

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND ERYICA

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION IN 2023

The current affairs are marked by the war in Ukraine and the impact of the pandemic on our societies and economies. Namely, the war has resulted in an increasing number of refugees arriving in different parts of Europe, including many children, young people, and women. Our countries are likewise experiencing rampant inflation and a cost-of-living crisis, jeopardising young people's autonomy and independence. The post-COVID landscape also shows a growing demand for mental health support, especially among young people and the most vulnerable. In this context, our proposal in the framework of the Council of Europe - ERYICA Partnership in 2023 focuses on ensuring that youth information services have up-to-date and relevant tools and resources to support young people's needs and difficulties in the current context. We wish to put a particular focus on vulnerable groups and youth at risk of exclusion. As youth information providers, we are aware of the positive impact that timely access to quality youth-friendly information can have on young people's participation and access to rights. In line with this and with the Council of Europe [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)4](#) on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood, [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#) on young people's access to rights, [Recommendation CM/rec \(2015\)3](#) on Access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights, and [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)8](#) on youth information, our activities in 2023 will focus on:

1. Ensuring quality youth information support to young refugees, especially those in transition to adulthood

In the context of the war in Ukraine, ERYICA decided to devote part of the efforts of our Council of Europe - ERYICA Partnership in 2022 to establish contacts with young refugees from Ukraine, civil society organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers, and youth information services working with this target group. We aimed to understand better the situation of young refugees from Ukraine and how youth information services can support their needs and aspirations. We conducted a survey and interviews in collaboration with young refugees and the Association of Ukrainians "Dzherelo" (Spain). The survey gathered 358 responses from young refugees from Ukraine aged 13-35 and based in different European countries. In addition, we organised two online cafés involving displaced youth, youth information providers, and various stakeholders and actors in the support of displaced persons.

The results of the survey Ukrainian displaced youth: Identifying information needs and aspirations were presented in September 2022 at an event organised in Sibenik (Croatia) in the framework of the ERYICA YinfoPeers project. Furthermore, the survey report was officially released on 30 September at the second online café held within our Partnership and entitled "How can youth information services support young refugees? The aim of all the above was to understand needs and expectations and highlight good practices and ideas for better integration and support of young refugees.

The report has underlined some key findings involving a wide variety of considerations depending on the age, gender, family situation, reasons for leaving their country, location, interpersonal and professional skills, expectations, needs, and aspirations of the target group. However, one thing is clear, the youth sector in general and youth information services in particular must play a key role in supporting the integration and scaling up the potential of young refugees. Helping young refugees to make the most out of their stay abroad is a key to supporting Ukraine's future reconstruction. Youth information services need to be ready to play that empowering role. In line with this preliminary work and findings, in 2023, we would like to give concrete answers to the needs and aspirations expressed by young refugees by equipping youth information workers with adequate training and resources.

Although our starting point is inspired by the situation of displaced youth from Ukraine, we believe the focus of our work should be broader. This is an opportunity to focus more on this vulnerable group, regardless of origin, nationality, or background. Youth information services can play an essential role in their lives and integration, but we must equip youth information workers with resources and tools to support their specific needs.

Online training on how to provide youth information services to young refugees

ERYICA developed in 2013-2014 the training course [Youth on the Move Infomobility - YoMIM](#). In 2018 the course was updated and adapted to be delivered in eLearning mode. Staying in a previously unknown place, young people have different information needs than local users of youth information services; these needs require different answers. Although YoMIM trains youth information workers to be able to address the specific information and support needs of young people in the context of cross-European mobility, we can indeed transpose its objectives, logic, and content to the context of forced migration. Therefore, our proposal for the Council of Europe - ERYICA Partnership in 2023 is to revise this training course to ensure that its objectives and resources also equip youth information workers to support youth facing forced migration. First, we plan to review the content of the current course (online Moodle course and offline manual) to include this dimension. Then, we will develop and pilot a module on young displaced people's specific needs and the aspects that need to be considered when working with them, e.g. mental health support, language barriers, referral to specialised services, partnerships, unaccompanied minors, etc.

This new module will illustrate how to provide information, guidance, and counselling during young refugees' permanence in another country. It will refer to regulations and procedures, identify key stakeholders, and highlight the emotional and psychological aspects to be considered when working with this vulnerable group. We intend to work closely with young refugees and key stakeholders, such as experts in migratory issues (forced migration, asylum seekers and refugees), CSOs supporting refugees, mental health experts, legal experts, etc. We believe an online training course based on the YoMIM course with an added module on how to provide information and support to young refugees and displaced youth would be an excellent contribution to this effort. In conclusion,

providing guidelines and resources to youth work professionals to support the integration of young refugees will enhance access to rights and protection from unfair treatment in the host country.

2. Enhancing the implementation and promotion of the European Youth Information Quality Label

In addition, ERYICA intends to continue furthering the implementation of the European Youth Information Quality Label with the support of our task force. Undoubtedly, the [Quality Label](#) is a milestone in the Council of Europe - ERYICA Partnership. As the third year draws to a close, we can safely speak of the encouraging results of this initiative. Opening applications twice a year has become standard practice, and eight youth information networks have already acquired the Label. Therefore, the Quality Label is becoming established, and the tool's design is a crucial means of assessing the quality of youth counselling and information services in Europe.

With misinformation and ignorance being an obstacle to the healthy development of young people today, the Quality Label turns out to be a wise investment with multi-level positive effects for the European youth. The funds will be distributed as follows:

- Allow the European Quality Label Task Force to meet twice a year - at least once face-to-face. This group of European experts assess the applications voluntarily after the two application deadlines and oversee the Label's governance framework.
- Organise two application periods per year and two info sessions per year to inform potential applicants and answer possible questions.
- Continue the successful process of representative Labelling Agreement, organise an awarding ceremony, and prizes for awarded applicants (design and printing/promotion) to reward holders.
- Give visibility to good practices, high-quality youth information, and counselling services through a label dissemination and promotion strategy. In parallel, we seek publicity and promotion for the awards to make the label holders better known to the general public, namely to young people.

3. Promotion of Council of Europe - ERYICA partnership resources

The Council of Europe - ERYICA Partnership was particularly fruitful for the European youth information and counselling sector. Throughout its duration, valuable resources, including tools, kits and publications, were created. Those were translated into several European languages and distributed in different European countries. In 2023, the distribution of already existing resources will continue. This includes the Liaisons manual, the Youth Information in 2020 booklet, the brochure Ensuring Quality in Youth Information and Counselling, the Compendium on national youth information and counselling structures, the Info-rights Kit, and the Youth Information Starter Kit. Potentially, these publications may be distributed in the following events:

- Youth information events and working groups;

- European Youth Card Association (EYCA) General Assembly;
- Eurodesk General Assembly;
- Events organised at local, regional and national level organised by youth information and counselling providers;
- Relevant events organised by Ministries at national or regional level;
- ERYICA Youth Ambassador framework events;
- Relevant events organised by the Council of Europe;
- Relevant events organised by the European Youth Forum;
- Relevant events organised by National Youth Councils;
- Events organised by the European Commission and/or the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership;
- The European Youth Event (EYE);
- The University on Youth and Development (UYD) of the North-South Centre;
- Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (North-South Centre);
- Events organised by UNESCO;
- The UNESCO Global Week on Media and Information Literacy;
- Relevant events organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the field of youth;
- Relevant events organised by National Agencies of EU programmes; and
- Any other relevant events that come up over the course of the year.

To ensure the broadest possible dissemination of our resources and publications, both past, such as the Ensuring Quality in Youth Information and Counselling brochure, the Liaisons manual and other Council of Europe - ERYICA joint publications, and future, we plan a series of meetings between ERYICA staff, ERYICA members, governmental representatives from the Council of Europe member states, youth organisations, and organisations interested in youth information, youth work and other relevant stakeholders. The aim always remains the efficient support of our network in providing the best possible youth information and counselling services.

Furthermore, ERYICA maintains a dynamic presence on social media (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) and the Internet (emails, the ERYICA website and newsletters) as a communication channel. Through it, ERYICA can directly promote Youth Information publications and reach a large audience of stakeholders from all over Europe.