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Valletta, 9 October 2025

**10th Council of Europe Conference
of Ministers responsible for Youth**

**Resolution
on the Council of Europe Reference Framework
on a Youth Perspective**

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Resolution on the Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective

The specialised Ministers of the Council of Europe member States, on the occasion of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, “Young People for Democracy: Youth Perspective in Action”, jointly organised by the Council of Europe and Malta on 8 and 9 October 2025, Valletta, adopt the following resolution:

1. Welcoming the positive contribution and creative potential that young people bring to our democracies and to European unity, and convinced that developing with young people the conditions for their meaningful participation in democracy will strengthen mutual trust in constitutional democracy, democratic institutions and the shared civic space;
2. Confident that the integration of young people's views and needs in areas of policymaking that concern them, leads to more forward-looking, future-proof policies and strengthens participatory democracy;
3. Having regard to the Declaration of the 4th Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavík, in which the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe underlined the importance of a “youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue”;
4. Recalling the Reykjavík Principles of Democracy of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, adopted at their 4th Summit held in 2023, in which they also committed to give priority “to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes, including through education about human rights and core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability”;
5. Resolved to create new and innovative approaches to empowering young people and fostering their active citizenship, taking into account the values of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture¹ and the objectives of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025;
6. Considering the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers, adopted at its 133rd Session in Strasbourg (May 2024, Strasbourg), on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Organisation, underlining the renewed and strengthened relationship between the Council of Europe and young people, and welcoming the adoption of the four elements articulating the youth perspective – Think with young people, Learn from and with young people, Participate with young people, and Act with and for young people - to guide the development of a Reference Framework on a youth perspective ;
7. Recalling the Council of Europe's standards on young people's access to rights, on young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods' access to social rights, and on youth work, as set out in the relevant recommendations of the Committee of Ministers

¹ The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture can be found via this link: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture>.

to member States and in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education²;

8. Taking into account the standards on young people's participation, set out in the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, and relevant recommendations and guidelines of the Committee of Ministers³;
9. Drawing attention to Resolution CM/Res(2020)2 on the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030, which places emphasis on revitalising pluralistic democracy by increasing the capacity of youth civil society to advance participatory democracy and democratic citizenship, and on strengthening youth policy and youth work to remove barriers to youth participation;
10. Recognising the Council of Europe's leading role in promoting youth participation through its innovative co-management system in the field of youth, which serves as a commendable model of co-operation between young people and public authorities in policy and decision-making processes, and its landmark instruments, namely the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, the European Youth Foundation and the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card;
11. Convinced that young people and youth civil society organisations are powerful agents of change, bringing fresh insights and innovative solutions to the development of European societies, and playing an important role in opening public discourse;
12. Expressing appreciation for the progress achieved by the Council of Europe and its youth sector since 1972 in fostering youth participation and putting young people's perspectives at the forefront of policy- and decision-making processes, and congratulating the youth statutory bodies for paving the way for significant developments in policy and action.

In view of the above:

13. We welcome the Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective, in appendix to this Resolution, as a unique and novel approach offering a practical path towards more dynamic and relevant policymaking, so that young people's experiences, needs and interests are taken into account in all policy areas affecting them.
14. We underline that the Reference Framework is a significant and innovative instrument for strengthening democracy through youth participation, and for developing just and inclusive policies that benefit both current and future generations.
15. We agree that the youth perspective is structured around four interconnected conceptual elements:
 - a) Attitude: *Think with young people*: the mindset recognising young people as active contributors to policymaking,

² Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member States: respectively CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights, CM/Rec(2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods to social rights, CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work, CM/Rec(2010)7 on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

³ Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting youth civil society and young people and "Youth Participation 2.0" guidelines for enhancing youth participation at local, regional and national levels.

- b) Experience: *Learn from and with young people*: the interactive processes enabling intergenerational learning, fostering mutual understanding and respect between policymakers and young people,
 - c) Skills: *Participate with young people*: the competencies needed for meaningful youth participation, grounded in democratic values like inclusion, pluralism, and non-discrimination,
 - d) Action: *Act with and for young people*: the commitment to actively including youth views and aspirations in the various stages of the policy cycle - deliberation, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
16. We further agree that the effective integration of a youth perspective into policy work relies on two key factors: on the one hand, recognising young people as rights holders, valuing their knowledge, skills and perspectives, and ensuring their active participation in policymaking in areas concerning them, from the development of policies to their implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment; and, on the other, a sustained commitment from both policymakers and young people, grounded in intergenerational solidarity and collaboration and supported by adequate financial and human resources.
17. We encourage the integration of a youth perspective into policy and decision-making processes in areas concerning youth through a step-by-step approach capitalising on context-specific realities and allowing each entity to assess its own starting position and how to move forward.
18. We undertake to consider further integrating the youth perspective into national policies that concern young people, inspired by the Reference Framework, while taking into account the specific contexts of our member States, with a view to developing responsive, inclusive, and effective policies addressing the needs and aspirations of young people.
- 19. We invite the Council of Europe:**
- a) To support member States in their efforts to integrate a youth perspective into their policies, drawing on the Reference Framework, the expertise, resources and good practices of the Council of Europe youth sector, and promoting intergovernmental co-operation in the field of youth.
 - b) To continue its work in this field and to mandate the Joint Council on Youth to develop practical tools (such as guidelines, checklists, and training modules) to support the implementation of the Reference Framework and strengthen related capacity-building efforts.
 - c) To prioritise efforts to integrate a youth perspective across the Organisation highlighting the importance of the Council of Europe Reference Framework, emphasising the central role of the Council of Europe's youth statutory bodies and Youth Department, particularly in providing high-quality support.

Appendix I to the Resolution

Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Young people⁴ and youth organisations are powerful agents of positive change, addressing societal challenges with creativity and determination. They play a key role in shaping public discourse on issues such as climate change, social justice, digital rights, and democratic participation and are committed to finding solutions to both local and global problems.
- 1.2 At the youth event *Confidence in Tomorrow*, organised on the occasion of the Council of Europe's 75th anniversary (May 2024), young people voiced their dedication to a democratic Europe and discussed their anxiety/worries about the state of democracy. They expressed frustration with democratic institutions that fail to protect human rights, uphold the rule of law, and promote peace. They shared a deep concern that their civic space is not only shrinking, but is actively under attack, highlighting the rise of authoritarianism and anti-democratic trends as key factors contributing to this decline, and emphasising the threat these pose to their ability to operate and advocate for rights and freedoms.⁵
- 1.3 Young people in Council of Europe member States face barriers to civic participation, demographic marginalisation, discrimination, economic insecurity and an unsafe digital environment which can, inter alia, discourage them from participating. As a result, member States face low youth voter turnout, which can be as low as 50% or less, depending on the type of election.⁶ Limited representation of young people in policymaking, in turn, creates a significant gap between policy decisions and their lived experiences. A 2022 survey shows that young people's trust in their governments to adequately protect their rights has declined significantly.⁷
- 1.4 Furthermore, young people face a complex web of social challenges that prevent them from fully exercising their rights. They are especially vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, and health issues, both physical and mental. Barriers to education, vocational training, and employment opportunities remain, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups of young people.
- 1.5 As social and economic inequalities rise and challenges to the Council of Europe's values persist, young people are losing trust in democracy and institutions and are exposed to social exclusion. They feel a real need for peace, and an environment that creates safe spaces where they can learn and grow, including through education that fosters critical thinking and civic engagement. By staying informed and involved in the policy and decision-making processes, they can contribute to creating a more inclusive and just future in an uncertain world, where the voices of all young people are heard and heeded. Developing and ensuring conditions for youth participation in democracy with young

⁴ Youth is understood as a period of transitions to autonomy, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. There is no fixed age-group for youth. The Council of Europe youth sector offers activities for young people aged 18 to 30. The broadest range of Council of Europe member States' youth policies is from 12 to 35 years.

⁵ Confidence in Tomorrow youth event – participants' message to Council of Europe duty bearers.

⁶ <https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/understanding-youth-engagement-europe-through-open-data>.

⁷ https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/delivering-for-youth-how-governments-can-put-young-people-at-the-centre-of-the-recovery_92c9d060-en/full-report.html

people themselves will also strengthen mutual trust in constitutional democracy, democratic institutions and the shared civic space.

2. The Council of Europe's work in the youth field and the emergence of a new Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective

2.1 For over 50 years, the Council of Europe has recognised the crucial role of young people and youth organisations in promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The Organisation has created structures that encourage youth participation, and their active involvement has been key to preserving and advancing these values. In the Youth Department, the co-management system, where young people and public authorities collaborate in policy- and decision-making processes, is a notable example. The European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest provide safe spaces for youth work, while the European Youth Foundation supports youth activities across member States. The Youth Partnership between the EU and the Council of Europe in the field of youth has fostered co-operation between the two Organisations on subjects of common interest.

2.2 Youth participation is embedded in various Council of Europe policies and initiatives. Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2006)14 on citizenship and participation of young people in public life emphasises the importance of young people's involvement in democracy, offering guidelines for member States on how to further this. The Organisation's Strategic Framework 2020 and its Roadmap on Civil society engagement with the Council of Europe 2024-2027⁸ both highlight the importance of youth participation in promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The revised European Charter on Youth Participation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities provides a set of principles, best practices and guidelines to enhance youth participation at local and regional levels. The Congress' Resolution 152(2023) stresses that participation should include the right, the means, and the opportunity for young people to engage in decision-making, with adequate support. Concrete tools, such as the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card, also support young people's participation and facilitate their access to rights.

2.3 The 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's 46 member States (May 2023) set out a novel approach for the Organisation, notably the integration of a youth perspective in its work, including intergovernmental and other activities. *"We set the Council of Europe on a new path of increased transparency and co-operation with its stakeholders, with strengthened visibility and sufficient resources. This should include a youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue. We also call for a review and further reinforcement of the Organisation's outreach to, and meaningful engagement with, civil society organisations and national human rights institutions."* Reykjavík Declaration, 16 May 2023.

2.4 The Reykjavík Principles for Democracy⁹ underlined the need *"to invest in a democratic future by ensuring that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes"*, underlining that *"priority will be given to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes, including through education about human rights and core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability"*. They also reaffirmed that *"civil society is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy and commit[ted] to supporting and maintaining a safe and*

⁸ SG/Inf(2023)28

⁹ Adopted as part of the [Reykjavík Declaration](#).

enabling environment in which civil society, as well as human rights defenders, can operate free from hindrance, insecurity and violence.”

- 2.5 The Reykjavík Declaration signals a clear commitment from the Council of Europe and member States to enhance youth participation in policy- and decision-making processes, with the opportunity to further strengthen political will, co-operation, resources, and innovation in youth engagement.
- 2.6 At the level of both member States and the Council of Europe, the inclusion of a youth perspective can help counteract trends of non-participation of young people in democratic processes and declining trust in public institutions. It can further democratise policymaking by enabling the development of policies based on dialogue and an intergenerational approach, which are likely to be more responsive to citizens' needs and therefore have a direct impact on society as a whole. A broad participatory culture is a strong enabling factor for the youth perspective to thrive.
- 2.7 Consequently, the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) initiated work on a Reference Framework to integrate a youth perspective across diverse policy areas. The Reference Framework includes four conceptual elements: **Think with young people, Learn from and with young people, Participate with young people, and Act with and for young people**. In 2024, the Committee of Ministers endorsed these elements to guide the preparation and implementation of the Reference Framework.
- 2.8 The Framework is designed to enhance collaboration between young people, youth civil society, and political decision-makers at national, regional and local levels, in line with the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 in policy and decision-making. Moreover, it aims at supporting Council of Europe bodies and intergovernmental committees in their efforts to integrate a youth perspective in their work.
- 2.9 The Reference Framework is flexible, allowing users to adapt it to their specific contexts and needs, drawing on the expertise of the Council of Europe youth sector and other relevant experience. It is expected to evolve into a toolbox to further support the integration of a youth perspective, through practical tools such as training modules, checklists, guidelines and a compendium of good practices at all levels. Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities will accompany it.
- 2.10 The following sections are intended to provide guidance on the substantive and methodological foundations of the Reference Framework and how it can be implemented within the Council of Europe. The Reference Framework can also be used by member States.

3. The vision

- 3.1 Acknowledging the positive contribution and change that young people bring to democracy and European unity, and renewing commitment to the improvement of the living conditions and the protection and strengthening of the human rights of young people, the Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective envisions:
- a) Participatory democracy – guaranteeing young people’s meaningful participation in democratic processes, and enhancing the impact, relevance, and resilience of public policies across Europe;
 - b) Inclusive policies that benefit young people – present and future generations – across policy fields that affect them, while promoting transparency, equity, and open dialogue with diverse stakeholders.

4. The four conceptual elements of the “youth perspective”

4.1 A "youth perspective" is a strategic approach to policy and decision-making that ensures young people's experiences, needs, and interests are consistently included throughout the various stages of the policy process. It recognises the competent contributions of young people and ensures their meaningful participation. This approach aims to create more relevant and future-oriented policies by introducing structural changes in how policies are elaborated, adopted, adapted, implemented, and evaluated with and for young people.

4.2 A "youth perspective" can be approached through four interconnected conceptual elements: **Think with young people, Learn from and with young people, Participate with young people, and Act with and for young people**. Each of these contributes to a comprehensive approach, and together they can foster meaningful youth engagement in policy processes. The elements are described as follows:

4.3 **Think with young people – Attitude:** the mindset recognising young people as active contributors to policymaking. This entails:

- a) Opening communication channels with young people and youth organisations and structures to understand better their aspirations, needs and concerns;
- b) Conducting research to understand the ambitions and experiences of young people, with a view to developing evidence-based policies;
- c) Challenging stereotypes and promoting respect for young people's perspectives and lived experiences.

4.4 **Learn from and with young people – Experience:** the interactive processes enabling intergenerational learning, fostering mutual understanding and respect between policymakers and young people. This entails:

- a) Encouraging open dialogue with a wide and diverse range of young people and creating an inclusive, empathetic environment with shared responsibility;
- b) Establishing or strengthening mechanisms that allow young people to contribute meaningfully to policy- and decision-making in the areas that concern them;
- c) Building and adapting participatory tools with young people that meet their diverse needs and foster solidarity and intergenerational learning.

4.5 **Participate with young people – Skills:** the competencies needed for meaningful youth participation, grounded in democratic values such as inclusion, pluralism, and non-discrimination. This involves:

- a) Developing the capacity of policymakers, youth workers, young people and youth organisations and structures to enhance the skills needed for meaningful participation and effective intergenerational collaboration;
- b) Using accessible language and adapting methods for effective youth engagement;
- c) Co-developing tools for intergenerational decision-making and strengthening youth participation infrastructure.

4.6 Act with and for young people – Action: the commitment to actively include young people's views and aspirations in the policy cycle – deliberation, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This involves:

- a) Creating safe spaces for dialogue and meaningful youth participation;
- b) Allocating resources to jointly create policies that shape a sustainable and inclusive future;
- c) Ensuring proper follow-up to young people's proposals and implementation of agreed policy changes.

4.7 Together, these four conceptual elements lay the foundations for ensuring that young people's voices are meaningfully and sustainably integrated into policy and decision-making processes. However, integrating a youth perspective into policy processes requires the understanding that different institutions and structures may start from different points. The approach should be context-specific, with each structure assessing its own starting point to make practical progress. The focus should be on continuous reflection and improvement, ensuring that young people's involvement is included across the various policy areas concerning youth.

4.8 Effective integration relies on two main factors:

- a) **Recognition of young people's knowledge, skills and perspectives:** recognising young people as rights holders, ensuring their active participation in policy and decision-making, from the development of policies to their implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including impact assessment.
- b) **Commitment and resources:** integration of a youth perspective must be sustained over time, requiring both institutional commitment and adequate resources. The latter include:
 - i. Financial resources: Sufficient funding to support youth participation and the processes needed to integrate a youth perspective.
 - ii. Human resources: Dedicated staff time and capacity for effective cross-sectoral collaboration to integrate youth perspectives into policy.

5. Guiding principles for integrating a youth perspective in decision-making processes

5.1 The principles for integrating a youth perspective in decision-making processes include:

- a) **Young people as rights holders:** Young people have specific needs that should be included across policy areas that concern them. They have the right to equal participation and to influence various stages of the policy cycle. Cooperation with the youth sector to adapt policy and decision-making processes, ensuring the effective incorporation of the views and aspirations of young people should be encouraged.
- b) **Human rights-based approach:** Youth participation should be guided by the values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Young people are diverse, with differences in age, gender, socio-economic background, and region, which can impact their ability to exercise their rights.

- c) **Cross-sectoral approach:** A youth perspective should be included in all sectors. Collaboration between entities in charge of youth policy and those in charge of other policy areas should be a focus, with transparent structures and adequate resources dedicated to youth engagement.
- d) **Intergenerational justice and solidarity:** Integrating a youth perspective should consider fairness and mutual respect between generations, while also addressing the impact and consequences of today's decisions on both current and future generations of society.
- e) **Interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder co-operation:** Expertise from various fields, civil society, youth organisations, academia and advocacy groups should be systematically integrated to create fair and sustainable policies.
- f) **Intersectionality:** Policies must address the barriers faced by young people from different backgrounds and intersecting identities, ensuring equitable participation, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- g) **Multilevel action:** Authorities at all levels should actively promote and facilitate the capacity-building of young people to engage in decision-making processes in the areas concerning them.
- h) **Sustainability:** Long-term investment in youth leadership, civic education, and sustainable partnerships with youth structures is essential for meaningful participation. Mechanisms for integrating a youth perspective should be regularly assessed and adapted to ensure they remain relevant and responsive.

6. Practical guidance for integrating a youth perspective in decision-making processes

6.1 While the conceptual elements outlined in section 4 enable users to build a solid foundation for this process, the following three-phase approach describes in practical terms how a youth perspective can be fully implemented sequentially.

6.2 This approach builds on three consecutive phases: 1) Preparation, 2) Design and implementation, and 3) Monitoring and evaluation, which need to be adapted to the different needs and contexts in the member States and at Council of Europe level.¹⁰ These three phases set the path for proposing or revising policies to meet the needs and protect the rights of young people.¹¹

PHASE 1. PREPARATION

6.3 This phase involves setting a solid ground for integrating a youth perspective, with several key requirements:

- a) **High-level political commitment from senior policy actors** to support the integration of a youth perspective in policy areas that concern young people.

¹⁰ At the level of the Council of Europe, specific complementary mechanisms and programmes for integrating a youth perspective exist, ranging from the appointment of youth rapporteurs and the employment of youth experts to the admission of young people's organisations as observers, to the participation of the Advisory Council in Youth in intergovernmental work and other activities. There are also complementary mechanisms and programmes at national, regional and local level, as identified in the study "Learning from national and local approaches to youth mainstreaming and use of youth perspective in policymaking across Europe".

¹¹ Some proposals and concepts can be found in the study "Learning from national and local approaches to youth mainstreaming and use of youth perspective in policymaking across Europe" by Dan Moxon, Marko Kovačić, Veronica Ștefan, December 2024.

- b) **Commitment from young people to actively participate in decision-making processes** once the high-level political commitment has been confirmed.
- c) **Enabling standards and legislation** that help to shift policymaking from a traditional sector-based approach to one that incorporates youth concerns across all policies. It may:
 - i. Define governance mechanisms for policy interactions across sectors on youth-related matters.
 - ii. Require actors outside the youth sector to engage with youth-related matters.
 - iii. Enable the youth sector, including youth organisations, to share its expertise, while ensuring that other sectors contribute resources and actively support the integration of a youth perspective.
- d) **Increased organisational capacity** by bolstering resources and skills in both the youth sector and other policy sectors to facilitate the integration of a youth perspective. Efforts should include:
 - i. Capacity-building for dialogue, information sharing, and co-designing tools.
 - ii. Investments in creating and safeguarding spaces for youth participation, both formal and non-formal.

PHASE 2. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.4 This phase involves operationalising the integration of a youth perspective by identifying priority policies that have the most significant impact on young people, gathering input and adapting policies accordingly. This includes:

- a) **Sustainable participatory mechanisms:** Execute mechanisms for youth participation in policy deliberation at different stages, such as youth consultations, forums, advisory groups, or co-management structures. These should be developed collaboratively with young people and youth organisations to ensure meaningful participation.
- b) **Human rights-based expert impact assessments:** Consider conducting assessments to evaluate how policies impact young people before making policy decisions (ex-ante) and after implementation (ex-post).

PHASE 3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.5 This phase aims to ensure the continued effective integration of a youth perspective, involving:

- a) **Technical assessment:** Evaluating how well youth perspectives are integrated in line with the Reference Framework.
- b) **Human rights-based monitoring and evaluation:** Evaluations of the impact of policies on young people should be conducted after their implementation. These assessments should involve young people and youth organisations, researchers,

youth workers and policymakers, and use measurable indicators, including human rights indicators.

6.6 Institutions and structures interested in meaningfully integrating a youth perspective are encouraged to start by assessing their current position within this framework. From there, they can take concrete steps towards integrating a youth perspective into policy processes using the three-phase operational approach.

7. Commitment and support for the integration of a youth perspective

7.1 The integration of a youth perspective should continue to be a priority for the Council of Europe. It requires a proactive, long-term commitment and effort to make youth participation a core component of policymaking processes. Appropriate resources (both financial and human) and capacity building are needed to implement it successfully.

7.2 More specifically for the Council of Europe, it is important to:

- a) Adopt an over-arching strategic approach, based on this Reference Framework, and an action plan to ensure the integration of a youth perspective across the Organisation.
- b) Encourage opportunities for mutual learning between Council of Europe staff, representations, and young people, based on the Youth Department's expertise and networks.
- c) Strengthen quality assurance and access to supporting tools and materials, recognising the central role of the Youth Department in this regard, and guidance to operationalise the Reference Framework.
- d) Continue supporting the integration of the youth perspective across different sectors, instruments and bodies, relying on the active contribution and expertise of the Advisory Council on Youth and its partner organisations.

7.3 Furthermore, when it comes to co-operation with member States and youth civil society organisations, the Youth Department, subject to appropriate resources, will:

- a) Offer advice on participatory mechanisms and identify good practice to address sectoral needs across the Organisation and in member States, through its Joint Council on Youth.
- b) Continue empowering young people, promoting knowledge sharing and competence transfer by supporting youth representatives in advocacy work and campaigning, communities of practice and platforms for peer exchange.
- c) Step up policy assistance measures for member States (including youth policy advisory missions, peer reviews, 50/50 training models) to support the integration of a youth perspective in national policies and actions.
- d) Develop new tools (guidelines, checklists, training modules) to facilitate the practical implementation of the Reference Framework.

8. Conclusion

8.1 At the Reykjavík Summit, the Council of Europe and its member States reaffirmed their commitment to effective public policies and stronger democratic institutions through open

dialogue. This Reference Framework aims to honour this commitment by supporting the integration of a youth perspective in policy areas that concern young people. Integrating a youth perspective is not just a matter of inclusiveness, intergenerational justice and equity. It is a political need to create policies in an agile way that are both forward-looking and responsive to the evolving needs of young people.

- 8.2 As the Council of Europe has shown, young people and youth organisations are powerful agents of positive change, bringing fresh insights and innovative solutions to pressing societal challenges. They are ready to express their needs and aspirations. Their involvement in relevant policy- and decision-making processes is essential to ensure policies are relevant, future-proof and adapted to dynamic realities.
- 8.3 The real challenge, however, is to ensure that young people's voices are heard, listened to and acted upon in a way that leads to meaningful and tangible policy changes. The Reference Framework provides a clear path for reforming policymaking and transforming youth participation and engagement into a substantial force for change, bringing young people's demands to an equal standing across policy areas that concern them.
- 8.4 The successful integration of the Reference Framework depends on the continuous political will and commitment of institutions and policymakers, and the continuous engagement and support of young people and youth organisations. Young people have knowledge, skills and perspectives, and can bring expertise; they must be recognised as rights holders. Their meaningful participation should be ensured at every stage of policy development. Further, without the adaptation or adoption of policies that reflect the findings of consultation mechanisms and impact assessments, the youth perspective exercise risks being tokenistic and reinforcing the existing disconnect between young people and policymakers. For a lasting impact, the Reference Framework should also be supported by sufficient resources and a continuous process of reflection and improvement.
- 8.5 By committing to the Reference Framework and its implementation, the Council of Europe and European policymakers reaffirm their dedication to integrating a youth perspective in shaping a future of just and inclusive policies that will benefit both current and future generations.