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(1) The big picture

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni was elected Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 26 June 2012 by PACE. She will take up office on 1 September 2012 for a period of three years. Ms Battaini-Dragoni is currently Director General of Programmes at the Council of Europe and has a deep knowledge of the youth sector having been Director General in charge of youth and having started her career as an educational advisor in the EYCS in the 1970s.

Following a lively debate on 26 June 2012, the PACE adopted [Resolution 1885 \(2012\)](#) and [Recommendation 2002 \(2012\)](#) on “The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis” ([Doc. 12951](#) and [Doc. 12974](#)).

(2) 40th anniversary of the Council of Europe youth sector

The 40th anniversary of the Strasbourg European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation – both created in 1972 – was launched during the June PACE session to mark the important role played by the Assembly in the creation of both institutions [[link](#)]. A press conference (“The Parliamentary Assembly – finding solutions to the problems facing young people”) focused on PACE’s role in shaping the Council of Europe work with and for young people over the last 40 years and in the future. Participants included PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon; PACE members Luca Volontè and

Michael Connarty; CCJ Chair Maria Paschou and the Head of the Youth Department, Ulrich Bunjes.

An exhibition highlighting the Council of Europe's work with and for young people ran throughout the whole PACE session. The accompanying video ("Young People Building Europe – a democratic success story") can be accessed on the [Council of Europe portal](#).

The Assembly's Sub-Committee on Education, Youth and Sport (chair: Michael Connarty) celebrated the 40th anniversary of the CoE youth sector by holding an exchange of views with young people and parliamentarians. Panellists included PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon, the Director General of Democracy Snezana Samardzic-Markovic and AC members Maria Paschou and Hranush Shahnazaryan.

Forthcoming milestones of the 40th anniversary are: Open day at the ECYS on 16 September 2012 for the "European Heritage Days"; the 9th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth to be held in St. Petersburg on 23-25 September and its preceding youth event (22-23 September); and the second "Youth Assembly" co-organised with PACE on 5-7 October 2012 in Strasbourg ("Youth and Democracy: the young generation sacrificed?").

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(3) Preparation of the 9th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth

The Committee of Ministers held a first exchange of views on the draft "Final Declaration" of the Conference in June; the debate will continue at their meeting on 12 September 2012. CM comments will be communicated to the meeting of the Senior Officials on 23 September.

Online pre-registration for participants, observers, guests and staff has started.

The selection of 25 participants of the preceding youth event, representing youth organisations or national youth councils, was concluded in June; the selection of 25 additional participants, representing youth organisations in the Russian Federation, will soon

be confirmed. Additional youth delegates will be nominated by the member states as part of their national delegation.

(4) Youth Department update

The Programming Committee met on 12-13 June 2012, deciding on events and EYF grants.

Recent programme events included:

- a training course on human rights education with young people through non-formal learning in Cyprus and Greece was held on 7-11 June in Cyprus by the NGO Support Centre from Cyprus;
- a symposium on the well-being of young people in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, organised in the framework of the EU-CoE youth partnership (Tbilisi, 11-12 June 2012)
- the first meeting of the Follow-up Group for the project *Young people combating hate speech on-line* (Strasbourg, 21-22 June);
- the 2012 Youth [Peace Camp](#) (EYCS, 22-30 June), involving some 50 young people from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Israel, Kosovo (various communities) Georgia, the Russian Federation and the Palestinian National Authority;
- a seminar with youth leaders and members of youth parliaments (Strasbourg, 24-30 June), with participants from the Armenia, Azerbaijan, Germany, France, Israel, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine;
- “Youth Sport speaks out on TabooPhobia; developing a youth led campaign to challenge homophobia in and through sport”, organised with [ENGSO](#) Youth (EYCB, 24 June – 1 July).

Looking ahead:

- “Human Rights in Education” – a training course in cooperation with the Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (Struga, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, 1-6 July);
- International Youth Camp Dialogue, organised in cooperation with the Russian Youth Council (Kaluga, the Russian Federation, 11-15 July);
- study session of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO): “Gender Equality through human rights education and youth leadership” (EYCB, 21-28 July 2012);

- symposium “Arab spring: Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms”, organised by the CoE/EU partnership (Tunisia, 27 – 28 August);
- the CDEJ Summer University (Georgia, 28-30 August).

The 2012 Euro-Arab Youth Forum in Bethlehem (Palestinian Authority), originally scheduled to take place in July, has been postponed to the autumn. The Forum is being organised together with the League of Arab States, the Higher Council for Youth and Sport of the Palestinian Authority and the European Youth Forum.

(5) Other Council of Europe news

In his address to the Ministers’ Deputies at their 1146th meeting on 20 June, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe mentioned his participation in the recent “European Dialogue for Internet Governance” ([Eurodig](#)) in Stockholm. Queen Silvia of Sweden had delivered a [keynote speech](#) about protecting - but also listening to - young people on the Internet. In an exchange with the YFJ, the Secretary General invited them to participate in the preparation of a “Compendium on rights for Internet Users” and took note of their message that it is vital to develop teaching tools on digital media, which would include elements of copyright, privacy and data protection laws. At the EuroDIG meeting itself, the Secretary General reiterated his support to the project “Young people combating hate speech on-line”, which was presented at the conference.

The [North-South Centre](#) held its third meeting of the Executive Committee in Strasbourg on 29 June 2012.

The Jury for the “European Drug Prevention Prize” will meet in Strasbourg on 17-18 July, to evaluate the 83 applications and select the three winning-projects which will be rewarded for their innovative work in drug prevention with active involvement of young people. The award ceremony will take place during the [Pompidou Group](#)’s Mid-term high-level conference on 14 November 2012.

In June, Ms Olöf Olafsdottir, Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation (the directorate responsible for youth), received the first “Equality and Diversity Prize” of the Council of Europe.

(6) Other news

Following the OECD conference on youth employment ([December 2011](#)), the OECD submitted the following documents to the meeting of Ministers of Labour of the G20: [The challenge of promoting youth employment in the G30 countries](#); and [G20 Labour Ministers must focus on young jobseekers](#). The OECD has been carrying out [in-depth studies](#) on youth employment since 2006.

The European Commission has nominated Ms Chiara Gariazzo as the new Director of Youth and Sport. She will take up her new duties on 1 September 2012.

EU leaders, meeting in Brussels on 28 June agreed that the 120bn-euro growth package should include 60bn Euros of unused structural funds to help small enterprises and create youth employment.

As part of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives [Youth on the Move](#) and the [Youth Opportunities Initiative](#), a pilot project to help young people find a job in another EU country has been launched by the European Commission.

The [European Recruitment Agency](#) has expressed its disappointment that key points it wished to see raised in a European Union sponsored conference on youth unemployment have been omitted.

At its 101st International Labour Conference held in Geneva in May/June, the ILO issued a [statement](#) *“Invest in youth or lose a generation”*. The ILO Conference called for *“urgent action to tackle the job crisis that affects 75 million young men and women across the globe.”* The ILO Committee on Youth Employment presented its report on the Youth Employment Crisis at the Conference.

The Heads of State and Government attending the Rio+20 conference held on 20-22 June in Rio have, in their [Outcome Document](#), expressed their *“deep concern about the continuing high levels of unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people”* They *“note the need for sustainable development strategies to proactively address youth employment at all levels”* and feel that *“the contribution of children and youth is vital to the achievement of*

sustainable development”. They urged all governments “to address the global challenge of youth employment by developing and implementing strategies and policies that provide young people everywhere access to decent and productive work”. They also reaffirmed their “commitment to gender equality and to protect the rights of women, men and youth to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including access to sexual and reproductive health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence”.

The British Council organised a youth democracy conference “Listen up! Young People and Democracy” on 27-28 June in London [[link](#)].

(7) Publications

The [AC](#) has published its first [Newsletter](#).

The *Composito: Manual on Human Rights Education for Children in [Armenian](#)* was presented on 1 June in the framework of World Children’s Day at Zangak Bookstore in Yerevan, Armenia. This manual published by the Council of Europe, was translated into Armenian and published by the *Armenian Constitutional Right-Protective Centre*, with the support of the Council of Europe, UNICEF and UNDP Armenian Offices, the Embassy of Germany to Armenia, and the British Reed Elsevier publishing house.

The [study](#) “Using E-learning in Intercultural Non-formal Education Activities - *A mapping study for identifying quality criteria*” focusses on quality criteria for e-learning in intercultural non-formal education activities [[seminar documentation](#)].

Facebook pages:

[Advisory Council on Youth](#)
[Council of Europe - Youth](#)
[European Youth Centre, Budapest](#)

Best regards

Ulrich Bunjes

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Abbreviations:

CCJ: Advisory Council on Youth
CDEJ: European Steering Committee on Youth
CM: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
CMJ: Joint Council on Youth
CoE: Council of Europe
Congress: The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional
Authorities
DDCP: Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the
Council of Europe
DG: Directorate General
ENGSO: European non-governmental sports organisation
EuroDIG: European Dialogue on Internet Governance
EYCB: European Youth Centre Budapest
EYCS: European Youth Centre Strasbourg
EYF: European Youth Foundation
ILO: International Labour Organisation
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PACE: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
YFJ: European Youth Forum

The next issue of Think Youth! will appear in September.

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