

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## **Resolution 414 (2017)<sup>1</sup> Forever young? The role of youth policies and youth work at local and regional levels in supporting young people's transition to autonomy and working life**

1. Young Europeans are facing many challenges in their transition to autonomy and working life because of the ongoing economic and financial crisis, which has hit young people hard, the youth unemployment rate and a crisis of human rights whereby young people are finding it increasingly difficult to access and exercise their fundamental human, social and economic rights. Some young people who are vulnerable or have special needs, such as disadvantaged or marginalised young people, Roma youth, young refugees and those young people with disabilities may face additional challenges.

2. Young people can be seen as indicators of the well-being of a society. They need to be considered as fully-fledged, legitimate citizens, who contribute to shaping European societies. Efforts must be made to ensure that their transition is accompanied by the development and implementation of innovative youth policies, as well as new ideas for youth work that are adaptable to individual needs and to local contexts.

3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, for its part, is committed to promoting youth participation within its own institution. Indeed, it invites one youth delegate per country, between the ages of 16 to 30, from each of the 47 member States, to attend each session alongside delegation members and to take part in all discussions and meetings.

4. The 27th Session of the Congress was held in October 2014 under the theme “Empowering youth: a shared responsibility for cities and regions” and was aimed at creating a forum for dialogue between the youth delegates and local and regional elected representatives, and at fostering youth participation in policy-framing and decision-making processes at local and regional levels.

5. The Congress is determined to pursue its dialogue with young people and to involve them in its work, in particular through projects that they are invited to develop in their respective countries in co-operation with local authorities and to present at the sessions.

6. In addition, the Congress reiterates the invitation previously made to member States of the Council of Europe in its Resolutions 346 (2012) and 386 (2015) to include young people in their national delegations to the Congress, both as

full and substitute members, so that the composition of the Congress reflects that of European societies.

7. The Congress welcomes the fact that the 2014 edition of the European Local Democracy Week was devoted to the theme “Participatory democracy: sharing, proposing, deciding”, with a special focus on youth.

8. In view of the above, the Congress strongly encourages the local and regional authorities of its members States to:

*a.* implement the recommendations contained in its Resolutions 386 (2015), 346 (2012), 319 (2010) and 259 (2008);<sup>2</sup>

*b.* raise awareness of the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and take it into consideration in all aspects of their youth policy making.

9. The Congress is convinced that a successful transition to autonomy for young people requires some investment, both in creating municipal youth departments, launching youth projects, supporting youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and youth clubs and in developing their programmes and activities, as well as training youth councillors.

10. Support given to youth in transition needs to be complete, catered for by various players at local and regional levels, and needs to be the outcome of co-operation between youth work, youth policy and youth research players, while at the same time involving young people themselves, who need to be seen as partners in constructing their career paths.

11. For this purpose, the Congress invites local and regional authorities, according to their competences, to assist young people in their transition to autonomy and adulthood by taking the following actions:

*a.* As regards information:

*i.* set up online and face-to-face youth counselling and information centres, which provide individual coaching and specific training sessions;

*ii.* in the framework of these centres, provide counselling on mobility and information on existing opportunities in other European countries;

*b.* As regards education:

*i.* offer to all young people, from an early age, human rights education at school and in non-formal and informal settings;

*ii.* ensure close co-operation between formal, non-formal and informal education, and intensify the links between formal education institutions on the one hand and youth clubs or youth NGOs on the other;

*iii.* ensure access to quality education for youth who are disadvantaged or have special needs (young refugees, early school leavers), and propose alternatives to traditional secondary education for those who are school drop-outs or foreign to the system;

*iv.* encourage access to apprenticeship and provide support to those pursuing their education beyond the age of 18;

c. As regards employment:

- i. facilitate access to “first employment” contracts with stable conditions, through co-operation with the public and private sectors, and support young entrepreneurs in the setting up and development of their new companies;
- ii. establish a local government programme to enable competences developed in the context of traineeships and volunteer work to be officially recognised as professional experience;

d. As regards housing:

- i. develop low-budget housing opportunities for young people, with loan opportunities and municipal financial support;
- ii. set up transitional shared homes in which two or three young people would live together and share tasks, accompanied (if need be) by social workers or youth workers;
- iii. provide a mechanism that allows local and regional authorities to act as guarantor for isolated young people when renting homes;
- iv. through youth information centres, offer young people training opportunities on autonomous living, as well as the possibility to request home visits from municipal youth councillors to mentor young people on particular challenges in their new homes;

e. As regards health:

- i. set up free physical and mental health centres for young people, if possible as part of youth information centres, and provide regular medical counselling;
- ii. in the framework of these structures, (including in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and rural areas), provide regular

information sessions or training on sexual and reproductive rights, depression, violence and harassment or other health-related issues;

f. As regards international and transfrontier co-operation:

- i. co-operate with European information centres for youth in order to transmit news on training, education or job opportunities abroad;
- ii. establish transfrontier youth information centres in regions situated on the borders between member States in order to encourage young people’s mobility throughout the region and to share information on youth-related opportunities.

12. Moreover, further attention should be given to isolated or disadvantaged youth. The Congress encourages local authorities to invest in reaching out to all young people and thus inform and motivate them to get involved in projects led by local government.

13. Finally, the Congress reaffirms its intention to pursue its co-operation with the Council of Europe’s Directorate General of Democracy, in particular the Youth Department, on promoting youth participation and access to social rights for youth.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 29 March 2017, 2nd sitting (see Document [CG32\(2017\)11](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Eunice CAMPBELL-CLARK, United Kingdom (R, SOC).
  2. [Resolution 386 \(2015\)](#) on bringing down barriers to youth participation: adopting a lingua franca for local and regional authorities and young people, [Resolution 346 \(2012\)](#) on youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement; [Resolution 319 \(2010\)](#) on the integration of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, [Resolution 259 \(2008\)](#) on the integration and participation of young people at local and regional level.