



Strasbourg, 20 February 2019

CMJ(2019)2

Restricted

**Second meeting of the drafting group
for the development of a
Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030
(Budapest, 22-23 January 2019)**

Meeting report

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Executive Summary

The **Council of Europe** is currently developing a strategy for its **youth sector for 2020 to 2030**.

The **context** of the current strategy (from “Agenda 2020” to a Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030), as well as the main steps of the **strategy development process** (consultative meeting with key stakeholders in May 2018; endorsement of the parameters of the future youth sector strategy 2030 by the Joint Council on Youth in October 2018 and setting up of a CMJ drafting group) were described in detail in the report of the first meeting of the drafting group (see document CMJ(2018)27 final). They will therefore not be recalled in the current report.

It is in this context that the CMJ **drafting group** started to shape the contents of the future strategy 2030 at its **first meeting** (6-7 December 2018). As a result, a draft **theory of change** was developed: this visual model aimed to explain how and why a desired change is expected to happen, and to illustrate the role which the Council of Europe and its youth sector could play in this context. The theory of change developed by the drafting group also defined the youth sector’s vision, its purpose and role, its distinction, its range of services and its draft thematic priorities.

Building on the discussions at the first meeting, a **second meeting** of the drafting group (22-23 January 2019) **continued developing the theory of change** (in particular its **thematic priorities**) and started devising the **draft contents** and structure of the strategy. Throughout these two meetings, the drafting group also kept in mind the necessity to ensure that the contents of the resulting strategy could be meaningfully **evaluated**.

The preliminary outcomes of the drafting group’s endeavours were examined at the joint meeting of the CDEJ and CCJ Bureaux (24-25 January 2019): the comments of the Bureaux in this respect are set out in document CDEJCCJ/BUR(2019)PV1 (part 5). The work of the drafting group will also be **examined by the statutory bodies** at the 40th CMJ meeting (19-20 March 2019). The drafting group will meet again (4-5 June 2019) to develop further and finalise the draft strategy in light of the CMJ’s comments.

Introduction

On 22-23 January 2019, the CMJ drafting group set up to develop a strategy for the Council of Europe youth sector 2030 (hereinafter “strategy 2030”) held its **second meeting**.

On the basis of the **theory of change** for the youth sector, drawn up at the first meeting (reflecting its vision; its purpose and role; its distinction; the range of services proposed), the **draft thematic priorities** of the strategy were further developed. A list of the key **possible contents** of the future strategy was also agreed.

As was the case in the first meeting, members of the [European Steering Committee for Youth \(CDEJ\)](#), the [Advisory Council on Youth \(CCJ\)](#), the [European Youth Forum \(YFJ\)](#), as well as experts in youth policy and strategy development sat down with members of the [Youth Department](#)’s and the [Directorate of Internal Oversight](#)’s secretariats (see list of participants in **Appendix I**) in order to continue elaborating a draft strategy 2030 for the youth sector.

1. Aim and objectives of the second meeting of the drafting group

In accordance with the roadmap for the development of a strategy 2030 and with the terms of reference of the drafting group, the **aim of the second meeting** was to **continue elaborating a draft strategy 2030** for the youth sector, notably on the basis of:

- the main outcomes of the consultative meeting (May 2018);
- the parameters agreed by the Joint Council on Youth (October 2018);
- the draft theory of change for the youth sector (vision, purpose and role, distinction, range of services, etc.) as developed at the first meeting of the drafting group.

Some of the specific **objectives** of this second meeting were to:

- continue drafting a theory of change for the youth sector (especially its draft thematic priorities), and to agree on the possible contents of the new strategy;
- try to encompass the various parameters of the future strategy in the theory of change, while ensuring that it could be meaningfully evaluated.

The programme of the second meeting is set out in **Appendix II**.

2. Building the theory of change for the Council of Europe youth sector (continued)

Based on its preliminary formulation of some **key elements** (see summary of the youth sector's vision, purpose and role, distinction, and range of services in **Appendix IV** of **document CMJ(2018)27 final**), the drafting group continued developing the **theory of change** for the Council of Europe youth sector.

In so doing, the drafting group discussed possible ways of ensuring that the future strategy could be meaningfully **evaluated**, and further developed the draft **thematic priorities** of the future strategy.

- **Evaluability of the future strategy**

The drafting group agreed that evaluation should be an **integral part of the strategy**, but was **concerned** by the fact there were **no dedicated budget lines** to provide the time and resources for it. In this context, it was deemed important, as far as possible, to build the evaluability criteria and indicators already into the system, so that they did not require extra work or resources. The possibility to define a baseline was also mentioned.

The drafting group briefly discussed various possible **approaches to evaluation**. The need to reach a **balance between quantitative** (statistics) and **qualitative data** (success stories, interviews, etc.) was emphasised in this respect. The difficulty of measuring change (SMART objectives, relevant indicators of change) was also underlined. Various methodologies, such as contribution analysis (interviews about change and development: who/what has played a part?) or impact assessment studies (individual and organisational multiplier effects within the main stakeholder groups: statutory bodies, governments, youth organisations, communities of practice (trainers, researchers, experts, etc.) were mentioned.

The representative of the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO) also emphasised the **importance of showing change in the wording** of the **impact and expected outcomes** of the strategy 2030 (e.g. by constantly referring to “stronger contribution”, “increased capacity”, “improved response”, “further progress”, “better access”, etc.). In line with the theory of change proposed by the drafting group, this wording would indeed help to show the desired progress over time and would make the strategy more evaluable. The drafting group agreed with this approach and **developed the wording of the draft thematic priorities accordingly (see Appendix III)**.

In addition to ensuring that the strategy could be evaluated, the drafting group agreed that the strategy could also comprise a **risk mitigation plan** or risk register. Based on a set of assumptions which might have an impact on the overall implementation of the strategy (and on the achievement of its objectives), this register could identify mitigating actions in order to try and manage risk at each step of the process. A risk mitigation plan might be developed once the strategy had been adopted, in order that it be included in the key contents at a later stage (see also suggestion under part 3 of the current report: “key contents of the strategy 2030”).

- **Draft thematic priorities**

Based on its preliminary discussion at its first meeting, the drafting group confirmed its proposed **draft thematic priorities** for the strategy 2030 (to be examined and endorsed by the CMJ at its next meeting):

- 1st thematic priority: **“Revitalising democracy”**
- 2nd thematic priority: **“Access to rights”**
- 3rd thematic priority: **“Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies”**
- 4th thematic priority: **“Youth work”**

Within each of the four thematic priorities, the DIO underlined that there was a **need to define indicators at three different levels** (i.e. at impact, outcomes and outputs levels). On that basis, the strategy could draw a “line of accountability” up to which the Council of Europe could be held accountable. The notion of **“accountability threshold”** was very important in this respect.

The need to think about the highest level, i.e. the **impact level** (e.g. “youth and Europe”, with some indicators collected at member states’ or European levels) was recalled by the DIO. Naturally, the youth sector was neither responsible nor accountable for achieving the objectives at impact level. The Council of Europe’s youth sector simply “contributed to” achieving them, it did not and could not “guarantee” their achievement.

The Council of Europe's youth sector was accountable, however, for the indicators at **outcomes level** (institutional level): what the youth sector's stakeholders, multipliers and institutions did with the Youth Department's outputs (instruments, programmes, publications, etc.). It would be important to be able to evaluate why some indicators had been achieved and others not at the outcomes level. The role of external factors (e.g. political situation in member states) was very important in this respect. The need to harmonise the logic and wording of all "expected outcomes" was therefore paramount.

Finally, it was recalled that indicators for the **output level** (over which the Council of Europe had direct control) were also necessary: these should theoretically be easier to define.

On this basis, the drafting group agreed to **translate each thematic priority into impact, expected outcomes and outputs**. With regard to the expected outcomes of each thematic priority, it was suggested to define only three or four achievable outcomes (e.g. **structural, cultural and personal**) within a specified impact. The corresponding **draft thematic priorities** (including impact and expected outcomes) of the strategy 2030, as proposed by the drafting group, are set out in **Appendix III**.

The drafting group agreed that, once the thematic priorities had been examined and endorsed by the CMJ, the **next stage** would be to develop the corresponding expected **outputs and indicators** (operationalisation using the logframe model).

Last but not least, it was also recalled that there was one overarching impact, which was not expressed through the thematic priorities, i.e. sustaining the youth sector in Europe. Communities of practice involved in the implementation of the strategy (not just the Council of Europe's Youth Department) would be a resource, but they also needed to be involved, sustained and renewed.

3. Key contents of the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030

The drafting group agreed that the overall strategy document to be developed before its third meeting may contain all or some of the **key contents** listed below.

- **Possible table of contents / structure of the strategy document**
 - **"The strategy on one page"**: brief narration of the graphic and the graphic itself.
 - **Introduction** to the strategy: what is it for, who is it for, how will it be used, etc.
 - **Context** within which the strategy is being developed (Council of Europe and other youth sector developments at European and global levels):
 - *Inter-institutional relations*: rationale and relevance of working together.
 - *Opportunities and challenges*, including: contextual factors; identified risks and challenges; identified opportunities and supporting factors; "mapping the boundaries".
 - Council of Europe youth sector's **theory of change**
(How the strategy is supposed to work and its rationale)
(If necessary, explanation of theory of change in appendix)
 - *Vision, aspirations*
 - *Role and purpose*
 - Council of Europe's *distinction*
 - What does the CoE youth sector offer (*range of services*)
 - Thematic *priorities* for the strategy period
 - short justification for these (if necessary)
 - translation and breakdown of the thematic priorities into impact, expected outcomes, outputs, indicators (operationalisation using the logframe model).

- **Implementation**
 - Youth Department's instruments (EYCs, EYF, co-management, partnership, etc.);
 - Resources (e.g. necessity of in-house educational staff in the EYCs, competence, capacity);
 - Link to biennial Programme and Budget;
 - Communities of practice involved (not just the Youth Department): will be a resource, but also need to be involved, sustained, renewed...
- **Quality, scale, impact** ("reality check", but also aspirations)
 - turning outcomes into impacts;
 - indicators of success (at outcome and output levels), "quality culture", scale (e.g. number of young people trained in the EYCs, etc.) and impact (concentric circles of participation: multiplier effect);
 - informed also by 'demonstrating success' and 'key imperatives';
 - mechanisms for evaluation (which approaches; data collection and "monitoring"): state the intention to have the strategy evaluated, and how (e.g. mid-term and final evaluations combined with permanent data collection mechanisms and establishment of baselines, "evaluability" of the strategy);
 - accountability (co-management, need for the stakeholders to take responsibility in implementing the strategy).
- **Risk mitigation plan** (or risk register for the strategy): to be developed at a later stage.
 - detailed management tool for the strategy;
 - based on a series of assumptions;
 - identification of risks that can hinder the implementation of the strategy;
 - identification of some possible mitigating actions.
- **Political document: Committee of Ministers' resolution**
 - relevant standards, thematic priorities and instruments;
 - to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers once the CMJ has adopted the overall strategy;
 - to be based solely on the contents of the strategy as agreed by the CMJ.
- **Possible appendices and additional sections**
 - **Context overview** (if needed to complement the context)
 - situation of youth;
 - detailed analysis of the political and social situation in Europe in relation to the Council of Europe's mandate and core values;
 - the most pressing issues of the day and possible trends through the coming 10 years for youth and for Europe.
 - **List of indicators**
 - **Key background reference documents / policy documents / etc.**
 - **Description of process** to prepare the strategy (1-page)
 - **Bibliography and source material**

4. Conclusion of the second meeting and next steps

To conclude, at its second meeting, the drafting group **continued to shape the future** Council of Europe youth sector **strategy 2030**. Throughout the meeting, DIO provided very useful feedback on how to ensure the **evaluability** of the future strategy.

The drafting group notably defined the draft **thematic priorities** of the strategy 2030, including their corresponding **impact and expected outcomes**. If and when agreed by the CMJ, these thematic priorities would serve as a basis for the operationalisation of the strategy (definition of the outputs and indicators). The drafting group also agreed on the **key contents** of the future strategy document.

The work of the drafting group thus far will be **presented to the youth statutory bodies** (40th CMJ meeting, March 2019) for any comments and/or proposals. The CMJ will be informed of the state of progress, and will be invited to accept the framework proposed by the drafting group.

The feedback received on this occasion would then be taken into account in the next stages of the drafting process: in light of the CMJ's comments, the overall strategy document would be drafted for examination at the third meeting of the drafting group. At the same time, draft outputs and indicators should be defined, also for examination by the drafting group at its next meeting. Last but not least, the model theory of change should be further developed on the basis of the key elements to be agreed by the CMJ (see a possible example to illustrate some aspects of the future theory of change in **Appendix IV**: N.B. this is only an example which does not presume in any way upon the final shape of the theory of change).

The drafting group will meet again on 4-5 June 2019 in order to develop further the draft strategy. The Joint Council should then examine the final proposal and endorse it in October. The drafting group is expected to **finalise the strategy by the end of 2019** for its launch in 2020.

Appendix I: List of participants

- **European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ):**

Katrin OLT, Estonia CDEJ member
Miriam TEUMA, Malta Chair of the CDEJ (chair of the drafting group)

- **Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)**

Georgios CHATZIGEORGIOU Vice-chair of the CCJ
Natascha SKJALDGAARD CCJ member – *apologised for absence*

- **European Youth Forum**

Tina HOCEVAR Vice-President

- **Experts in youth policy and strategy development**

Yael OHANA Frankly Speaking - Training, Research & Development
Howard WILLIAMSON Professor of European Youth Policy at the University of South Wales

- **Secretariat**

Antje ROTHEMUND Head of the Youth Department
Florian CESCO Head of the Youth Policy Division
Joanne HUNTING Secretary to the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)
Rica TERBECK Evaluator, Evaluation Division, Directorate of Internal Oversight

- **Resource person**

Giovanna MONTAGNA Administrative Assistant, Youth Policy Division



Participants in the 2nd drafting group meeting (see [news item](#) on the youth portal for more information).

Appendix II: Programme / draft agenda of the second meeting (Budapest, 22-23 January 2019)

Tuesday 22 January 2019	Wednesday 23 January 2019
Breakfast	Breakfast
<p>Introduction to the second meeting's programme</p> <p>Reviewing previous elements of the theory of change (vision, purpose and role, distinction, what does the Council of Europe youth sector offer)</p>	<p>Agreeing on the key elements of the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of contents • Appendices (context overview, key background reference documents, bibliography, etc.)
Coffee break	Coffee break
<p>Continue developing the theory of change for the Council of Europe youth sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic priorities • Desired or expected outcomes/outputs for the strategy period (10 years) within each of the thematic priorities 	<p>Agreeing on the key elements of the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030 [continued]</p>
Lunch break	Lunch break
<p>Developing the theory of change for the Council of Europe youth sector [continued]</p>	<p>Summary of the meeting's outcomes</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remaining tasks for the group • reporting (Bureaux and CMJ) • third meeting (dates and priority tasks)
Coffee break	16.00: end of meeting
<p>Developing the theory of change for the Council of Europe youth sector [continued]</p>	Departure of participants
<p>Dinner to be arranged by participants</p>	

Appendix III: Draft thematic priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030,
as proposed by the drafting group

1st thematic priority: “Revitalising democracy”

Impact: Young people’s democratic citizenship and active participation are making a stronger contribution to redressing challenges to democracy.

Expected outcome 1: Increased capacity of youth civil society to further participatory democracy and democratic citizenship within and beyond their memberships.

Expected outcome 2: More policies and governance processes conducted in a meaningful participatory manner, involving young people and their representatives/organisations.

Expected outcome 3: Stronger contribution of youth policy and youth work to the removal of barriers to youth participation.

Expected outcome 4: Improved institutional responses to new developments in democracy, such as the changing participation patterns of young people and digitalisation.

2nd thematic priority: “Access to rights”

Impact: Young people enjoy better access to rights.

Expected outcome 1: Further progress achieved in the implementation of the Council of Europe’s standards on young people’s access to rights.

Expected outcome 2: Increased capacity building and resources for youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders to advocate for access to rights and to improve inclusiveness of their own structures.

Expected outcome 3: Improved institutional responses to newly emergent issues affecting young people’s rights, such as environment, privacy and well-being.

3rd thematic priority: “Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies”

Impact: Young people, in all their diversity, live a life more free of discrimination, violence and exclusion, and are contributing to peaceful and inclusive societies.

Expected outcome 1: Stakeholders better equipped to tackle the challenges of building inclusive societies through policies, programmes and projects that embrace diversity.

Expected outcome 2: Young people, including those experiencing discrimination and exclusion, benefiting from opportunities that develop their commitment to and exercise of democratic citizenship.

Expected outcome 3: Key foundations, such as European unity, global solidarity, peace and intergenerational dialogue, embedded more prominently in policy, practice and research within and beyond the youth sector.

4th thematic priority: “Youth work”

Impact: Young people’s autonomy and democratic citizenship are being strengthened through youth work and non-formal education/learning.

Expected outcome 1: Youth work recognised and embedded within youth policy frameworks, notably through the common European youth work agenda.

Expected outcome 2: Improved quality of youth work practice delivered by both volunteer and paid youth workers.

Expected outcome 3: Extended access and attractiveness of youth work and non-formal education for the benefit of wider populations of young people.

Appendix IV: Example to illustrate some possible aspects of the future theory of change

