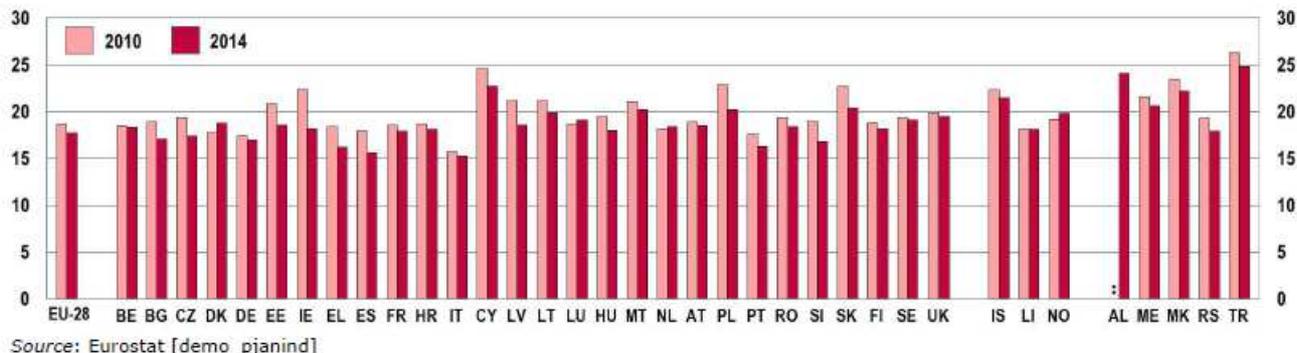
### Patterns of youth mobility across the continent

Thanks to the increasing opportunities for EU citizens to travel and set up residence across EU Member States**, young Europeans have become increasingly mobile and likely to go work or study in another European country**. Crossing geographical and cultural borders and gaining life and work experience in a different context is a great opportunity for a young person to acquire personal skills, learn new languages and appreciate the diversity of European culture.

According to the EU Youth Report 2015, with over 20% of **the immigrants (aged 15-29) coming from another EU Member State**, Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Austria stand out as the countries whose youth population receives in 2012 the highest proportion of young immigrants from other EU countries (Figure II). In most of the countries, the share of young immigrants coming from another EU Member State has not changed radically compared to 2010. However, some exceptions exist. The most significant increase has occurred in Greece, where the percentage of young European immigrants from other EU countries has doubled, although the overall level is relatively low (6%). In contrast, in Estonia and Romania the resident youth population from other EU States has significantly decreased.

The largest proportions of **young EU citizens leaving their own country of residence to settle in another EU Member State** in 2012 were recorded in Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia (where one in four young people have emigrated) and remarkably in Lithuania (where the share reaches 45%). The biggest increase in the proportion of young people emigrating over the two years in question is observed in Slovenia. Lichtenstein and Iceland have also seen increases in the share of young people choosing to live in another EU Member State. The opposite trend is illustrated in Ireland, where the proportion of young residents leaving the country to settle in another EU country has declined by almost one third.

Overall, looking at the countries for which data are available for both EU immigrants and emigrants, some are clearly shown to be either countries from which many young Europeans go abroad (for example, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Hungary) or countries which receive large numbers of young people (in particular Denmark, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg and Austria).

**Figure II: Share of young (aged 15-29) EU immigrants and emigrants, by country, 2010 and 2012.**

## a) EU immigrants from another EU Member State
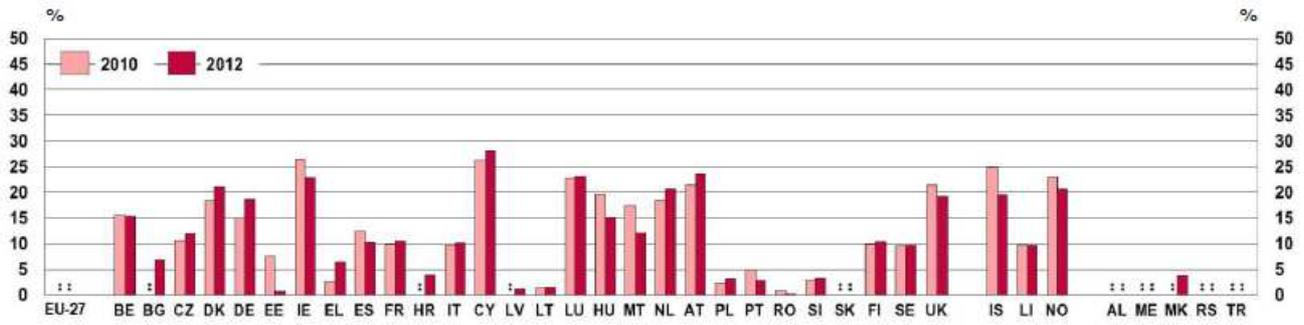


## b) EU emigrants to another EU Member State
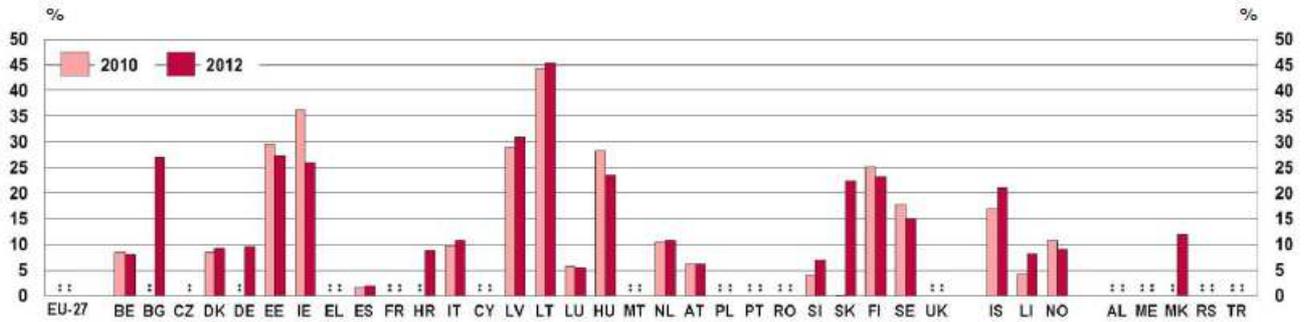


*Notes*: According to the definitions provided by Eurostat, 'Immigration' denotes the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country; 'Emigration' denotes the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months. *Source*: Eurostat [yth_demo_070] [yth_demo_080]

# EU Youth Strategy (2010-18)

While respecting Member States' overall responsibility for youth policy, the EU Youth Strategy, agreed by EU Ministers, sets out a framework for cooperation covering the years **2010-2018**. The **EU youth policy framework for cooperation in the field of youth** aims to foster the achievement of Europe 2020 goals[1].

## Which are the EU's objectives?

The EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 has two main **objectives**:

- To provide **more and equal opportunities** for **young people** in education and the job market;

- To encourage **young people** to **actively participate in society.**

## How does the EU work?

The EU Youth Strategy's implementation[2] is carried out by EU Member States with the support of the Commission, through a **dual approach** that aims to:

1. Take **specific initiatives** in the youth field, targeted at young people to encourage non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility and information and

2. Promote **'mainstreaming' cross-sector initiatives** that ensure youth issues are taken into account when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other fields with a significant impact on young people, such as education, employment or health and well-being.

Cooperation between **Member States** and the **Commission** is based on seven **implementation instruments**:

- Knowledge building and evidence-based policymaking
- Mutual learning
- Progress reporting
- Dissemination of results
- Monitoring of the process
- Structured Dialogue with young people
- Mobilisation of EU programmes and funds

The **Directorate General for Education and Culture** (DG EAC) is the executive branch of the European Union responsible for policy on education, culture, youth, languages, and sport. DG EAC supports these issues through a variety of **projects** and **programmes**, notably Erasmus+[3] and Creative Europe[4].

The **Education, Culture and Audiovisual Executive Agency**, EACEA, operates under the supervision of its parent Directorate General for Education and Culture and is entrusted with the implementation of programmes and activities on behalf of the European Commission. The EACEA website[5] provides all information about **EU's funding programmes** and opportunities in the fields of education, training, youth, sport, citizenship, audiovisual, culture and volunteering.

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[1] See EUROPE 2020 webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

[2] See: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/index_en.htm

[3] See the EC Erasmus+ website: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

[4] See the EC Creative Europe website: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/node_en

[5] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/

## EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 key areas

The EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 aims to improve the situation for young people in **eight areas**:

1. Education & training
2. Employment & entrepreneurship
3. Health & well-being
4. Participation
5. Voluntary activities
6. Social inclusion
7. Youth & the world
8. Creativity & culture

## EU Youth Strategy evaluation and reporting tools

The European Youth Monitor is an evaluation tool of the EU Youth Strategy. It is based on the EU Youth Dashboard composed of 41 indicators on the state of young people in the European Union covering all eight fields of action of the EU Youth Strategy. It is updated regularly, on the basis of data provided by the youth data set developed by Eurostat or **Eurobarometer surveys** (n° 375 e 408) and it provides information and **statistical data** from 2010 onwards, where available.

The joint EU Youth Report is a **reporting tool** of the **open method of coordination** in the field of youth. The joint EU Youth Report is based on responses from the EU countries to a Commission questionnaire covering all the 8 strategic fields of action. Young people are also consulted in their own countries, and different national ministries contribute to the process. National Youth Reports also provide information on how the EU Youth Strategy has been implemented at the national level during the current cycle.

- The 2009 EU Youth Report is a key document which presents statistics and data on youth.

- The 2012 EU Youth Report evaluated how the EU Youth Strategy was implemented over the **first work cycle** of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-12) and proposed priorities for the next three years.

- The 2015 EU Youth Report presented a full picture of the situation of young people in Europe and how policymakers have addressed it in the period 2013-2015.

General **publications**, **studies**, **reports**, **statistics** and **policy documents** on youth issues are available in the Document library.

## Main policy documents

- Commission Communication on a draft 2015 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) - 07.2015[6].

- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 - 20.05.2014[7].

- 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18) - 20.12.2012[8].

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[6]      http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2015_eac_001_eu_youth_strategy_en.pdf

[7]      http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42014Y0614(02)&from=EN

– 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) - Brussels, 10.9.2012[9].

– COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, 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) - Brussels, 10.09.2012[10].

– Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) - "The EU Youth Strategy", 27.11.2009[11].

– COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, An EU Strategy for Youth, Investing and Empowering A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities - Brussels, 27.04.2009[12].

[8]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XG1220(01)&from=EN
[9]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012SC0256&from=EN
[10]  http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/documents/eu_youth_report_2012_communication_en.pdf
[11]  http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01)&from=EN
[12]  http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN

# 1. Education & training

Through the Education and Training 2020 strategy (ET2020)[13], a part of the Europe 2020 strategy[14], EU countries have identified **common challenges**, such as ageing societies, skills deficits[15] in the workforce and global competition, to address **by 2020.** Each EU country is responsible for its own education and training systems, so EU policy is designed to support national action and help address common challenges, offering a **forum** for exchange of best practices, gathering and dissemination of **information** and **statistics**, as well as advice and support for policy reforms. **Funding** is also available for activities that promote learning and education at all levels and for all age groups.

## 1.1. What are the EU's objectives?

In order to reduce the current skills mismatch in Europe and ensure that the young are able to transition **from education to employment,** the EU is active in addressing these challenges:

- Making **lifelong learning** and **mobility** a reality;

- Improving the **quality and efficiency** of education and training;

- Promoting **equity, social cohesion**, and **active citizenship**;

- Enhancing **creativity and innovation**, including **entrepreneurship**, at all levels of education and training.

## 1.2. Main EU programmes and tools:

These objectives are being pursued through **youth-specific programmes,** several **tools** and more broadly through the **EU's policies** for growth and jobs:

1. The **Erasmus+ Programme**[16] supports projects designed for **youth organisations** or **groups of young people**, with a focus on **non-formal learning**, such as youth exchanges[17], opportunities for volunteering[18], training, and networking opportunities for youth workers, cooperation for innovation in youth work, as well as projects to engage young people in a Structured Dialogue[19] with policy makers.

2. The EU relies on **Working Groups**[20] composed of experts nominated by member countries and other key stakeholders. This work is part of a broader cooperation, known as the Open Method of Coordination, which aims to promote mutual learning, exchange of good practices, fostering national reforms and developing EU-level tools. Working Groups are designed to help Member States address the key challenges of their education and training systems, as well as common priorities agreed at European Level.

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[13] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm

[14] See footnote 1

[15] For more information on "Development of skills" see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/skills-development_en.htm

[16] See footnote 3

[17] For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/young-people/youth-exchanges_en

[18] For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/young-people/european-voluntary-service_en

[19] See the EC webpage on Structured Dialogue: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/dialogue_en.htm

[20] See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups_en.htm

3. The **Youthpass**[21], a set of five standardised documents and a skills passport available for free in 26 languages, is designed to provide an **EU-wide recognition of non-formal learning experiences** gained by young people under Erasmus+.

4. **The Frameworks & tools for recognition of qualifications in other EU countries**[22]. The European Union has developed several instruments to support the **transparency** and **recognition of knowledge, skills,** and **competences** to make it easier to study and work anywhere in Europe.

5. **EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership - Education & non-formal learning**[23]. The partnership stems from the close relations that the Council of Europe and the European Commission have developed in the youth field over the years since 1998. Its overall goal is to **foster synergies** between the youth-oriented activities of the two institutions and its specific themes are participation/citizenship, social inclusion, recognition and quality of youth work.

6. The **Education and Training Monitor**[24] is an annual series that reports on the evolution of education and training systems across Europe, bringing together the latest **quantitative and qualitative data**, recent technical reports and studies, plus policy documents and developments. While focused on **empirical evidence**, each section in the Monitor has clear **policy messages** for the Member States.

7. The website of the **JRC's Centre for Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL)**[25] provides **additional indicators** that were used throughout the monitoring exercise.

8. **E-twinning**[26] is the EC portal to find partners, share ideas and inspirations on "Education and Training" European initiatives.

9. The **Eurydice Network**[27] provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies.


## 1.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **four indicators** in order to gain information on and capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Education & Training** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- 20-24 year-olds with complete secondary education [28]
- Tertiary education attainment [29]
- Early leavers from education and training [30]
- Underachievement in reading, mathematics and science [31]

### 1.4. The state of European young people in 2015

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[21]     See: https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/youthpass/
[22]     See: http://goo.gl/vPSn09
[23]     See: http://goo.gl/D1Hv4W
[24]     See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm
[25]     https://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ET2020Indicators/
[26]     https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm
[27]     http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
[28]     **Definition**: Percentage of the population 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED level 3c long). Cfr. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT On EU indicators in the field of youth, (Brussels 25.03.2011), available on http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard_en.pdf [accessed 3/2/2016], p. 5.
[29]     **Definition**: Share of population aged 30-34 with tertiary education attainment. Cfr. *Ibidem*, p. 5.
[30]     **Definition**: % of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who is no longer in education or training. Cfr. *Ibidem*, p. 5.
[31]     **Definition**: Share of 15-year olds who get a score of 1 or below (on a scale from 1 to 5) in PISA tests. Cfr. *Ibidem*, p. 5.

According to the EU Youth Report 2015, **all indicators present positive trends** towards the achievement of the EU targets:

1. European children and young people on average spend **more than 17 years in formal education**, and this period has been increasing in recent years. Young people are increasingly highly educated and the share of young Europeans attaining **upper secondary qualifications** continues to increase up to more than **80%**. [32]

2. The proportion of people aged 30-34 **with tertiary level education** attainment has grown over the last three years, although at a different pace across European countries. On average, over **a third of Europeans between 30 and 34 years of age** have achieved a tertiary degree. [33].

3. Despite this positive trend in educational attainment, a significant share of young Europeans still face significant difficulties in the education system and feel compelled to leave prematurely without having gained relevant qualifications or a school certificate. On average, about **11 % of Europeans aged 18-24 in 2014 left education** having completed lower secondary education at most. However, since 2000 there has been a **general decline in the proportion of young people leaving school early** in Europe. [34]

4. On average, about **one in five young people aged 15** demonstrate low levels of proficiency in the three core competencies. However, since 2009 **the share of low achievers in reading, mathematics and science has declined** in the majority of European countries. [35]

However, challenges do exist for those who do not benefit from the improvements in terms of education. Many young people face difficulties in completing school education and acquiring necessary skills. Indeed, progress is mixed regarding reducing the share of 'low achievers' among 15 year olds. This compounds their socioeconomic disadvantages and reduces their opportunities to participate more broadly in society.

## 1.5. Official links

– The **European Commission** page on Education and Training[36].

– The **European Commission DG** for Education and Culture[37]

– The **European Parliament Committee** for Education and Culture[38]

– The **European Youth Portal >** Learning[39]

## 1.6. Reports

– The European higher education area in 2015 Bologna Process: implementation report - published by EACEA, 2015[40].

– The 2014 Country Reports which accompanied the Education and Training Monitor 2014[41].

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[32]     Cfr. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Situation of young people in the EU (Brussels, 15.9.2015), available on http://goo.gl/cHJ6cE, pp. 15-16.
[33]     Cfr. *Ibidem*, pp. 17-18.
[34]     Cfr. *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.
[35]     Cfr. *Ibidem*, p. 20.
[36]     http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm
[37]     http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm
[38]     http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/home.html
[39]     http://europa.eu/youth/EU/employment-and-entrepreneurship/jobs_en
[40]     http://goo.gl/qCnS05
[41]     http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor14_en.pdf

–   The 2013 Country Reports which accompanied the Education and Training Monitor 2013[42].

–   Education and training in Europe 2020: responses from the EU member states - Eurydice Report, 2013[43].

## 1.7. Main policy documents:

•   COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020), New priorities for European cooperation in education and training - Brussels, 26.8.2015[44].

•   COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), New priorities for European cooperation in education and training - Brussels, 26.8.2015[45].

•   Council Conclusions on investing in education and training — a response to 'Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes' and the '2013 Annual Growth Survey' - 5.03.2013[46].

•   COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning - 20.12.2012[47].

•   Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on education and training in Europe 2020 — the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs - 26.11.2012[48].

•   COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes - Strasbourg, 20.11.2012[49].

•   2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 'Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe' - 8.03.2012[50].

•   Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the 'Europe 2020' strategy - 4.03.2011[51].

•   Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the 'Youth on the Move' initiative — an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face - 19.11.2010[52].

•   Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on education for sustainable development - 19.11.2010[53].

•   Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') - 12.05.2009[54].

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[42]   http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor13_en.pdf

[43]   http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/163EN.pdf

[44]   http://ec.europa.eu/education/documents/et-2020-draft-joint-report-408-2015_en.pdf

[45]   http://ec.europa.eu/education/documents/et-2020-swd-161-2015_en.pdf

[46]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0305(01)&from=EN

[47]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222(01)&from=EN

[48]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XG1219(02)&from=EN

[49]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0669&from=EN

[50]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XG0308(01)&from=EN

[51]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011XG0304(01)&from=EN

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

[53]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:327:0011:0014:EN:PDF

## 1.8. Research findings:

Since the Treaty of Maastricht, EU institutions have always considered investing in the education of young Europeans as a key step towards the construction of the Union: 'The European Union and its forms of governance being developed in cooperation with its citizens' and especially those 'who are going to be at the helm in the future'[55].

This principle is repeatedly stressed by the European Commission in papers concerning the education of young Europeans. These young people are considered « as a central driving force to implement the targets of the Lisbon process to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world.[56] »

The same principle is consolidated by the fact that « they (Youth Europeans) have expressed themselves 'loud and clear' their desire to be considered as 'fully fledged conversation partners' so they can 'influence the debate on the way it develops', and thus 'contribute to building the EU'[57].

In the final analysis and according to the above statements: «educating youth in Europe is about ensuring political mobilization and the governance of the future development of the European Union ».[58]

But what capacities, dispositions and versions of themselves must youngsters display to be included in the overarching narrative of contemporary Europe as a dynamic knowledge society?[59]

By analysing the objectives of the Programme Youth launched by the European Commission in 2000, OLSSON[60] summarized the situation as follows: « 'youth' is coded as being or becoming an active border crosser, participatory, full of initiative, enterprising, creative, feeling solidarity, and as being boundlessly equipped with an understanding of the cultural diversity and the common values assumed to exist in Europe ».

The characteristics and capacities required by the subjects of education policy are largely the same as those required by the subjects of youth policy. **Universities** are expected to stimulate an 'entrepreneurial mindset amongst students and researchers'[61]. On the other hand, **European teachers** are expected to help young people to acquire a 'spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation' and develop to become 'fully autonomous learners by acquiring key skills'. **Youngsters learning subjects** are expected to be 'globally responsible in their role as EU citizens', to show 'intercultural respect and understanding' and to be equipped with an ability to identify common values. One of the key dispositions being worked into the creation of the European youth subject is mobility and an ability to participate in exchanges across borders.[62]

Education, at the European level, should also shape "people's sense of their place in the world, helping to bestow 'citizenship'"[63]. Indeed, the ideal young European citizen is an educated one, who has been

[54]     http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN

[55]     European Commission , *White paper on Youth*, 2001.

[56]     European Commission, 2007.

[57]     European Commission, 2001.

[58]     Olsson, U., Petersson, K. and Krejsler, J.B :'Youth' Making Us Fit: on Europe as operator of political technologies", in *EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL*, 10(1), 2011.

[59]     Popkewitz, Thomas S. (2008). "Cosmopolitanism and the Age of. School Reform: Science, Education, and Making Society by Making the. Child.

[60]     Olsson, U., Petersson, K. and Krejsler, J.B., *Op Cit.*

[61]     Pihie Z. A. L. and Sani, A. S. A., "Exploring the entrepreneurial mindset of students: implication for improvement of entrepreneurial learning at university", in *The Journal of International Social Research*, Vol. 2/8, Summer 2009.

[62]     Pihie Z. A. L. and Sani, A. S. A., *Ibid.*, 2009.

[63]     Alexiadou, N. and Findlow, S., Developing the Educated Citizen: Changing Frameworks for the Roles of Universities in Europe and England, in *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia*, 24(3): pp. 371-382, 2014.

schooled and skilled for participation in postmodern and globalized societies[64]. Hence, universities have a social responsibility in further developing this "social dimension" of the European Union[65]. Alexiadou and Findlow[66] (2014) analyse the United Kingdom's system of tertiary education, focusing on the importance of marketing cosmopolitan degrees and identities that foster European citizenship and European civic values.

On the other hand, some educationalists emphasize less formal methods to develop an active citizenship, fostering practical activities to citizenship-learning[67]. For example, several initiatives encouraging young people to take up volunteering within their communities[68] have emerged as measures to encourage "active citizenship". All the same, the increasing availability of digital media has opened up innovative avenues to practice youth citizenship[69]. Brooks and Holford (2009)[70] consider that learning about citizenship, with its dimension of identity and action, should be an emotional and social process, as well as cognitive.

Having acknowledged the role carried out by formal and non-formal learning in providing a civic education to young Europeans, Bennett (2003)[71] suggests the need to bridge citizenship learning environment, the policy process, and the public sphere. The linkages between these three areas should not only result in the learning of a set of civic skills, but also in the development of higher regard for participating in the political world of civic activism, government and elections[72].

At the European level, lifelong learning encourages both the development of a civic education and of European citizenship. Lifelong learning is regarded as a key-action to personal and professional development, economic growth and success for individuals and for society as a whole. Within the youth programme, the lifelong learner is equipped with abilities to grasp opportunities through non-formal and formal learning.[73]

Moreover, Lifelong Learning supports and encourages the development of new personalized approaches to education as, for instance, *interest education*'s programmes[74]. Interest education is a practical method to develop specific skills. In particular it aims to provide young people with civic value education and patriotic awareness, as it is willing to encourage youths' personal development and career growth. In Europe, Latvia has a long and successful tradition of extracurricular education[75], with a special focus on interest education.

Policy review needs to distinguish between formal and non-formal approaches to education, taking in special consideration the fact that young people often learn in informal contexts. Non-formal learning is seen as voluntary, self-organized and in line with young people's own desires. Insofar, it is considered vital for reaching the goals of the Lisbon process.[76] [77] Recognition of non-formal education is limited and

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[64]     Keating, A., "Education for Citizenship in Europe: European policies, national adaptations and young people's attitudes." in *Education, Economy and Society series*. Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan., 2014, p. 173

[65]     Alexiadou, N. and Findlow, S., *Ivi*, 2014, p. 373.

[66]     Alexiadou, N. and Findlow, S., *Ibid.*, 2014.

[67]     Brooks, R. and Holford, J., Citizenship, Learning, Education: Themes and Issues, in *Citizenship Studies*, 13(2), 2009, p. 99.

[68]     Matthews, N., Green, P., Green, D. and Hall, I. The Role of Volunteering in the Transition from Higher Education to Work, 2009, in: Brooks, R. (ed.) Transitions from Education to Work: new perspectives from Europe and beyond Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2009.

[69]     Brooks, R. and Holford, J., *Ibid.*, 2009, p. 100.

[70]     Brooks, R. and Holford, J., *Ibid.*, 2009, p. 109.

[71]     Bennett, L. W., Civic Learning in Changing Democracies: Challenges for Citizenship and Civic Education, *University of Washington*, Seattle, USA, 2003.

[72]     Bennett, W. Lance, Adam Simon, and Mike Xenos, "Seattle Student Voices: Comprehensive Executive Summary," *Center for Communication and Civic Engagement,* 2002, in Bennett, L. W., *Civic Learning in Changing Democracies: Challenges for Citizenship and Civic Education*, University of Washington, Seattle, USA.

[73]     Bennett, W. Lance, Adam Simon, and Mike Xenos, *Ibid.*, 2002.

[74]     Klasone et al., "Experience of the Interest Education in Development of a Socially Active Person in Liepajas Children and Youth Centre", in *European Scientific Journal,* July 2015.

[75]     Klasone et al., *Ivi*, 2015, p. 3.

[76]     Olsson, U., Petersson, K. and Krejsler, J.B., *Op Cit.*

underused across Europe. However, the non-formal education is an important part of EU 2020 priorities,[78] and its importance can also be assumed from the outcomes of the Youth in Action programme[79], which has improved the employability of 75% of the EVS participants.[80]

Within non-formal education, a critical aspect is represented by the formal recognition of **"youth work"**. Youth work is currently defined in Europe as 'actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, and designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning'.[81]

Recent scientific debates[82] on the topic of youth work highlighted the issues of understanding the specificity of the contribution of youth work and how it is produced. In particular, it has emerged that one of the most significant traits of youth work is the fact that it always operates in the middle of a field of tension, between young people as an active social force, on the one hand, and the need to preserve the social system on the other[83].

An analysis of good practices and common approaches in youth work, demonstrates that the principles of voluntary participation, youth-centeredness and mutual respect are appealing for young people and might strongly contribute to their transition from education to employment, especially for those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The transition **from education to employment** is nowadays characterized by the fact that, standard employment has been replaced by flexible working patterns and more precarious career paths. As youngsters take longer to move to permanent employment, they tend to stay in education instead of entering employment at an earlier age. In this context, to facilitate the transition there should be an increased focus on the level and type of support provided to young people.[84] For instance, the Swedish national school-to-work transition policy has the main aim to self-empower young people to forge their own careers.[85]

Enhancing the active role of young people within society also supports the fight against prejudice. Greuel, König and Reiter[86] (2015), suggest that prejudices might be reduced through the direct participation of young people in educational, employment, recreational, and other settings. In particular, meaningful *service activities* and *service learning*[87], in which young people take some responsibility, may have a beneficial impact on adolescents by developing their personal competencies, as empathy, self-confidence

[77]     Greuel, F., König, F. and Reiter, S., "Reducing Prejudice in Pluralistic Societies. Trends in Non-Formal and Informal Anti-Prejudice Education in Germany", in *ITALIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION*, 7(1), 2015.

[78]     Schut, J., "Recognition of prior learning in youth work in the European Union: causes for its limited use and modeling the outcomes", in *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(1)., 2015.

[79]     European Commission Education and Culture DG, *Youth in Action Programme. The Impact of the European Voluntary Service*. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/evs-impact_en.pdf

[80]     Souto-Otero, M., Ulicna, D., Schaepkens, L. and Bognar, V., "Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in youth organisations on young people's employability", in Brussels: European Youth Forum, 2013.

[81]     Louw, A.V., The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment: Results of the expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015, in European Commission, 2015.

[82]     Morciano, D., Scardigno, F., & Merico, M., Introduction, *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(1), 2015, pp. 1-11.

[83]     Morciano, D., Scardigno, F., & Merico, M., *Ibid*., 2015.

[84]     Hadjivassiliou, K., Tassinari, A., Speckesser, S., Swift, S. and Bertram, C., "Policy Performance and Evaluation", *STYLE Working Paper*, United Kingdom, 2015.

[85]     Lundahl, L. and Olofsson, J., Guarded transitions? Youth trajectories and school-to-work transition policies in Sweden, in *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 19(sup1), 2014, pp.19-34.

[86]     Greuel, F., König, F. and Reiter, S., Reducing Prejudice in Pluralistic Societies. Trends in Non-Formal and Informal Anti-Prejudice Education in Germany, in *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(1), 2015.

[87]     Greuel, F., König, F. and Reiter, S., *Ivi*, 2015.

or emotional control[88]. Therefore, the participation of young people in these activities would have the double benefit of engaging them in education as of affecting them in a positive way.[89]

[88]     Koopmann, F. K., *Gesellschaftliches Engagement als Bildungsziel in der Schule. Ansprüche – Wirklichkeiten – Perspektiven.* Expertise zum Carl Bertelsmann-Preis. Gütersloh, 2007.
[89]     Greuel, F., König, F. and Reiter, S., *Ivi,* 2015.

# 2. Employment & Entrepreneurship

Within the context of the Europe 2020 growth and jobs strategy[90], the EU is working to increasing the **youth employment** rate in line with the wider EU target[91] of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). **Youth entrepreneurship** is high on the EU political agenda as a tool to combat youth unemployment and social exclusion as well as stimulating innovation among young people.

## 2.1. What are the EU's objectives?

To **promote youth employment and entrepreneurship**, the EU and its member countries work together to:

- Address the concerns of young people in **employment strategies**;
- Invest in the **skills** employers look for;
- Develop **career guidance** and counselling services;
- Promote opportunities to **work and train abroad**;
- Support **quality internships/apprenticeships**;
- Improve **childcare** and shared family responsibilities;
- Encourage **entrepreneurship**.

## 2.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

Specific steps taken by the **Commission** to help tackle youth unemployment encompass:

1. **The Youth on the Move**[92] flagship initiative (2010), a comprehensive package of education and employment measures for young people. It includes:

- the **Youth Opportunities Initiative (2011)**[93], aimed at **cutting youth unemployment**;
- **Your first EURES Job**[94], a **job mobility scheme,** which helps young people to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in other EU countries.

2. The **Youth Employment Package (2012)**[95], including:

- The **Youth Guarantee**[96], adopted by the Council in April 2013, which aims to ensure that **all young people up to the age of 25 receive a quality job offer, the opportunity for further education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship** within 4 months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed;
- A **Quality Framework for Traineeships**[97] adopted by the Council in March 2014. Its objective is for trainees to acquire **high-quality work experience in safe and fair conditions**, and to encourage more transnational traineeships;

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[90]     See Footnote 1

[91]     http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm

[92]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=950&langId=en

[93]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1006&langId=en

[94]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=993&langId=en%20

[95]     http://goo.gl/QdfKwJ

[96]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079

[97]     http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/141424.pdf

- The **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**[98], which brings together public authorities, businesses, social partners, VET providers, youth representatives, and other key actors to **promote apprenticeship schemes** and initiatives across Europe.

3. **The Youth Employment Initiative (2013)**[99] strengthens the Youth Employment Package. It emphasises **support for young people not in education, employment or training in regions with a youth unemployment rate above 25 %.** A budget of €6 billion has been allocated to this for the period 2014-20;

4. **Working together for Europe's young people: a call to action on youth unemployment (2013)**[100], a communication aimed at accelerating the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, boosting investment in young people, and developing EU-level tools to help EU countries and firms recruit young people.

5. The **Erasmus+** programme (2014-20) has a strong focus on **innovation** and **entrepreneurship**, particularly through transnational youth initiatives and strategic partnerships.

6. **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs**[101] is an exchange programme which gives entrepreneurs who intend to start a business or have recently started one the **chance to learn from experienced owners** of small businesses in other European Union countries.

7. The **European Social Fund**[102] plays a fundamental role in strengthening the competitiveness of the European workforce and to foster youth employment and social inclusion.

8. **EU Skills Panorama**[103] is a EU-wide tool gathering **information on skills needs**, forecasting and developments in the labour market.

9. **New Skills for New Jobs**[104] – this initiative seeks to improve the way future skills needs are anticipated, to develop **better matching between skills and labour market needs**, and to bridge the gap between education and work.

10. **The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme**[105] is a **financing instrument** at EU level to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. The PROGRESS axis of EaSI helps the EU and its countries to **modernize employment** and improve social policies. The EURES axis of EaSI promotes **job mobility** across the EU. The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of EaSI supports **micro-credit and microloans** for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises and social entrepreneurship.

## 2.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **six indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Employment & Entrepreneurship** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Youth unemployment rate[106]
- Long term youth unemployment rate[107]

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[98]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en
[99]     http://goo.gl/B4CqJR
[100]    http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0447&from=en
[101]    http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/
[102]    http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=534&langId=en
[103]    http://euskillspanorama.ec.europa.eu/
[104]    http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=822&langId=en
[105]    http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081
[106]    *Definition*: This indicator provides the unemployment ratio of young people aged 15-29. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/unemployment/index_en.htm

- Youth unemployment ratio[108]
- Young employees with a temporary contract[109]
- Young people wanting to set up their own business[110]
- Self-employed youth[111]

## 2.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

According the **EU Youth Report 2015**[112], the economic crisis, which started in spring 2008, has dramatically changed the youth labour market to a degree that several years after the start of the crisis, in almost all European countries young people are still facing unprecedented difficulties in finding a job. Employment has become more difficult to find and retain, and, when a job is secured, the risk of being overqualified is high for many young graduates.

**Unemployment**, including **long-term unemployment**, has continued to rise amongst youth, particularly in countries facing economic hurdles. Here, insecure work conditions linked to **temporary contracts** and **involuntary part-time work** continue to be widespread and, in some regions, have even deteriorated. However, some signs of improvement in the situation for young people in the labour market emerged between 2013 and 2014, raising the hope that the negative trends provoked by the economic crisis have started to turn around.

Analysing the situation of the **15-29 age group as a whole between 2011 and 2014**, a **significant contraction in employment** is evident. Indeed, employment among those aged 15-29 **decreased by more than 1.8 million**, from 42.2 million in 2011 to 40.4 million in 2014. **In 2014**, **more than 8.5 million young people aged 15-29 were unemployed**.

Since the start of the financial and economic crisis, **the increase in youth unemployment** (in all the three age groups considered: 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29) has been significantly greater than for the older active population (aged 25-64). The EU-28 unemployment rate among young people in **2014** was **26.3 %** for those aged **15-19**, **20.6 %** for those aged **20-24** and **13.6 %** for the oldest age group (**25-29**). These rates then increased during the period 2011-2014 for the two older age groups (aged 20-24 and 25-29), while for the youngest group (15-19 year-olds), the change shows a moderate improvement (-1.9 %). For the two older age groups the change represents an **increase of 4.0 % for young people aged 20-24**, and of **7.9 % for those aged 25-29**. From a gender perspective, over the period 2011-2014 at EU-28 level, the unemployment rates of men and women have followed similar trends.

The employment situation for young people is further complicated by the phenomenon of **long-term unemployment**, which applies to an **increasing proportion of young men and women**. The youth long-term unemployment rate differs between age groups (15- 19, 20-24 and 25-29 years). The EU-28 average value for the youngest group (**15-19 years**) in **2014** was **5.8 %,** corresponding to a 3.6 % increase in comparison with 2011 (5.6 %). For young people aged **20-24**, the long-term unemployment rate (EU-28

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[107]        *Definition*: This indicator provides the share of unemployed youth 15-24 without a job for the last 12 months or more among all unemployed in this age-group. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/long-term/index_en.htm

[108]        *Definition*: This indicator provides the unemployment ratio of young people aged 15-29 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/unemployment-ratio/index_en.htm

[109]        *Definition*: This indicator provides the share of young employees (age 20-29) who are on a contract of limited duration, as a percentage of the total number of young employees.http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/temporary/index_en.htm

[110]        *Definition*: This indicator provides the percentage of young people with a desire to set up their own business http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/own-business/index_en.htm

[111]        *Definition*: This indicator provides the percentage of self-employed among all employed aged 20-29. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/employment/self-employed/index_en.htm

[112]        http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015_en.pdf

average) increased from 6.5 % in 2011 to **7.7 %** in **2014** (+18.5 %). For the **25-29** age group, the increase was from 4.9 % in 2011 to **5.9 %** in **2014** (+ 20.4 %).

Although **the youth unemployment ratios** are by definition much lower than youth unemployment rates, as they include economically inactive youth, they have, however, also **risen since 2008** due to the effects of the crisis on the labour market. Moreover, **an increasing percentage of young people** in 2014 had only **temporary, part-time work or other non-standard form of employment** in comparison to 2011.

## 2.5. Official links:

— The **European Commission DG** for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

— The **European Commission DG** for Enterprise and Industry

— The **European Youth Portal >** Working

## 2.6. Reports:

— Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union - edited by European Commission, February 2014[113].

— The State of Social Entrepreneurship - Executive Summary Country Reports - produced by the SEFORIS Partnership, 2014[114].

— Young people, entrepreneurship & non-formal learning: a work in progress - produced by the SALTO-Youth Participation Resource Centre, March 2014[115].

— Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability - EC Expert Group Report, 2012[116].

— Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe - produced by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2012[117].

— Youth on the move, Analytical report - Flash Eurobarometer survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, May 2011[118].

— EC periodical reports on youth employment in the EU[119].

## 2.7. Main policy documents:

— COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION CONCLUSIONS on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people - Brussels, 20.5.2014[120].

— COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships - 10.3.2014[121].

— COMMISSION PROPOSAL for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on a Quality Framework for Traineeships - Brussels, 4.12.2013[122].

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[113]     http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf

[114]     http://www.seforis.eu/upload/reports/Executive_Summary.pdf

[115]     https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2949/010_SALTO_Participation.web_A%20work%20in%20progress%5B2%5D.pdf

[116]     http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/2014/documents/report-creative-potential_en.pdf

[117]     http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/pubdocs/2012/54/en/1/EF1254EN.pdf

[118]     http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf

[119]     http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes

[120]     http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142702.pdf

[121]     http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0327(01)&from=EN

- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Working together for Europe's young people. A call to action on youth unemployment - Brussels, 19.6.2013[123].

- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Towards a Quality Framework on Traineeships - Brussels, 5.12.2012[124].

- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Social Business Initiative, Creating a favourable climate for social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and innovation - Brussels, 25.10.2011[125].

- RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning - 18.12.2006[126].

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[122] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013PC0857&from=EN

[123] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0447&from=EN

[124] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0728&from=EN

[125] http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/docs/COM2011_682_en.pdf

[126] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962&from=EN

## 2.8. Research findings:

The EU's growth strategy for the coming decade, *Europe 2020*[127], aims at providing the European Union with a "smart, sustainable and inclusive economy". To accomplish this objective, it is imperative to focus on "tackling youth and long term unemployment, while integrated and competitive product and services markets should stimulate innovation and job creation"[128].

Hence, considering that in August 2015, 23 million Europeans were still unemployed[129], **youth employability has become** a common objective for all labour market policies across the European Union.[130]

Youth access to employment, jointly with their social well-being, has been affected by the recent recession and financial crisis. The report, issued by the European Youth Forum in 2014, analyses the main features of contemporary youth unemployment[131]. It comes to the conclusion that the actual crisis was not a simple cyclical downturn, but it had structural origins. The report clearly states that the impact of the crisis could only be effectively addressed with deep structural and institutional changes, as well as with policies that take into account the needs of young people[132].

The Institute for Policy Research (2013)[133] highlights how European countries have experienced different levels of youth unemployment, long-term unemployment and 'NEET-hood' rates. The employability of youngsters varies according to geographic, economic and many other factors. For instance, the personal attitudes of youngsters may have great importance when it comes to deciding among the varieties of educational, training and employment opportunities available to them.

That said, one concern seems to be commonly recognised throughout Europe: the difficulty for youngsters to deal with their **transition from education to the workplace[134]**.

To remedy this situation, initiatives[135] have incentivised the involvement of employers with schools and universities in order to conduct employability activities that transfer employability skills amongst young people. All the same, apprenticeships may also facilitate the school-to-work transition, favouring specific occupational skills, while reducing skills mismatch.

Moreover, there is a vast amount of literature (Louw (2015; Lundahl and Olofsson, 2014; Souto-Otero et al. 2014)[136] on the topic of school-to-work transition, and several ongoing discussions on the most appropriate ways to tackle the issue. Among the proposed solutions, it is worth citing the widely recognised importance of putting youngsters directly in contact with the labour market during their studies. In fact, it has been shown that the experience of paid work during studies has a special impact on young people, as it successfully prepares them to start their career.[137] Indeed, on-the-job experiences during studies may be

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[127]    Further information at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

[128]    European Commission, *Annual Growth Survey 2016. Strengthening the recovery and fostering convergence*, COM(2015) 690 final, Brussels, 26 November 2015, p. 4.

[129]    European Commission, *Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council,* COM(2015)700final, Brussels, 26 November 2015.

[130]    European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe. Eurydice Report*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016.

[131]    European Youth Forum, *Youth in the crisis-What went wrong?*, 2014.

[132]    European Youth Forum, *Ibid.*, 2014.

[133]    Institute for Public Policy Research, *States of uncertainty- Youth unemployment in Europe*, 2013.

[134]    Kvist, J., 2015. A framework for social investment strategies: Integrating generational, life course and gender perspectives in the EU social investment strategy. *Comparative European Politics*, *13*(1), pp.131-149.

[135]    Hadjivassiliou, K., A Tassinari, S. Speckesser, S. Swift and C. Bertram, *Policy Performance and Evaluation,* United Kingdom. STYLE Working Papers, WP3.3/UK. CROME, University of Brighton, Brighton, 2015. http://www.style-research.eu/publications/working-papers

[136]    See Louw (2015), Lundahl and Olofsson (2014), Souto-Otero et al. (2014), Bowman et al. (2015), Hadjivassiliou et al. (2015). Kweik (2015).

[137]    Institute for Public Policy Research, *States of uncertainty- Youth unemployment in Europe*, 2013.

considered an interface between education and labour market, helping young people to establish themselves in a working environment.

Several examples of good practice[138] across Europe highlight the benefits to young people of embarking on work experience. The founding principles that should lay behind such youth work projects are related closely to the need to "espouse equality for young people and strive to advance their social, economic and cultural rights"[139]. Moreover, youth work should have the objective of supporting young people to address and overcome any barriers and challenges they face, while working to influence public policies and actions impacting on young people.

*Transition policy* deals with **school-to-work transition.** It is defined as: "conscious strategies and efforts within the local, national and international political arenas to promote young people's school-to-work transitions"[140]. According to Lundahl and Olofsson (2014)[141], universal transition policies may also entail the benefits of preparing young people for citizenship and democratic participation both in the workplace and in society as a whole. Hence, universal transition policies enhance youths' access to the marketplace, while exhorting them to become active citizens. However, in referring to the Swedish national school-to-work transition, the importance of assisting young people in forging their careers is highlighted, in order to prevent school failure and dropout. The main issue with transition policies concerns the lack of reliable evidence about what kind of policies really works. Notwithstanding this, Bowman, Borlagdan and Bond (2015)[142] stress the fact that useful frameworks to assess different forms of policy evaluation do exist, as well as approaches that help tease out different policy and program responses to assisting young people along the path to satisfactory work.

In accordance with these findings, several sequences of European programmes and initiatives for youth have contained measures aimed at fostering youth transnational mobility for work, education and/or professional training purposes[143], including supporting their first work experience and improving access to the European labour market.

A recent study conducted by Souto-Otero et al. (2014)[144] confirmed that the transition of young people from education to employment has been difficult in recent times. This is due to the mismatch between the skills acquired at school and the needs of the labour market. This lack of coordination has led to high unemployment among young people and limited growth in certain key industrial sectors[145]. In turn this affects the level of young people's participation in society.

The **promotion of youth work** has been suggested as a solution to youth unemployment.[146] This is because employers consider youth engagement with youth organisations as a positive sign of initiative and engagement, as it helps them develop their employable and soft skills. In addition, their involvement in

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[138]     Louw, A. V., "The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment", *Results of the expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015,* European Commission, 2015.

[139]     Louw, A. V., *Ivi*, 2015.

[140]     Lundahl, L. and Olofsson, J., "Guarded transition? Youth trajectories and school-to-work transition policies in Sweden", in *International Journal of Adolescnece and Youth*, Vol. 19, Supplement 1, 2014.

[141]     Lundahl, L. and Olofsson, J., *Ivi*, 2014.

[142]     Bowman D., Borlagdan J and Bond, S., *Making sense of youth transitions from education to work*, Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Victoria, Australia, 2015, p. 28.

[143]     See for instance the EC Programs: Youth (2000-06), Youth in action (2007-13), Erasmus+ (2014 – 2020). And the initiatives: Your First Eures Job (2014) and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (2009 – 2016)

[144]     Souto-Otero et al., 2014. Available online at: http://library.deeep.org/record/1472/files/DEEEP-REPORT-2015-067.pdf

[145]     Donert, K., "Digital Earth – Digital World: strategies for geospatial technologies in 21st century education", 2015, In Muñiz Solari O, Demirci A, van der Schee J (Eds.), *Geospatial Technologies and Geography Education in a Changing World*, Netherlands, Spring, pp. 195-204.

[146]     Caliendo, M. and Schmidl, R., "Youth unemployment and active labor market policies in Europe", *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, 5(1), 2016, pp.1-30.

youth organisations helps unemployed youngsters to enhance their own employability through connections and networking as this provides them with information on job availabilities.

Nevertheless, the recent EU Youth Report on the condition of youth in Europe (2015)[147] shows that despite "positive trends are registered in the field of education, where all the main indicators showed improvements for the EU as a whole, [...] the economic crisis continues to limit young people's chances of success. Employment has become more difficult to find and retain, and, when a job is secured, the risk of being overqualified is high for many young graduates".

On the same line, in 2014[148], the European Youth Forum claimed that, "The measures to tackle youth unemployment, proposed at European level are uncoordinated and ineffective. In particular the initiatives in the education field did not equip graduates with the needed employable skills: this led to skills mismatch that negatively and disproportionately affected young people"[149].

Hence, it seems that investing in education is not sufficient when it comes to avoiding long-term unemployment among young people. According to the European Youth Forum (2013)[150], it is necessary to create stable jobs, as youngsters face different kinds of discrimination and inequality than those of older workers. In this direction, close cooperation between national, regional and European level actors, including trade unions and business associations, is likely to be fruitful.

Furthermore, studies have shown a connection between unemployment and the **disinterest in entrepreneurship** of young people. Data analysis, both at the EU and national levels, has shown that this barrier comes from a lack of entrepreneurial skills, which are needed for launching such initiatives[151]. This deficit is said to be the result of not including entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of schools[152].

Boosting the entrepreneurial spirit among youngsters is now one of the main objectives of European Union policies[153]. Young people are potential powerful actors in the areas where they live and work. For this reason it is crucial to shape their entrepreneurial mind-sets and to ensure that they get the opportunity to acquire the vital entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes[154].

More than half of the European countries now allocate both national and EU funding to entrepreneurship education, but stable and comprehensive funding schemes still need to be developed. Furthermore over half of them have very few or no guidelines for teaching entrepreneurship skills to young people[155].

[147]    European Commission, *EU Youth Report 2015*, 2015.

[148]    European Commission, *Ibid.*, 2015.

[149]    European Youth Forum. Op. Cit.

[150]    European Youth Forum, *"Quality jobs for young people"*, 2013.

[151]    Volles, N., Lifelong learning in the EU: changing conceptualisations, actors, and policies. Studies in higher education, 41(2), 2016, pp.343-363.

[152]    OECD, *The missing entrepreneurs 2015, Policies for self-employment and entrepreneurship*, 2015.

[153]    See: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/index_en.htm

[154]    Maura Sheehan and Andrea Mc Namara, "Business start-ups, youth self employment- Policy Literature Overview Synthesis Report", National University of Ireland Galway, 2015.

[155]    European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *Op. Cit.*

# 3. Health & Well-being

The EU is required, by its founding treaty, **to ensure that human health is protected as part of all its policies**, and **to work with the EU countries** to improve public health, prevent human illness and eliminate sources of danger to physical and mental health.

## 3.1. EU Health Strategy 2014-2020:

The comprehensive **EU Health Strategy "Together for Health" (2008-2013)[156]**, adopted in 2007, remains valid for the following decade and supports the overall Europe 2020 strategy. Europe 2020 aims to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy promoting growth for all – one prerequisite of which is a **population in good health**.

The **third EU Health Programme (2014-2020)[157]** is the main instrument the European Commission uses to implement the **EU health strategy[158]**. It is implemented by means of **annual work plans,** currently, the **annual work plan 2015[159]**, which sets out priority areas and the criteria for **funding actions** under the programme. The total budget for the programme is €449.4 million. A summary and a presentation of the EU Health Programme (2014-2020) are also available, as well information concerning the previous EU Health Programme (2008-2013).

## 3.2. What are the main EU's objectives?

The EU Youth Strategy aims to support the **health** and **well-being** of **young people** with a focus on:

- Promoting **mental and sexual health**, sport, physical activity and **healthy lifestyles**;
- Education on **nutrition**;
- Preventing and treating injury, eating disorders, addictions and **substance abuse**;
- Promoting **cooperation** between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sport organisations;
- Making **health facilities** more accessible and attractive for young people;
- Raising **awareness** of how sport can promote teamwork, intercultural learning and responsibility.

## 3.3. Main EU Programmes and tools:

1. In 2013, a **Joint Action Mental Health and Well-being[160]** was launched with financial support from the EU Health Programme. It is a three-year initiative that aims to create a framework for action at European level and builds on the **European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being[161]**. The Joint Action focuses on promoting mental health in workplaces and schools, developing of actions against depression and suicide, implementing of e-health approaches, developing of community-based and socially inclusive mental healthcare for people with severe mental disorders, and promoting the integration of mental health in all policies.

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[156] http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm
[157] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0282&from=EN
[158] http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/policy/index_en.htm
[159] http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/events/adoption_workplan_2015_en.htm
[160] http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/
[161] http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/docs/mhpact_en.pdf

2. **Sexual health** is a sensitive area, covering multiple levels of educational, ethical, medical, social and cultural customs, which vary considerably across Europe. The EU aims to help authorities and stakeholders in the EU and neighbouring countries to raise awareness about the risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), to support the prevention of STIs, to improve access to prevention, treatment, care and support, to reach migrants from countries with a high level of HIV, and to improve policies targeting the populations most at risk. An **Action Plan for 2014-2016**[162], extending a similar plan in 2009-2013, explains how the EU, civil society, international organisations and stakeholders will achieve this. The Commission has also set up **two bodies** to help with policy implementation and strengthen cooperation among countries, civil society and international organisations: **HIV/AIDS Think Tank**[163] is a forum for representatives of EU Member States and neighbouring countries to exchange information and strengthen cooperation; **HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum**[164] is a group of major European networks and NGOs, advising the Think Tank on policy formulation and implementation.

3. The Commission's **strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues**[165] aims to help **reduce the risks associated with poor nutrition and limited physical activity**. This strategy is coordinated by a High Level Group[166], which **shares knowledge and good practices** regarding national initiatives. An **EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health**[167] provides a **forum** aimed at tackling overweight and obesity trends. The Commission **funds initiatives** promoting nutrition and physical activity through its Public Health Programme[168]. It also receives funding from the European Parliament for projects to improve action in these areas and to identify good practices that can be used in other European cities or regions. From this work, an **EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity**[169] has been agreed.

4. The **EU alcohol strategy**[170] is designed to help national governments and other stakeholders coordinate action to **reduce alcohol related harm**. **The Action Plan on Youth Drinking and on Heavy Episodic Drinking (2014-2016)**[171] is part of the strategy. The Commission's Public Health Programme funds projects and other initiatives addressing alcohol-related harm, including the **Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol-Related Harm (2014-2016)**[172].

5. In the field of **sport**, the Erasmus+ Programme aims to support actions that result in the development, transfer, and implementation of innovative ideas and practices at European, national, regional, and local level. The Erasmus+ programme provides support for several opportunities in the field of sport, including **funding** for **Collaborative partnerships, Non-profit European sports events, and Actions that strengthen the evidence base for policy-making**[173].

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[162]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/sti_prevention/docs/ec_hiv_actionplan_2014_en.pdf

[163]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/sti_prevention/hiv_aids/think_tank/index_en.htm

[164]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/sti_prevention/hiv_aids/civil_society_forum/index_en.htm

[165]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/policy/strategy_en.htm

[166]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm

[167]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/

[168]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm

[169]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/childhoodobesity_actionplan_2014_2020_en.pdf

[170]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/policy/index_en.htm

[171]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/2014_2016_actionplan_youthdrinking_en.pdf

[172]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/2014_2016_actionplan_youthdrinking_en.pdf

[173]    http://ec.europa.eu/sport/opportunities/sport_funding/not_for_profit_events_en.htm

## 3.4. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **six indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Health & Well-being** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Share of daily smokers[174]
- Young people with a Body Mass Index of 30 or above (obesity)[175]
- Alcohol use in the past 30 days and Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use[176]
- Psychological distress[177]
- Death by intentional self-harm[178]
- Road traffic: self-reported incidences[179]

## 3.5. The state of European young people in 2015:

Young people are not only more satisfied with their life than older age groups, but they also feel healthier. The proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 in the EU-28 who perceive their health to be 'bad' and 'very bad' is 8.4 percentage points lower than for the general population. Despite their generally good health, **young people** are **more prone to risk behaviour** than older age groups. Risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, physical inactivity and unsafe sexual practices often cluster together and reinforce each other. They are all influenced by the same social factors: the level of deprivation and social exclusion, access to education, as well as the family, school and living environment. The proportion of **young people** smoking daily has been in decline since the early 2000s, though not in all countries. Young people are more likely to use **cannabis** than older age groups. Young men are more prone to substance use than young women. **Suicide rates** were relatively stable in the EU-28, but with a slight increase from 2008, both among young people and in the total population.

## 3.6. Official links:

- The European Commission > DG Health and Food Safety > Public Health[180]
- European Commission > Sport[181]

## 3.7. Reports:

- Health at a Glance: Europe 2014 - OECD, 2014[182].
- Investing in Heatlh[183] - Commission Staff Working Document - February 2013.

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[174] *Definition*: Share of daily cigarette smokers in the population aged 15-24. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[175] *Definition*: Young people 18-24 with a Body Mass Index of 30 or above. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[176] Definition: Share of target group who answered affirmatively to a question asking if they had had any alcoholic beverage to drink in the last 30 days or regular cannabis use in the last 12 months. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[177] *Definition*: Young people (15-24) having had psychological distress during the past four weeks. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[178] *Definition*: Deaths caused by suicide per 100 000 inhabitants aged 15-24. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[179] *Definition*: Proportion of individuals aged 15-24 reporting to have had a road traffic accident, which resulted in injury for which medical treatment was sought during the past 12 months. Source: EU Youth Dashboard

[180] http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm

[181] http://ec.europa.eu/sport/index_en.htm

[182] http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/docs/health_glance_2014_en.pdf

[183] http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/docs/swd_investing_in_health.pdf

- Mid-Term Evaluation of the EU Health Strategy 2008-2013[184] - Report prepared by "Public Health Evaluation and Impact Assessment Consortium" (PHEIAC), 08.08.2011.

- Green Paper - Improving the mental health of the population: Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union[185] - European Commission, 14.10.2005.

- Mental Health Declaration for Europe Facing the Challenges, Building Solutions - WHO European Ministerial Conference, 12–15 January 2005[186].


## 3.8. Main policy documents:

- REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Implementation of the second Programme of Community action in the field of health in 2013 - Brussels, 22.6.2015[187].

- REGULATION (EU) No 282/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 on the establishment of a third Programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1350/2007/EC - 11.03.2014[188].

- Q&A on the third Health Programme 2014-2020 - Brussels, 26.02.2014[189].

- Statement by Commissioner Borg following the vote in Parliament on the Health Programme 2014-2020 - Brussels, 26.02.2014[190].

- EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2014-2020 - Brussels, 9.11.2011[191].

- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009 -2013 - Brussels, 26.10.2009[192].

- Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 20 November on the health and well-being of young people - 20.11.2008[193].

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[184]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/docs/midtermevaluation_euhealthstrategy_2011_report_en.pdf
[185]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/mental_gp_en.pdf
[186]    http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/88595/E85445.pdf?ua=1
[187]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/implementation_2013_en.pdf
[188]    http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0282&from=EN
[189]    http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-139_en.htm
[190]    http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-31_en.htm
[191]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf
[192]    http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/aids/docs/com2009_en.pdf
[193]    http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:ef0007&from=EN

## 3.9. Research findings:

The White Paper on Youth, issued by the European Commission in 2001[194], recognised the importance of health in empowering young people, fostering their social inclusion and developing their active citizenship. The European Youth Pact[195], adopted in March 2005, further emphasised the need to mainstream the "youth" dimension, in particular concerning issues that related youth health to other relevant European policies.

The Council of the European Union stated in 2008[196], "the extent of social inclusion and level of education of young people is closely related to their health and well-being. Hence, it is important that young people are kept well informed of the advantages of a healthy lifestyle and that they are encouraged to become more responsible and autonomous with regard to their own health"[197].

Consequently, the Council invited Member States to: "mainstream the 'youth' dimension into all initiatives that are related to health issues and implement appropriate measures for youth health policy"[198]. With the aim of allowing: "all relevant stakeholders, including young people themselves, to participate in developing and implementing the initiatives related to health issues"[199].

Today "health and well-being" is one of the eight key areas identified by the EU Youth Strategy. And it is also the "broadest" area among the eight: being focused on many aspects that together support the health and well-being of young people. It includes topics such as nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, sexual health, HIV/AIDS and mental health[200].

The concepts of health and well-being indeed go beyond the single aspect of physical health. According to the EU Youth Report[201], **good health** has an impact on the quality of life and life expectancy and it contributes to personal well-being (physical, mental, emotional). Moreover health increases self-esteem and self-confidence. The Report also brings several examples of factors that negatively influence the health of young people, among all: unemployment and inactivity make young people more likely than others to have lower levels of mental well-being. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines *health* as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"[202]. The European Youth Strategy, considered as a whole, seems to embrace this definition, also by remarking the links between health and social inclusion. However, new issues that may have a negative impact on young people's health have recently surfaced, and new approaches aiming at counteracting those issues emerged in response.

This summary raises some points drawn from recent literature on the subject of health and well-being of young people as well as some of the recent policies and intervention programmes aimed at reducing risky behaviours.

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[194]    European Commission, *White paper on youth*, November 2001.

[195]    European Commission, *European youth pact*, March 2005.

[196]    Council of the EU, *Health and well-being of young people*,  November 2008.

[197]    Council of the EU, *Ibid*., 2008.

[198]    Council of the EU, *Ibid*., 2008.

[199]    Council of the EU, *Ibid*., 2008.

[200]    European Commission, *An EU Strategy for youth*, November 2009.

[201]    European Commission, *EU Youth Report 2015*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2016.

[202]    Preamble to the *Constitution of the World Health Organization* as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946.

Understanding the **differences between risky behaviour and risky factors** is an important starting point, for commentators, policy makers and practitioners, which in turn may influence how services are organised and delivered. Coleman and Hagell (2015)[203] criticize the position of some commentators who describe the young generation as having no regard for their health, a situation that involves highly risky behaviour (such as unsafe sex, substance misuse, binge drinking). As they report, taking risks may be seen as part of a learning process for young people. However, this does not mean that all adolescents are irresponsible, in fact only a minority of young people take risks with their health, and this minority often comes from a disadvantaged background (Coleman and Hagell, 2015)[204].

For this reason efforts should be put in place to bring good quality health education among all social contexts (Michaud, 2006)[205].

In line with this issue, the EU National Youth Councils[206] expressed their concern towards the wide **differences among** the situations from **country** to country in the field of health and well-being. They stressed the need for the European Union to guarantee certain standards of health, education and social policies for all EU citizens[207].

To better design future intervention strategies and governmental policies it is important that research is encouraged on successful intervention programmes that deal with risky behaviour. From a review of current interventions and programmes[208], the **most promising approaches** to reduce multiple risk behaviour are those that simultaneously address multiple domains of risk and protective factors predictive of risk behaviour.

These interventions mainly aim to increase young people's resilience, together with promoting positive parental and family influences and school environments that support positive social and emotional development (Jackson, et. al., 2012)[209]. Another significant factor is when implementing intervention programmes, they should at the same time try to reduce the exposure of young people to negative influences and increase opportunities for engaging in activities that encourage positive development (Jackson, et. al., 2012)[210].

Scientific evidence[211] shows that the **promotion of physical activities** contributes to the enhancement of well-being both from a physical and a mental point of view.[212] A positive example of a youth development program focused on physical activities addressed to girls is the after school program Girls on the Run

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[203]     COLEMAN, John and HAGELL, Ann, "Young people, health and youth policy", in *YOUTH & POLICY*, n° 114, 2015, pp. 17-30.

[204]     COLEMAN, John and HAGELL, Ann, *Ibid*., in YOUTH & POLICY, 2015.

[205]     MICHAUD, Pierre-André, 'Adolescents and Risk: Why not Change our Paradigm?', *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38, 2006, pp.481-483.

[206]     European Youth Forum, *Shadow report on youth policy a youth perspective*, as result of an extensive consultation open to National Youth Councils (NYCs) and International Non-governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs), 2015.

[207]     European Youth Forum, *Ibid.*, 2015.

[208]     Caroline A. JACKSON, Marion HENDERSON, et. al., "An overview of prevention of multiple risk behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood", *Journal of Public Health*, 2012, Vol. 34, No. S1, pp. 31 –40.

[209]     Caroline A. JACKSON, Marion HENDERSON, et. al., *Ibid.*, Journal of Public Health, 2012, Vol. 34, No. S1, pp. 31 –40.

[210]     Caroline A. JACKSON, Marion HENDERSON, et. al., *Ibid.*, *Journal of Public Health*, 2012, Vol. 34, No. S1, pp. 31 –40.

[211]     Richard Bailey, Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion, in *Educational Review* 57, n° 1, 2005 pp. 71-90.

[212]     Richard Bailey, *Ibid.*, in Educational Review 57, n° 1, 2005 pp. 71-90. Brassai, L., Piko, B.F. and Steger, M.F., "A reason to stay healthy: The role of meaning in life in relation to physical activity and healthy eating among adolescents", *Journal of health psychology*, 20(5), 2015, pp.473-482.

(GOTR)[213] . Findings demonstrate a positive collaborative process leading to important information to be used for an impact evaluation of Girls on the Run.

Regarding mental health, Fish (2014)[214] suggests that more importance should be granted to local authority and voluntary youth services that may contribute to build resilience in youth, especially in children and adolescents, through helping the development of social and emotional skills[215].

In order to make physical activity more appealing to youth, the WHO Regional office for Europe has created a specific blueprint[216]. This blueprint stresses the importance of **supportive urban environments and youth-friendly settings** where children and young people live, study and play.

Concerning the significance of **sexual education**, studies[217] show that countries with insufficient or inadequate sexuality education register highest HIV/AIDS infection rate and highest cases of STI infection and involuntary teenage pregnancy; in addition to that, there is abundant literature referring to health in the context of migration and migrant communities[218].

In terms of **alcohol abuse**, in 2008 the Amphora project[219] was launched with the purpose of creating an Alcohol Public Health Research Alliance that could influence the debate on alcohol policy at a European level. In fact, Europe has proved to be the region where the most alcohol is produced and consumed. The project showed that socio-demographic changes (e.g. increased urbanization and changes in maternal age) affect alcohol consumption. However, since adolescent alcohol use varies across Europe[220], alcohol policies and prevention programs should take cultural aspects as **social drinking norms** into account[221]. Indeed, in order to be effective, intervention strategies tackling adolescent alcohol use should focus on local social drinking norms and drinking cultures[222]. Moreover, even if online alcohol marketing and alcohol branded sports sponsorship increase the likelihood of teenagers to drink alcohol, **alcohol policies** do have an impact on its consumption.

Referring to another phenomenon tackled by many social and prevention initiatives in Europe, that is **drug abuse**, research is not so abundant. Studies on drug abuse are mainly ascribed to EU policy reports

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[213]     Ullrich-French, S., Cole, A.N. and Montgomery, A.K., "Evaluation development for a physical activity positive youth development program for girls", *Evaluation and program planning,* 55, 2016, pp.67-76.

[214]     Matthew Fish, "The Value of Youth Services towards Child and Adolescent mental health", in *Youth & Policy*, n° 112, 2014, pp. 95-99.

[215]      Matthew Fish, *Ibid.,* in *YOUTH & POLICY*, n° 112, 2014, pp. 95-99. Mcconkey, R., Dowling, S., Hassan, D. And Menke, S. "Promoting social inclusion through Unified Sports for youth with intellectual disabilities: a five-nation study", J*ournal of intellectual disability research*, 57(10), 2013, pp.923-935. Hagen, I. and Nayar, U.S.. "Yoga for children and young people's mental health and well-being: research review and reflections on the mental health potentials of yoga", *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 5(35), 2014. pp.1-6.

[216]     Paul Kelly, Anne Matthews and Charlie Foster, *Young and physically active: a blueprint for making physical activity appealing to youth*, Department of Public Health, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, 2012.

[217]     Karolina Beaumont and Marcia Maguire, *Policies for Sexuality Education in the European Union*, 2013. WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA. *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe*. Federal Centre for Health Education, 2010.; Deane, K. D., Parkhurst, J. O., & Johnston, D., "Linking migration, mobility and HIV", *Tropical Medicine & International Health*, 15(12), 2010, pp. 1458–1463; Antecol, H., & Bedard, K., "Unhealthy assimilation: why do immigrants converge to American health status levels?" in *Demography*, 43(2), 2006, pp. 337–360.

[218]     Karolina Beaumont and Marcia Maguire, *Ivi*, 2013; Deane, K. D., Parkhurst, J. O., & Johnston, D., *Ibid.*, Tropical Medicine & International Health, 15(12), 2010, pp. 1458–1463; Antecol, H., & Bedard, K., *Ibid.*, Demography, 43(2), 2006, pp. 337–360.

[219]     Anderson P, Braddick F, Reynolds J & Gual A eds., *Alcohol Policy in Europe: Evidence from AMPHORA*, 2012.

[220]     Bräker, A.B. and Soellner, R., "Alcohol drinking cultures of European adolescents", *The European Journal of Public Health*, 2016.

[221]     Bräker, A.B. and Soellner, R., *Ibid.*, 2016.

[222]     Bräker, A.B. and Soellner, R., *Ibid.*, 2016.

providing the overarching political framework on the basis of the policy priorities identified by Member States and EU institutions [223].

To conclude, it is important to stress the importance of developing a good understanding of the links between individual health and well-being and relationships with society as a whole, as they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. From a youth perspective, when designing prevention activities and interventions to reduce health risk behaviours, it is essential to **directly engage young people** in order to better understand their priorities and behaviours[224]. This approach is indeed meant to be successful because of its capacity to acknowledge the needs of different age groups while it fights stereotypes (Coleman and Hagell, 2015)[225].

[223] Williamson, H., "Sniffin'glue"–Scanning some horizons for youth policy in 2020", *Perspectives on Youth*, 2014., p.11-18.
EU Council, *EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)*, Official Journal of the European Union, 2012. Available at: eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vienna/documents/press_corner/2016_eu__drugs_strategy.pdf

[224] Ballard, P.J. and Syme, S.L., "Engaging youth in communities: a framework for promoting adolescent and community health", *Journal of epidemiology and community health*, 70(2), 2016, pp.202-206.

[225] COLEMAN, John and HAGELL, Ann, "Young people, health and youth policy", in *YOUTH & POLICY*, n° 114, 2015, pp. 17-30.

# 4. Participation in civil society

**Youth participation** in democratic institutions and in a **continuous dialogue** with policy makers is essential to the sound functioning of our democracies and the sustainability of policies which impact on young people's lives. The Commission and Member States works on policies for fostering young people's **participative skills** and **active engagement** in society by shaping youth policies in constant dialogue with young people.

## 4.1. What are the EU's objectives?

The EU Youth Strategy seeks to **encourage young people to participate** in the democratic process and in society in several ways which include:

- developing mechanisms for **engaging in dialogue with young people** and facilitating their participation in the shaping of national policies;
- supporting **youth organisations**, including local and national youth councils;
- promoting **participation** by under-represented groups of young people in politics, youth organisations, and other civil society organisations;
- supporting ways of **'learning to participate'** from an early age.

## 4.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

Specifically, the **Commission** pursues these objectives through:

1. Structured Dialogue – to **involve young people** in the process of making EU youth policy.

2. The Erasmus+ Programme – to **support projects** providing opportunities for young people to participate in cross-border projects and events.

3. The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe working **to empower young people** to participate actively in society.

4. The League of Young Voters in Europe is a politically neutral initiative that aims **to amplify young people's concerns and expectations** in the run-up to European elections.

5. VoteWatchEurope in an independent NGO which promotes better **insight into EU politics**, by providing easy access to data and cutting edge analysis of the votes and other activities of the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers. **It gives people the chance to vote on a set of key issues** and see which Members of the European Parliament share their views.

6. The International Debate Education Association is a global network of organisations that value debate and education as a way **to give young people a voice** and **to raise their awareness** about worldwide issues.

7. The European Youth Portal is an inter-institutional initiative of the European Union which offer people the opportunity to **express opinion** about politics and society, and **participate in Structured Dialogue**.

8. The Europe for Citizens Programme provides funding initiatives to strengthen remembrance and to enhance **civic participation** at EU level.

## 4.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **five indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Participation in civil society** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Participation of young people in elections at the local, regional, national or EU level
- Young people's participation in political or community/environmentally-oriented NGOs
- Proportion of the population who have used the Internet for interaction with public authorities
- Proportion of the population who have used the Internet to post opinions on civic and political issues via websites
- Young people elected to the European Parliament

## 4.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

Results from the European Social Survey conducted in 2012 indicate that, on average, about 33 % of respondents declared themselves to be very or quite interested in politics. Some differences existed between countries. Northern and Scandinavian Member States register above average levels of interest. On the other hand, several southern and eastern European countries display comparatively low levels of concern with political issues. Contrary to the claim that young people are disaffected with politics, interest in political issues amongst young people in Europe has remained stable over the last decade, with approximately one third of respondents reporting to be very or quite interested. Within the younger age groups, levels of concern with political issues are highest amongst individuals at the older end of the spectrum (around 40 % of respondents aged 25 to 29 on average declare to be very or quite interested). Electoral and party engagement seems to have limited appeal for young citizens. A Eurobarometer survey from 2012 indicates that only about one in two young people consider elections as one of the most valuable ways to express their political preferences. According to their responses, **47 % among 15-24 year-olds**, and **50 % among 25-34 year-olds**, believe that **voting is one of the two best ways to ensure that their voice is heard by decision-makers**. Consistent with this are the, low levels of turnout to elections registered amongst young people in recent years. According to the Eurobarometer's results illustrated below, on average **about 60 % of young respondents have cast their vote in an election between 2011 and 2014**.

In line with these results, joining a political party appeals to a rather small proportion of young people. Between 2011 and 2014, levels of **membership** have remained stable at around an average of **5 %** in Europe. Young people show general support for democratic systems but are often critical of how they work in practice. Data presented here confirm young people's preference for **being active in non-governmental organisations and/or local organisations** which address local issues, rather than in political parties. On average, twice as many respondents as those who have been active in a political party stated they had participated in the activities of a local organisation aimed at improving the local community.

A wide array of opportunities for political participation are also offered by the **Internet** and its applications. Young people have been in the forefront of using these means of interpersonal communication. Data collected by Eurostat shows that, on average, roughly **50 % of young Europeans have used the Internet to contact or interact with public authorities in 2014**, a figure that had increased over the previous 4 years.

Besides making contact with public authorities, around **18 % of young Europeans take to the Internet to exchange their political opinions** through messages and posts on websites. Results for the age group 15-24 and for a longer reference period from a Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2013 show that, on average, young people clearly prefer to express their opinions and ideas through online fora, rather than participating in person in public debates.

## 4.5. Official links:

The **European Commission** page on Participation in civil society

The **European Youth Portal >** Taking part

## 4.6. Reports:

Tackling radicalisation through education and youth action - Factsheet, 2015.

ADDRESSING YOUTH ABSENTEEISM IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS - produced by International IDEA, the League of Young Voters in Europe, the European Youth Forum, 2014.

EUROPEAN YOUTH: PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE - Flash Eurobarometer, May 2013.

Youth Participation in Democratic Life - produced by EACEA, February 2013.

European Research on Youth: Supporting young people to participate fully in society - EC Directorate General for Research, 2009.

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE YOUTH FIELD Encouraging the participation of young people with fewer opportunities - RESULTS OF THE SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY YOUTH EVENT 18th-21st of April 2008, Ljubljana and Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia.

## 4.7. Main policy Documents:

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society - Brussels, 5.09.2007.

Further general documents are available in the Document library.

## 4.8. Research findings:

The European Union has designed a set of policies and initiatives[226] to **encourage young people to participate** in the democratic process and in society. Key tools include the *Structured Dialogue[227]* designed to **involve young people** in decision making processes at the EU level on issues affecting youth. The *Erasmus+ Programme[228]* **supports projects** that provide opportunities for young people to participate in transnational activities all across Europe.

In spite of several initiatives, increasingly **low levels in youngsters' socio-political participation** have been witnessed in many EU member states, including for instance the last European Parliament elections in 2014[229]. More and more, citizens feel pushed further away from traditional parties towards anti-systemic ones due to their lack of trust in national governments and European institutions[230].

Before analysing **youth participation** and engagement in socio-political activities, it is essential to investigate how participation is structured, what "participation" means today and how it is measured.

Soler Masó et al. (2015)[231] identify three key dimensions to take in consideration when evaluating a participative process: inclusiveness, intensity and influence on public policies. The authors define inclusiveness as the possibility for any young person to participate; intensity is the desire to allow any young person to implement the actions comprised by the process; influence on public policies indicates the connection between the reached decisions and institutional action. Finally, the researchers stress that youth involvement should not be limited to single consultations and opinion polls, but it shall engage young people in decision-making process, since young Europeans are the stakeholders of youth projects. Indeed, participation should not be an end in itself, but it should be seen as a tool to influence the decision- and policy-making process.

Concerning the **meaning of "participation"**, Hoskins[232] suggests the development of a new definition of political participation, encompassing new forms of political engagement. In fact, he noticed that indicators of voting and engagement in political parties are no longer adequate measures of youth participation, especially since the spread of online discussions and of new Internet media. In the same perspective, Deželan[233] stresses the need to look beyond elections and electoral turnout when referring to levels of youth participation. In a follow-up to the League of Young Voters' study focusing on the European

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[226] For a general overview see: European Commission Website, *Youth. Supporting youth in actions in Europe*. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/civil_society_en.htm

[227] See: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/dialogue_en.htm

[228] See: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

[229] Bouza, L., *Addressing youth absenteeism in European elections,* European Youth Forum Aisbl, 2014.

[230] Treib, O., "The voter says no, but nobody listens: causes and consequences of the Eurosceptic vote in the 2014 European elections", *Journal of European Public Policy*, *21*(10), 2014, pp.1541-1554;
Hartleb, F., *A Thorn in the Side of European Elites: The New Euroscepticism*, Brussels, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, 2011; Bleiker, C., "German party says 'no' to the euro, 'yes' to the EU", DW Online, 11 March 2013, Online at: http://www.dw.com/en/german-party-says-no-to-the-euro-yes-to-the-eu/a-16660602 ;
Brexit Brief, "The roots of Euroscepticisim", *The Economist*, March 12th 2016. Online at: http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21694557-why-britons-are-warier-other-europeans-eu-roots-euroscepticism.

[231] Pere Soler Masó, Anna Maria Novella Cámara, Anna Planas Lladó, "The structures of youth participation in Catalonia since the democratic transition", *Educació i Història: Revista d'Història de l'Educació, 25: 211-237*, 2015. Available online at: http://revistes.iec.cat/index.php/EduH/index

[232] Hoskins, Bryony, *What About Youth Political Participation?*, Research seminar 24-26 November 2003, European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, 2003. Available online at: http://pjpeu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668207/2003_youth_political_participation_report.pdf/6a144f6b-569a-469a-9b65-ec5a1d75937b

[233] Deželan, Tomaž, *YOUNG PEOPLE AND DEMOCRATIC LIFE IN EUROPE.WHAT NEXT AFTER THE 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS?*, European Youth Forum, 2014. Available online at: http://www.youthup.eu/app/uploads/2015/11/YFJ_YoungPeopleAndDemocraticLifeInEurope_B1_web-9e4bd8be22.pdf

Parliament's elections, the author highlights the emergence of individualized, immediate, and non-representative styles of politics, associated with protests, petitions and social movements. Moreover, he witnesses the development of a 'networked individualism', where young European citizens are more likely to participate in non-hierarchical networks, be project-oriented, and conduct their social relations predominantly through social media. However, it should be clearly understood that the **Internet and social media** are not necessarily a 'game changer' in terms of improving youth political participation. Therefore, improving participation through the Internet and social media might only be successful when coupled with the strengthening of existing democratic structures, such as youth civil society organizations[234].

Bertocchi et al.[235] focus on the impact that the media has to encourage or dissuade youth civic and political participation. The authors conducted research in Italy, where they noticed that the Italian media overemphasized risky and deviant youth behaviour, while ignoring more positive youth models. Therefore, the majority of young Italians display a low degree of participation, mainly due to disappointment and to feelings of powerlessness, even if structural opportunities for participation do exist. In comparison, Yoldaş[236] highlights that the **mass media** has come to represent a considerable force when it comes to youth participation in politics. In doing so, they have almost replaced the role carried out by civics education, taught by educational institutions. However the importance for youngsters to gain experiences of political participation is stressed, through civics education, political conversations and via mass media.

Beyond the evolution of different tools employed by youngsters to participate in civil society, Hurlbert and Gupta (2015)[237] investigated when public participation in decision making is needed, and under what conditions it is likely to work. They developed and tested a *split ladder of participation*, as a diagnostic, evaluation and strategic tool for tackling policy problems and assessing when participation is likely to work. From testing the split ladder it emerged that structured policy problems generally require minimal public participation, whereas moderately structured policy problems are likely to entail different degrees of participation depending on levels of trust and delegation of power[238].

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the 2007/2008 financial and economic crisis had a dramatic impact on youth participation. In particular, it has caused welfare budget cuts resulting in decreasing opportunities for youth participation, less social protections and more social instability. Tsekoura[239] analyses youth participation in United Kingdom and Greece, where she observes a generalized mistrust towards the political system. More precisely, the author notes that **welfare budget cuts** in UK were more likely to affect youth working opportunities, whereas in Greece the financial crisis spread a general lack of interest in volunteerism, a loss of confidence in youth's ability to influence larger social change and the outburst of youth protests. As a result, positive political and civil participation of youth was compromised. Nonetheless,

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[234]    Holt, K., Shehata, A., Strömbäck, J. and Ljungberg, E., "Age and the effects of news media attention and social media use on political interest and participation: Do social media function as leveller?", *European Journal of Communication*, 28(1), 2013, pp.19-34; Boulianne, S., "Social Media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research", *Special Issue: Communication and Information Technologies Section (ASA)*, Val. 16\8, Issue 5, 2015, Online at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1008542

[235]    Elvira Cicognani, Cinzia Albanesi, Bruna Zani, Davide Mazzoni, Alberto Bertocchi, PaolaVillano, *CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ACROSS GENERATIONS IN ITALY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY, Department of Education Sciences, University of Bologna (Italy),* 2011. Available at: http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/7066/1/Bologna_PIDOP_presentation.pdf

[236]    Becerik Yoldaş Özlem, "Civic education and learning democracy: their importance for political participation of young people", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 174, 12 February 2015, pp. 544-549. Available online at: http://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815007545/1-s2.0-S1877042815007545-main.pdf?_tid=54813000-eb59-11e5-8da3-00000aab0f01&acdnat=1458120640_e5cc53899293cd3b925c260af81fd4ba

[237]    Hurlbert, M. and Gupta, J., The split ladder of participation: A diagnostic, strategic, and evaluation tool to assess when participation is necessary. Environmental Science & Policy, 50, 2015, pp.100-113. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Margot_Hurlbert/publication/273390547_The_split_ladder_of_participation_A_diagnostic_strategic_and_evaluation_tool_to_assess_when_participation_is_necessary/links/55073ebd0cf26ff55f7c31fb.pdf;

[238]    Hurlbert, M. and Gupta, J., *Ibid.*, 2015, p. 109.

[239]    Tsekoura Maria, *Joining the adventure? Exploring young people's experience within spaces for youth participation in the United Kingdom and Greece*, 2012. Available online at: http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/3783/1/Tsekoura12PhD.pdf

young people in the UK still looked forward to certain localised forms of involvement, while in Greece they mainly engaged themselves in young people's networks, rather than within more constructed forms of democratic participation.

Sanderson et al. (2015)[240] encourage EU Member **States** to commit themselves to **involve young people as active stakeholders** in designing policies, rather than leaving European youth as a passive beneficiary of services and policies. The "involvement of young people in the decision-making processes related to service design and delivery can take various forms, and it is important to note that different levels and forms of participation are valid for different groups of young people and for different purposes"[241].

Talent Match was a large-scale evaluation conducted in England that lasted seven years. It suggested that youth involvement should predominantly be seen as a capacity building activity. Their evaluation found that "youth involvement measures worked better where civic society organisations had youth involvement as part of their mission, they had staff trained in outreach and involvement, and they were able to cede control in the design and delivery of the programme strategy and projects. Conversely, youth involvement did not work where organisations saw it as a 'bolt-on' to their existing work, and that it was a requirement of a programme which had to be complied with"[242].

[240]    Sanderson, E., Wells, P. and Wilson, I., *Young people's resilience and involvement: possible elements of the European Union's Structural and Investment Funds in addressing youth unemployment?*, 2015. Online at: http://shura.shu.ac.uk/10667/3/Sanderson_Young_People's_Resilience_and_Involvement.pdf
[241]    Sanderson, E., Wells, P. and Wilson, I., *Ibid.*, 2015, p. 7.
[242]    Sanderson, E., Wells, P. and Wilson, I., *Ibid.*, 2015, p. 13.

# 5. Voluntary Activities

Showing **solidarity to society** through **volunteering** is important for young people and is a vehicle for personal development, learning mobility, competitiveness, social cohesion and citizenship. Youth volunteering is an excellent example of **non-formal learning** for young people and also contributes strongly to **inter-generational solidarity.**

## 5.1. What are the EU's objectives:

The EU Youth Strategy promotes:

- Greater **recognition of the value of voluntary activities** and the skills it promotes;
- Good **working conditions** for young volunteers and opportunities for enriching work;
- **Inter-generational solidarity**;
- **Transnational volunteering**.

In line with these purposes, the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU calls for **Member States** to:

- Raise more **awareness** about the benefits of volunteering abroad;
- Develop **opportunities** for volunteering abroad;
- Promote **quality** through the development of self-assessment tools;
- Recognise **learning outcomes** of voluntary activities through schemes such as Europass and Youthpass;
- Promote **cross-border mobility** of youth workers and young people in youth organisations;
- Pay particular attention to young **people with fewer opportunities**.

## 5.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

1. The European Voluntary Service (EVS), part of Erasmus+ offers young people aged 17-30 the chance to volunteer in another Member State as well as outside the EU. The EVS core values and quality standards are laid down in the EVS Charter. The European Voluntary Service started in 1996: more information about its history are available here. The Info Kit provides useful information for volunteers setting off on EVS.

2. The European Commission supports Member States through the development of the Volunteering Database of **organisations accredited** to run projects under European Voluntary Service and promoting exchange of experiences through the Expert Group on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU.

3. The European Youth Portal includes a Volunteering Database where young people can find information about current **volunteering opportunities**.

4. The EVS aims to develop **solidarity, mutual understanding** and **tolerance** among young people, while contributing to **strengthening social cohesion** and promoting **active citizenship.** Their learning experience is formally recognized through a Youthpass.

5. The Commission also supports Member States wishing to enhance their **civic services**, through actions such as Prospective Initiatives under Erasmus+.

## 5.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **four indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Voluntary Activities** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Participation of young people in organised voluntary activities
- Voluntary activities aimed at changing young people's local communities
- Young people volunteering abroad
- Young people receiving a certificate or diploma for voluntary activities

## 5.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

According to the results of the Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' conducted in **2014**, around **one young European in four** has engaged in **voluntary activities**. At the European level, figures have remained stable since **2011**, although some variations have occurred in certain Member States. The younger groups of young people tend to be more active in voluntary activities. Comparison with rates of participation in the general population does not signal substantial differences between generations, nor does comparison between men and women.

The majority of those involved in voluntary activities choose projects and services aimed at bringing benefits to their **local community**. The proportion of young Europeans who have undertaken these types of activity has registered an **increase since 2011**. Despite the local focus favoured by many young volunteers, others are involved in charitable activities with a particular focus on humanitarian and development aid – causes which have a definite global dimension. Education, training and sports are also popular activities. Conversely, other issues such as the environment, animal welfare, as well as political, cultural and religious causes seem to have less appeal.

Although young people's international mobility has increased over recent years bringing many young Europeans to live, study and work in other European countries, as discussed in the first chapter of this report, serving in cross-border voluntary organisations does not seem to be a major reason for young people to leave their country of origin: only around **2%** of individuals in the European Union report having **volunteered abroad**.

On average, only **a quarter** of young people who have participated in voluntary activities have received a certificate or diploma formally recognising their experience and the skills they have demonstrated, a percentage that has slightly increased since 2011.

## 5.5. Official links:

The **European Commission** page on Voluntary activities

The **European Youth Portal >** Volunteering

The **European Commission** page on **Erasmus+** > European Voluntary Service

## 5.6. Reports:

REPORT on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU - European Parliament, Committee on Culture and Education, 14.05.2012.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION - Final Report submitted by GHK, 17 February 2010.

## 5.7. Main policy documents:

OPINION of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-border Voluntary Activities in the EU - Brussels, 28.03.2012.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Crossborder Voluntary Activities in the EU - Brussels, 20.09.2011.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union - 20.11.2008.

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT accompanying the Proposal for a RECOMMENDATION OF THE COUNCIL on mobility of young volunteers across Europe - Brussels, 3.07.2007.


## 5.8. Research findings:

According to the European Commission's 2015 Youth Report[243], voluntary activities bring about several personal benefits, as they discourage young people from leaving school prematurely, they improve self-confidence and sense of social well-being. Thus, the advantages of volunteering are broadly recognized both by scientific articles[244] and by the European Union. The research papers examined dwell on the variables influencing young Europeans participation in voluntary activities, the need to develop efficient voluntary infrastructure, and the contribution of voluntary activities to shape the society.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is necessary to make some preliminary remarks. In particular, the meaning of social action and of voluntary activity should be introduced. According to Marzana, Marta and Pozzi (2011)[245], one of the most complete **definitions of social action** is that provided by Snyder and Omoto (2007)[246], who include in this expression all the activities in which people act in ways that will benefit not only themselves as individuals, but also the larger communities of which they are members. Voluntary activities indeed belong to this definition of social action.

Taking into consideration the different definitions in EU Member States, the 2009 Council of European Union's Decision[247] defines the term *voluntary activities* as "all types of voluntary activities, whether formal, non-formal or informal which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and without concern for financial gain. They benefit the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole"[248].

Furthermore, voluntary activities are influenced by specific variables[249], whose analysis allows us to grasp **how the individual propensity to volunteer is affected.** Since it is "precisely during the 'period of youth' that individuals learn societal values and form civic and social identities as citizens of today and tomorrow"[250]. They do this by identifying the variables that underpin the choice of and motivation towards one or other action and whether it is possible to act on them. The purpose is to promote social action in young people, as well as to sustain it over time[251].

[243]    European Commission, S*ituation of young people in the EU*, Brussels, 15 September 2015.

[244]    Hall, 2008; Pilivian, 2003; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008, in European Commission, S*ituation of young people in the EU*, Brussels, 15 September 2015. See also Sabine Hossenfelder, *on the problem of Measuring happiness*, 3 february 2011.

[245]    Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, "Social action in young adults: voluntary and political engagement", in *JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENCE* 35 (3), June 2012, pp. 497-507.

[246]    Snyder, M., & Omoto, A. M. *Social action. Social psychology: A handbook of basic principles*, 2nd Ed, 2007.

[247]    COUNCIL DECISION (2010/37/EC), *On the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship*, 27 November 2009. Pp. 43-49.

[248]    COUNCIL DECISION (2010/37/EC), *Ibid., 2009.*

[249]    Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, *Ivi*, June 2012, pp. 497-507; and Lionel Prouteau and Boguslawa Sardinha, *European Volunteering: Individual and Country Determinants*, 2011.

[250]    Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, "Social action in young adults: voluntary and political engagement", in *Journal of adolescence* 35 (3), June 2012, pp. 497-507

[251]    Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, *Ivi*, in *Journal of Adolescence* 35 (3), June 2012.

These variables can be categorized in micro (or individual level) variables and macro (country level) ones.

The **individual level variables** concern socio-demographic characteristics and they also pertain to individual attitudes and values[252]. According to individual level variables, the people who seem more prone to be engaged in unpaid activities are the ones who think that both leisure and work are important components of their lives. On the other hand, **country level variables** refer to economic, political and religious contexts. In particular, two macro variables appear to be robustly and positively related to volunteering: the per capita expenses of government and the degree of secularization of society[253].

Furthermore, **cultural and historical factors also influence the will to volunteer**, as well as individual and environmental resources. For instance, social transformations affect differently civic participation of youths. This especially emerges when comparing ex-communist regimes with other European states. The Eastern bloc countries were characterized by values and ideology that shaped a typical civic participation pattern[254].

A key precondition to attract and retain volunteers is the existence of **efficient volunteering infrastructures** supporting volunteers, ensuring the long-term sustainability of volunteering and its high standards[255]. The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) underlines the importance for practitioners to develop knowledge on different approaches to volunteering infrastructures. Since "volunteering is treated in a wide variety of ways across Europe, depending on cultural, historical and legal context of the country concerned, what works well in one country may not work as well in another part of Europe"[256]. CEV particularly stresses the importance of disseminating information on funding opportunities for voluntary activities, to improve facilities for regular and systematic research on the topic and to spread awareness of volunteering opportunities, which shall have high ethics and quality standards.

Several researchers[257] have deemed it interesting to investigate **how voluntary activities shape societies** and individual understanding of citizenship and engagement.[258] Certainly, youth volunteering simulates several forms of civic engagement[259] and it may bring about several social improvement and organizational development[260].

Rachel Brooks (2009)[261] suggests that volunteering constructs an understanding of citizenship focused on belonging, conformity and duty, even though it is commonly argued that volunteering is a mean to foster active citizenship and political participation among young people.[262] Brooks' article puts forward interesting questions that remain to be further explored: for instance, does volunteering negatively affect certain types

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[252]     Lionel Prouteau and Boguslawa Sardinha, *European Volunteering: Individual and Country Determinants*, 2011.

[253]     Lionel Prouteau and Boguslawa Sardinha, *Ivi*, 2011.

[254]     Mirazchiyski, P., Caro, D.H. and Sandoval-Hernández, A., "Youth future civic participation in Europe: Differences between the East and the rest", *Social indicators research*, *115*(3), 2014, pp.1031-1055. Online at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andres_Sandoval-Hernandez/publication/235437968

[255]     European Volunteer Centre, Volunteer Infrastructure in Europe, 2012. Online at: http://www.alliance-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CEV_Volunteering-infrastructure.pdf

[256]     European Volunteer Centre, *Ivi*, 2012.

[257]     Rachel Books, *Young people and Political participation: An analysis of European Union policies*, 2009 ; Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, *Ivi*, 2012.

[258]     See EU Commission COM, C*ommunication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Crossborder Voluntary Activities in the EU*, 20 September, 2011.

[259]     Crocetti, E., Erentaitė, R. and Žukauskienė, R., "Identity styles, positive youth development, and civic engagement in adolescence", *Journal of youth and adolescence*, *43*(11), 2014, pp.1818-1828. Online at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rita_Zukauskien/publication/260040301

[260]     Esra Erturan-Ogut, E., "Youth Volunteering in Sport: A Case Study of The Benefits of "The European Voluntary Service" for a Sport Organization", in *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research*, *64*(1), 2014, pp.71-85. Online at: http://www.degruyter.com/dg/viewarticle.fullcontentlink:pdfeventlink/$002fj$002fpcssr.2014.64.issue-1$002fpcssr-2014-0028$002fpcssr-2014-0028.pdf?t:ac=j$002fpcssr.2014.64.issue-1$002fpcssr-2014-0028$002fpcssr-2014-0028.xml

[261]     Rachel Books, "Young people and Political participation: An analysis of European Union policies", in *Sociological Research Online* 2009.

[262]     Rachel Books, *Ivi*, 2009.

of political engagements, such as protesting? Is volunteering actively promoted as the main form of youth political engagement in political discourse, rather than more oppositional activities, such as protests and sit-in?

Indeed, it is interesting to compare different forms of social actions and their impact on youth as, for instance, **volunteering** and **political participation**.

Volunteering builds a form of common human struggle and mutual interdependency, since it is driven by social-communitarian and group variables, experienced directly when working with the population supported by the volunteer activities. In turn, political participation seems to be more closely related with self-determination and clear, identifiable values. Hence, political participation appears more motivated by indirect relationship with the beneficiaries. This leads to a different development of trust within youth engaged in politics and their volunteer peers. In fact, the firsts do not experience the same level of trust as the others, as they are closer to the disenchantment and distrust of unengaged youth.[263]

Finally, it should be recalled that global demographic, technological and institutional changes give rise to new opportunities for young people to volunteer[264]. For example, social media have come to represent a considerable tool to involve and recruit volunteers[265]. in Surely globalization has made international travel and communication easier, while young people increasingly appreciate volunteering's benefits to formal education, providing skills as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, management, creativity and so on[266], even if the skills gained are not always sufficiently recognised or given credit.[267]

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[263]       Daniela Marzana, Elena Marta and Maura Pozzi, Ivi, in *Journal of adolescence*, 35 (3), June 2012.

[264]       United Nations Volunteers, *UNV Youth Volunteering Strategy 2014-2017. Empowering Youth thorugh Volunteerism*, 2013.

[265]       Harling, J., "How the internet can help you boost your volunteer programme", in *Reason Digital*, May 23rd 2012. Online at: http://reasondigital.com/advice-and-training/how-the-internet-can-help-you-boost-your-volunteer-programme/

[266]       United Nations Volunteers, *Ivi*, 2013.

[267]       EAC-EA and DG EAC, *Volunteering in the European Union*, 17 February 2010.

# 6. Social Inclusion

The European Commission supports and complements Member State policies in the fields of **social inclusion** and **social protection**. Fighting **social exclusion** and **poverty**, which are increased during an economic crisis, is one of the main Europe 2020 targets. **Young people** are particularly at risk from poverty and social exclusion, so these feature high on the EU political agenda.

## 6.1. What are the EU's objectives?

The EU Youth Strategy aims, in particular, to:

- Realise the full potential of **youth work** and **youth centres** as a means of inclusion;
- Encourage a **cross-sector approach** to address exclusion in areas such as education, employment and social inclusion;
- Support the development of **intercultural awareness** and **combat prejudice**;
- Support information and education for young people about their **rights**;
- Address the issues of **homelessness**, **housing,** and **poverty**;
- Promote **access to quality services** – e.g. transport, e-inclusion, health, and social services;
- Promote specific **support for young families.**

## 6.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

The **Commission** supports the objectives through:

1. The European platform against poverty and social exclusion – launched in 2010, it proposes measures to **reduce** the number of people living in poverty or otherwise socially marginalised in the EU by at least 20 million by 2020.

2. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (run jointly with the Council of Europe) - it provides reliable **information** about the living conditions of young people.

3. The Erasmus+ programme and the activities supported by it in the youth field. The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy outlines the support and possibilities available in the Erasmus+ programme for the youth field when it comes to including **young people with fewer opportunities**.

4. The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs - it contributes to achieve the EU's targets to have at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020.

5. The Social Investment Package - it provides guidance to Member States to modernise their welfare systems towards **social investment** throughout life. The package complements: the Employment Package, which sets out the way forward for a job rich recovery; the White Paper on Pensions, presenting a strategy for adequate, sustainable and safe pensions; the Youth Employment Package, which deals specifically with the situation of **young people**.

6. The **EU funds**, in particular the European Social Fund. It is one of Europe's main tools for promoting **employment and social inclusion** – helping people get a job (or a better job), integrating disadvantaged people into society and ensuring fairer life opportunities for all.

7. The Commission works together with EU countries through the Social Protection Committee using the Open Method of Co-ordination in the areas of social inclusion, health care and long-term care and pensions. This **social OMC** is a **voluntary process** for political cooperation based on agreeing common objectives and measuring progress towards these goals using common indicators. The process also involves close **co-operation** with stakeholders, including Social Partners and civil society.

## 6.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **seven indicators** in order to gain information on / capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Social Inclusion** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Average age of young people when leaving the parental household
- At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for children and young people
- At-risk-of-poverty rate for children
- Severe material deprivation rate for children and young people
- Children and young people living in households with very low work intensity
- Self-reported unmet needs for medical care
- Share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET rate)

## 6.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

The economic crisis and the subsequent recession continue to have an impact on young people in terms of **poverty and social inclusion**. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, the majority of young Europeans – especially in countries hardest hit by the economic recession – feel that young people have been marginalised by the economic crisis and are being excluded from economic and social life. Changing labour markets, increasing uncertainty and high youth unemployment rates influence many aspects of young people's lives including their levels of poverty and deprivation, their living conditions, their health and well-being and even their political and cultural participation. All these aspects contribute to young people's feelings of social exclusion, especially amongst the most vulnerable groups.

The risk of becoming poor is closely linked to a crucial move: leaving the parental home. In fact, moving out of the parental household is found to be the 'strongest predictor behind youth poverty'. Though moving out of the parental home might not be definitive for many (young people often 'boomerang' back to their parental household if they cannot afford to live independently), the timing of this move differs widely between European countries, influencing the social exclusion and poverty levels among young people.

**On average, young Europeans leave the parental home around the age of 26**. However, there are substantial differences across European countries, as well as between young men and women. Regarding country differences, there is a clear north-west vs. south-east divide in Europe: young people in northern and Western Europe generally leave the parental household earlier than their peers from southern and eastern European countries.

The main pointer for poverty and social exclusion is the **composite indicator of 'at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion',** which is based on three sub-indicators of poverty: the at-risk-of-poverty rate; the severe material deprivation rate; and the rate of living in a household with very low work intensity. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion are defined as the proportion of the population that falls into at least one of the categories described by the three sub-indicators.

**On average in the EU-28, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people aged 15 to 29 (29.0 % in 2013) is higher than that for children under the age of 16 (27.3 %) or for the total population (24.5 %)**. Moreover, in 2013 the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates in 2013 stopped increasing for both the total population and children (for children, there had even been small decrease between 2010 and 2011), but continued to rise for young people, widening the poverty gap between young

people and the total population. In 2013, within the group of young people, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate was the highest for the **20 to 24 age group (31.5 %)**.

The specific groups of young people who are more vulnerable than others to poverty and social exclusion include, **young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs)** and young people from a **migrant background**. After a steady rise in NEET rates of those aged 15-24 in the EU-28 from **2009** due to the economic crisis, the NEET rate reached its **peak** of **13.1 %** in **2012** and then started to **decline.** This small decrease is due to a decline in the share of unemployed NEETs between 2013 and 2014, and, to a lesser degree, of inactive young people. In addition, looking at the educational background of NEETs reveals that, over the four years considered, the gap between young people with low levels of education and their peers with medium to high levels of education has widened to the disadvantage of the latter group.

Migrants and ethnic minorities are among the groups most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. The differences between these two groups are telling**: foreign-born young people** are considerably more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than **native-born youth** in the EU-28 (**43.8 %** vs. **28.1 %** in **2013**).

## 6.5. Official links:

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre website.

The SALTO-YOUTH Cultural Diversity website.

## 6.6. Reports:

Tackling radicalisation through education and youth action - Factsheet, 2015.

Youth Social Exclusion and Lessons from Youth Work: Evidence from literature and surveys - Report produced by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), 2013.

## 6.7. Main policy documents:

Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people - 20.05.2014.

Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training - Brussels, 26.11.2013.

Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people - 14.06.2013.

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 November 2012 on the participation and social inclusion of young people with emphasis on those with a migrant background - 27.11.2012.

Further general documents are available in the Document library.

## 6.8. Research findings:

The European Commission supports and complements the policies of its Member States in the fields of social inclusion and social protection. Fighting social exclusion and poverty both increased in importance during the recent economic crisis and became one of the main Europe 2020 targets[268].

A report issued by EACEA in 2013[269] recognized that "social exclusion produces deep and long-term damage to the living conditions, social and economic participation, emotional life, and health status of young people. It also contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In turn, insecurity in living standards, political and social isolation, feelings of estrangement and unhealthy lifestyles aggravate pre-existing conditions of social exclusion. This results in a vicious circle where socially excluded young people are in even more danger of suffering from additional material deprivation, social and emotional marginalisation, and health issues, which in turn expose them to more serious risks of exclusion".

In this context, the **European Youth Strategy (2010-2018),** which aims to generate greater and better opportunities for young people while promoting solidarity, active citizenship and social inclusion, should be interpreted within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and its headline target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by that time[270].

In recent years, greater disengagement of young people from economic and social life has been widely registered across Europe, with factors such as lack of job opportunities, changing labour markets, migration and social exclusion identified as key contributors fuelling feelings of uncertainty and alienation while discouraging an active participation in society[271]. Social inclusion is widely considered to be a **multidimensional and multi-conditioned phenomenon** that embraces various dimensions such as education, labour market, housing, health and civic engagement[272]. Thus, only by analysing each of these areas is it possible to produce a comprehensive overview of various risk factors and therefore design and implement effective interventions. In this regard, the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators for the Monitoring of Progress Towards the EU Objectives for Social Protection and Social Inclusion[273] developed by the EU Social Protection Committee provides commonly agreed indicators guaranteeing available comparative data at EU level[274]. It has now been a decade since the use of indicators got a foothold in the evaluation of social inclusion policy, particularly in the active citizenship policy[275].

**Statistics** show that, when compared with other age groups, as a specific population category and target group, young people in Europe are most affected by the phenomenon of social exclusion.

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[268]    EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, 2010, Available from: ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf.

[269]    EC- EACEA, *Youth Social Exclusion and Lessons from Youth Work*, 2013.

[270]    EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Ivi*, 2010.

[271]    EU PARLIAMENT. "Flash Eurobarometer on the 'European Youth in 2014' and European Commission", *Youth Report 2015*, 2015 p.206. Available from: ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm

[272]    VROOMAN, J.C. & HOFF, S.J. . "The disadvantaged among the Dutch: A survey approach to the multidimensional measurement of social exclusion", *Social Indicators Research*, , 113(3), 2013, pp.1261-1287. MARKOVIC, J., GARCIA LOPEZ, M.A. and DZIGURSKI, S., *Finding a place in modern Europe. Mapping of Barriers to Social Inclusion of Young People in Vulnerable Situations*, 2015.

[273]    European Union Social Protection Committee, *Portfolio of EU Social Indicators for the Monitoring of Progress Towards the EU Objectives for Social Protection and Social Inclusion*, Belgium, EU, 2015. Available online at: file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/KE-06-14-163-EN-N%20(1).pdf

[274]    EU SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE, *Portfolio of EU Social Indicators for the Monitoring of Progress Towards the EU Objectives for Social Protection and Social Inclusion*, 2015. Available from ec.europa.eu/social/ BlobServlet?docId=14897&langId=en

[275]    HOSKYNS, B. "Monitoring policy development in the field of education for active citizenship", in *Social inclusion for young people: breaking down the barriers*, 2007, pp. 115-124.

For instance, the economic crisis, severely hit young Europeans. From the second quarter of 2008, the EU youth unemployment rate took an upward trend: from 15.2% (March 2008) to 23.8 % in the first quarter of 2013, before receding to 21.4 % at the end of 2014[276].

Pobric[277] ascribes this to the fact that young people do not usually possess assets like real estate, high-income or savings, and their network primarily includes non-influential people. Additionally they are usually not in charge of making decisions or fostering policy reforms.

When it comes to building the most effective and efficient **approach to inclusion**, Markovic[278] suggests there appears to be two main policy dilemmas, an individualized approach in contrast to a "structure oriented" one, and the use of preventive measures opposed to compensatory ones[279]. Nonetheless, besides employment and income statistics, looking more at the social environment and at the essence of the notion of social exclusion, it is clear that other factors need to be mentioned and kept into consideration, such as the discomfort and/or the discrimination based on disability, gender and race, or experienced by specific groups (e.g. Roma or migrant communities) in different settings (i.e. rural versus urban)[280].

At the political level, the links between health and social inclusion of youth have recently received increased attention, representing an orientation for policy-making and a source of inspiration in the research for **initiatives to contrast social exclusion**.[281]

If we reflect on the spatial dimension of social exclusion, there is great concern about the fact that social and economic development appear to have increased rather than reduced social inequality. Additionally, research[282] has shown that in recent years the mechanisms for promoting social cohesion and social support have become weaker in most European States, with a shift of emphasis from the State's responsibility towards **NGOs and individuals' activity**[283]. The report published by the European Youth Forum on youth policies in Europe confirms this tendency, highlighting the significant role of INGYOs and National Youth Councils, as well as specific projects aiming at including young people with fewer opportunities, including those involving international mobility[284]. Examples of initiatives presented include the provision of fully funded places to participate in events, gender diversity training and proposed capacity building initiatives for youth workers to develop socially inclusive activities with diverse groups of young people.

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[276] Source: EUROSTAT "Youth unemployment trends". Last update: 2.2016. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trends

[277] POBRIĆ, R., *Why am I excluded ? A comparative study on youth social inclusion policies*, 2015.

[278] Markovic, J., Lopez, M.A.G., Dzigurski, S., "Finding a place in modern Europe. Mapping of Barriers to Social Inclusion of Young People in Vulnerable Situations", *European Commission and Council of Europe Publication*, March 2015.

[279] Markovic, J., Lopez, M.A.G., Dzigurski, S., *Ibid.*, European Commission and Council of Europe Publication, March 2015.

[280] MUCHA, P., "The Limits and Boundaries of the European Social Model–Roma Minority Inclusion Beyond EU Conditionality", *Doctoral dissertation, Central European Universi*t. 2013. GELIS, J.F. "How an intervention project contributes to social inclusion of adolescents and young people of foreign origin", *Children and youth services review*, 52, 2015, pp.144-149.

[281] BAILEY, R., *Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion*, 2005; MCCONKEY, R., DOWLING, S., HASSAN, D. AND MENKE, S., "Promoting social inclusion through Unified Sports for youth with intellectual disabilities: a five-nation study" in *Journal of intellectual disability research*, 2013, 57(10), pp.923-935.

[282] EUROFOUND, *Social inclusion of young people*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; KEARNS, A., BAILEY, N., GANNON, M., LIVINGSTON, M. AND LEYLAND, A., "All in it Together'? Social Cohesion in a Divided Society: Attitudes to Income Inequality and Redistribution in a Residential Context", in *Journal of Social Policy*, 2014, 43(03), pp.453-477; ABRAMS, D. & VASILJEVIC, M. "How does macroeconomic change affect social identity (and vice versa?): insights from the European context", in *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 14(1), 2014, pp.311-338.

[283] EUROFOUND, *Ibid.*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; KEARNS, A., BAILEY, N., GANNON, M., LIVINGSTON, M. AND LEYLAND, A. *Ibid.*; ABRAMS, D. & VASILJEVIC, M. *Ibid.*, 2014.

[284] EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM, *Shadow report on youth policy a youth perspective*, 2015. Available from: www.borbolycsaba.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/YFJ_ShadowReport_print-LAST.pdf

Expanding the discussion about the effects of social exclusion on society, it is also worth referring to the potential implications in terms of radicalization and violence extremism of young people, a very hot topic in both the EU and international agenda[285].

After the terrorist attacks of 13 November 2015 in Paris, Commissioner Navracsics stressed once again the central role that education, youth policy, culture and sport must play in defeating terrorism. "Education and culture are very efficient tools to combat radicalisation. Beyond statements, we must take action. As security forces cooperate, education, culture, sports and youth sectors must do the same to eradicate the roots of terrorism: inequality, a lack of attachment to our common values, and social exclusion"[286]. In policy terms, European Ministers responded by backing the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture[287] as an education tool for promoting democratic culture.

To conclude it is essential to keep in mind that problems such as the long-term disengagement of young people from the labour market, and their consequent financial and social well-being constraints, represent phenomena that deeply affect society and the economy as a whole, therefore social inclusion is an issue that needs to be analysed through multi-dimensional lens and addressed from a holistic and long-term perspective.

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[285] BIG, D., BONELLI, L., GUITTET, E.P., RAGAZZI, F., *Preventing and Countering Youth Radicalisation in the EU*, Committee on Civil liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), 2014.

[286] EUROPEAN COMMISSION, "Tackling radicalisation through education ans youth action", 2015.

[287] Council of Europe, *Competences for Democratic Culture. Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies,* 2016. Available online at: https://book.coe.int/eur/en/human-rights-education-intercultural-education/6881-competencies-for-democratic-culture-living-together-as-equals-in-culturally-diverse-democratic-societies.html

# 7. Youth & the world

Within the EU Youth Strategy 2010-18, the EU aims to **support young people to engage with regions outside Europe** and to become more **involved in global policy processes** regarding issues such as climate change, the UN Millennium Development Goals, and human rights.

## 7.1. What are the EU's objectives?

In particular, the EU aims to:

- raising **awareness of global issues** among young people;
- providing opportunities for young people to **exchange views with policy makers** on global issues;
- fostering **mutual understanding** among young people from all over the world through dialogue;
- encouraging young people to volunteer for environmental projects (**"green volunteering"**) and to act green in their everyday life (recycling, saving energy, using hybrid vehicles, etc.);
- promoting **entrepreneurship, employment, education, and volunteering opportunities outside Europe;**
- promoting **cooperation with and exchanges between youth workers** on different continents;
- encouraging young people **to volunteer in developing countries** or to work on development issues in their own country.

## 7.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

Specifically, the **Commission** pursues these objectives through:

**1. Erasmus+** projects supporting the **international mobility** of young people and youth workers as well as **international cooperation** of youth organisations. These projects help young people become active citizens;

**2.** Increased **cooperation with partner countries neighboring the EU** such as: The "**Eastern Partnership Youth Window**", which strengthens youth cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and the "**Western Balkans Youth Window**" which fosters youth cooperation with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

**3. Bilateral events** between the EU and non-EU countries which promote intercultural dialogue and understanding between young people.

**4.** The "EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue" launched in 2012 has produced a number of joint partnership projects involving youth organisations, focusing on issues of common interest such as youth employability and entrepreneurship, youth involvement in society, and voluntary activities. In addition, specific events took place in Europe and China on youth work development, on youth entrepreneurship and on youth social inclusion. As agreed at the second HPPD meeting in September 2014, these events should continue over the next few years.

**5.** The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership – an annual symposium between youth policy-makers, youth researchers, youth workers, and young people in South-East Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, as well as the Southern Mediterranean.

**6.** Increased volunteering opportunities outside Europe.

## 7.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **three indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Youth & the world** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Participation in political, community, or environmental NGOs
- Participation in climate change or global warming organisations
- Participation in human rights or development organisations

## 7.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

As a recent Eurobarometer survey on young people demonstrates, a large proportion of young people are indeed engaged with global issues like sustainable development and climate change at various different levels. A large majority of European youth has adopted certain lifestyle changes in order to protect the environment and combat climate change. The most common actions include sorting waste systematically (74 %), reducing water and energy consumption at home (65 %), and reducing the consumption of disposable items like plastic bags (58 %). Nevertheless, when it comes to young Europeans' active engagement with global issues through more organised activities, their commitment is relatively low. Another recent Eurobarometer survey on 'European Youth' finds that only **3.1 %** participate in NGOs active in the domain of **climate change** or other **environmental issues**, while **4.7 %** do so in the areas of promoting **human rights** or **global development**. In contrast, **11 %** of young people participate in NGOs aimed at improving their **local community.**

## 7.5. Official links:

The **European Commission** page on Youth and the World

The **European Youth Portal >** Think global

The **European Youth Portal >** Travelling

## 7.6. Reports:

Global Europe 2050 - Report published by EC Director-General for Research and Innovation, 2012.

Further publications, studies, reports, statistics and policy documents are available in the Document library.

## 7.7. Research findings:

The Global Europe 2050 report was issued by the European Commission in 2012 with the aim of "looking into the future and working through a number of scenarios to see where the EU might be in 2050"[288].

Among the findings of the report, it is clearly acknowledged that: "key factor for Europe prosperity is indeed its young people: there are close to 100 million in the EU, representing a fifth of its total population"[289].

Moreover, it is evident that the percentage of youth in the EU population will inevitably increase since: "While the EU is ageing rapidly, the number of young people in prime migration age continues to increase in the EU's greater neighbourhood "[290].

Europe is today already dealing with the immediate impact of migration flows." The Global Europe 2050 report underlines how this impact will be even bigger in the medium term since: "First, migrants are much younger than the recipient population. Second, the migrants' birth rate is appreciably (approximately three times) higher than the continent's mean. Third, the immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in segregated neighbourhoods in large cities. Fourth, significant share of these immigrants show little or no sign of second-generation assimilation into their host societies"[291].

The impact of **globalization** on the life-chances of young people, their lifestyles and education is considered today to be a crucial topic when it comes to the analysis of the relationships between youth and the world. This is because globalization affects not only young people's work prospects, but also their identity, sense of citizenship and patterns of political engagement[292], the research reviewed here mainly focuses on issues related to the need for global education to shape global citizenship and the impact of migration on youth participation in the 21$^{st}$ century. It is interesting to initially examine the "paradox" of a new generation growing into new adulthood, in a rapidly changing world[293]. On this issue, Dwyer and Wyn[294] (2004) particularly stress the importance of **consulting youth** and fostering their active participation, as they are often denied an active voice in the shaping of policies or in the evaluation of the study or research findings, according to the principle that: "assumptions adopted at a policy level need to be tested against the actual choices of the participants"[295].

However, it is important to stress that youngsters should be encouraged to participate not only locally, but also at other scales including at a global level. To do so, they need to receive a proper **global education** that bridges local and global issues. Among the interesting initiatives aiming at involving and educating youngsters on global issues are simulation projects as 'Change the World Model-Europe Understanding the EU System and Simulation at the European Commission[296], the Model United Nations[297] and the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum[298].

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[288]    European Commission, *Global Europe 2050*, Foreword, 2012.

[289]    European Commission, *Ibid.*, 2012.

[290]    European Commission, *Ibid.*, 2012.

[291]    European Commission, *Ibid.*, 2012.

[292]   European Commission, *EU Youth Report 2015*, 2015, p. 127.

[293]    Dwyer, P. and Wyn, J., *Youth, education and risk: Facing the future.* London, Routledge, 2004.

[294]    Dwyer, P. and Wyn, J., *Ibid.*, 2004.

[295]    Dwyer, P. and Wyn, J., *Ibid.*, 2004.

[296]    Carpani, Roberto, "2015 simulation at the EC: students' report 'After this experience, we feel not only Italian but also European citizens...'", in *EuropaBook website*. Available Online at: http://www.europabook.eu/news-and-events/EBnews/2015-simulation-ec-students%E2%80%99-report-%E2%80%9Cafter-experience-we-feel-not-only

[297]    See: http://www.nmun.org/

[298]    See: http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2016/01/2016-ecosoc-youth-forum/

By examining real case scenarios, Harris[299] (2012) researches the role that education systems have in citizenship development and whether governments promote specific norms and values through national education systems that can be identified as developing the ideal (world) citizen. Harris[300] (2012) detects a tendency among citizens (from countries with high HDI[301]) of taking the values of democracy and freedom of thought for granted. This causes a loss of a sense of critical thinking among citizens and spreads passive attitudes of letting the decisions come from those who appear to understand how the world works. The **education system** should instead be used by the government **as a socialization tool**, to introduce the values and norms that are necessary for the development of ideal citizenship. In order to build global awareness, steps should be taken at all levels of education to fulfil this goal. Specifically, the research looks at secondary education (high school and gymnasium) as it is at this level that critical thinking skills should be in full development.

Therefore, a truly **global education** should convey 'awareness', 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'values' towards the development of global citizenship[302], which is a controversial concept that is nowadays widely discussed.

It is commonly accepted that higher education plays a crucial role in shaping youths' global education and awareness[303]. According to Hall[304] (2015), **universities** have the power to create **collaborative networks** to generate research. However, he suggests they need to take a more active role in collaborating with civil society to generate powerful knowledge, while they should open up their activities with wider society for much more fruitful interaction. Universities have the duty to prepare their graduates to play a role in building a more equal and fairer world, empowering young world's citizens to work together. New forms of engagement are recommended, like multi-sector partnerships, for instance universities and governments working with industries and NGOs, which may be able to foster cooperation among young people from different continents.

It is also necessary to consider how young Europeans socially construct their **global identity**, through for example cultural consumption and social movements[305]. In the information age, generational identities are highly de-localized, and all youth are caught up to some extent in the 'network society'[306], where they obtain information, communicate and collaborate from global sources.

Furthermore "the changing role of families has an impact on social capital and consequently on the capacity of family life to develop values and moral for the next generation. The gap between older and younger generation will be widened, also due to the difficulties that a continued state of global crisis and instability will create for the new generations to find or maintain decent jobs and create their own adult life."[307]

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[299]     Harris, M., *Governments Role in Education on Citizenship Development: A Comparative Study of the United States and Sweden's Educational Systems*, 2012.

[300]     Harris, M., *Ibid.*, 2012.

[301]     The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income per capita indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A country scores higher HDI when life expectancy at birth is longer, the education period is longer, and the income per capita is higher. Source: Wikipedia The free encyclopedia, Human Development Index, consulted on April 20, 2016. Online at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Development_Index

[302]     Costa, F.M.M.S., *From Policy to Practices: Global Education in Portugal and England. A comparative case-study à propos of an internship at the Development Education Research Centre of the Institute of Education*, University College London, 2015.

[303]     Hall, B., *Big Tent Communique VI. Local identities and global citizenship: A message from Catania and challenges for universities*, 2015 . Online at: http://conference.pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/bt-vi_oct_11.pdf

[304]     Hall, B., *Ibid.*, 2015.

[305]     Nilan, P. and Feixa, C. ed., *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities*, Plural Worlds, London, UK, Routledge, 2006.

[306]     Castells, M., "The Rise of the Network Society", in *The Information Age: economy, society and culture*, vol. 1, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996.

[307]     European Commission, *Global Europe 2050*, 2012.

Hence, young Europeans conduct their lives in a world characterised by plurality and by the hybridization of culture and traditions[308].

In such a pluralistic world, how youth generations relate to Europe is based on their political knowledge, interests and identities[309].

Faas[310] (2007) considers that national political agendas and national education systems greatly impact on youths' relationship towards the European Union and the world. When education systems display a European curricular dimension emphasising Europe as a common bond, young people generally feel positive about it. On the other hand, when governments reinforce national agendas and identities to the detriment of European and global ones, young people tend to marginalise Europe, as their global identity[311].

Indeed, governments and education systems have an impact in shaping youths' global citizenship. In accordance with Harris[312] (2012), here the term '**global citizen**' does not have a political or legal connotations, but it is more in line with the idea of an individual who is part of a global community. The young global citizen needs to be guided through a path of global awareness, which means that he or she needs to develop "a mindful way of being in the world today"[313].

Certainly, a way to improve the mindfulness of being a global citizen[314] is to be engaged in issues as climate change[315], the promotion of human rights or sustainable development. A Eurobarometer survey[316] on young people demonstrates that a large proportion of young people are engaged with sustainable development and climate change at various levels[317]. However, youths' level of engagement varies among different European countries[318], depending on national education and their sensibilisation towards these issues. At the European level, the European Voluntary Services[319] advances numerous projects focused on environmental issues, encouraging young Europeans to build their knowledge on such global issues.

The concept of *glocalization[320]* is linked to the idea of global citizenship and to the influence of the local towards the global and vice versa. *Glocalization* stems from the observation that all global change starts with local action, and the recognition that there is always an underlining connection between local and global processes. The notion of *glocalization* thus draws attention to the extent to which the local is constitutive of the global, and the degree to which the relationship between localities and the global is dialectical rather than unidirectional (Bauman, 1998; Robertson, 1995)[321].

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[308]    Nilan, P. and Feixa, C. ed., *Ibid*, 2006.

[309]    Faas, Daniel, "Youth, Europe and the Nation: The Political Knowledge, Interests and Identities of the New Generation of European Youth", in *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 10, issue 2, 2007. Available online at: http://edepositireland.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/22299/Youth%20Europe%20and%20the%20Nation%20_TARA_September%202008_Faas_.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y%20which%20I%20reviewed

[310]    Faas, D., *Ibid*., 2007.

[311]    Faas, D., *Ibid*., 2007.

[312]    Harris, Matthew, "Governments Role in Education on Citizenship Development", M*aster thesis in International and European Relations*, Linkopings University, 2012.

[313]    Gibson, K.L. et.al. "Developing Global Awareness and Responsible World Citizenship with Global Learning", *Roeper Review The Reoper Institute*, 2008.

[314]    Gibson, K.L. et.al., *Ibid*., 2008.

[315]    European Commission, *2012 EU Youth Report*, Belgium, 2012, p. 267.

[316]    Flash Eurobarometer of the European Parliament (EP EB395) on 'European Youth in 2014', 2014.

[317]    European Commission, *2015 EU Youth Report*, Belgium, 2015, p. 270.

[318]    European Commission, *Ibid*., 2012.

[319]    See : https://europa.eu/youth/evs20_en

[320]    Sklad, M., Friedman, J., Park, E. and Oomen, B., 'Going Glocal': a qualitative and quantitative analysis of global citizenship education at a Dutch liberal arts and sciences college", in *Higher Education*, 2015, pp.1-18.

[321]    Bauman, Z., *Globalization. The Human Consequences*, NY, Columbia University Press, 1998; and Robertson, R. "Glocalization: Time-Space and HomogeneityHeterogeneity", in *Global Modernities*, 1995.

It follows that to empower the new global citizens, it is important to explore their participation in local communities, and to investigate enablers as well as barriers to youth participation at local level.

Wood[322] (2013) found that young people in New Zealand do not engage enough in traditional civic and political organisations. This is despite the fact they are concerned about issues relating to them. The young people feel they have little influence over local political actions and community decision making. Young people experience **social membership** through leisure, sport, culture and non-structured activities rather than via traditional civic and political associations. Therefore, it emerges that young citizens prefer being engaged in informal activities, enabling them to relate to other young people. This observation may inspire new patterns of participation through social, leisure and cultural activities.

Concerning the **barriers to integration** and to global participation, Hébert[323] (2016) carried out an analysis of the linkages between multiculturalism and citizenship in three countries exhibiting different approaches and styles towards youth integration: Australia, Canada and France. He suggests:

"The barriers to integration are similar across the three countries and deal with issues of equality of opportunity, equality of treatment and equality of outcome, as experienced in educational institutions, settlement services, the workforce and daily life"[324].

Religious barriers do exist, which can sometimes lead to faith-based **radicalization**. as for Concerning Islam. Bizina and Gray[325] (2014) consider youth radicalization as a salient global topic. The authors observe that a comprehensive and inclusive approach, involving community engagement and the building of trust between different social actors and local population is crucial to counter the problem of radicalization.

Beyond religious barriers, global youth are also hampered by racial barriers, leading to racial preferences and to the exclusion of certain groups of people.

Racial and religious barriers are more and more evident due to the increasing flux of migration (Haider, 2015)[326].

**Global migration** is a marked characteristic of contemporary young citizens. Chase and Allsop[327] (2013) analysis of youth migration in Europe highlights that young people are more likely than adults to migrate irregularly or to follow patterns of adult migration, with the aim of improving life opportunities (See also: EU Fundamental Rights Agency 2010; Kanics et al., 2010)[328].

Chase and Allsop (2013) record several failures in the alternative strategies supposed to respond to the needs of migrant young people. These failures have substantial consequences for both independent migrant youth and Europe as a whole.

Their paper identifies and critically examines three assumptions upon which the European policy response to independent youth migration is based on three features:

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[322]    Wood, "Citizenship and participation of young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand: a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Policy", Massey University, Palmerston North, Aotearoa/New Zealand (Doctoral dissertation), 2013.

[323]    Hébert, Yvonne, *Youth in Plural Cities, Multiculturalism and Citizenship: Policy Challenges and Opportunities*. Foro de Educación, 14(20), 2016, pp.199-230.

[324]    Hébert, Yvonne, Ibid., 2016, p. 207.

[325]    Bizina, M. and Gray, D.H., "Radicalization of Youth as a Growing Concern for Counter-Terrorism Policy", *Global Security Studies*, 5(1), 2014, pp.72-79.

[326]    Haider, H., *Radicalisation of diaspora communities, i*n *GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1187*, Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2015, Online at: http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq1187.pdf.

[327]    Chase, E. and Allsopp, J., '*Future citizens of the world'?. The Contested Futures of Independent Young Migrants in Europe*, 2013.

[328]    FRA European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Annual Report. Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2010, Luxembourg, Publication Office of the European Union, 2011; Kanics, J., Senovilla Hernandez, D. and Touzenis, K. (eds.) Migrating alone: unaccompanied and separated children's migration to Europe, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2010.

1) Young migrants will comply with institutional processes in pursuit of their 'best interests';
2) Returning young people (to countries of origin or previous residence) is a 'durable solution'; and
3) Independent young people 'belong' in their countries of origin.

According to the authors a deep review of these assumptions is needed to reduce the dissonance between policy intentions and the lived experiences of young migrants.

# 8. Creativity and culture

The EU supports **young people's creativity** and **innovation** through access to and participation in culture.

## 8.1. Which are the EU's objectives?

In particular the EU Youth Strategy aims to:

- Support the **development of creativity** among young people;
- Increase **access to culture** and creative tools;
- Make **new technologies** available to empower young people's creativity and innovation, and boost interest in culture, the arts and science;
- Provide access to places where young people can develop their creativity and interests;
- Facilitate **long-term synergies between policies and programmes** in culture, education, health, social inclusion, media, employment and youth to promote creativity and innovation;
- Promote **specialised training** in culture, new media and intercultural skills for youth workers;
- Promote **partnerships** between the cultural and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers;
- Facilitate and support **young people's talent** and entrepreneurial skills;
- Promote **knowledge** about culture and cultural heritage.

## 8.2. Main EU Programmes and tools:

The Commission supports these objectives through its **funding programmes**, **policies** and **studies**:

1. Creative Europe, which is the European Commission's framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors. The programme will support:

- Culture sector initiatives, such as those promoting cross-border cooperation, platforms, networking, and literary translation;
- Audiovisual sector initiatives, such as those promoting the development, distribution, or access to audiovisual works;
- A cross-sectoral strand, including a Guarantee Facility and transnational policy cooperation.

2. Erasmus+ supports creativity and innovation in youth projects.

## 8.3. EU Youth Indicators:

The Youth Monitor takes into account **six indicators** in order to gain information on /capture the situation of young people in Europe in the field of **Creativity & Culture** and to evaluate overall progress towards the objectives of the **EU Youth Strategy**:

- Participation in amateur artistic activities
- Participation in cultural activities
- Participation in sport clubs
- Participation in leisure time or youth organisations
- Participation in cultural organisations
- Young people learning at least two foreign languages

## 8.4. The state of European young people in 2015:

Results from two Eurobarometer surveys, conducted in 2011 and 2014 respectively, shed light on the levels of and variations in young people's participation in various cultural activities. The main trend that emerges is a **general decline** in the extent to which young Europeans have taken part in these experiences over the three years in question. On average, the strongest decline was registered in the proportion of young people going to the theatre, dance performance or opera (-14 %), followed by going to the cinema and concerts (-9 %) and visiting historical monuments, museums and galleries (-6 %).

The consistent drop in figures for all indicators in the EU in general, and in several Member States in particular, hints at the existence of general underlying causes for the decline in the numbers of young Europeans becoming involved in cultural activities. It seems likely that the economic crisis affecting the European continent over recent years, which has exacted a high economic and social price in several countries, has played a part.

## 8.5. Official links:

The **European Commission** page on Creativity and Culture

The **European Commission** > Programmes > Creative Europe

The **European Youth Portal >** Culture & Creativity

## 8.6. Main policy documents:

Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people - 11.05.2012.

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on access of young people to culture - 19.11.2010.

Further documents are available in the Document library.

## 8.7. Research findings:

The European Parliament and the Council of the EU, on December 2006 stated: "As globalisation continuesto confront the European Union with new challenges, each citizen will need a wide range of key competences to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world."[329]

In the same document those key competencies stated above were defined in details. Among them was: "Cultural awareness and expression". Defined as follows: "Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts."

The **definition** of creativity and culture as a key competence is derived from the belief that: "A solid understanding of one's own culture and a sense of identity can be the basis for an open attitude towards and respect for diversity of cultural expression. A positive attitude also covers creativity, and the willingness to cultivate aesthetic capacity through artistic self-expression and participation in cultural life."[330]

Following this rationale: "Creativity and culture" has been always considered among the key competences to be promoted for young Europeans. To guarantee consistent development of the creative sector in Europe, the European Commission launched in 2007 the "Culture" Programme, aimed at "Supporting the development of creativity among young people" and "Increasing access to culture and creative tools". The programme lasted until 2013 and was then reformed under the current "Creative Europe" (2014 – 2020) Action.

The dramatic evolution of the creativity of young Europeans' creativity is taken place through the relatively recent elimination of barriers to mobility, the strengthening of civil society and the diffusion and use of improved tools of communication[331]. At the same time, there is an emerging movement willing to eschew all **notions of culture** as fixed and unchanging, while combating persisting stereotypes. This movement has the aim to recognize **cultural identities** as multiple and fragmented constructions[332].

European creativity is fuelled by ongoing efforts to improve young Europeans' **multilingualism**. As a matter of fact, the ability to communicate in other languages is said to be essential for Europeans to develop a broader international outlook[333]. Thus, the development of a strategy for culture in EU external relations took the area of language and multilingualism into account, for example the key EU messages are made available in different languages[334]. At the same time, the opportunity to easily and openly cross the borders of EU States, profiting from opportunities such as Erasmus+[335], EVS[336] or youth exchanges is nurturing new generations of European citizens who are experiencing studies, jobs and lives in countries different from their own.

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[329]    European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning*, Official Journal of the European Union, 2006/962/EC, 30 December 2006.

[330]    European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, *Ibid.*, 2006.

[331]    Isar, Yudhishthir Ray, *Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU External Relations'. Engaging the World : Towards Global Cultural Citizenship*, European Union, 2014.

[332]    Isar, *Ivi*, 2014, p. 108.

[333]    Carter, B. and Sealey, A., 2015. Realist social theory and multilingualism in Europe. European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3(1), pp.1-19.

[334]    Isar, *Ivi*, 2014, p. 117.  Further policy recommendations and examples of good practice regarding multilingualism have recently been gathered through the Language Rich Europe project (http://www.language-rich.eu/ home/welcome.html).

[335]    See : http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/moving_en.htm

[336]    See : http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/mobility/european-voluntary-service_en.htm

Moreover, it is agreed that young Europeans should be able to communicate with each other, sharing values, expertise and acquired experiences[337]. When it comes to new communication tools, the **Internet and social media** play a crucial role. New media represents a consolidated area where young people are able to express their creativity and make their culture flourish. Policy-makers and the public are paying more and more attention on the development of on-line cultural relationships and social learning tools[338] specifically addressed to youths who are part of the so-called "digital generation"[339].

Studies show that the more children use the internet, the high levels of digital skills they gain, providing them with access to online benefits and opportunities. Among the set of opportunities offered by interned and social media, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) highlights that 45% of young Europeans use **social media to find a job**, while 60% use them at work to improve their abilities[340].

However, it should be questioned how significant **online communication** might be for the formation and expression of young people's identity and relationships[341]. Several projects inspired by Turkle's (1995) analysis of a «culture of simulation» pursue the argument that children use computers to experiment with themes of sexuality, politics and selfhood (e.g. Stald, 1998; Stern, 2002). Livingston and Bovill (2001)[342] suggest that the Internet offers a comparatively safe yet private place for children and teenagers to experiment with identity. What is less clear is how creative, or subversive, such communication may be. So, it should be kept in mind that these new "digital generations" are not invulnerable and risks-free.

A clue to containing or overcoming some of the **risks** emerging from Information and Communication Technology (ICT) might be the understanding of the complexity of people's media surroundings. However, this understanding is getting harder and harder to assess. To make it easier, Livingston, Haddon and Gorzig (2012)[343] focused on the risks and opportunities that young people are facing online. Insofar, the authors have dealt with topics as communication, identity, participation, exclusion and undesired contact[344], and they have studied means able to face and cope with aggressive online elements, such as **cyber-bullying**.[345]

However, **accessing the Internet**'s advantages depends on several factors, including age, gender and socio-economic status as well as the parents' willingness to support them. Beyond parents' role, the role of schools and of national authorities in providing education and regulation is also very relevant .[346]

Regarding **young Europeans' taste for cultural consumption**, a survey[347] conducted in 28 European countries, in 2013, shows that it is quite segmented across the continent, with some social boundaries and barriers. The survey recorded a decrease in European citizens participation to culture on most of

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[337]    Zeldin, S., Camino, L. and Calvert, M., 2012. Toward an understanding of youth in community governance: Policy priorities and research directions.*Análise Psicológica*, *25*(1), pp.77-95.

[338]    Isar, *Ivi*, 2014, p. 130.

[339]    Julie Frechette and Rob Williams (eds.), *Media Education for a Digital Generation*, NY, Routledge, 2016.

[340]    Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), *Social media improve career prospects for young Europeans*, 2016.

[341]    Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill, *Children and their changing media environment: a European comparative study*, 2001; and Porfilio, B., Gardner, L.M. and Roychoudhury, D., Ending the'War Against Youth:'Social Media and Hip-Hop Culture as Sites of Resistance, Transformation and (Re) Conceptualization. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, *11*(4), 2013, p. 88. http://jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/11-4-05.pdf

[342]    Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill , *Ivi*, 2001.

[343]    Sonia  M. Livingstone, Leslie Haddon, Anke Gorzig, "Children, risk and safety on the internet: research and policy challenges in comparative perspective", in *Policy Press*, 2012.

[344]    Sonia Livingstone, "Children's Use of the Internet: Reflections on the Emerging Research Agenda", *Reflections on the Emerging Research Agenda*, UK, 2003.

[345]    Sonia  M. Livingstone, Leslie Haddon, Anke Gorzig, *Ivi*, 2012.

[346]    EU Kids Online, *Findings, Methods, Recommendations*, 2014.

[347]    Parvu, O., "Consumption and Participation to Culture among the European Youth", in *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research*, Vol. 1, No.1, May-August 2014.

dimensions and indicators[348]. Given the post-modern lifestyle, cultural consumption has many rivals when it comes to budgeting time, making it a very versatile consumption field.[349]

Concerning the information seeking and news consumption of youngsters, a recent scientific article[350] investigated the decentralisation of technologies of watching or reading news and a repositioning of the relationships between political news seeking, trust in journalism, meaning-making and socio-economic status within a framework of local experiences of politics and civic life. Crucially, the article shed light on the question of how groups of excluded youth conceptualise their own status in relation to the state, the nation and news media, and their critical comments about representation. The numbers involved remain, however, relatively low. In 2015, only 14 percent of young people were self-employed.[351]Some of the key reasons that explain this current situation include the fact that there is a lack of awareness about entrepreneurial activities in the many young people's families and overall communities, while often education and training programs do not have enough initiatives to foster entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.

There are a very wide range of "sectors" and activities that can be considered as "creative". Hence, **culture and creativity** might be considered **as an economic and social strategic sector** due to its resilience to economic crisis, in particular for young people who access their first employment[352]. In relative terms, Culture and Creative Sectors maintained the rate on contribution to total GDP at European Union, but ICT's linked to those sectors have grown up at an average of 15% during the first decade of the twentieth century. This data has been confirmed for employment and self-employment among young people who work in the cultural and creative sectors face a better situation, especially as regards the self- employed in the "Information and communication" sector but also those in the "Arts, entertainment and recreation" sector. During the period 2008-2012 self-employment rates decreased about 5%, whereas self-employment in those two sectors increased betweeen 5% (arts) and 10% (information).

In terms of young Europeans' approaches to creativity, they are starting to delve into **entrepreneurship**, by launching their own businesses and becoming self-employed[353]. The numbers involved remain, however, relatively low. In 2015, only 14 percent of young people were self-employed[354]. Some of the key reasons that explain this current situation include the fact that there is a lack of awareness about entrepreneurial activities in many young people's families and overall communities, while often education and training programs do not have enough initiatives to foster entrepreneurial attitudes and skills[355]. At the same time, young people lack the human, financial and social capital needed to start and successfully run their own businesses, which is usually acquired in time and through previous work and entrepreneurial experience.

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[348]     Such as: watching or listen to a cultural program on TV or on the radio at least once, visiting a historical monument or site at least once, visiting a museum or a gallery, being to a concert or to theatre, visiting a public library, etc. in Parvu, O., *Ibid.*, 2014, p. 113.

[349]     Virtanen, T., *Dimensions of Taste for Cultural Consumption – A Cross-Cultural Study on Young Europeans*, Finnish Graduate School of Marketing, Finland, 2005. Online at: http://neumann.hec.ca/aimac2005/PDF_Text/Virtanen_Taru.pdf

[350]     Banaji, S. and Cammaerts, B., "Citizens of Nowhere Land: Youth and news consumption in Europe", *Journalism Studies*, 16(1), 2015, pp.115-132.

[351]     Hatfield, Izzie, *Self-Employment in Europe Report*, London, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), January 2015. Online at: http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/self-employment-Europe_Jan2015.pdf?noredirect=1

[352]     Stumpo, G. and Manchin, R. *The resilience of employment in the Culture and Creative Sectors (CCSs) during the crisis*, EENC Report, 2015.

[353]     Louw, A.V., 2015. *The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment: Results of the expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015*, Brussels, European Commission.

[354]     Hatfield, Izzie, *Self-Employment in Europe Report*, London, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), January 2015. Online at: http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/self-employment-Europe_Jan2015.pdf?noredirect=1

[355]     European Commission, *Policy Brief on Youth Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial Activities in Europe*, Luxembourg, 2012. Online at: https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/Youth%20entrepreneurship%20policy%20brief%20EN_FINAL.pdf

Beyond that, businesses that are initiated with more financial resources are more likely to succeed.[356] Young people are disadvantaged not only because they have low personal savings, but also because they have difficulty in accessing external finances, since banks apply a set of stringent parameters in assessing loan proposals. Finally, there might be market barriers as well, with customers being sceptical about the reliability of their produces and services, discriminating them precisely because of their youth.

The European Youth Forum[357] has called for the creation of an **environment that supports youth entrepreneurship** at the European level, with institutions supplying information about the nature of the labour market, the functioning of welfare and healthcare systems as well as any additional entrepreneurship-related knowledge that is required to set up a business. At the same time, formal education could play a fundamental role in encouraging entrepeneurship. They argue that schools should provide time, space and recognition for youth-led initiatives that may be entrepreneurial projects setting the stage for future entrepreneurship initiatives[358]. This is being backed by the development of smart specialisation initiatives encouraged under regional policy[359]

As suggested by the EU Strategy for Youth, culture stimulates creativity, and entrepreneurship education should be viewed as a means to promote economic growth and new jobs[360], as well as a source of skills, civic participation, autonomy and self-esteem. The European Expert Network on Culture[361] underlined the diverse fields of the **creative industries**: cultural sites, traditional cultural expression, performing arts, new media, creative services, design, publishing and printed media, visual arts, and audiovisuals.

Culture and creativity should not only be considered from an economic point of view. It is also important to recognise its **influence on citizens' lifestyle and behaviors**, from a cultural and social perspective (cultural consumption, sharing the experiences of cultural and creative goods, etc). Social psychology research[362] confirms the change of oriented aspirations among youth, linking tolerance and creativity by the means of culture.[363] Since their purposes involve an imagined vision of creating a world different than what currently exists, rather than a perceived vision of fitting in to what exists now, the ability to autonomously self-select or self-design that purpose becomes an important motivator for selecting subsequent intermediate goals, opportunities, and environments to sustain that purpose.

Another research trend in youth creativity is centered in the expression of youth culture and creativity in the urban space and public realm.[364] There are nascent forms of collective providing insight into the intersection and interaction between new communications media and changing uses of physical urban spaces, for example, through flash mobs, graffiti and others new forms of sociability that should be considered.

Morch (2013)[365] examines the topic of culture and creativity from the viewpoint of social and cultural integration. In particular, he considers the increasing flux of youth migrants. Indeed, "ethnic minority youth or migrant youth are in more ways caught in a conflict between social integration and culture, which

[356] European Commission, *Ibid.*, Luxembourg, 2012. Online at: https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/Youth%20entrepreneurship%20policy%20brief%20EN_FINAL.pdf
[357] European Youth Forum, *European Youth Forum Position Paper on Youth Entreneurship*, Portugal, 17-20 November 2011. Online at: http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/0451-11_YFJ_PP_Youth_Entrepreneurship-FINAL1.pdf
[358] European Youth Forum, *Ibid.*, Portugal, 17-20 November 2011.
[359] McCann, P. and Ortega-Argilés, R., 2016. Smart specialisation, entrepreneurship and SMEs: issues and challenges for a results-oriented EU regional policy. *Small Business Economics*, *46*(4), pp.537-552.
[360] Adamoniene, R. and Astromskiene, A., "Connection of youth entrepreneurial activity and value principles", *Viesoji Politika ir Administravimas*, *12*(3), 2013. Online at: http://www.eejournal.ktu.lt/index.php/PPA/article/viewFile/5295/2891
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influences the understanding of the relation between society, culture and individual"[366]. **Culture** may be regarded **as a tool that informs the socialisation process** between the individual and society or as intimately connected to individual identity[367].

Aidi (2014)[368] analysed the ways in which globalized forms of music are emerging from and producing various forms of community and collective protest. This is based on the premise that "today music is the realm where Muslim diaspora **consciousness and identity** politics are most poignantly being debated and expressed"[369]. Aidi's work deals with Muslim youth cultures in relation with the world Muslims are living in, where there are state projects of militarization, securitization, surveillance as well as the influence of right-wing Islamist movements[370]. A further research orientation is the consideration of **creativity and culture as an instrument for informal lifelong learning**[371]. Youth participation in **digital culture** is not only generating profound changes in our society, specially in the ways of creating and sharing knowledge, but also in personality development and education processes out of the conventional frameworks (family and school). Margaryan et al. (2011)[372] investigated the extent and nature of youngsters' use of digital technologies for learning and socializing, showing that there are no big differences in either quantitative and qualitative terms between their use of digital technologies in formal and informal learning.

In conclusion, culture and creativity are increasingly being called upon to be a transverse element of youth policies, integrating various fields of action in the EU young strategy. This sector has several advantages, including its growing links with the use of digital technologies, their impact on education and training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities among young people, opportunities for social interaction, communication and participation. Within the diversity of cultural actions there are many examples of opportunities that arise for creativity and entrepreneurship.

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# Main outcomes and recommendations

The last version of the EU Youth Report, released in 2015, whose main findings were resumed in the present document, displays rather contradictory statistics on the present condition of young Europeans.

On a side the report finds that European programmes and initiatives for youth are succeeding in fostering the attainment of high level of education for young Europeans, as well as promoting a positive attitude of the target population towards international mobility and exchanges. On the other side the report finds that the improved level of education among young Europeans do not automatically lead to better working opportunities. On the contrary the youth unemployment rate, including long-term unemployment, continued to rise in EU since the start of the actual economic and financial crisis in 2008.

More in details one concern seems to be commonly recognized throughout Europe: the difficulty for youngsters to deal with their transition from education to the workplace. The main cause being identified in the mismatch between the skills that young people acquire at school and the ones demanded by the labor market.

This issue leads to very negative, sometimes even dramatic, consequences in almost all the eight areas identified by the European Commission as "strategic" for youth empowerment.

Intuitively the economic crisis and the subsequent recession have a deeply negative impact on young people in terms of poverty and social exclusion. Surveys and statistics show that young Europeans often feel "marginalized" or "excluded" from economic and social life. The feeling of uncertainty towards their employability and consequently towards their future drastically reduces the number of youngsters willing to leave their parental house. Hence reducing their capacity to become independent and exacerbating even more their social exclusion. The feeling of "being in need" often leads the individual to focus on his self-empowerment rather than being concerned by global issues.
The feeling of exclusion bringing more and more youngsters into self and society-disruptive behaviors, often labeled as "radicalization".

For the area of "Health and well being" young Europeans are described as being "prone to risk behaviors": such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, physical inactivity and unsafe sexual practices. This attitude being "positively influenced by deprivation and social exclusion", among other causes.

As for the topic of youth participation: it is evident that an increasing perception of the deterioration of their own condition and future perspectives lead young Europeans to be less confident in society, thus less engaged in socio-political activities. However the research shows that indicators of voting and engagement in political parties are no longer adequate measures of youth participation, especially since the spread of online discussions and of new Internet media. Hence it seems more correct to state that young people "participate differently" nowadays and this is partly linked to a widespread loss of confidence towards traditional ways of participation.

The Youth report shows that in 2014 one European out of four got engaged in voluntary activities and just 15% of the volunteers have received a certificate or diploma formally recognizing their experience.
It seems evident that the widespread perception of mistrust towards the society does not foster youth participation in voluntary activities.  This negative trend is probably even worsened by the generally missing formal recognition of such activities. In general it seems that young Europeans do not perceive the participation in voluntary activities as a priority for their personal and/or professional growth. As a consequence they do not benefit from the positive aspects that voluntary activities may bring: such us

discouraging young people from leaving school prematurely, improving their self-confidence and sense of social well-being.

Tackling youth and long term unemployment is nowadays considered an absolute priority and a common objective for all labor market policies across the European Union.

However a standard solution, applicable to the entire EU, has not yet been identified since the youth unemployment rate (and its consequences) varies along Europe in relation to specific geographic, economic and/or social factors. Even the attitudes and behaviors of individuals affect their capacity of undertaking virtuous paths of self-empowerment.

Nevertheless a common plea emerges from all the papers and report analyzed: the necessity to directly engage young people in developing and implementing the policies and initiatives targeted to themselves.

This approach is indeed thought to be successful because of its capacity to acknowledge the needs of the target group – and within the general target of "Young Europeans" the needs of different sub groups - while it fights stereotypes and leads to a better understanding of the youth self-perceived priorities and behaviors.

However, as said the attitude of young Europeans towards society is nowadays characterized by widespread mistrust: hence fostering their active participation is a challenge by itself.

In this sense researchers and educationalists encourage European a different – more open – approach in European youth educational policies. In particular it is strongly encouraged the adoption of modules of formal and/or non formal education aimed at developing the "social dimension" of learners, in other words: "people's sense of their place in the world, helping to bestow 'citizenship'"[373].

In particular the promotion of youth work is viewed as a possible solution to youth unemployment: since youth engagement in organizations and initiatives with social purposes might feed their sense of social belonging and foster the development of their "soft skills", social attitudes and connections, leading to an increase of their employability.

On the same line an analysis of good practices and common approaches in youth work encourages the development of new personalized approaches to youth education. It demonstrates that the principles of voluntary participation, youth-centeredness and mutual respect are appealing for young people and might strongly contribute to their transition from education to employment.

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# Sitography

European Commission YOUTH: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

European Commission Youth Montor: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/index_en.htm

### Official Links for Education and Training:

European Commission Education & Traininghttp://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

The **European Commission** page on Education and Training: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

The **European Commission DG** for Education and Culture:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm

The **European Parliament Committee** for Education and Culture:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/home.html

The **European Youth Portal >** Learning :

http://europa.eu/youth/EU/employment-and-entrepreneurship/jobs_en

### Official Links for Employment and Entrepreneurship:

The **European Commission DG** for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion:

http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp

The **European Commission DG** for Enterprise and Industry:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/index_en.htm

The **European Youth Portal >** Working :

http://europa.eu/youth/EU/employment-and-entrepreneurship/jobs_en

### Official Links for Health and Well-being:

The **European Commission > DG** Health and Food Safety > Public Health :

http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm

**European Commission** > Sport :

http://ec.europa.eu/sport/index_en.htm

### Official Links for Participation in civil society:

The **European Commission** page on Participation in civil society :

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/civil_society_en.htm

The **European Youth Portal >** Have your say :

http://europa.eu/youth/EU/employment-and-entrepreneurship/jobs_en

### Official Links for Voluntary Activities

The **European Commission** page on Voluntary activities :

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/voluntary_en.htm

The **European Youth Portal >** Volunteering :

https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en

The **European Commission** page on **Erasmus+** > European Voluntary Service :

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/young-people/european-

voluntary-service_en

Official Links for Social Inclusion

The **SALTO-YOUTH** Inclusion Resource Centre website:

https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/aboutinclusion/

The **SALTO-YOUTH** Cultural Diversity website :

https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/cultural-diversity/

Official Links for Youth and the World

The **European Commission** page on Youth and the World:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/world_en.htm

The **European Youth Portal >** Think global :

https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en

The **European Youth Portal >** Travelling :

https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en

Official Links for Creativity and Culture

The **European Commission** page on Creativity and Culture :

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/creativity_culture_en.htm

The **European Commission** > Programmes > Creative Europe :

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/

The **European Youth Portal >** Culture & Creativity :

https://europa.eu/youth/EU/culture-and-creativity/arts-and-entertainment_en