

COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH POLICY ADVISORY MISSION TO PORTUGAL SEPTEMBER 2024

Final report of the Council of Europe youth policy
advisory mission delegation¹



¹ The opinions expressed in this report are the responsibility of the advisory mission delegation and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe or its member states.

Acknowledgements

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1 Executive Summary

As part of its intergovernmental cooperation programme, the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) decided to support Portugal through a youth policy advisory mission, following a request of the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth. A delegation including Miriam Teuma (European Steering Committee for Youth - CDEJ), Jan Vanhee (European Steering Committee for Youth - CDEJ), Anna Knobbout (Advisory Council on Youth - CCJ), Dr Tomi Kiilakoski (Scientific Expert, Senior Researcher, Finnish Youth Research Society), Clementina Barbaro (Council of Europe, Head of the Youth Policy Division), Marius Schlageter (Council of Europe, Policy Advisor) visited Faro, Lisbon and Porto on September 3-5, 2024.

The key objectives of the mission included understanding the state of youth work in Portugal, identifying the main challenges faced by young people and youth work, and contributing to the improvement of the National Youth Work Strategy, with an emphasis on quality and innovation.

The delegation met with representatives of local youth associations, municipalities, regional directors and departments, and national-level youth policy stakeholders. They were also introduced to perspectives on the formal education system in Portugal, from both educational policy and practical points of view. The mission's focus included the role of youth associations in providing youth work, promoting youth participation, identifying strengths and challenges in youth work offerings, and examining local educational and training structures for youth work. Additional topics included recognizing and validating prior learning and understanding the perspectives of the community of practice in youth work. The delegation was presented with the current version of the National Youth Work Strategy.

The delegation learned that Portugal has stable structures for youth work. Associations play a vital role in providing services to young people and reaching diverse groups based on their understanding of local conditions. However, challenges remain, as many associations operate on a project-based model, resulting in limited operational funding, resource uncertainty, and occasionally inadequate material facilities. Training opportunities are, in some cases, lacking. The delegation observed that the community of youth workers in Portugal is growing, although some expressed concerns that the group remains small and under-recognized. Formal education for youth workers exists, with the *Técnico de Juventude* course at Level 4 marking a step forward. A new Level 5 course is currently in development. Establishing formal vocational-level education in youth work is a significant achievement, though raising awareness about these courses was frequently highlighted as an area for improvement.

Portugal has developed national mechanisms to support youth work, such as youth centers that have received the Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Work, serving as valuable resources. Portugal has demonstrated a long-term commitment to promoting youth participation. The creation of a National Youth Work Strategy holds the potential to convince society of the importance of youth work. Ensuring the quality of youth work remains a challenge for the future.

Main recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the youth policy advisory mission, the delegation puts forward the following recommendations to the Portuguese authorities.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON YOUTH WORK IN PORTUGAL

1. **A clear definition of youth work is needed.** The delegation noted that in Portugal there is not a common, shared understanding about what youth work is. Clarifying what youth work is, and explicating what positive outcomes youth work brings to society are needed to gain recognition for youth work.
2. **Better tools to promote recognition.** Once there is understanding about what youth work is, effective tools that help in the promotion of and recognition of youth work as it is understood in the European youth work discussion should be created.
3. **Integrate youth work strategy to the general youth policy framework.** There are good examples of youth policy in Portugal, but the connections between different youth policy issues are not clear. A National Youth policy framework should make this explicit and integrate these issues including the new youth work policy strategy that is being drafted.
4. **Fun play and creativity.** According to CM/Rec(2017)/4 youth work is "inclusive and socially engaging, creative and safe, fun and serious, playful and planned". The delegation heard less about the creativity, fun and playfulness, although these elements are at the heart of youth work. These elements also ensure that young people join voluntarily youth work activities. Integrating these issues to the new youth work strategy ensures that youth work offer is wide enough.
5. **More open spaces.** The delegation noted that there few mentions of spaces of 'hanging out' and the companionship of other young people. These elements are brought about for example by youth clubs, organised events and supporting peer relations. Emphasising the importance of creating spaces in the new strategy is recommended.
6. **Create sustainable career paths for youth workers.** The delegation learnt that youth workers are dependent on project money, face financial uncertainties and have difficulties in entering youth work in paid capacity. Creating sustainable structures and resources on the local level is recommended if the intention is to develop a youth work career with more sustainable career paths.
7. **Enhance the role and value of volunteering.** Youth work done by volunteers should be better acknowledged, and the recognition of their learning experiences could be better developed.
8. **Youth work Knowledge.** The recognition of youth work likely requires systematic promotion of what youth work is, to different stakeholders. Since some of the problems identified are a result of weak recognition, measures are needed to promote youth work to those stakeholders in Portugal, who are not yet knowledgeable about youth work.
9. **Support the existing community of practice of youth work by providing resources.** The delegation saw promising examples of how the community of practice of youth work has organised itself to demand a more visible role in Portugal. These initiatives should be supported by providing more financial resources.

10. **Support youth work by providing tools for quality assurance and monitoring.** For the delegation quality assurance and monitoring are vital tools for youth work. Measures on how quality can be strengthened should be part of the youth work strategy.
11. **Develop knowledge-based youth work through supporting youth research.** It is recommended to produce reliable and quality information on youth work and the needs of young people. This aligns with the Council of Europe recommendation, which encourages member states to renew their support for youth work by “strengthening the dialogue between youth work, youth policy, and youth research.”
12. **Initial and ongoing youth work education and training.** The delegation appreciates the current efforts to develop initial training in youth work. There is a clear and systematic national framework for validating skills and competences. The delegation would also like to point out that using the term ‘youth work’ in the course title would be helpful in youth work promotion, and in recognising the competences required to do youth work. Given the complex nature of youth work, developing educational pathways beyond Levels 4 and 5 should be a strategic goal in the future. The training offer for those already working as youth workers should be coordinated to ensure that training meets the needs of the current community of practice of youth work and current and emerging youth policy issues.
13. **Analyse the diverse needs of young people and incorporate an intersectional approach in youth work policy.** As stated in the Declaration of 3rd youth work convention, is crucial “to be highly accessible for young people from a diversity of backgrounds and profiles. A basic youth work offer should therefore include a clear strategy to enhance social inclusion and diversity among participating young people” (p. 6.)

Recommendations for the Youth Strategy

1. Create a strategic vision on volunteering. The strategy mentions volunteers or volunteering only once, meaning it currently lacks a vision on how to balance voluntary and paid youth work. There is no strategic vision on how to recognize the learning outcomes of youth leaders. The delegation refers to the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work, which invites member states to “promote the recognition of the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding developed through participating in and delivering youth work.”
2. Create a vision on promoting research on youth and youth work. There is no strategic vision on the National Youth Work Strategy for promoting youth research and knowledge-based approaches in youth work policy and/or youth policy.
3. Articulate how the Portuguese youth work community of practice and the European youth work community are linked. The EU resolution on the youth work agenda invites member states and the European Youth Work Agenda to “Promote the European dimension of youth work through cross-border and transnational exchange, cooperation, intercultural learning, and peer-learning.”
4. Consider how continuous education for youth workers can be organized. The strategy emphasizes updating the youth worker professional profile to level V and validating, recognizing, and certifying the competencies of youth workers. This emphasis is highly necessary, but the delegation invites Portugal to also consider the training opportunities offered to youth workers.

5. Ensure that all important topics are covered in the strategy. Given the decision to base the strategy on the priority areas of the Bonn process, certain important topics may not receive adequate attention. The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to consider whether all necessary elements are included in the strategy.
6. Consider the age range, which currently targets young people from 10 to 35. The age gap is quite wide and may result in difficulties in developing youth work. For example, limiting the age group from 13 to 30 might be more suitable for the youth work purposes.
7. Amend the following topics: The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, CM/Rec(2017)4, was not revised or updated in 2023 (p. 4). It was, however, reviewed in 2023. On p. 5, referencing the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 is advisable. The eight priority areas are not defined in the *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States Meeting within the Council on the Framework for Establishing a European Youth Work Agenda* (2020/C 415/01) itself but are part of the Bonn Process. On pages 6–8, the descriptions of European youth work conventions and the European Youth Work Agenda follow the description of Portuguese developments. Consider integrating these as part of the discussions on European youth work policy in p. 5, or merge the last paragraph on p. 5 and the first on p. 6 into the chapter *Youth Work in Portugal*.
8. Consider adding a section in page 9 (Youth Worker in Portugal) on how work with and for young people is currently being conducted, including the efforts of youth associations, municipalities, and youth centres, both with and without the quality label.

Recommendations on the proposed topics and measures

The delegation acknowledges that the strategy identifies key challenges in Portugal and proposes measures to address these challenges, including recognizing youth work, promoting quality, digital transition, and reviewing the youth work profile. However, the delegation recommends considering the following:

9. Address inclusion and marginalization: Topic 1, "Develop and expand youth work offer," does not address issues of inclusion or marginalization. The delegation recommends paying attention to excluded groups of young people and adopting an intersectional perspective.
10. Clarify Measure 2, "*Youth Development Academy*," as it is currently unclear whether this initiative is targeted at young people or youth workers. Additionally, clarify its connection to quality development.
11. Create vision for monitoring and measuring youth work quality: The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to consider ways to monitor or measure the quality of youth work. While the creation of pedagogic materials, as mentioned in Measure 3, is needed, reflecting on how to build a monitoring system would strengthen the strategic approach in Portugal.
12. Create indicators for the impact of quality youth work on youth workers and organisations. When promoting quality, the key issue is whether organizations and youth workers actively use the quality system. The "Quality Youth Work" (European Commission 2015) document

emphasizes that "The basis and 'soul' of a quality approach must provoke critical reflection and a vivid debate on what we [youth work community of practice] do, how we do it, and, most importantly, why we do it." The delegation encourages reflection on how to achieve supporting critical reflection through quality framework and whether appropriate indicators can be found to measure this.

13. Consider whether "*A Common Direction for the Youth Work Community of Practice*" is the most accurate title, as the delegation views the proposed Measure 4 as being more focused on engaging young people in the youth work process.
14. Emphasise Cross-sectoral cooperation: Section 4 (beyond the youth work community of practice) and Measure 5 focus on civic spaces for young people but not on how the youth work community of practice can collaborate with other sectors. Given the importance of the topic in many presentations, the delegation suggests further consideration of how the national strategy could foster professional cooperation.
15. Section 5 (promotion and recognition) and Measures 6 and 7 do not address how to promote youth work among stakeholders in Portugal who are not yet aware of it. Recognition is a key challenge in promoting sustainable career paths in youth work, and identifying measures and indicators to improve youth work recognition should be a strategic goal.
16. Broaden the vision of digital youth work: Section 6 (innovations and emerging challenges) focuses on digital transformation. The delegation encourages Portuguese authorities to adopt a broader view of digital youth work. The delegation highlights the importance of developing a strategic vision of digitalization in youth work that goes beyond merely using digital technologies.
17. Section 7 (policy frameworks) and Measures 12 and 13 address the youth worker profile, an important step forward. However, the delegation notes that the current course at level IV is not well known in Portugal. The delegation encourages reflection on whether additional policy frameworks are needed to promote the role of youth work education and, if so, in what timeframe they could be implemented.
18. Clarify the connections between Measures 1, 2, 12, and 13, as they all address education, training, and the professional profiling of youth workers. Consider whether these measures should be integrated into a single strategic goal.

Final Recommendation

19. As an overarching recommendation, the delegation notes that the strategy could be clearer in its vision, mission, goals, and values, which are standard components of strategies. The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to clarify some of these elements.

2. Background and Objective of the Mission

One of the main objectives of intergovernmental cooperation in the Council of Europe's Youth Department is to promote and support the development of member states' youth field based on the values and standards of the Council of Europe. Public institutions and governmental authorities responsible for youth receive expert assistance to address youth policy issues and challenges, depending on the needs and contexts of the requesting states. Within this framework of assistance measures, the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (IPDJ) requested assistance for youth policy development from the Council of Europe's Youth Department.

The main objectives of the Council of Europe mission's visit to Portugal are to:

- a) Get to know in detail the National Youth Work Strategy, namely its main objectives, measures and areas of intervention envisaged, the monitoring and evaluation system envisaged as well as the way in which the Strategy has been developed;
- b) Get to know "in loco" the current state of youth work in both the public sector and civil society;
- c) Identify the main problems and challenges facing young people and youth organisations in the area of youth work;
- d) Get to know some good practices in the field of youth work;
- e) Gather information and data that will enable the Council of Europe's mission to make contributions to improving the National Youth Work Strategy, with an emphasis on quality and innovation in youth work so that it can be an instrument that supports the various institutions that carry out youth work.

3 European Youth Work Policy and its relevance to Portugal

The European youth work discussion has contributed to three different dimensions. Firstly, it has articulated a common European vision of what youth work is about. Secondly, it has explicated the societal contribution of youth work. And thirdly, it has invited member states to further engage in supporting youth work and creating a sustainable environment for it. Portugal has actively taken part in this development, and European perspectives continue to influence youth work development in the country, as demonstrated by the delegation during the advisory mission.

In the Council of Europe recommendation (CM/Rec(2017)4) youth work is defined as follows:

" Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision

making. Despite different traditions and definitions, there is a common understanding that the primary function of youth work is to motivate and support young people to find and pursue constructive pathways in life, thus contributing to their personal and social development and to society at large.”

This perspective on youth work emphasizes that it is about learning outside schools and other formal institutions, and it happens through guided activities and daily encounters, i.e., through non-formal and informal learning. It can be carried out by paid professionals and volunteers. Youth work encompasses both individual and social aspects of learning. This same understanding is shared by the Council of Europe and the European Union. A similar definition is also used by the European Union in the *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda 2020/C 415/01*. The first article of the resolution uses this same definition. The second article states that although there is a shared European understanding of what youth work entails, it can take different forms depending on national traditions, concepts and theories, practices, and the stakeholders involved.

“Although there is a common understanding of the primary function of youth work, it takes very different forms across EU Member States of the EU is defined or described differently and is associated with different perceptions, traditions, stakeholders and practices. It takes place in different forms and setting. Youth work plays an important role in the personal and social development of young people, their participation in society and in the transitions, they are going through. It is aimed at all young people, including those less engaged with society and/or with fewer opportunities and / or whose full political and social participation is at risk due to individual or structural disadvantages or discrimination.”

This definition emphasises that youth work brings about social benefits. The youth work offer is universal and intended for all young people. It contributes to personal education and career paths, provides learning opportunities and it also contributes to wider societal discourses.

The Council of Europe has developed a European Youth Work Portfolio, which outlines the different competencies youth workers need. According to this framework, youth workers require both youth-work-specific competencies, which make youth work a unique field, and general competencies. There are 8 focus competence areas, further divided into 32 competencies. These highlight the complex nature of youth work practice, as youth workers must be knowledgeable about young people, pedagogy and learning, society, intercultural relations, and policies, in addition to having general skills, such as the ability to lead teams and manage projects. The focus areas are the following:

1. Address the needs and aspiration of young people
2. Provide learning opportunities for young people
3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live and engaging with it
4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations
5. Actively practice evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted
6. Support collective learning in the youth workers’ team
7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people and
8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

The delegation points out that the term 'youth work' and its definition are based on a long-term process where the youth work community of practice, including practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and young people, have collaborated to reach a common understanding. The delegation believes that the common European definition of youth work will be useful for Portugal in clarifying the value of youth work and demonstrating the impact of this work.

4. Overview of the situation of youth work in Portugal as coming up from the meetings and resources made available to the delegation

The delegation had chance to get to know the youth work system and youth policy in general in Portugal. Different local, regional and national stakeholders described their work. The delegation met representatives of local youth associations, municipalities, regional directors and departments and national level youth policy stakeholders. The delegation was also presented the perspectives of the formal education system in Portugal both from the educational policy and practice points of view.

Below is a detailed description of the different presentations. An evaluation to show the strengths and areas of development needed follows.

4.1. Faro, Algarve Region – 2nd and 3rd of September 2024

Youth work and Youth Policy in the Algarve Region

The delegation arrived in Faro on September 2. On this occasion, they met with Regional Director Custódio Moreno, who briefed the delegation about youth policy and youth work in the region.

On September 3, the morning meeting began with an introduction by Director Custódio Moreno. He described the Algarve region in general and reflected on the specific challenges facing youth work. The Algarve is the southernmost region of Portugal, comprising three different zones: Litoral (coastline), Barrocal (transitional area between the coast and the highlands), and Serra (highlands). There are 16 municipalities in the region, which can be divided into freguesias (in English, parishes, with no reference to religion). In total, there are 66 freguesias in the region. The Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth works with all these municipalities.

The geography of the Algarve region has a significant impact on youth policy. Historically, most activities in the region have occurred along the coastline, where cities have more resources and activities, leading to a concentration of citizens in these areas. This geographical distribution affects the socio-economic situation in the region. Young people are more likely to migrate to the coastal cities, especially in the southernmost part of the region. Labour market and educational issues also influence the lives of young people, who tend to work and study close to these urban centers. Youth organizations and municipalities are key players in the highlands. Historically, young people's access to socio-cultural activities has primarily been through youth organizations. In the 1980s and 1990s, municipalities did not have designated individuals responsible for youth affairs, but this has changed. Since 2000, municipalities have appointed a person in charge of youth, cultural, and sports activities, with these positions being political in nature. Each municipality provides a physical space for the officer to work.

Actions by both central and decentralized government have contributed to this development. For example, youth information initiatives have positively impacted youth work offers. According to Director Moreno, this was a turning point for municipalities, which began to recognize the importance of engaging more closely with young people. The ongoing challenge is to provide the right information to young people amidst the overwhelming amount of available information.

In the 1990s, youth exchanges and camps were the primary youth work offers. Nowadays, the offers have broadened, as more human resources are available. Some municipalities have started to offer youth houses, or “casas do juventude.” This development has facilitated closer collaboration between young people, youth organizations, and local decision-making processes. Cities now provide more opportunities for young people, such as participatory budgeting and other participation structures. All of these changes have initiated a transition from youth organizations that offered a wide range of topics to more specialized organizations focusing on areas such as sustainability and youth camps. However, youth organizations remain fewer in number compared to sports organizations.

The main challenges for young people and youth policy are empowering youth and providing reliable information. There is also a need to rejuvenate civil society, creating space for heterogeneity and different visions. Regional director stated that the primary message in working with young people is to “Listen, listen, listen, and be prepared to act.”

PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The delegation was presented with the work of six youth organizations in the Algarve region. There are fewer than 50 youth organizations in the entire region. The associations presented included Associação Sê Mais Sê Melhor, Associação Liláz, Associação Contextos, ECOS, Associação Moju, and Associação Oficina do Sentir. All of these organizations provide services for young people. In the following section, the emphasis is on the common themes rather than a detailed description of the services offered.

Sofia Martins discussed the development of the quality of the Faro Youth Centre. The center is unique in the region and has a central location. It offers free space for non-profit organizations. The current weaknesses include the absence of a pedagogical team with experience in non-formal education and a political vision for the youth field. The current staff are overworked, and there are no co-management principles in place. However, there are opportunities for promoting recognition of the professional qualification of “youth worker.” The main threats include a lack of investment by regional municipalities, a lack of attractiveness of youth work as a career, and a lack of a culture of youth participation. The international dimension of the Faro Youth Club occurs through partner organizations. Unlike youth clubs that provide spaces for socializing, the Faro Youth Club does not offer that. The Roma community was mentioned as an example of a minority group that needs attention, highlighting the need to combat discrimination and racism.

The youth organization Sê Mais Sê Melhor aims to build active and autonomous communities where young people design, build, and implement their own projects. Out of the three staff members, one is financed by the state and two by projects. The staff are trained psychologists who use their expertise to support the volunteers. The main difficulties include financial management and bureaucratic work; engaging young people and adapting projects to their needs; and difficulty accessing material, monetary, and theoretical resources. They called for support in managing



association tasks and hiring more human resources. Currently, the organization has a co-working space, which is a great place for collaboration but not a space for young people to spend time.

The aim of Liláz is to develop the competencies of young people through non-formal education, targeting the 18 to 30 age group. They provide international mobility opportunities and engage in environmental campaigns, especially focusing on sustainability issues. The main challenges include the seasonal work opportunities available to young people in the region. They also encounter individuals from different countries through tourism who do not necessarily recognize the value of youth exchanges. Additionally, they called for better recognition of youth-related activities. The lack of structural/operational funding in Portugal was seen as a significant problem, as funding is often tied to specific projects, leaving those working with youth organizations without financial security. They also expressed dependence on municipal decisions.

Contextos is a cooperative based in Faro dedicated to social development and cohesion. They focus on cultural, social, educational, and sustainability issues. They collaborate with universities and aim to work with youth aged 14 to 17 in schools. They believe that youth participation could be further developed by promoting information for young people so they understand how to access participation, as well as by identifying strategies for reaching them. The development of the regional youth strategy between 2012 and 2016 was mentioned as an example that utilized different participatory mechanisms.

ECOS provides education and training and engages in local development. The delegation was presented with various projects aimed at promoting participation and empowering youth. The presentation emphasized that the lack of structural funding results in few opportunities for co-management with young people, which limits the potential to develop their work. They also mentioned the regional strategy Algarve 2020, which established a network that operates informally. This process occurred from 2012 to 2016. They highlighted that changes in key personnel have sometimes led to shifts in the entire process.

MoJu is an almost 17-year-old organization that is youth-led. The organization began by addressing a significant need among young people for organizing concerts and theater performances. They have projects that work with minority groups, such as the Roma community. In 2021, they established a community office to address community needs. Sometimes parents (or grandparents) approach them for assistance with tasks like reading letters from local authorities. Their work has a clear community element. They, too, emphasized the need to secure funding sources and expressed concern about the changing nature of these sources. They mentioned that formalities and bureaucracies present challenges, particularly as there are very few young people capable of writing funding applications, and no training is available for them.

Associação Oficina do Sentir offers therapy services and organizes multiple projects while supporting volunteer work. Their challenges include reaching schools, funding activities and projects, and a lack of qualified human resources (especially in volunteering). The majority of their work is volunteer-based.

The common themes mentioned in most of the presentations included the importance of project funding and the consequent lack of structural/operational funding. Different dimensions of youth participation and the obstacles to promoting youth participation were often highlighted. The lack of material resources was mentioned in some cases. The delegation noted that youth organizations were clearly contributing to the region by working “with and for young people.” However, in some

cases, it was unclear how various activities would fit into the European understanding of youth work. Additionally, training opportunities for non-formal methodologies were not systematic.

PERSPECTIVES OF MUNICIPALITIES

Seven municipalities of the Algarve region presented their youth work policies and the services they offer for young people. The municipalities of Vila Real de Santo António, Faro, Loulé, Portimão, Lagos, Tavira, and São Brás de Alportel informed the delegation about their local situations.

Representatives of Vila Real de Santo António emphasized that the municipality takes youth affairs very seriously. There are four technical officers supporting youth matters and a youth policy advisor. Listening to young people is a strategic priority, and the commitment to co-management is one of the main priorities of Vila Real.

Faro has a team of several technicians working with sports and youth. The Division of Sports and Youth was created in 2023 and is a formal division within the municipality. Faro promotes communication and provides activities for young people, offering logistical and financial support to organizations. Faro is currently revising its youth plan, with a new plan expected in 2025. Statistical information from 2010 identified points of development for young people of different ages. The key areas of the strategic plan include Citizenship and Youth Participation; Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Training; Sports, Culture, and Leisure; and Urban and Environmental Development. Support is offered for associations, entrepreneurship, and participation, with various programs available.

The strategic vision of Loulé emphasizes being inclusive, cohesive, competitive, and sustainable. The number of young people aged 10 to 39 years is 22,797, out of a total population of 70,622. Promotion of civic activities includes the Banco Local de Voluntariado (Bank of Local Volunteers), support for youth organizations, support for sports organizations, and a municipal youth council. There is a need for improvement in finding specialized material and human resources to ensure the continuity of the work developed.

Portimão has worked closely with young people for the past eight years. The municipality has 60,000 inhabitants, of which 10,000 are between the ages of 10 and 35. There are three staff members working with young people, alongside two organizations. The municipal youth council includes a distinct group of young people who gather monthly to analyze issues that are then taken to the municipal youth council. Young people are able to join meetings with municipal officials. The youth strategy of the municipality is devised with young people and takes into account national and EU youth strategies. It covers a period of ten years and is revised every three years with input from young people. There are actions and activities related to civic participation, entrepreneurship, volunteering programs focused on social inclusion, and youth mobility programs. The municipality also hosts young people from the European Union and vice versa. The entire month of March is dedicated to young people's ideas, and there is a youth festival, which is currently in its 21st edition.

The representatives of Lagos emphasized that it is common for municipalities to have similar structures. Involving young people in democratic processes and promoting youth participation are important goals for municipalities. One of the difficulties is encouraging young people to collaborate on the problems facing their city. Youth policy challenges include combating school dropout rates through encouragement and supporting the transition to the labor market, particularly in finding the first job after completing vocational or university studies.

Tavira emphasized that the work the municipality does is always connected to listening to young people. The offers for youth within the municipality include international exchanges, the municipal program "Tavira Active Holidays," Youth Week, participation in European programs, and visits to the European Parliament, as well as a Volunteer Bank. The Tavira Youth Action Plan, titled "Tavira 2020 Youth," is based on working with young people. Challenges and action areas include engaging young people with youth agents, promoting civic participation and capacity building for youth, involving youth in collective responsibility actions, contributing to the empowerment of young people, and developing and monitoring action plans for youth.

São Brás de Alportel has specific projects for the youth sector. It is a growing municipality, but the youth sector is not independent and is integrated with other sectors. A concrete example is the municipal assembly, which consists of students. There are prizes for young people, and there is an event where young people have the opportunity to sing together with a band at one of the largest events in the municipality. The city representative emphasized the importance of equality of opportunity. For example, providing monetary support to young people for participating in cultural activities is crucial. They aim to provide a co-working space where young people can work on their projects and receive support.

In the discussion, the role of the IPDJ and the links between national and local developments were addressed. It was stated that national discussions are needed, and more sharing of practices between municipalities should be encouraged. The municipalities emphasized that the IPDJ should listen to their needs. The role of youth workers was discussed, and it was noted that the concept of youth work shared by the municipalities in the region differs from the European understanding of youth work. There was no shared agreement on who should be responsible for the provision of youth work. Some municipalities emphasized the role of associations, while others noted that working directly with young people is essential, requiring individuals who can engage with youth. Therefore, there is room for municipal youth technicians. Youth technicians need to be able to connect with young people and help them fulfill their needs.

The role of volunteers was also discussed, along with the importance of supporting young people outside formal organizations. The municipalities noted that they cannot assist informal groups of young people due to strict legal frameworks in Portugal, which pose a barrier to supporting these groups.

According to the municipalities, explaining the importance of youth workers remains a significant challenge. The delegation believes this is partly due to the current difficulty in Portugal in explaining what youth work entails and its social value to Portuguese society in general and to local communities in particular. Municipalities reflected on the different status of sports and youth. They emphasized the need to convince decision-makers about the importance of investing in youth. This clearly requires national discourses that articulate the value of investing in youth work and other services for young people. Defining and clarifying youth work would also help distinguish it from other professions.

The delegation noted that municipalities had differing views on youth policy and varying resources for working with and for young people. In the delegation's view, municipalities should be more strongly supported in developing youth work. The Council of Europe recommendation on youth work states that there is a "need for strategies, frameworks, legislation, sustainable structures, and resources" at the local, regional, and national levels. Organizing more national discussions and sharing more practices through a national platform, such as a national conference on youth work, might be beneficial. The delegation noted that IPDJ must take the lead in establishing the

competencies of youth workers and developing a definition of youth work for Portugal to set standards and make it easier for municipalities to understand the role and potential of youth work. As a long-term goal, more funding should be allocated to youth organizations and municipalities.

4.2. National and Lisbon Perspectives – 4th of September 2024

The first part of the day consisted of presentations held at the Lisbon Youth Centre, which has a Council of Europe quality label for youth centres. The delegation heard presentations from national-level organizations: FNAJ – Federação Nacional das Associações Juvenis (National Federation of Youth Associations); CNJ – Conselho Nacional da Juventude (National Youth Council); DYPALL network; IPDJ – Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude (Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth). Additionally, the Lisbon Youth Centre presented its work, and the Lifeshakers association shared information about its activities.

National Federation of Youth Associations (FNAJ) represents local youth associations and regional federations. It has political representation in various bodies, including youth advisory councils and the advisory board of the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth. FNAJ provides services for member youth associations, including legal support, accounting and tax assistance, project development support, a national training program, a youth information centre, and assistance with associative management. FNAJ promotes citizenship and volunteering, youth dialogue, inclusion, skills development, internationalization, and the reinforcement of local society's economy. They have methods to promote youth participation, such as National Youth Associations meetings, the National Youth Democracy Campaign, and national networks of youth-friendly municipalities. FNAJ also provides resources, summits, and training courses for youth workers.

National Youth Council (CNJ) is a representative platform for youth at the national level. It represents more than fifty national organizations focused on young people. CNJ works daily with and for youth. It has collaborated with various municipalities on Municipal Youth Plans, which aim to place young people at the center of identifying problems. These plans include both digital and in-person components. However, a challenge identified is that some municipalities still need to develop municipal youth councils as representative bodies and make them more dynamic. Not all municipalities in Portugal have a youth plan. CNJ also called for greater recognition of non-formal learning. Other challenges included promoting non-formal education to enhance the development of transversal skills among young people and increasing the appreciation of volunteering as a transformative tool for personal and professional development. CNJ invests in a pool of facilitators (around 30 facilitators) trained annually in non-formal education topics.

In the discussion following the two presentations, it was emphasized that the legal framework for youth councils was established in 2009. Some municipalities still face challenges in creating youth councils. Only young people who are part of local youth organizations can join the councils, which makes it difficult for non-members to participate. In Portugal, youth work happens within local youth organizations, but this does not always guarantee quality. The delegation inquired about the role of volunteering in youth work, and it was noted that most people involved are volunteers (95 percent), with youth workers mainly in managerial positions. Volunteering is integral to the context of youth work. FNAJ emphasized that there is ongoing evolution at the local level, with communities increasingly accepting that non-paid youth workers can be considered youth workers.

Lifeshaker, created in 2009, seeks to break the cycle of poverty from childhood to adulthood. According to Patricia Gil, the organization's objectives include ensuring access to inclusive, quality, and equitable education. However, Lifeshaker faces challenges similar to those encountered by organizations in the Faro region, particularly dependence on project-based funding, which leads to uncertainty. To work more effectively, the organization needs to know that it will receive a certain amount of funding at the beginning of each year. During the discussion, young attendees from Lifeshaker highlighted that peer activities organized within the association provide them with opportunities to learn and spend their teenage years productively. The role of volunteering was also discussed. While long-term volunteering helps create a youth worker identity, the official system in Portugal does not yet recognize youth work as a profession.

Bruno Antonio, Coordinator of the DYPALL network, offered a critical outlook on the state of youth work in Portugal. He noted that although there is a group of people who identify as youth workers, they do not necessarily communicate this identity outside their professional circle. He emphasized the need to expand and develop youth work offerings. He called for more comprehensive formal education beyond Level IV *Técnico de Juventude* courses and advocated for stronger connections to other educational pathways. He also stressed the importance of municipalities hiring youth workers and providing systematic quality training. Antonio highlighted that much of the youth work done in Portugal falls under the umbrella of social education but is not recognized as such. He also called for proper funding, research on youth work in Portugal, and monitoring to assess its impact.

Flagship projects of the DYPALL network included the Municipal Youth Plan in Portimão, a strategic plan for youth spaces in Sintra, and initiatives like LYCIS (Local Youth Councils at the International Scale) and the Winter Democracy Academy.

During the discussion, the delegation asked about the *Técnico de Juventude* course for youth workers. It was suggested that a mapping exercise to determine who teaches the course would be beneficial. Additionally, it was noted that not all adult students are fully committed to the field, and some education institutions lack adequate knowledge of youth work.

Lisbon Youth Centre / Centro de Juventude de Lisboa serves as a safe space for youth and youth organizations. It contributes to youth policy development by working with young people and youth workers. The centre promotes the three pillars of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It offers training for youth workers and young people, as well as boot camps, podcasts, and communication and social network training. The centre also organizes International Youth Day events.

Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude (IPDJ), represented by Tiago Guilherme, outlined the youth policy structures in Portugal. Article 70 of the Portuguese Constitution mentions youth policy, emphasizing the development of young people's personalities, the creation of conditions for their effective integration into active life, the encouragement of creativity, and a sense of community service. The IPDJ has two departments responsible for youth affairs: the Department of Youth Policy and Youth Associations and the Department of Youth Programmes.

The Minister of Youth and Modernisation, Margarida Palsado Lopes, is responsible for youth affairs. The IPDJ has two departments that oversee youth affairs: the Department of Youth Policy and Youth Associations, and the Department of Youth Programmes. Associations of young people can be categorized into the following categories: Federations, Student Associations, Youth Associations, Associations targeting the youth segment, and Informal Youth Groups. Youth associations receive

support through financial assistance, education and training, logistical support, technical support, and support for the development of associations.

There are various national stakeholders in the youth field, each with a clear division of labor. However, as observed during discussions with municipalities and associations, it is not always easy to distinguish youth work, as understood in Europe, from other youth services and efforts to promote youth participation. While there is national recognition of the importance of volunteering, greater emphasis might be needed on recognizing non-formal learning within volunteering. To further enhance the recognition of youth work, youth worker training and education emerged as a key recommendation during the discussions. Currently, youth workers in the field may lack sufficient training opportunities. It is essential to formally recognize youth work training and education at the national level and to work towards improving the training standards for youth workers. Establishing a structured training pathway that leads to employment would represent a significant step forward.

Youth Policy in Portugal

The delegation met with representatives of two ministries: the Minister of Youth and Modernisation, the Deputy Minister for Equality, and representatives from the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education. During this discussion, general outlines of youth policy in Portugal were presented, along with the development of *Técnico de Juventude* education and the principles of recognizing prior learning.

At the beginning of the meeting, the special advisor on youth and modernisation Rui Oliveira emphasized the importance of having a minister responsible for youth. He mentioned that the ministry oversees different agencies, including the IPDJ, Erasmus Agency, and Movijovem. He stressed the importance of including the Bonn Process in the national youth plan and highlighted the significance of youth councils. Portugal needs individuals who are responsible for youth, whether by combining sports and youth, treating youth as an independent theme, or considering youth as a cross-cutting issue. He also noted that youth weeks have been growing in importance. Civil society organizations are key stakeholders in Portugal, such as the National Youth Workers Association and the National Youth Council. On the local level, participatory budgeting and municipal youth plans are significant. Additionally, education and training for youth workers have been developed. The Non-Formal Education Academy, designed by the National Youth Council, was mentioned as an example of developing youth policy.

Miguel Silva presented the work of the *Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional* (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education) and described the Level 4 formal education for youth workers. The national qualification system has four components: the agency itself, special councils, education and training providers, and qualification centers. The agency is a coordinating body for the recognition of qualifications. The Portuguese national framework aligns with the European framework. The agency designs and updates the National Catalogue of Qualifications, an instrument that regulates non-higher-level double certification qualifications. It describes educational and professional standards. There is a national credit system, and different pathways for both young people and adults. Portugal offers adult education and training courses, mainly intended for adults, which are based on skill units and can be completed in different modules.

The *Técnico de Juventude* (Youth Technician) course is a Level 4 qualification that has existed since 2015. There are plans to replace this course with a Level 5 qualification for special technicians in non-formal learning. The reason for this transition is that working with young people requires a complex

approach, and raising the level of qualifications is beneficial. From 2015 to 2024, 150 trainees have qualified, and over 160 certifications have been awarded. Trainees mainly come from Lisbon, the northern region (specifically from Porto), and Algarve, and the primary age group is 18-34.

Miguel Silva emphasized the importance of qualification centers, which can offer certification through the recognition of prior learning. This involves identifying skill sets that adults already have. This is carried out by trainers and educators, as well as technicians trained to evaluate prior learning. They identify the best path toward qualification. He remarked that the ceremonies for awarding qualifications are professionally rewarding, as one can see the happiness on the faces of people finally receiving formal recognition. So far, 56 adults have been certified as youth technicians, and 6 are on their way to certification.

In the following discussion, the delegation inquired about how the state is able to finance youth associations. The special advisor explained that Portugal places a strong emphasis on young people and youth participation. Civil society is important to the country, and the state can create programs, such as those addressing mental health problems. There is a budget for youth organizations working on these issues. The National Youth Plan and municipal youth plans are also important tools.

The delegation asked whether the term "non-formal learning" is understood by people working in the field. It was suggested that those in the field understand it, but people outside the field may not. The delegation recommended considering the use of the term "youth work" in the name of the educational programme to follow the COE and EU recommendations and resolutions on youth work.

PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING

On the 5th of September, the delegation visited Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre in the morning and vocational educational institute EPAD GAIA, located in Vila Nova de Gaia. During the day, details of the *Técnico de Juventude* training course were provided, and the delegation learned how vocational education is offered in Portugal. Associação Portuguesa de Profissionais de Juventude (Portuguese Association of Youth Workers) also presented their views.

At the beginning of the day, the basic structure of the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training was described. Centro de Emprego e Formação Profissional do Porto (Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre) was presented. There are long and short-term modular certified training programs. There are specific programs for young people offering both dual certification and professional certification. Modular training programs are certified.

Youth worker training in the institution was described in detail. Between 2015-2022, the following courses were developed: dual certification (level 4) with 4 courses, and 8 courses for partial certification. Two certifications have been offered for recognition, validation, and certification of skills (RVCC). Training focuses on practical know-how. The representatives of the training centre emphasized that youth work in Portugal differs from the European perspective. Therefore, offering both national and international perspectives is necessary. The training has provided access to real work contexts during the program, such as social inclusion holiday camps, international work camps, organizing events for young people, and participation in multicultural exchanges at the European level. Internships have been carried out in city councils, municipal libraries, IPDJ, social organizations, and secondary schools. Out of the students who graduated, 3 trainees were recruited by local authorities, although not specifically for youth work; 4 trainees in NGOs; 4 in tourist entertainment; 2 trainees created their own jobs; and 6 trainees continued to higher education in different areas.

The rest are working in various professional fields. It was stressed that many people working for associations are in need of certification.

The centre offers a variety of training programs. Between 2015 and 2022, the main areas of interest have been cooking and pastry, beauty and massage, hairdressing, education, commerce, automotive mechatronics, information technologies and cybersecurity, multimedia, health assistance, and entertainment and tourist information. There were 110 completed courses.

Identified challenges included developing level 5 certification for youth workers, openness to concepts of cooperation and international networking, and the recognition of youth workers as indispensable professionals in local and national institutions, whether public or private. The lack of a proper institutional framework for youth work was seen as a major obstacle, particularly regarding the public, private, and third sectors. The absence of this framework means that there are no job opportunities. A future task would be convincing municipalities that only people with professional qualifications are capable of performing youth work. The representatives called for societal recognition of youth workers and noted that Portugal has started developing youth work structures later compared to other European countries.

Hilario Mateo from the National Youth Workers' Association noted that regarding the *Técnico de Juventude* course, knowledge of the course at the national level is uneven. In some parts of the country, the course is recognised well, and in others it is not. He emphasized that youth policy and youth work are currently being discussed in Portugal. He highlighted the need to give more attention to youth workers. According to him, the level 5 course is a step forward. He also stated that municipalities are just starting to engage in the youth field and emphasized the importance of growth in this area. As an overall goal, he noted that youth workers need to promote youth work in Portugal.

EPAD GAIA - Escola Profissional

During the afternoon, the delegation learned about the history and mission of EPAD Gaia, which was founded in Lisbon in 2005. In 2015, the EPAD in Vila Nova de Gaia was authorized. EPAD has a partnership with APPJ (Portuguese Association of Youth Workers). Training offerings include Educational Technician, Psychosocial Technician, and Youth Technician. The graduation rate was 93.64% between 2020-2023, and the employment placement rate was 50% from 2019-2022. 10.4% of graduates were working in their field of study.

A presentation on the history of Portuguese education highlighted that 2005 marked a significant change in the educational system, with an increase in professional courses. Currently, 45 percent of students are in vocational education. It was noted that the educational system is now highly flexible. The modules can be adapted to different needs, and teaching methodology has changed, with courses following a project-based methodology.

The Youth Technician course was first offered in EPAD GAIA in 2022/2023. The identified challenges include unemployment and job insecurity in Vila Nova de Gaia, as well as a shortage of internship opportunities. The program representatives recommended strengthening internship and training programs, supporting youth entrepreneurship, and fostering partnerships with local communities. Work-related learning was seen as important. In the discussion that followed the presentation, three students of the course expressed that their main goal after finishing the course is to find a job. They

also stressed that the role of the Youth Technician should be more widely recognized. They showed their commitment to working with young people and being present in their lives.

The Porto Metropolitan Area described its work on youth policy. Youth is a strategic priority of the AMP's Metropolitan Council for the period 2021-2025. The AMP is an association of 17 municipalities. They have created the Metropolitan Council of Counselors for Youth, hosted Structured Dialogue Sessions with Young People AMP – 2023 EU, and are currently planning a strategy. Movimento Transformers presented their work, which has aimed since 2010 to massively increase civic engagement. They noted that the number of volunteers in Portugal is low compared to other countries.

Hilario Mateo, president of the National Youth Workers' Association, described the overall situation of youth work. The association was created in 2018 when Cascais was the European Youth Capital. They are a member of the Alliance of Youth Workers Associations. The aim of the organization is to empower youth workers, promote youth work, and represent the unified voice of youth workers in Portugal. They provide webinars, seminars, and training sessions. Their goal is to influence policies and actions that strengthen the recognition and importance of youth work, both nationally and at the European level. Currently, the association is the largest community of practice for youth workers in Portugal. Mateo noted that "now is the time to define, recognize, and elevate the role of the youth worker."

He questioned whether level 4 education is sufficient for youth workers in Portugal. He emphasized that while modular training is important, the educational level is not adequate for everyone.

Currently, the organization has 3 projects. Like many other youth associations, it is dependent on project funding. Mateo noted that European resources are particularly important for them.

In the discussion, the role of Europe was also addressed. Challenges were identified in joining European networks, as municipalities may not be open to working within Europe. It was also noted that accessing these networks is not easy. Additionally, the bureaucracy involved in European programs was seen as a difficulty.

The youth work context in Portugal

The delegation had the opportunity to familiarize itself with the situation in Portugal. It learned how youth work is supported financially and materially, how the community of practice has built alliances and partnerships, how educational pathways have been created, and how youth work has been promoted. The overall youth and educational policy contexts were further explained to the delegation.

The delegation was inspired and moved by various examples of work done by youth associations. It became clear that youth associations are vital in providing services to young people and in reaching out to different groups based on their understanding of local conditions. However, the challenges faced by these associations appeared similar across the country. Most operate in a project-based manner, resulting in scarce operational funding, uncertainty about available resources, and sometimes inadequate material facilities. Training opportunities are in some cases lacking. Although all examples clearly benefited young people in Portugal, it was sometimes unclear whether these associations were delivering youth work as understood in the broader European context.

The delegation commends efforts to build an educational pathway for youth work. The *Técnico de Juventude* course at Level 4 has been a step forward. Moreover, the youth sector has successfully convinced Portuguese society that youth work is a complex field requiring knowledge about young people, pedagogical methods, society, and peer relationships. A new Level 5 course is also being developed. Having formal vocational-level education in youth work is certainly progress. However, there were critical voices regarding the success of this course. Raising awareness about the course was frequently mentioned as a point for improvement. Additionally, creating partnerships between institutions offering youth work training and the broader community of youth workers was seen as necessary. The delegation notes that, in many parts of Europe, it is more common to have university-level education in youth work rather than solely vocational education.

The delegation observed that the community of youth workers in Portugal is growing, although some voiced concerns that this group remains small and under-recognized. Nevertheless, there are clearly individuals who identify as youth workers and are eager to unite through the National Youth Workers' Association and DYPALL networks. Both have successfully created local partnerships, a foundation that can be used to build further alliances.

Portugal has developed national mechanisms for supporting youth work. For example, youth centers that have received the Council of Europe quality label for youth work serve as valuable resources. The creation of a national youth work strategy has the potential to convince society of the value of youth work.

Every community of practice has a dual task: to explain its role and value both internally and externally. These internal and external forms of recognition are still being developed for youth work in Portugal. In some cases, the concept of youth work was unclear to stakeholders the delegation met. Additionally, the existing courses have yet to fully raise awareness of what youth workers do and the unique contributions they bring to society. The role and value of volunteer youth workers also remained somewhat unclear. This may be influenced by the traditional views of volunteering in Portuguese society.

The use of and the availability youth research in policy and practice was not systematic, and in some cases, the information was outdated. Developing youth research and integrating it into evidence-based policymaking is an area for further improvement in Portugal.

Sustainable career paths for youth workers are likely to become a pressing issue in the coming years. Those who have earned degrees as youth technicians may face limited career opportunities. The reliance on project-based funding introduces precarious elements to youth workers' career paths. Practitioners expressed a desire for municipalities to allocate more resources to youth work.

Ensuring the quality of youth work was identified as a challenge for the future. This issue is tied to the ambiguous nature of youth work itself—quality can only be assessed once goals, resources, and methods are clearly defined. This challenge is further complicated by the absence of monitoring mechanisms for youth work.

The development of youth work does not occur randomly and can benefit greatly from existing youth policy mechanisms. Portugal has demonstrated a long-term commitment to promoting youth participation. At the local level, municipalities have employed various mechanisms such as youth councils, participatory budgeting, youth plans, and youth weeks. Positive examples were observed in these mechanisms, which facilitated the integration of young people's perspectives into local decision-making. However, some representatives noted disparities between municipalities, with some being more committed to promoting youth participation than others.

Youth associations across Portugal are active in promoting youth participation and active citizenship. National-level organizations, such as the National Youth Council and the National Federation of Youth Associations, represent the voices of young people. Although not within the mandate of this advisory mission, the delegation would like to point out that it did not hear examples of the use of innovative methods, including digital technology. Roma youth, for example, were cited as a group that may remain unheard. The delegation refers to the *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6* of the Committee of Ministers to member states on protecting youth civil society and supporting young people's participation in democratic processes. This recommendation emphasizes the role of youth work in promoting youth participation, and *Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)4* on Roma youth participation stresses the importance of including underrepresented groups like Roma youth.

5. General recommendations on youth work in Portugal

On the basis of the findings of the youth policy advisory mission, the delegation puts forward the following recommendations to the Portuguese authorities.

1. **Create a clear definition of youth work.** The delegation noted that in Portugal there is not a common, shared understanding about what youth work is. Clarifying what youth work is, and explicating what positive outcomes youth work brings to society are needed to gain recognition for youth work. Although youth work clearly is about working with and for young people, there is a more concise definition of it in the European discourse. According to the *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4* of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work:

"Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making."

The delegation notes that this definition was not always shared by different stakeholders. The role of youth associations in Portuguese youth work is crucial. Better explicating what youth work could also be potentially helpful in explicating that youth work might done by other stakeholders as well in Portugal. Such definition needs to be clear in the new youth work strategy for all stakeholders involved in the youth field and those outside the field.
2. **Better tools to promote recognition.** Once there is understanding about what youth work is, effective tools that help in the promotion of and recognition of youth work as it is understood in the European youth work discussion should be created. This need is also stated in the declaration of the 3rd Youth work convention: "While recognition per se is the outcome of a series of developments, such a process requires more investment in strategic and coordinated efforts and resources to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a self-standing work arena." These coordinated efforts should be integrated to youth work strategy.
3. **Integrate youth work strategy to the general youth policy framework.** Good examples exist on youth participation, services for the young people, work done by youth associations etc. but the connections between these different youth policy issues are not clear and it is not clear regarding what belongs to what or where. A National Youth policy framework should

make this clear and integrate these issues including the new youth work policy strategy that is being drafted.

4. **Fun play and creativity.** According to CM/Rec(2017)/4 youth work is "inclusive and socially engaging, creative and safe, fun and serious, playful and planned". The delegation heard less about the creativity, fun and playfulness, although these elements are at the heart of youth work. These elements also ensure that young people join voluntarily youth work activities. Integrating these issues to the new youth work strategy ensures that youth work offer is wide enough.
5. **More open spaces.** The delegation noted that there few mentions of spaces of 'hanging out' and the companionship of other young people. These elements are brought about for example by youth clubs, organised events and generally supporting peer relations. The 2nd youth work convention states that youth work is about creating spaces and building bridges.

" The common ground of youth work is twofold. First, it is concerned with creating spaces for young people. Second, it provides bridges in their lives. "Beyond creating autonomous spaces for youth work practice, youth work is also concerned with enabling young people to create their own spaces and opening spaces that are missing in other areas – such as schools, training, and labour markets." This aspect is also emphasised in CM/Rex(2017)4 which states that youth work "should focus on young people and create spaces for association and bridges to support transition to adulthood and autonomy". Emphasising the importance of creating spaces in the new strategy is recommended.

6. **Creating sustainable career paths for youth workers.** The delegation learnt that youth workers are dependent on project money, face financial uncertainties and have difficulties in entering youth work in paid capacity. Creating sustainable structures and resources on the local level(although it will likely be a long-term challenge) is recommended if the intention is to develop a youth work career with more sustainable career paths
7. **Enhance the role and value of volunteering.** As stated in the CM/Rec(2017)4, "Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation". Youth work done by volunteers should be better acknowledged, and the recognition of their learning experiences could be better developed.
8. **Youth work Knowledge.** The recognition of youth work likely requires systematic promotion of what youth work is, to different stakeholders. Since some of the problems identified are a result of weak recognition, measures are needed to promote youth work to those stakeholders in Portugal, who are not yet knowledgeable about youth work. A number of Council of Europe publications regarding youth work already exist in Portuguese. Such material should be more widely distributed.
9. **Support the existing community of practice of youth work by providing resources.** The delegation saw promising examples of how the community of practice of youth work has organised itself to demand a more visible role in Portugal. For example, the National Association of Youth workers is promoting youth work and trying to make it more visible. Also, the providers of Técnico de juventude courses mentioned being willing to engage in promoting youth work. These initiatives should be supported by providing more financial resources.
10. **Support youth work by providing tools for quality assurance and monitoring.** For the delegation quality assurance and monitoring are vital tools for youth work. This perspective is also emphasised in the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the

Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda Ensure the presence of sustainable structures and the availability of appropriate resources for quality youth work, so that all young people can have a positive experience of the measures put in place in this area, or shape these measures themselves, with a particular focus on action at local level and in remote and rural areas where there are fewer opportunities for youth work.” Measures on how quality can be strengthened should be part of the youth work strategy.

- 11. Develop knowledge based youth work through supporting youth research.** It is recommended to produce reliable and quality information on youth work and the needs of young people. This aligns with the Council of Europe recommendation, which encourages member states to renew their support for youth work by “strengthening the dialogue between youth work, youth policy, and youth research.”
- 12. Initial and ongoing youth work education and training.** The delegation appreciates the current efforts to develop initial training in youth work. There is a clear and systematic national framework for validating skills and competences. The delegation would also like to point out that using the term ‘youth work’ in the course title would be helpful in youth work promotion, and in recognising the competences required to do youth work. Given the complex nature of youth work, developing educational pathways beyond Levels 4 and 5 should be a strategic goal in the future. The training offer for those already working as youth workers should be coordinated to ensure that training meets the needs of the current community of practice of youth work and current and emerging youth policy issues. The experience of those working with young people should be validated. The efforts towards such validation shown in Portugal is commended and should be further strengthened.
- 13. Analyse the diverse needs of young people and incorporate an intersectional approach in youth work policy.** As stated in the Declaration of 3rd youth work convention, it is crucial “to be highly accessible for young people from a diversity of backgrounds and profiles. A basic youth work offer should therefore include a clear strategy to enhance social inclusion and diversity among participating young people” (p. 6.)

6. Recommendations for the Youth Work Strategy

6.1. On the National Youth Work Strategy

The version of the national youth work strategy presented starts with a description of the framework, which is built on the interpretation of the Bonn process. It includes three chapters that describe the youth work context in Portugal (2. Youth Work in Portugal, 3. Innovation in Youth Work, 4. Creating Civic Spaces for Young People). As evident from the titles, chapter 2 primarily describes Portuguese challenges, while chapters 3 and 4 deal with common European challenges.

Chapter 5 presents seven topics and, in total, 13 measures of the strategy. Each proposed measure has 1 to 3 indicators. The contents of the European Youth Work Agenda are described in the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for Establishing a European Youth Work Agenda (European Commission 2020). The seven topics are derived from the priority areas of the Bonn process, which “puts the EYWA [European Youth Work Agenda] into action by developing strategies, setting priorities, planning actions for implementation in different contexts, and carrying out measures and activities” (European Youth Work Agenda Factsheet). The priority areas include

developing and expanding the youth work offer; quality development; a common direction for the youth work community of practice; beyond the youth work community of practice; promotion and recognition; innovation and emerging challenges; and a policy framework and strategic framework for youth work development. The first seven are taken as the topics of the youth work strategy, demonstrating a clear commitment to participating in the European development of youth work.

Youth work strategies may focus solely on youth work, be part of a broader youth policy strategy, or be part of a larger welfare strategy. The solution adopted in the Portuguese version is to focus on youth work alone. The integration of the youth work strategy into other fields in Portugal is notably scarce. This may seem surprising, given that the EU resolution on the European Youth Work Agenda explicitly invites member states to "Integrate youth work into existing and future youth policy strategies and their implementation at all administrative levels in order to facilitate greater innovation, improve quality, and increase recognition of the field, with a particular emphasis on action at the local level in shaping and developing the Agenda" (European Commission 2020, §25).

6.2. Recommendations for the Youth Strategy

While the delegation respects the willingness to follow the principles of the Bonn process, some key strategic areas may be missing if the strategy is strictly based on priority areas. Based on the general recommendations in the sections, the following recommendations can be offered:

20. Create a strategic vision on volunteering. The strategy mentions volunteers or volunteering only once, meaning it currently lacks a vision on how to balance voluntary and paid youth work. There is no strategic vision on how to recognize the learning outcomes of youth leaders. The delegation refers to the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work, which invites member states to "promote the recognition of the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding developed through participating in and delivering youth work." (Measure 8 mentions expanding the Youth Pass offer but does not address volunteers.)
21. Create a vision on promoting research on youth and youth work. There is no strategic vision on promoting youth research and knowledge-based approaches in youth work policy and/or youth policy. This dimension is mentioned in the Council of Europe Recommendation, which invites member states to "foster knowledge-based youth work that can respond to the changes and trends in our societies and the emerging challenges faced by young people" and to "encourage the use of research, evaluation, and continuous follow-up in developing knowledge-based, quality youth work ensuring that mechanisms are in place to measure its outcomes and impact."
22. Articulate how the Portuguese youth work community of practice and the European youth work community are linked. The EU resolution on the youth work agenda invites member states and the European Youth Work Agenda to "Promote the European dimension of youth work through cross-border and transnational exchange, cooperation, intercultural learning, and peer-learning."
23. Consider how continuous education for youth workers can be organized. The strategy emphasizes updating the youth worker professional profile to level V and validating, recognizing, and certifying the competencies of youth workers. This emphasis is highly necessary, but the delegation invites Portugal to also consider the training opportunities

offered to youth workers. (Training is mentioned in Measure 6, but there is no strategic vision on how training and formal education are seen from a strategic perspective.)

24. Ensure that all important topics are covered in the strategy. Given the decision to base the strategy on the priority areas of the Bonn process, certain important topics may not receive adequate attention. The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to consider whether all necessary elements are included in the strategy. Alternatively, they could refer to the broader goals of the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work and the EU resolution on the youth work agenda itself. This would help address some of the key challenges identified in section 5 of this report.
25. Consider the age range, which currently targets young people from 10 to 35. The age gap is quite wide, and may result in difficulties in developing youth work. For example, limiting the age group from 13 to 30 might be more suitable for the youth work purposes.
26. Amend the following topics: The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, CM/Rec(2017)4, was not revised or updated in 2023 (p. 4). It was, however, reviewed in 2023. On p. 5, referencing the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy is advisable. The eight priority areas are not defined in the *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States Meeting within the Council on the Framework for Establishing a European Youth Work Agenda* (2020/C 415/01) itself but are part of the Bonn Process. On pages 6–8, the descriptions of European youth work conventions and the European Youth Work Agenda follow the description of Portuguese developments. Consider integrating these as part of the discussions on European youth work policy in p. 5, or merge the last paragraph on p. 5 and the first on p. 6 into the chapter *Youth Work in Portugal*.
27. Consider adding a section in page 9 (Youth Worker in Portugal) on how work with and for young people is currently being conducted, including the efforts of youth associations, municipalities, and youth centers, both with and without the quality label.

Recommendations on the proposed topics and measures

The delegation acknowledges that the strategy identifies key challenges in Portugal and proposes measures to address these challenges, including recognizing youth work, promoting quality, digital transition, and reviewing the youth work profile. However, the delegation recommends considering the following:

28. Address inclusion and marginalization: Topic 1, "Develop and expand youth work offer," does not address issues of inclusion or marginalization. The delegation recommends paying attention to excluded groups of young people and adopting an intersectional perspective.
29. Clarify Measure 2, "*Youth Development Academy*," as it is currently unclear whether this initiative is targeted at young people or youth workers. Additionally, clarify its connection to quality development.
30. Create vision for monitoring and measuring youth work quality: The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to consider ways to monitor or measure the quality of youth work. While the creation of pedagogic materials, as mentioned in Measure 3, is needed,

reflecting on how to build a monitoring system would strengthen the strategic approach in Portugal.

31. Create indicators for the impact of quality youth work on youth workers and organisations. When promoting quality, the key issue is whether organizations and youth workers actively use the quality system. The "Quality Youth Work" (European Commission 2015) document emphasizes that "The basis and 'soul' of a quality approach must provoke critical reflection and a vivid debate on what we [youth work community of practice] do, how we do it, and, most importantly, why we do it." The delegation encourages reflection on how to achieve this and whether appropriate indicators can be found to measure this.
32. Consider whether "*A Common Direction for the Youth Work Community of Practice*" is the most accurate title, as the delegation views the proposed Measure 4 as being more focused on engaging young people in the youth work process.
33. Emphasise Cross-sectoral cooperation: Section 4 (beyond the youth work community of practice) and Measure 5 focus on civic spaces for young people but not on how the youth work community of practice can collaborate with other sectors. Given the importance of the topic in many presentations, the delegation suggests further consideration of how the national strategy could foster professional cooperation. The delegation also draws attention to the need for cross-sectoral cooperation, as highlighted in the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work: "Strengthen the role and position of youth work to facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation between youth work – whether provided by public authorities, the private sector, or civil society – and other sectors, including social care, health, sport, culture, formal education, employment services, and criminal justice."
34. Section 5 (promotion and recognition) and Measures 6 and 7 do not address how to promote youth work among stakeholders in Portugal who are not yet aware of it. Recognition is a key challenge in promoting sustainable career paths in youth work, and identifying measures and indicators to improve youth work recognition should be a strategic goal.
35. Broaden the vision of digital youth work: Section 6 (innovations and emerging challenges) focuses on digital transformation. The delegation encourages Portuguese authorities to adopt a broader view of digital youth work. According to *Developing Digital Youth Work* (European Commission 2018), "Digital youth work means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work. It is not a youth work method – digital youth work can be integrated into any youth work setting (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work, etc.). It can take place in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments – or in a mixture of both." The delegation highlights the importance of developing a strategic vision of digitalization in youth work that goes beyond merely using digital technologies.
36. Section 7 (policy frameworks) and Measures 12 and 13 address the youth worker profile, an important step forward. However, the delegation notes that the current course at level IV is not well known in Portugal. The delegation encourages reflection on whether additional policy frameworks are needed to promote the role of youth work education and, if so, in what timeframe they could be implemented.

37. Clarify the connections between Measures 1, 2, 12, and 13, as they all address education, training, and the professional profiling of youth workers. Consider whether these measures should be integrated into a single strategic goal.

Final Recommendation

38. As an overarching recommendation, the delegation notes that the strategy could be clearer in its vision, mission, goals, and values, which are standard components of strategies. The delegation invites Portuguese authorities to clarify some of these elements.

Annex 1

Members of the Council of Europe Youth Policy Advisory Mission Delegation 2024 to Portugal

- Miriam Teuma – European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)
- Jan Vanhee – European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)
- Anna Knobbout – Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)
- Tomi Kiilakoski – Scientific Expert, Senior Researcher, Finnish Youth Research Society
- Clementina Barbaro – Council of Europe, Head of the Youth Policy Division
- Marius Schlageter – Council of Europe, Policy Advisor

Annex 2

Programme of the Policy Advisory Mission 2024 to Portugal

2nd September – Arrival in Faro of the Council of Europe’s mission and preparatory meeting with the Portuguese delegation

Arrival in Faro of the Council of Europe’s mission and meeting at IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate between 7 pm and 8 pm with the Portuguese delegation in order to define the objectives, scope of intervention and expected results of the Council of Europe’s mission.

Dinner – 8:30 pm – IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate

3rd September

IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate – from 9 am to 12

- Presentation of the work carried out by IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Sê Mais Sê Melhor association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Liláz association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Contextos association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by ECOS – Cooperativa de Educação, Cooperação e Desenvolvimento CRL, in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Moju association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Oficina do Sentir association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Visit to IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate Youth Center.

IPDJ’s Algarve Regional Directorate – from 2 pm to 4 pm

- Presentation of the work carried out by Vila Real de Santo António City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Faro City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by São Brás de Alportel City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Loulé City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Portimão City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Lagos City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;

- Presentation of the work carried out by Tavira City Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector.

4:15 pm – Travel to Lisbon

4th September

Lisbon Youth Center – from 9:00 am to 12:00

- Presentation of the work carried out by IPDJ's Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Directorate in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the Lisbon Youth Center in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the department of youth policies and youth associations in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Lifeshaker association in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Dypall Network in Portugal in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the National Youth Council in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the National Federation of Youth Associations in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Visit to the Lisbon Youth Center.

Office of the Minister of Youth and Modernisation – from 2 pm to 4 pm

Meeting with the Minister of Youth and Modernisation and/or with the head of the Office/advisor for the youth affairs of the Minister to get the governmental perspective on the youth work sector in Portugal, namely the current problems and challenges and the policy measures planned for this sector and for young people in general. The President of the Republic's youth advisor, Rita Saias, is expected to take part in the meeting, with the aim of getting the Presidency's perspective on the youth area and the youth work sector in particular. The National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP) will be represented in the meeting through Miguel Silva, director of the Adult Qualification Department and Sandra Lameira, director of the National Qualifications Catalogue Department, with the aim of getting ANQEP's perspective on the qualification of young people and adults.

4:15 pm – Travel to Porto

5th September

Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre - 10:00 am – 12:30

- Presentation of the results obtained regarding the training and employability of young people and identification of the main problems and challenges in this area;

- Visit to Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre.

EPAD Gaia – from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm

- Presentation of the youth worker training course and identification of the main problems and challenges relating to the course (curriculum; career paths; young people's interest in the course, etc);
- Discussion with the trainers/teachers of the youth worker training course on the profile of the trainers/teachers of the course, the selection process and the main problems and challenges relating to the youth worker training course;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP) in the field of the National Qualifications Catalogue and Youth Qualifications and identification of the current problems and challenges in the area of youth and adult qualifications;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the Portuguese Association of Youth Workers (APPJ) and identification of current problems and challenges facing the youth work sector in the country;
- Presentation of the work carried out by Oporto Metropolitan Area (AMP) and identification of current problems and challenges in the youth work sector in Oporto Metropolitan Area;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the youth division of Gaia City Council and identification of current problems and challenges facing youth work sector in Vila Nova de Gaia municipality;
- Presentation of the work carried out by the Transformers Movement and identification of current problems and challenges facing the youth work sector;
- Presentation of the work carried out by IPDJ's North Regional Directorate in the area of youth work and identification of the main challenges facing this sector;
- Visit to the EPAD Gaia.

6th September

Morning – De-Brief

Annex 3

List of Stakeholders & Officials met throughout the Policy Advisory Missio 2024 to Portugal

Name of the entity/organisation	Representative	City/Place
Direção Regional do Algarve do IPDJ (IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate)	Custódio Moreno – director of IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate; Sofia Martins – policy officer in IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Sê Mais Sê Melhor (youth association)	Ricardo Baptista - psychologist	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Liláz (youth association)	Carlos Reis – head of international programmes and projects	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Contextos (youth association)	Andreia Martins – head of international programmes and projects	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
ECOS (youth association)	Natália Estrelo – member of the board of directors	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Moju (youth association)	Daniela Correia – president of the board of directors	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Oficina do Sentir (youth association)	Rita Pinto – president of the board of directors	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de Vila Real de Santo António (Vila Real de Santo António municipality)	Álvaro Leal – deputy mayor; Beatriz Conceição – municipal executive support office (youth)	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de Faro (Faro municipality)	Jorge Candeias – head of the sports and youth promotion Division	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de São Brás de Alportel (São Brás de Alportel municipality)	Marlene Guerreiro – deputy mayor and vice-president	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de Loulé (Loulé municipality)	Catarina Seguro and Telma Cabrita – policy officers in the education and youth department	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate

Câmara Municipal de Portimão (Portimão municipality)	Teresa Mendes – deputy mayor; Andreia Costa – policy officer in the sports and youth Division	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de Lagos (Lagos municipality)	Sara Coelho – deputy mayor; Elisabete Serra – head of the education, youth and sport Division; Marta Santana – policy officer in the education, youth and sport Division	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Câmara Municipal de Tavira (Tavira municipality)	Rui Venâncio – intermediate head of the organic unit of the education and social action Division; Paula Silva – policy officer in the education and social action Division	Faro/IPDJ Algarve Regional Directorate
Associação Lifeshaker (youth association)	Patrícia Gil - technician	Lisbon Youth Centre
Dypall Network (European platform)	Bruno António – executive director	Lisbon Youth Centre
Conselho Nacional de Juventude (National Youth Council)	André Cardoso - president	Lisbon Youth Centre
Federação Nacional das Associações Juvenis (National Federation of Youth Associations)	Fernando Vieira – vice-president	Lisbon Youth Centre
Department of youth policy and youth associations (IPDJ)	Tiago Guilherme – policy officer in the department of youth policy and youth associations	Lisbon Youth Centre
Lisbon Youth Centre	Ana Cristina Garcia and Rosário Nunes – policy officers in the Lisbon Youth Centre	Lisbon Youth Centre
Gabinete da Secretária de Estado Adjunta e da Igualdade (Office of the Secretary of State for Equality)	Rui Oliveira – assistant/advisor in the Office of the Secretary of State for Equality; Ana Marques – technical specialist/advisor in the Office of the Secretary of State for Equality	Office of the Secretary of State for Equality
Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education)	Miguel Silva – director of the Adult Qualification Department and Sandra Lameira – director of the National Qualifications Catalogue Department	Office of the Secretary of State for Equality

Centro de Emprego e Formação Profissional do Porto (Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre)	Vítor Macedo – director of Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre	Porto Employment and Vocational Training Centre
EPAD Gaia (Vocational School)	Conceição Caldeira – school director; Clara Lopes – pedagogical director and Joana Barbosa – coordinator of the youth worker course	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education)	Miguel Silva – director of the Adult Qualification Department; Sandra Lameira – director of the National Qualifications Catalogue Department and Soraia Belo – policy officer of the Youth Qualification Department	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Associação Portuguesa de Profissionais de Juventude (Portuguese Association of Youth Workers)	Hilário Matos – president of the board of directors	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Área Metropolitana do Porto (Oporto Metropolitan Area)	Ana Amorim – metropolitan executive secretary	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Câmara Municipal de Vila Nova de Gaia	Maria José Rodrigues – director of the culture and youth department	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Movimento Transformers (association)	Catarina Sanahuja – project manager	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Direção Regional do Norte do IPDJ (IPDJ North Regional Directorate)	Alcídio Jesus – policy officer of IPDJ North Regional Directorate	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia
Direção-Geral dos Estabelecimentos Escolares (Directorate-general for schools)	João Gonçalves – director of the Directorate-general for schools	Gaia/ EPAD Gaia