



Ministry of Sport, Tourism and
Youth Policy of the Russian
Federation



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL
DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 26 March 2012

Evaluation and Planning Meeting

Implementation of the Framework
Programme for Cooperation between the
Directorate of Youth and Sport of the
Council of Europe and the Ministry of
Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of the
Russian Federation in 2011 and 2012

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg
21 January 2012

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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1. Welcome of the participants and opening of the meeting

Mr. Ridde chaired the meeting.

2. Context and objectives of the meeting

Mr. Gomes presented the aims and objectives of the meeting. Following the recommendations of the Evaluation Expert Meeting (EEM) (March 2011, Moscow), it was decided to hold this meeting in 2012 to: evaluate the implementation and results of the 2011 activities, plan the programme of activities for 2012, discuss perspectives for the cooperation for 2013 and beyond.

Mr. Roman Aleksandrov agreed that the EEM should be organised on a regular basis, ensuring smooth cooperation between Russia and the Council of Europe in the youth field. Each party should host the meeting in turn. Mr. Aleksandrov also underlined the important role of the seconded national expert from Russia in this process, and for the bilateral cooperation in general. Russia would like to keep this secondment for future.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as it appears in this report.

4. Updates on youth policy developments in the Russian Federation and in the Council of Europe

Mr. Aleksandrov informed that the main event expected in the Russian Federation is the presidential election on 4 March 2012. In the programme of all

candidates much attention is paid to youth issues. A new president's team could have another vision than the present one. Today the main priorities in the areas of youth policy and sport are talented people and volunteering. Changes are awaited, but not dramatic ones.

Mr. Barinov added that the NYCR is very pragmatic. The new state structure responsible for youth would be the 11th change during the 20-year history of the NYCR. The NYCR is ready for constructive approaches to cooperation.

Mr. Bunjes noted that the Council of Europe is in the middle of a reform process. The Youth Department is now working with the Education Department in one directorate, cooperation between the two is being developed. The Council of Europe is also looking to neighbouring regions, particularly North Africa (together with EU), Central Asia (e.g. Kazakhstan). Policy advisory missions, trainings and visits of these countries' officials are under consideration. The Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for youth in St Petersburg is a major priority for 2012.

Mr. Ridde reminded the meeting that the newly appointed Advisory Council will be a partner of the CDEJ for two years now.

5. Follow up and implementation of the conclusions of the evaluation meeting held in Moscow in March 2011

Mr. Gomes underlined that the partners started to implement the recommendations of the EEM already in 2011. Cooperation and communication channels have been "depersonalised", reporting is improving and so is the quality of the activities.

Mr. Aleksandrov concluded that the Russian partners did not change their approaches a lot. Financial decisions depend on three persons, but appearing problems do not depend on them. Planning and implementation has improved on the Russian side; however, visibility needs further improvement. There is still a long way between the drafting of the Action Plan and its signature.

6. Priorities, role and desired format of the cooperation activities between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe's youth sector

Mr. Aleksandrov proposed to use the experience of cooperation with Russia in developing cooperation with Kazakhstan and some other countries.

Ms. Wulff underlined that it would be useful to have the time-table of cooperation, with a clear understanding when decisions should be made.

Mr. Bunjes commented that between drafting and adoption no process is easy in the Council of Europe. It differs from the process with non-member states. Co-management is our specificity. Difficulties with the Action Plan primarily stem from the fact that there is a need to coordinate with the decision-making process, and timetable, of the Joint Council on Youth and the Programming Committee. A new format for 2014 may have to be devised that would address these challenges.

7. Evaluation and feed-back from the 2011 activities, notably:

Ms. Georgescu reminded that educational advisers were actively involved in the implementation of activities in 2011, which had been very useful. It was a mutual learning process; the two sides should bring their approaches closer together. In her view, further training activities in the Russian Federation are necessary.

Ms. Gudakovska stated that we should further improve the preparation of activities, the selection of participants and follow-up activities.

Ms. Wulff commented that for the Joint Council it is difficult to concentrate on political purposes, not on technical. The Joint Council should have more information on each activity.

Mr. Aleksandrov pointed out that political documents should be approved by the Joint Council, whereas Action Plans should be approved at a lower level.

Mr. Barinov underlined that this new way of cooperation—with educational advisers involved at all stages of the activity—implementation is very productive. The NYCR, which has a new team since June 2011, also increased its involvement in the content of the activities, not only in technical support. The new Deputy Chairman of the NYCR successfully fulfilled the duties of the Programming Director of two main activities (in Kaluga and Nalchik). The NYCR is very glad that the Youth Department ensures educational advice in all activities with Russia.

Ms. Georgescu insisted that all Russian trainers should also be present during the preparation phase.

Mr. Gomes stressed that we should give more possibilities to Russian leaders to meet non-Russian leaders.

a. Kaluga Youth Camp

Ms. Georgescu regarded the event as successful. At the same time she recommended working more with organisers of the Camp, developing a more training-oriented approach.

Ms. Gudakovska proposed to explore the possibility of slightly changing the format of the Camp.

Mr. Barinov answered that the Russian partners would prefer not to change the format, for several reasons. At the same time, there would always be space for discussion and improvement.

Ms. Shirinova expressed the opinion that the 2011 camp was more successful than the two previous ones (2009 and 2010). The main reason was the deeper involvement of the educational advisor, Ms. Georgescu, and a better selection of the team of Russian trainers (the continuing challenge was that they did not speak English, which meant that team meetings took more time because of translation). She also underlined that for the first time the NYCR had created a position of "Programming Director" of the project, taken by the deputy Chairman of the NYCR, Mr. Bagrov. He had become a permanent member of the educational team, had chaired all team meetings, served as a bridge between educational and organisational teams, duly transmitting to organisers all the decisions and requirements of the educational team. The organisational team was also more effective and reachable. The participation of young people from other European countries gave new breath and a wider horizon to the event, strengthening its European dimension.

b. Nalchik Forum

Ms. Shirinova reminded that the format of the International Forum for Youth Leaders For Mutual Understanding in Caucasus was innovative, as it brought together for the first time youth leaders (120 participants) not only from different Russian republics of the Northern Caucasus but also from central Russia and other Russian regions, from all Southern Caucasus states and also from other countries (Ukraine, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Serbia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Great Britain). The activity was very ambitious in terms of venue, envisaged participation, objectives and topic. It was also the first of its kind to be realised in the framework of the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, it was successful endeavour which presented many learning opportunities.

Having an activity organised in the Caucasus with participation from the entire region is an achievement in its own right and a precondition for starting intercultural dialogue in the region, fostering youth participation and the role of youth organisation in making sustainable dialogue and peace-building in the region a reality. This was highly appreciated by the participants, who also highlighted the importance of Council of Europe involvement in youth work in the region.

One of the strengths of the Forum was the vast media coverage. In different articles and interviews Russian and Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian youth leaders highly appreciated this possibility to hear and to be heard, stressing that this Forum is the only opportunity for them to cooperate, to promote dialogue where politicians cannot find a way to understanding. They expressed their hope that the Forum will be held regularly in different places.

One of the challenges encountered in the technical preparation was that several participants selected by the Council of Europe dropped out, since they could not afford to pre-finance their ticket.

Mr. Gomes advised that there should be more local participants/trainers involved in the preparatory meeting.

Mr. Barinov underlined that one of the results of the Forum is the further development of the "Black Sea Cooperation Network", created after the Caucasus Peace Camp (held with the support of the EYF in 2011). He personally appreciated the opportunity to visit the Russian Caucasus after a break of 15 years. This form of including the region in all European processes should be supported further. The NYCR is inclined to involve more and more Russian regions into the cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Ms. Gudakovska mentioned that it was good that several participants of 50/50 training, held 2010 in Dagestan, participated in the Forum. It proved to them and others that everything is possible for them.

c. Seminars for Young Parliamentarians

Mr. Barinov reminded that the NYCR always helped with the selection of participants for these seminars.

Ms. Shirinova reminded that this know-how was developed in 2010 by the secretariat of the (then) Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and the National Youth Council of Russia with the financial support of the

European Youth Foundation and organisational support of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. In the Council of Europe report for 2010, this activity was mentioned as a flagship event of the youth sector. The participants familiarised themselves with the policies and work of the Council of Europe, particularly its youth sector, as well as the procedures and priorities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. With Youth Department staff members they discussed best practices in the field of youth participation in the legislative process; youth-policy making under the "Agenda 2020"; and ways of improving their own practice (influencing and interacting with state bodies, increasing membership and involvement).

Participants had discussions with the PACE President, the Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe, representatives of the European Court of Human Rights, and members of the Russian delegation to the PACE.

As a result of this activity there was a proposal of the Russian PACE delegation to all their colleagues, to bring along members of youth parliaments from their countries to the PACE sessions on special programme.

In April and October 2011, two seminars for members of youth parliaments, young parliamentarians and representatives of youth NGOs took place with up to 30 participants per event. They were self-financed by the Russian partners, with full organisational support of the youth sector's secretariat. The Russian trainers followed the educational format, developed for the first seminar by Council of Europe trainers.

In 2012, the Youth Department of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe, together with the "Foundation of International Cooperation" is co-organising four seminars for members of youth parliaments to be held during PACE sessions. The first seminar (January 2012) involved participants from Russia and other CIS countries. It was co organised together with the "Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the CIS" (IFESCCO). Two further seminars will involve 30 Russian participants from youth parliaments. The forth seminar will involve 15 Russian and 15 Turkish participants from youth parliaments.

All the seminars were part of the annual Action Plans for cooperation.

Mr. Aleksandrov commented that the Ministry delegates the holding of some activities to their partners and does not interfere with details and technicalities.

d. Other activities

Mr. Aleksandrov mentioned that the Intercultural Course in Russia was duly implemented in accordance with what had been promised and expected.

8. Planning of the 2012 activities

The participants examined the draft Action Plan for 2012 and generally agreed upon all activities presented. Upon the proposal of the Russian partners it was agreed to change the venue of the 50/50 training from Tomsk to Strasbourg.

Three activities need further discussions: Intercultural Russian course (no budget had been earmarked by both parties), the 2nd Forum for Mutual Understanding in the Caucasus (no budget earmarked by the Council of Europe) and the training course on human rights education (no budget earmarked by the Russian partners yet). For the latter, the Russian partners promised to look into ways of making the course possible if the Council of Europe would consider raising its contribution.

9. Perspectives and for 2013 and beyond

Mr. Aleksandrov informed that every year the Ministry spends between € 200 000 and € 300 000 on this cooperation. The Ministry would like to explore other forms of continuing and deepening this collaboration, such as:

- a) The sum in question could be paid directly to the Council of Europe as a voluntary contribution.
- b) Russia could organise some activities outside Russia, i.e. in other regions such as CIS countries.
- c) The Ministry has discussed the creation of a youth centre in Moscow with the same approaches as the EYCs. The Ministry is ready to finance the Centre for arranging events for young people from all over Europe on priorities agreed beforehand, such as intercultural dialogue or participation. After a while it could become a European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Bunjes commented that we should jointly consider cooperation in the 2013-2015 period with a focus on substance, less on technical detail. The Council of Europe would not necessarily insist on the current format of cooperation and be ready to discuss all options proposed by Mr. Aleksandrov.

Mr Aleksandrov recalled that there are more options for future cooperation. The Russian Federation would not like to be a subject for a special programme while being one of the "big payers" of the Council of Europe. One could also come back to the option of Action Plans, respecting however the procedures of the Joint council and the co-management approach. All sides were suffering from the distinction between a body taking the political decisions on the one hand, and a body taking financial decisions on the other. Additionally one could consider moving towards a two-year planning period, to avoid having to discuss it each year.

Mr. Ryzhkin drew attention to the distinction between three different groups of CIS countries — members of the Council of Europe, members of the European Cultural Convention without being members of the Council of Europe (Belarus, Kazakhstan) and countries which are members of neither the Council of Europe nor the European Cultural Convention. Cooperation with CIS countries that are non-members of the Council of Europe should be based on the interest expressed by these countries.

Mr. Ridde asked when the discussion on the general scope of cooperation would be finalised.

Mr. Aleksandrov answered that the decision on a new framework will not be taken this year. In March 2012 we could establish a working group with the task to prepare the draft.

Mr Bunjes summarised the discussions and conclusions:

- It is at this point in time not possible to prepare a new framework agreement for 2013, for the reasons outlined earlier and related to the political processes in the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation. It is also clear that the current formalisation of the cooperation is only partly satisfactory to all stakeholders.
- Instead, the Joint Council should initiate, at the earliest in autumn 2012 and at the latest in spring 2013, a discussion of the aims and format of cooperation. Proposals should be possible once a new administration and government in Russia are fully in place. The Ministerial Conference in St Petersburg could provide useful insights.
- A decision on a new framework agreement—with the possible implications on the 2014 and 2015 programme and budget—should be adopted at the latest by autumn 2013 (preferably earlier, so as to be fully taken into account in the programme and budget preparations for 2014-2015).
- In the meantime, for the programme 2013 both partners will prepare a programme based on the 2012 programme (format of activities and budgetary implications), while taking into account the outcomes of the evaluation of each single activity.

10. Dates for an evaluation and planning meeting in 2013

Mr. Aleksandrov proposed to have the next meeting in January 2013 in Moscow. This was agreed.

11. Conclusion of the meeting

Mr. Gomes concluded that the meeting was very good, useful and marked a new atmosphere in the cooperation. He also reminded participants of the possibilities for voluntary contributions for projects such as the Youth Peace Ambassadors and the Roma Youth Action Plan.

Mr. Ryzhkin assured that Russia pays much attention to cooperation with the Council of Europe in the youth sphere. He found the meeting interesting, positive and useful.

Participants thanked Mr. Ridde for chairing, and the organisers for hosting the meeting.

The meeting was closed.

Appendix

List of participants

Russian partners

Roman ALEKSANDROV, Deputy Director of the Department for Tourist Activities and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of the Russian Federation

Denis BARYNOV, Chairperson of the National Youth Council of Russia

Eduard RYZHKIN, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe

Council of Europe

Alexis RIDDE, Chairperson of the CDEJ (chair of the meeting)

Antonia WULFF, Chairperson of the CCJ

Ulrich BUNJES, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe

Rui GOMES, Head of the Education and Training Division, Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Mara GEORGESCU, Educational Advisor, Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Nasiyat SHIRINOVA, Administrator, Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Anna TRIGONA, secretary to the Advisory Council on Youth, Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Natalja GUDAKOVSKA, consultant-trainer.