



AP/Carte-J(2023)PV50

## **Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card**

### **50th meeting of the Board of Co-ordination**

**Monday, 23 October 2023**

**18.30 – 20.00**

### **REPORT**

#### **1. Welcome and opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by Miguel Perestrello, the current President of EYCA, Chair of the Board of Co-ordination for 2023. The list of participants appears in the Appendix.

The Board welcomed Tobias FLESSENKEMPER, the new Head of the Youth Department, and thanked him for the presence at the meeting.

#### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

[\*AP/Carte-J\(2023\)OJ50, annotated agenda\*](#)

The Board of Co-ordination adopted the agenda of the current meeting as it appears in the reference document AP/Carte-J(2023)OJ50.

#### **3. Adoption of the report of the 49th meeting of the Board of Co-ordination**

[\*AP/Carte-J\(2023\)PV49\*](#)

The Board of Co-ordination took note of the report of its 49th meeting as it appears in document AP/Carte-J(2023)PV49.

#### **4. Information on the composition of the next Board of Co-ordination 2024-2025**

The term of office of the current Board of Co-ordination would end on 31 December 2023. According to paragraph 5 of Appendix I to Resolution ResAP(2003)1 instituting the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card, eight governmental representatives out of the twenty-five member States Parties to the Partial Agreement, were to be nominated to the Board of Coordination for the mandate of 2024-2025. The list of candidate states would be submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption before the end of 2023.

All current Board members were eligible for re-election except Malta, Portugal and San Marino which had served two consecutive mandates. The secretariat invited the governmental representatives to express their interest in becoming Board members by 2 November 2023.

#### **4. Tour de table on national developments in the field of youth mobility and youth card schemes [Link to the table](#)**

The Board of Co-ordination members proceeded with a traditional up-date on recent developments in the implementation of youth mobility policies and/or European Youth Card scheme on national level, the contributions appear in Appendix II.

#### **5. Expansion perspectives of the Partial Agreement – oral exchange**

The secretariat and the EYCA Director updated the Board on on-going negotiations with states which had shown interest in the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility. EYCA Director made an oral presentation highlighting a positive trend of the Partial Agreement's in the last few years (North Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania), bringing membership to a good number of member states (currently 25). The challenge was to bring big countries into accession, particularly those that used to be part of the Partial Agreement in the past: for some it was connected with the crisis 2008 and the following years which led to non-payment of international contributions.

This is also about the priorities we communicate: we have a collective will of increasing the number of member States - not as an objective in itself, but with a commitment in terms of mobility and the priorities of the Council of Europe and its Youth Sector. With some member States we have been in constant communication. Belgium is very connected with EYCA, so it is a matter of keeping up the dialogue, patience and co-operation. The path was right but even more efforts were needed to continue growing.

The secretariat confirmed the positive trend of member States joining, it was also positive that the work plan for 2024 was foreseeing to continue raising awareness about EYCA and the Partial Agreement. Preparation of a promotional video was foreseen as well as other visibility efforts.

The Head of the Youth Department said that it was indeed important, and should be prioritised, to continue working on those countries which were active in EYCA but not part of the Partial Agreement, as it was important to strengthen the tool of the European Youth Card. Partial Agreements were indeed a flexible instrument that were between public and private sector, and this was a very unique opportunity to engage with the private sector which was also playing an important role for youth. It was a value based approach.

The Head of the Youth Department outlined several perspectives:

1- we should further work on co-operation with other Council of Europe Partial Agreements, Cultural Routes as an example, to make sure there was a follow-up. That Partial Agreement had close ties with many organisations in the field could open discount avenues there and possibly other advantages. Why not consider EUROIMAGES and their links to the cinemas;

2- when thinking about youth information, one realised it was a difficult task – communication channels were overcrowded. EYCA was pushing information in an ethical framework and maybe one should encourage members to push information, it was a channel that had been once established. States had difficulties to get information out – unless by paying to meta for this. Networks which Partial Agreement and EYCA were building were not only networks but it was also a possibility for sharing information - which could not be done on social media;

3- reflect on these two points in the work plan documents.

## **6. Implementation of the programme of activities 2023**

*PA's Work Programme 2023 [AP/Carte-J\(2022\)6](#); Report study visit "Strengthening capacities for governmental youth agendas using EYC as a tool: the case of Portugal" [AP/Carte-J \(2023\)7](#); Report seminar 'Walk the Talk' in Luxembourg [AP/Carte-J \(2023\)8](#); Upcoming seminar '[Youth as promoters of sustainability: the EYC as a tool to reinforce sustainable mobility](#)', Vitoria – Gasteiz, Spain*

The EYCA Director shared information on the implementation of the Partial Agreement's programme of activities 2023 since the Board's last meeting on 13 March 2023. He noted that 2023 programme really focused on a comprehensive approach on the best use of the card.

The board was updated about the outcomes of the Study visit for civil servants and EYCA organisations on youth policy aiming at 'Strengthening capacities for governmental youth agendas using EYC as a tool' that took place in Evora and Lisbon (Portugal) in April 2023.

The board took note of the "Walk the Talk" 50/50 seminar that was organised on 4-7 July 2023 in Luxembourg in the framework of the 2023 programme of activities of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card. The seminar offered its participants an innovative atypical interactive format, where guests were walking along a few selected Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe crossing Luxembourg accompanied by experts and simultaneously learning and exchanging about youth mobility, youth card and cultural heritage.

The reports and presentations of these events are available as reference documents as well as on-line. There was a suggestion from the Board to do evaluation of the projects that are developed.

The Head of the Youth Department welcomed an exchange of views on various good ideas and, at the same time, high-lighted the need to stay focused, for example on giving proper and practical follow-up to the co-operation with the Cultural Routes Partial Agreement. For example, following Covid pandemic, many people subscribed to new apps and they walk through push notifications. EYCA might consider looking for providers of such services in terms of cultural, walk or other activities.

The Board was also updated on the preparation of the upcoming seminar 'Youth as promoters of sustainability: the EYC as a tool to reinforce sustainable mobility' that would take place in Vitoria–Gasteiz, Spain, on 29 November-1December 2023. It was inspired by the conference on sustainability organised by the CoE-EC partnership in the field of youth (EPLM programme) on 27 February–1 March 2023.

One of the main objectives of the seminar would be to identify concrete ways to use the EYC as a means to provide young people with green and digital services in smart cities (and beyond). Vitoria–Gasteiz in the Basque country was a European green capital back in 2012 and had a strong approach on sustainable urban planning. Applications had been already received.

The Head of the Youth Department informed the Board that the Spanish Agency for Youth (INJUVE) made a remark about the forthcoming seminar in Spain (the Basque Region) that they felt that they were not part of the discussion. The context might have a local political dimension. The EYCA President (and Chair of the Board of Coordination) made a remark that Injuve was informed about the PA 2023 program in October 2022 and the possibility to organise a PA seminar in Valencia or Vitoria-Gasteiz. It would be good to have the national level of Spain more involved and part of the activities. He suggested to undertake negotiations between the secretariat, EYCA and INJUVE with that aim. The Board's Chair supported this approach.

## **7. Preparation of the programme of activities 2024**

*Work Programme 2024 [AP/Carte-J\(2023\)9](#)*

The EYCA Director presented the initial proposals for the work programme of 2024 such as a seminar 'Youth infrastructure essentials: the role of European Youth Card in advancing ecosystems for youth empowerment' planned to take place in April in Podgorica, Montenegro. The PA 50/50 planned for October 2023 in Chisinau, Moldova, would address "Peace as a prerequisite for democratic engagement: how EYC services can promote democratic values". The Director also shared ideas for the promotional video of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility that would be presented during the promotional seminar at the end of 2024 in Italy or France.

The Board suggested to use the Budapest European Youth Centre rather than go to Chisinau. In this context, the EYCA Director reminded that the places of the activities were yet suggestions and were not set in stone.

A member of the Board noted that it was important to evaluate the results of the activities and also explore a wider area of subjects and suggested to shift this year from a promotional seminar to try an innovative format of a regional project, for example, between countries of RYCO (Regional Youth Cooperation Office) or Central European Initiative; or newly joined countries (Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Greece, Romania) could host an activity in their country.

It was agreed that the Partial Agreement members would make a proposal for activities for the second part of the 2024 year with a deadline of at least 3 weeks, replacing the PA promotional seminar. This said, the Head of the Youth Department found that promotional activities for the non-member States were extremely important.

The Board members were invited to tentatively endorse the proposed work programme 2024 and note that the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility continued to address issues that were not only timely but also in line with global events, demonstrating its adaptability and relevance.

## **8. Recent and forthcoming developments in EYCA – oral report**

The EYCA Director mentioned some recent and forthcoming developments in EYCA:

- **Updates on new EYCA membership applications**

EYCA director explained that since the last meeting, EYCA had been working on new memberships in Armenia, Moldova, Switzerland, Kosovo and the Baltic countries, especially Latvia and Estonia. Various meetings with the authorities and other organisations like RYCO had been conducted in order to expand the EYCA outreach.

- **New elected EYCA Board and President**

In the last EYCA General Assembly that took place in Montenegro, a new Board and a new EYCA President were elected. The executive was now composed of Miguel Perestrello from Portugal, Monica Sala from Andorra and Jugoslav Radovic from Montenegro. The three countries were part of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card. Their mandate was for three years.

- **Upcoming projects on youth active citizenship**

EYCA was carrying out a project «Stand for More on 24» dedicated to increase the number of young people that would participate in the 2024 European elections. EYCA was reaching more than 10 million people in this process that was conducted by young people themselves.

## **9. Any other business - None**

**10. Date and place of the next meeting:** Monday 8 April 2024, Budapest

Appendix I

**Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card**

Board of Co-ordination (50<sup>th</sup> meeting)

Strasbourg, 23 October 2023

**List of participants**

**CDEJ representatives**

Rustam ABDULLAYEV (Azerbaijan)

Marina SMERNIĆ (Croatia)

Maria CHRISTODOULOU (Cyprus) *apologised*

Miriam TEUMA (Malta)

Gjorgi TASEV (North Macedonia)

Jorge Orlando QUEIROS (Portugal)

Riccardo VENTURINI (San Marino)

Ivana ANTONIJEVIĆ (Serbia) *apologised*

**CCJ representative**

Vittorio GATTARI

**EYCA representatives**

Miguel PERESTRELLO, EYCA president

Jugoslav RADOVIC, EYCA Vice President

Monica Sala, EYCA Vice President *apologised*

Jean Paul ROMEGAS, EYCA Board Member

Kristina TSANKOVA, EYCA Youth Panel

Lilly Elenkova, EYCA Bulgaria

Maria Luisa Silvestrini, EYCA Italy

EYCA office

Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director

Corina PIRVULESCU, EYCA members manager

## Appendix II

### **Tour de table on national developments** (Item 5 of the Agenda)

**Bulgaria:** EYCA in Bulgaria is an NGO. The organization has a quality label according to the European Solidarity Corps and in December 2023 expects the new volunteers from Germany and France. The main task of the volunteers is to provide quality youth information for young people in the country and Europe, as well as to support the organization's campaigns. They need to organize youth volunteer events. Ongoing youth campaigns of the organization: *More in 2024*, *We need Youth*, *Access to culture through volunteering*.

As mentioned, *More in 2024* is European campaign to engage young people in political participation, especially the upcoming European elections. EYCA Bulgaria is working with 3 young changemakers. *We need Youth campaign* is part of the implementation of the EU youth dialogue process and it is carried out in cooperation with the national youth council. It started with the Spanish presidency and will continue through the Hungarian and Belgian presidencies. *Access to culture through volunteering* is a long-term process of providing access for young people to various cultural events through volunteering, such as concerts, festivals, and etc. Last summer, during this process, a survey was also conducted related to the needs and interests of young people in the field of culture. The study was supported by Maximizing Impact program. As regards the institutional perspective: cooperation is good.

**France:** The French government left the Partial Agreement in 2006 so I speak from an NGO perspective. We have many youth cards - regional, municipal, but none of them is a European card, it's all very locally developed with no way to use it outside the region. Our priority is to work with such initiatives to add a European dimension to these existing cards. We are working on this right now and getting connections with different cities and regions. We try to increase the number of cards of varying duration - according to the age range and priority with high education institutions. We try to focus on non-students as well - in France if you consider the advantages given to young people, students have much better service than the rest of young people. So we work with the governments to increase the number of help given to such students who work and study in professional training. They are precarious and they need help. They are also less mobile than university students so we try to incentivise this mobility.

Card advantage: we try to align with the current public trend in public policy - to face the precariousness of the students (mental health, economic precariousness, digital divide), bring them new advantages in these fields. We will soon set up a national youth panel taking as an inspiration EYCA's youth panel, as it will be very useful. We work also in the promotion of the European elections with plenty partnerships with organisations.

**Montenegro:** Thanks to the Council of Europe for supporting the European Youth Card on European and national level.

The NGO Centre for Youth Education with the support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth is implementing the European Youth Card (EYC) in Montenegro from 2018. For now, young people can use more than 200 discounts in different discount categories and we will do our best to increase this number in the future. Our next goal is to become fully digital in next year avoiding

using a plastic-physical card. We are happy that the EYCA Card is recognized from the highest levels of the Government of Montenegro having in mind that it is the Program of National Interest for young people in the period 2022-2024. As coordinators of the project, we are proud of the fact that we have distributed more than 55.000 EYCA cards for now and established cooperation with different stakeholders: state institutions, universities, high schools, local municipalities, international organisations and other NGOs.

**North Macedonia:** It was a challenge the past period - because of the technical issues we have with the two institutions responsible for the implementation of the card. It is important to create communication between the two. Thanks to EYCA we have overcome this issue, so now calls to the card holders have been issued so that they can now register and use EYCA card for their own benefits, there will be a second call to young people - we are planning to work more with the benefits and discounts especially from the aspect of sports and culture, to re-establish some communication with other organisations related to culture. According to our information, we have 6000 card holders. Our target is to reach 10K - it is a normal expectation. We have solved technical issues and moved further to the digitalisation of the card (app).

**Turkiye:** The Ministry is here as an observer, since the country is considering joining the Partial Agreement. EYCA process has been going on for couple of years in the country, we have started the process to implement the youth card nationally. The market was too competitive, other cards did similar offers but without an international aspect, but they had a strong banking support. At the moment, the Ministry has a governmental programme to start the youth card in 2024. We are in close contact with EYCA office and we are willing to put together a scheme that will make EYCA card available to young people particularly in view of a big youth population in Turkiye.

**Portugal:** In Portugal there are 110K card holders. We developed in the last year a very strong survey – the biggest ever made. It gave us a lot of information about the youth population, what they want, etc. We are planning a strong restructuring of the youth card. It will happen in 2024 - offering cards for free to those finishing the obligatory school. We will enlarge a lot. We are developing new discounts, new advantages based on the ideas that were collected in the survey, as well as developing the second pillar: spreading and enrolment of the youth policies in the youth card. From the Ministry's point of view: youth card is important. One of the outcomes: 10K young people were interviewed on 12 different fields in this survey. 3 most important fields were: employment, access to healthcare, human rights and social inclusion.

**San Marino:** Our organisations said to be prepared to implement the card. The problem is that we have a small number of young people.

Note from EYCA: every single member of EYCA counts, whatever the number of cards. The main aim is to increase mobility of all young people in Europe and for that everyone counts in this project. It is not an EU project, it concerns Council of Europe members states and beyond.

**Slovenia:** The Slovenian agency is an NGO responsible for youth cards, there are partnerships with more than 100 different types of companies that function in 10 or 12 various areas: most for education, sports, culture. From the Ministry's point of view: the agency has special status of public interest in the youth field so it is eligible for public funds, it is usually within the criterias.

Note from Portugal: we are very enthusiastic about Slovenia, we work closely with higher education to co-grant student cards.

**Italy:** Italian card is part of EYCA, there are 2 million cards in Italy now, but we are not part of the Partial Agreement yet, we have started with a national youth card and that is why we have a different age validity: from 18-35 (EYCA's age goes from 18-30), so we are not covering the age of 14-18 at the national level. The reason is the application we use which you can only get when you turn 18. Two regions are part of EYCA (Lazio and Sardinia) that were members as national counterparts before Italy joined EYCA as a country.

They are proposing a Mediterranean roots project (Group 5 connected to the Balkans) aimed at developing more sustainable mobility and eco-friendly discounts between Mediterranean countries.

**Croatia:** The youth card is implemented by a youth organisation that also manages youth hostels. In recent years the number of cards has been decreasing especially during the covid times, now there are 1600 cardholders. The card proposes 86 different discounts. Supporting youth mobility is one of Croatia's priorities.

**Malta:** Maltese youth card is EYCA member for a long time. Currently it is managed by the Maltese Agency for Youth. We give cards for free, but not to everyone (it would reduce its value). People need to apply. We do not focus on discounts but on the mobility part, we have few businesses who could offer discounts. We promote the card as a mobility card and a way to get young people out and using the card and using discounts which are available in other countries. We encourage Maltese young people to be part of the EYCA Youth Panel. And we always engage in the projects that EYCA is doing, like European elections, etc. Eurodesk and ERYICA are in the same agency which has its benefits since we do a lot of projects together.

**EYCA Youth Panel:** Youth Panel is a statutory body of EYCA which includes 11 people. We connect the European youth with the EYCA card, give opportunities from young people to young people, a lot of representation activities in the Council of Europe activities and seminars. We also are in the process of organising our own project with the goal to conduct a rural youth camp in April next year. We have conducted a questionnaire with the aim to have a small study on rural youth.