



AP/Carte-J(2026)PV55

Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card 55th meeting of the Board of Co-ordination

**Wednesday 25 March 2026
14.30-18.30
European Youth Centre Budapest
Plenary Room**

Report

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Board's Chair, Miguel Perestrello (EYCA President). A round of introductions took place. Following the elections, the chairmanship moved to Liliya Elenkova (CDEJ, Bulgaria). The list of participants appears in Appendix 1.

2. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers' Resolution ResAP(2003)1, the Board of Co-ordination elected Liliya Elenkova as its Chair for 2026 and Miguel Perestrello as its Vice-Chair till the end of his duties as EYCA President in June 2026.

3. Adoption of the agenda

AP/Carte-J(2026)OJ55, annotated agenda

The Board of Co-ordination adopted the agenda of its current meeting as it appears in document AP/Carte-J(2026)OJ55.

4. Report of the 54th meeting of the Board of Co-ordination

AP/Carte-J(2025)PV54 and ad hoc; AP/Carte-J(2026)1

The Board of Co-ordination took note of the report of its 53rd meeting as it appears in documents AP/Carte-J(2025)PV54 and AP/Carte-J(2025)PV54_ad hoc.

5. Financial situation of the Partial Agreement – exchange of views with the financial services AP/Carte-J(2026)3; PPP

The Board of Co-ordination on several occasions raised the need to understand the calculation method used for the PAYM, possibilities to increase its budget and actions needed to be taken. For that purpose, an on-line exchange of views with the representatives of the Budget Division of the Directorate of Programme and Budget of the Council of Europe was organised during the current meeting.

A power-point presentation preceded a questions-and-answers session and started with general explanations about the Council of Europe budget. The Committee of Ministers Resolution (1994)31 is a basis to calculate the scales of contributions of member States. It applies to the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe as well as to the partial agreements. According to this Resolution, there are two criteria to calculate the scales of contributions.

The first criterion is population. For this criterion, the secretariat uses information from independent sources such as the UN statistical database for this kind of data. Also, an average population and an average GDP of each member State are calculated over a specified three-year period. For example, the rate of 2026 is based on the period of 2021-2023.

The Resolution also sets minimum and maximum rates for the ordinary budget. But for the partial agreements it is possible to fix the minimum and maximum rates on an ad hoc basis, taking into account particular circumstances (this is the case for the UN CARP¹). If major contributors are part of a partial agreement, then there happens an equalisation of the rates.

The last important point is the fact that these scales are updated every year. So, there might be differences from one year to another depending on the evolution of the population and/or the GDP compared to the other States - members of a partial agreement.

The slide with the final rates of contributions for the partial agreements for 2026 shows that a minimum rate is 2.7342% and a maximum rate is 35%, but none is going up to this maximum. As regards the PAYM, a minimum rate is applied. In addition, PAYM does not have major contributors.

The Head of the Budget Section took over the presentation, briefly touching on the budget and the evolution of the budget over the last few years, since 2022 for the PAYM, and then passing on to the explanation on how these amounts could move or change, which was the part that the Board of co-ordination was particularly interested in.

The budget is approved by the Committee of Ministers and is restricted to member States of the partial agreement concerned, in this case, the PAYM. The budget proposal comes from the Secretary General. Over the recent years, it has been adjusted for inflation, which is the same with all of the budgets over this period, and also for any accessions or withdrawals. Inflation over the past few years has been of a reasonable amount, but obviously there has also been an equivalent increase in costs for both staff and operational expenditure.

When a new member State accedes to a partial agreement, the budget is increased, and if a member State withdraws, the budget is decreased by the scale of that State's contribution to the budget using the rates mentioned in the previous slides. The PAYM had several accessions over the mentioned period and one withdrawal this year (1 January 2026). All the States that have joined recently are relatively small member States bringing a relatively small increase to the budget.

The budget for 2026-2027 was approved at the end of 2025. Year 2026 was approved on a standard basis. Year 2027 was approved on a provisional basis, meaning that the Committee of Ministers will come back to this budget during 2026 to adjust it for some technical changes, which will include the real inflation rate for any additional accessions and withdrawals.

For the PAYM budget, the expenditure mainly goes to the grant agreement with the EYCA (for the implementation of the work programme), there's some travel expenditure and 0.25 of an obligatory

¹ Centralised Accounting and Reporting Platform (CARP)

administrative support of the Council of Europe within the budget. Thus, a relatively small contribution goes to other activities outside of the grant.

Regarding a possible increase in resources of the PAYM and how its budget could be increased, there are a number of possibilities. One, and perhaps the one that needs least discussion within the Committee of Ministers or other bodies, is voluntary contributions from members. Contributions can be given to the Partial Agreement for either a particular activity or for support of the Partial Agreement's work.

Another possibility is to review the expenditure within the Partial Agreement. This said, given that the budget is very limited, the review would also be quite limited. But one could try to see if there's any other way to split the activities of the Agreement or split the budget.

A further way is new accessions. This is obviously the best way because it is sustainable funding. It's foreseeable and also shows additional commitment of member States.

As already mentioned, the PAYM has no major contributors, which means that the contributions or recent accessions have not led to a significant increase to the budget of the Partial Agreement. So, the status of a new acceding state (major or ordinary contributor) would influence an increase to the budget which, finally, leads to an increase of the overall budget. This would need to be done in line with the strategy of the youth sector and of the Organisation.

The member States would need to support the increase in the budget which could be voted and approved within the Committee of Ministers.

Following the end of the presentation, **the Chair opened the floor for questions and comments.**

The representative of Luxembourg was surprised at the difference in budgets between the PAYM and other Partial Agreements with less member states and no major contributors either. She referred as an example to the Major Hazards Partial Agreement which possessed for 2026 the overall budget of around 652,000€ compared to the budget of the PAYM, which was under 100,000€. She asked an explanation for the main reason of this difference.

The answer to this question was that, basically, the main reason for the size of the budget is often historical, depending on when the budget was started, when the Partial Agreement was started. The majority of the budgets have evolved from their starting position and then depended on accessions and withdrawals with the budget increasing or decreasing. The budget also depends on the activities carried out by the Partial Agreement, as well as on what is behind the statute of the Partial Agreement and what activities it intends to carry out.

The budget is usually aligned with those activities. It was quite difficult to compare the partial agreements because their nature and their scope are different and what they are aiming at. Usually, the budget is also based on what is expected to be done by the Partial Agreement. This last explanation provoked a question of precision: if, for example, for 2027 the Board of Coordination decided to propose six activities instead of the usual three, would that mean that the Board of Coordination could ask the Committee of Ministers – through the Secretary General - for a double budget for that year.

The answer was that indeed the annual budget was generally based on the previous year's budget, and it was quite exceptional to have any significant changes to that. The change could be based on the change in activities driven by priorities of the organisation. It should be supported by the PA's member States, proposed through the Secretary General to the Committee of Ministers which would

take a decision based on an overall prioritisation of the Council of Europe's budgets and member States' priorities.

The EYCA Director asked two questions. The first was linked to the question of the Luxembourg representative: whether the maximum (or the minimum) rate was fixed by the member States and whether this could be changed upon agreement of the member States. A supplementary question was whether a minimum/a middle or a maximum rate was applied to all member States of the same Partial Agreement, or each country had its own individual rate within the same Partial Agreement.

The reply was that the rates, including the maximum rate, for the Partial Agreement can be decided by that Partial Agreement's member States sitting in the Committee of Ministers. But also, the rates depend on the methods that split the overall budget. The same rate is applied to all member States of a given Partial Agreement, and not on an individual basis.

His second question was about the meaning of the equalisation of the rates of major contributions. Regarding the equalisation of the rates, the secretariat applies the average of the population and of the GDP for each of the four big payers to the (ordinary) budget to make sure that in the end they will all pay the same rate.

And in partial agreements, for example, if there are two major contributors, the secretariat would first do the calculation based on the GDP and the population and then would equalise the two rates to make sure that the major contributors pay the same amount. As regards PAYM, this equalisation does not impact it at the moment as there are no major contributors. This was done historically whenever major contributors were members. Thus, the overall envelope is allocated among member States without the increase of the budget.

The Head of the Youth Department asked a question for clarification whether the Committee of Ministers in its restricted composition to the members of the Partial Agreement could decide to increase the budget autonomously or this has to be done in the overall evolution of the budget of the Organisation. The reply was that this could be done within the Council of Europe's programme and budgetary cycle, for example adjustments were to be done for 2027, so, theoretically, the proposal could be presented in 2026 for the year 2027, as part of the overall budgetary proposal of the Secretary General. It would need to be supported by member States concerned, as well as by the Secretariat. So, this was a coordinated approach.

The representative of Greece asked for a clearer answer on whether the PA member States were autonomous in their decision for a possible budgetary increase, or not.

In other words, the budgetary proposal for a given cycle is a multi-stage process in the Council of Europe. There is a proposal of the Secretary-General, say, for the next budget period for 2028-2031, in which every partial agreement gets a number and that's the starting point. The decision on that number is then verified by the Committee of Ministers with the parties that are members of that particular partial agreement. But the overall framework is set before by the Secretary-General and then confirmed by the Committee of Ministers in the composition of the members of the partial agreement.

The next question concerned voluntary contributions. The presenters replied that if a member State wished to give a voluntary contribution to the PAYM, a contract would be drawn up between the contributor and directly the PAYM based on either a specific project or general support to the functioning of the Partial Agreement. The secretariat of PAYM noted that the practice of in-hand voluntary contributions, either by the relevant national ministries or EYCA member organisations, existed from the start of the intergovernmental activities in 2013, as the latter covered meals and accommodation for the participants; the EYCA grant could only cover their international travel.

The Board returned to the question of finding the starting point of the process of reconsideration of the actual PAYM's budget.

The scheme would be the following: in the approach to the next four-year programme and budget cycle 2028-2031, there will be an initial discussion on priorities, which the Secretary-General initially hold, formally and informally, with member states to learn and discuss their priorities for the next four-year Council of Europe programme. Then, internally, there is a call for priorities from each of the Directorates General (DGs) of the Organisation, where they get together and present the priorities as they see them for 2028-2031. So, in the case of the PAYM, it would be part of DG2's priorities discussion if the PAYM wishes to put forward an increase in its budget for the next four years.

These priorities, obviously, are fed by the interest of member States, and the activities that are being done or would be done in future. The various priorities then get regrouped and presented again to the Secretary-General, who will analyse them based on his conversations with the member States (Committee of Ministers) and the input from the Directorates General.

He then gives an initial indication of his preliminary proposals for priorities in a framework document circulated to the Committee of Ministers (CM) before summer. Member States are expected to provide their feedback on these proposals, particularly on the point whether the national priorities coincide with the Secretary General's priorities. On the basis of that input the secretariat prepares a draft programme and budget, which is discussed at the meetings of the CM Rapporteur Group on Programme and Budget (GR-PBA). A compromise proposal should be finalised by the end of November when the budget is approved.

In conclusion, as regards PAYM, step1 is prioritisation within the DG2; step2 is the approval by the Secretary General, step3 is consideration and decision by the CM.

The Chair thanked the secretariat of the Budget Division for their presentation and time and released them. She opened the floor for an **internal debriefing** following the above exchange of views.

The representative of Austria expressed his gratitude for the presentation and the exchange of views; they clarified certain issues. The question was now on actions in order to advance. One of the strategies should be visibility of the PAYM, particularly to the Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg. This also included regular personal contacts between the CDEJ representatives and their relevant Ambassadors. Only by becoming visible and proving the added value the PAYM and its Board would have a chance of influencing the next budget cycle.

Another issue is the variable geometry of structures in the relationship between the Partial Agreement and EYCA: case one, when a country is both member of the PAYM and EYCA; case two, when a country is member of the PAYM but not member of EYCA; and case three: when a country is not member of the PAYM but is member of EYCA. In order to advance with further accessions to the PAYM, one needs to be confident about the added value of these structures. This variable geometry prompts reasonable questions about the rationale behind it and the value of being or not being a the PAYM's member.

The representative of Portugal found interesting the explanation of the calculation method for contributions, particularly that contributions to the EYF, the PAYM and the EPAS come from the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs ensuring the payment of the obligatory national contribution to the budget of the Council of Europe. In this context, he wondered whether it would be helpful to have a feasibility study on the solutions, technical and political, to increase the PAYM's budget. Four solutions were mentioned: voluntary contributions,

reshuffling of expenditure within the budgetary envelope, accessions and, finally, increase of the budgetary envelope. To reach most of them, there is a need for a more aggressive communication, like advocacy campaigns. There is a need to offer attractive programmes to convince the Secretary General to support the request for the budgetary increase.

There is also a need to convince administrations internally and thus the need for advocacy, including coming from the national youth cards towards national authorities, for example through meetings between the contributing ministry/body and the relevant youth card organisation, and this should be on the agenda of the Board's meetings, and then taken to the highest national political level possible. If the budget request comes from top down, the operational level of the ministry will follow suit.

The representative of San Marino gave as an example individual people who managed to increase their budget through communication/blogs in internet. In his opinion, fair play was a good theme to promote through the European Youth Card. He also suggested to work on developing an identity of the European Youth Card holder.

The representative of Greece said that the youth mobility was an important question for her country and personally for herself. She still thought that no clear explanation was given to the question of a big difference of the calculation rates between the four Partial Agreements mentioned in the reference document, and why they started from a better rate than the PAYM, and that unfair disbalance continues to persist and that was a problem, a problem for stability, for the development of the work programme, for the image, for the attraction of new member States.

The representative of Slovenia linked the discussion to the youth organisations who always complain about the budget independently of the amount they receive as support from the government. They think content should follow the money, whereas it's the money which should follow the content. In his opinion, the situation is similar in this case. He asked himself what was the most that the Board could do with the budget already available, particularly visibility and actions/activities for young people. The Board should develop for the PAYM a good programme. He considered that for 2026 the Board has developed a very good work programme, and this should continue. If the budgetary appropriations will not cover all the good proposals in the plan, the Board should seek another opportunity, think outside the box, or adapt the programme, and then react on the political level.

The EYCA Director said that the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card has always been one of the strategic points for EYCA in the international relationships. First of all, because not all EYCA members are EU members, which means that their connection to the youth policy and the youth sector is coming through the Council of Europe. Second, because not all EYCA members are part of the Erasmus+ programmes. So, they also need other ways to connect to the youth mobility. And also, one should not forget that the values that the Council Europe is defending are also those values on which EYCA was created at the very end of the 1980s. So, that's the reason for EYCA to have a very, very strong Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility. EYCA believes in youth mobility and in co-operation with governments, and a lot of excellent co-operation has been developed step-by-step, it is this co-operation that makes the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility successful.

This is the reason that EYCA has tried to put a lot of efforts into the Partial Agreement activities, Council of Europe Youth Campaigns, since EYCA enjoys a stable financial situation, it has been able to bring in an important financial support.

The advantage of the PAYM is also that it is institutionally linked with an NGO – EYCA – which possesses flexibility a governmental body cannot have. The Partnership between EYCA and PAYM makes the latter also flexible.

If the Board cares to develop co-operation with other Partial Agreements, to put efforts into attracting new member States, it needs to invest financial resources. The EYCA Director considered that all member States could agree to contribute a bit higher rate than right now. And indeed, the Board should work on higher visibility. Work has been continuously done on visibility, but additional and coordinated effort would be needed.

Another important issue is the need to work on a strategy to increase the membership of the Partial Agreement and attract countries who are not yet members, like Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Germany, etc. Also, such processes also benefit from a cascade effect, there is a need to create this effect. For this, it is important to know political priorities of member States and take them also into account.

The Head of the Youth Policy Division stressed that in order to succeed with the request for an increased budget, there should be a strong and consolidated signal from the Board and all Partial Agreement members. For that communication and contacts with relevant ambassadors would be really important. Voluntary contributions might be the easiest solution. Several representatives said that their national administrations will not be able currently to provide voluntary contributions.

The Chair pointed out that the most difficult task is to include contributions into the Ministerial budget, but once that is done, there are no more questioning about it and payments flow automatically. To succeed in this initial step, one should use solid and clear evidence as the basis. One such evidence could be that the work of the Partial Agreement has an important impact for young people. In the Chair's opinion, Such impact is clearly reflected in the processes of collecting, analysing and evaluating the results of the events carried out under the Partial Agreement by the EYCA office.

The Board has not yet discussed or decided how to effectively analyse, assess and use this data. This needs to be determined, particularly that the evaluation questionnaire for participants of the Partial Agreement's events will be used on a regular basis now. Based on this feedback, the Board could determine the impact; based on the impact, the governmental representatives can defend the increase of the budget. Also, the Partial Agreement should show more visibly its links to the strategic goals of the youth sector and the Council of Europe, including when presenting the narrative annual report. This report could be used for a general analysis and a general assessment.

The Chair also agreed that the Partial Agreement is a strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and EYCA: it is a platform for networking between member States themselves, EYCA representatives themselves but, even more crucial – between member States and youth card organisations which represent civil society.

In conclusion, the Chair evaluated the Board's feedback as very fruitful and enriching, with some directions to be followed closely in the near future.

6. Implementation of the work programme 2026 – update

AP/Carte-J(2026)2; AP/Carte-J(2026)4

Following the Board's discussions of the research review of the Partial Agreement's functioning in the period 2013-2025, a **model evaluation** for any Partial Agreement's activity to be distributed to the selected participants in advance was prepared. The Board approved the questions in the model

evaluation as they appear in document AP/Carte-J(2026)2 and added two more: “*How did you learn about the Partial Agreement’s event?*” and “*How do you evaluate the methodology used during the event?*”.

As regards a **desk research on the current/new meanings of youth mobility in Europe** - one of the three activities of the PAYM’s work programme 2026, the Board agreed to publish a call for tenders without change as it appears in document AP/Carte-J(2026)4.

The first presential activity of the PAYM’s work programme 2026 will be a **promotional seminar “Renewing commitment to youth mobility”, Bucharest, Romania**. Ms. Lavinia Sandra Tănase, a new Romanian representative to the statutory bodies, representing the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity of Romania, provided additional information. The Board agreed to move the activity from April 2026 to the second part of the year.

The second event is planned to be a conference in Bulgaria, organised in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Chair, who is also a representative of Bulgaria, confirmed that the event is included in the Ministry’s budget and is scheduled for late September or early October 2026.

The secretariat recalled that at the Board’s meeting in November 2025, the Board wished that a **promotional event of the PAYM for the Permanent Representations of the Council of Europe** and asked if the Board wanted to start already in 2026; if yes, the secretariat asked for indications as to the modalities. This was particularly important in view of previous discussions on visibility and communication.

The Board was of the opinion that the promotional event should take place this year (October 2026) for an hour or two, for all the permanent representatives of the Council of Europe, in an informal way but at the same time with a formal status, and in conjunction with the statutory bodies of the youth sector, including the Board’s meeting. The focus might be on the presentation of the results of the desk research on new meanings of youth mobility in Europe.

With regard to the reporting of activities under the Partial Agreement, the Chair that the report should primarily contain data directly related to the activities of the Agreement for which funding has been provided. This will help to analyse and assess the direct link between the events carried out and the impact of the public funds allocated. In addition, related activities that have a direct or indirect influence may also be reported.

7. Expansion perspectives of the Partial Agreement – oral update

The Board was updated on the on-going negotiations with Albania and Italy. It would be great to have an official ceremony of Albania joining the Partial Agreement during the EYCA Conference/General Assembly in June in Albania this year. The EYCA Director will go to Roma after the catholic Easter to meet a new Head of the Youth Department, particularly that Italy is currently the country with the most European youth card holders (over 3 million) including for people between 30 and 35 years old. And the Ministry is very committed.

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

The Board proceeded with a traditional update on recent developments in the implementation of youth mobility policies and/or European Youth Card scheme on national level (also see the link to the table for information).

Update of EYCA's regional group 1 composed of **Andorra, France, Portugal and Spain:**

Andorra: the European Youth Card in Andorra is implemented by the Carnet Jove Andorra which is a non-profit entity under the form of an association of members (the Government of Andorra and the seven councils or parishes). The opportunities offered to card-holders are divided into discounts, experiences, network activities and useful information. These opportunities work under a collaborative model. The card membership in Andorra is growing – over 10 000 young card-holders in 2025 which is more than 60 percent of the young population in Andorra.

France (non-member of the Partial Agreement): The Association Innovation Jeunesse Découverte (Association IJD France) is the European Youth Card implementer in France. Currently it is developing two strategies on the municipality level. Many municipalities have a European youth card following the example of Portugal, which has a lot of municipality youth cards, as well as simultaneously working with the regions.

Spain: the youth card is developed by the Spanish regions; 19 youth card organisations are members of EYCA. Cards differ in their policy on the age, costs, co-branding policy, offers, etc. The majority of regions are increasing both the numbers of youth card holders and activities and partnerships linked to the cards; in some cases, they have a very, very strong policy programmes within the regions.

Portugal (CDEJ): the youth card is developed in Portugal by Movijovem or Movi, and is free for young people, which means that there was a massive increase of young card-holders. The youth card in Portugal is very connected to the network of hostels. Movi has a program called intra-rail, which helps young people to use the train through the country free-of-charge. In Portugal the Youth Mobility Strategy is implemented through Movi, and the European Youth Card is a central tool for youth policy on mobility.

The number of valid cards has reached 225,000 by the end of 2025, supported by major government initiatives, and one of them is “walk/come and meet Portugal”, which has enabled more than 30,000 young people to travel across the country using free transport and accommodation. From 2026 onwards, participation in this program requires holding a youth card.

Movi has expanded partnerships in areas with strong social impact, most notably with the Portuguese Psychologist Association, providing over 3,000 mental health consultations to more than 500 card holders.

Finally, a key structural updates include a new validity model - cards for minors now remain valid until the age of 18, and cards for young adults - until the age of 30, as well as the launch of the third edition of Plataforma Jota (Platform J), which is kind of a youth panel, enhancing youth participation in strategic activities.

Movi will also commemorate significant milestones in 2026: 35 years of Movi and 40 years of the youth card, marked by national and international events, involving public and private stakeholders. Movi's governance has also evolved with the appointment of a new president by the Minister of culture, youth and sports.

Update of EYCA's regional group 2 composed of **Bulgaria, Romania, Rep. Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Poland, Kazakhstan:**

Bulgaria (CDEJ): EYCA Bulgaria continues its partnership with the National Youth Council of Bulgaria about the EU dialogue project. In that regard, different events will be organised across the

country, in schools, to promote dialogue, but also the European Solidarity Corps. Also, EYCA in Bulgaria applies for a new cohort of volunteers under the European Solidarity Corp. Now the plan is to try cooperation with some municipalities across the country to promote the municipal cards.

Romania: Nine years ago, the current European Youth Card Romania took the project over from scratch. Since then, the constant community of card holders in Romania has grown to 45 000. The strategic aim is to engage with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity: it's a long process; the discussions have been going on for five years already. The idea of working together with the Ministry is to have the European Youth Card officially recognised as the national youth card in Romania. There is also work with a private partner to help with the distribution network. There are good perspectives for possible co-operation with Eurodesk.

Georgia: Tbilisi City Hall's Sports and Youth Centre is a municipal organisation founded by the Tbilisi Municipality City Hall responsible for the development of the European Youth Card in Georgia. The card was officially launched in 2025. The organisation has recently been finally successful in signing an agreement with the Bank of Georgia, which is the biggest bank in the country.

Update of EYCA's regional group 3 composed of: **Austria, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Luxembourg:**

Austria (CDEJ): the European Youth Card Austria is in charge of the European Youth Card in Austria for young people between the ages of 12 and 30. The organisation is part of the National Network of Austrian youth information centres which offer a variety of information on the spot and free of charge such as work, travel or leisure activities. The Austrian Youth Information Centres are a national member organisation of EYCA, ERYICA and EURODESK. More information is provided in the relevant table (also available on the restricted website).

Germany: there is a new municipality youth card in Germany - the Berlin Youth Card, i.e. simultaneously a German Youth Card and the European Youth Card, this is new since one month. This is not the first time in EYCA's work that municipality youth cards are co-branded with the European Youth Card, for example in Spain, in Portugal, in Romania (for ex. A Bucharest Youth Card), but this is the first time this concerns a big capital like Berlin in terms of the significance of the city and in terms of tourism, and EYCA is very proud of this achievement. The development process is just at its start. This said around 2,000 youth cards are already in place. If it flies, it could be an excellent encouragement for other EYCA members and municipalities. For example, the government of Catalonia would like to establish a municipality youth card with Barcelona.

Update of EYCA's regional group 4 composed of **Estonia and the UK (Scotland):**

Group 4 currently consists of two countries – Estonia and Scotland, UK - however, hopefully the third one – Ireland – will join soon.

Estonia: Koolisüsteemide OÜ is an Estonian company founded in 2008, specialising in issuing smart cards for educational institutions, which is now responsible for the development of the European Youth Card in Estonia. The new organisation is exactly in the process of creation of a new card. The regional group 4 meeting is in May; there will be more news about their progress.

Scotland, UK: the European Youth Card is implemented in Scotland by the organisation called “Young Scott” which is Scotland's national youth information and citizenship charity. The Young Scot National Entitlement Card is a free smartcard issued to young people, aged 11-25, through schools and local councils. It connects young people to a wide range of services including access to discounts, rewards, school meals, concessionary travel, library services and proof of age. It is an

essential item for any young person in Scotland, including underprivileged young people (poverty-stricken, asylum-seekers, in public care). Different communities of young people across Scotland can access different services with the Young Scot cards – and this is a particular pride for the organisation.

This said, from the Young Scot perspective, it provides not only local or regional services but also universal services - across Europe for discounts and opportunities. With 900,000 Young Scot cardholders and Scotland's only dedicated online content platform for all young people, it's very much part of the infrastructure in Scotland.

The Young Scot representative found it very interesting to take part in the current meeting's discussions. She noted that the Young Scot does a lot of work to try and engage with the United Kingdom government to encourage them to think about the Partial Agreement. Even if that decision is not part of the competencies of Scotland, the Young Scot is part of the Scottish Advisory Forum on Europe, and being part of that forum, the Young Scot did work to influence the UK government, for example, to reintroduce Erasmus+.

The Young Scot has already launched a new app and is moving in that direction. The Charity has also just finalised its delivery plan for the next financial year with the priorities remaining fundamentally the same in terms of the services that the Young Scot provides in relation to the card. Young people are actively participating to drive change, as the Young Scot does a lot of work around participation and information provision. A new priority for the Young Scot in the new strategy is around young people leading innovation for social good. And here building evidence, data and insight, as mentioned in this meeting earlier, are particularly important to ensure that the ongoing dialogue with young people really leads to meeting their evolving needs in the services that the organisation provides, but also enabling space and conditions needed for innovation. And the Young Scot strives to make sure that it is itself at the forefront of that together with young people.

Update of EYCA's regional group 5 composed of: **Albania, Italy, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Kosovo², North Macedonia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Group's representative said that it was not easy to get updates from all 15 members, but they worked really well together and there was potential for stronger co-operation thanks to the growing importance of digital environment, especially the new EYCA app. The EYCA Director added that co-operation with RYCO is of additional benefit, EYCA has a memorandum of understanding with RYCO. In addition, EYCA is now also part of the Advisory Board of RYCO. Two weeks ago, EYCA Office and RYCO had a meeting in Tirana to see ways in which RYCO can help to develop the European Youth Card schemes in the countries of its membership.

Montenegro: The European Youth Card is implemented in Montenegro by Center for Youth Education with the institutional and strategic support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, on behalf of the Government of Montenegro. The Center for Youth Education is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political youth organisation, founded in Podgorica in 2009, with the aim of supporting, affirming and encouraging young people to strengthen activism, volunteerism, mobility and non-formal education. It is an active member of three European networks: EYCA, Social Impact Award (SIA) and Euclid Network (EN) and has a voluntary club with more than 50 members.

The youth card project in Montenegro has been, for the last six years, labelled as a programme of national interest, including for the period of 2025-2027. This has been a big success, not only for

² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

the Youth Card organisation, but also for the Ministry and particularly the Directorate for Youth and Cooperation with NGOs. This label ensures not only the budget but also connections and influence with other partners in order to support the youth card to grow stronger.

It is important to stress that the European Youth Card is not only a discount tool, but a tool which connects young people with information, mobility, education, employability, digital services, including through an official website of the Center for Youth Education, and an international MyEYCA app.

The European Youth Card has helped in creating a more youth-friendly ecosystem in Montenegro. Especially this happened because the European Youth Card programme has connected the different actors around one common goal: improving services and opportunities for young people in our country. In practice, this means cooperation with ministries, with local municipalities, with local authorities, high schools and universities, companies and international organisations. All of them report benefits of being included in the programme. So, our idea was to have a really strong national programme with various focuses which is particularly connected with youth policies in our country, so well beyond the discounts. For this reason, the impact of the card is wider than the card itself. So, for young people, it means easier access to opportunities and useful services.

For institutions, it means a practical channel of communication and a bridge to reach many more young people than before and also to support them and to identify their needs. For companies, it means a concrete way to be socially responsible and more youth-friendly in different terms. And for youth organisations and youth actors, it means a stronger platform for cooperation and joint action. In conclusion, at this moment there are over 60,000 active card holders (since 2018 over 105 000 cards have been distributed) in Montenegro. Last but not least, Podgorica was selected a European Youth Capital for 2028.

Italy has an excellent development in terms of growth – over 2 million cards.

There are some challenges in **Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia**. EYCA would like to continue to strengthen their development also with their license holders and, of course, with institutions supporting them. Also, a good way to provide impetus is to organise different events in these countries, like, for ex. a Partial Agreement's seminar "Youth ecosystems essentials: the role of EYC in advancing ecosystems for youth empowerment", 29-31 May 2024, Podgorica, or like this June EYCA's Conference and General Assembly in Tirana, and previously in Pristina and in Italy.

BiH (CDEJ): PRONI Center for Youth Development holds the license for the European Youth Card but currently the implementation is at a standstill. The Ministry of Civil Affairs is trying to solve this issue by taking over the license from PRONI and organising an open call for another NGO to take over. Financial support is problematic because of complex internal laws and procedures. The Ministry is in contact with colleagues from Montenegro in order to see how their experience can be used in BiH.

Greece (CDEJ): the European Youth Card in Greece is issued and developed by the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation. The Foundation was established in 2011 and resulted from the merger of the National Youth Foundation, the Institute for Continuing Adult Education and Institute for Youth. Some of the most important collaborations are the following: Hellenic Railways Organisation (TRAINOSE), Organisation of Urban Transportation of Thessaloniki (OASTH), Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Ministry of National Defence, Post-secondary Education Centres, Hellenic Chamber of Hotels.

In Greece young people aged 13 - 30 can apply online for a European Youth Card to get discounts on products and services in various sectors, such as education, entertainment, tourism and

transport. The card is valid for one year, at a cost of 10€. As for 2026, there was an idea to organise a Partial Agreement event in Greece; maybe this will be possible next year.

9. Recent and forthcoming developments in EYCA – oral update

EYCA President and EYCA Director informed the Board of the Regional meetings taking place in the month of May in advance of the EYCA Conference and General Assembly in Tirana, Albania, in June 2026. A new EYCA Board will be elected at the General Assembly in Tirana. Another important development is the Code of conduct which will be also adopted at the General Assembly. EYCA members will also discuss the question of finding a balance between EYCA's very decentralized system on the one hand, and the need to uphold a common branding, on the other.

In terms of numbers, there are already 9.6 million young card-holders (600 000 more since the last Board's meeting in November) and around 24 000 in terms of the advantage opportunities and discounts.

The EYCA Board met on 24-25 February 2026 in Brussels to review recent developments and plan the organization's next steps. A key part of the discussions focused on the results of the annual EYCA Member Survey, which provided valuable insights into achievements to date and areas for improvement. The Board also discussed plans for future initiatives, covering areas such as technology, cost reductions, the Maximising Impact program, and many others.

The Maximising Impact seminar which followed the Board's meeting (25-27 February 2026, Brussels) focused on youth panels and youth participation. Members showed keen interest in youth panels, while members of Youth Panels and organisations shared ideas, experiences, and practical advice on making youth participation truly meaningful. Discussions covered both European and local perspectives, focusing on how to involve young people in decisions that actually matter. A central theme was the shift from consultation to co-creation, to ensure that young people do not simply share their ideas but actively contribute to shaping projects and policies.

Youth panels like Plataforma J in Portugal or youth ambassadors (like ERYICA has) have awoken a lot of interest among EYCA members. It was decided that the next annual EYCA Maximising Impact Seminar organised will be dedicated to this topic, particularly that several member organisations are at different stages of creation of a youth panel. Some are closer to the aim, like for example, Slovenia or Sardinia; some are in the process. The Italian government, apparently, wanted to create a youth consultancy body too.

Updates on the EYCA youth panel: One of the most important recent projects of EYCA Youth Panel is "Your Voice Hour 2030" which had invited young people to share messages on their most pressing concerns, particularly in the framework of the European Union currently shaping policies that will define the next decade: the future EU budget, the next EU Youth Strategy, initiatives on housing and broader socioeconomic priorities. At a moment when vitally important, long-term decisions are being made, it is imperative that the lived realities of young people today are taken into account.

More than 2030 young people responded to the call. The full policy report is available at the following link: <https://eyca.org/blog/your-voice-our-2030-policy-report>. Information on the results of this survey is also available in Appendix 2 to this report.

The EYCA Youth Panel and Young Creators met in Ghent, Belgium, for an intensive working weekend, transforming the voices of young people into concrete recommendations and creative productions aimed at influencing European policies. At the heart of their work was the Your Voice, Our 2030 campaign. On the creative front, the Young Creators helped bring these results to life.

They transformed the messages into videos and visual content addressing themes such as democracy, housing, mental health, and social media.

These productions were presented in Brussels on the Monday following the weekend meeting, at an event at the European Commission. The youth panel presented its policy recommendations, while all participants contributed to formulating ideas to guide the future European youth strategy, ensuring that young people's perspectives are central to European policy discussions. Together, the youth panel and the Young Creators ensured that young people's voices were not only documented, but also seen, heard, and understood.

10. Any other business

For lack of time, Ms. Rocio CERVERA, Deputy Executive Director of the Partial Agreement of the North-South Centre (Lisbon) made a short presentation of the main objectives of the Centre at the end of the CMJ meeting the same afternoon. It was not possible to discuss avenues for possible co-operation, including contacts with Moroccan and Tunisian authorities, at the current meeting.

As regards an update on co-operation with the Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) in the framework of the youth perspective, the Board was informed that a Working Group on Youth Participation in the Cultural Routes met for the first time in Luxembourg on 16 March 2026 to review the current status and forms of youth participation in the routes with an aim to make proposals for a medium-term development process in the programme and in the cultural routes. The group brought together representatives of the Advisory Council on Youth and youth leaders active in the Cultural Routes.

The Chair noted with concern that the representatives of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility were not invited to be part of that Working Group despite previous fruitful and promising co-operation. The Board agreed that she will take initiative to address the secretariat with this inquiry.

As regards an update on possible co-operation with the EDQM, the EDQM Communication and Events Department has been preparing a strategic project on enhanced engagement with civil society and youth. The Youth Department's secretariat will follow on this.

11. Date and place of the next meeting

The Chair recalled that the current meeting's time-slot, i.e. a Wednesday afternoon, was a test. Other options were still on the table: Monday evening after a CDEJ meeting at 18.30-20.00 or an on-line format. The Board decided that Wednesday afternoons was the optimal solution.

Consequently, the next Board's meeting will take place in the framework of the statutory bodies on Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 14.30-18.00.

APPENDIX 1

List of participants

Governmental representatives

Markus WOLF (Austria)
Liliya ELENKOVA (Bulgaria)
Konstantina PISLI (Greece)
Enikő VARGA-VÉGVÁRI (Hungary)
Charlotte LOASO (Luxembourg)
Jorge QUEIROS (Portugal)
Riccardo VENTURINI (San Marino)
Igor JESIH (Slovenia)

Guests

Kemal SALIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Darko STOJANOVIC (Montenegro)
Lavinia Sandra TĂNASE (Romania)

EYCA representatives

Miguel PERESTRELLO, EYCA President
Manel SANCHEZ, EYCA Director
Corina PIRVULESCU, EYCA Program and Membership Manager
Mihai TAPALAGA, EYCA Romania
Martina URBASEK, EYCA Slovakia - apologised
Hilary KID, EYCA Scotland
Jugoslav RADOVIC, EYCA Montenegro
Joana AZEITERO, EYCA Youth Panel

Advisory Council on Youth – not nominated

Secretariat

Tobias FLESSENKEMPER, Head of Youth Department
Clementina BARBARO, Head of Youth Policy Division
Natalja TURENNE, Responsible for the PAYM
Observers: Sophie KWASNY, Sylvia IVANOVA

APPENDIX 2

EYCA Youth Panel's survey "Your Voice Hour 2030" Summary Results

The EU is currently shaping its policies for the next decade: the EU budget of almost EUR 2 trillion and upcoming EU Youth Strategy will impact young people through wide-ranging issues (housing, education, culture, health, Erasmus, environment, equality etc.). The EYCA Youth Panel would like to ensure the EU's proposals genuinely target the challenges currently felt by young people. That's why this project was run till January 2026. Several studies have been published on the needs of young people, and the EYCA Youth Panel ambitioned to complement them with the actual stories from young people aged 13-30.

Over 2030 young people responded to the survey. The full policy report is available at the following link: <https://eyca.org/blog/your-voice-our-2030-policy-report>.

In short, this report outlines the main findings along 6 themes:

- Jobs, Education, Affordability and Independence
- Economic Instability and Housing
- Loneliness and Community Integration
- Introduction to Adulthood: Pressure, Uncertainty and Mental Health
- Collective Struggles: Civic Rights & Sustainability
- Barriers to Emancipation

The Youth Panel summarised its own top 10 recommendations for anyone shaping young people's lives:

1. Young people should be empowered with high-quality education on critical and ethical thinking.
2. All young people should have access to current, realistic information about job market and labour rights through mentorship programmes to help transition into employment.
3. All qualifications and degrees, including vocational training, should be recognised, valued and accessible across borders.
4. Prioritise stable, fairly compensated work for young people and ban exploitative, unpaid and unfair work programmes and contracts.
5. Conciliation measures at workplaces should be introduced for young people.
6. Simplify bureaucracy for young people, by improving institutional transparency and communicating complex information in youth-friendly ways.
7. Spaces built by and for young people should be supported through funding youth centres and youth-led initiatives.
8. Meaningful participation of young people in policy processes must be ensured to eliminate tokenism.
9. Price caps and speculation control on housing should be introduced specifically for young people.
10. Simplify access to affordable physical and mental health support, while banning discrimination in professional environments of those accessing mental health support.