

1. What do Member States consider to be the key priorities for the future EU cooperation in the area of youth policy?

As already pointed out in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention which was held in April 2015 in Brussels, we are in favor of developing an ‘European Agenda for Youth Work’ because we are convinced that Europe should definitely continue to support the development of youth work and to strengthen civil society organizations.

Strengthening youth and promoting their autonomy and critical thinking are the main concerns of youth work. In addition, youth work and non-formal learning evolve constantly and reach many young people in an out-of-school context, including the disadvantaged ones. They should therefore continue to be promoted and supported in a European context.

More and systematic involvement of and listening to (especially young) citizens is more than ever necessary to strengthen our democracy and the European project. The development of youth policies at a local, regional and national level, in accordance with the needs and realities of young people at these levels, and with concrete actions and results, is essential to answer the challenges that young people face. Involvement of young people and youth organizations in these different policy- and decision-making levels is also essential to ensure the quality of such policies. Due to the fact that these challenges and common interests concern all areas, youth policies should be coordinated in a cross-sectorial approach and therefore install a close cooperation with other competences (employment, social care, formal education, environment...).

Furthermore, youth organizations youth workers, whether on a voluntary or full-time basis, exercise a responsible office and must receive the necessary support from the public sector in order to be able to meet the young person in their environment.

In addition, we should put a stronger focus on youth exchanges; strengthen international youth initiatives; support data bases and actors concerning youth research (e.g. youth wiki); and foresee a dedicated budget for youth work and youth organizations’ development in general and the concept of Smart Youth Work.

In order to do so, we have to further invest in the expertise of a (youth-related) database of experts as the current expert pool ([Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action – ‘RAY network’](#)) is in our opinion not sufficient.

Joint European efforts are best reflected in a common European strategy paper - a common European youth strategy. The actual implementation of the strategy would then be designed and financed through youth programs as for example Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps and its successor programs. Both programs (E+ and ESC) are interlinked and it might be a good idea to put them together in one programme and to synchronize the maturity of the strategy and the programs. A

clear overarching general objective (active citizenship of young people in Europe) in the field of Youth and some well-focused specific objectives supporting the overarching objective are needed.

Commissioner Tibor Navracsics received signed a position paper on the successor programme of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps (beyond 2020), which was signed by the three Belgian youth ministers.

2. How can the inputs from the Structured Dialogue (the 11 Youth Goals), as well as input from other stakeholders, contribute to these priorities?

The time-honoured adage of "public participation without insight, leads to judgment without prospects" continues to take hold. We have to invest even more and better in a qualitative participation process as a solid foundation for the "structured dialogue". This dialogue supplemented with other forms of participation must also enable us to make better environmental analyses before starting concrete policy preparations.

Furthermore, the inputs given through the Structured Dialogue contribute to a better vision of the values and societal changes wished by young people and help Member States not only in the development of youth policies, but in the development of all the areas young people feel concerned with.

Such an approach, based on the real and effective participation and expression of all young people (not only the ones who are directly involved in politics), and developed on local, regional, national and EU level, could diminish the actual pressure put on young people to be more and more competent, competitive, innovative and efficient in the labour market. Moreover, such an approach could consider a sustainable development of the society.

The 11 Youth Goals must therefore have a close link with the European Youth Strategy, which must make sure to involve young people's aspirations for their future.