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**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)**  
**comments on Committee of Ministers response to**  
**Congress Recommendation 367 (2015) on youth participation**

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The Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) oversees the Council of Europe's programme in the field of youth and advises the Committee of Ministers on all questions within its area of competence. The Joint Council on Youth is the youth policy-making body of the youth sector bringing together the members of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ).

The Advisory Council on Youth would like to thank the Committee of Ministers for its invitation to the Joint Council on Youth to review the Congress Recommendation 367 (2015) on youth participation. The CMJ was through the Advisory Council involved in the drafting of Recommendation 376 (2015) and would like to express its appreciation for the excellent cooperation with the Congress in this respect. In particular, the Advisory Council would like to express its support and appreciation for the Congress persistent work to ensure youth participation at local and regional levels.

Concerning the Recommendation itself, the Advisory Council would like to respond in particular to point 8, where the Congress asks for specific input from the CMJ.

#### **Ad 8.a**

The CMJ decided at its statutory meeting in April 2015 to examine youth in decision-making processes such as the co-management system. As a follow up the CMJ decided, at its statutory meeting in October 2015, to initiate a mapping exercise similar to the one proposed by the Congress. The decision which was taken reads as follows:

"Took note of the concept paper of the Secretariat concerning a study on innovative forms of youth participation (CMJ(2015)35) and approved the following concept for the study:

First a general overview of existing materials on youth involvement in decision making processes at European, national and municipal levels (including among others research, reports, legal instruments and tools, including those developed by the Council of Europe).

Based on the general overview, a case study to identify examples of successful and unsuccessful initiatives (including co-management) in involving young people in decision making processes should be developed. The study should:

- Integrate an analysis of these practices
- Identify in which areas involvement of young people in decision making processes is weak or inexistent
- Develop conditions for 'effective' involvement of young people in decision making processes
- Suggest ways to facilitate governments and local authorities' to involve young people in their decision making processes;

The Joint Council asked the Secretariat to implement this study according to the timetable indicated in the concept paper."

This study will be prepared in the first half of 2016 and presented at the CMJ statutory meeting in October/November 2016. The CMJ will inform the Congress of its findings.

#### **Ad 8.b**

The Advisory Council would like to express its support to organise a conference on youth participation to promote dialogue between Congress members and young people, keeping in mind that such a proposal would be subject to CMJ approval at one of its statutory meetings.

The Advisory Council suggests that such a conference could follow the publication of the above mentioned survey.

#### **Ad 8.c**

The Advisory Council would like to express its interest in the proposal of exploring the current offers of youth participation in political parties and trade unions at local, regional, national and European levels in order to define the state of youth political participation in Europe, however, it will not have the capacities to undertake such a survey in the near future. Once resources are available, the Advisory Council would advise to also include the Parliamentary Assembly and Congress in this work, as both institutions deal with political parties and trade unions.

Finally, the Advisory Council would like to underscore the importance of **point 9** of the Congress Recommendation which encourages the Committee of Ministers to invite member States to consider making voluntary contributions to help finance the Congress efforts of increasing youth participation in its work. The Advisory Council firmly trusts that the Council of Europe could further establish itself as a spearheading international institution that is truly making a positive difference for youth participation in Europe and beyond. Funding for the Congress youth participation efforts would be key in ensuring this.