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SUPPORTING CONFIDENCE AT 18



A seminar on sharing practices of projects and initiatives in support of Young Refugees and Migrants in transition to adulthood.

- On the occasion of the World Refugee Day -

20-21 June 2024

European Youth Centre Budapest

REPORT



Seminar organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department and [PICUM \(platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants\)](#), in cooperation with VOICIFY, VYRE (Voices of Young Refugees in Europe) and the [Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees](#)

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Executive Summary

Chapter 1 outlines and provides a background context to the 'Confidence at 18' youth event, held from 20 – 21 June 2024 by the Council of Europe Youth Department to mark World Refugee Day 2024. The event emphasised the multifaceted transition to adulthood for young refugees, exiled, migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented (YREMASUD) influenced by legal, cultural, personal, and support-related factors. It provided a space for young people to discuss their experiences and perspectives on the current situation of YREMASUD in Europe, share challenges and good practices, and make proposals for possible ways forward. During the event, participants engaged in plenary sessions and working groups, covering themes related to access to the rights outlined in the Recommendation. This report offers an overview of the key findings and conclusions drawn from the discussions of the event.

In Chapter 2, the perspectives of participants on the relevance of the Recommendation in the context of World Refugee Day 2024 are outlined. The chapter then describes their understandings of the term 'adulthood', going on to then explore their discussions on access to the rights outlined in the Recommendation based on a number of case studies.

Chapter 3 discusses the Recommendation five years after it was adopted by the Committee of Ministers, examining participants' experiences of key challenges but also good practices from their country contexts and a large number of proposed solutions. Key areas include legal barriers to family reunification, health care and psychological supports, access to education, employment, residency, housing and care and aftercare. Following this, the chapter discusses challenges to the implementation of the Recommendation where participants made proposals to the Council of Europe and youth organisations aimed at supporting the further implementation of the Recommendation, through for example advocacy and the practical guide 'Confidence at 18'.

Chapter 4 provides briefly outlines the conclusions from the seminar.

Overall, the findings from the seminar demonstrated the complex transition to adulthood for YREMASUD, influenced by legal, cultural, political, personal, and support-related factors. It underscored the exacerbation of challenges and barriers due to societal polarisation and the rise of the far-right in Europe, which hinder access to rights and services. Key issues include insufficient support services, funding, resources, and accessible information about rights, compounded by language barriers and administrative complexities. There is thus a critical need for harmonised efforts among Member States, mutual support among actors, and recognition of the diverse realities of YREMASUD.

Prioritising the meaningful participation of YREMASUD in developing and implementing recommendations is considered essential. Creating safe, supportive spaces and addressing basic needs such as mental health, housing, and stable residency status are vital for their successful transition. Enhancing the practical guide's accessibility by making it user-friendly and multilingual will better inform YREMASUD about available services and rights and further support the implementation of the Recommendation. Overall, the youth seminar emphasised the importance of ongoing engagement and the active role of young participants in shaping human rights and informing future solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report offers an overview of the discussions in the plenary sessions, as well as the main results of the working groups during the 'Confidence at 18' seminar at the Council of Europe Youth Centre in Budapest which ran from 21-22 June 2024. It also includes excerpts from input received from those who and examples of good practices highlighted during the event.

1.1. Description of event

The 'Confidence at 18' seminar was organised in the framework of the celebrations of World Refugee Day. It was organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), in cooperation with VOICIFY, Voice of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE) and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees. More details on these organisations are provided in appendices.

The event sought to pool, share and exchange experiences and practices from practitioners and youth with lived migration experiences. The event also aimed to encourage mutual learning, supporting collaboration between different stakeholders, and identifying priorities for action.

The seminar gathered over 30 representatives from 27 organisations together. They participated in a two-day programme which consisted of plenary and working group sessions. The programme centred on collecting experiences focusing on good practices and concrete examples, current challenges in the evolving context of Europe and possible solutions. It also served as a moment to reflect on the status of the implementation of the Recommendation five years after its adoption and its relevance for participants' work, aiming to identify priorities for action going forward.

The term 'YREMASUD' which means young refugees, exiled, migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented persons was used throughout the text instead of young refugee. Aiming to be as inclusive as possible, the term was adopted for this seminar following recommendations from the partner organisation Voicify.

1.2. Background

Transition to adulthood is a phase in a young person's life marked by milestones and achievements, such as their 18th birthday. However, for all young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers turning 18 means an overnight loss of the rights and protection that they previously enjoyed as children, especially if they were unaccompanied. What should be a moment of celebration can instead mean a sudden lack of access to basic human rights, such as housing or education.

At the Council of Europe level, protecting young migrants and refugees transitioning into adulthood has long been identified as a priority area for its work (Stapleton, Özerim, Chardymova and Kayser, 2023). On 24 April 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)4: Supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood](#) (Council of Europe, 2019). The Recommendation asks governments of member states to adopt measures to ensure that "young refugees receive additional temporary support after the age of 18 to enable them to access their rights, and at recognising and strengthening the role of youth work and the youth sector in promoting better access to these rights, including through their work to build social cohesion and inclusion."¹ The Recommendation offers guidance to member states on several crucial aspects related to the transition to adulthood, including access to social services, housing, and society; educational opportunities, vocational training, and integration into the job market; as well as access to healthcare and psychological support.

Since the Recommendation was adopted, several related measures have been introduced by the Council of Europe, including Council of Europe [Action Plan](#) on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025) (Council of Europe, 2021), the Joint Council on Youth [roadmap](#) to support the implementation of the Recommendation, and, as part of this, [practical guide 'Turning 18 with Confidence](#) launched in April 2023 (Stapleton, et al. 2023). The guide presents the Recommendation practically, incorporating a collection of examples, questions and guidelines that can assist policymakers, youth organisations, young people, researchers, and other actors in promoting the implementation of the Recommendation.

Despite these measures, five years after the adoption of the Recommendation, it would be wrong to presume that the issues addressed in the Recommendation have been resolved or overcome. PICUM's report, *Turning 18 and Undocumented: Supporting children in their transition into adulthood* highlights many outstanding challenges that migrant young people continue to face when transitioning into adulthood (Van der Vennet, 2022). It is important to note that these challenges are found in the context of a broader deterioration of vulnerable people's access to rights, protection and, for migrants, a secure residence status which is occurring in the context of a general backsliding of democracy and human rights values in many countries (Stapleton, forthcoming).

¹ The Recommendation defines "young refugees in transition to adulthood" as young people having reached the age of 18 who arrived in Europe as children and have obtained or qualify for refugee status under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, or for subsidiary protection under European Union or national legislation.

It is in times of crisis that the values and principles that unite us must be protected and upheld, as recalled by the Council of Europe Summit in the [Reykjavik Declaration](#) (Council of Europe, 2023). There is a need to reassess the challenges and opportunities today while, at the same time, sharing examples of practice that can inspire other practitioners and public authorities in member states. In this context, and to mark World Refugee Day, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe thus teamed with PICUM to organise the 'Confidence at 18' seminar.

1.3. Aim and objectives

The seminar's aim was to reassess the current needs and situations faced by young refugees and migrants in transition to adulthood and support advocacy and practice to implement the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood. The key objectives included:

1. To collect experiences in the implementation of the guidelines of the Recommendation on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood and share current challenges faced by practitioners and young people themselves;
2. To identify priorities for action and advocacy by young people and human rights organisations and by youth policy and youth work actors in the further promotion of the Recommendation.
3. To raise awareness about the plight of young people affected by migration and refugee policies on the World Refugee Day (20 June)
4. To reinforce cooperation and support among youth-, migrant- and refugee-led organisations and support the inclusion of a youth perspective in migration and refugee-related policies and programmes which affect their transition into adulthood.

The appended programme outlines the main programme flow and contents.

1.4. Methods

The seminar was conducted in a non-formal education learning space, based largely on smaller working groups, but also in plenary discussions. The participants were practitioners, experts or youth workers who work to ensure a safe transition into adulthood for young refugees, exiled, migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented persons (YREMASUD), in different projects and institutions. The diversity of the participants not only geographically but also in terms of experience, representation of different perspectives, and groups in society ensured rich input was gathered. Outputs including notes (from participant observation and debriefing sessions), memo-taking, flipcharts, workshop plans, event scripts, and PowerPoint presentations were analysed for this report.

Thematic Analysis, a qualitative research method used to identify and analyse frequent patterns (themes) within data, provided rich insights into participants' perspectives. Preliminary thematic data analysis was conducted during the two days of the event. This was presented to participants on the final day, with feedback incorporated into the final report. Data analysis from the final day was conducted following the event.

1.5. Structure of report

Following this introduction chapter which sets the background, context and description of the event and outlines the youth event aim and objectives, as well as the methods employed. In Chapter 2, the relevance of the Recommendation during World Refugee Day 2024 and participants' understanding of 'adulthood' are discussed, along with case studies on accessing rights. Chapter 3 explores the realities in Europe for YREMASUD five years after the adoption of the Recommendation, highlighting key challenges, good practices, and proposed solutions in areas such as legal barriers, health care, education, and housing. The chapter also includes participants' proposals for the Council of Europe and youth organisations to enhance implementation through advocacy and the practical guide 'Confidence at 18'. Chapter 4 briefly outlines the seminar's conclusions.

2. UNPACKING THE RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Recommendation in the context of World Refugee Day

Despite describing the adoption of the Geneva Convention “a breakthrough for humanity”, **Rui Gomes**, Head of Education and Training in the Council of Europe Youth Department, described feeling “often confused about the meaning and purpose of the day. Is it a commemoration or a celebration? There is unfortunately a lot to commemorate but not a lot to celebrate”. Nevertheless, both Rui and **Nicole Epting**, the UNHCR Representative for Central Europe from UNHCR stressed that World Refugee Day is a reminder not to give up hope and **David Best**, Special Representative to the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, underlined that it is a moment to honour and think about the plight of refugees. The invited speakers highlighted the importance of the Recommendation in the context of the day, with Rui Gomes arguing that the Recommendation is “as, if not more relevant than ever, given the degradation of human rights protections against refugees”. On the 20th of June, the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth also issued a statement focusing on the need to honour refugees, particularly young refugees. Rui reminded participants not to forget that it is also important to honour those working for the rights of refugees, stressing that protecting the human rights of refugees and supporting their inclusion is crucial for the cohesion of European societies. All those present at the plenary gave one word to represent the meaning of World Refugee Day for them (illustrated in the Word Cloud).



Dániel Bagaméri, Head of Office at IOM Hungary, described the transition to adulthood as a “critical period in the lives of young refugees” reaffirming the commitment of IOM to provide essential services during this period.

Laeticia Van de Vennet, a PICUM representative noted despite the importance of this phase of a young person’s life, it receives very little attention. She commended the work of the Council of Europe for increasing the visibility of this important issue. Dániel outlined the many complexities faced by young refugees and migrants as well as key focuses of the IOM Hungary, namely, the provision of education, vocational training and life skills for young migrants, mental health support services, direct assistance to unaccompanied minors, and family reunification measures.

Similarly, VYRE and Voicify representatives, **Razan Damlakhi** and **Robert Ian Ouko Kibet Babu**, listed several challenges faced by YREMASUD during this period including structural barriers, access to education, employment, residency and mental health supports, describing the increased vulnerabilities many face. Laetitia also noted that many YREMASUD struggle during this period and there needs to be an increased focus on different young people during this period, including accompanied youth and those who are undocumented facing particular disadvantage due to their residence status.

It was stressed that the transition to adulthood is a priority area for the work of the Council of Europe, as recalled in the Reykjavik Summit. Youth work was underlined as central to this with Rui highlighting the important role of the youth sector and the involvement of young people/ young refugees themselves in matters that concern them. The importance of collaboration with youth- led refugee organisations, such as VYRE and Voicify was further noted as well as developing partnerships with others, such as PICUM, UNHCR and IOM. Nicole Epting described youth as “essential partners to lead solutions”. Dániel Bagaméri similarly stressed that they have a key role in discussions and are increasingly “demanding a seat at the table in decision-making processes”.

The role of VYRE and Voicify were outlined by their representatives, Razan (VYRE) and Ian (Voicify). Razan explained the leading, ambitious role that VYRE, launched in 2008, had in supporting the development of the Recommendation. For example, the role of VYRE on the Advisory Council on Youth to persistently advocate for the needs of young refugees which resulted in the drafting of the Recommendation. The organisation has also been working extensively for many years on capacity building for YREMASUD and advocacy across Europe. Ian described the importance of Voicify which was founded in 2022 as the first umbrella organisation representing YREMASUD which seeks to amplify their political power. The organisation supports by sharing best practices

and experiences from our own youth experiences, fostering dialogue, and encouraging the mobilisation of YRESMUD's power.

Dániel outlined that IOM Hungary also aims to "amplify the voices of youth" for example through channels for dialogue for young people on the move such as the Global Ambassador Initiative. Nicole similarly highlighted several good examples such as the Global Advisory Council in the UNHCR who work with and for youth in a safe and unique space to contribute to the work of the UNHCR at all levels.

The adoption of the new [EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) was considered by Nicole as an opportunity to ensure the centrality of children and young people. Laetitia called for an increase in cross-international border programmes and exchanges and the important role of the Council of Europe in this. Nicole described the continued commitment of the UNHCR and the Council of Europe in working together since the 2014 joint study '[Unaccompanied and Separated Asylum- Seeking and Refugee Children Turning Eighteen: What To Celebrate?](#)' which deals with the transition to adulthood as well as the UNHCR endorsement of the Recommendation and practical guide. This study was conducted as the transition to adulthood was identified as an urgent priority. Following this, much work was undertaken to ensure that the Recommendation would be adopted, including the work of young refugees and youth workers in the area. The Recommendation developed out of deep concerns about the lack of protection of rights once YREMASUD turn 18 years.

The Recommendation focuses on two key areas: measures to safeguard the rights and opportunities of young people and supporting the role of youth work. Rui asked about the next steps in implementation:

"Seriously? What do we seriously do with this recommendation? In other words, what can we do to support Member States to ensure that they know about this and use this".

He stressed the commitment of the Youth Department to support the implementation of the Recommendation and to keep the issue on the agenda of youth policy, noting the road map for implementation outlined by the Joint Council on Youth.

2.2 Defining 'adulthood'

Before discussing the participants' understandings of the Recommendation and the transition to adulthood of YREMASUD in more detail, it is important to understand the participants' perspectives of 'adulthood'.

Overall participants expressed diverse views on what adulthood means and the support necessary for positive outcomes. While a small number called for clear and consistent definitions of adulthood, for example, linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, the varied perspectives of the participants demonstrate an intricate picture where adulthood includes various layers of rights and responsibilities. Adulthood was overall considered a complex, individual process that goes beyond legal age, encompassing mental, physical, and emotional maturity, cultural backgrounds, and personal circumstances.

Participants highlighted that adulthood is a unique and individual process influenced by personal experiences and circumstances. The transition was considered to involve gaining a gradual physical, mental, and emotional maturity, coupled with increasing autonomy and responsibility. Financial independence and self-sufficiency were considered key markers of adulthood by some participants.

Despite an emphasis on independence, supportive networks and relationships were deemed essential by participants during and after this transition. They felt that support must persist into adulthood, acknowledging that reaching the age of majority does not equate to complete independence or self-sufficiency. The importance of considering individual development, health and the need for continued support, especially for those with disabilities or special needs was emphasised.

"important to recognise even if an adult, they may need support in a different way to a young person. It does not mean you are completely independent and you don't need support." (Participant, debrief after Workshop Day 1).

Turning 18 was widely recognised as a significant legal milestone, marking the age of majority in many contexts. This age comes with legal responsibilities, especially concerning migration processes like asylum procedures. However, participants noted that understandings of adulthood can vary across cultural contexts, affecting perceptions of adulthood and responsibilities held once an adult. Cultural background was considered by several participants to significantly impact how adulthood is perceived and the responsibilities it entails. For example, legal definitions of adulthood were seen to vary globally, reflecting diverse cultural, legal, and societal expectations.

For some participants, adulthood meant gaining full access to rights, such as voting, working, and making independent decisions. Others linked adulthood to social inclusion and equality, emphasising that young refugees should have the same rights as their peers.

Finally, the facilitator the importance of embracing the complexity of the term, underlining that the Recommendation is focused on full access to rights, and that "all these rights we have come from being a human". He described the importance of taking specific actions to support the YREMASUD to have equal access to rights.

2.3 Exploring access to the rights outlined in the Recommendation

The participants participated in working groups to analyse good practices related to supporting young refugees and migrants in their transition to adulthood and identifying successful strategies in areas such as education, housing, and financial independence. During these Working Groups, they also explored opportunities for cross-learning and collaboration together, discussing the role of different stakeholders in the implementation and reflecting on how the practices could be adapted to their local contexts. These discussions were based on case studies drawn [UACFutures Project](#) (p. 15-42) . These case studies focused on:

1. Access to the labour market – Belgium;
2. Access to information – France;
3. Access to mental health – Germany;
4. Access to education and employment – Greece;
5. Meaningful participation - The Netherlands;
6. Access to accommodation – Spain.



These discussions demonstrated the overlap and intersection of different rights, with rights found to impact each other. Different support services were supplied across the different case studies and were implemented in various ways by different actors, demonstrating collaboration and coordination between stakeholders.

Some groups also compared their contexts and reflected on opportunities for adaptation in their local context. They reported finding this useful for their own work:

"Going through different cases, I can take this to my local context and it makes sense for other people to hear – they might be inspired" (Participant in post-workshop debrief, Day 1)

Comparisons were drawn between the French case on access to information and the Slovenian and Irish contexts. In the French case, unaccompanied children make a 'comprehensive plan' and interview to identify their needs post-18 years. Similarly, in Slovenia, there is also an interview that aims to support unaccompanied children to develop a plan for their futures. However, this was considered by participants as unsuccessful as it took place only two weeks before a young person's 18th birthday. The support provided to separated children in Ireland however was considered a positive example. Every young person who presents to the Separated Children Seeking International Protection Service at least 12 months before their 18th birthday is eligible for aftercare and is supported to develop a needs assessment and aftercare plan. They also have access to follow-up support and complete a progress review where their support is reviewed if necessary. Participants of this group also noted that while several contexts have similar planning supports at 18 years, these are not always effective, with a lack of follow-up strategy to continue to provide youth-centred support post-18 years. Some participants described good practices that had been shared by others. The opportunity to provide feedback through an anonymous complaint system in Bosnian reception centres was commended as a good practice example. In this system, a group of beneficiaries were supported to create a self-led organisation and conduct an internal audit of the organisation running the reception centre.



3. THE RECOMMENDATION FIVE YEARS ON: CHALLENGES, GOOD PRACTICES AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

Overall participants discussed an extremely challenging context across Europe for YREMASUD as they transition to adulthood, with an increasing move towards hostile migration policies and growing far-right movements. A complex interplay of political, social and institutional factors and challenges were identified by participants, with a range of emergent issues considered to impact YREMASUD's ability to have a smooth transition to adulthood. Criminalisation of migration and solidarity efforts were also underlined as significant issues. Similarly, the current political situation was seen to impact young people's ability to voice their concerns, with fear of being a target of hate and violence.

"They get angry, right-wing say its immigrants, migrants, refugees, that it is because of them instead of addressing the broader structural issues. Because people are so unhappy, they vote for these parties. It is easier to blame this group [REMASUD] than tackle global issues." (Participant, Workshop debriefing, Day 2).

Participants criticised mainstream political parties for not making sufficient effort to deconstruct prejudiced myths about YREMASUD and called for an increase in reliable data to counter-narratives.

There is a " lack of political will to address anti-discrimination and inclusion aspects of migration." (Participant, Debriefing Day 1)

Nevertheless, they applauded the work of NGOs to improve this issue with one stating:

"even though we are in a current politically bad situation in many European countries, there is hope in civil society on the ground, they are creating safe spaces to exchange and provide a safe space."

Participants called for campaigns to counter these narratives and the need for civil society to continually, increasingly push against these issues. Examples of such campaigns included awareness campaigns amongst citizens and the wider public to increase information on immigration, particularly in rural areas. They also identified the arts as powerful tools for fostering diversity and inclusion, with Slovenia mentioned specifically as a good practice in this regard. Participants further described the importance of institutionalised diversity and inclusion in government departments, private entities and NGOs, considering it a positive move to promote anti-discrimination and

inclusion. They also outlined the importance of education on these issues, calling for the provision of support for this. Finally, language was identified as important for breaking barriers to social interaction and for promoting inclusion.

In addition to false narratives on YREMASUD, a participant also described the misinformation about European countries, where upon arrival in Europe, people often face a very different reality from what they had expected.

Some challenges were considered to be valid to the general population with participants noting however that YREMASUD experienced these mainstream, broader challenges more acutely than the majority population. The ongoing housing crisis, the rising cost of inflation and the standard of living had a direct negative impact on YREMASUD but also indirect impacts resulting from their link to an increase in anti-YREMASUD rhetoric and discrimination.

Challenges were found in EU accession countries and transit countries, such as Bosnia, where a participant described the EU's role in shaping migration management responses. They noted, for instance, that Bosnia was "being pushed" by the European Union to open a detention facility where unaccompanied young people would be moved upon turning 18 years. Other participants raised concerns about the EU Migration and Asylum Pact and the possible negative impact this would have on YREMASUD. Differences across country contexts were also noted, with, for instance, transit countries seeing arrivals for very short periods and therefore while support for this time can be considered good, there is no need for longer-term solutions which can be difficult to implement particularly with large numbers of arrivals.

Participants stressed the need to need to recognise the different realities, experiences and contexts of YREMASUD but also their diverse statuses, family situations, and how they are defined in policies (such as related to their family situation, age, etc.) as this was seen to impact on the protections and support available to them.

Overall there was a call by many participants for increased community spaces and hubs which can support linking YREMASUD to services and supports but also to provide a safe space just to be 'young'. An example of such a space can be found in Hungary where YREMASUD or ethnic youth can go if they feel isolated, can join in solidarity with others on different actions and have a platform to represent and engage with local communities. Other examples are found in Greece where these youth spaces include pool tables, kitchens, washing machines, classrooms, offices for meetings with external actors (lawyers, social workers psychologists, case/ youth workers), musical instruments, free lunches. They are open, neutral spaces run in

collaboration with other organisations. Some young people come to play football, relax, play the PlayStation, and exchange ideas while others engage in specific activities.

3.1 Thematic challenges and proposed solutions

During a silent discussion, participants were invited to explore specific challenges and barriers faced by YREMASUD transitioning to adulthood and then make proposals for solutions to these issues. The guiding questions for each topic were as follows:

1. What challenges have YREMASUD been facing in accessing education in your community?
2. What barriers have YREMASUD been facing in finding employment opportunities in your community?
3. What challenges have YREMASUD been encountering in accessing healthcare and psychological support services?
4. What legal barriers have YREMASUD been facing in exercising their right to family unification?
5. What legal barriers have YREMASUD been facing in access a residence permit?
6. Any emerging issues that you foresee could have an impact on transition experiences going forward?
7. What have been the challenges of designing and implementing advocacy campaigns about “transition to adulthood”
8. What have been the challenges to use the Practical Guide in your work?

The key findings on challenges, barriers and potential solutions arising from the first six questions from the silent discussion and resulting debrief are summarised in the following paragraphs. The following section (section 3.2.) then provides an overview of the discussion of questions seven and eight.

3.1.1 Legal barriers to family reunification

1. Access to Embassy Appointments

Some individuals cannot make appointments with their embassy in the country they are living.

➤ Proposed solutions:

- Hire more staff in embassies.
- Open up the option of online appointments.

2. Aged- related barriers

Authorities delay giving positive advice until a young person turns 18, limiting options for family reunification. Some young people turn 18 before securing residency, creating additional barriers.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Implement policies to expedite the process for young people before they turn 18.

3. Time Constraints for Applications

There is a short time frame (often 1 year) to apply for family reunification. In Belgium, for example, there are only three months to apply after being granted status.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Explore practices in other member states. For instance, in Ireland, it is possible to apply up to nine months after gaining status.

4. Information and Legal Support

There is a lack of information and legal support. Language barriers and complex legal jargon hinder understanding. Many NGOs lack the capacity to explain the process to each individual.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Encourage collaboration among NGOs, including cross-border collaboration with organisations in countries of origin.
- Learn from models like the Irish Refugee Council, Red Cross, and Crosscare in Ireland, which support access to family reunification and provide legal follow-up at no cost.

5. Financial Barriers

Financial resources are insufficient to cover the costs of travel and accommodation for families. In Portugal, for example, YREMASUD have the right to family reunification but lack financial resources. In Ireland, families arriving through reunification risk homelessness as they cannot apply for social housing before arrival.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Identify institutions that can support hosting and/or providing housing to families, with financial support until they secure employment.
- Consider models like Cyprus, where social welfare provides housing for three months and assists in finding a home.
- Organise fundraising events to support these efforts.

6. Excessive Documentation Requirements

Authorities often request unnecessary documents and evidence. Difficulty in accessing original or copies of legal documents, especially for stateless persons.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Create a framework to recognize the challenges inherent in being stateless and difficulties in providing proof of family links.

7. State shortfalls

Lack of cooperation from countries of origin can impede the reunification process.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Promote interagency collaboration between legal aid bodies, ministries of justice, and social services to ensure support for families upon arrival.

8. A shift in policies and perceptions

In certain contexts, such as in the UK, there has been a deterioration of family support. In the UK, there previously had been an inclusive, supportive package for YREMASUD families which included health, education, etc. However, recently this has been changed towards a more hardline approach. In certain contexts, institutions sometimes consider that “families send children to exploit the system”.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- There is a need to change narratives and rhetoric regarding those involved in the family reunification process. The Recommendation and practical guide are key resources to support changing this narrative.

9. Legal Status and Nationality Barriers

Young people who are undocumented or have subsidiary protection have no legal basis to apply for family reunification in certain contexts, such as Hungary. Nationals of certain countries, like Afghanistan, do not have the right to family reunification in all host countries, such as Poland. Increase in arrivals of nationals who have low success rates in international protection procedures.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Advocate for policy changes to allow family reunification for individuals with subsidiary protection and from certain nationalities.

10. Disempowerment

YREMASUD often feel disempowered during the process. For example, in family reunification situations a person has no right to remain silent and is required to respond at all times.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Legal literacy for YREMASUD is crucial.

3.1.2 Healthcare and psychological supports

1. Capacity and Access Issues

There is a limited capacity of governmental support services and overstretched NGOs, resulting in long wait lists for accessing services. There is a lack of funding for healthcare services and of access to healthcare services for individuals without documents or identity.

There is limited access to free mental health services and to basic healthcare, such as food, showers, and hygiene products in countries like France.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Raise awareness and advocate for increased funding of services through social media campaigns.
- Encourage interagency collaboration between public healthcare systems, NGOs, and youth organisations.
- Promote the need for inclusive, free services funded by government and international organisations.
- Highlight existing models, such as Turkey's mental psychological support within social cohesion and youth participation projects and NGOs that provide free mental health supports.
- Prioritise mental health and increase information on mental health illness and services in activities.

2. Cultural Sensitivity and Language Barriers

There is a lack of cultural sensitivity from healthcare professionals, with cultural barriers to accessing healthcare services. There are also language barriers due to a lack of interpretation services.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Provide intercultural training for healthcare professionals.
- Offer familiar and less intimidating spaces for discussion where YREMASUD can share their lived experiences.
- Implement alternative, culturally sensitive psychotherapy methods such as group work and meditation.

3. Stigma and Awareness

Stigma related to mental health leads individuals to fear admitting they need support. There is a lack of advocacy and awareness of mental health issues as well as information on how the healthcare system works.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Conduct campaigns to end stigma and raise awareness about the needs of YREMASUD.
- Utilise social media campaigns to raise awareness, eliminate stigma, and advocate for increased funding.
- Promote awareness of the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive services.

4. Systemic Barriers

National healthcare systems do not all provide psychological services. There is a lack of advocacy and awareness of the specific issues faced by YREMASUD.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Encourage interagency collaboration, such as between public healthcare systems, NGOs, and youth organisations.
- Develop partnerships with actors outside of the healthcare system, training, and the different roles that therapists/ psychologists can have.
- Advocate for government and international organisations to fund inclusive and free mental health services.

3.1.3 Access to education

1. Capacity, Resources, and Financial Barriers

There is a lack of capacity and resources in educational institutions. YREMASUD have difficulties accessing education due to high costs and lack of scholarships, with existing scholarships often having very high requirements. Access to third-level education is challenging due to language barriers, high tuition fees, a lack of scholarships, and difficulties in providing school certificates from other countries. Residency status impacts access to third-level education, such as in Ireland, where a person must have been a resident for three of the past five years in an EU country to access grants.

➤ Proposed solutions:

- Provide free education options and increase the availability of accessible scholarships.
- Offer financial support to assist in accessing third-level education.
- Implement scholarships for temporary protection holders, including support for housing, language classes, and tutoring.
- Support access to third-level education regardless of residence status.
- Allocate specific places in courses for YREMASUD so they can access third-level education.
- Shorten waiting periods for international protection application processing and simplify application processes.
 - Individualised support accessing formal education, such as through support with registration processes for university.
 - Good practices for accessible non-formal education included a Saturday school where young people can enjoy different activities. World Vision Georgia similarly developed a 'happy space' for young people to gather.

2. Language Barriers and Integration Support

There are language barriers due to a lack of available language courses. For example, in Hungary, vocational training is only accessible in Hungarian, and in Greece, children face difficulties accessing preparatory language classes before attending Greek schools. There are also complex registration processes with a lack of preparatory courses for applications. There is a lack of integration programs that respond to the specific needs of YREMASUD and cultural competence and training in the host country. There is insufficient non-formal education spaces or programmes for YREMASUD.

➤ Proposed solutions:

- Provide targeted state-funded language courses for non-native speakers.
- Implement peer mentoring programs and small-scale projects where cultural mediators accompany children in schools to help with translation.

- Create more spaces for YREMASUD to learn the host country's language.
- Offer preparatory courses, such as the Olive programme described by one participant, which provides academic English preparation for university.
- Implement integration classes outside of school hours.
- Mandate cultural competence training for all professional education service providers who work with migrant groups.

3. Discrimination and Social Integration

YREMASUD experience discrimination in public schools. There is a lack of peer support and integration programs and non-formal education spaces to learn and discover interests.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Organise afternoon extracurricular activities through NGOs or government initiatives to provide non-formal education spaces.
- Introduce activities to integrate young people with other non-YREMASUD peers. For example, establish buddy programs with peers to support integration and acceptance. A positive example is a swim team club in Ireland where migrant youth met non-migrant peers. Young people made friends, learned the English language quickly and about the host culture.

4. Qualification Recognition and Registration Processes

There is a lack of qualification recognition for education obtained in other countries as well as complex registration processes without adequate preparatory courses.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Simplify the process for recognising qualifications from other countries.
- Provide preparatory courses to aid in the registration process.
- Introduce formal recognition of participation in non-formal education activities, particularly for those who struggle to access formal education, for example through self-assessments.

5. Housing and Accessibility

YREMASUD have challenges accessing housing near educational institutions, resulting in long travel distances. In some contexts, such as Bosnia, compulsory education ends after 16 years, requiring students to pay tuition.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Provide housing support to ensure proximity to educational institutions.
- Implement policies to extend compulsory free education beyond 16 years.

3.1.4 Access to employment

3.1.5

1. Discrimination and Cultural Barriers

YREMASUD experience discrimination from employers due to prejudices regarding YREMASUD. They have language, culture, and communication barriers. There is a lack of

diversity and inclusion in workplaces.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Facilitate connections between YREMASUD and employers.
- Support employers with hiring YREMASUD, providing assistance with paperwork and legal status information.
- Promote positive campaigns to highlight the positive aspects of migration and success stories.
- Raise awareness in rural populations through educational modules in schools, universities, and the youth sector.

2. Legal and Administrative Barriers

Legal barriers prevent people from working while waiting to secure residency. Statelessness, irregular residence status, and the need for an address, bank account, and tax number complicate the process. Complex documentation and bureaucratic steps are required to secure employment. The employment laws and related residency conditions were described as differing across country contexts, often found to hinder access to employment and services provided across different sectors. For example, in Ireland, cooperation with the workforce to support labour market integration was described as a good practice.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Support case/social workers and community mentors to assist job seekers.
- Provide clear information about legal rights and support from organisations when rights are being abused, such as examples can be found in Belgium.
- Involve trade unions to support safe working environments.

3. Language and Communication Barriers

YREMASUD face language barriers exacerbated by a lack of language classes. Communication barriers impact job acquisition and workplace integration.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Offer targeted state-provided language courses for non-native speakers.
- Provide interview training and support for developing interview and CV skills.
- Implement mentoring programs to support job seekers.
- The French 'Maison des langues' [house of languages] programme which was created within La Mans University where 'exiled students' (refugees) access free educational supports which have assisted with their integration provides a good practice example.

4. Recognition of Qualifications and Skills

Lack of recognition of qualifications and previous experience, digital skills and professional networks impact YREMASUD's ability to secure employment.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Recognise and validate foreign qualifications and previous work experience,

- including voluntary work.
- Provide digital skills training and create professional networking opportunities. In France, for instance, NGOs provide skill development specifically for digital skills to YREMASUD.
- Regularly organise job events to connect employers with YREMASUD.

5. Exploitative Labor Conditions

YREMASUD lack understanding of labour rights, leading to the normalisation of exploitative labour conditions, which are more accessible than legal work.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Provide access to information and organisations that offer support when rights are being abused.
- Involve trade unions to ensure a safe and fair working environment.
- Training and access to information to support YREMASUD to be aware of exploitation and related issues. A positive example from Greece highlights how this can be done, where organisations who support YREMASUD to find employment, follow up with them to ensure they don't experience exploitation or risky situations.

6. Accessibility and Mobility

There is a lack of accessible jobs and knowledge on where to find work as well as transportation issues which limit job accessibility.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Support job seekers through case/social workers and community mentors.
- Ensure direct means of transport to job locations.
- Provide funding and grants to support migrants with housing.
- Establish mentoring programs to guide and support YREMASUD in their employment journey.

7. Poor uptake of jobs

Challenges sometimes with the uptake and continuation of jobs as people for several reasons. For example, people may have much higher levels of qualifications than the job they are proposed, jobs may offer low salaries and poor working conditions, people may be suffering psychological difficulties, people do not feel valued or may feel that their dignity is lost.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Develop activities which encourage jobs matching with qualifications, for example, by adapting learnings from the response to the displacement of Ukrainians since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Work with employers to develop plans with employees to show advancement opportunities in their careers.
- Provide links to mental health services for those who may need them.
- Promote a rights-based approach to access to employment recognising that a person

has the right to refuse a job.

3.1.6 Access to residency

1. Legal and Administrative Barriers

YREMASUD face long waits for visas as well as tightening rules and delays in international protection results. There are limited pathways to regularisation, with conditionalities on residency applications (e.g., number of years in the country, education level, integration). Lawyers also have limited capacity to assist with residency issues. There can also be differences in perspectives on residency decisions across different authorities and government departments. There are significant costs associated with residence permits.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Implement a fast-track international protection process for young people.
- Provide work permits before arrival to the destination country, as seen in Slovenia.
- Ensure transparency in the decision-making process and give due consideration to young people's vulnerabilities when assessing residency applications.

2. Employment and Education Pathways

Many YREMASUD work in irregular employment and lack legal employment opportunities. In some contexts, studying is considered the easiest pathway to residency, creating barriers for those not following this educational pathway. Residency permits expire after studies, leaving young people at risk of precarity again. Undocumented young people risk labour exploitation and homelessness or housing exclusion, with little or no access to support, despite many having multiple vulnerabilities.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Facilitate pathways to regularisation that do not solely rely on education.
- Support access to regular employment and provide information on legal employment opportunities.
- Provide free information and advocacy services on risks of labour market discrimination and exploitation as well as on homelessness services, such as those provided by NGOs in Georgia.

3. Documentation and Legal Support

YREMASUD confront challenges in securing a passport, particularly for unaccompanied minors. They also have difficulty accessing necessary documentation and fear of potential negative decisions, such as deportation. Stateless children risk being in limbo without nationality or legal identity. Young people perceive that residence permit decisions are made arbitrarily and lack transparency. They also may have limited ability to understand and interact with residence procedures due to illiteracy, language barriers etc.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Provide early access to specialist legal advice on applying for and securing nationality.
- Offer free and accessible legal assistance and support for securing

necessary documentation.

- Increased accessible and understandable information on these processes as well as education and other measures to support YREMASUD to interact with them.
- Improve transparency in the residency decision-making process to alleviate fears of arbitrariness and deportation.
- Spain is a positive example of supporting stateless young people to gain access to nationality as authorities grant access to legal identity for children in Spain.
- Increased pathways to securing residency.

4. Access to information

YREMASUD lack awareness regarding residency requirements and rights. They have limited access to legal support and information. Many fear potential negative decisions and the consequences, such as deportation.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Increase awareness campaigns regarding residency requirements and rights.
- Provide clear and accessible information on the legal process and support available.



3.1.7 Access to housing

Participants identified four groups of young people with each situation impacting their ability to access housing: those who are regularised, those who aren't, young people who have families, and young people in the international protection process.

1. Conditionalities impacting access

Conditionalities to accessing housing are particular barriers, including, for instance, job, income, social welfare numbers, etc. For example, in Sweden, you must have a tax number to gain access to housing, with a yearly subscription paid. However, some people have waited years to gain access. The vulnerability of certain YREMASUD can impact their access to housing, noting that those who are undocumented, for instance, have less support than others. The lack of prioritisation of single young people (particularly males) in housing can risk increasing their vulnerability.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Provide targeted housing to different groups of YREMASUD incorporating other supports to assist their transition such as found in a Greek example where single young men aged 19-24 years were housed aiming to ensure their dignity. They also had opportunities to learn skills such as saving and how to live independently.

2. Housing crisis

Housing across Europe for YREMASUD who have turned 18 years is “chaos” and a “mess” with additional barriers facing this group than the majority population. The housing crisis has left a backlog of separated young people in some aftercare units in certain contexts, such as Ireland. In the Irish context, there are supported independence units, which aged-out separated youth can access for one year after reaching 18 years aiming to support young people to then progress to a fully independent living arrangement. However, a lack of private rental accommodation has left these young people struggling to move on. With many separated young people needing to access these placements, despite having a policy against moving a young person or care leaver to emergency homeless accommodations, the Child and Family Agency, Tusla, describes having no other options outside of this.

3. Lack of State involvement

In contexts where the State was not involved in service provision, such as Bosnia, a lack of housing options was found for those after aged-18 years. Across Greece, Turkey and Sweden, for example, there is a lack of governmental housing schemes to support young people. For instance, Turkey was only found to provide housing for students. Discrimination was identified as a further barrier to accessing housing.

4. Conditions and location

In some contexts, there is “no formal support for asylum seekers aged 18 years and above”. Instead, young people were placed in isolated, overcrowded camps without access to NGOs and services, and limited access to employment and education. Overcrowding and poor quality accommodation and housing.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Provision of free transport to support access to support services, such as provided in the Polish context.

3.1.8 Access to care and aftercare

1. Disparities across contexts

There are large disparities in aftercare services across country contexts. In some contexts, once a young person turns 18 years old, there is no structured support service or

aftercare. In others, such as Ireland, there are structured aftercare services for young people who have accessed care.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Need for aftercare support for all young adults and children in care in general.

2. Eligibility

Aged-out separated and unaccompanied young people are not eligible for access to aftercare. For example, while Ireland, for example, was considered a good example in (after)care provision for separated young people, an overwhelming number of separated young people who are not eligible for aftercare, present with high support needs but are only eligible to access drop-in services.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Develop a high-quality drop-in aftercare service, such as those being developed in Ireland.

3.2 Challenges in implementing the Recommendation

The final two questions (7 and 8) discussed during the silent discussion and related debrief of questions were:

7. What have been the challenges of designing and implementing advocacy campaigns about “transition to adulthood”
8. What have been the challenges to use the Practical Guide in your work?

When responding to these questions, it became quickly evident that overall participants had little understanding or previous knowledge of the Recommendation or the associated practical guide ‘Turning 18 with Confidence’. Participants discussed potential challenges and solutions for the implementation of the Recommendation, the use of the practical guide and the development of advocacy campaigns to support the implementation of the Recommendation. Key challenges and proposed solutions for the Council of Europe and youth organisations from these discussions are outlined below.

3.2.1 Council of Europe: Recommendation and practical guide ‘Turning 18 with Confidence’

Participants described exceptions, for example, with more support to those displaced from Ukraine, feeling that many lessons can be learned from Russia’s aggression on Ukraine where countries rapidly put mechanisms, with solidarity put into action across Europe. They stressed the need to translate these measures into wider action for other communities.

1. Awareness, Dissemination and Practical Application

There is a lack of knowledge and awareness about the existence of the practical guide, with insufficient dissemination efforts, to date, evidenced by many participants' lack of awareness of the guide. People are not able to find the guide online when they search it. There is limited official applicability of the Recommendation to all YREMASUD as it centres on young refugees and asylum seekers.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Disseminate the Recommendation and the guide beyond Council of Europe channels, supporting Member States in dissemination.
- Organise more conferences and national-level meetings.
- Improve the format of the guide with better Search Engine Optimisation to ensure it can be easily found.
- Connect with grassroots organisations, CSOs, NGOs, and IOs working in Europe to distribute information and support the guide.
- Use social media channels to engage a broader audience.
- Disseminate the guide through youth work organisations at the national level.
- Offer introductory seminars/webinars to explain the Recommendation and the guide's goals, creation purpose, and practical usage.
- Organise and support national-level events/meetings to overcome participation barriers.
- Ensure that conferences and awareness-raising events continue to be held to promote the guide.
- Provide a platform to share good practice examples.
- Promote the good practice guide as a starting point for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation in Member States. Add case studies and specific examples which highlight different country contexts, including their policies and measures, to support highlighting what is lacking and to support an evaluation of what other positive measures can be implemented.
- Develop a method of acknowledging the positive work of Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation. For example, through annual letters of achievement.

2. Format and Accessibility

The current format of the guide can be improved for better accessibility and engagement. The guide should show intersections between different rights and further work should be done to outline these overlaps. It also needs to be presented in a more flexible and easily updatable format.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Develop a different layout with video summaries/introductions.
- Create an online 'living' format that is easier to update than a book form.
- Translate the guide into more languages.
- Ensure recommendations highlight intersections between different rights.
- Centre all actions on how to be youth-centred and give space for your people to be at the centre of the process, from design to implementation of any next steps.

3. Political Will and Accountability

There appears to be a lack of 'real' political will from Member States to implement the Recommendation, with a heavy reliance on NGOs who are already fighting for similar causes, to promote and implement the guide.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- The Council of Europe should actively promote the guide and Recommendation in Member States.
- Seek ways to make Member States more accountable for the implementation of the guide.
- Hold Member States accountable and coordinate efforts for implementation.

3.2.2 Youth organisations: Development, implementation and reach of advocacy campaigns

1. Limited Grassroots Organisations and Youth Representation

There is a lack of grassroots organisations working on issues related to the transition to adulthood. Young people are not sufficiently represented and show a lack of interest due to other commitments or challenges they must overcome in their lives.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Train young people who are concerned/affected by the issues

"nothing about me without me" (Participant written comment, Day 2).

- Involve youth workers to motivate and engage young people. For example, in France, Utopia 56 partnered with another organisation 'Children for Children' to raise awareness of the meaning and experiences of unaccompanied minors. They involved children in a short film where the children explained from their perspective, aiming to spread awareness in schools and foster better understanding.
- Establish forums for advocacy opportunities for young people.
- Develop standards which help to ensure that YREMASUD are at the centre of all actions, from design to implementation.

2. Lack of Legal and Financial Support

There is a lack of hard law as a basis for advocacy and limited funding and opportunities for youth advocacy.

➤ *Proposed solutions*

- Partner with other actors and organisations, including private corporations to gain resources and financial support for campaigns. Corporate social responsibility partnerships can be useful for instance to leverage resources and support for advocacy efforts. For example, in France, Utopia 56 mobilised support from Ben & Jerry's to raise awareness about migrant rights through social media campaigns and influencer partnerships.

- Develop data and needs-based advocacy campaigns that incorporate qualitative data for a comprehensive understanding of young people's needs.

3. Public Interest and Community Support

There is a lack of interest and support from the general public and local communities. Advocacy campaigns are often limited to specific target groups, hindering the overall impact.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Launch campaigns that raise awareness and educate the public on the issues, starting from a young age.
- Create colourful, positive campaigns to reach a broader audience and convey political messages effectively.
- Use social media and partner with influencers to amplify the reach and impact of advocacy campaigns.

4. Coordination and Cooperation Among NGOs

There is limited coordination and cooperation among NGOs in advocacy efforts. Campaigns often do not address the transition experiences of those without a legal identity.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Seek and promote cooperation between NGOs, civil society organisations, and international organisations to distribute information and support advocacy efforts.
- Focus advocacy campaigns on identifying and supporting stateless individuals early on.
- Engage with advocacy groups and other youth organisations to protect and support young people speaking out.

5. Fear of Repercussions and Lack of Safe Spaces

YREMASUD fear being punished for speaking out and there are limited safe spaces and support for young advocates.

➤ *Proposed solutions:*

- Provide safe spaces and protection for young people involved in advocacy through collaboration with advocacy groups and other youth organisations.
- Increase outreach work to involve more young people in advocacy.
- Use platforms like TikTok and YouTube to engage undocumented youth and support their advocacy efforts. For example, in Spain, undocumented young people used TikTok and YouTube to raise awareness of the challenges they face. While these young people were not directly associated with any organisations, there are opportunities for youth organisations to target and further support their efforts. Some of the young people involved in this awareness-raising effort, for example, now collaborate with NGOs like PICUM to support advocacy efforts.

4. Conclusions from the Youth Seminar

4.1 Concluding remarks

The seminar demonstrated that the transition to adulthood is a complex journey for YREMASUD, influenced by a multitude of factors including legal, cultural, political, personal, and support-related aspects. Despite the challenges that the participants faced in identifying examples, this report underscores the importance of learning from diverse contexts and approaches.

The increased polarisation of societies and rise of the far-right in many European contexts were seen to have exacerbated the difficulties that YREMASUD have in accessing their rights as they transition to adulthood, with many diverse challenges remaining. These include the lack of comprehensive support services available to YREMASUD, as well as structural issues such as insufficient funding and resources which further exacerbate the difficulties in providing and expanding these services. Additionally, a significant challenge lies in the lack of accessible information regarding their rights, which is often compounded by language barriers and the complexity of administrative processes.

Participants in the study highlighted the necessity for mutual support among actors while acknowledging the disparities between country contexts. Some Member States are more advanced than others in implementing the Recommendation, illustrating a need for harmonised efforts. There is also a pressing need to recognise the diverse realities, experiences, and contexts of YREMASUD. It is crucial to acknowledge and address how the varying statuses, family situations, and the way these young people are defined in policies significantly impact the protections and support they receive.

It is evident that to successfully overcome these challenges, YREMASUD must meaningfully participate in the development and implementation of recommendations and their involvement must be prioritised. The creation of supportive, safe spaces where young people can meet, network, and support each other is vital.

There should be a prioritisation of the basic needs of all YREMASUD as they transition to adulthood to ensure that they can become successful, healthy, and supported adults. Key priorities include addressing mental health issues and ensuring housing. Stable residency status should also be front and centre of all policies as it is a prerequisite for the transition, impacting all aspects of their transition and integration.

While the practical guide can be of important use to support the implementation of the Recommendation, further work is necessary to ensure its appropriate and successful uptake by different stakeholders. It for example needs to be more user-friendly, streamlined, and translated into multiple languages to ensure accessibility. This would enable YREMASUD to better understand the services available to them and their rights, providing them with the necessary information to navigate their new environments.

In conclusion, the closing remarks of the youth event 'Confidence at 18' highlighted the dedication and energy of the young participants, recognising their crucial role in shaping human rights alongside policy-makers. The event underscored the importance of ongoing engagement and the collection of good practices and challenges to inform future solutions and recommendations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of participants

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

Margot Lemmens	Minor-Ndako
Bert Desal	VZW Oranjehuis

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE

Ramona Elkmann	Caritas Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina
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CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Polyniki Stavrou	Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare Cyprus
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CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Veronika Riabinina	Ščedryk společenství Ukrajinců Olomouckého kraj
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FRANCE / FRANCE

Sayed Makarim Mutahar	Arman - Espoir Pour l'Afghanistan
Emeline Hardy	Utopia 56

GEORGIA / GEORGIE

Khatia Terterashvili	World Vision Georgia
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GREECE / GRECE

Eleni Stamou	Ministry of Education
Lara Stauss	Mazí Housing
Khaled Shahoud	InterEuropean Human Aid Association Germany (IHA)
Evangelia Tsipi	Action for Women

HUNGARY / HONGRIE

Barbara Kiss	UNHCR
Antonia Lisa Haegner	UNHCR
Zsombor Lakatos	Menedék
Kinga Knódel	Cordelia
Fayez Al-Hamad	

IRELAND / IRLAND

Reoland Pepa	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
Metasebia Kedru Kereta	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
Marwa Zamir	Irish Refugee Council

ITALY / ITALIE

Eva Menichetti	ARCI Brindisi
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POLAND / POLOGNE

Weronika Sołkiewicz	European Lawyers in Lesvos
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PORTUGAL / PORTUGAL

Alexander Kpatue Kweh

União de Refugiados em Portugal,
Fórum Refúgio Portugal

João Matela

Portuguese Sports and Youth Institute (IPDJ)

SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE

Tamara Raftović Loštrek

Slovene Philanthropy

SWEDEN / SUEDE

Julius Ntobuah

Newcomers with Disabilities in Sweden

TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE

Yunus Duman

International Youth Activities Center Association (IYACA)

Pinar Ece Multu

Ministry of Youth and Sports in Türkiye

UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI

Omid Hotak

Network and Learning Opportunities (NLO)

Sirazul Islam

European Network on Statelessness

Organising team

Laetitia Van der Vennet

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented
Migrants (PICUM)

Lian Martínez Moya

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented
Migrants (PICUM)

Razan Damlakhi

Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)

Robert Ian Ouko Kibet Babu

VOICIFY - European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration
Experiences

Cihan Kilic

Consultant, Council of Europe

Amy Stapelton

Rapporteur

Guests

Nicole Epting

UNHCR Representative for Central Europe

Dániel Bagaméri

Head of Office, International Organization for Migration
(IOM) in Hungary**Council of Europe**

David Best (online)

Special Representative on Migration and Refugees

Rui Gomes

Head of Education and Training Division

Balint Molnar

Director European Youth Centre Budapest

Ida Kreutzman

Educational Advisor

Rosalie Levenslicht

Programme Assistant

Appendix 2: Programme

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Arrival of participants

19:00 Dinner

Thursday 20 June 2024

09:30 Opening of the seminar

Presentation of participants

Opening statements, on the occasion of the World Refugee Day, by:

RUI GOMES, Head of Education, Training and Cooperation, Council of Europe

DAVID BEST, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, Council of Europe (online)

NICOLE EPTING, UNHCR Representative for Central Europe

DÁNIEL BAGAMÉRI, Head of Office at IOM Hungary

LAETITIA VAN DER VENNET, PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

RAZAN DAMLAKHI, Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)

ROBERT IAN OUKO KIBET BABU, VOICIFY - European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experiences

11:00 Break

11:30 Reflection on realities

Introduction to CM Recommendation 2019(4) on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood, by RUI GOMES, Head of Education, Training and Cooperation, Council of Europe

Presentation of research findings on transition to adulthood by LAETITIA VAN DER VENNET, PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

Experiences with refugee-led advocacy, Voicify (The European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experiences) and VYRE (Voices of Young Refugees in Europe)

Discussion on reality in different countries

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Sharing and reflecting on past work in smaller groups

16:00 Break

16:30 Sharing experiences, challenges and good practices on transition to adulthood in working groups:

- Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Youth work and non-formal education
- Healthcare and Psychological Support
- Non-Discrimination and Inclusion
- Right to Family Unification
- Access to Care and Aftercare

19:00 Reception dinner

Activity on World Refugee Day

Friday 21 June 2024

9:30 Opening of the day, recapping on findings from the day before

10:00 Group work on challenges faced by young people transitioning into adulthood and human rights actors/advocates working to ensure a safe transition into adulthood

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 Group work continued

12:30 Conclusions in plenary

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Looking back at CM Recommendation 2019(4) and guide Turning 18 with confidence

Identifying advocacy priorities going forward

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Conclusions by seminar rapporteur

Evaluation

Closing remarks

Saturday 22 June 2024

Departures

Appendix 3. Description of partner organisations

Founded as an initiative of grassroots organisations, the **Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)** represents a network about 160 member organisations working with undocumented migrants in more than 30 countries. With two decades of evidence, experience, and expertise, PICUM promotes recognition of undocumented people's human rights and provides an essential link between local realities and the debates and decisions taking place at policy level. PICUM is dedicated to the rights of undocumented children and young people and to supporting undocumented and formerly undocumented young people advocating for change at local, national or regional level. Visit www.picum.org for more information.

VOICIFY - The European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experiences is the first-ever European self-representative structure for organisations led by young people with lived migration experiences. VOICIFY develops the capacities of its member organisations, and advocates for their rights and interests at the European and International level.

Established by, with, and for refugees, **Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)** is a network of grass-root refugee-led organisations across Europe. Through capacity-building and advocacy, VYRE is committed to promoting (young) refugees' rights and agency and empowering them to actively participate in society.