

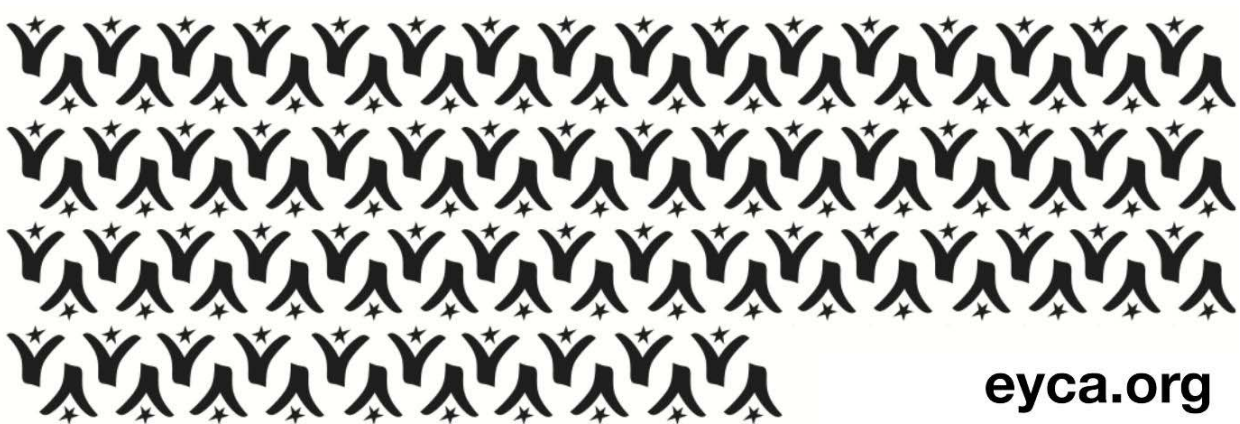


SEMINAR

From youth policies to good practices: the European Youth Card as a tool to promote access to social rights for all young people

22 – 24 April 2018
Budva, Montenegro

REPORT



Context:

The Council of Europe is one of the leading institutions in promoting inclusive, human-rights based youth policies. With legislative framework such as the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and The European Social Charter, citizens and governments have important mechanisms at their disposal.

However, when it comes to vulnerable population groups, especially young people, their access to civic, social and economic rights is particularly important. A series of recent Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers highlight the importance of youth work and services to ensure young people have access to their social and economic rights, are correctly informed and aware of the instruments they can use:

- youth work - CM/Rec(2017)4,
- young people access to rights - CM/Rec(2016)7
- access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights - CM/Rec(2015)3

The seminar aimed at **identifying possibilities of using the European Youth Card as a tool to reach out to the most vulnerable young persons and to ensure that they have access to information that defends their social rights.**

The guests attending this seminar represented a variety of stakeholders at local, national and international levels: municipality and national ministers for youth affairs, youth workers at local level, young leaders or officials of international/intergovernmental organisations.

Day 1 of the seminar

On the first day, guests had the chance to listen to presentations from both keynote speakers and representatives of EYCA member organisations. The day was opened by Mr. Nikola Jankovic, the Minister of Sports of Montenegro who expressed a warm welcome for guests and the importance of hosting this event in Montenegro.

An official welcome was also given by Ms. Natalja Turenne, on behalf of the Council of Europe. She explained the work and role of the institution and the importance of the Partial Agreement through the Youth Card for promoting mobility, human rights education and active citizenship among young people.

The EYCA director, Mr. Manel Sanchez, gave an official welcome and thanked the Ministry of Sports from Montenegro for hosting the event. He also delivered a detailed presentation about EYCA and the various ways in which the youth card contributes to implementing public policies dedicated to youth. The full presentation can be found here: <https://goo.gl/Y5sfBC>

Keynote speakers

The first keynote speaker was Mrs. Zdeňka Mašková, representing the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic. Her presentation focused on showcasing models of good practices in youth policy development in the Czech Republic with social and economic rights of young people at its core. In her presentation she stressed the importance of access to rights and opportunities, especially for young people from disadvantaged areas, as in many cases they are very excluded from the processes. She also shared what she and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic have done as specific processes and activities to deal with this challenge. The presentation 'A rights-based approach in national youth policy' can be found here: <https://goo.gl/DdEqQr>

Considering the particular social and political context of the Western Balkans and the place where the event took place, Mr. Nenand Koprivica – Director General of the Youth Directorate and Board member of [Regional Youth Cooperation Office](#) - RYCO offered a regional perspective of the youth affairs and political cooperation. He mentioned that RYCO was established in 2016 as part of the Berlin process, based on the experiences from the Franco-German Youth Office, with the purpose of increasing

reconciliation, youth mobility in the Western Balkans and foster intercultural dialogue among young people. RYCO is high on the political agenda when it comes to the Western Balkan countries' EU integration and it has been recognised as one of the successful results of political cooperation in the region. Moreover, it's a unique model for the region which is co-managed and functions as a foundation exclusively for youth.

More information about his presentation can be found here: <http://www.rycowb.org/>

In line with the theme of the seminar 'access to social rights for young people', Mr. Emil Krstanovski from the International Labour Organisation delivered a presentation related to:

- the situation of youth employment in the Western Balkan region;
- the programmes and policies that advance social rights of young people and decent working conditions;
- the action of the international organisations (in particular ILO) to foster social inclusion and promote access to social and economic rights.

His full presentation is available here: <https://goo.gl/4ijfWr>

The voice of young people was represented by Mr. Matej Manevski – from the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. He presented the three recently adopted recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the instruments that youth organisations and public bodies have in order to make sure they are implemented at national level:

- youth work recommendation - CM/Rec(2017)4,
- young people access to rights recommendation - CM/Rec(2016)7
- recommendation on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights - CM/Rec(2015)3

His full presentation can be found here: <https://goo.gl/rznAZF>

The afternoon of the first day was split between presentations of good practices from EYCA member organisations and a panel discussion framing the state of youth in the Western Balkan region. The good practices from EYCA members were offered by:

- National Youth Card Association – Bulgaria: The role of youth card in fostering youth participation;
- Youth Act Centre – Albania: The role of Youth Card in promoting tolerance and human rights, combating discrimination and implementing youth projects;
- CJP - The Netherlands: The role of Youth Card in offering mobility opportunities for young people in Vocational Education and Training schools;
- vInspired - England, UK: The role of Youth Card in promoting sustainable volunteering programmes.

All presentations from EYCA member organisations can be found here: <https://goo.gl/2yRz8k>

The panel discussion framed the regional context in which young people grow and develop as citizens and community change makers. The panellists represented national public bodies – the Ministry of Sports of Montenegro, international organisations which develop programmes to foster social inclusion: UNICEF (Montenegro office), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Mission to Montenegro) as well as youth representatives – the Union of High school Students. They presented their programmes and policies for social inclusion and active participation of young people, and the way various stakeholders can work together to advance sustainable policies dedicated to youth.

The day ended with a visit to the local youth centre in Budva, where participants had the chance to learn more about local realities and how youth work was implemented at a grass-roots level in Montenegro. A full photo gallery can be found here: <https://goo.gl/sgo2cC>

Day 2 of the seminar

The second day started with a brief summary of the different practices, processes and ideas shared the previous day. The participants split into 4 topic-related groups to discuss specific ways to use the youth card further in their daily work.

The specific groups were:

1. Social inclusion - preventing and combating discrimination/promoting intercultural learning;
2. Youth policies, Participation & Activism;
3. Employment - Access to quality jobs & internships;
4. Regional cooperation (WB region), Mobility & Exchange.

Within these groups reflection was guided by the following questions:

1. What can/should be the role of the youth card in addressing the topic of your group?
2. Which needs of young people would you fulfil with your action?
3. What could be the possible challenges for the youth card scheme while addressing the topic?

The second part of the morning focused on presentation of the recommendations and outcomes of the working groups, their discussion and the next possible steps.

All of the groups had a very productive working environment and came up with specific recommendations to improve the situation and use the European youth card as a mainstream tool to promote its different aspects.

Employment - Access to quality jobs & internships

One of the main challenges mentioned was the limited reach out towards young people, particularly disadvantaged youth. The market offer of quality jobs and internships was limited, there was lack of access for young people to engage with quality jobs and internships due to discrepancies between the educational sector and the market economy and its demands, especially concerning the skills required. The identified challenge, but also an opportunity, for the youth card was co-operation with employers, including recognition of the youth card, and using the youth card as a tool to create links between the various actors.

Within this scope the needs and recommendations defined were:

- to promote more the youth card as a platform for dialogue between young people, employers and the governmental bodies;
- to provide free advice, carrier guidance and legal support as part of the youth card services offered, especially when it comes to first employment of young people;
- to establish a “quality label for youth friendly businesses” for employers who promote quality jobs and internships, and establish a network which would include both them and young people in order to strengthen links between them;
- to advocate for subsidies for “youth friendly businesses” and promote them through the youth card;
- to train youth workers and social workers (through online and offline trainings) in understanding and promoting the youth card as a tool to support employability of young people, particularly among vulnerable young people.

Youth policies, participation & activism

The main challenges identified within this group were the existence of various barriers for young people to participate and the lack of clear mechanisms and policies for engagement of young people. Youth policies needed to incorporate more visibly the right to information, mobility and other learning opportunities that stimulate participation of young people using the youth card as a tool.

Within this scope the needs and recommendations defined were:

- to incorporate the youth card as a reference within various youth strategies and youth policies, especially those focusing on youth information and youth motility;
- to promote policies that provide subsidies for young people to engage in different learning and mobility opportunities through the youth card;
- to develop links among the youth card and various youth information services in order to provide information on participation mechanisms, as well as rights and responsibilities for civic participation (for example in voting).

Social inclusion - Preventing and combating discrimination / intercultural learning

The main challenges identified in relation to social inclusion, preventing and combating discrimination and promoting intercultural learning were again difficulties in the reach out, especially towards disadvantaged youth. In this regard the difficult economic circumstances faced by young people were mentioned. The economic hardship and lack of opportunities created the so called NEET¹ youth detached from the community, on the one hand, and decreasing the sense of belonging within the communities, on the other hand.

Within this scope the needs and recommendations defined were:

- to use the youth card as a reaching out mechanism for disadvantaged youth, through providing quality and youth friendly information, discounts and different offers, and the promotion of youth services, but also by gathering information on the interests and motivation of young people for their further engagement;
- to use the card as a tool to facilitate access and participation of youth (especially from disadvantaged areas) in different social inclusion schemes on local, national and international levels;
- to promote youth focused policies and schemes from various agencies and organisations through the youth card;
- to offer the youth card through travel tickets, library and university cards, etc., in order to promote different services for young people through the youth card.

Regional cooperation, mobility & exchange

The main needs identified within this group were the visibility and accessibility of the youth card among young people, especially those who were not higher education students. Additional challenges were lack of strong links between private companies and/or public bodies, and the card, as well as under-developed marketing strategies within some regions (namely the Western Balkans).

Within this scope the needs and recommendations defined were:

¹ This indicator presents the share of young people who are **not** in employment, education or training (NEET), as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group, by gender.

- to initiate regional activities for sharing practices and good examples of usage of the youth card;
- to align and promote common policies in the region to provide services and opportunities for young people;
- to explore methods for usage of the youth card as a tool to promote reconciliation and peace-building, as well as interregional mobility (for example, the Western Balkans);
- to support each other regionally in order to develop stronger links among the youth card and other relevant stakeholders like governmental institutions, platforms of NGOs, the Regional youth cooperation office, etc.

Evaluation and feedback

All participants received an on-line survey, to be filled in anonymously in order to offer feedback on the content and organisational aspects of the seminar.

The results include:

- 66% of respondents rated the overall experience of the seminar with 10 / 10 grade (excellent);
- 77% of respondents rated the information about Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility and about EYCA as being 'very useful';
- Over 70% of respondents rated the key-note speeches and information received as being 'very relevant' for the topic discussed;
- Over 80% of respondents rated the EYCA good practices examples from member organisations as being 'very interesting' and in the comments section asked for more examples like these during the seminars;
- Over 70% of respondents rated the panel discussion as being 'very interesting' and over 50% of respondents rated the visit to local youth centre as being 'very relevant';
- Almost 90% of respondents rated as 'excellent' the conditions of accommodation and communication with organisers;
- Among the recommendations for future events, participants mentioned: 'it should last longer than 2 days'; 'there should be more space for sharing good practices'.

PROGRAMME

DAY 1 SUNDAY, 22 April 2018	
	Arrival of participants
19:00	Welcome dinner
DAY 2 MONDAY, 23 April 2018	
09.30 – 10.00	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Nikola Janovic – Minister of Sports, Government of Montenegro • Ms. Natalja Turenne – Council of Europe representative • Mr. Manel Sanchez - EYCA Director
10.00 – 10.15	Aims and objectives of the Seminar Presentation of the participants
KEY NOTE SPEAKERS	
10.15 – 11.00	EYCA Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Manel Sanchez – EYCA Director Role of youth services in promoting access to social & economic rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Zdeňka Mašková – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Czech Republic
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 – 13.00	Youth: their capacity of accessing social & economic rights: how to prevent the loss of a new generation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Nenand Koprivica – Board member, Regional Youth Cooperation Office • Mr. Emil Krstanovski - International Labor Organisation Youth leaders advancing social justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matej Manevski – Advisory Council on Youth
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
EYCA GOOD PRACTICE ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE & LINK TO YOUTH POLICIES	
14.00 – 16.00	EYCA member organisations to present their good practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Youth Card Association - Bulgaria • Youth Act Centre - Albania • CJP - The Netherlands • vInspired - England, UK
16.00 – 16.15	Coffee break
LOCAL REALITIES	
16.15 – 17.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel discussion with various local stakeholders • Visiting a youth centre / youth organisation
18.30	Sightseeing tour of Budva City
20.30	Dinner at the hotel
DAY 3 TUESDAY, 24 April 2018	
9.30 – 11.30	<u>Groups discussion</u> How to integrate the youth card in local / national policies and youth services that would facilitate access to social & economic rights for young people. Major topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion • Access to quality jobs & internships • Preventing and combating discrimination
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 - 13.00	Conclusions: Next steps, main messages and possible new paths to explore
13.00	Lunch