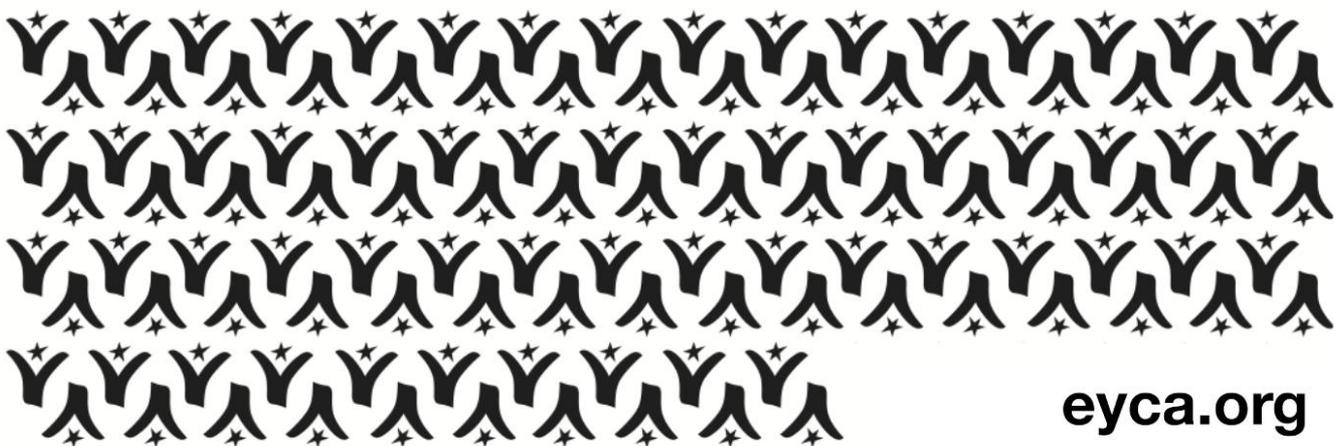




Development of the European Youth Card: Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the youth card and the European Youth Card Association

Report 2021



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to describe the activities of the work undertaken by EYCA in 2021 as a result of the support the Association received through the Grant Agreement in the framework of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card in the framework of the Council of Europe.

The Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Cards has become one of the core priorities of the European Youth Card Association, through 34 years of its operations. EYCA has invested significant efforts to revive and strengthen its relationship with the Council of Europe as part of implementing its vision to improve youth mobility and active citizenship for all young people in Europe.

European Youth Cards (EYC) are a valuable tool for physical and social mobility of young people. Not only do they offer benefits that help youth to save up and reinvest in their personal development, but having an EYC also exposes young people to various professional opportunities. On the other hand, Youth Cards provide communication channels, enabling policy-makers (1) to provide young people with information, and (2) to engage with young people directly in policy and programme design.

In 2021, the implementation of the programme of Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not being allowed to implement most of the PA seminars in person, the programme of this year was focused on systemically evaluating the Partial Agreement services offered to Member States representatives, tackling emergent topics caused by the pandemic (such as mental health and digitalisation), but also strategically planning the recovery of youth sector and its priorities post-pandemic.

Priorities

Having in mind the priorities for the 2020 - 2021 programme of activities of the Council of Europe's Youth Sector adopted by the Joint Council on Youth, we argue that youth mobility remains an important tool for achieving these objectives.

Throughout 2021, youth mobility has been particularly challenged and replaced by on-line, international activities. However, the European Youth Centres gradually opened their doors to youth activities and mobility within projects improved, compared to 2020. Youth mobility remained at the core of our services and EYCA piloted hybrid seminars and trainings for young people, offering everyone the possibility of either travelling or attending online.

Therefore, the proposed specific aims for the Partial Agreement (PA) work programme 2021 were:

- Support and encourage innovation in youth work and youth services, especially in the context of COVID-19 challenges;
- Explore how the European Youth Card can support resilience and participation of young people and access to their rights;
- Promote the European Youth Card as a tool for young people's social, economic and cultural inclusion.

I. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY: YOUTH POLICY AND YOUTH WORK PROMOTING THE CORE VALUES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

1. Commissioning design and content input for EYCA communications tools

1.1 Communication activities have been implemented as planned.

The EYCA Facebook page is growing, with 3.900 likes and an average organic reach of 37.000 users per month.

1.2 Website

- The EYCA website was updated throughout the year
- Information on the PA is prominently featured - <https://www.eyca.org/partial-agreement>.
- The new website highlights the good practice of EYCA members via a dedicated section - <https://www.eyca.org/national-projects> - to which content is added constantly.

1.3. PA on Youth Mobility branding and presentation brochure

In 2021, EYCA closed a survey among member States representatives regarding the services they received via PA on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card (if they are members) through finalisation of its analysis. The results were captured in a report widely disseminated and discussed at the level of the PA's Board of Coordination.

Throughout the year, EYCA also promoted the new presentation brochure of the Partial Agreement. The document serves to promote the values of the Partial Agreement and to encourage other member States to join. It offers information on the topics approached during the PA seminars throughout the years, their results and on the ways Governmental bodies can use the outcomes.

1.4 EYCA Update

The EYCA internal mailing list offered information to all members about opportunities at European level, news from members and benefits for young cardholders. The PA seminars calls were promoted accordingly and member organisation were encouraged to attend and present good practices.

2. Travel, board and lodging associated with:

2.1 Quality improvement support to existing members

In 2021, although most of the activity was online, EYCA managed to offer support visits to key new member organisations, organise youth trainings both residential and hybrid mode, organise four Partial Agreement seminars, one of them being in hybrid mode. Key elements of each of the visit are presented below.

- Visit to Montenegro

The support visit took place in November 2021, bringing together representatives of the member organisation Centre for Youth Education and Directorate for Sports and Youth. During the meetings the support of the public authorities for the European Youth Card scheme was reinforced. The EYC in Montenegro is rapidly growing as a tool for local youth policies, currently having 8 co-branded cards with most important municipalities. In addition, the support of the governmental authorities

helped the EYC in Montenegro to partner up with the main University. As of 2022, over 20.000 students will have access to the European Youth Card as part of their student benefits in the country.

- **Visit to Greece**

In June 2021, EYCA office offered a support visit to the member organisation in Greece, with the purpose of fostering EYC youth services in the country. The visit had both a political and operational level. The EYCA delegation met the President and staff of INEDIVIM, as well as the Advisor to the Secretary of State and Directors of Youth Unit in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Following the support visit, a letter of intention to join the PA on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card was signed. Greece became the Partial Agreement's 23 member at the end of 2021

- **Visit to Albania to support negotiations between the youth card organisation and the Government representatives**

Throughout 2019 - 2021 the EYCA member organisation in Albania went through staff changes and needed support in developing the EYC scheme strategically. The support visit in November 2021 included meetings with representatives of City Hall of Tirana and Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth. Possibility of joining the PA on Youth Mobility was further discussed and hopefully will materialise in 2022. Other elements such as the connection with the European Youth Capital were discussed in the context of Tirana's title for 2022.

- **Visit to Italy**

EYCA is currently implementing a regional model of membership in Italy. Following the development of the European Youth Card in regions Lazio and Sardinia, and recently on the national level through the Department for Youth Policies and the Universal Civic Service, Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The visit to Italy helped the three parties negotiate a sustainable model of developing the EYC and pave the way also for the Chairmanship PA seminar in 2022. A presentation on the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility was delivered on this occasion.

- **Identifying and supporting the new member organisations of EYCA**

In 2021, EYCA welcomed as a new member organisation the Department for Youth Policies and the Universal Civic Service, Office of the President (Italy), which will implement the European Youth Card. In addition, in 2021 two new member States joined the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card: North Macedonia and Greece. The constant efforts of the EYCA's member organisations and support from the relevant Ministries contributed to this success. For 2022, EYCA is looking forward to expanding the European Youth Card scheme in Baltic countries, other Nordic countries (Denmark and Norway) as well as Armenia.

- **Legal support dimension of quality improvement development**

Domain registration and protection

To ensure the reciprocity of the European Youth Card discounts and benefits in all European countries, the registration and protection of online domains is crucial. To make sure youth information is easily accessible to young people, EYCA has registered europeanyouthcard.xy and eyca.xy domains, so that they can be used by member organisations.

- **Effective license and sub-license agreements**

According to the EYCA Statutes, there can only be one license holder for the European Youth Card per territory, i.e. one organisation developing the card for the given country/territory. However, to expand the distribution network and to make the card available to all young people, there are also sub-license agreements in some cases. EYCA provides the legal services connected to both license and sub-license agreements.

II. LIVING TOGETHER IN DIVERSE SOCIETIES: YOUTH POLICY AND YOUTH WORK PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

1. Commissioning technology infrastructure:

- **to support good practice database development**
- **to support EYCA's members' group structure**

EYCA discount database & intranet

The new **EYCA discount database** was introduced in 2018 together with the website. The database allows members to use APIs to add their discounts to the EYCA database automatically. This translates into quality discount information for young people at all times. Throughout 2021, the discounts were updated in the new database and organised in a user - friendly way, which makes it more accessible for young people.

The existing **EYCA intranet** continued to be expanded into a comprehensive EYCA Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), in order to streamline the collaboration between EYCA and its member organisations.

COVID-19 pandemic also fostered the negotiation of new, pan-European discounts, as requested by young people. Most of them spent the lockdown consuming on-line services of education, entertainment, culture and shopping on line. Thus, the EYCA members adapted their business model, in an effort to increase the pool of cardholders and providing them with access to health-related information. ***EYCA continued cooperation with Market AAD, aiming to offer young people across Europe new benefits.***

EYCA App

The EYCA app project has grown and is currently being used by 13 EYCA member organisations, an increase from last year. The project features two development options: the use of a general European Youth Card app or receiving support from EYCA to develop a local card app. In addition, other 14 EYCA member organisations use local card apps, thus highly increasing the digitalisation of EYCA in Europe.

2. EYCA's members' group structure, including specific Conference workshops

EYCA regional meetings were organised in a hybrid mode this year, as travel restrictions relaxed in some parts of Europe. This was an opportunity for EYCA members to meet two times in groups this year and exchange good practices on how they are providing youth work services during the pandemic. Therefore, in preparation for EYCA General Assembly and Conference, the meetings took place as follows:

Group 1 – 14-15 October 2021, Pamplona (Spain)

Group 2 – 23 – 24 September, Athens (Greece)

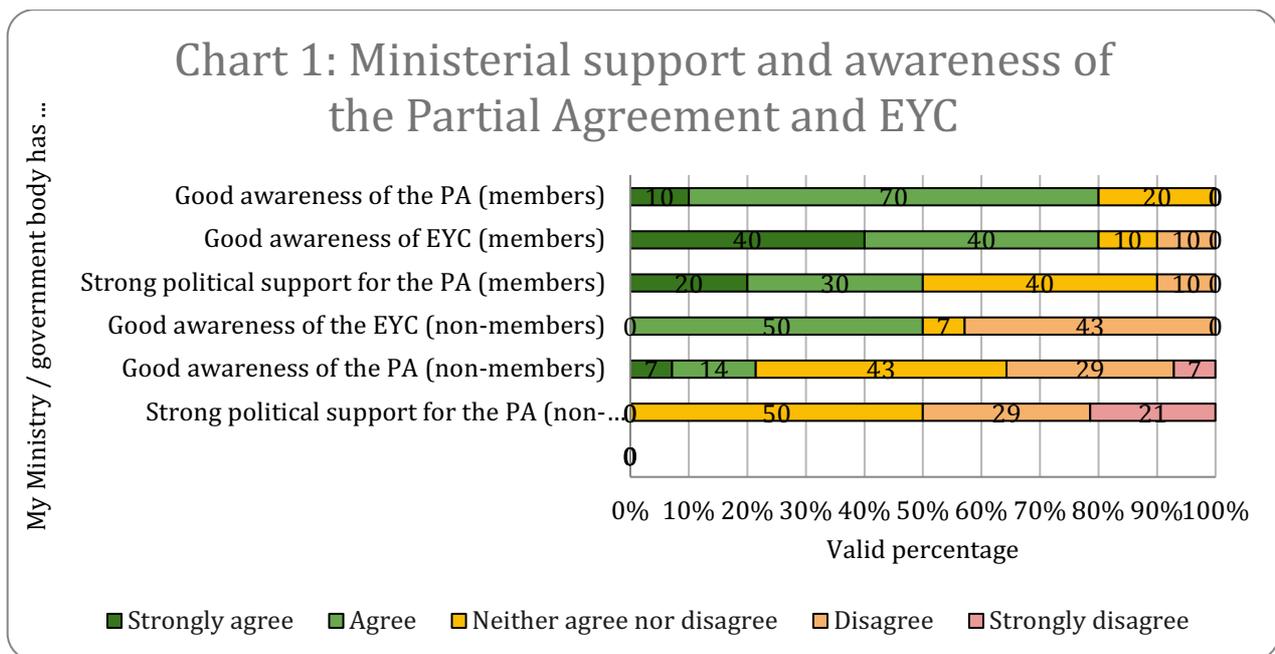
- Group 3 – 4th of October 2021, online
- Group 4 – 7th of October 2021, online
- Group 5 – 23 – 24 September, Athens (Greece)

Partial Agreement evolution and new possibilities of implementation were discussed in the meetings. Also, the PA programme 2022 was discussed.

3. Commissioning the generation and dissemination of knowledge relating to volunteering and youth citizenship

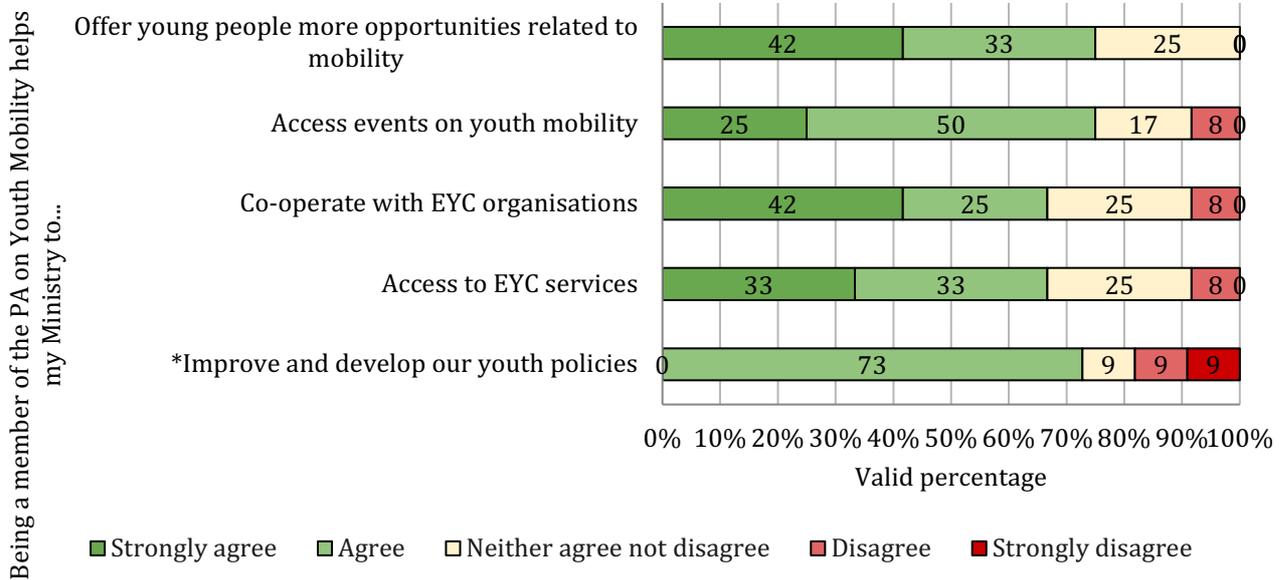
The year of 2021 also proved to be a good period for analysing feedback from member and non-member States of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility, as well as getting member states’ reflections on this analysis. EYCA employed the services of a consultant, Dan Moxon, who:

- run surveys among representatives of member States which are part of the PA on Youth Mobility. The survey is available [at this link](#)
- run surveys among representatives of member States which are not part of the PA on Youth Mobility. The survey is available [at this link](#)
- analysed the feedback received and included it in the final report.



The survey was closed at the beginning of this year and the results were captured in a comprehensive document annexed to the final report. The results were presented at the promotional PA seminar in March 2021. The Board of Coordination took note of the results at its meeting in March 2021 and held a brainstorming on the results at its meeting in October 2021. It has agreed to convene a dedicated meeting open to all Partial Agreement’s member states in the framework of youth sector’s statutory meetings in March 2022 to further consider them in strategic discussions and put forward concrete proposals on how to enrich and diversify the PA on Youth Mobility services. The report will also be used to design the next year’s European University on Youth Policies of the Council of Europe youth sector, considering the needs identified and expectations from the PA on Youth Mobility, as one of the flagship initiatives of the Council of Europe.

Chart 2: Benefits to Partial Agreement member states



On the same note, throughout 2021, EYCA hired the services of facilitators Mrs. Andreia Henriques and Mr. Athanasios Krezios, both of them experts in youth participation and policy design. Mrs. Henriques worked particularly to deliver the facilitation and reporting for the last PA seminar, while Mr. Krezios was engaged in long term training and facilitation of EYCA’s programmes for cardholders.

III. SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Travel, board and lodging associated with knowledge exchange meetings and events related to promoting and developing social inclusion aspects of youth card organisations

The year 2021 still proved difficult to organise the flagship events of EYCA, in particular related to Maximising Impact Programme and organising events exclusively dedicated to member organisations.

However, whenever travel was possible, EYCA organised support visits to youth card organisations in different countries. We also organised trainings for young people related to democratic participation, civic engagement, social inclusion of disadvantaged youth and advocacy.

EYCA supported member organisations to undertake exchange visits especially in the second part of the year, when vaccination rates were higher and traveling was safer.

Among exchange visits that were undertaken by EYCA member organisations, we mention:

- Directorate for Youth and Sport and Centre for Youth Education, Montenegro visited Agencia Catalana de la Juventut, in Spain and Carnet Jove association in Andorra;
- Tbilisi Youth Centre Union from Georgia visited Balearic Youth Institute in Spain;
- PRONI from Bosnia and Herzegovina visited Centre for Youth Education in Montenegro;
- SLOAM from Slovenia visited Mecenat in Sweden.

In addition, other mobility experiences were mainly dedicated to young people:

- Training on Youth Participation in Gran Canaria, Spain in March 2021;
- Attending the European Youth Event and benefiting from a training on civic engagement in European Youth Centre in Strasbourg;
- Youth Panel meeting in Strasbourg, in October 2021.

PA SEMINARS

In 2021, EYCA organised three Partial Agreement seminars and contributed with one more PA seminar to a larger Youth Conference in the framework of the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, some online and in a hybrid mode. As much as possible, EYCA continues to give priority to *in-person* events, especially as online time starts to take a toll on young people and professionals' mental health.

The seminars organised by EYCA were:

1. Promotional PA seminar – based on the research findings and survey among members and non-members of the Partial Agreement (16 March 2021 on-line);
2. PA seminar in the framework of the “ReStart, ReNew, ReIntegrate” Youth Policy Seminar under the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (27-29 October 2021, Budapest);
3. PA seminar on Mental Health in Digital Environments (18 October 2021, on-line and Slovenia);
4. PA seminar on Reimagining our future: youth policies meeting new realities (17 November 2021, on-line and Malta).

- **PA Seminar – Based on the research findings and survey among members and non-members of the Partial Agreement. 16 March, 2021 (online)**

The main objectives of the seminar can be summarised:

- Promote the European Youth Card as a tool for policy development and implementation, at local, national and European levels, especially towards Government representatives;
- Share good practices on how the European Youth Card is developed by EYCA members, especially on how it supports young people through the public health crisis of COVID-19;
- Encourage Governments who have not signed the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility to do so and address ‘youth mobility’ as a priority in their public policies;
- Present results of survey among members and non-members of Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the European Youth Card.

Therefore, the profile of participants included:

- representatives of Governments working to develop and implement national youth policies and being interested to connect it with the European dimension as regards the youth card and youth mobility;
- representatives of EYCA member organisations, including EYCA Board members;
- representatives of the Council of Europe.

From a methodological perspective, the seminar was held exclusively online, for only three hours. Organising the event online considered the possible negative impact on participants mental health and what is generally known as ‘Zoom fatigue’, after one year of online meetings.

Therefore, the seminar mainly consisted of presentations of different good practices and models of European Youth Card development, followed by questions, answers and recommendations from the member States representatives.

Aiming to cover a diverse geographical area and a variety of EYC models, the seminar brought together presentations from many youth card organisations. Also, it featured a video of Dr. Dan Moxon, as researcher who looked into the different expectations and needs of CDEJ members in relation to the European Youth Card development.

Presentations

The seminar was opened by EYCA's president, Mr. Jan Peloza together with Mrs. Natalja Turenne, representative of the Council of Europe. It was followed by a short introduction on how the PA on Youth Mobility is designed and the benefits it brings to its members.

EYCA Director, Mr. Manel Sanchez, delivered a comprehensive presentation about the European Youth Card Association, its member organisations and how it can support the policy development at national and regional levels.

To offer more context, the presentation was followed by a presentation of PA on Cultural Routes and joint initiative with PA on Youth Mobility. The presentation was offered by Mr. Stefano Dominioni.

For the next two hours, the seminar hosted presentations of different youth card organisations, showcasing models of good practice in using the European Youth Card to implement youth policies and public services in different areas:

- **Carnet Jove Andalusia, Spain** - The Youth Card as a tool to build relationships with young people. The presentation focused on good practices regarding services that can be offered through the European Youth Card, as a "one stop shop" tool. Also, by using the EYC as a tool to build constant dialogue with young people (cardholders) and engage them in service design, the card is used as a tool to build trustful relationships with beneficiaries, an essential element in youth work.

- **European Youth Card in Bulgaria - Supporting youth organisation and projects for young people.** Presented by Mrs. Lilya Elenkova, EYCA Board Member, the presentation focused on how the communities of cardholders can be mobilised and empowered to participate in democracy projects. From supporting official programmes such as the UN Youth Delegate to being recognised as an access tool to non-organised young people, the EYC in Bulgaria can offer good practices in how to advance youth participation in democratic societies.

- **Cartao Jovem in Portugal - The Youth Card in policy dialogue and youth engagement at municipal level.** Having one of the most complex European Youth Card programmes, the cobrand with the Municipalities in Portugal serves as an example on how the EYC can be used to deliver young citizens with public services. Over 105 municipalities and over 15.000 young people benefit from the Municipal European Youth Card, a tool through which local and regional administration involves young citizens in public life. The presentation also touched on other topics of interest for young people, such as climate change and how the EYC can contribute to tackle the negative effects.

- **Evropska Omladinska Kartica, BiH - The Youth Card promoting intercultural understanding and peaceful communities.** As a new member organisation in the European Youth Card Association, PRONI presented their model of connecting the European Youth Card with youth work services in multi-ethnic communities, with a purpose to build peaceful and resilient communities.

All presentations and documents can be consulted [at this link](#).

The event was closed by EYCA Director and the Council of Europe representative, taking on board all recommendations of creating further spaces for debate and learning about the PA on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card.

Programme of the seminar

16 March, 2021	
09.30 – 10.00	<p>Welcome address by hosts and organisers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan Peloza – EYCA President • Natalja Turenne - Council of Europe • Manel Sancez - EYCA Director <p>Round of introductions from participants</p>
GENERAL PRESENTATION	
10.00 – 10.15	<p>Presentation and discussion: The Partial Agreement and its role in the implementation of youth policies in member states – examples of good practice from governments</p>
10.15 – 10.30	<p>Presentation based on survey results from members and non-members of PA on Youth Mobility</p>
10.30 – 10.45	<p>Presentation of PA on Cultural Routes and joint initiative with PA on Youth mobility</p>
10.45 – 11.00	<p>Coffee break</p>
GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES	
11.00 – 11.45	<p>The European Youth Card and effective youth policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnet Jove Andalusia, Spain The Youth Card as a tool to build relationships with young people • European Youth Card in Bulgaria Supporting youth organisation and projects for young people • Cartao Jovem in Portugal The Youth Card in policy dialogue and youth engagement at municipal level
11.45 – 12.00	<p>Coffee break</p>
12.00 – 12.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CJP Netherlands The Youth Card promoting young people's lifestyle • Evropska Omladinska Kartica, BiH The Youth Card promoting intercultural understanding and peaceful communities <p>Debates related to the benefits of supporting the European Youth Card and joining the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility</p>
12.45 – 13.00	<p>Conclusions and closing remarks</p>

- **PA Seminar – Mental Health in Digital Environments. 18 October, 2021.**
(Online/Ljubljana, Slovenia)

About the organisers

The event was jointly organised by Council of Europe, EYCA, Slovenian Agency for Youth Mobility (SLOAM) and International Youth Health Organization (YHO).

About the seminar

The Council of Europe is the leading Pan-European international organisation promoting inclusive, human-rights based youth policies. One of the priorities of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility for 2021 is to “*Support and encourage innovation in youth work and youth services, especially in the context of COVID-19 challenges*”. The pandemic has represented a major disruption to everyone’s life. As our societies get back to normal, young people are left with invisible scars that we need to be pro-active in addressing, through youth policy development and tailored programmes for youth.

The pandemic has particularly impacted young people in complex ways, from taking a toll on their mental health to negatively impacting their education process as schools moved classes online, or to disproportional loss of their already vulnerable jobs. Addressing the effects of the pandemic requires creativity and cross-sectoral approach in youth policy development.

Since the start of the pandemic, the everyday life of young people has transitioned to the virtual setting. While younger generations have been characterized as the “digital natives” even before the pandemic, the COVID-19 measures together with lockdowns and social distancing contributed to major lifestyle changes which is why youth are spending more time online and in different digital environments than ever before. Even before the pandemic, there was evidence of how the digital world negatively impacted mental health and COVID-19 only exacerbated the problem. Youth in the COVID-19 era are reporting rising levels of depression, anxiety and feelings of isolation and loneliness. Heightened levels of stress and substance use have been noted amongst the young people as well. We are seeing a rise of new and emerging mental health issues, such as Zoom fatigue or Snapchat and Instagram dysmorphias, as well as the worsening of mental health disorders like gaming addiction, self-harm and other psychiatric illnesses.

The worsening state of mental health and wellbeing of youth also reflects exponential levels of uncertainty that young people are facing in their everyday lives. Spending an increased amount of time engaging with digital technologies and social media is influencing the mental health of youth by disturbing their sleep patterns and making them more vulnerable towards cyber-bullying.

That is why mental health in digital environments is a crucial topic to be addressed throughout Europe. It is critical to intervene early and ensure a cohesive, holistic and rigorous policy action to transform the narrative. Prioritizing the topic on the national and European level requires a cross-generational and interdisciplinary policy approach with a non-siloed mentality, keeping in mind the potentials and limitations of digital environments and investing in solutions, such as but not limited to digital mental health, increasing health literacy of youth on appropriate digital use and risks, and establishing support systems for young people.

The seminar aimed to:

- Ensure mental health is being promoted as a policy priority at national and European level, respectively that youth work adapts and includes services to identify, guide and support young people with mental health challenges;

- Offer the space for professionals and young people to have a coordinated approach on this topic and make recommendations for policy makers;
- Identify how the European Youth Card infrastructure and resources can be used to raise awareness and destigmatise mental health issues.

The format was interactive seminar, bringing together policy makers, experts in the youth mental health, civil society representatives and EYCA members.

The event featured representatives from International Organisations focused on mental health, National Governmental representatives and EYCA member organisations. It was for the first time when presentations focused European Youth Card and mental health services, thus voicing the concerns of many cardholders and showcasing how the EYC can rapidly be used to address new topics in youth policies.

The seminar was organised for half a day, fully online, thus being mindful of the time we requested participants and guests to spend in front of their screens.

Programme of the Seminar

<i>18 October, 2021</i>	
9.00 – 9.45	<p>Welcome and short presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health, Slovenia • Ministry of Education, Slovenia • World Health Organisation • Council of Europe – about PA on Youth Mobility • EYCA Director – about EYCA • SLOAM
9.45 – 10.00	<p>Aim and objectives</p> <p>-mapping the audience -expectations</p> <p>Introduction of the facilitator, presentation and expectations of participants</p>
10.00 – 11.00	<p>New realities for young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Matej Vinko – Slovenian National Public Health Institute
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 12.00	<p>BREAKOUT ROOMS: Thematic working groups led by EYCA members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movijovem, Portugal – supporting youth wellbeing and mental health • SLOAM, Slovenia – sustainability and mental health at the core of youth participation • Young Scot – involving young in codesign of mental health services / presentation of iFeel programme • Instituto Aragones de la Juventud, Spain - EYC as a tool to offer integrated youth services <p>Participants will work in parallel groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attend a short presentation on how EYC is used as a tool for supporting young people</i> • <i>Share good practices and challenges they face given the new realities of young people</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Map and identify possible new policy priorities and topics to be tackled in youth agenda</i>
12.00 – 12.15	Back to plenary Q & A session
12.15 – 12.30	Coffee break
12.30 – 14.00	<p>Round table event: Mental Health in the Digital World: Future of Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health Europe: Dominique de Marne, Senior Policy Advisor for Youth - YHO: Andrej Martin Vujkovic, President - EFPSA: Deianara Couwet, President (or their external representative) - IFMSA: Mohamed Mamdouh Eissa, Liaison Officer for Public Health Issues (or the Regional Director for Europe) <p>Closing remarks</p>

Among the recommendations of participants, we mention:

- Online appointments, consultations for young people, but they **MUST** happen in person mainly as this gives young people strength;
- Schools should get qualified psychologists;
- Working against stigma of getting help and having mental health problems;
- Training youth workers and personnel who work with youth workers on how to provide mental health first aid and how to react;
- Council of Europe Youth Unit strength is to outreach to youth organisations, but don't work on health.

All presentations are available [at this link](#).

- **PA Seminar – ‘ReStart ReNew ReIntegrate - Opportunities for young people after coronavirus’ held under the Hungarian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. 27 – 29 October 2021. (Budapest, Hungary)**

The Conference was an opportunity to discuss possible ways of restarting youth communities after the pandemic including during a seminar involving the European Youth Card Association and the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card. The seminar was part of the Partial Agreement’s programme of activities for 2021.

The Conference was targeted towards representatives of ministries responsible for youth affairs from the member states of the Council of Europe and representatives of several civil youth organisations.

Programme of the Seminar

Time	Day 0
14:00 - 19:00	Arrival of participants to the accommodation
19:00 – 20:30	Dinner at the accommodation
	Day 1
07:00-09:00	Breakfast
09:00-09:30	Official opening of the conference Representative of the Hungarian Government

	<p>Representative of the Council of Europe – video message Representative of the Advisory Council</p>
09:30 – 10:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Effects of Covid-19 across youth work and youth activities” Representative of the CMJ (TBC)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plenary Sessions, international best practices</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>„Keep calm and look forward”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exemption of young adults under 25 from personal income tax – Hungary (Ms. Zsófia Rácz Deputy State Secretary) - Best practices of Germany (TBC) - Best practices of Italy (TBC) - Mental Health and Well-being during and after the pandemic (Pszichodiák Foundation – Hungary)
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 12:15	<p style="text-align: center;">Round table</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tools to restart youth communities - Presentation of international and domestic challenges and good practices Representative of the CDEJ Representative of the AC Representative of the YFJ (TBC) Representative of the Hungarian NYC (TBC)</p>
12:15 – 13:45	Lunch
13:45-15:15	<p style="text-align: center;">Working Group Discussions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical, online or hybrid education? What is the way of the future? 2. Back to work - opportunities for young people to re-integrate them into the labour market, European practices 3. Soft-skill development with non-formal learning methods 4. Youth civic spaces – situation, roles and opportunities after the pandemic
15:15 – 15:45	Questions and feedbacks
15:45 – 18:00	Visiting a local organizations
18:00 – 19:00	Free time
19:00-22:00	Dinner
Time	Day 2
07:00-09:00	Breakfast
9:00-9:30	<p style="text-align: center;">European Youth Card Association, Partial Agreement seminar – Opening</p> <p>Mr. Gergely Mohay – Prime Minister’s Office – Department for Youth – head of department Representative of the CoE (TBC) Mr. Jan Pelozza – European Youth Card Association – president</p>

	Representative of the Hungarian Educational Authority (TBC)
09:30-10:30	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth and youth mobility presentation of the member of the EYCA
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-13:00	<p>Presentations of the European Youth Card Association members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institut Balear de la Juventut, Spain – EYC as a tool to build resilient communities 2. Young Scot, UK – EYC and youth mental health during a pandemic: iFeel programme 3. Agencia Catalana de la Joventut, Catalunya, Spain – EYC as a one stop shop support system for youth 4. Agenzija Zghazagh - Youth work during and after the pandemic <p>Questions and closing remarks</p>
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30	Departure

All presentations can be found [at this link](#).

- **PA Seminar – ‘Reimagining our future: youth policies meeting new realities: The role of the European Youth Card in connecting emerging topics with youth policy development’**. 18 -19 November 2021. (Valletta, Malta/hybrid)

Why this seminar?

Miriam Teuma, Chief Executive Officer of [Agenzija Żgħażaġh of Malta](#), opened the seminar, while highlighting the importance of its theme. The pandemic has had an impact in young peoples' lives and in youth related services and programmes. There is the need to look at current challenges, identify new emerging topics and the way-forward for the field. She referred to three main elements of the seminar: to understand the impact of the pandemic, namely through the presentation of research findings, to share and learn from good practices, such as the ones of the European Youth Card Association member organisations, and to have a forward-looking discussion on the future of youth work and policy in (post) pandemic and recovery times.

Natalja Turenne, on behalf of the Council of Europe, took the floor to present the work developed by this international organisation in the field of youth, in particular in what regards the [Partial Agreement on Youth mobility through the Youth Card](#). One of the priorities of the Partial Agreement for 2021 is to “*support and encourage innovation in youth work and youth services, especially in the context of COVID-19 challenges*” and it was within this framework that the seminar was held.¹

Manel Sanchez, Director of the [European Youth Card Association](#) (EYCA) briefly shared the background of the seminar and acknowledged the efforts of the youth field, in particular of EYCA organisations, in responding to the challenges faced by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The seminar was planned as an opportunity to collect insights and suggestions on how the European Youth Card (EYC) can support youth work and policy developments related to emerging topics.

¹ Presentation is available [here](#).

New realities for Young People

Three surveys were conducted over the past two years within the framework of the [Knowledge Hub](#) of the [Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth](#), on the impacts that the pandemic of COVID-19 is having on the lives and futures of young people.

James O'Donovan is one of the experts on the Knowledge Hub and was the keynote speaker of this session. He was involved in compiling, analysing and reporting on these surveys and he shared the main findings and future policy implications for the youth sector. The first and second surveys (2020-2021) focused on issues such as communication with young people, funding and policy initiatives, and impact on and response of both state and NGOs' services and programmes. The third survey (2021) was dedicated to the impact on the mental health and well-being of young people, the impact of the pandemic of COVID-19 on digitalisation and post-pandemic priorities.

[Main findings](#) highlight that the pandemic situation had a severe impact in services and programmes addressed to young people and that there is the current need to pay more attention to youth communication and information, mental health of young people and the pros and cons of digitalisation on young peoples' lives. In addition, the surveys show that young people with low income, as well as young women, young migrants and young people living in rural areas have been disproportionate and negatively affected by the pandemic situation.

Some issues were already a priority, but the last 18 months have reinforced their importance, such as the need to foster civic engagement of young people, promote non-formal education, strengthen capacity building and ensure financial support for youth work, and increase cooperation amongst different sectors.

Sharing EYCA members practices

To offer latest information and inspiration (based as well on good practices) was a key dimension of the seminar. To achieve such objective, EYCA member organisations shared their knowledge and experience in delivering services and programmes to young people during the last year and a half.

There were two sessions of practices, intercalated with small group discussions with participants, where they also had the opportunity to relate to what was presented, share their practices, identify main challenges faced by young people as well as emerging topics in the youth field. In this section, we share the main outcomes of the presentations, in the next one we will give a brief overview of participants' input to the overall discussion.

The European Youth Card and youth participation & empowerment in pandemic times

Jason Zammit - Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, Malta

Enabling spaces for youth participation and policy shaping in pandemic times

[Presentation](#)

Jason presented the ways the agency adapted and shifted its focus from offline to online to allow for youth participation during the pandemic of COVID-19. He shared some of their success stories, including on how to set-up a national youth policy during pandemic times, the different initiatives in reaching out to young people and offering spaces for participation (with student councils, on young parliamentarians).

Jason reflected on how the agency dealt with uncertainty, developing the capacity to adjust to circumstances, moving from online to offline from in-school to out-of-school contexts. In addition, he referred the importance of research to have a better knowledge of the reality and to develop evidence-based policies and programmes.

At the end, Jason listed three main learning points, to take forward for the future of their work: 1) that young people are still open to participate, even during pandemic times; 2) in time of crises we should look for help and collaborate with the right sectors and partners for each initiative; and 3) that youth work approach has been key to their success and that further investment on it is needed.

Emanuela Rubbino - Lazio Crea, Italy

EYC as a tool to connect youth and decision makers

[Presentation](#)

Emanuela shared the work of Lazio Crea regarding youth policy at regional level. She presented the Lazio Youth Card, while reminding that it is much more than discounts. In that context, Emanuela referred to their work in promoting the EYC from a tool for engagement (e.g. *Lazio Sound*, *Vitamina G* initiatives) to an advocacy tool (EYCA's #STANDFORSOMETHING campaign).

She also presented different initiatives that were held during the lockdown period, which allowed young people to exchange on topics such as LGBT+ community as well as to engage in discussions with experts/NGOs and policy makers.

Emanuela ended her presentation with an invitation to use EYCA membership to reach out to and engage young people in the upcoming [2022-European Year of Youth](#).

Nikolay Yordanov - Comunidad de Madrid, Spain

EYC as a tool to empower youth talent and creativity

[Presentation](#)

Nikolay brought a local perspective on the EYC, from Madrid. He presented the main findings of a survey conducted at the end of 2020 which focused on the impact of COVID-19 on young people's lives and registered close to 340 000 responses – a clear example on the outreach capacity of the card.

Two of the main conclusions were: 1) there was an overall concern with mental as well as physical health and well-being; and 2) that despite increased digitalisation, the human factor remains important for young people.

Based on the results of the survey, they reinforced efforts to offer opportunities to practice sport and enjoy outdoor activities. They also ran a campaign to promote healthy lifestyle.

Nassim Djabam - SLOAM, Slovenia

EYC as a tool to promote youth social entrepreneurship and helping youth thriving during pandemic

[Presentation](#)

Nassim presented SLOAM's experience in fostering partnerships with municipalities, while sharing useful and practical tips on how to do it.

He briefly presented the initiatives Social Impact Award and the Impact Hub, as tools for change-making and impact entrepreneurship, which also count with public universities, high schools and companies as partners.

Nassim invited all to further engage municipalities in their work because, despite the challenges, it allows to reach out to young people and have concrete impact at local level.

Yugoslav Radovijc - Centre for Youth Education, Montenegro

Using EYC as a tool for local youth policies

[Presentation](#)

Yugoslav brought a local perspective. He shared the efforts of the Centre for Youth Education in fostering recognition of the EYC at official level. The card has been recognised as of public interest for the period 2022-2024. They have enlarged the scope of their work as well as the partnerships established.

Cooperation with local municipalities has been key to develop concrete local initiatives and have allowed the exchange young people with local policy makers.

Lily Elenkova – NYCA, Bulgaria

EYC as a tool to research emergent needs of youth post-pandemic (presentation of research results)

[Presentation](#)

Lily brought a comprehensive overview on youth policy development to the discussion. She mentioned the strategic frameworks of the Council of Europe and of the European Union in this matter. She highlighted that the main aim of youth policy should be to support young people. She underlined the importance of considering four dimensions when developing a youth policy: good shape (mental and physical), learning, participation, and inclusion. In addition, it should include the following main elements: youth research, training, sharing good practices, youth work – all requirements for a successful national youth policy.

Lily ended by highlighting the importance of research to base youth policy development, and the work developed in Bulgaria in understanding the impact of COVID-19 related measures on the lives of young people.

Reflecting on current challenges and emerging topics

Participants in Malta, as well as the ones attending remotely, had the possibility to engage in smaller group discussions in both mornings, following the presentations of EYCA members.

They were invited to share about the challenges they are currently facing, given the new realities of young people and how they are approaching them. Although space was given to reflect on what happened since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the discussion focused on the present and future of youth work and policies and the contribution of the European Youth Card.

Though youth services and programmes were quickly adapted, and new responses have been put in place, it is important to be aware that youth work has its limits. Though international mobility shall remain a key element of our work, the pandemic situation also reinforced the importance of keeping investment in local activism and participation.

As main challenges, it was mentioned the difficulties faced in keeping young people engaged during lockdown and in a long-term perspective. Online fatigue, which can lead to lack of motivation to continue engaging online, was another important challenge identified.

For the future, participants consider that although digitalisation has offered solutions, such as offering digital cards and online opportunities of youth participation, there is the need to find a balance as

digital opportunities are not enough, and human connection is a key feature of youth work – blended/hybrid approaches can be a way forward. To make the best use of digitalisation, there is the need to offer digital skills development of both young people and youth workers, including on how to make digitalisation more inclusive, ensuring that no young person is left behind. In this context, EYCA's maximising impact programme could play a role.

Furthermore, in times of uncertainty, empathy and the human dimension of youth services and programmes need to be reinforced. In this context, there might be the need to provide orientation to young people to support navigation through these pandemic times. Young people are facing times of great uncertainty, lack of plans, difficulties in accessing labour market, sense of insecurity, therefore, orientation services in different areas would be advisable (professional, health and mental care, educational, etc.). The EYC can, amongst other possibilities, support in reaching out to the ones in need.

When returning to face-to-face initiatives, it is important to make international mobility attractive again, facilitating travelling and to ensuring safe spaces, also regarding COVID-19 requirements. Youth services and programmes providers need to keep fostering young people's curiosity on European identity and culture. In this context, though EYC is much more than discounts, this feature can play an important role in pushing for mobility, by offering concrete opportunities in this regard (for example, railways).

Apart from the smaller group discussions, participants were invited to share a few [pictures](#) on how they reimagine the future of youth work and policies. While presenting them, they shared their message. Strengthening cooperation, self-care, networking as well as highlighting the importance of education and youth work were main elements mentioned. The Sustainable Development Goals were referred as a relevant framework to take into consideration while reimagining our future. Finally, though we cannot predict the future, we can plan different moves and options to be able to give concrete responses to the challenges faced by young people.

Reimagining our future: youth work and policies meeting emerging realities

The panel discussion was an opportunity to share different perspectives, including from youth policy makers and youth representatives, on how is the field evolving in (post) pandemic and recovery times. It addressed emerging initiatives on youth work and policies to tackle new realities. Some proposals on how the EYC can support new developments were also mentioned.

Miriam Teuma, CEO of Agenzija Zghazagh and Chair of the **Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe**, launched a question to the audience and overall youth field: "*What to do in the coming years?*", setting the tone of the panel discussion. She shared how the new Council of Europe Youth strategy focus on what can young people get from the organisation and the benefits of having them implementing the core values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Miriam mentioned that they went through an internal reflection to see if the youth sector strategy until 2030 remains valid, considering the impact of the pandemic. The conclusion is that not only the priorities remain valid, but they also became even more important. Access to human rights, revitalising pluralistic democracy, living together in diversity and youth work will remain at the core of the initiatives of the youth sector of the Council of Europe. In this context, Miriam shared briefly about the upcoming 2022 campaign of the Council of Europe on democracy for youth, which aims to foster full and meaningful youth participation, while connecting digitalisation and democracy.

Babis Papaioannou, Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the **European Commission**, referred to the youth priorities for the coming years, namely: inclusion & diversity, green, digital and youth participation. In addition, he mentioned that for 2022 we will see different initiatives related to youth policy dialogue including the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda, mutual learning activities, recovery support to youth work, and cross-sectorial efforts within the European institutions, under the coordination of the EU Youth Coordinator.

He referred to the cooperation with the Council of Europe, namely on research and in the framework of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth. Babis mentioned current and upcoming flagship processes relevant to youth work and policy such as the Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Year of Youth – 2022. Babis recalled the importance of strong engagement of relevant youth stakeholders, such as EYCA, as a key element of success for the initiatives mentioned. He left an invitation for all youth actors to contribute to the European Year of Youth, though exact opportunities of collaboration and coordination still need further elaboration.

Kristina Filletti, Secretary-General of the **National Youth Council of Malta**, brought a youth perspective, both as a young person and as representative of a youth organisation, to the discussion. She gave examples on the impact of the pandemic and related measures on young people, while also sharing a positive message that it has been a productive and creative time.

Kristina shared the current challenges to promote youth activism and participation and recalled the importance of non-formal education and youth work. She called attention to the impact on young people's mental health and the consequences of climate change. Kristina ended with a call to activism, mentioning that there are many and different opportunities for young people to participate.

Lydia Siapardan, **Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe**, shared her concern on how the pandemic has exacerbated structural inequalities and on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on young people in realising their human rights, in particular the rights to education, adequate housing and decent work. In this context, she highlighted the importance of more socially inclusive youth policies, that recognise the importance of youth work and support youth workers who engage at grassroots' level and with young people in marginalised and vulnerable situations.

To conclude, Lydia shared few proposals on how the EYC could contribute to social inclusive policies, highlighting its role in creating a sense of community, its accessibility, and the capacity to reach out to young people from diverse backgrounds.

Manel Sanchez, **Director of the European Youth Card Association**, referred to their process in setting up EYCA's strategy with member organisation, young people and cardholders. During the pandemic the organisation decided to review its strategy and reached the conclusion that, despite the need for few adjustments, the main goals should remain the same. He shared that the pandemic has exacerbated already existing challenges, giving them more visibility and recalling the urgency to work on them – such as digitalisation, mental health and climate change.

Manel mentioned the role of EYCA in supporting its member organisations, valuing their diversity and how important it is to ensure a bottom-up approach and to continue reaching out to non-organised youth.

He recalled that EYC is a card for opportunities, that offers services beyond discounts and has a role in fostering mobility, which hopefully will remain as a key element of youth services and programmes, and in leaving no one behind.

Closing

Natalja (Council of Europe), Manel (EYCA) and Miriam (Aġenzija Żgħażaġh of Malta) shared some final remarks, thanking everyone for their participation and committing to follow-up on the main conclusions of this seminar, while planning future initiatives on youth work and policies.

Programme of the Seminar

DAY 1 THURSDAY 18 November, 2021	
9.15 – 9.45	Welcome and short presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aġenzija Zghazagh Malta • Council of Europe – about the PA on Youth Mobility • EYCA Director – about EYCA
9.45 – 10-00	Introduction of the facilitator Aim and objectives Presentation and expectations of the participants Brief programme overview
10.00 – 10.45	New realities for young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James O’Donovan – Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the-Council of Europe
10.45– 11.15	<i>Break</i>
11.15 – 12.30	Sharing EYCA members practices: European Youth Card and youth participation and empowerment in pandemic times Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Zammit - Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, Malta • Emanuela Rubbino - Lazio Crea, Italy (online) • Nikolay Yordanov - Comunidad de Madrid, Spain Parallel working groups
12.30 – 13.00	Plenary
DAY 2 FRIDAY 19 November, 2021	
9.15 – 9:25	Intro of the day
9.25 – 10.30	Sharing EYCA members practices: European Youth Card: European Youth Card and new realities for youth

	<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nassim Djaba and Nika Stegovec - SLOAM, Slovenia • Jugoslav Radovic Centre for Youth Education (online) • Lilya Elenkova - NYCA Bulgaria <p>Parallel working groups</p>
10:30-11:00	<i>Break</i>
11.00 – 12:45	<p>Expert panel: Reimagining our future: youth work and youth policies meeting new realities.</p> <p>Guests:</p> <p>Miriam Teuma - CDEJ Chairperson</p> <p>Babis Papaioannou - European Commission representative</p> <p>Lidya Sapardini – Advisory Council on Youth of CoE</p> <p>Kristin Filleti - National Youth Council of Malta (KNZ)</p> <p>Manel Sanchez - EYCA Director</p>
12.45 – 13.00	Take-aways and closing

2. Participating in meetings and events to support the development of youth information across Europe

EPLM – EYCA is part of the Steering Group of the European Platform on Learning Mobility. This year, the two coordination meetings took place on 20 May and 25 October 2021. The meeting focused on reflections about how the pandemic impacted youth mobility and brainstorming related to 4th EPLM Biennial Conference.

At the same, within EPLM there are ongoing discussions on strategic development of the Steering Group and other dimensions that should be addressed at policy, practice and research level, on the topic of youth mobility.

Seminar ‘Youth Policies from Standards to Practice’, 29 November – 2 Dec 2021, St Petersburg, Russian Federation – EYCA Director attended the event and delivered a presentation about the role of European Youth Card in policy implementation.

European Youth Event, 8 – 9 October 2021, Strasbourg, France – EYCA attended with a group of cardholders and ran consultations with young people on European topics. The event contributed to enhancing skills for participation in democratic societies and was open for EU and non-EU countries.

IV. POLICY APPROACHES AND INSTRUMENTS BENEFITING YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

1. Commissioning technology infrastructure

The EYCA common card number database (CCDB) allows for card numbers to be verified instantly online. This allows cardholders to use online discounts and services such as mobile applications. The development of the CCDB continued in 2021. New member organisations added their card numbers to the database, with over 5 million card numbers verifiable via the CCDB currently.

In 2021, EYCA continued to support members to add customised features to the EYCA free app, making the experience more user-friendly for young people, by offering tech grants as part of the MI programme.

2. Special Edition of the European Youth Card

In 2021, EYCA invested in a new app to be used only for EYC special editions. Such special editions can be issued when a significant campaign or institutional process is taking place, so as to reach out to young citizens and engage them. A next opportunity to use the app for EYC special edition is for the campaign '*Youth For Democracy For Youth*' to be implemented by the Council of Europe next year.

Signed:



**European Youth
Card Association**

Manel SÁNCHEZ | EYCA Director