

The 7th conference of the Europe Goes Local network

EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2025

25 – 27 March, Prague



EUROPEAN UNION



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Title: The European EGL Event 2025
Published in May 2025
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15364583

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Graphic design and layout of the report by Annelies Designs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2025	1
1. YOUTH WORK POLICY OVERVIEW	3
1.1. European Context for Youth Work Policies	3
1.2. Support for Youth Work Policies from the EU	5
1.3. The perspective of some European umbrella organizations	6
1.4. Support for Youth Work Policies from Europe Goes Local	8
2. ESSENTIALS FOR YOUTH WORK POLICY DEVELOPMENT	9
2.1 Be a specific and distinct youth work policy	11
2.2 Be knowledge-based	12
2.3 State the desired qualitative and quantitative outcomes	12
2.4 Allow youth work to be flexible and to adapt to the varying needs and ideas of young people	13
2.5 Be well-grounded and understood among those concerned	13
3. LOCAL YOUTH WORK POLICIES: PRACTICES AND EXAMPLES	14
3.1 Empowering Youth in Strasbourg	14
3.2 Youth work policy and practice around Europe – presentation of municipal practices in parallel workshops	16
Impact of Antwerp Youth Work	17
Young Cities	18
Developing Youth Center Services Based on Youth Personas	19
Now I Know What Youth Work is About: Using Youth Work Curriculum to Communicate Youth Work	20
EGL Goes to Oliveri and Back	21
Knowledge-Based Youth Work Policy and Practice	22
Beyond Words: Exploring Youth Perspectives through Creative Interactions	23
Rural Project Lab	24
Vilnius Youth Policies: Shaping the Future with NGOs and Young People	25
From Idea to Realization: Involvement of the Youth City Council in the Green Participatory "Eco Budget" for Primary Schools	26
Gaia Municipal Plan for All Youth(s) 2.0: Leaving No One Behind	27
Upplands-Bro Municipality: European Charter on Local Youth Work for Developing Knowledge-Based Youth Work Policy	28
Youth Participation in Local Policies in Paris: An Ecosystem Rather Than a System	29
True North 2026 - European Youth Capital 2026	30
MESSAGES TO THE 4TH EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION AND REFLECTION ON THE NEEDS OF MUNICIPALITIES	32
FINAL REFLECTIONS	34
ANNEXES	37
Annex 1: European EGL Event 2025 Programme	37
Annex 2: Youth work policy essentials	39
Annex 3: Some observations on the central role of municipalities in creating sustainable youth work development	40

The European EGL Event 2025

The role of municipalities in developing local youth work has been recognized more and more by policy makers. The latest milestone on the journey of local youth work development was the policy paper¹ launched by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU which states:

'By investing in a robust and long-term local youth work policy, based on intense dialogue and participation, local governments create concrete conditions for the optimal development of local youth work. Therefore, municipalities need a framework that gives contours and inspiration to create tailor-made sturdy local support systems.'

The 4th European Youth Work Convention, taking place in May 2025, again puts youth work recognition on the European policy agenda.

With the European EGL Event 2025, Europe Goes Local, as a platform for municipal level youth work stakeholders, intended to support municipalities in developing a comprehensive, knowledge-based youth work policy and provided a channel for municipalities to make their voice heard in the European policy discussion through a joint input for the upcoming Convention. Specifically, the European EGL Event 2025 had the following objectives:

- Facilitate knowledge building and exchanges on local youth work policy development, with a particular focus on how the EU Youth Programmes can contribute to its improvement and enhancement.
- Highlight successful long-term practices and project processes that have significantly influenced local youth work policy development.
- Foster in-depth discussions and exchanges about inspiring practices, emphasising their systemic and practical applicability to diverse local contexts.
- Create a platform for municipalities to convey messages to the fourth European Youth Work Convention.
- Explore municipalities' challenges and needs in accessing and using the European youth programmes and identify potential solutions.

The conference took place from the 25th to the 27th of March 2025 in Prague, the Czech Republic, and gathered **109 participants** from **32 European countries**², each country attending with a delegation of 2-4 persons. The participants represented various organisations: from municipalities, through National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes and international bodies such as SALTO, to youth (umbrella) organisations (see below). Participants took up various roles at these organisations, from officials such as directors and officers, through elected representatives, youth workers, municipality workers, and experts, to researchers (see next page).

¹ [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on youth work policy in an empowering Europe \(C/2024/3526\)](#)

² Countries present: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium and specifically the Flemish community of Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland

Organisation type	Ratio of participants
Municipality	48,62%
National Agency or SALTO Centre	25,69%
NGO (European level)	9,17%
NGO (national level)	6,42%
NGO (local level)	5,50%
Ministry	4,59%
Grand Total	100,00%

Table 1: Organisation types represented by the participants

Professional category	Ratio of participants
Professional working in municipal level youth work (municipal staff)	43,52%
NA/SALTO staff	24,07%
Professional with a diverse range of expertise engaged in municipal youth work (experts working in NGOs, institutes – non-municipal staff)	11,11%
Representative of a national network, umbrella organization dealing with municipal level youth work	8,33%
Representative of a European-level organisation/institution	8,33%
Elected municipal decision-maker (mayor, deputy mayor, municipal council member)	2,78%
Researcher involved in studies on municipal level youth work	0,93%
Representative of a youth council	0,93%
Grand Total	100,00%

Table 2: Professional categories of the participants

The European EGL Event 2025 included a mix of engaging presentations, panel discussions, practical workshops, and interactive peer-to-peer support sessions. The event was structured into diverse formats to ensure a dynamic engagement and knowledge transfer. The detailed event programme can be found in the annexes to this report. The main programme building blocks included:

- **An online onboarding session:** Before the conference, an optional online 90-minute onboarding session was organised for participants to start to get to know each other, get familiar with the programme, and with Workvivo, the online communication platform which was used before and throughout the conference. The onboarding session took place on the 19th of March 2025.
- **Plenary addresses:** Placed throughout the event, those were collective moments keeping participants focused and in tune with the practical and strategic intentions of the event.
- **Practice presentations:** Municipalities presented long-term projects or initiatives that focused on the development of youth work policy.
- **In-depth discussions:** Participants engaged in parallel thematic sessions where they explored good examples of practices in detail and discussed how to adapt them to their own local context.
- **Networking time:** Participants shared experiences and built networks more informally.

This report summarises the thematic discussions and practices presented and underlines the collective insights of the participants to support knowledge-building and actionable steps. This report will also contribute to highlighting the role of the EU Youth Programmes in supporting the development of local youth work strategies and inform future policy development.

1. Youth Work Policy Overview

This chapter provides an overall context for the contemporary youth work policy discourse, and it is based on inputs of Koen Lambert (Director of JINT), Jonas Agdur (Senior Advisor at KEKS), Charalampos Papaioannou (Policy Officer of the European Commission) and László Milutinovits (Senior Project Officer of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership), Caillum Hedderman, (Board Member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ)), and Tanja Herceg (Programme Manager at ERYICA (The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency)) as well as on accompanying desk research of the author of this report.

1.1. European Context for Youth Work Policies

Development of youth work in general and youth work policies in particular are supported by the string of [European Youth Work Conventions](#) (EYWCs), with the [1st EYWC](#) taking place in Ghent (Belgium) in 2010, the [2nd EYWC](#) taking place in 2015 in Brussels (Belgium), the [3rd EYWC](#) taking place in 2020 in Germany and online, and the [4th European Youth Work Convention](#) taking place in Malta in May 2025. The expected outcomes of the 4th EYWC are, among other, a roadmap for the implementation of a European strategy for youth work policy development, recognition and quality practice, and proposed actions to be submitted for endorsement to the Council of Europe Youth Ministers' Conference in October 2025.

The EYWCs played a role in setting up and implementing the [European Youth Work Agenda](#) (EYWA). EYWA was established by 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 in 2020](#), and built on other developments in the area, such as the [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#) or the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work from 2017. Known as the [Bonn Process](#), the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda is in progress across many countries, with [national and local initiatives](#) taking place.

EYWA has also been supported by the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, an international body fostering synergies in the youth sector between the European Commission and the Council of Europe Youth to help achieve greater European unity. Specifically, the EU-CoE Youth Partnership supported the Steering Group on the European Youth Work Agenda, regional seminars, as well as research and capacity building projects.

Specifically, the symposium "[Visible Value: Growing youth work in Europe](#)" was held in 2023 in the European Youth Centre Budapest (Hungary) and examined challenges, opportunities, and good practices in youth work in Europe. [The Review of the implementation](#) of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work five years after the adoption also took place and shed some light on developments in youth work on the European and national levels. [Growing Youth Work in Europe: Results of the "Mapping European youth work ecosystems"](#) study was published in 2024 and outlined the diversity of youth work in Europe. [A Study on models for the recognition of youth workers competences in Europe](#) was published in 2024 and puts forward two models on cross-border recognition of youth workers' competences in Europe. [Advocacy tools for youth work development](#) are also being prepared by the EU-CoE Youth Partnership.



[The Strategic National Agencies Cooperation \(SNAC\) Growing Youth Work](#) is also supporting the EYWA and Bonn Process, for example by strengthening connections and synergies among youth work related activities of the network of National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes, by implementing joint activities on specific topics of the Bonn Process, or by supporting the Bonn Process in neighbouring partner countries.



The EU negotiations on the [Multiannual Financial Framework](#) 2028-2034 are taking place in 2025, including the [public consultation](#) phase. This constitutes a key moment which will also influence further development of youth work in the EU and beyond, as it will determine the frameworks for the EU Youth Programmes for years to come. Koen Lambert, Director of the National Agency for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes for Belgium-Flanders (JINT), underlined that it is expected that the 4th EYWC in Malta in 2025 will provide inputs into the discussions on creating a European strategy for youth work policy development as well as feed into the next EU Youth Strategy from 2028 onwards. The European EGL Event 2025 also served as a forum to deliberate on challenges in local youth work, and in youth work policies. These exchanges also aimed at enabling all participants to contribute to the public consultations on the Multiannual Financial Framework and later also on the upcoming EU Youth Strategy post-2027.

1.2. Support for Youth Work Policies from the EU

Charalampos Papaioannou, Policy Officer of the European Commission shared the findings from the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ and [European Solidarity Corps](#) programmes, as both of them are relevant for youth work and therefore also for the youth work policy domain. Both EU Youth Programmes support local volunteering and capacity building projects and provide funding for many youth work actors, including for local municipalities to develop participation projects and youth-friendly policies at the local level.

In the context of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Programme, more than 80% of public consultation respondents supported the current structure and type of actions, and 70% of them saw horizontal priorities as extremely relevant. The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Programme attracted a wide range of participants with different profiles across its various sectors and addressed the needs of individuals from various target groups well. Nevertheless, the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Programme was still not reaching various target groups equally; most of the beneficiaries were highly experienced applicants, and outreach to people with fewer opportunities could be further improved. The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Programme shows added value in the following areas: boosting inclusion, diversity, fairness and equal opportunities, as well as building a European identity, a sense of belonging to the EU, and raising awareness of EU values.

In the context of the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 Programme, the mid-term evaluation concluded that the programme effectively addressed current needs of European society by fostering democratic participation, inclusion, and revitalising local initiatives. The European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 Programme also successfully addressed local challenges, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas, by involving international volunteers. Nevertheless, the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 Programme could better identify and include people with fewer opportunities, improve geographical distribution, align funding with goals, and enhance IT tools.

Mr. Papaioannou also shared that proposals for the new generation of the EU Youth Programmes include prioritising inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and participation in democratic life. The new programmes should place greater focus on small-scale partnerships, digital youth work, and green practices, and there are proposals to increase the budget and simplify access for smaller organizations.

The future EU Youth Strategy will constitute the basis for all new EU Youth Programmes, and therefore it is key that local and municipal youth work is recognised and visible in the new EU Youth Strategy. Public consultation on the future EU Youth Strategy and the new generation of the EU Youth Programmes is to be launched before summer 2025, and it will contribute to the establishment of the future EU Youth Strategy in 2027. It is key to use this opportunity and submit concrete proposals towards emphasising local youth work during the public consultation phase to ensure local youth work policy is viewed as an important topic to be tackled in the future EU Youth Strategy.



1.3. The perspective of some European umbrella organizations

Caillum Hedderman, Board Member of the [European Youth Forum](#) (YFJ) elaborated on youth work from the YFJ perspective. Youth work is anchored in local realities and therefore it happens where young people are, be it in the neighbourhood, in online spaces, or elsewhere. Youth work should be recognised as the very foundation of the EU Youth Programmes as it is key to support young people in becoming active citizens. Youth work is a practice which is done with young people, it is youth-led, and it has community impacts through empowering young people in shaping their immediate environments.



In relation to this input from Mr. Hedderman, it should be noted that discussions on the definition of youth work, environments in which it takes place, and many other aspects, have been going on for many years. The European Commission contributed with its ["Guide to Youth Work"](#) already in 2015, the Council of Europe published its ["Insights in to Developing the Youth Work Environment"](#) in 2022, and there are many more resources available, with the EU-CoE Youth Partnership producing many interesting [publications](#) on the topic.

Mr. Hedderman further outlined that apart from active citizenship and engagement, young people are positively impacted in the domain of mental health, development of local communities, and many others. Mr. Hedderman further stressed that budget cuts bring negative impacts on local level youth work.

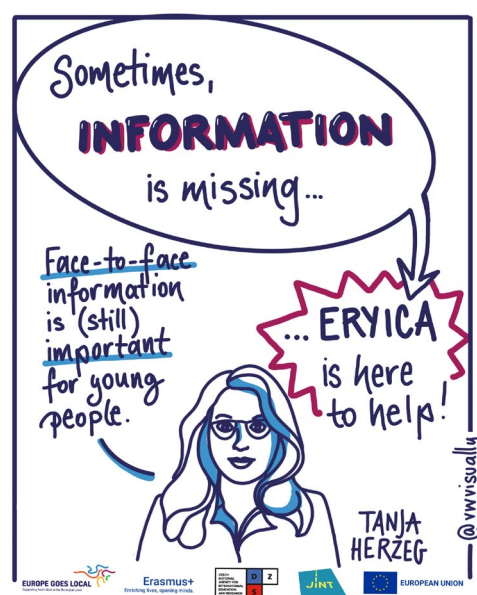
Many studies which bring forward evidence of positive impacts of youth work. In the international environment, the [RAY Research Network](#) should be mentioned as a quality source of impact evidence. Furthermore, the classic [study on value of youth work by the European Commission](#) (2014) should be mentioned, as well as the [Study on youth work in the EU](#).

Mr. Hedderman also shared that recognition of youth work, its value, impacts, but also of positive local actors, is a key challenge. Another challenge Mr. Hedderman mentioned was the lack of structural recognition of learning outcomes, despite empirical evidence of young people's learning in youth work and non-formal learning activities. He underlined that those learning outcomes are not recognised by qualification frameworks, and therefore these learning outcomes cannot be included in educational trajectories of young people.

Furthermore, debates on recognition of youth work have been going on for many years. Basic information on the topic is well summarised by the [EU-CoE Youth Partnership](#), and the most up-to-date information on the state of play of the recognition of youth work in the EU can be found on the [Youth Wiki webpage of the European Commission](#). [Youthpass](#) should also not be omitted, as it is a long-existing self-recognition tool which has been explicitly linked to the EU Youth Programmes for many years.

Lastly, Mr. Hedderman noted that local youth workers should also be recognised as partners in policymaking and invited to co-create the frameworks in which they work. He also underlined that stability and continuity are impossible without stable frameworks, including the financial one. In this context, [a shadow evaluation of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes](#) was commissioned by the European Youth Forum. The report explores how youth organisations experience the EU Youth Programmes, focusing on how well these initiatives meet the needs of young people and the realities of youth civil society. Exploring the current implementation of these programmes, the report highlights key opportunities and challenges for youth-led organisations and their role in strengthening youth civic spaces, providing valuable insights for future programme negotiations and improvements.

Tanja Herceg, Programme Manager at [The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency](#) (ERYICA) introduced the angle of youth information in local youth work. ERYICA aims to intensify European and international cooperation in the field of youth information work and services, by giving visibility to initiatives at a local, national and international level, and by providing its members with opportunities for professional development, exchange and innovation. ERYICA introduced the [European Youth Information Charter](#) in 1993 and updated it in 2018, codifying a set of professional principles and guidelines for youth information and counselling work across Europe. ERYICA stresses that youth information and counselling aim to uphold the right of young people to full and reliable information, helping young people to make informed choices, and promoting their autonomy, their ability to think critically, and their active participation in society.



ERYICA also implemented [YouthInfoQuest](#), a survey focusing on how young people across Europe seek, access, and evaluate information. The survey showed, among other things, that face-to-face communication is one of the most preferred information channels for young people, and that while specialised professionals are seen as reliable sources of information by about 70% of respondents, youth work bodies are seen as reliable information sources by over 30% of the respondents as well. Ms. Herceg underlined that in this context youth information services act as a bridge between local realities and European opportunities and shared that [ERYICA provides specialised trainings](#) for youth information workers. Ms. Herceg also stressed that more training was needed to support connections between youth work and youth information services.

Additionally, it should be noted that [Eurodesk](#), a youth information network including over 3000 partners in 36 countries, also regularly provides opportunities for young people to voice their opinions on youth information needs, and these are published in the series of Youth Info Surveys: [Mobility and the Role of Youth Information 2019](#), [Mobility and the Role of Youth Information 2022](#), and [Mobility and the Role of Youth Information 2024](#). Each of these surveys shows preferences of young people when it comes to communication channels, such as use of social media, and the surveys also map attitudes of young people towards learning mobilities, providing valuable information for local youth workers engaging in cross-border or European youth work.

1.4. Support for Youth Work Policies from Europe Goes Local

[Europe Goes Local](#) is a partnership of National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes and other stakeholders, and contributes to youth work policy development through its [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#), the accompanying online tool, the [Changemakers Kit](#), and through further activities with the following aims:

"Build bridges between the local and European levels, including municipalities in rural areas, strengthen the dialogue between the stakeholders of local youth work, make the European dimension an integral part of local youth work provision, offer tools and opportunities for local stakeholders to collaborate and develop common projects, recognize and promote European best practices with the purpose of peer-learning."

Europe Goes Local created the [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#) which aimed at further strengthening local youth work by outlining basic principles of youth work itself, of youth work policy, of local youth work practice, and stressed the needs of youth workers and the necessity to create capacity building opportunities for them.

Furthermore, the [European Conference on Local Youth Work and Democracy](#), held in February 2024 in Brussels (Belgium) and supported by the Europe Goes Local and the Democracy Reloading initiatives, provided valuable input for the creation of the [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on youth work policy in an empowering Europe](#) (2024). This Resolution calls on the EU Member States to strive for the following:

"Supporting the development of quality youth work and of youth work policy at all levels, paying due attention to the local level, which is closest to young people." (Para 24)

"Develop or further support a comprehensive youth work policy, as appropriate, in addition to a wider youth policy by means of encompassing frameworks and sustainable support and funding mechanisms for developing quality youth work, taking into account existing youth work realities and actors, and new, more experimental and innovative youth work practices. This youth work policy should build on existing policy initiatives relating to youth work, be evidence and knowledge-based and be developed further in close cooperation with the youth work community of practice." (Para 30)

"Support the development, implementation, evaluation and promotion of quality youth work at all levels, with due attention to the local level, and continue to support the strengthening of the development, implementation and evaluation of quality youth work, particularly within the framework of the European Youth Work Agenda, where appropriate." (Para 31)

"Work towards a bottom-up perspective by allowing local knowledge, experience and practice concerning the organisation of local youth work to inform the European level. This can be achieved, where appropriate, by providing municipalities and other local or regional authorities with resources, channels and platforms for exchange, to enable them to experience European identity, cooperate, and enrich the local level with a European dimension, for example, within existing EU programmes or by strengthening multilevel governance." (Para 36)

The European EGL Event 2025 contributed to all these processes by facilitating knowledge-building, peer to peer municipality knowledge transfer, and dialogue among stakeholders from various EU Member States as well as in an interplay with international bodies.

2. Essentials for Youth Work Policy Development



During the European EGL Event 2025, Jonas Agdur, Senior Advisor at [KEKS](#) (Sweden), pointed out that youth work policy has been mentioned in European policy papers since 2017 (e.g., the Council of Europe [Recommendation on youth work from 2017](#), or 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 in 2020](#)). He also stressed that it was only the [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on youth work policy in an empowering Europe](#) (2024) that finally mentions local governments as one of the key players. This Resolution also invites local governments together with "the youth work community of practice" (Para 30) to co-create local youth work policies.

Mr. Agdur underlined that the basic purpose of policy is to guide practice, setting aims and principles. He also stressed that a strategy is a plan on how to reach the aims set in policies, and hence every youth work policy should be accompanied by an adequate and realistic strategy for its implementation. In order to set up successful youth work policies, two key documents provide guidance: the Europe Goes Local [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#), and the report by Council of Europe "[Youth work: the role of local and regional authorities](#)". These two documents provide a basis for **essentials of successful youth work policy**, namely:

Youth work policy should be a specific and distinct youth work policy.

- I.e. it should comply with the core principles and values of youth work as stated in the Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work and the European Charter on Local Youth Work.
- I.e. it should make clear the role/mission and boundaries of youth work in relation to other policy areas, e.g. social work.

Youth work policy should be knowledge-based.

- I.e. it should be developed and regularly updated according to relevant knowledge on young people's various living situations and needs as well as on the different forms and methods of youth work that can be used to meet aims and objectives.
- I.e. it should be regularly updated in accordance with the analysis and evaluation of outcomes in relation to measurable indicators and aims.

Youth work policy should state the desired qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

- I.e. it should be based on clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators and aims regarding what shall be achieved in relation to young people's participation and learning.
- I.e. it should contain clear procedures for follow up and evaluation of outcomes in relation to aims, costs and the target group reached.

Youth work policy should allow youth work to be flexible and to adapt to the varying needs and ideas of young people.

- I.e. it should govern through aims, not through rules and regulations.

Youth work policy should be well-grounded and understood among those concerned.

- I.e. it should be developed in close dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, especially youth workers and young people.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 were offered an opportunity to voice their opinions on clarity of the presented policy essentials, and on the level of implementation of these policy essentials in the local contexts of the participants. Results show that while the policy essentials were quite clear to the participants (Figure 1), they are not especially well implemented in the local realities (Figure 2).

How clear is the following essential to you?

Be a specific and distinct youth work policy.

8.3

Be knowledge-based.

8.1

State the desired qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

7.8

Allow youth work to be flexible and to adapt to the varying needs and ideas of young people.

8.8

Be well-grounded and understood among those concerned.

8.3

Not at all

8.3

Fully

Figure 1: Clarity of policy essentials to the participants of the European EGL Event 2025.

In your local/municipal reality, how much does your (local) youth work policy live up to the following essentials?

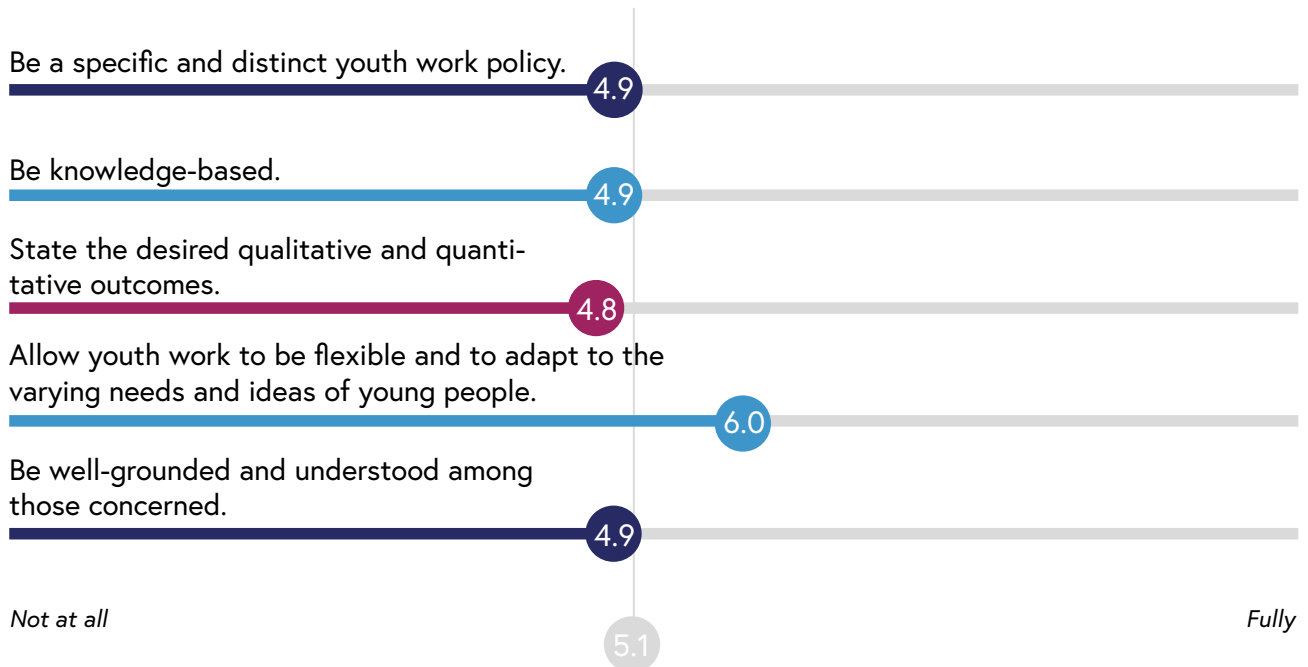


Figure 2: Level of implementation of policy essentials in the local realities of the participants of the European EGL Event 2025.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 were further offered a space to reflect on the five policy essentials, focusing on the shared understanding and clarity of the given policy essential, but also on the challenges of implementing youth work policies in line with these essentials, and on practical experiences in youth work policy development and implementation. The results of the deliberations are summarised in the following subchapters and grouped by policy essentials.

2.1. Be a specific and distinct youth work policy

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that this youth work policy essential is largely absent in practice, with youth work often manifested through sporadic actions rather than a clear policy framework. One of the key points was the lack of a common European definition of youth work, as this was seen to be a barrier in establishing local youth work policies. Doubts arose concerning the need for flexibility in youth work policy in the context of connecting with players in other fields, and this interplay was seen as highly contextual and specific for different geographical locations.

Challenges include a lack of comprehensive knowledge across Europe regarding youth work policy development. Europe Goes Local could support this by mapping existing European youth work policy schemes, offering a self-assessment tool based on the essentials, fostering a shared understanding of youth work and quality standards, and providing crucial support where national policy is lacking.

2.2. Be knowledge-based

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that this youth work policy essential emphasizes the needs and voices of young people in youth policy development. It stresses the importance of actively including them in dialogue throughout the entire process, not just focusing on the final outcome. Key aspects include monitoring and evaluation, prioritizing young people's input, hearing diverse perspectives, fostering intersectoral cooperation involving researchers and various stakeholders, utilizing data from different sources (including youth crime statistics), training youth workers in data collection and analysis, and collaborating with schools and NGOs.

Challenges identified include how to build knowledge, involve young people in research, translate research into practice, make sure youth workers are not overwhelmed by these processes, but also how to involve municipality staff, how to overcome the lack of national policies in some countries, and how to effectively bridge European and local policies. Participants stressed that as much as this is seen as a key essential, it is a question to what extent it can be brought to life. Europe Goes Local is seen as a potential support by consolidating existing research, providing practical strategies, facilitating peer learning, offering expert support, co-hosting activities with policymakers, tailoring support to local contexts, organizing study visits with decision-makers, building capacity for youth workers, and fostering networking.

2.3. State the desired qualitative and quantitative outcomes

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that this youth work policy essential emphasizes the importance of understanding and demonstrating the impact of youth work, both quantitatively (numbers of reached young people) and qualitatively (the actual impact as experienced by young people). Participants saw a challenge in communicating the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of youth work to those outside the youth work sector, including politicians.

It was unclear how to present both quantitative and, especially, qualitative aspects of youth work to decision-makers to secure funding. Overall, there is a struggle to translate the intangible benefits of youth work into concrete, measurable outcomes that resonate with politicians. Participants shared a concern that there is a potential contradiction between setting quantitative benchmarks and at the same time keeping youth work as a flexible, process-oriented endeavour. Participants also raised the question of the potential misuse of collected data, and of possible negative consequences in cases where data is difficult to provide (e.g., budget cuts).

Challenges include a lack of recognition of youth work as a profession, weak political and structural support at the municipal level, communication gaps with decision-makers, a dominance of quantitative indicators that do not capture the full impact of youth work, and the need for clear and common definitions of indicators to get comparable results across different municipalities. Europe Goes Local could support this by advocating for support from the ministry level, providing examples of good practices, promoting the European Charter on Local Youth Work, offering trainings, and establishing adaptable milestones for measuring impact.

2.4. Allow youth work to be flexible and to adapt to the varying needs and ideas of young people

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that this youth work policy essential emphasizes the need for youth workers to be open-minded, consult young people, and incorporate their opinions into designs of activities. Youth work policies should be tailored to the needs of specific young people, allowing for changes to activities that are not effective. The policy essential also prompted discussions about the definition of youth work.

The lack of a clear definition of "flexibility" is a key point of unclarity. Participants noted that policy documents often lack the tools for practical flexibility and that being too flexible might hinder focused work with specific target groups by leading to over-generalization. Doubts primarily revolved around the flexibility of actors from other fields, like governments and schools, as it was pointed out that flexibility should be required from all involved stakeholders, not only from youth workers.

Challenges underlined by participants included a lack of understanding and flexibility from local government decision-makers and other stakeholders outside youth work, making it challenging for youth workers to be flexible and adapt to the youth perspectives. The rigid timeframes of open calls, grant schemes, and policies themselves (with a start and an end date) are also seen as challenges that contradict flexibility. Europe Goes Local could support this by providing examples of successful flexible practices, offering inspiration and motivation to municipalities, and launching calls for more diverse activities. Sharing good practices would also help in learning new flexible methods and approaches for different youth categories and local realities.

2.5. Be well-grounded and understood among those concerned

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that this youth work policy essential includes creating understandable qualitative and quantitative indicators for youth work, and they raised questions about tailoring communication and language to all involved stakeholders, including young people, experts, and policymakers. Participants discussed whether different levels of understanding are needed for various groups and the importance of tailoring information accordingly.

The conversation highlighted the need for recognition of youth work, grounding it in knowledge and research. The varying definitions and realities of youth work and of young people across Europe, were noted as challenges to achieving a common understanding.

Unclear aspects include how to ensure youth work policy is understandable to all, and doubts were raised about who needs to "understand" versus be informed, and how to navigate the potential increasing specialization within youth work profession itself (working with different target groups, topical domains, etc.).

Challenges include identifying the target audience for youth work policy, and ensuring youth work is well-grounded and recognized. Europe Goes Local could offer support through study visits for sharing practices, addressing concerns at relevant conferences, and potentially involving researchers to tackle common challenges. The potential role of youth information networks in supporting local policy development was also mentioned.

3. Local Youth Work Policies: Practices and Examples

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 were given opportunities to learn from one another. First, experiences from local youth (work) policies in Strasbourg (France) were presented to all participants, and subsequently a series of parallel workshops led by participants themselves were held.

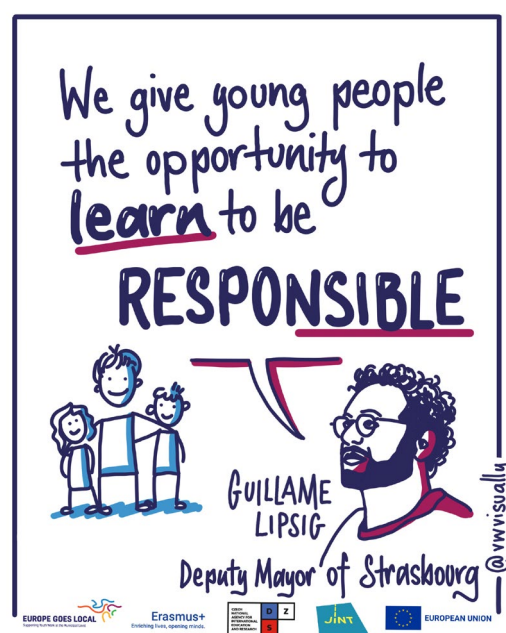
3.1. Empowering Youth in Strasbourg

Key-note speaker, Guillaume Libsig, Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg (France) in charge of Community Life, Youth Policy, Popular Education, and Event Policy introduced the local youth policy and youth work policy, and his input is summarised below.

Youth policies are often only focusing on consultation, but it is key to aim towards co-construction of policies with young people. Moreover, young people are often asked to use institutional mimicry: they are asked to act like adults. Such approach is dysfunctional, since it puts pressure on young people to act and think outside of their immediate experience. Instead, young people should be enabled to act as young people.

The very nature of youth engagement brings up a constant challenge: young people grow older and leave youth participation spaces and structures, creating constant pressure to engage new young people. Sustainability and continuation of any youth participation platforms are therefore in a constant need for care, updating, and renewal. This needs to be acknowledged as an inherent characteristic of youth participation: youth is a period of transition and experimentation in which young people, among other things, learn to be responsible for public space. Therefore, young people need to have the freedom to come and go and to make mistakes to learn from. Mr. Libsig underlined that "responsibility is a skill that must be learned, and we must share and give responsibilities" to young people.

Based on the premises, the youth policy of the city of Strasbourg adopted an age-specific approach (see next page) and young people are offered different opportunities based on their current needs: youth councillors, interns at the municipality, or volunteers supporting local bodies, etc.



**Ages 8-11**

Focus on developing cooperation skills and learning to manage frustration constructively.

Ages 12-16

Building initial responsibility through structured participation in decision-making processes.

Ages 16-20

Creating pathways to concrete responsibility through junior associations and thematic projects.

Ages 20-30

Supporting transition to full civic responsibility, institutional participation and professional insertion.

The city of Strasbourg also introduced some innovative approaches to local youth policy. Firstly, young people engaged in various structured youth participation initiatives, such as youth councils, are encouraged to also pick up the role of youth ambassadors and reach out to their peers as well as to elected officials of the municipality, creating spaces to meet and to work together. As an example, policy advocacy initiatives where young people are in direct communication with national leadership from the position of a policy stakeholder can be mentioned. Secondly, young people are invited to participate in concrete working groups within the municipality structures, to participate in decision-making on various concrete initiatives of the city of Strasbourg. As an example, young people are included in municipal public space planning committees, including voting rights to co-decide on various initiatives. Thirdly, youth policy is based on key topics selected by young people themselves, currently as follows: Democracy and Europe, Solidarity and the Fight against Discrimination, Ecology and the Environment, Culture, Sports, and Communication, Memorial and Citizenship Journey 2025. These topics create common ground to support the relationships between institutions, associations, and youth. Fourth, youth councils are cared for in such a way that continuity is ensured despite youth transitioning to other life chapters.

There are two types of youth workers in Strasbourg, some of them are directly employed by the municipality, some of them are NGO-based. The NGO-based youth workers face some challenges, and the municipality creates city to city partnerships to support them. That way young people are supported in intranational and international mobility in areas where interests of the partner cities overlap. Local authorities in France, including the one in Strasbourg, are supported in the implementation of youth participation activities by the [ANACEJ initiative](#).

3.2. Youth work policy and practice around Europe – presentation of municipal practices in parallel workshops

14 workshops highlighting local practices in youth work and youth work policy areas were held during the European EGL Event 2025 (see Table 1 below).

Impact of Antwerp youth work Wini Echelpoels (BE-FL)

Young Cities Nikolaos Christofi (CY)

Developing Youth Center Services Based on Youth Personas Kaisa Orunuk (EE)

"Now I know what youth work is about". Using youth work curriculum to communicate youth work Mika Pietilä, Heidi Pouttu (FI)

EGL goes to Oliveri and back Elisa Ciribuco (IT)

Knowledge-based youth work policy and practice Jenny Haglund (SE)

Beyond Words: Exploring Youth Perspectives through Creative Interactions - Socionaut Kateřina Kuchtová (CZ)

Rural Project Lab Matteo Sisto (IT)

Vilnius Youth Policies: Shaping the Future with NGOs and Young People Vidmantas Mitkus (LT) (Plenary 2)

From idea to realization - involvement of the Youth City Council in the organization of the project Green Participatory "Eco Budget" for Primary Schools Marcin Gołębiowski (PL)

Gaia Municipal Plan for All Youth(s) 2.0: leaving no one behind Gil Nunes (PT)

Upplands-Bro Municipality- European charter on local youth work for developing knowledge based local youth work policy Oshy Liebech Schwartz (SE)

Youth participation in local policies in Paris: an ecosystem rather than a system Thomas Rogé (FR)

True North 2026 - European Youth Capital 2026 Martine Lødding, Sina Riz a Porta (NO)

Descriptions of each of the workshops can be found below together with highlights from the exchanges by the European EGL Event 2025 participants.

Impact of Antwerp Youth Work

Presented by Wini Echelpoels, Stedelijke Jeugddienst Antwerpen, Belgium

The city of Antwerp is a city with 550,000 inhabitants, of which almost 180,000 are children and young people up to the age of 26. So, one-third of the population is a young person. In 2023, the City of Antwerp allocated 5% of the total operating and investment budget to financial support. This means that the city gives 113 million euros to support policy out of a total urban budget of 2.36 billion euros.



The Vibrant City policy area (sports, culture, youth, events, heritage) allocated proportionally the largest share of the budget to associations and partners, 40 million euros, which amounts to 19% of the budget for the policy area.

Since 2019, mapping impact in youth work has been on the agenda. We did a lot of research from the Municipal Youth Service, which brought us into contact with the Ambrassade, UCLL, KBS, etc. Since 2020, we have organised a sounding board group in which seven youth activities subsidised by the city of Antwerp participated. They were able to experiment, develop and test methodologies and share experiences.

From 2024, impact in youth work will also be included in the agreement note of 40 subsidised organisations. All these organisations map out their impact through a diverse range of methodologies. The most commonly used methodologies are the logbook, survey, podcast and self-designed apps (e.g., Airtable).

The two biggest challenges were creating a common language around impact and not introducing the tool as an additional control tool. There was a lot of resistance from Antwerp youth work, but now, four years later, we notice that there is more common language, that activities find each other better and work together, that it is easier to talk about themes, that organizations look more critically at themselves and their offerings, which increases the quality of youth work.

On May 8, 2025, the Ambrassade, the city of Antwerp, UCLL and the Aanstokerij are jointly organizing a thematic day around impact. Here the impact framework will be outlined, and good practices will be highlighted as examples. Many lectures, workshops, experience sessions and practical tools will also be provided to inspire a youth worker, policy maker, local government or communications manager. A brief overview will also be given to the Antwerp youth work landscape about the impact they help to identify.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that careful data collection and impact assessment are necessary to show impacts of youth work. A culture supporting such impact assessments is key, as well as shared aims across various actors, supporting data collection while keeping flexibility which is needed to take into account different youth work approaches.

Young Cities

Presented by Nikolaos Christofi, Agros Youth Club, Cyprus

The Young Cities program is an innovative and highly participatory initiative that focuses on empowering and creatively engaging young people to address challenges in their local community. The slogan of the program is "Young people as ambassadors of positive change in their community" and focuses on young people aged 14-35.

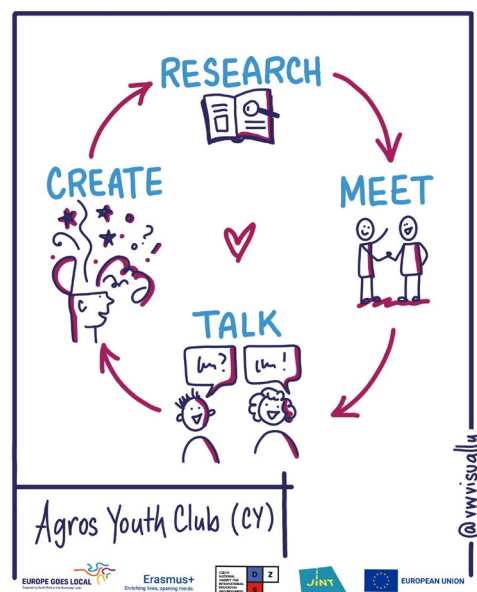
The aim of the program is to create "Youth-Friendly" cities by developing and implementing strategies and proposals with a multiplier effect, aimed at improving the social framework for young people as well as for their fellow citizens. A key objective of the project is to cultivate modern skills among young people and promote a culture of active citizenship. The implementation of the program is primarily based on the "Think and Do" methodology, characterized by the creation of a "Think Tank" with young participants to exchange ideas and identify challenges within local municipalities, as well as the development of "Actions" to bring these ideas to life through collaborations with local organizations and other stakeholders. At the same time, the program seeks to provide appropriate training in leadership, critical thinking, and negotiation skills, under the guidance of experienced trainers and youth facilitators.

Agros is a village in the Limassol district, built among high mountains at an altitude of 1100 meters. Its population is 800 people and is one of the most interesting villages of Cyprus and the Pitsillia area. Historical and cultural sites are kept in a natural environment of extraordinary beauty with the village maintaining its customs and traditional character. The love for work and progressiveness characterize its citizens. Agros is likened to a city on the mountain as it provides all the basic needs like education, employment, and services. The community places great importance on youth policy issues, as it is the most significant tool for the qualitative and sustainable development of the community, providing services that meet today's needs of young people.

The community hosts a Youth Multi-Center, which provides accurate and up-to-date information on youth-related issues through an experienced Youth Worker. At the same time, it organizes interactive workshops for the development of soft skills. Additionally, career guidance and mental health services are offered. The operating expenses are fully covered by the state.

The development of the local youth work policy involved a series of concrete actions that ensured a structured, inclusive, and sustainable approach to youth development. These actions included research and needs assessment, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, policy drafting and framework development, capacity building and training, implementation of programs and initiatives, and monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation.

Various stakeholders played a distinct role in shaping, implementing, and sustaining the policy, including young people and youth organizations, municipal authorities, youth workers, educational institutions, NGOs, civil society organizations, and the national government.



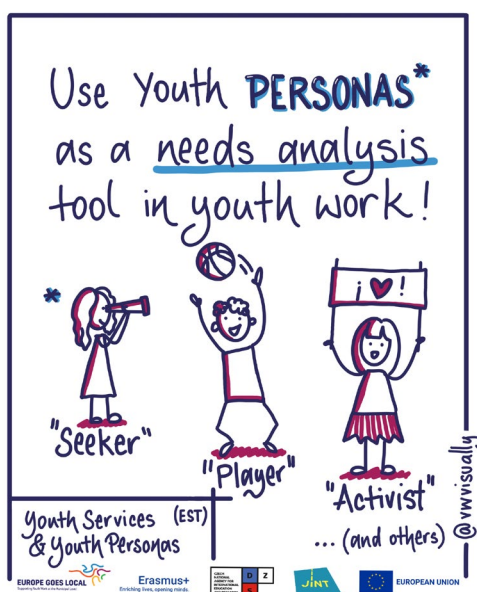
The creation of a local youth work policy led to several short-term outputs and long-term outcomes that impacted young people, communities, and institutions. Key outputs included the development of youth clubs and programs, local youth strategies and action plans, training for youth workers and stakeholders, and the implementation of services related to employment, civic engagement, mental health, and digital inclusion. Long-term outcomes included increased youth participation in decision-making, improved education and employment prospects, stronger social inclusion, better mental health and well-being, stronger community engagement, and more efficient use of public resources. The project is ongoing and expected to conclude at the end of 2026. Follow-up actions will be discussed by the organizing team upon completion.

The project has been supported by European tools such as the EU Youth Dialogue results and the EU Youth Goals, which help shape local youth work policies by providing a strategic framework aligned with broader European priorities. These tools contribute to shaping policies at various levels to ensure that young people can reach their full potential.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that the Young Cities program, despite operating in a small village, inspires to influence local policy by empowering youth. Its success lies in the passion of involved individuals and a direct connection with the local mayor. The program emphasizes understanding community needs through research and collaborating with local stakeholders, making youth work an integral part of local community. This helps young people to feel valued, and it is connecting them to their town's identity. The initiative employs knowledge-based practices, like interviews and focus groups. A "think tank" has been successfully introduced, bringing together young people and municipal officials, promoting active citizenship. Creative engagement techniques, approaching young people in environments in which they spend their time (online, in the gym, etc.), and making the municipality open and approachable by young people were all seen as keys to success.

Developing Youth Center Services Based on Youth Personas

Presented by Kaisa Orunuk, Education Department, City of Tallinn, Estonia



Tallinn is the capital and largest municipality of Estonia, with a population of 461,901. The city's youth work policy is an integral part of municipal policies and is outlined in the Tallinn 2035 Development Strategy, specifically in the Education and Youth Work chapter. In Estonia, youth work is a responsibility of local governments, and dedicated budgetary resources are allocated for its implementation.

In Tallinn, youth work is coordinated by the Youth Work Department of the Tallinn Education Department. The city ensures the provision of diverse youth services, including youth centres, hobby education, co-financing youth organizations, and various programs supporting young people's personal and social development.

The City of Tallinn aimed to upgrade the youth centre service to a new level. To achieve this, we wanted to gain a clearer understanding of how young people find their

way to youth centres and the role of youth workers in supporting them. As a result of the service design process, it was decided to develop the youth centre service based on youth personas. All key stakeholders, including young people, were involved in the service design process.

As a result of the service design process, the service model of youth centres and its components were defined. The service model is available in English at [Tallinn Youth Centers Service Model](#).

This is an ongoing process, and Tallinn continuously develops its youth centre services based on the defined model. We are happy to share our experience and have discovered that the personas of young people visiting youth centres are of great interest both in Estonia and in other countries. Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that youth centre services can be improved by focusing on seven distinct youth personas (seeker, player, lingerer, activist, event attendee, social skills learner, learner), guiding both youth services and youth workers. Youth work policies guided by personas foster policy flexibility and adaptability, and they help attract more young people to youth work services via tailored youth work promotion.

Now I Know What Youth Work is About: Using Youth Work Curriculum to Communicate Youth Work

Presented by Mika Pietilä, Heidi Pouttu, Youth services from City of Porvoo, City of Vaasa, Municipality of Muonio, Finland

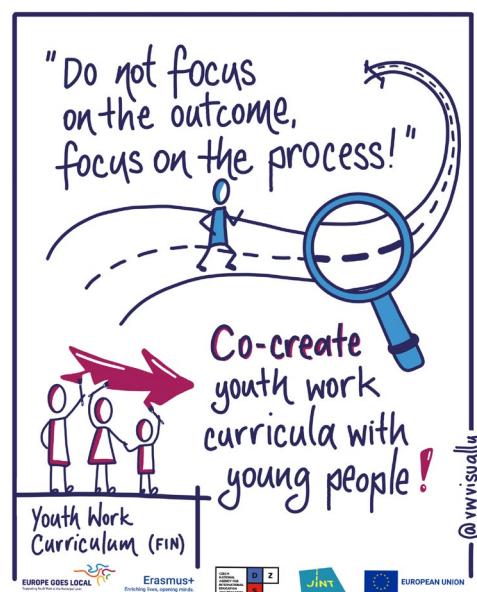
The basic plan of youth work is a youth work curriculum model created in Finland. The aim is to clarify the content of youth work, making it easier to verbalize and demonstrate its effectiveness. The development of the youth work curriculum in Finland has evolved over the last 10 years, facilitated by the Finnish Youth Research Society. The curriculum process in Finland is inclusive and democratic, typically taking 18 months to 3 years, depending on the organization's size.

Currently, close to 40 municipalities have created their own local curricula. This document presents results from three municipalities—Porvoo, Vaasa, and Muonio—each varying in size, youth work resources, and location across Finland.

The process starts with the working community and includes all aspects of youth services. Dialogue between employees, as well as between study and practice, is key. Local youths contribute their ideas, which are integrated into the youth work description.

Action research was conducted with the Finnish Youth Research Network, collecting extensive material. The curriculum process has proven effective in municipalities of all sizes, from small rural areas to the capital city.

The basic plan of youth work provides direction, policies, and boundaries for youth work implementation. It serves as a foundation for evaluation, operational planning, role descriptions, management structures, and staff development.



For the youth work community, both the process and the final document are important. The process strengthens the community and fosters dialogue, while the written document provides clarity for stakeholders. One local council member remarked after reading the document that the nature and value of youth work had become much clearer.

There are varying follow-up actions across Finnish municipalities. Some update their basic plans regularly, while others use them as ongoing development tools. Experienced mentors assist in curriculum creation, though no official roles exist yet. National structures support these efforts, and academic research continues to explore the curriculum's impact.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that involving young people in curriculum development is crucial, because it needs to be rooted in the local reality. Youth workers' daily interactions provide natural insights into young people's lives, but it is key to also include diverse youngsters, even those not typically involved. A youth work curriculum can be a useful tool to engage with politicians, and it can even be used to facilitate direct communication with young people, so they can explain the value of youth work from their own perspective.

EGL Goes to Oliveri and Back

Presented by Elisa Ciribuco and Ilaria Zocco, Comune di Oliveri (Messina) and Municipality of Oliveri (Messina - Sicily), Italy

Oliveri is an Italian municipality with 2,168 inhabitants in the province of Messina, Sicily. The town is known for its tuna fishery, the Laghetti di Marinello Nature Reserve, and the Arab-origin castle on Mount Tindari. The municipality has gained recognition for its strategic approach to combining territorial development, innovation, and youth participation.



The Youth Council plays a central role in organizing events and youth development initiatives. The municipality is currently constructing an auditorium of great artistic and cultural value. Through Europe Goes Local (EGL), Oliveri has become a hub for sustainable growth and social inclusion, leveraging European projects to create opportunities for young people.

Since 2017, the association Il Vergante has been part of the Italian EGL delegation, promoting EGL in rural territories through Erasmus+ projects. Education in Progress joined this effort in 2023 to address the underrepresentation of Southern Italy in EGL at the national level.

Study visits were conducted in Switzerland and Romania, facilitated by Swiss and Romanian EGL delegations. These visits helped Oliveri learn about youth work structures at the municipal level and inspired further initiatives.

In December 2024, Oliveri hosted a study visit, introducing EGL to local policymakers. The municipality engaged with EGL tools and practices, gaining insights into youth policies and European funding

opportunities. As a result, Oliveri joined a KA154 project, "Rural Youth Goes European – South Edition," to organize a future study visit and promote best practices in rural youth engagement.

The collaboration with Education in Progress and Il Vergante has increased Oliveri's capacity in project management and youth work. The municipality now has a stronger network of partners and improved access to EU funding opportunities. The participation in EGL has enhanced youth involvement in local decision-making, promoting structured dialogue and long-term youth strategies.

This initiative demonstrates how EGL fosters local-to-European cooperation, bringing international best practices to small municipalities and ensuring youth work remains a priority in rural areas.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that the workshop highlighted a successful cooperation model between youth workers and municipalities, sparked by Europe Goes Local. Key takeaways for broader application include its simple, replicable design and the crucial impact of physical visits to understand the local context.

Knowledge-Based Youth Work Policy and Practice

Presented by Jenny Haglund, KEKS, Sweden

KEKS was established 20 years ago when three municipal youth work departments in Sweden came together to cooperate on common goals, documentation, follow-up, and competence development. Today, KEKS includes approximately 80 member organizations across 10 countries.

The overarching aim of KEKS is to strengthen the quality and position of youth work at local, national, and European levels. A key tool in this effort is the KEKS system for quality assurance, which includes a common web-based system for documentation and follow-up, called The Logbook. This system has made KEKS a leader in developing knowledge-based policy and practice.

The KEKS system provides municipalities and youth work providers with a structured approach, including clear, measurable aims and tools for documentation and evaluation. The data collected helps municipalities reflect on their practices and demonstrate that youth work aligns with policy objectives.

The implementation of KEKS' system allows youth workers to gather statistics, analyze data, and improve practices based on measurable indicators related to youth participation, safety, and learning. The results from youth questionnaires provide insights into young people's experiences and inform policy decisions.

By using measurable indicators, KEKS has enhanced the credibility of youth work, attracting increased political interest and recognition. The system strengthens municipal governance by providing transparent, data-driven insights into youth work outcomes.



The first version of The Logbook was launched in 2009, with the current version developed in 2017 through an Erasmus+ strategic partnership with partners from Romania, Ireland, and Estonia. KEKS continuously revises and improves its system based on user feedback and new research in youth work.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that developing measurable aims for youth work at the local level and implementing a quality assurance system, like the KEKS Logbook, is necessary for facts-based advocacy and reflection on aims and benchmarks. This reflection must involve youth workers, young people, and other stakeholders to continuously improve youth work quality. While some countries have similar systems already in place, participants from other countries found this specific example very valuable. Successful implementation requires convincing local decision-makers, emphasizing that the system is for quality improvement, not just control. It further requires involvement of youth workers and young people, and dedicating time and resources for additional tasks.

Beyond Words: Exploring Youth Perspectives through Creative Interactions

Presented by Kateřina Kuchtová, Socionaut, the Czech Republic

In the workshop, we will look into various activities that can be used to help youth to deliver their points of view into discussion. After that we will exercise our aim to widen perspective on designing inclusive participation.

Young people are not accustomed to verbalizing their arguments in the formal language. Let's take this as an opportunity for creating ways of participation that suit them better, bring us great data and allow us to make real changes. As Denise Ferreira da Silva says, we are different but not separate. That is why we care for common space and structures, and in order to do that, we need to listen to each other carefully, without stereotypes and in context. This workshop will bring productive friction on the edge of sociology, anthropology and artistic methods. Though any previous involvement with these three disciplines is not necessary.



Socionaut is dedicated to participatory placemaking, applied research, and educational activities. We emphasize human approach, use qualitative methods, and amplify overlooked stories.

We want sociology to be understandable, regardless of your expertise, and outputs that will be beneficial and useful. Our goal is to link up each person with an interest in the space where we spend our lives – sociologists, architects, municipalities and locals – and create opportunities for sharing and thus contribute to creating better places to live. We explore space and its meaning for local people and society. Our job involves qualitative and participative research. But we do not perceive methods as immutable and predetermined. We approach each project individually, design individual procedures and solutions and adapt it appropriately to the specific conditions to hand. We want interdisciplinary cooperation to become a regular part of

the planning processes. We believe that good places to live are ones that allow and encourage the involvement of all groups in planning. Only in this way can a long-term viable society emerge.

Together we will establish what ideas and expectations the inhabitants of your community have. What do they think about the place where they live? What do they appreciate and what bothers them? Where can they see room for improvement? What would help you and them to live better together? Using qualitative techniques means that we also get residents involved who would not otherwise express their opinion. We create a safe space for open dialogue enabling us to gather meaningful, useful and applicable information.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that young people's involvement in co-designing public spaces is a helpful, empowering, and rewarding approach. Drawing techniques, such as emotional mapping, allow deeper expression beyond words, revealing varied perspectives, such as children's differing experiences of the journey to school on foot and by car. Imaginative practices, such as using mirrors, encourage broader perspectives. Participation of youth from underrepresented groups and cooperation with youth workers, can restructure political environments at all levels to better meet diverse needs and create more relevant public spaces.

Rural Project Lab

Presented by Matteo Sisto, Europiamo ETS, Italy

The EGL Project Lab was implemented in Norma, a small rural town in central Italy with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. It was part of the "Europe Goes Rural" initiative by Europiamo ETS, designed to strengthen youth participation and local engagement by bridging the gap between young people and municipalities in the Monti Lepini and Ausoni areas of the Lazio region.

The project involved a network of municipalities, a local youth organization, and Europiamo as a national network. It impacted twelve rural municipalities where youth participation structures were weak or non-existent.

In Italy, youth work lacks official recognition, and in this region, structured youth policies were absent. The project addressed the civic disengagement of young people by fostering their participation in local governance and European programs.

The EGL Project Lab was structured as a one-day event, bringing together young people and municipal decision-makers to identify local challenges and co-develop solutions. The methodology included:

- **Community SWOT Analysis:** Mapping local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- **Introduction to EGL Best Practices & the European Charter on Local Youth Work:** Facilitators shared successful EGL projects to inspire participants.
- **Project Ideation and Development:** Small working groups co-designed project proposals tailored to local needs.
- **Presentation and Feedback Session:** Participants pitched their ideas to municipal representatives, receiving guidance on funding opportunities such as Erasmus+ and ESC.

The project involved young people, municipal leaders, facilitators, and EGL experts. It created a platform for structured youth-municipality dialogue, setting the foundation for future youth participation initiatives in the area.

Key outcomes included the development of three youth-led project proposals, increased municipal commitment to youth work, and greater awareness of EGL best practices. The project demonstrated how rural communities can integrate European methodologies to enhance youth participation.

Following the success of the EGL Project Lab in Norma, efforts are now underway to replicate this approach in other rural communities. Participants are receiving mentorship to refine their ideas and secure funding through Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps. Additional municipalities are being encouraged to adopt similar participatory frameworks to strengthen their youth policies.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that to effectively implement youth projects in rural areas, it is vital to understand local structures and key municipal figures. Projects should focus on small, well-grounded changes. It is also important to make the most of each meeting with decision-makers, thorough preparations for meetings are crucial, including specific budget requests aligned with specific suggested actions. It is useful to adapt proven tools to the local context and utilise study visits, especially for decision-makers. The sustainability of achievements beyond the project timeline is crucial.

Vilnius Youth Policies: Shaping the Future with NGOs and Young People

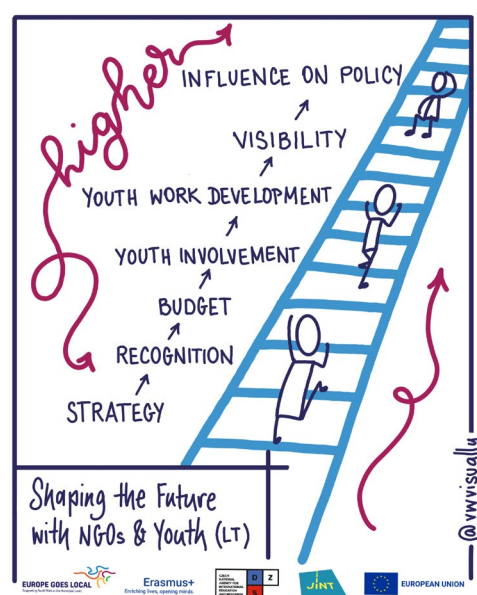
Presented by Vidmantas Mitkus, Vilnius City Municipality, Lithuania

Vilnius, the capital and largest municipality of Lithuania, is home to over 600,000 residents and serves as the country's political, economic, and cultural hub. Youth work in Vilnius is embedded within broader municipal strategies, ensuring a cross-sectoral approach that integrates education, social services, health, and civic engagement.

The city prioritizes youth participation through initiatives such as the Vilnius Youth Council and the Vilnius Youth Affairs Council, ensuring young people have a voice in policy decisions. To strengthen youth work, Vilnius provides funding for youth organizations, municipal and NGO-run youth centers, and capacity-building for youth workers.

Before implementing the new youth policy framework, Vilnius' youth policy had remained largely unchanged for decades, making it outdated and disconnected from young people's evolving needs. The reform process involved comprehensive research in 2023, followed by a collaborative revision of the Youth Policy Concept to define clear municipal commitments to youth.

A working group, including young people, NGOs, policy-makers, and service providers, was formed to develop the Vilnius Youth Policy Strategy 2024-2026. The strategy prioritizes education, health, social services, and civic engagement, ensuring youth participation in decision-making processes.



Key challenges included resistance from policymakers, the need for capacity building among youth organizations, and balancing diverse stakeholder interests. Success factors included an evidence-based approach, strong youth participation, cross-sector collaboration, and strategic long-term planning.

The initiative resulted in a modernized Vilnius Youth Policy Concept, an increased municipal budget for youth work, and the institutionalization of youth participation mechanisms. Young people now play a more active role in shaping municipal policies, improving coordination between youth organizations and the municipality.

To ensure successful implementation, Vilnius is committed to structured monitoring and evaluation, continued investment in youth infrastructure, and expanding youth participation structures. The city aligns its youth policy with the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027), reinforcing youth participation at all levels and ensuring sustainable, evidence-based youth policy development.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that Vilnius youth policies emphasize an evidence-based approach and active involvement of young people in decision-making through a youth affairs council. Political will and a constantly adapting three-year strategy are crucial. The principle "nothing about youth without youth" is central. A clear strategy enhances recognition, budget, youth engagement, but also numbers of projects and international collaborations. Youth participation is the foundation for developing the strategy, leading to greater visibility, changing perceptions of young people among decision-makers, influencing other policy areas, and fostering a holistic youth policy through long-term advocacy. Strong relationships between youth and decision-makers are supported by the evidence-based approach.

From Idea to Realization: Involvement of the Youth City Council in the Green Participatory "Eco Budget" for Primary Schools

Presented by Marcin Gołębiowski, Municipality of Starachowice, Poland



Starachowice, a city in the Świętokrzyskie Province of Poland, has a population of approximately 50,000. The city is known for its industrial history and economic revitalization but faces challenges such as depopulation and aging demographics. The municipality prioritizes youth work as part of its broader development strategy, incorporating education, social welfare, and civic engagement initiatives.

The Youth City Council, established in 2007, plays a key role in engaging young people in decision-making. It was actively involved in designing and implementing the Green Participatory "Eco Budget" for Primary Schools, an initiative aimed at fostering civic engagement and environmental awareness among students.

The initiative involved eight primary schools in Starachowice. The Youth City Council participated in all stages, from idea development and promotion to project selection and implementation. Students submitted eco-friendly project

ideas, which were voted on by their peers. The process was designed to teach students about civic responsibility and participatory budgeting.

The first edition of the Eco Budget ran from September 2023 to April 2024, resulting in the selection of 24 winning projects from 47 proposals. These projects included initiatives such as quiet rooms, green corridors, eco-gaming spaces, and bird-friendly school environments. Over 1,893 students participated in the voting process, with an impressive turnout of 89%.

Key outcomes included increased civic awareness among young people, higher engagement in Youth City Council elections, and practical improvements in school environments. The initiative strengthened youth participation structures, demonstrating the value of youth-led decision-making. Funded by the "Direction Future – Starachowice Local Development Program" with support from Norwegian funds, the project was a success. In 2025, the municipality plans to expand the Eco Budget to include secondary schools and local institutions, further enhancing youth engagement in sustainability initiatives.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 appreciated that Starachowice, facing depopulation and aging, empowered its long-standing Youth City Council through municipal resources. The Green Participatory "Eco Budget" project engaged 8 primary schools, with young people allocating budgets to 24 winning environmental initiatives, achieving high pupil participation. The Youth Council managed the project, gaining visibility and fostering knowledge in participatory processes and entrepreneurship. Discussions highlighted the need for youth councils to influence local politics, emphasizing partnership and national dialogue on youth participation and youth work as support mechanisms to tackle rural depopulation. The project was reality-based, target-focused, supported by adults but led by youth, aimed at skills-building, and knowledge development, and it stressed the need for mutual trust between the young people and the decision-makers.

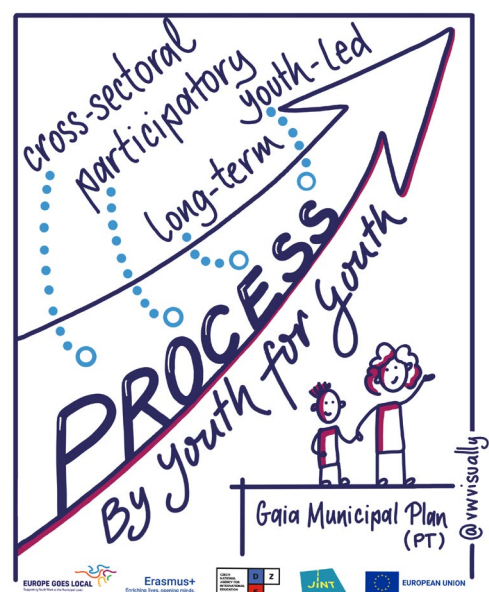
Gaia Municipal Plan for All Youth(s) 2.0: Leaving No One Behind

Presented by Gil Nunes, Municipality of Gaia, Portugal

The Municipality of Gaia, recently elected National Capital of Youth by the Portuguese Institute for Sports and Youth, is one of the largest in Portugal, with over 80,000 residents aged 13-30. Gaia is known for its urban and rural diversity, extensive riverbanks, and seashore.

The municipality has implemented several youth participation initiatives, including a participatory budget for youth (€240,000), municipal youth assemblies, anti-violence campaigns, talent scholarships, and youth-led cultural events. Gaia is also a key member of European initiatives such as Democracy Reloading, the Eurodesk Network, and the EGL Steering Committee.

In 2024, Gaia launched version 2.0 of the Municipal Plan for All Youth(s), a strategic document outlining youth policies until 2028. The plan was developed through an extensive



consultation process called "More Voice to Youth(s)," gathering input from over 600 young people and stakeholders. This process ensured that vulnerable groups were considered, reinforcing the municipality's commitment to inclusivity.

The plan is structured around seven key areas: feeling, happiness, humanism, habitat, impact, freedom, and talent. It defines 34 axes of action, providing a comprehensive framework for local youth policies.

A significant outcome of the plan was the formation of the Gaia Youth Force, an empowered youth group actively involved in shaping municipal strategies. They play a key role in the implementation and oversight of the plan, ensuring continuous engagement.

The plan also supports the development of a new Youth Centre, scheduled for launch in 2025, which was designed entirely based on youth input.

Funded through Erasmus+, the consultation process received recognition as a best practice by the Portuguese Erasmus+ Agency. The plan also aligns with the EGL Charter, emphasizing participation, digital skills, and outreach to young people in remote areas.

Future actions include translating the plan into English for broader dissemination and integrating it into national and European youth policy frameworks.

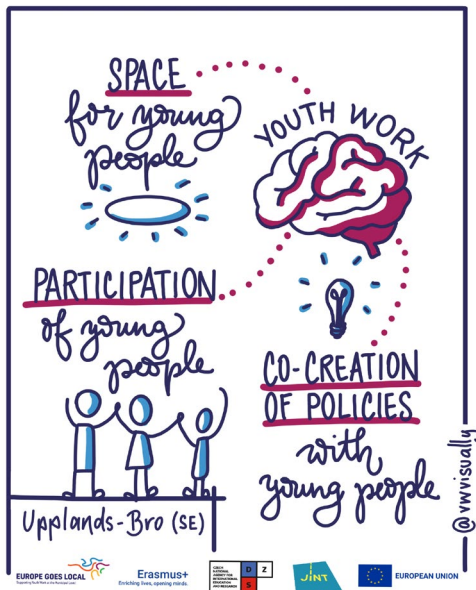
Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that the Gaia Municipal Plan for All Youth(s) 2.0 is an inspiring example of youth-led policy creation. Its multi-stage youth-led process actively involved young people in defining their needs, resulting in a highly authentic plan "by youth for youth." European funding supported the development of this participatory environment. The Gaia Municipal Plan is adaptable, focuses on aims over regulations, and clearly articulates qualitative and quantitative participation outcomes. Its strong participatory nature ensures it is well-grounded and understood by stakeholders. Key takeaways for improving local youth policy include systematic youth voice integration and utilizing of European funding for project development. Engaging both young people and their wider community is encouraged, with the Gaia Municipal Plan 2.0 specifically aiming for inclusion across all youth demographics, and cross-sectorality.

Upplands-Bro Municipality: European Charter on Local Youth Work for Developing Knowledge-Based Youth Work Policy

Presented by Oshy Liebech Schwartz, Upplands-Bro Municipality, Sweden

Upplands-Bro Municipality, located in northern Stockholm, has a population of approximately 30,000 people. Historically, youth work in the municipality was underdeveloped, lacking clear political direction and integration with broader municipal goals. Before 2018, youth services were primarily focused on providing spaces for young people without a strategic vision.

Since 2021, the municipality has adopted the principles of the European Charter on Local Youth Work to transform its youth work approach. This process identified gaps in staff knowledge and introduced new methods to align services with the Charter's standards. A key milestone was the development of a local youth work policy reflecting both young people's needs and the municipality's strategic vision.



Youth services are primarily delivered in secondary schools, but additional venues and public spaces are utilized to reach a diverse range of young people, particularly those aged 16-19. The approach focuses on proactive engagement, relationship-building, and empowering young people to take ownership of activities.

The implementation process included self-assessment, needs analysis, and action planning. Several workshops were organized with young people and stakeholders to anchor the Charter's principles and develop a shared vision for youth work. Overcoming initial skepticism among staff and securing financial resources were key challenges.

Today, Upplands-Bro's youth work is centred on promoting well-being, active participation, and learning. The municipality has professionalized its youth work staff, enhanced integration with social services, and increased youth involvement in municipal decision-making.

More young people are now engaged in creating and leading activities, improving the status of youth spaces in the community. The municipality continues to expand its integration of the Charter's principles, making youth work a recognized and strategic component of local governance.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 thought that Upplands-Bro Municipality's initiative addresses the ongoing challenge of developing knowledge-based local youth work policy. The bottom-up approach emphasizes the need to get on board various actors. Clarifying the essential role and distinct identity of youth workers, is crucial, especially given misperceptions from civil services and a lack of communication between youth workers and local administration. Concrete examples are needed to demonstrate the value of youth work to municipalities, moving policy beyond abstract ideas and demonstrating concrete activities.

Youth Participation in Local Policies in Paris: An Ecosystem Rather Than a System

Presented by Thomas Rogé, City of Paris, France

The City of Paris, with 2.2 million inhabitants, experiences a daily influx of young people, doubling the youth population from 300,000 to 600,000. Youth work is not a dedicated municipal competence, and Paris lacks a centralized youth policy. Instead, youth participation is facilitated through various participatory measures, facilities, and initiatives.

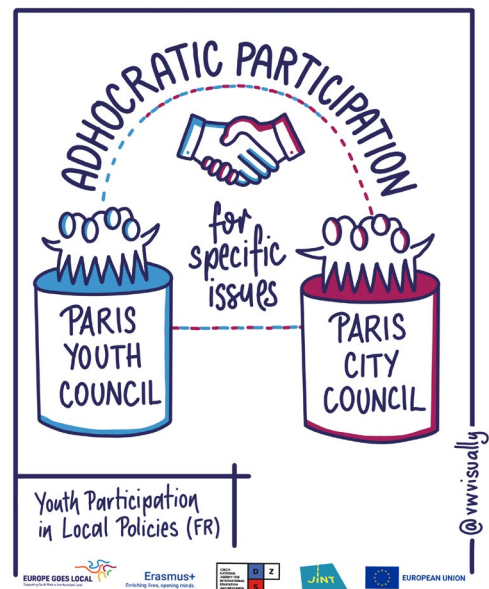
Following the 2001 municipal elections, the City of Paris established a participatory ecosystem, creating multiple avenues for citizens—including young people—to contribute to local policy-making. These mechanisms include participatory budgeting, youth councils at the municipal and district levels, and citizen voting.

Over the past 25 years, Paris has institutionalized youth consultations on a range of issues. While young people's input is integrated into broader participatory frameworks rather than standalone youth-focused structures, certain youth participation mechanisms, such as District Youth Contracts, remain localized and tailored to specific communities.

The approach prioritizes collaboration between different participatory bodies, ensuring youth voices are included in the broader civic dialogue. However, Paris has yet to develop a fully integrated youth work policy.

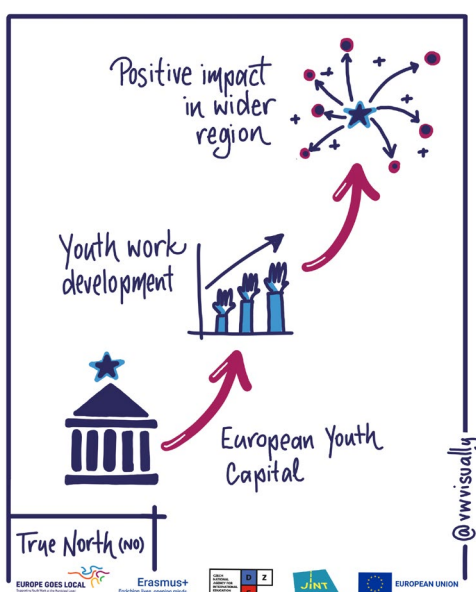
To strengthen youth participation further, the city has engaged with Democracy Reloading to train and equip professionals supporting youth participation, particularly facilitators of the Paris Youth Council. This training aims to enhance youth engagement, ensuring that participatory governance continues to evolve and adapt to young people's needs.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 appreciated that the annually elected Paris Youth City Council (100 members) advises the mayor on specific issues as well as proposes their own topics. "Adhocratic participation" involves targeted inclusion of young people for specific needs, directly translating their input into policy, as seen with the creation of [Quartier Jeunes](#), a highly visited one-stop shop for youth services requested by young people themselves. This centre, supported by evidence like the ERYICA study on peer learning, offers diverse services, prioritizes accessibility for marginalized youth, and focuses on information, culture, leisure, and project support.



True North 2026 - European Youth Capital 2026

Presented by Martine Lødding and Sina Riz a Porta, Tromsø Municipality; European Youth Forum, Norway



Tromsø, the largest city in Arctic Europe, has around 80,000 residents, with nearly 50% under 35 years old. It has a strong focus on youth work, influenced by its history of youth activism in the 1970s and '80s, which led to participatory youth structures like the Tivbit Youth Centre and regional youth councils. The municipality prioritizes youth empowerment, inclusion, and innovative cultural expression. It provides resources through self-governed youth initiatives, educational institutions, and community-driven programs. While Tromsø continues to grow, Northern Norway faces youth population decline, increasing the importance of municipal efforts in education, employment, and cultural development.

Tromsø's approach to youth involvement and the development of their European Youth Capital 2026 (EYC 2026) bid has been a multi-faceted process rooted in a 50-year history of youth engagement in the city.

Concrete actions included:

EYC Application Process: A two-year application process involving youth councils, political engagement, and working group formation with participants from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQ+ NGOs, Indigenous youth representatives, young immigrants, student associations, youth politicians, city officials, and youth workers.

Research and Documentation: Reviewing existing research on youth in the region, including "New Voices – from Words to Action" and the White Paper on Arctic Policy and its youth annex. Insights from workshops and publications were logged.

Presentations and Advocacy: Youth council members and working groups presented the project to politicians and stakeholders at events such as "The Arctic Frontiers" and "The High North Dialogue." A debate meeting was also organized with the Norwegian Prime Minister.

Developing Programme Proposals: Programme proposals for EYC 2026 were created through crowdsourcing methods, including workshops, digital surveys, meetings with youth NGOs, and school input.

Focus on Youth First: As a result of the EYC application process, "Youth First" became one of the five main goals in the Municipality's action program for 2023-2026.

Planning for EYC Year and Beyond: Workshops, seminars, and input sessions aimed to create lasting methods, processes, and results, beyond just a single year of events.

Various stakeholders contributed, including Tromsø Municipality, local and regional youth councils, youth NGOs, policy makers, businesses, SpareBank 1 Nord-Norge, the Chamber of Commerce, the Norwegian government, the European Youth Forum, the Sámi Parliament's Youth Council (SUPU), and universities such as Oslo Metropolitan University and The Arctic University of Norway.

Effects and Outcomes:

Tromsø was awarded the title of European Youth Capital 2026. Early effects of the application process and title recognition include:

- A more inclusive, sustainable, and creative city and region.
- Development and implementation of a new youth policy and a Local Youth Strategy.
- Improved youth participation and representation in decision-making and policy development, including potential co-management structures.
- A broader goal to make Tromsø, Northern Norway, and the Arctic a better place to live, work, and create for young people.

Follow-Up Actions:

The implementation of TRUE NORTH 2026 will shape the outcomes seen in 2026 and 2027, which will determine further follow-up actions.

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 appreciated that becoming a European Youth Capital significantly boosts local engagement in youth-focused and youth work initiatives. Municipal representatives of Tromsø also explored cooperation within the wider Arctic region, therefore multiplying impacts beyond the municipality itself.

Messages to the 4th European Youth Work Convention and reflection on the needs of municipalities

Participants of the European EGL Event 2025 were presented with a paper called "Some observations on the central role of municipalities in creating sustainable youth work development" by Jonas Agdur (see Annex 3 for the full text of the paper), which is to be conveyed to the organizing team of the 4th European Youth Work Convention (May 2025, Malta).

The paper highlights that European policy documents acknowledge the crucial role of local and regional authorities and youth organisations in supporting quality youth work, recognising that youth work is fundamentally a social practice working with young people and society. Municipalities are primarily responsible for successfully implemented youth work, as youth work primarily takes place at the local level where young people live. However, the paper notes that despite numerous European-level initiatives, the central role of municipalities is often forgotten, with actions sometimes planned without considering municipal knowledge and experience. A youth work community of practice that does not visibly include municipalities cannot sustainably develop local youth work. The paper argues that initiatives at the European level will only have structural impact if they start from the actual challenges faced at the municipal level, and municipalities must be part of finding the way forward to avoid debates becoming unproductive. The latest EU resolution invites member states and the European Commission to adopt a bottom-up perspective, allowing local knowledge, experience, and practice to inform the European level, which requires organisations representing municipalities to be involved.


Following the presentation of this paper, two rounds of focused consultations building on the paper were held, and participants used the EGL online community platform to submit their views. The first round of discussions aimed at exploring necessary developments at the European level, using the following guiding questions:

- For local policy development, what support do you need from the European level?
- For local practice development, what support do you need from the European level?

Participants agreed that there is need for (a) support of national level policies, and (b) further developing the EU level ("European youth work") in order to provide an overarching framework for all European municipalities. They also pointed out that it would be beneficial to align existing initiatives not to double on the work being done in the youth work domain (c).

At the national level (a), participants stressed the need for implementation of the EU framework. In this context, it is key to underline that youth work is fully in the competence of the Member States, which not all participants seemed to be aware of. Furthermore, specific youth work-focused platforms should be created at the national levels to support municipalities in their work, including research bodies, peer learning networks, and the like.

Continuous support from the EU level (b), should include youth work policies that provide an overarching framework for all EU Member States, as well as more specific guidance supporting the municipal level youth work, and its implementation in line with the EU framework. Education of youth workers, possibly in the form of a European youth work study programme, and other capacity building and networking opportunities, was also suggested. Funding was stressed, ideally directly from



the EU to the local levels, but it is not obvious whether participants meant to go beyond the existing funding mechanisms of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. Recognition going beyond the youth work itself, but also including municipal youth officers, was suggested, as well as a boost for visibility and evidence-based advocacy.

Synergies in local youth work initiatives (c) were also mentioned, namely in the following areas: among various youth work related initiatives and actors; cross-sector in cooperation with actors from other fields working on similar projects and topics; across levels (align national, regional, local initiatives); and historically (not repeating what has already been done but building on it).

The second round of exchange aimed at exploring the municipal voice in youth work (policy) implementation, building on the following guiding questions:

- Are you informed on European youth work policy? How do you see European policy use on local youth work level?
- The European youth dialogue aims to give youth a voice - Has your municipality been involved in a similar process?
- How do you see European level materials' (research, manuals, etc.) usefulness?

Most participants stressed the need for further work in the domain of information accessibility and outreach (a), and a few concrete examples of the EU Youth Dialogue alternatives were mentioned (these will not be summarised, they can be found in the chapter below).

Participants agreed lack of information on the EU frameworks is a standing issue and stated that these are only visible in certain circles ("the EU bubble"). In line with this opinion, they stated that EU events, such as the EGL conferences, and National Agencies, were the primary sources of such information for them. They mentioned that language barriers, both in terms of different languages, but also in terms of the difficulty of used language ("Eurospeak") are present when searching for the EU frameworks.

Final Reflections

Ondřej Bárta, the general rapporteur of the European EGL Event 2025, [freelance youth researcher](#) and a Senior Associate at [People, Dialogue and Change](#), brought forward aspects calling for further reflection.


Youth policy seems to be more common than youth work policy in local realities across Europe. Does that mean that youth policy is a pre-requisite for youth work policy? How are these two types of policies related to one another? Is youth work policy a tool of youth policy? How should those policies be related to the EU level while at the same time acknowledging the large differences in various local realities?

Youth work is a beneficial practice for young people, local communities, and actors in other sectors, as it supports young people in various ways and prevents various issues from occurring or worsening. Does that mean that youth work should be treated as a universal service applicable in all contexts and circumstances? What boundaries are there to where youth work is a valid approach and where other sectors and services should step in? How does youth (work) policy support youth work in cooperating with other sectors to create the most favourable and efficient services for young people? Is youth work necessarily involved in all domains of youth work policies? And is youth work always the main actor, or is youth work sometimes in a supportive role of other services and sectors?

Youth workers operate in an environment which asks them to be superheroes. They design, write, manage, implement, and evaluate projects. They are expected to be experts in various areas, from participation, to mental health, and even youth research, or co-creation of local policies. What do youth workers need to be able to focus on smooth youth work? What support would they need in terms of administration, research, collaboration across sectors, and many other domains where, as of today, they are expected to manage on their own?

Youth work policies and sufficient local budgets were the primary concerns of many debates at the European EGL Event 2025, and rightfully so, as they are key tools. Nevertheless, what other systems need to be in place for local youth work to sustainably and effectively operate? What human resources does local youth work need? What youth work education structures does local youth work need? What support do youth workers need to move into rural areas and stay there? Are youth work experts available? Are trainers of trainers available? Can we create "Youth Work Centres of Excellence" to support youth work generally and local youth work in particular?

Recognition was debated heavily during the European EGL Event 2025. Youth work needs to be recognised for its value to local communities and for society at large, supporting cohesion, inclusion, democratic values, participation development, and many other positive changes. Youth work also needs to be recognised for its contributions to individual personal and professional developments in young people, ideally through systematic and official recognition of learning outcomes. There is, however, a third type of recognition which was not debated but which is just as important as the first two: recognition of the value of youth work by other sectors. Youth work very likely has a positive influence on the work of teachers in the formal education sector, of the police, of policymakers, and it probably has positive implications for the work of mental health professionals, social workers, and many others outside of the youth work bubble. This recognition is rarely debated, yet it might be important in establishing and sustaining beneficial connections with actors in other sectors.



Local realities have limited resources, which was amplified many times throughout the European EGL Event 2025. There are not infinite numbers of youth workers waiting to be hired, queues of youth researchers eager to support local youth work policy with evidence, or large pools of skilled municipal workers supporting the whole youth work implementation. There are many high-quality organisations and individuals in all of these roles, however. This begs the question: How to ensure that networks and communities of practice are established which support local municipalities across Europe to establish well-anchored, functional, and youth-centred youth work policies?

A round table discussion took place at the end of the European EGL Event 2025, with speakers capitalising on the conference insights.

Jenny Haglund, Secretary General of KEKS, clarified that the borders of the youth work sector are set through youth and youth work policies in an interplay between various stakeholders. Knowledge-based communication is key for recognition, and this needs to involve different stakeholders and actors such as policymakers from various areas, NGOs working in different domains, and so on. Cooperation in that case is based on a mutual understanding of, and recognition of the added value of various stakeholders when it comes to supporting youth. It is key to support youth workers in a qualitative and long-term sustainable way, so they can be the superheroes in youth work, not in project management. Knowledge-based advocacy and utilisation of tools that already exist are key, with the [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#) being a prime example of such a useful tool. The Charter unifies the sector, provides a common language, and crosses the gap between the European and the local.

Kaat Torfs, Chairperson of the Steering Group, Director of the National Agency for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes for Belgium-Flanders ([JINT](#)), elaborated on the rights-based approach to youth work. Young people have the right to explore, to play, to learn participation, to develop the skill of being responsible. A rights-based approach to youth work is putting young people at the heart of what youth work does. The abovementioned Charter is a tool which helps to raise awareness and is useful in getting policymakers on board as partners. Although it is key to create a common language through which local municipalities and youth workers can work together, it is important to be aware of the dangers of overmeasurement which may kill fluidity of the youth work practice. National Agencies have a strategic role in influencing the EU policies by providing input for the upcoming EU Youth Strategy. Such messages to the EU policymakers need to be coherent, repeated, clear and simple.

Mafalda Ferreira, Project Manager of the [DYPALL Network](#), appreciated the European EGL Event 2025 as an efficient peer learning platform. Networking and sharing are key to impactful and recognisable youth work, because they create efficient ways to boost the capacities of youth workers to advocate for youth work at different levels. Communication to various sectors is key, since youth work should be understood by partners in policing, teaching, and other areas, and municipalities should be the bridge between youth work and other sectors. It is key to create tools which are evidence-based and tailored to the needs of the local youth work.

Claudius Siebel, Chairperson of the EGL Advisory Board, and Senior Consultant of JUGEND für Europa, stressed that the European EGL Event 2025 presented the participants with two key capacity-building opportunities. First, policy essentials of youth work policy as presented by Mr. Agdur and deliberated on during the conference create a systematic framework. Second, good practice sharing which took place mostly in workshops, represented a cookbook on how youth work policy is indeed implemented. Recognition of local youth work is often dependent on financial and other realities



of the local municipality. Europe Goes Local can provide support in that respect, including in designing concrete formats on how to support youth, for example through small-scale, well-focused peer learning events for local policymakers. The EU Youth Programmes are important tools, they support international youth work and that should be an integral part of local youth work, providing young people with cross-border opportunities regularly as well.

Dragan Atanasov, representative of the regional SALTO Resource Centres in Europe Goes Local, underlined that there is a growing awareness of the importance of municipalities as key players of local youth work. A municipality is also always a place where the battle for resources takes place, and that means that we need to put youth work higher on the list of priorities. Prioritisation of youth work locally can happen by strengthening of the emphasis on youth work at the EU level, for example via the upcoming EU Youth Strategy post-2027. The boosted emphasis at the EU level could support countries where national youth work frameworks are missing, since that currently creates challenges for local municipalities who would like to create their own youth work policies. It should also be noted that SALTOs are important resource centres for local youth work.

Judit Balogh, European Coordinator of Europe Goes Local partnership, closed the European EGL Event 2025, thanked everyone for their engagement, and stressed that the message to the 4th European Youth Work Convention will be one of the outcomes of this conference. She also underlined that [various activities, conferences, and training courses are organised by EGL](#), and encouraged the participants to use these opportunities.

Annexes

Annex 1: European EGL Event 2025 Programme

25 March 2025

12.00 - 14.30 Lunch; registration desk open

14.00 - 14.30 Informal welcome

14.30 - 16.00 Welcome by the host, the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research - Lucie Lemonova, *EGL national coordinator - Czech National Agency for International Education and Research*

Welcome by the Chairperson of the Europe Goes Local Steering Group - Koen Lambert, *Director of JINT vzw*

Introduction to the concept and agenda. Getting to know each other.

16.00 - 16.30 Coffee break

16.30 - 17.30 Introduction to the European context for youth work policy development.

- Charalampos Papaioannou, *Policy Officer of the European Commission*;
- László Milutinovits, *Senior Project Officer of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership*;
- Tanja Herceg, *Programme Manager of ERYICA*;
- Caillum Hedderman, *Board Member of the European Youth Forum*

Keynote: Youth work policy in Strasbourg - Guillaume Libsig, *Deputy Mayor of City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg*

17.30 – 18.45 The essentials of youth work policy development - Jonas Agdur, *Senior Adviser of the KEKS network*

Discussion groups.

19.00 - 21.00 Dinner

26 March 2025

* the Advisory Board of Europe Goes Local is parallelly convening from 15:15 - 18:00 – including coffee break

09.30 - 9.45 Introduction to the day

09.45 - 10.00 Transition to workshops

10.00 - 11.15 Practices of youth work policy development – 7 parallel workshops

1. Wini Echelpoels: Impact of Antwerp youth work (BE-FL)
2. Nikolaos Christofi: Young Cities (CY)
3. Kaisa Orunuk: Developing Youth Center Services Based on Youth Personas (EE)
4. Mika Pietilä, Heidi Pouttu: "Now I know what youth work is about". Using youth work curriculum to communicate youth work (FI)
5. Elisa Ciribuco: EGL goes to Oliveri and back (IT)
6. Jenny Haglund: Knowledge-based youth work policy and practice (SE)
7. Kateřina Kuchtová: Beyond Words: Exploring Youth Perspectives through Creative Interactions - Socionaut (CZ)

11.15 - 11.45 Coffee break

11.45 - 13.00 Practices of youth work policy development – 7 parallel workshops

8. Matteo Sisto: Rural Project Lab (IT)

9. Vidmantas Mitkus: Vilnius Youth Policies: Shaping the Future with NGOs and Young People (LT)

10. Marcin Gołębiowski: From idea to realization - involvement of the Youth City Council in the organization of the project Green Participatory "Eco Budget" for Primary Schools (PL)

11. Gil Nunes: Gaia Municipal Plan for All Youth(s) 2.0: leaving no one behind (PT)

12. Oshy Liebech Schwartz: Upplands-Bro Municipality- European charter on local youth work for developing knowledge based local youth work policy (SE)

13. Thomas Rogé: Youth participation in local policies in Paris: an ecosystem rather than a system (FR)

14. Martine Lødding, Sina Riz a Porta : True North 2026 - European Youth Capital 2026 (NO)

13.00 - 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 15.00 Plenary: Highlight Reports and Harvesting

15.00 - 16.30 The municipal perspective on youth work and its further development – a message to the 4th European Youth Work Convention – Presentation and discussions in groups

16.30 - 17.00 Coffee Break

17.00 – 18.00 The municipal perspective on youth work and its further development – a message to the 4th European Youth Work Convention – Discussions groups and harvesting

18.00 - 19.00 'Me-Us Time'

19.00 - 22.00 Dinner and concert

27 March

09.30 - 10.00 Introduction to the day

10.00 - 11.00 Next steps towards future youth work policy development

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break

11:30 - 13.00 Overview of achievements and outcomes, outlook, harvesting and closing

Highlights by the rapporteur of the event, Ondřej Bárta

Round table discussion: What are the key takeaways of the event? - Representatives of the EGL

Steering Group member organisations:

- Kaat Torfs, Chairperson of the Steering Group, Director of JINT vzw;
- Jenny Haglund, Secretary General of KEKS;
- Claudius Siebel, Chairperson of the EGL Advisory Board, Senior Consultant of JUGEND für Europa;
- Mafalda Ferreira, Project Manager of DYPALL;
- Dragan Atanasov, representative of the regional SALTO Resource Centres in EGL

Closing and next steps (Judit Balogh, EGL European coordinator)

13:00 - 14.30 Lunch and then departure

Annex 2: Youth work policy essentials

A policy that makes youth work's specific and distinct contributions to young people and society clear needs to:

Be a specific and distinct youth work policy.

- I.e. it should comply with the core principles and values of youth work as stated in the Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work and the European Charter on Local Youth Work.
- I.e. it should make clear the role/mission and boundaries of youth work in relation to other policy areas, e.g. social work.

Be knowledge-based.

- I.e. it should be developed and regularly updated according to relevant knowledge on young people's various living situations and needs as well as on the different forms and methods of youth work that can be used to meet aims and objectives.
- I.e. it should be regularly updated in accordance with the analysis and evaluation of outcomes in relation to measurable indicators and aims.

State the desired qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

- I.e. it should be based on clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators and aims regarding what shall be achieved in relation to young people's participation and learning.
- I.e. it should contain clear procedures for follow up and evaluation of outcomes in relation to aims, costs and the target group reached.

Allow youth work to be flexible and to adapt to the varying needs and ideas of young people.

- I.e. it should govern through aims, not through rules and regulations.

Be well-grounded and understood among those concerned.

- I.e. it should be developed in close dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, especially youth workers and young people.

And it should, which is not policy as such,
be accompanied by a strategy for its realization.

Annex 3: Some observations on the central role of municipalities in creating sustainable youth work development

European policy documents on youth work have developed significantly since the 2nd Youth Work Convention in 2015. Looking at some recent statements from the EU and the Council of Europe it is clear that "Local and regional authorities and youth organisations are closest to the daily lives of young people and play a crucial role in supporting the development of quality youth work", that "Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live" and that "Local and regional authorities are primarily responsible for successfully implemented youth work."

Furthermore, the European Youth Work Agenda aims at "connecting political decisions with their practical implementation", and, as noted in the EU resolution on youth work policy in an empowering Europe, it is through "investing in a robust and long term local youth work policy, based on intense dialogue and participation, local governments create concrete conditions for the optimal development of local youth work."

The conclusion is obvious: Youth work primarily takes place where young people live, at the local level, and local authorities, that is to say municipalities, are key players in creating the right conditions.

Despite numerous parallel initiatives on the European level debating on youth work, the above statements seem often to be forgotten. Actions and activities are still planned and carried out without taking municipal knowledge and experience into account. However, a 'youth work community of practice' of which municipalities are not a distinct and visible part will never be able to develop local youth work in a robust and sustainable way.

Municipalities have a crucial role in the revitalization of democracy and in making young people regain trust in public institutions, not the least through supporting young people's participation and influence via youth work. We are all aware that municipalities are not a homogenous group and have diverse needs and competencies. Many lack a youth work policy and often even a youth policy. At the same time, there is today a lot of knowledge and experience on the municipal level regarding how to create, implement, monitor and evaluate efficient municipal youth work policy and practice. The European Charter on Local Youth Work, a 'non-political' initiative and document, has united the sector and paved the way for municipal cooperation and mutual support in the further development of youth work.

If discussions, initiatives and activities that take place at the European level should have any real and long-lasting, structural impact, they need to start from the actual challenges that youth work is facing at the municipal level. Hence, a "road map" for the further development of youth work must know the place from where the journey departs and where its destination is. In both cases this must be the local level, and municipalities must therefore be part of finding the way forward. If not, there is a high risk of these debates becoming an ongoing loop of non-demanding statements, leading nowhere and only creating frustration among those engaged in everyday local youth work.

Youth work will not be "growing" if this growth is not rooted in municipal soil, and there will only be a robust and long-term local youth work policy if adopted by municipalities. The latest EU resolution states that "The member states and the European Commission are invited to work towards a bottom-up perspective by allowing local knowledge, experience and practice concerning the organisation of local youth work to inform the European level." This statement must be turned into reality if youth work is to thrive, and it asks for organisations representing municipalities to be present at the table.

We therefore invite the participants of the 4th European Youth Work Convention, in their respective areas of competence, to reflect on and discuss how they aim to cooperate with municipalities in the further development of youth work, e.g.:

- How is municipal knowledge and experience to inform national and European authorities and institutions on the needs and challenges of local youth work?
- How is municipal representation to be involved in the creation, implementation and evaluation of future policies, strategies and activities?
- How are municipalities to be involved in re-designing the European programs so they meet the municipal reality and thus reach new less privileged groups of young people?

We are eagerly looking forward to an ambitious and fruitful Convention, creating optimal conditions for the community of practice to take the next steps together, further strengthening the quality and recognition of youth work.

References

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