



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

English only

Statement on World Youth Skills Day

Worldwide, millions of young people still lack access to quality education, especially those from vulnerable and marginalised groups such as youth from low-income households, with migrant and Roma¹ background, and youth with disabilities. The Advisory Council on Youth is calling for action on the World Youth Skills Day among the Council of Europe member states to ensure inclusive and quality education for all young people across the European continent.

As technology evolves at a high pace, changing not only the job market but also our societies as a whole, growing up in the 21st century means that those who are transitioning to adulthood will continuously need to adjust to technological developments and volatile job markets to meet ever-new requirements and challenges surrounding them. To meet these challenges at a personal and societal level, young people must nurture a complex skill-set.

Beyond the much-debated need for the development of tech-related hard skills, the Advisory Council on Youth urges the member states to **invest in education that would equip young people with the knowledge needed for the ethical use and development of technology grounded in values of human rights, intersectionality, and democracy**. In addition, education on human rights, and particularly social and labour rights, is of utmost importance for **young people to be able to claim fair working conditions** and actively shape the present and the future of work. Building necessary skills not only allows young people to become **self-reliant and independent**, but it also provides them with the **freedom to make their own choices** and adapt to ever-changing environments.

At the same time, it must be highlighted that in order to ensure equal access to learning opportunities for all socioeconomic groups, and strengthen the capacity of the educational system that reaches out to all learners of society, **we need to address the structural determinants** that are preventing the full participation of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as lack of technical devices, but also electricity, internet, and space. **Access and participation should not be a luxury, but rather a basis for a just society that supports an inclusive skills acquisition.**

In this regard, the Advisory Council on Youth highly appreciates the work done by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in the field of education and training of young people empowering them to access their rights and promoting [the European Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#). We also recall the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2012\)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education](#) which highlights both formal and non-formal education that enables pupils and students to develop appropriate competences, self-confidence, and critical thinking to help them become responsible citizens and improve their employability.

¹ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Kale/Cale, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom, and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

Finally, the Advisory Council on Youth draws attention to the crucial role that youth organisations and youth workers play in supporting young people's employability and development of civic and political self-efficacy. As youth organisations are disproportionately hit by the financial repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis, many of them being forced to cease operations, **we call on member states to urgently allocate funds for the support of youth organisations and youth work given their centrality in youth empowerment and skill development**, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Bearing in mind the utmost relevance of quality education for youth skills development, **the Advisory Council on Youth stays committed to promoting inclusive youth policies and youth programmes that provide enabling learning environments for all young people** in which they can thrive, showcase their skills and exchange with their peers.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.