

Current Affairs Committee Meeting, 39th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – Remote meeting, 16 September 2020

Speech by Thomas ANDERSSON (Sweden, ILDG)

Check against delivery - Seul le prononcé fait foi

Debate on “Youth Work: the Role of Local and Regional Authorities”

Dear colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

In our Resolution and Recommendation, we call on local and regional authorities to take a strong lead in developing contacts. We need to create spaces for and invest sufficient resources in youth work.

It is our duty and responsibility to reach out to all young people and enable them to plan their own future. Therefore, we have provided examples of good practice of active youth participation on local and regional levels.

In the Resolution we address the importance of acknowledging young people as full-fledged citizens who contribute to shaping European societies.

We urge local and regional authorities to empower youth and to encourage active youth work to build more inclusive and democratic societies.

To do this, we propose various avenues:

- They can invest resources, both human and financial, in youth work and integrate a future-proofing approach. They must keep in mind the well-being of future generations.
- They can reach out to all young people, and particularly to unorganised, disadvantaged or socially excluded youth.
- They can ensure the delivery of quality youth work by providing spaces for youth work and trainings for youth workers.
- They can develop partnerships with NGOs and youth organisations.
- They can ensure that young people receive information equally and can interpret it from their own perspective.
- They can develop relevant, clear and measurable aims and indicators for their youth work policies and ensuring follow-up and evaluation;

- They can consider applying for the CoE quality label for youth centres and set up youth centres if there are none.

In the Recommendation, again we recognise young people as powerful agents for change, especially through youth work. Innovative youth policies need to be developed and implemented to help young people develop their interest, talents and future.

The Member States of the Council of Europe are invited to:

- implement the Committee of Ministers' recommendation CM/Rec (2017) on youth work in their countries, translating it into their languages and actively participating to its five-yearly reviews;
- encourage local and regional authorities to work with NGOs and Youth Initiatives;
- support local authorities to apply to the CoE quality label for local youth centres;
- include young people in their national delegations to the Congress, so that the Congress reflects our societies.

Colleagues, as you all know, we are strongly committed to the implementation of the UN sustainable development goals, in particular SDG 10 on "Reducing Inequalities" and SDG 11 on "Sustainable Cities and Communities" to build a more inclusive, sustainable and democratic society. Youth work is an important contribution in this.

Local and regional authorities are the ones primarily responsible for successfully implemented youth work. I encourage you, my dear colleagues, to take the lead and invest in and with our youth, for a more democratic, inclusive, and self-aware society in the long term.

Colleagues, I invite you to adopt the present resolution and recommendation.

Thank you.