EUROPEAN UNION

Mapping of European Strategies

And their links to youth and youth work

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

Erasmus+ Youth
Enriching lives, opening minds.

EUROPEAN UNION

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Introduction

While we can find numerous contexts where youth work and education and training cooperate and co-create, youth work, as an environment and a field, mostly operates outside formal education and training. It is value-based, built on voluntary participation, and delivered by a wide range of structures (NGOs, youth associations, youth clubs, public services, informal groups, etc.) whose practices, resources, and levels of recognition differ considerably across Europe. Its purpose, however, is consistent: **to support young people in becoming active participants in democratic life and in their communities.** Beyond something recreational, **it makes youth work explicitly civic and political.**

At the time of this mapping, two **EU programmes** currently provide the main European funding schemes for youth and youth work. **Erasmus+**, through youth exchanges, youth participation activities and mobility for youth workers/persons of trust (among other), supports non-formal learning and professional development across countries and regions. The **European Solidarity Corps** supports volunteering and community-driven solidarity projects, with young people being both agents (of change) and contributors. **Both operate under the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027**, which organises its purpose around three actionable objectives: Engage, Connect, Empower.

The **European Youth Goals** are integral parts of the EU Youth Strategy, eleven cross-sectoral policy goals developed through the Structured Dialogue with young people, now annexed to the Strategy. They cover areas from mental health, employment and sustainable living to quality learning, participation and fostering the sense of belonging to the EU. They provide a concrete policy reference point that connects young people's own priorities to the Strategy's implementation. **Several Goals directly call for recognition of youth work, sustainable funding for youth organisations and meaningful youth participation in decision-making,** making them an important bridge between the youth and youth work landscape and the broader European policy agenda. They are implemented through the **EU Youth Dialogue**, the governance mechanism through which young people formally contribute to EU policy processes, organised by the trio presidencies and national working groups, and supported by National Agencies across all Erasmus+ programme countries.

The **Council of Europe** brings a different but complementary institutional dimension. Its **Youth Sector Strategy 2030**, adopted in January 2020 and covering 50 states across the European Cultural Convention, is organised around four thematic priorities: **revitalising pluralistic democracy, young people's access to rights, living together in peaceful and inclusive societies, and youth work**. The Council of Europe's geographical reach goes beyond EU membership, and its approach is grounded in human rights standards and the rule of law. Besides its funding scheme - the European Youth Foundation - a **defining feature of its work is co-management**, a governance principle through which youth organisations and governments share equal decision-making authority over programme priorities. The CoE youth sector has been working with both governments and youth civil society for nearly fifty years to develop national youth policies that meet common European standards.

These two institutional frameworks are supported by the **European Commission - Council of Europe Youth Partnership**, a joint body that has been producing knowledge, policy guidance and professional development resources for the field since the 1990s. It has supported and later on, co-organised, the **European Youth Work Conventions** (four so far) which are the main arenas where practitioners, researchers and policy makers take stock of the state of youth work across Europe and its neighbouring regions. The third convention, in December 2020, launched the **European Youth Work Agenda** as the shared cross-institutional framework for the quality, innovation and recognition of youth work. The fourth, held in Malta in May 2025, reaffirmed **youth work's role in sustaining democracy** and produced a roadmap now guiding the Partnership's work through 2028.

What makes all the **information above relevant as a starting point for this mapping** is, in fact, the possible gap it reveals: these frameworks are well developed on their own terms. However, what is considerably less clear is **how other strategies and/or policy areas connect to them**: where strategies on employment, gender, intergenerational dialogue, mental health, digital inclusion, climate, housing or migration, to name a few, **intersect with what youth work is actually doing, and where those connections are absent or underdeveloped despite a (perhaps) obvious potential**.

That is what **this mapping is for**: for each strategy or policy paper we look at, the questions are consistent: does it acknowledge youth and young people explicitly? Does it recognise youth work as a field, a methodology, a set of actors relevant to its objectives? And where neither is true, which does happen, is there a ground for a connection that does not yet exist? To make the mapping operational as well as political, a dedicated column also explores which specific **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps** actions and instruments connect most directly to each strategy's objectives.

Rationale for the selection

The strategies and processes examined here were not chosen to be exhaustive. They span different institutions (the European Union and the Council of Europe), different legal and political statuses (binding instruments, communications, action plans, strategies and convention outcomes), and very different scopes (from gender equality and disinformation to democracy, inclusion and youth work itself). The decision to group such varied documents in a single mapping is deliberate, and the selection follows three principles.

- First, the **relevance to young people and to youth work**. Each document was included because it either addresses young people (ages 13–30) and the youth field directly, or because it shapes a policy area in which youth work demonstrably plays, or could play, a role, even where the document itself is 'silent' on youth.
- Second, the **European scope and steering potential**. The mapping concentrates on strategies and processes set at European level that give direction to funding, standards or policy across many countries, rather than on national or purely local measures. A document was included only where it carries enough political or programmatic weight to influence what happens on the ground.

Third, **complementarity across institutions and themes**. The EU and the Council of Europe are treated together because their youth frameworks are complementary (not interchangeable): the EU steers the main funding schemes, while the Council of Europe grounds its work in human-rights standards, a wider geographical reach and the co-management principle. Including both and pairing thematic strategies with the youth-specific frameworks, is what allows the mapping to show where the two sides meet and where they do not.

How is the document organised?

The mapping is arranged in four parts. **Section 1** covers strategies beyond youth and youth work, meaning documents not primarily focused on the youth field but with direct or indirect relevance to it. **Section 2** covers strategies directly connected to youth and youth work, showing how young people and youth work are understood in each and how each links back to the strategies in Section 1. **Section 3** provides a cross-reference matrix, and **Section 4** sets out key observations on the most valuable links to explore.

A table of contents precedes these sections so that readers of the published document can navigate directly to the strategy or theme of interest.

Definitions applied throughout

Youth: young people as defined in the EU youth programmes (ages 13–30).

Youth sector: youth work policy, practice and research; youth policy, practice and research; youth participation and youth inclusion policy, practice and research; and youth volunteering policy, practice and research.

Existing links: references explicitly mentioned or quoted within the strategy document itself.

Possible links: links the strategy does not make itself, but that emerge from thematic overlap, meaning topics where youth or youth work could logically contribute, even though the document is not explicitly referring to them.

Erasmus+ / ESC links: specific programme actions and instruments within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps that connect to the strategy's objectives.

You can find a more thorough **glossary** as an annex to this document.

SECTION 1: Strategies beyond youth and youth work

The following table maps 8 European-level strategies and policy documents that are not primarily focused on youth or youth work, but which have direct or indirect relevance to young people (ages 13–30) and to the youth work field. The green column identifies specific Erasmus+ and ESC actions and instruments connecting to each strategy's objectives.

Strategy / Document	Focus	Existing links with YOUTH	Existing links with YOUTH SECTOR	Possible links with YOUTH	Possible links with YOUTH SECTOR	Links to Erasmus+ and ESC (concrete actions)
Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030 *COM(2026) 113 final* *5 March 2026* https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en	Advances gender equality across 8 principles: freedom from gender-based violence (GBV); health; equal pay and economic empowerment; work-life balance and care; equal employment; education and training; participation in public/political life; institutional mechanisms. Dual approach: targeted actions + gender mainstreaming across all policy areas. Intersectional approach throughout (disability, ethnicity, age, migration status, SOGIESC - Sexual Orientation,	**[p.1, fn.7, Introduction]** "The Strategy pays particular attention to women from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, migrant women, women with disabilities, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, **young and older women**, and LBTIQ+ women." **[p.2, Principle 1 (GBV)]** "Addressing attitudes and behaviours is key to preventing gender-based violence, and engaging **men and boys** is crucial." / "Gender-based cyberviolence presents a quickly escalating threat to **women and girls**." / "Many **children**	**[p.3, Principle 1 (GBV)]** "The Commission will also support Member States in implementing Article 35 of the VAW Directive, which requires them to make available and distribute **educational material** promoting the understanding that **consent** must be given voluntarily as a result of a person's free will, mutual respect, and the right to sexual integrity and bodily autonomy." — Directly relevant to youth work practice in **consent** education. **[p.15, Principle 6 (Education)]** "The Commission will also better support teachers and schools	Youth work's non-formal methods are among the most effective tools for attitude and behaviour change on gender norms - the strategy's own stated priority for GBV prevention **(Principle 1, p.2–5).** The strategy's concern with young men's radicalisation and polarisation **(Principle 7, p.16)** is an area where youth organisations already have direct access and established practice. The political participation dimension **(Principle 7)** could explicitly reference EU Youth Dialogue and youth-	Youth workers/persons of trust active in consent education, bystander programmes and GBV prevention with young people, directly relevant **to Principle 1 (p.2–5)** and the VAW (Violence Against Women) Directive's requirement for educational material on consent (Art. 35). Youth sector's counter-radicalisation role is well established and directly applicable to the misogyny/incel dimension underlined in **Principle 7 (p.16),** yet no connection is made to the EU Knowledge Hub event announced there.	**Erasmus+** appears in the Strategy only in the context of school and sport [Principle 6, p.15] - the youth strand is not referenced. The programmes already fund relevant work — what is missing is the explicit connection. **Youth Exchanges, Youth Participation Projects** and **Mobility for Youth workers/persons of trust** are in practice already relevant to GBV prevention, attitude change and young women's political participation. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** are the primary instrument for developing non-formal

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	Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics). Covers both internal EU action and external relations.	also suffer from gender-based and domestic violence, as direct victims or as witnesses." **[p.6, Principle 2 (Health)]** "Gender norms associated with traditional masculinity can also adversely affect **men and boys'** health, including discouraging help-seeking and increasing engagement in harmful behaviours." **[p.13, Principle 5 (Employment)]** "One in three women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment at work, a figure that rises to 41.6% among **women aged 18–29 years**."	in tackling gender stereotypes by supporting the development and promotion of material on this topic, for example through the European School Education Platform and **Erasmus+ projects**." **[p.15, Principle 6 (Education)]** "The Commission will further gender mainstreaming in these areas, particularly in the European Week of Sport, #BeActive EU Sport Awards, **Erasmus+ Sport** and in the Strategic Vision for Sport in Europe."	led participation activities under Erasmus+ as routes for young women's voice. The Action Plan against **Cyberbullying [p.4, Principle 1]** explicitly notes that women and girls are disproportionately targeted (a direct concern for young people in the 13–30 age group, where online peer dynamics are most intense). The youth sector is not referenced as an actor in prevention or response. The Commission commits to "expand cooperation with gender equality-focused organisations	Non-formal learning settings offer space for cross-gender dialogue on polarisation that formal institutions cannot easily replicate, relevant to the study on young men/boys **(Principle 7, p.16).** Sport is referenced repeatedly in the Strategy as a vehicle for tackling gender stereotypes — through Erasmus+ Sport, the European Week of Sport and the Strategic Vision for Sport in Europe **[Principle 6, p.15]**. Youth work organisations active in sport already operate at this intersection, particularly in reaching young men and boys in informal settings	methodologies for gender equality education and GBV prevention across youth organisations - unacknowledged in the Strategy. ESC **Solidarity Projects** offer an additional route: enabling youth organisations to design and run community-level gender equality initiatives. Gender equality is not named as a priority in Erasmus+ or ESC and is currently addressed only implicitly through the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. Relevant SNACs:

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		[p.15, Principle 6 (Education)] "Together with the '**Girls Go STEM**' initiative... it will contribute to the wider target of attracting **one million girls** to STEM by 2028." / "The Commission will promote a '**Boys in HEAL**' (Health, Education, Administration, Literacy) approach." **[p.17, Principle 7 (Political life)]** "Anti-gender narratives...including by driving polarisation between **young women and men**." / "The Commission will launch a study on the online networks, spheres and narratives	*No direct mention of youth work, youth policy, youth participation mechanisms, youth volunteering or youth research as distinct tools or fields. The Erasmus+ references are in the context of formal education and sport - not the youth strand.*	that engage and support men and boys" **[p.18, Principle 8].** Youth organisations working with young men in informal settings are among the most well-placed to do this yet are not identified as relevant partners.	where attitude change on gender norms is most possible. This is an unacknowledged but concrete entry point for the youth sector. Culture is named as a "powerful enabler to fight gender stereotypes in educational settings and beyond" **[p.15, Principle 6]**. Youth organisations active in non-formal cultural activities and creative practices are directly relevant to this objective but are not acknowledged. European Solidarity Corps solidarity projects could be explicitly mobilised for	- Mental Health in Youth Work (addresses gendered dimensions of mental health and help-seeking among young people); - YouSports (connects sport, youth work and non-formal education with a focus on gender equity); **Strategic Partnership on Inclusion** (reaches girls and young women facing multiple barriers to programme participation); **New Power in Youth** (strengthens youth participation in democratic life, directly relevant to the Strategy's political participation

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		targeting **young men and boys**, and their possible links to anti-democratic forces and hate movements." / "The Commission will organise a Policy Practice Joint Event on misogyny and incel ideology among **young people** under the EU Knowledge Hub on the prevention of radicalisation."			gender equality community action - no mention in the strategy.	objectives for young women.)
EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026–2030 *COM(2026) 12 final* *20 January 2026* https://commission.europa.eu/documen	Successor to the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. Combats all forms of racism: anti-Black racism, antigypsyism, antisemitism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Muslim hatred. Five chapters: (I) tackling structural	**[p.2, Introduction, fn.9]** "The Commission conducted a **Youth Check** on this initiative." — **Youth civil society organisations** consulted during strategy preparation. **[p.4, Chapter I (Remembrance,**	**[p.4, Chapter I (Remembrance, education)]** Joint UNESCO project on anti-racism education described as "developed in line with the **EU Youth Strategy**" — **EU Youth Strategy** explicitly	The strategy's Chapter III on social equality - education, employment, housing, healthcare - has a strong intergenerational dimension not articulated as such; young people from racial/ethnic minorities	The Strategy gives a central role to anti-racism education, awareness-raising and attitude change, including a joint UNESCO project on anti-racism education aligned with the EU Youth Strategy **(Chapter I,**	**Erasmus+** is referenced only alongside ESF+ and Horizon Europe in the context of formal education [Chapter III, p.10] - the youth strand is absent. **Youth Exchanges** and **Youth Participation Projects** have

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t/f4acc4d4-689e-4db8-8c89-c7243b76ab88_en	racism; (II) enforcing anti-discrimination law and combating hate; (III) strengthening social equality and cohesion; (IV) fostering key partnerships; (V) leading by example within EU institutions. Combines targeted measures with mainstreaming anti-racism across all EU policies. Intersectional approach throughout; intersections with sex, disability, age, religion, migration status explicitly acknowledged.	**education)]** "The Commission will launch a study on the role of social media in forming **young people**'s attitudes towards diversity and ethnic groups." — JRC study announced. **[p.4, Chapter I (Remembrance, education)]** Joint UNESCO project on anti-racism education "developed in line with the **EU Youth Strategy**" — **EU Youth Strategy** referenced as the aligned framework. **[p.10, Chapter III (Inclusive education)]** "**Citizenship education** from an early age is a key tool for fostering open mindsets." Art,	referenced as the framework alignment. **[p.10, Chapter III (Inclusive education)] Erasmus+** mentioned alongside ESF+ and Horizon Europe as programmes promoting "equal access to quality and inclusive education, teacher training, school cooperation and learning mobility". **[p.12, Chapter IV (Key partnerships)] EU Youth Coordinator** listed as a working partner of the Commission Coordinator on combating racism - an existing institutional link between the	face the sharpest barriers in these areas. The Strategy addresses hate speech in sport through the **EU Work Plan for Sport [p.8, Chapter II]** without connecting this to young people as primary participants in sport settings. The Strategy encourages local anti-racism action plans in "regions, cities, schools and community centres" **[p.12, Chapter IV].** Community and youth centres are primary settings for youth work and ESC Solidarity Projects on inclusion, yet neither young people nor the youth sector are	**"Remembrance, education and awareness-raising", p. 6).** While the focus is placed on schools, teachers and formal education systems, these objectives correspond directly to the youth sector's non-formal learning practices, particularly in reaching young people outside formal education and providing spaces for reflection on identity, history and discrimination, without the youth sector being explicitly referenced. The Strategy also highlights young people's exposure to	intercultural learning and community engagement directly relevant to the Strategy's attitude-change and social cohesion objectives in their core. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** enable youth organisations to develop and share intercultural learning and anti-racism practice across countries - the key programme instrument for the field-level capacity the Strategy requires but does not acknowledge. **ESC volunteering** in organisations working on minority rights and intercultural dialogue, and ESC **Solidarity**

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		culture and sport are named as vehicles against racism — with **children and young people** as the implicit target group. **[p.11, Chapter III (Social protection)]** European Child Guarantee: attention to "**children with a migrant background or minority ethnic origin**". **[p.12, Chapter IV (Key partnerships)] EU Youth Coordinator** listed as a working partner of the Commission Coordinator on combating racism.	youth sector and anti-racism governance. *No direct mention of youth work, youth policy, youth participation or youth volunteering as distinct fields or tools.*	named as actors in developing or implementing these plans. The Erasmus+ youth strand (youth exchanges, youth participation activities) has direct relevance for intercultural learning and combating prejudice; only the education and sport dimensions of Erasmus+ are named. The EU Youth Dialogue and Erasmus+ youth participation activities are natural vehicles for structured engagement of young people on anti-racism but are not referenced.	online racism, announcing a Joint Research Centre study on the role of social media in shaping young people's attitudes to ethnic diversity **(Chapter I, "Knowledge building and evidence-based policymaking", p. 6)** and extensive measures addressing hate speech, trust deficits and underreporting of hate crime **(Chapter II, pp. 8–10).** These areas closely align with youth sector practice in media literacy, prevention of polarisation and community-based trust-building, yet youth sector is not identified as an actor	**Projects** at community level, are equally relevant tools for anti-racism action - neither is referenced in the Strategy. In addition, **Solidarity Projects** focused on community-level anti-racism action and local inclusion initiatives are directly relevant to the local action plan dimension [p.12, Chapter IV] **The EU Youth Coordinator** is listed as a working partner of the anti-racism Coordinator [Chapter IV, p.12] - an institutional link that should be reflected in programme-level priority-setting and

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					within the prevention, protection or victim-support framework. Updated guidelines on tackling disinformation online target teachers and educators **[p.8, Chapter II]** - non-formal educators are not included. Youth workers/persons of trust operate in precisely the spaces where online racism most directly affects young people, making this a structural gap in the Strategy's approach.	National Agency guidance. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Strategic Partnership on Inclusion** (addresses barriers faced by young people from minority ethnic and racial backgrounds); ▪ **Beyond Borders – Neighbours Together** (supports youth cooperation across programme and partner countries, fostering intercultural encounter as a structural programme instrument); ▪ **YouSports** (connects sport, youth work

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						and non-formal education, relevant to the hate speech in sport dimension); ▪ **Europe Goes Local** (supports youth work policy at municipal level, relevant to the local anti-racism action plan dimension); ▪ **Digital Youth Work** (builds media literacy and digital competences in youth work, relevant to the online racism and digital education dimensions).
The Union of Skills *COM(2025) 90 final*	Overarching strategy for education, training and skills development, framed	*Note: links here are in the context of education and training, not youth as*	*Note: links here are mostly in the context of education and training, not always the youth*	The strategy's concern with motivation as a barrier to adult learning **(p.10, Strand**	The Union of Skills adopts a broad definition of skills encompassing	**Erasmus+** is listed as a major funding programme [Section 4], but the youth

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5 March 2025 https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/union-skills_en	as a competitiveness and resilience instrument. Three structural problems: skills shortages and gaps; insufficient transformation speed in education/training systems; fragmented governance. Four strands: (A) building skills for quality jobs and lives; (B) upskilling and reskilling for digital and green transition; (C) circulating skills across the single market; (D) attracting, developing and retaining talent. Covers all learning levels: school, VET, higher education, adult	*understood in Erasmus+ Youth.* **[p.2–3, Section 1.1 (Skills shortages)]** "Nearly half of **young people** lack basic digital skills." / **15-year-olds**' declining PISA performance in mathematics, reading, science and digital skills flagged as a core problem. **[p.2, Section 1.1 (VET)]** "**Young workers below 30**" flagged in the context of generational renewal in VET occupations, particularly crafts. **[p.6, Strand A (Building skills)] Boys** identified as at higher risk of early school leaving alongside	*sector as understood in Erasmus+ Youth.* **[p.7, Strand A (Building skills)] "Non-formal and informal learning, youth work, cultural initiatives, sport participation and volunteering"** explicitly named as "offering valuable opportunities for people to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours and to become active citizens." Single sentence; not elaborated. **[p.12–13, Strands B and C] Erasmus+** referenced for VET mobility, transnational university-business	**B),** showing damaging effects of negative school experiences and the need for alternative approaches, applies acutely to young people who have disengaged from formal education; youth work reaches precisely this group but is not named in this context. The strategy's objectives on civic knowledge, democratic resilience and resistance to disinformation **(p.4–5, section 2; p.7–8, Strand A)** are central to the EU Youth Strategy's own goals;	competences for life, democracy and social resilience **(Section 1.1, p. 2; Objectives, p. 5).** These aims overlap directly with the youth sector's core mission of non-formal learning for civic engagement, critical thinking and inclusion, but the youth sector is not positioned as a structural contributor within the skills ecosystem. The Strategy acknowledges that low motivation and negative experiences with formal schooling are major barriers to upskilling and calls for alternative, trusted learning environments	strand and its non-formal learning architecture are not distinguished from the rest. The most consequential connection is between Youthpass and the Union of Skills' Skills Portability Initiative. However, Youthpass is not referenced in the Strategy's validation architecture. In the context of adult learning, the **ETS competence frameworks**, developed to define and support development of competences of youth workers/persons of trust and trainers engaged in non-formal education and

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	learning, lifelong learning. New governance architecture: European Skills Intelligence Observatory and European Skills High-Level Board, feeding into the European Semester.	learners with disabilities and those from a migrant background. **[p.14, Strand C (Circulating skills)]** "**Learners with fewer opportunities**" specifically mentioned in the context of strengthening Erasmus+ to be more inclusive and accessible, including in VET.	partnerships and making learning more inclusive for learners with fewer opportunities. **[p.17, Section 4 (Investing in skills)]** **Erasmus+** listed among key EU funding programmes (EUR 26.1 billion in 2021–2027 MFF).	no connection is drawn. The EU Youth Dialogue, as a structured mechanism for young people's input into policy, is entirely absent from the governance sections despite the strategy's calls for stakeholder engagement. The Strategy notes that "intergenerational approaches could be tested" in community learning contexts **[p.11, Strand B]**, positioning young people as active contributors to two-way knowledge transfer. Youth work, which routinely	to re-engage learners **(Section B, "Upskill and reskill", pp. 10–11).** While youth sector routinely provides such community-based and voluntary learning settings, its role remains marginally acknowledged, limited to a single isolated reference to non-formal and informal learning without integration into governance or delivery mechanisms **(Section A, p. 8; Section 5, pp. 19–20)** The European Skills High-Level Board will bring together "business leaders, education and training	European youth work are not acknowledged in the strategy. Erasmus+ **Mobility for Youth workers/persons of trust** is also directly relevant to the Strategy's competence development objectives. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** are the most relevant instrument for developing Youthpass integration into validation frameworks and piloting recognition tools across national contexts. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Youth@Work** (addresses the

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				facilitates intergenerational dialogue, is not named as a vehicle for this.	providers and social partners" **[p.19, Section 5].** Non-formal education providers are absent. Youth sector organisations, which develop competences at scale outside formal systems, are excluded from the governance architecture that will shape EU skills policy for the decade. The Strategy calls for "innovative community learning spaces" to re-engage people with low basic skills in "environments where they feel more comfortable" **[p.11, Strand B]**. The methodology and infrastructure developed by youth	visibility of non-formal learning outcomes in the labour market); ▪ **Education and Training of Youth workers/persons of trust** (develops competence frameworks that feed directly into the validation agenda); ▪ **Digital Youth Work** (builds digital competences of youth workers/persons of trust, contributing to the Strategy's digital skills dimension.) ▪ **Growing Youth Work** (develops youth work as a

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					work is directly transferable to this objective, even where the primary target group differs.	field and expands its reach into underserved communities, relevant to the community learning spaces dimension); ▪ **RAY** (generates independent evidence on the reach and outcomes of Erasmus+ and ESC, directly supporting the case for Youthpass within the Skills Portability Initiative.)
Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness *2026*	Framework for embedding long-term thinking and generational equity across EU policymaking. Built around a new	**[p.3–4, Section 2 (Changing horizon)]** "**Children and young people** today have access to increasing opportunities to learn, travel, volunteer and	**[p.11, Section 5 (Mainstreaming)]** "EU programmes such as **Erasmus+** support skills development, active citizenship and lifelong learning for all	The strategy's concern with 'elevated levels of stress, anxiety and loneliness among young people' **(p.4)** is identified but addressed only	The Strategy places strong emphasis on amplifying young people's voices, strengthening solidarity between generations and	Of all Set 1 strategies, this one is the most explicit about the programmes: **Erasmus+** is named for promoting intergenerational

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https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/intergenerational-fairness-communication/intergenerational_fairness_strategy_layout.pdf	intergenerational 'contract' with three dimensions: Fair Policymaking (embedding long-term thinking and the youth perspective); Fair Opportunities (uniting generations around shared goals); Fair Places (ensuring intergenerational fairness across territories). Addresses megatrends: demographic change, green and digital transitions, shifting geopolitics, through the lens of how today's choices distribute opportunities and burdens across current	have their voice heard." Also flags "elevated levels of stress, anxiety and loneliness among **young people**", housing unaffordability, **NEET** risk, labour market disruption and basic skills decline. **[p.3–4, Section 2, fn.8]** Report on the implementation of the **EU Youth Strategy** (2022–2024) cited directly. **[p.4, fn.20]** "63% of **younger Europeans** come across fake news more than once a week" — cited as an intergenerational risk factor.	age groups, help foster the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy and (particularly through its **youth strand**) promote intergenerational fairness and learning." **[p.11, Section 5 (Mainstreaming)]** "The **European Solidarity Corps** supports intergenerational teams of **volunteers** at local and regional level to acquire skills, key competences and European values, contributing to intergenerational solidarity and fairness."	through formal policy channels; the non-formal support structures that youth work provides in this space - peer support, social connection, resilience-building - are not named. The NEET dimension **(p.5)** is addressed through formal education and employment policy; youth work reaches young people who have disconnected from both, yet is not named in this context. The EU Youth Dialogue as a concrete structured mechanism for young people's voice in policy is not referenced despite the	supporting participation across the life course, including through volunteering, civic engagement and community-based interaction **(Introduction; Section 2, pp. 2–4).** While these objectives align closely with the youth sector's core function as a space for participation, empowerment and intergenerational dialogue, the youth sector is not identified as a distinct field or infrastructure enabling these processes. The Strategy highlights elevated levels of stress, anxiety and	fairness and learning [Section 5, p.11], and **ESC** is cited as supporting intergenerational teams of volunteers, with a concrete Solidarity Project as an inspiring practice [Section 4.2, p.9]. **Both ESC formats - volunteering and Solidarity Projects** - are well suited to intergenerational work, and both are already referenced in the Strategy, albeit generically. The opportunity is to ensure this framing feeds into the post-2027 programme design — positioning ESC (or the new strand within Erasmus+) as a

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	and future generations. Covers housing, education, employment, health, pensions, care, climate, digital and democratic participation. Cross-sectoral and mainstreaming in ambition; built through a co-design process including a European Citizens' Panel on Intergenerational Fairness.	**[p.5, Section 2] "Young people with disabilities** often struggle when moving into adulthood due to weak pathways between education and employment." / Young people **NEET** flagged in the context of territorial divides. **[p.7, Section 4.1 (Fair Policymaking)]** Commitment to continue "the systematic application of the **Youth Check**, including **Youth Policy Dialogues**, to the key initiatives of the Commission work programme". **[p.8, Section 4.2 (Fair Opportunities)]** "Promoting financial	**[p.9, Section 4.2 (Fair Opportunities, inspiring practices)] European Solidarity Corps** project cited as an inspiring practice: "Together with Seniors – Gardening Workshops" in Poland, promoting "intergenerational bonds and community integration". **[p.9, Section 4.2 (Fair Opportunities)] EU Youth Strategy** referenced as the framework to be strengthened with an intergenerational fairness dimension in the post-2027 cycle.	strategy's strong commitment to meaningful youth participation in 'Fair Policymaking' **(Section 4.1, p.7).**	loneliness among young people, alongside difficulties in transitions from education to stable employment and access to autonomy, including housing **(Section 2, pp. 4–5).** Although these challenges are recognised as intergenerational risks, the role of youth sector in providing non-formal support, peer connection and transitional accompaniment for young people is not acknowledged. In the “Fair Opportunities” and “Fair Places” dimensions, the	multi-generational solidarity instrument, with intergenerational solidarity as a named priority in the next programme regulation. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** support the development of intergenerational methodologies across youth organisations. The work of **SALTO Inclusion and Diversity on intergenerational solidarity** provides a ready-made resource base - training tools, methodologies and practitioner networks - that directly supports the implementation of the Strategy's intergenerational

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		literacy, which is essential to empower young people to secure their financial independence and financial inclusion" - named as a targeted Fair Opportunities objective for young people. **[p.8–9, Section 4.2 (Fair Opportunities)]** Commitment to "boost citizens engagement, particularly of **young people**, by supporting participatory and consultative processes". Includes 2026 **European Youth Week** "dedicated to solidarity and fairness" and strengthening "the intergenerational fairness dimension in **EU youth and sport**			Strategy promotes intergenerational dialogue, participatory processes, volunteering, cultural activities and community spaces at local and regional level **(Sections 4.2 and 4.3, pp. 8–10).** These delivery contexts strongly overlap with youth sector practice, particularly in community-based and local settings, yet the youth sector remains unmentioned as an actor within the implementation architecture.	objectives through Erasmus+ and ESC activities. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Mental Health in Youth Work** (relevant to the Strategy's concern with stress, anxiety and loneliness among young people as an intergenerational issue); ▪ **Youth@Work** (addresses youth-to-work transitions as a key intergenerational fairness dimension); ▪ **Strengthening Youth Volunteering** (directly relevant to the Strategy's

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		policies through the **post-2027 EU Youth Strategy**". **[p.13, Section 5 (Mainstreaming)]** The EU Water Resilience Stakeholder Platform has "dedicated seats for **youth representatives**"; the EU Bioeconomy **Youth** Ambassadors Programme empowers **youth** to engage in policy discussions on sustainable food systems — demonstrating an emerging pattern of youth participation in sectoral governance across the Strategy's mainstreaming agenda.				explicit reference to ESC intergenerational volunteering teams); ▪ **Europeers** (connects generations of programme alumni); ▪ **Europe Goes Local** (supports youth work policy at municipal level, contributing to the Strategy's 'Fair Places' dimension.) ▪ **Growing Youth Work** (develops youth work's community-building capacity at local level, relevant to the Strategy's Fair Places dimension and intergenerational

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						connection objectives.)
EU Preparedness Union Strategy *JOIN(2025) 130 final* *26 March 2025* https://commission.europa.eu/topics/preparedness_en	Joint Communication from the European Commission and the High Representative. Overarching framework for strengthening civilian and military preparedness and resilience across the full spectrum of threats and crises. Three core principles: integrated all-hazards approach; whole-of-government approach; whole-of-society approach. Seven action areas: foresight and anticipation; resilience of vital societal	**[p.8, Section 3 (Population preparedness)]** "Women and groups in situations of vulnerability, such as **children**, older people and persons with disabilities, those facing discrimination, poverty and/or social exclusion, are disproportionately affected by crises." **[p.10, Action 15 (Population preparedness)]** Commission will "develop guidelines for curriculum development, starting by **early childhood education**, to support	**[p.9, Section 3 (Population preparedness)]** "Schools, teachers, **youth workers/persons of trust and trainers** play a key role in fostering digital and media literacy and critical thinking, promoting civic engagement, and teaching democratic citizenship, as underlined in the Union of Skills." — Youth workers/persons of trust explicitly named as a professional group. **[p.10, Action 16 (Population**	The strategy's whole-of-society approach and commitment to community building and volunteering **(p.8)** have a strong implicit dimension for young people that is not fully articulated as a youth-specific strand. Disinformation and FIMI (p.8) as threats to societal preparedness are directly relevant to young people as a particularly exposed group online - not developed as a youth-specific dimension beyond general references to digital and media literacy.	Action 16's commitment to a preparedness priority in Erasmus+ and the ESC is genuinely significant, but frames youth organisations purely as grant applicants rather than as a field with its own expertise, methodologies and professional infrastructure relevant to preparedness. Youth sector organisations have established competence in community outreach, reaching marginalised young people, peer education and non-	Action 16 explicitly creates a new preparedness priority within **Erasmus+ and ESC** - the most direct programme mandate in any Set 1 strategy. Youth and sport organisations are named as eligible applicants but framed as recipients rather than partners in the design of the priority. The ESC **humanitarian volunteering strand** and ESC **Solidarity Projects** on community resilience are both directly relevant, but neither is distinguished from

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	functions; population preparedness; public-private cooperation; civil-military cooperation; crisis response coordination; resilience through external partnerships. Covers natural disasters, human-induced disasters, hybrid threats (cyberattacks, disinformation, FIMI) and geopolitical crises. Sets out 30 key actions. Treats preparedness as a collective societal responsibility requiring engagement of citizens, communities, civil society, businesses and the scientific community.	the acquisition of basic skills on preparedness, including media literacy, as a key for active and informed citizenship and fighting disinformation". **[p.10, Action 16 (Population preparedness)]** "A new preparedness priority will be created in **EU youth programmes**, such as the **European Solidarity Corps** and **Erasmus+**, to promote preparedness, resilience, participation in democratic life and civic engagement."	**preparedness)]** **Erasmus+** and the **European Solidarity Corps** named as the primary vehicles for the new preparedness priority. "**Youth and sport organisations**" listed among eligible organisations to apply for funding.	The EU Youth Dialogue and young people's structured participation in policy could be explicitly referenced as a mechanism for integrating youth perspectives into national and EU preparedness planning: absent from the strategy. The proposed annual EU Preparedness Day **[p.10, Action 13]** aims to raise awareness across the population. Youth participation through youth councils, youth organisations and Erasmus+ activities is an obvious mechanism for embedding preparedness culture	formal civic engagement - all directly relevant to population preparedness goals - not acknowledged beyond naming 'youth and sport organisations' in a list. Action 4 commits to "a comprehensive and inclusive EU-wide plan for training and skills development covering security, defence, and crisis management, to equip professionals, volunteers and decision-makers" **[p.4, Action 4]**. Youth workers/persons of trust are explicitly named in Action 16 as a professional group relevant to preparedness, yet they	general volunteering in the Strategy. **The European Training Strategy** offers a framework for embedding preparedness competences in youth worker education, a connection not made in the Strategy. The youth sector's experience in civic education is a significant untapped asset here. Erasmus+ **Youth Participation Projects** support young people's engagement in democratic life and structured dialogue with decision-makers; **Training and Cooperation Activities**

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				among young people, while it is entirely absent from the Action's framing.	are absent from the training architecture that will define who is equipped and recognised for this work. The European Youth Sector Agenda and the European Training Strategy for youth workers/persons of trust could be referenced as frameworks through which preparedness competences could be systematically developed in the youth sector workforce. Youthpass as a tool for recognising competences developed through preparedness-related	build youth worker competences in democratic facilitation and civic education methodology - both directly relevant to the Strategy's population preparedness objectives. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** are the most appropriate instrument for developing preparedness methodologies in youth work and building partnerships with civil protection structures. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Democracy Reloading** (community resilience and civic

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					volunteering and youth sector activities is not mentioned.	engagement at local level); ▪ **Mental Health in Youth Work** (psychosocial resilience as a preparedness dimension); ▪ **Strengthening Youth Volunteering** (relevant to ESC's role in Action 16); ▪ **Digital Youth Work** (media literacy and disinformation resilience); ▪ **Beyond Borders - Neighbours Together** (youth cooperation across programme and partner countries, relevant to the Strategy's external

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						partnerships dimension.) ▪ **Growing Youth Work** (expands youth work's community-building and local reach, relevant to the Strategy's whole-of-society objectives.)
European Democracy Shield: Empowering Strong and Resilient Democracies *JOIN(2025) 791 final, 12 November 2025; complemented by EPRS briefing (European*	The European Democracy Shield is the EU's overarching framework to protect and strengthen democracy against internal and external threats, particularly foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), disinformation, hybrid threats and electoral interference. It is structured around three pillars: (1) safeguarding the	*No explicit links. The Joint Communication does not identify young people as a specific group.* References throughout use general terms such as "citizens", "society", "people" and "civil society" without age differentiation (Introduction; Sections 2–4). Education and media literacy are referenced in general terms under	*No explicit links. The Joint Communication does not mention youth work, youth workers/persons of trust, youth participation, youth volunteering or youth organisations in any section.* Erasmus+ is mentioned once among EU programmes that may support implementation of the Shield, in the funding	The Shield's emphasis on disinformation, polarisation, declining trust and civic resilience is directly relevant to young people, who are heavily exposed to online information environments. The Shield announces "a media resilience programme for all age groups across rural	Youth sector's core practices - non-formal citizenship education, media literacy, peer learning, dialogue across difference and community-level engagement - align closely with the Shield's third pillar. The European Youth Sector Agenda explicitly frames the youth sector as contributing to	**Erasmus+** appears once in the Shield (in the funding section), without reference to the youth strand or its established track record in democratic participation and media literacy. The Shield is building new institutional architecture (European Centre for Democratic Resilience) and new funding instruments

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Parliamentary Research Service) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025JC0791	integrity of the information space; (2) strengthening democratic institutions, free and fair elections, and free and independent media; and (3) boosting societal resilience and citizens' engagement. The strategy adopts a whole-of-society approach and proposes non-legislative actions, including the creation of a European Centre for Democratic Resilience.	Pillar 3 — without reference to young people or youth-specific mechanisms.	and implementation section (Section 6), without reference to the youth strand, non-formal learning or participation activities.	and urban areas" under Pillar 4. Young people are the age group most exposed to online information manipulation yet are not distinguished as a specific target group. Youth work organisations already deliver media literacy in informal settings, reaching young people where formal education does not, but are not identified as delivery partners for this programme. Mechanisms such as the EU Youth Dialogue or youth participation activities under Erasmus+ could logically support the Shield's objectives under Pillar 3	democratic resilience, yet it is not referenced. Youth workers/persons of trust are not identified as actors, and youth programmes are treated as generic funding lines rather than as part of a structured youth sector field with relevant expertise. The Centre will host a stakeholder platform for dialogue with "civil society, researchers and academia, media providers." Youth organisations have specific and well-documented expertise in non-formal democratic education	(AgoraEU): these are founding decisions. The priority is to ensure that Erasmus+ Youth Participation Projects, ESC Solidarity Projects and ESC volunteering in civil society organisations working on democratic resilience are all positioned as delivery partners for Pillar 3 from the start. KA2 Cooperation Partnerships support the development of civic education and media literacy methodologies across youth organisations - the non-formal democratic resilience infrastructure Pillar 3 requires but does not name. **The EU Youth**

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				(boosting societal resilience and citizens' engagement), but they are not referenced.	and community-level democratic engagement - a distinct contribution not currently recognised in the platform's architecture.	**Dialogue** should also be formally connected to the Shield's consultation architecture. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Democracy Reloading** (develops youth participation in local democratic decision-making, directly relevant to Pillar 3); ▪ **New Power in Youth** (strengthens youth participation in democratic life at all levels); ▪ **Digital Youth Work** (builds competences in digital literacy and critical thinking relevant to the Shield's

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						disinformation objectives); ▪ **Europe Goes Local** (connects European and local levels of democratic engagement; ▪ **Europeers** (peer networks of programme alumni as a grassroots civic engagement instrument.)
Roadmap towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe – Building a resilient, inclusive and agile democracy + Roadmap	The New Democratic Pact for Europe is the Council of Europe's overarching political framework to restore trust in democracy and reinforce democratic security across its member states. It aims to redefine democracy to make it stronger,	**[Roadmap, p.3]** The Pact seeks to make democracy resonate "in particular with **younger generations**". **[2-pager, p.2; Roadmap, p.3]** Under Pillar 1 – Learning and Practising Democracy: objectives include "elevate **youth voices**	**[Roadmap, p.3]** Under Pillar 1 – Learning and Practising Democracy: refers to "**formal and informal learning**" — aligning directly with youth work practice. **[Roadmap, p.9]** Conference "Democracy at a Crossroads: Why	While youth are already well integrated, further strengthening could occur under **Pillar 2 – Protecting Democracy (Roadmap, pp. 3–4),** where issues such as socio-economic inequalities, disinformation,	Youth work is already strongly present, but it could be further embedded as a structural delivery mechanism across all three pillars, beyond events and consultations. In **Pillar 2 – Protecting Democracy**, youth	The key question is whether Erasmus+ and ESC activities - **Youth Participation Projects, Solidarity Projects on democratic engagement, ESC volunteering in civil society organisations, Training and Cooperation**

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SG/Inf(2025)14, 29 April 2025 https://www.coe.int/en/web/new-democratic-pact-for-europe	more inclusive, and more resilient in the face of democratic backsliding, disinformation, polarisation and shrinking civic space (2-pager, pp. 1–2; Roadmap, Sections I–II, pp. 2–3). The Pact is framed as a collective, inclusive and future-oriented process, culminating in political commitments at the 2026 Summit of Heads of State and Government (2-pager, p. 2; Roadmap, p. 3 & p. 10). It is articulated around three key pillars: Learning and Practising Democracy, Protecting Democracy,	and foster civic engagement" and equipping citizens "especially **young people**" with skills for engaged citizenship. **[Roadmap, Appendix I, pp.6–9] Youth participation** features throughout milestones: **youth-driven hackathons**, **youth seminars** and youth-specific events. **[Roadmap, p.8]** 10th Council of Europe Conference of **Ministers responsible for Youth** explicitly integrated into the Pact process. **[Roadmap, p.6]** "**Reconnect with youth**" identified as one of the three key	**Youth Work Matters**" explicitly scheduled. **[Roadmap, p.7]** Seminars on strengthening **youth organisations**' democratic leadership. **[Roadmap, pp.6–7]** Activities hosted at the **European Youth Centres** in Strasbourg and Budapest. **[Roadmap, pp.7 & 9]** Focus on supporting **youth organisations**' resilience in the context of shrinking civic space.	polarisation and electoral integrity are addressed mostly at system level. These challenges disproportionately affect young people, particularly first-time voters and marginalised youth, but this is not always analysed in age-specific terms. The broad consultation processes described **(Roadmap, Section II, pp. 2–3)** could further systematise youth-specific feedback mechanisms beyond events and conferences The Pact's Pillar 2 addresses declining trust and electoral	sector's experience in countering disinformation, preventing radicalisation, and sustaining democratic culture at local level is not explicitly articulated, despite the relevance **(Roadmap, p. 3–4)**. In **Pillar 3 – Innovating for Democracy**, the emphasis on participatory tools, prospective games and civic tech **(Roadmap, p. 4)** strongly aligns with youth sector methodologies, yet youth sector is not named systematically as an innovation partner across these processes.	**Activities, KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** - can be formally co-oriented toward the Pact's three pillars, so that programme-funded work on democratic participation is recognised as a visible contribution to the Pact's agenda. **Edu4Europe** is one existing example of this kind of alignment between programme activities and broader democratic processes. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Democracy Reloading** (directly aligned with Pillar 1 (Learning and

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	and Innovating for Democracy (Roadmap, Section III, pp. 3–4).	needs in the early consultation phase.		integrity - challenges most acute among young people, where disengagement from formal democratic processes is most pronounced. First-time voters are a primary but unaddressed group, and youth sector organisations building democratic competences before and beyond the ballot box are not identified as actors in this dimension.	The Roadmap names supporting youth organisations' resilience in shrinking civic space [pp.7 & 9] - a concern shared by the EU Strategy for Civil Society. This creates an opening for a joint CoE-EU advocacy position connecting the Pact's democratic resilience objectives with the Civil Society Strategy's enabling environment agenda, with youth organisations as a named constituency in both.	Practising Democracy); ▪ **New Power in Youth** (implements the Youth Participation Strategy, supporting youth participation at local, national and European levels); ▪ **Europe Goes Local** (bridges European and local levels of democratic life); ▪ **European Academy on Youth Work** (develops innovative practice and methodology in youth work, directly relevant to the Pact's Pillar 3 (Innovating for Democracy) and its emphasis on participatory tools

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						and civic innovation.); ▪ **Beyond Borders - Neighbours Together** (supports youth cooperation in programme and partner countries, relevant to the Pact's broader democratic security agenda.) ▪ **Growing Youth Work** (supports the sustainability and community-building capacity of youth organisations as democratic actors at local level.)
Strategic Agenda 2024–2029	The Strategic Agenda 2024–2029 sets out the political priorities of the European Union	**[p.8, "Advancing together"]** "Promoting **youth employment** will be of key	*No explicit links.* The document does not mention youth work, youth	Several core priorities have strong but unarticulated relevance for youth.	The Agenda's ambitions regarding democratic resilience, societal cohesion,	**Neither Erasmus+ nor ESC is mentioned anywhere in the Strategic Agenda.** This

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European Council https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/	for the next institutional cycle. It is a high-level orientation document agreed by the European Council, structured around three overarching priority areas: A free and democratic Europe, A strong and secure Europe, and A prosperous and competitive Europe **(pp. 3–8).** It addresses democracy, rule of law, security and defence, migration, enlargement, climate and digital transitions, competitiveness, skills, social cohesion and global action. The Agenda is not an implementation strategy but a political compass guiding EU	importance in the coming years." Youth implicitly included in references to "citizens", "people" and "future generations" under "A free and democratic Europe" **(p.3)** and "Advancing together" **(p.8)**, without age-specific framing. *No references to youth participation structures, youth policy frameworks, or youth as democratic actors.*	workers/persons of trust, youth organisations, youth centres, non-formal learning, youth participation or youth volunteering. "Citizen engagement" is referenced under "A free and democratic Europe" **(p.3**), framed at a general level alongside civil society and media, without identifying the youth sector. Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, or the EU Youth Strategy are not mentioned anywhere in the document.	Under “A free and democratic Europe” **(p. 3),** the commitment to strengthening democratic resilience, citizen engagement, and countering disinformation directly concerns young people as new voters and intensive users of digital platforms, yet youth are not discussed specifically. Under “A strong and secure Europe” **(pp. 4–5),** references to fighting radicalisation, violent extremism and foreign interference have clear implications for young people, but no youth-specific dimension is developed.	countering radicalisation, media and digital literacy, and social inclusion strongly align with youth sector practice, but this connection is entirely implicit. Under “A free and democratic Europe” **(p. 3),** youth sector could logically contribute to deepening citizen engagement, strengthening democratic discourse, and countering disinformation and hate speech. Under “A strong and secure Europe” **(p. 5),** youth sector’s role in prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism is	matters: the Agenda guides the next Multiannual Financial Framework, which will determine both programmes' budgets and priorities for the post-2027 period. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships**, with their systemic focus on innovation and cross-sector cooperation, are the most visible instrument for demonstrating the youth strand's contribution to the Agenda's priorities, yet neither appears in the document. The Agenda's objectives on skills, democratic resilience and social cohesion all connect logically to

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	institutions and the next Multiannual Financial Framework **(pp. 2–3).**			Under "A prosperous and competitive Europe" and "Advancing together" **(pp. 6–8),** skills, lifelong learning, labour-market participation and youth employment are mentioned, but without linking these priorities to broader youth empowerment or civic engagement agendas.	relevant but not acknowledged. Under "Advancing together" **(p. 8),** investment in skills and participation across the life course could incorporate non-formal learning and youth sector pathways, yet the Agenda remains firmly focused on formal systems and economic outcomes. Youth work is not recognised as part of the EU's social or democratic infrastructure in this document.	both programmes and both ESC formats, but the connection needs to be made explicit through advocacy at European Council and Commission level. **Relevant SNACs:** ▪ **Democracy Reloading** (operationalises the Agenda's democratic resilience dimension at local level); ▪ **Youth@Work** (addresses the youth employment priority explicitly named in the Agenda); ▪ **New Power in Youth** (connects youth

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						participation to EU policy processes); ▪ Education and Training of Youth workers/persons of trust (develops the professional infrastructure of the youth sector, relevant to the Agenda's skills and social cohesion priorities). ▪ **Growing Youth Work** (addresses the sustainability and development of youth sector organisations, directly relevant to the Strategy's funding and enabling environment agenda).

Strategy / Document	Focus	Existing links with YOUTH	Existing links with YOUTH SECTOR	Possible links with YOUTH	Possible links with YOUTH SECTOR	Links to Erasmus+ and ESC (concrete actions)
EU Strategy for Civil Society **COM(2025) 790** | 12 November 2025 https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/8c30975d-bc1c-4415-8dcd-a71cb28f3662_en?filename=JUST_template_comingsoon_standard.pdf	EU framework for strengthening civil society as a partner in democratic governance. Three objectives: (1) meaningful engagement of CSOs as partners in governance; (2) open, safe and enabling civic space, including protection of CSOs and human rights defenders from shrinking civic space and SLAPP threats; (3) adequate, sustainable and transparent funding for CSOs. Establishes a Civil Society Platform (operational 2026) as a structured dialogue mechanism.	**[p.1, Introduction]** Civil society is explicitly named as contributing to "actively involving **young people**" in democratic participation and inclusive public debate. **[p.3, fn.7] Youth and social movements** named as examples of civil society organisations covered by the Strategy. **[p.7, Section 2.1] EU Youth Dialogue**, **Youth Policy Dialogues** and Commission President's **Youth Advisory Board** explicitly named as engagement mechanisms within the	**[p.13, Section 4] Erasmus+** explicitly listed among EU programmes that support CSO activities, alongside ESF+, CERV, Horizon Europe and the Justice Programme. **[p.14, Section 4]** Post-2027 **Erasmus+** (with integrated **European Solidarity Corps**) named as promoting "resilience, participation in democratic life and civic engagement, through formal, **non-formal and informal learning paths**". **[p.14, Section 4]** AgoraEU programme (successor to CERV and Creative Europe,	The Strategy's concern with shrinking civic space and threats to CSOs directly affects youth organisations and youth-led movements, yet no age-specific dimension is articulated. Youth organisations, which are often under-resourced and operate on a voluntary basis, are among the most vulnerable to the funding and regulatory pressures the Strategy identifies. The Civil Society Platform (operational 2026) could formally integrate the EU Youth Dialogue as a structural input mechanism - connecting the	Youth sector organisations are civil society organisations by definition — yet the Strategy does not recognise youth sector as a distinct field, a professional practice or a sector with specific competences, funding needs and policy relevance. This is a significant visibility gap. The Strategy's funding principles — particularly accessibility, resourcing for grassroots organisations and the use of financial support to third parties (FSTP) — are directly relevant to the chronic underfunding	**Erasmus+ and ESC** are explicitly named as key funding programmes for civil society [Section 4, p.13], and the post-2027 Erasmus+ (with integrated ESC, EUR 40.8 billion) is described as promoting democratic participation and civic engagement through non-formal learning. **KA2 Cooperation Partnerships** support capacity-building and cross-border cooperation among youth organisations as civil society actors. **Both ESC formats**: volunteering in civil society organisations and Solidarity Projects run by youth

Strategy / Document	Focus	Existing links with YOUTH	Existing links with YOUTH SECTOR	Possible links with YOUTH	Possible links with YOUTH SECTOR	Links to Erasmus+ and ESC (concrete actions)
	Explicitly complements the European Democracy Shield. Covers internal EU action, Member State level and EU external action.	Commission's civil society engagement framework. **[p.17, Section 5.2]** Enhancing participation of "**youth** (alongside women)" in public and political life is named as a core priority of EU foreign policy and external action.	EUR 9 billion) announced as enhancing "protection and promotion of fundamental rights, democratic participation and resilience" - relevant to **youth civil society** funding post-2027. *No direct mention of youth work, youth workers/persons of trust, youth participation or youth volunteering as a distinct field or sector. Youth organisations are included implicitly within the broad CSO definition.*	Strategy's governance ambitions to the existing youth participation architecture. This connection is not made in the Strategy. The Strategy's inclusivity principle (Principle 6), ensuring underrepresented, marginalised and grassroots organisations can participate, is directly relevant to young people's organisations, which frequently lack the institutional capacity to engage in formal EU dialogue processes. **[Section 5.4, p.18–19]** Under the Pact for the Mediterranean, the	of youth sector organisations across Europe, especially at local and community level. The Strategy's 10 guiding principles for dialogue with civil society (partnership, comprehensiveness, inclusivity, accessibility, resourcing) directly mirror the participatory and relational principles of the youth sector — yet no connection is made to the youth sector field as a sector with established practice in these areas. The online knowledge hub on civic space announced in Section	organisations as CSOs are directly relevant to the Strategy's objectives, though neither is distinguished explicitly. ▪ **Relevant SNACs:** - **Europe Goes Local** (supports youth work policy at local and municipal level, relevant to the Strategy's emphasis on grassroots CSO engagement); ▪ **New Power in Youth** (engages youth civil society in democratic processes and implements the Youth Participation Strategy); ▪ **Democracy Reloading** (builds

Strategy / Document	Focus	Existing links with YOUTH	Existing links with YOUTH SECTOR	Possible links with YOUTH	Possible links with YOUTH SECTOR	Links to Erasmus+ and ESC (concrete actions)
				Commission commits to "establishing a Youth Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean" - a concrete youth governance initiative in EU external action, positioning **young people** as democratic actors in the EU's neighbourhood engagement.	3.4 could integrate monitoring of conditions for youth sector organisations and youth civic space — currently absent from the Strategy's monitoring architecture.	local democratic participation structures, operationalising the Strategy's civic engagement dimension at programme level. ▪ - **Growing Youth Work** (develops youth work as a field and expands its community-building capacity at local level, directly relevant to the Strategy's emphasis on grassroots organisations, community-based civic space and sustainable CSO development.)

SECTION 2: Strategies directly connected to youth and youth work

The following table maps 9 European-level strategies and policy documents directly connected to youth and youth work, showing how young people and youth work are understood in each and how each connects to the strategies in Section 1.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
The 4th European Youth Work Convention https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/4th-european-youth-work-convention- The European Youth Work Convention is a pan-European agenda-setting process that supports advancing a European strategy for youth work policy development, implementation, recognition and quality practice. It explicitly	Young people are positioned consistently as: ▪ active agents, not passive beneficiaries; ▪ co-creators of youth work, alongside youth workers/persons of trust; ▪ democratic actors, whose participation, voice and leadership are essential for resilient democracies. The report repeatedly emphasises that: ▪ youth work is something built "with young	Youth work is defined throughout the Convention as: ▪ a distinct field of practice rooted in democratic values, human rights and participation; ▪ a non-formal educational and social practice based on voluntary engagement; ▪ both a professional and voluntary activity, carried out by paid and unpaid youth workers/persons of trust;	The Convention assigns shared but differentiated responsibilities: ▪ European institutions (EU and Council of Europe) Are responsible for: - political recognition of youth work, - aligning strategies, - supporting cooperation via the EU–CoE Youth Partnership, ▪ ensuring youth work is structurally embedded in future European	**Instruments and levers identified** ▪ The Convention relies on: ▪ strategic processes (European Youth Work Agenda, EU Youth Strategy, CoE Youth Sector Strategy); ▪ youth work conventions and ministerial conferences; ▪ funding programmes (notably Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps);	**Civil Society Strategy:** The Convention's core demands - recognition of youth organisations, sustainable funding and protection of civic space for youth work - map directly onto the Civil Society Strategy's three objectives. The Convention is arguably the youth sector's most concrete contribution to the civil society agenda, yet the two are not formally connected. New Democratic Pact: Convention positions youth work as central to democratic resilience,

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
positions itself as a bridge between youth work practice, youth policy, and political decision-making, with the stated ambition of shaping future European and national youth work strategies over the next five years. The Convention does not adopt binding measures. Instead, it produces: ▪ strategic conclusions, and ▪ a roadmap intended to inform: - the next EU Youth Strategy (post-2027), - national youth policies, - Council of Europe youth governance, and	people, not delivered to them"; ▪ young people must have agency, including in leadership roles, advocacy, policy dialogue and democratic processes; ▪ youth work must reach diverse groups of young people, including marginalised, rural, migrant, refugee and politically disengaged youth. ▪ Young people are also recognised as living in complex, non-institutional realities, where everyday life, relationships, digital environments and informal spaces matter more than formal politics. Youth work is	▪ inherently relational, long-term, and context specific. The report clearly distinguishes youth work from: ▪ formal education, ▪ social work, ▪ employment or activation policies, while stressing that youth work can complement but must not be instrumentalised by these fields. Youth work is understood as: ▪ contributing to democracy, inclusion, critical thinking and social cohesion;	strategies and funding frameworks. ▪ Member States Are expected to: - establish legal or policy frameworks recognising youth work, - provide governance structures at national, regional and local level, - ensure sustainable funding and infrastructures, - support education, training and working conditions of youth workers/persons of trust. Youth work community of practice (youth workers/persons of trust, organisations,	▪ quality frameworks, competence models and ethical standards; ▪ research, monitoring, evaluation and data collection; ▪ advocacy structures (youth work associations, networks, umbrella bodies). ▪ **Internal limits and gaps** ▪ At the same time, the report identifies significant structural weaknesses: ▪ youth work remains unevenly recognised and funded across Europe; ▪ implementation depends heavily on political will at national level;	directly supports the Pact's agenda and is explicitly connected through the ministerial conference [Roadmap, p.8]. Preparedness Strategy: Convention's emphasis on community-building and civic resilience aligns with Action 16's preparedness priority; calls for Erasmus+ and ESC to embed youth work expertise. Democracy Shield: Convention's framing of youth work as democratic infrastructure directly supports the Shield's Pillar 3 objectives. Union of Skills: Convention advocates recognition of non-formal learning competences - directly relevant to the

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
- future funding and recognition frameworks for youth work. Its scope covers youth work across local, regional, national and European levels, and explicitly situates youth work as part of the democratic, social and educational infrastructure of Europe, particularly in the context of democratic backsliding, polarisation, war, digital transformation and social inequality.	framed as operating in between institutions and everyday life, supporting young people to make informed choices without directing them politically.	▪ creating safe physical and digital spaces; ▪ supporting empowerment beyond employability; ▪ requiring values, ethics, quality standards, professional competence and reflective practice. The Convention explicitly frames youth work as a pillar of democratic resilience and a field that must maintain its autonomy and critical role, even when engaging with political systems.	networks, trainers, researchers) Is positioned as: ▪ the primary driver of implementation, ▪ the source of expertise, innovation and quality development, ▪ a key actor in advocacy and policy dialogue. ▪ Young people Are expected to: ▪ participate as co-creators, ▪ exercise leadership, ▪ engage in advocacy and democratic processes supported by youth work. The Convention insists that youth work policy cannot be imposed top-	▪ funding is often project-based and unstable, undermining sustainability; ▪ youth workers/persons of trust face precarious working conditions, burnout and lack of status; ▪ there is no binding enforcement of Convention conclusions; ▪ coordination between policy fields is inconsistent. The Convention explicitly acknowledges that without structural funding, legal recognition and long-term commitment, even strong political declarations risk remaining symbolic	Skills Portability Initiative and Youthpass integration. **Strategic Agenda 2024–2029:** Convention's recommendations could inform the next EU Youth Strategy post-2027 and integration of youth work into EU democratic infrastructure. **Gender Equality and Anti-Racism:** Convention's inclusion framework and diversity emphasis intersect with both strategies' education and participation objectives.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
			down and must be co-built with the field and with young people themselves.		
EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en The EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 is the European Union's overarching framework for youth policy cooperation. Its purpose is not to regulate youth work directly, but to coordinate political priorities, cooperation mechanisms and EU programmes affecting young people across Member States. The Strategy is structured	Young people are positioned as active citizens, contributors and partners, rather than as a population group to be managed or protected. The Strategy explicitly aims to strengthen young people's participation in democratic life at local, national and European levels, presenting youth engagement as both a right and a democratic necessity. Youth are framed as diverse, with recognition of inequalities linked to socio-economic background, education,	Youth work is recognised as an important but non-exclusive instrument within the EU Youth Strategy. It is not defined in legal or professional detail; instead, it is described functionally, primarily as a means to support participation, inclusion, learning and empowerment. The Strategy acknowledges youth work as a space for non-formal learning, civic engagement, solidarity and personal development, but it does not present youth work as a standalone policy field with its own internal logic.	The EU Youth Strategy assigns responsibility in a distributed and cooperative manner. The European Commission is responsible for providing political direction, coordinating EU-level instruments, and integrating youth perspectives into broader EU policies. Member States are expected to implement the Strategy through national youth policies, cooperation frameworks and engagement mechanisms, while respecting subsidiarity.	The Strategy relies primarily on EU programmes and coordination mechanisms. Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps are identified as the main financial levers supporting youth participation, learning, volunteering and youth work-related activities. The EU Youth Dialogue is the key governance instrument for youth participation, providing structured input into policy processes. At the same time, the Strategy has clear internal limits. It does not impose	**Civil Society Strategy:** The EU Youth Dialogue and Youth Policy Dialogues are explicitly named in the Civil Society Strategy as engagement mechanisms [Section 2.1, p.7]. The Strategy's funding principles and enabling environment agenda directly affect the youth organisations through which the EU Youth Strategy is implemented - a connection not made explicit in either document. **Preparedness Strategy:** EU Youth Strategy programmes (Erasmus+, ESC) explicitly named in

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
around three long-term priorities – engagement, connection and empowerment – and aims to make youth a more visible and integrated dimension across EU policymaking. The scope of the Strategy is deliberately broad. It addresses democratic participation, social inclusion, learning and mobility, intercultural exchange, solidarity, and international engagement. Youth policy is framed as a cross-sectoral field, meaning that responsibility lies not only with youth ministries or services, but across multiple EU policy domains. The Strategy functions as a political and coordination framework	geography and access to opportunities. The Strategy acknowledges that not all young people benefit equally from participation and mobility opportunities, and it therefore places emphasis on inclusion and outreach to young people with fewer opportunities. Overall, young people are presented as co-creators of policy, particularly through structured participation mechanisms, and as actors whose trust in democratic institutions must be actively rebuilt. The **European Youth Goals** are the most direct expression of this positioning: developed through the Structured Dialogue, they represent	Instead, youth work is positioned alongside other tools such as mobility programmes, volunteering, youth information and dialogue mechanisms. In contrast to the European Youth Work Agenda or the Youth Work Conventions, the Strategy avoids sharp distinctions between youth work, volunteering, participation and education, and treats them as part of a broader youth policy toolbox	Youth organisations and civil society actors are positioned as intermediary actors facilitating participation, mobility and engagement, particularly through EU-funded programmes. Youth workers/persons of trust are implicitly included as part of this ecosystem but are not singled out as a distinct professional or policy group. Young people themselves are expected to participate through structured mechanisms such as the EU Youth Dialogue, consultations and youth-led initiatives, contributing to agenda-setting rather than implementation. The **European Youth Goals** are the substantive	binding obligations on Member States, does not guarantee funding for youth work as a field, and does not address systematically the working conditions, recognition or sustainability of youth work systems. Youth work risks being instrumentalised as a delivery mechanism for participation goals without corresponding structural support. Compared with the European Youth Work Agenda and the outcomes of the Youth Work Conventions, the EU Youth Strategy prioritises policy coordination and participation outcomes over the development of youth work as a	Action 16 - the strongest direct operational link **Anti-Racism:** Joint UNESCO anti-racism education project explicitly referenced as aligned with the EU Youth Strategy [Chapter I] **Intergenerational Fairness:** Strategy explicitly referenced as the framework to be strengthened with an intergenerational fairness dimension in the post-2027 cycle. **Union of Skills:** EU Youth Strategy's empowerment goals on civic knowledge and democratic resilience are directly aligned - connection not made in the Union of Skills itself.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
rather than an operational delivery instrument. A key structural element of the Strategy are the eleven European Youth Goals. Covering areas from mental health, employment and sustainable living to quality learning, participation and fostering the sense of belonging to the EU, the Goals translate young people's own priorities into concrete policy reference points and are implemented through the EU Youth Dialogue conducted by National Agencies across all Erasmus+ programme countries.	young people's own articulation of what matters most in their lives and what European policy should prioritise. Several Goals explicitly call for recognition of youth work, sustainable funding for youth organisations and meaningful youth participation in decision-making - making young people not only the subject of the Strategy but active shapers of its political agenda.		output of this process — eleven cross-sectoral priorities developed through the Structured Dialogue that formally define young people's contribution to EU policy agenda-setting. National Agencies play a key role in implementing the Goals through the EU Youth Dialogue in each programme country.	professional, ethical and systemic field. The **European Youth Goals** provide an additional policy lever: as a formal annex to the Strategy, they create a reference point for connecting young people's priorities to broader EU policy processes. However, like the Strategy itself, the Goals carry no binding obligations - their influence depends entirely on political will to reference and act on them across policy domains.	**Democracy Shield and New Democratic Pact:** EU Youth Dialogue and Erasmus+ participation activities could directly contribute to both instruments' societal resilience goals - not referenced in the Democracy Shield. **Strategic Agenda 2024–2029:** EU Youth Strategy is the operational framework underpinning youth employment and participation commitments - not explicitly referenced.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030 The Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 provides the political and normative framework for the Council of Europe's youth sector for the period 2020–2030. It defines a long-term mission to enable young people across Europe to uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.	Young people are positioned as key democratic actors and partners, whose creativity, social commitment and competencies are essential to the sustainability of democratic societies. The Strategy treats young people not only as beneficiaries of rights but as individuals and collectives capable of actively shaping democracy, public life and social cohesion. Young people are framed as rights-holders who must have effective access to human rights protections, enabling environments for participation, and opportunities to influence decision-making at local,	Youth work is explicitly recognised as a core structural priority of the Strategy and a pillar of democratic resilience. It is understood as a distinct field that supports young people's empowerment, participation, rights awareness and capacity to engage critically with society. Youth work is seen as both a practice and a system, encompassing youth workers/persons of trust, youth leaders, youth organisations, spaces and methodologies rooted in non-formal learning. The Strategy links youth work directly to democracy, human rights education, social inclusion and peaceful coexistence.	The Strategy assigns clear institutional responsibility to the Council of Europe Youth Sector, operating through its unique co-management system, where government representatives and youth representatives jointly decide priorities and actions. The Youth Department is responsible for implementing the Strategy through statutory bodies, programmes, advisory missions and financial instruments. Member States are expected to engage with the Strategy by aligning national youth policies with Council of Europe standards, participating in intergovernmental	The Strategy relies on concrete institutional instruments, including the co-managed statutory bodies, the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, the European Youth Foundation, youth policy advisory missions, and the partnership with the European Commission in the youth field. These instruments allow the Strategy to combine norm-setting, capacity-building, funding and participation within a single governance framework. At the same time, the Strategy does not impose binding obligations on member states beyond political commitments, and its impact depends on the willingness and capacity of	**Civil Society Strategy:** The CoE Youth Sector Strategy's emphasis on civic space, youth organisations' resilience and co-management shares the same underlying concern as the Civil Society Strategy's enabling environment objective - from a different institutional framework but with directly complementary standards and tools. **New Democratic Pact:** CoE Youth Sector Strategy is the direct upstream framework for the Pact's youth dimension - explicitly referenced in the ministerial conference integration [Roadmap, p.8] **Democracy Shield:** Strategy's normative

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
Unlike EU framework strategies, it functions simultaneously as a mission statement, policy guide and operational reference for the Council of Europe's statutory bodies, programmes and instruments in the youth field. The Strategy structures all youth sector activities, including youth participation mechanisms, youth work development, youth policy support and funding instruments. It is also explicitly designed to guide cooperation with member states and to support national youth policies in meeting Council of Europe standards. Youth work is identified not as a marginal tool but	national and European levels. The Strategy explicitly recognises that young people face structural barriers to participation and rights, and that public institutions have a responsibility to remove these barriers. Youth participation is framed as meaningful only when it is influential, inclusive and sustained, not symbolic or consultative in name only.	Youth workers/persons of trust are recognised as key multipliers of Council of Europe values, and youth work is understood as needing quality development, standard-setting, professional support and recognition. Unlike the EU Youth Strategy, the Council of Europe framework treats youth work not only instrumentally but as a policy field in its own right, closely linked to ethical standards, values and public responsibility.	cooperation and making use of support mechanisms such as youth policy advisory missions. Youth organisations, youth workers/persons of trust and youth civil society are recognised as essential partners in implementation, advocacy and values transmission. Young people themselves are positioned as co-decision-makers within the co-management system and as active contributors to democratic life, not merely as recipients of programmes or protection.	national authorities to engage. While youth work is strongly recognised at the normative level, disparities in recognition, resources and working conditions across member states remain an acknowledged challenge. The Strategy therefore combines strong value-based framing with flexible implementation, accepting uneven national realities while promoting common standards	framework on democratic resilience and youth work as a pillar of democracy directly supports the Shield's Pillar 3 objectives. **Gender Equality and Anti-Racism:** Strategy's emphasis on access to rights, inclusive societies and living together in diversity directly intersects with both strategies' objectives. **Intergenerational Fairness:** Strategy's community-based and participatory approach to youth development aligns with the 'Fair Places' and 'Fair Opportunities' dimensions. **Union of Skills:** Strategy's recognition agenda for youth work and non-formal learning

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
as one of the four thematic priorities, alongside democratic revitalisation, access to rights and inclusive societies.					complements the Skills Portability Initiative. **Preparedness:** Strategy's emphasis on youth work as a pillar of democratic resilience could inform the preparedness priority under Erasmus+/ESC.
The European Training Strategy https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/trainingstrategy/ The European Training Strategy 2021–2027 (ETS) is a European strategic framework dedicated to strengthening youth work through education, training and capacity-	Young people are not the primary direct target group of the ETS; rather, they are positioned indirectly, as the ultimate beneficiaries of higher-quality youth work. The Strategy assumes that improved education, training and competence development of youth workers/persons of trust and trainers will lead to youth work that better addresses young people's needs, inclusion,	Youth work is understood as a distinct professional and voluntary field grounded in non-formal and informal learning, operating across local, national, European and international contexts. The ETS treats youth work primarily through the lens of competence development, quality assurance and professionalisation, while explicitly recognising the diversity of youth work	The ETS defines a shared but clearly structured set of roles within its implementation architecture. The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre acts as the central coordinator, steering the Strategy, developing tools, organising capacity-building actions and ensuring coherence with EU youth policy priorities.	The ETS relies on a comprehensive set of operational instruments, including Training and Cooperation Activities, Network Activities, Strategic National Agency Cooperation projects, competence models for youth workers/persons of trust and trainers, the Youthpass Strategy, digital tools such as YOCOMO (the Youth workers/persons of trust Competence Model	**Union of Skills:** ETS's competence-based frameworks for youth workers/persons of trust and trainers directly complement the Skills Portability Initiative and validation agenda - Youthpass as a recognition tool is the direct link. **Preparedness Strategy:** ETS could serve as the framework through which preparedness competences are systematically built into

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
building of youth workers/persons of trust and trainers. Its scope is deliberately specialised: it does not regulate youth policy as a whole, but focuses on the conditions, quality, recognition and sustainability of learning pathways for those who operate youth work at European and international levels. The ETS positions itself explicitly as an implementation-support strategy for broader youth policy frameworks, in particular the European Youth Work Agenda, the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, relevant Council Conclusions, and the Council of Europe youth framework. It is embedded operationally in Erasmus+	participation and democratic engagement. Young people are also recognised as part of the broader community of practice, including through youth representations, participation structures and youth-led organisations, but the ETS does not frame young people as co-decision-makers within its governance in the same way as youth policy frameworks do. Instead, youth are positioned as the reference point against which quality, relevance and impact of youth worker education and training are assessed.	traditions and roles across Europe. The Strategy places strong emphasis on competence-based frameworks for both youth workers/persons of trust and trainers, viewing these as essential for quality development, recognition and validation. Youth work is framed as a field that must continuously adapt to social, political, digital and economic changes, and therefore requires structured opportunities for innovation, experimentation and reflective practice. European and international youth work are not treated as separate from youth work “as such”, but as integral dimensions	National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps are key implementers, responsible for translating the ETS into concrete training, cooperation and networking activities and for steering Training and Cooperation Activities and Network Activities at national and European levels. SALTO Resource Centres, trainers, youth workers/persons of trust, youth work organisations, researchers and platforms are positioned as core actors within a wide community of practice, contributing expertise, innovation and critical reflection.	project), and knowledge-management mechanisms including Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST). These instruments allow the Strategy to operate simultaneously at micro, meso and macro levels, supporting individual competence development, organisational capacity and systemic change. At the same time, the ETS acknowledges clear internal limits. It does not impose binding obligations on Member States, cannot regulate national education systems, and depends heavily on programme-based funding cycles and institutional cooperation. Recognition of youth workers/persons	the youth work profession - connection not made. **Gender Equality and Anti-Racism:** ETS trainer competence frameworks could embed gender-sensitive and anti-racism education approaches - significant opportunity for mainstreaming. **Democracy Shield and New Democratic Pact:** Strengthened youth worker competences in media literacy, critical thinking and democratic citizenship education directly support both instruments. In addition, ETS competence “being civically engaged” is directly connected to both of the strategies. **Intergenerational Fairness:** ETS's sustainability and

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes, and functions as a connective layer between policy ambitions and concrete capacity-building practices. Although time-limited to 2021–2027, the Strategy explicitly looks beyond this period and frames itself as future-oriented, addressing long-term development of the youth work field. The ETS explicitly names the Youthpass Strategy, the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and the Youth Participation Strategy as connected strategies, positioning the ETS as a hub within a coherent cluster of quality		that enrich the field and contribute to its overall development.	The European Commission provides political steering and ensures alignment with EU strategies and programmes, while advisory and consultative functions are concentrated in the ETS Advisory Group, which links policy development, programme implementation and field expertise.	of trust and trainers remains uneven across Europe, and validation systems largely depend on national uptake. The Strategy therefore positions itself as an enabler, connector and igniter of processes, rather than as an enforcement mechanism, accepting variability while aiming to increase coherence, quality and visibility across the European youth work landscape.	quality agenda for youth work supports the intergenerational social infrastructure dimension.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
instruments embedded in Erasmus+ and ESC.					
Youth Participation Strategy. A strategy for enhancing youth participation in democratic life through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/ypstrategy/ The Youth Participation Strategy provides a strategic framework for strengthening youth participation in democratic life through the Erasmus+	Young people are positioned as rights-holders, democratic actors and agents of change. The Strategy explicitly rejects narratives of youth apathy and instead recognises that young people are actively engaged, often through non-traditional or alternative forms of participation, including activism, volunteering, digital engagement and community action. Youth participation is defined as young people having the right, means, space, opportunity and, where necessary, support to freely express their	Youth work is not the central subject of the Strategy, but it is implicitly recognised as a key enabling environment for youth participation. Youth work appears primarily as a field that provides spaces, relationships, methodologies and professional support enabling young people to participate meaningfully in democratic life. The Strategy links youth participation strongly to non-formal education, volunteering and youth-led projects, all of which are core domains of youth work practice.	The Strategy assigns responsibilities primarily to programme stakeholders rather than to young people themselves. The SALTO Participation & Information Resource Centre is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, evaluating and revising the Strategy, and for convening a co-steering group composed jointly of stakeholders and young people. National Agencies play a central role in embedding youth participation principles within programme implementation, supporting applicants and	The Strategy relies on programme-based instruments rather than binding regulation. Its main levers are Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps actions, including youth participation projects, volunteering, solidarity projects, training and cooperation activities, networking activities and strategic cooperation between National Agencies. Additional instruments include guidance tools, training modules, research dissemination mechanisms and the SALTO	**Democracy Shield:** Youth Participation Strategy's entire framework: youth voice, civic engagement, democratic participation, is directly relevant to the Shield's Pillar 3 and yet not referenced. **New Democratic Pact:** Youth participation mechanisms (EU Youth Dialogue, youth councils, youth parliaments) directly operationalise the Pact's 'Learning and Practising Democracy' pillar. **Civil Society Strategy:** The EU Youth Dialogue and Youth Policy Dialogues, the primary instruments of the Youth Participation Strategy, are explicitly

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Its primary focus is not on regulating participation in general, but on maximising the contribution of EU youth programmes to democratic participation by young people. The Strategy is explicitly designed as a support and coordination tool for programme stakeholders rather than as a guide for individual project applicants. Its scope covers participation at multiple levels, ranging from local community action to national and European decision-making processes.	views, influence decision-making and be active within democratic and civic life. Young people are not treated as a homogenous group; the Strategy consistently acknowledges diversity among young people and highlights the importance of inclusion, particularly of young people with fewer opportunities. Youth participation is framed as both individual and collective, formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional, with all forms recognised as potentially valuable if implemented inclusively and meaningfully.	Rather than defining youth work as a distinct policy field, the Strategy treats it as part of a broader youth sector ecosystem that includes youth organisations, youth workers/persons of trust, trainers and information providers. Youth work is understood functionally, as a means to develop competences for democratic participation, facilitate civic space, support youth-led initiatives and foster inclusion. Structural issues such as recognition, working conditions or professional frameworks for youth workers/persons of trust are not addressed in depth, but the Strategy	beneficiaries, and involving young people in programme management. Other key actors include youth organisations, youth councils, youth information providers, researchers and youth participation experts, all of whom contribute to implementation, capacity building and knowledge development. Young people are expected not only to participate in funded projects, but also to be involved in governance and steering processes related to programme implementation, particularly through pilot models for youth involvement in decision-making structures	Participation Resource Pool. Monitoring and evaluation are built into the Strategy through outcome indicators linked to European Youth Goals, and through participatory evaluation processes involving young people and stakeholders. At the same time, the Strategy acknowledges important limits. Its impact depends heavily on how consistently National Agencies and other stakeholders embed participation principles in programme implementation. While individual-level learning outcomes are strong, evidence of system-level impact	named in the Civil Society Strategy as structured engagement mechanisms [Section 2.1, p.7]. Youth participation in democratic life is a core objective of both strategies, making this one of the strongest cross-set connections in the mapping. **Intergenerational Fairness:** Strategy's focus on participatory processes and youth voice directly complements the 'Fair Policymaking' dimension [Section 4.1]. **Anti-Racism:** Structured youth participation is a vehicle for engaging young people from minority backgrounds on anti-racism - not referenced in the Anti-Racism Strategy.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
The Strategy aligns itself closely with the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 and the European Youth Goals, particularly those related to participation, inclusion and civic engagement. It is conceived as a living document, regularly reviewed and updated through a participatory governance mechanism, and is intended to remain relevant at least until the end of the EU Youth Strategy period in 2027.		does emphasise the need for sustainable support and quality youth work in order to strengthen participation and inclusion.		remains limited, and the Strategy explicitly recognises the need to strengthen links between programme activities and broader policy change.	**Gender Equality:** Youth participation activities offer space for young women's leadership and political voice - not referenced under political participation [Principle 7]. **Union of Skills:** Youth participation as an active citizenship competence is directly relevant to the civic and democratic skills dimension: connection absent.
Implementation guidelines Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy	Young people are positioned primarily as participants with differentiated access conditions, rather than as a uniform group. The Strategy explicitly recognises that some	Youth work is not defined as a standalone policy field in the Strategy, but it is repeatedly referenced as a key domain for inclusion practice. Youth work appears alongside education,	The Strategy sets out clearly differentiated responsibilities across programme actors. The European Commission provides the overarching framework and monitoring requirements.	The Strategy relies on a wide range of programme-level instruments to foster inclusion and diversity. These include prioritisation of inclusion in project assessment, improved accessibility and user-	**Anti-Racism:** Strategy's focus on reaching young people from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds directly complements the Anti-Racism Strategy's social equality objectives.

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionstrategy/ The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy provides a horizontal implementation framework for ensuring equitable access to Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps for people facing barriers to participation. Its scope is cross-sectoral, covering education, training, youth and sport, and applies to all programme actions, funding mechanisms and phases of the project lifecycle. The Strategy is explicitly designed to operationalise inclusion and diversity as a core programme principle,	young people face structural barriers that limit their effective access to programme opportunities and therefore require targeted support. Youth are framed first and foremost as rights-holders, entitled to equal opportunities in education, training, volunteering and participation in democratic life. Young people with fewer opportunities are described not as a marginal subgroup, but as individuals whose circumstances interact with programme structures and outreach practices to create exclusion.	training and volunteering as one of the main contexts in which barriers to access can be identified and addressed. The Strategy explicitly recognises youth work as a field with accumulated expertise in reaching young people with fewer opportunities, particularly at local and community level. Youth work is implicitly understood as a relational, non-formal and community-embedded practice that enables outreach, trust-building, mentoring and long-term accompaniment. The Strategy treats youth organisations and youth workers/persons of trust as essential intermediaries	National Agencies are assigned a central coordinating role, including the development of national inclusion and diversity action plans, the appointment of Inclusion and Diversity Officers, targeted outreach and tailored support for applicants and beneficiaries. Resource Centres and EACEA support capacity-building, knowledge sharing and training across sectors. Beneficiary organisations are expected to integrate inclusion and diversity throughout project design, implementation and follow-up, including participant selection, preparation, support	friendliness of programme tools, preparatory visits, reinforced mentorship, dedicated financial support, smaller and more accessible project formats, step-by-step participation pathways, short-term and blended mobility, local European activities, online exchanges and language learning support. At the same time, the Strategy explicitly recognises structural limits. Inclusion outcomes depend heavily on the capacity, commitment and resources of implementing bodies and beneficiary organisations. Differences in national contexts and administrative practices lead to uneven implementation.	**Gender Equality:** Strategy's intersectional approach to barriers aligns with the Gender Equality Strategy's framing; reaching girls and women from disadvantaged backgrounds. **Union of Skills:** Equity work within Erasmus+ explicitly referenced for making Erasmus+ more inclusive [Strand C]. **Intergenerational Fairness:** Inclusion in programme access for young people from all backgrounds contributes to 'Fair Opportunities' and 'Fair Places' dimensions. **Preparedness:** Strategy's outreach expertise could contribute to ensuring diverse youth participation in preparedness priority

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
rather than as a standalone theme or optional objective. It translates legal provisions in the programme regulations into concrete implementation guidance for National Agencies, Resource Centres, EACEA and beneficiary organisations. The document focuses on practical mechanisms, governance roles and shared definitions to ensure consistency across countries and sectors, while allowing flexibility for national contexts.	The Strategy consistently emphasises dignity, autonomy and non-stigmatisation, and explicitly discourages deficit-based approaches. Youth participation is also linked to broader objectives of social cohesion, democratic engagement and shared citizenship, but youth are not positioned as governance actors within the Strategy itself.	for inclusion, particularly in awareness-raising, participant preparation, mentoring, community engagement and follow-up. However, issues such as youth worker recognition, working conditions or professional autonomy are outside the scope of the document.	during activities and the recognition of learning outcomes. Organisations are explicitly encouraged to invest in their own organisational capacity for inclusion and to cooperate with local actors working with target groups. Young people themselves are positioned as participants whose needs, feedback and learning outcomes must be actively considered at all project stages, but they are not assigned formal decision-making roles within programme governance.	While shared definitions and monitoring indicators aim to improve comparability, the document acknowledges that barriers are often cumulative and context-specific, requiring judgement and flexibility at local level. The Strategy therefore functions as an enabling and coordinating framework rather than as an enforcement mechanism.	activities under Erasmus+ and ESC. **Democracy Shield:** Reaching young people with fewer opportunities for democratic participation directly supports the Shield's societal resilience objectives. **The Civil Society Strategy**'s inclusivity principle explicitly requires dialogue to include "organisations representing groups that are underrepresented, marginalised or in vulnerable situations" [Section 2.2, Principle 6] - directly mirroring the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy's target groups and methodology. Both strategies address

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
					structural barriers to participation, from different programme angles
SALTO European Solidarity Corps Strategy 2021–2027 https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4299/SALTO-ESC-Strategy.pdf The SALTO European Solidarity Corps Strategy 2021–2027 defines the strategic orientation of the SALTO ESC Resource Centre for the duration of the European Solidarity Corps programme period. Its focus is to support, shape and strengthen the	Young people are positioned primarily as active agents of solidarity, rather than only as beneficiaries of learning or mobility. The Strategy frames young people as volunteers, solidarity project organisers, mentors and community actors who actively contribute to societal change through solidarity-based action. Youth are also positioned as members of a broader European Solidarity Corps community, which includes organisations, trainers,	Youth work is not explicitly defined as a separate field, but it is implicitly embedded throughout the Strategy. The Strategy consistently relies on youth work logics such as non-formal learning, mentoring, community building, reflective practice and competence development. Trainers, mentors and organisations active in solidarity projects are treated as key youth-work-related actors, even when the terminology of	The Strategy assigns SALTO ESC the role of a hub of expertise, coordination and innovation within the European Solidarity Corps. SALTO ESC is responsible for generating knowledge on solidarity and volunteering, supporting National Agencies in programme implementation, coordinating working groups, organising training and networking activities, and fostering cooperation across programmes. National Agencies are positioned as key	The Strategy relies on a wide range of operational instruments, including networking activities (NET), training frameworks such as the Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC), thematic working groups, quality label support, publications, research calls, resource libraries, online exchange platforms and regular staff and community meetings. These instruments are designed to support knowledge transfer, quality assurance and community building across Europe.	**Preparedness Strategy:** ESC humanitarian aid volunteering directly relevant to crisis preparedness - ESC explicitly named in Action 16 for the new preparedness priority. **Intergenerational Fairness:** ESC explicitly referenced as supporting 'intergenerational teams of volunteers' [Section 5, p.11]. **Democracy Shield and New Democratic Pact:** Solidarity as a democratic value and civic engagement through ESC directly support both

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
meaning, quality and impact of solidarity-based volunteering and solidarity projects across Europe and partner regions. The Strategy functions as a programme-embedded development framework, aligning SALTO ESC activities with EU youth priorities while responding to the concrete needs of National Agencies and programme stakeholders. Its scope is explicitly operational and systemic. It covers solidarity as a value, European volunteering as a practice, programme implementation quality, cooperation between implementing bodies, and the development of a European community of	mentors, municipalities and policy actors. The document emphasises youth participation through solidarity, highlighting learning, community impact and civic engagement as outcomes of participation in the European Solidarity Corps. Young people are not positioned as co-governors of the programme at policy level, but their experiences, learning outcomes and community impact are treated as central reference points for improving volunteering policies and programme design. Particular attention is given to inclusion, value-based learning and	"youth work" is not foregrounded. Solidarity projects and volunteering are understood as learning and citizenship practices, closely aligned with youth work values. The Strategy treats solidarity as a living concept that must be explored, debated and continuously re-interpreted through practice, research and dialogue. Youth work expertise is especially visible in the emphasis on quality frameworks, training cycles, mentoring models and communities of practice, positioning youth work as a carrier of programme quality and	implementers and multipliers, responsible for using the programme to promote solidarity nationally and for collaborating with stakeholders at different levels. Trainers, mentors, organisations, municipalities and researchers are framed as members of a growing community of practice that shares responsibility for quality, learning and impact. Young people are positioned as participants and contributors within this ecosystem, while policy actors are engaged through research dissemination, networking	At the same time, the Strategy acknowledges structural limits that shape its action. SALTO ESC operates within the financial and regulatory framework of the European Solidarity Corps and depends on cooperation with National Agencies and other SALTOs. The discontinuation of jobs and traineeships after 2020 illustrates the constraints imposed by programme budgets. The Strategy therefore positions SALTO ESC as an enabler and connector, capable of shaping narratives, improving practice and influencing policy uptake, but not of	instruments' societal resilience dimensions. **Anti-Racism:** ESC solidarity projects are a vehicle for intercultural engagement and community action: could be explicitly positioned as an anti-racism instrument. **Union of Skills:** ESC learning outcomes could be connected to the Union of Skills' validation agenda through Youthpass integration. **Civil Society Strategy:** ESC is explicitly named in the Civil Society Strategy as a key funding programme for civil society [Section 4, p.13], and the post-2027 Erasmus+ with integrated ESC is framed as a civil society instrument. The SALTO ESC Strategy's

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
practice around the European Solidarity Corps. The Strategy is explicitly linked to broader European frameworks, including the EU Youth Strategy, the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, the Youth Participation Strategy, the European Training Strategy and the European Youth Work Agenda, while maintaining a distinct focus on solidarity within the youth programmes.	recognition of solidarity experience	ethical orientation within the European Solidarity Corps.	and input into policy development processes	enforcing change independently	emphasis on embedding solidarity and developing ESC as a quality programme is directly relevant to the Civil Society Strategy's funding and enabling environment objectives.
The Youthpass Strategy https://www.youthpass.eu/en/about-youthpass/youthpass-strategy/	Young people are positioned first and foremost as learners whose learning deserves visibility, recognition and ownership, regardless of where and how it takes place.	Youth work is understood as a key learning environment in which significant non-formal and informal learning takes place, and whose educational value requires	The Strategy assigns a central coordinating role to the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, working in close cooperation with the European Commission.	The main instrument for implementing the Strategy is the Youthpass multilingual technical tool and website, supported by educational materials, training activities, networking formats,	**Union of Skills:** Youthpass is the primary existing mechanism connecting youth work non-formal learning to the broader validation and recognition agenda: directly relevant to the Skills Portability

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
The Youthpass Strategy provides a strategic framework for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the European youth field, with specific reference to the Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Its focus is not limited to the Youthpass certificate as a technical tool, but extends to Youthpass as an educational approach, a recognition process and a strategic action framework for strengthening the learning dimension of youth work and volunteering. The scope of the strategy is both programme-embedded and system-oriented. It aims to	The Strategy frames youth not as passive recipients of certificates, but as active agents in a reflection process that enables them to identify, articulate and document their learning outcomes. Youthpass is conceived to support young people's awareness of their competences and their ability to transfer these competences into educational, civic and professional contexts. At the same time, the Strategy explicitly recognises that youth learning takes place in diverse contexts and that youth learners have differentiated needs. Particular attention is given to ensuring	stronger articulation and recognition. The Strategy frames youth work as a space where learning is intentional, relational and embedded in practice, even when it does not resemble formal education. Youth work is also positioned as a field requiring greater professional recognition, both for its contribution to young people's learning and for the competence development of youth workers/persons of trust themselves. The Strategy explicitly treats youth workers/persons of trust, trainers and other practitioners as learners and Youthpass holders,	These actors are responsible for strategic development, technical evolution, guidance, monitoring and support related to Youthpass. National Agencies and the SALTO network are positioned as key implementers and multipliers, responsible for embedding Youthpass in programme implementation, supporting beneficiaries and ensuring accessibility, multilingualism and visibility at national level. Youth workers/persons of trust, trainers, mentors and organisations are assigned a critical pedagogical role, as they are expected to facilitate learning reflection, explain	research and monitoring mechanisms. The Strategy structures its action through three interlinked Fields of Action: implementation and further development of Youthpass, learning and recognition in youth work, and policy support for recognition and validation systems. At the same time, the Strategy clearly acknowledges internal limits. Youthpass remains a voluntary tool, dependent on awareness, motivation and facilitation by youth workers/persons of trust and organisations. Recognition beyond the youth field cannot be enforced and relies on cooperation with	Initiative [Strand C] - connection not made. **Preparedness Strategy:** Youthpass could recognise competences developed through preparedness-related volunteering and youth work activities - not mentioned in Action 16. **Gender Equality and Anti-Racism:** Youthpass documentation of competences in intercultural, gender-sensitive and anti-racism areas could feed into both strategies' monitoring frameworks. **Intergenerational Fairness:** Youthpass recognition of intergenerational volunteering competences aligns with the Strategy's

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
strengthen Youthpass implementation within the two EU youth programmes while also contributing to broader European policy processes on learning, competences, validation and youth work recognition. The Strategy explicitly positions itself as a bridging document between practice, programme implementation and policy development, guiding Youthpass development and use until at least the end of the current EU Youth Strategy period in 2027.	accessibility and inclusiveness, especially for young people with fewer opportunities. Youth are not positioned as governance actors within the Youthpass system, but they are placed at the centre of the learning and recognition process, with future developments intended to give them greater ownership of their Youthpass profiles and learning narratives.	and acknowledges that their learning outcomes need recognition frameworks suitable for professional contexts. Youthpass is therefore understood as both a tool and a catalyst for strengthening the quality, reflection practices and recognition of youth work across Europe.	Youthpass to participants and accompany the recognition process. Authorities and policy stakeholders are addressed primarily as recipients of evidence, insights and recommendations derived from Youthpass implementation. While decision-making power remains with institutions, responsibility for quality implementation and impact is distributed across the youth work community of practice.	education, employment and policy systems. Implementation quality varies across contexts, and sustained impact depends on long-term capacity building, evidence generation and policy dialogue rather than on technical instruments alone.	emphasis on skill transfer across generations. **Strategic Agenda 2024–2029:** Youthpass as a recognition instrument supports the Agenda's investment in skills and lifelong learning - not referenced.
European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local	Young people are positioned as rights-holders, equal actors in	Youth work is recognised explicitly as an essential	The Charter assigns clear responsibilities to public authorities. Local and	The Charter relies on normative leverage rather than enforceable	**New Democratic Pact:** Charter is a direct normative instrument

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
and Regional Life (2025) https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/revised-european-charter-on-the-participation-of-young-people-in-local-and-regional-li-1 The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life is a normative human-rights-based standard aimed at promoting and strengthening youth participation in democratic decision-making at local and regional levels across Council of Europe member States. Its scope is explicitly multi-level, addressing	society and agents of change, not merely as beneficiaries of participation initiatives. The Charter explicitly recognises youth participation as an individual human right with a collective dimension, grounded in international human rights law. Young people are framed as having the right, the means, the space, the structures, the opportunities and the full support required to influence decisions affecting their lives. At the same time, the Charter emphasises the diversity of young people and the intersectional barriers they may face. It explicitly addresses	enabling environment for youth participation. The Charter frames youth work as a space where democracy, human rights and participation are learned and practised through non-formal education, peer engagement and community-based action. Youth work is treated as both a support system for participation and a democratic practice in its own right. The Charter calls on local and regional authorities to ensure adequate conditions, recognition and support for youth work, including both paid and voluntary youth work. Youth centres, youth-led spaces and youth civil	regional authorities are designated as the main duty-bearers for creating enabling environments, democratic structures and procedures that allow young people to participate meaningfully in decision-making. National authorities are responsible for establishing favourable legal, political and financial frameworks and for supporting local and regional implementation. Young people, youth organisations and youth councils are positioned as partners in co-management, with the Charter explicitly promoting co-decision-making models whereby young people are involved	mechanisms. Its primary instruments are standards, principles and guidance, complemented by calls for dissemination, translation, education, training and evaluation. It promotes a wide range of participation infrastructures, including youth councils, deliberative democracy mechanisms, participatory budgeting, consultation processes, digital participation tools, youth centres and civic education provision. At the same time, the Charter acknowledges internal limits. Implementation depends on political will, institutional capacity and	within the CoE framework that the Pact builds upon - local-level democracy and youth participation are central to both. **Democracy Shield (EU):** Charter's standards on youth participation in local democratic processes could inform EU-level approaches to societal resilience and civic engagement under Pillar 3. **Intergenerational Fairness:** Charter's focus on local and regional authorities as duty-bearers for youth participation directly complements the strategy's 'Fair Places' and 'Fair Opportunities' dimensions. **Gender Equality:** Charter's attention to equal access, non-discrimination and

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
responsibilities at local, regional and national levels while recognising local and regional authorities as the primary duty-bearers for implementation. The Charter functions as a reference framework rather than a programme-specific strategy. It sets out principles, structures, rights and support measures required to ensure meaningful, inclusive and sustainable youth participation. The 2025 revision replaces the 1992 and 2003 versions and responds to contemporary socio-economic, political, digital and geopolitical challenges, including democratic backsliding, shrinking civic space,	discrimination, inequality and structural obstacles linked to gender, disability, socio-economic status, migration, rurality, ethnicity and other factors. Youth participation is not restricted to formal political processes but includes a broad spectrum of civic, social, environmental and economic engagement, with equal legitimacy given to traditional and non-traditional forms of participation.	society organisations are identified as key democratic infrastructures that must be sustainably resourced. Youth work is therefore understood not as a delivery mechanism alone, but as a structural pillar of democratic participation at local and regional level.	from agenda-setting through implementation and evaluation. Youth councils, youth civil society and youth-led structures are recognised as permanent participation mechanisms requiring autonomy, adequate resources and formal recognition. The Council of Europe institutions commit to monitoring, reviewing and supporting implementation through multilevel cooperation.	sustained resourcing at local and regional level. Participation risks becoming symbolic if not connected to real influence, feedback, accountability and long-term support. The Charter therefore emphasises regular evaluation, transparency and joint review involving young people themselves, recognising that youth participation is a continuous, resource-intensive and relational process, not a one-off activity.	participation of marginalised groups aligns with the Gender Equality Strategy's political participation dimension [Principle 7]. **Anti-Racism:** Charter's anti-discrimination framing and commitment to reaching youth from minority backgrounds complements the Anti-Racism Strategy's social equality objectives. **Strategic Agenda 2024–2029:** Charter provides the normative architecture for citizen engagement and democratic resilience at local level - implicitly supports the Agenda's democratic resilience dimension. **Civil Society Strategy**: Both instruments address

Focus and scope	How are young people seen?	How youth work is defined and understood	Roles and responsibilities	Instruments, levers and internal limits	Links to Set 1 Strategies (beyond youth & youth work)
crises and growing inequalities affecting young people across Europe					local democratic participation and the enabling conditions for civil society and youth organisations at local and regional level. The Charter's standards on youth participation in local governance and the Civil Society Strategy's emphasis on grassroots CSO engagement and local civic space are directly complementary - operating at the same level but from different normative frameworks.

SECTION 3: Cross-Reference Matrix

The matrix shows the theoretical connection as perceived from the strategies' contents (how the strategies align in their topics, principles, and ambitions, for instance) between each Section 2 strategy (rows) and each Section 1 strategy (columns), based on the analysis across both mapping tables.

Legend: ●●● Strong / direct connection ●● Moderate connection ● Weak / indirect connection – No significant link identified

	Preparedness	Gender Equality	Anti-Racism	Union of Skills	Democracy Shield	Intergen. Fairness	Strategic Agenda	New Dem. Pact	Civil Society Strategy
4th EYWC	●●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●	●●●	●●●
EU Youth Strategy	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●
CoE Youth Strategy 2030	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●	–	●●●	●●
European Training Strategy	●●	–	–	●●●	●●	●●	●	●●	–
Youth Participation Strategy	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●	●●●	●●●
Inclusion & Diversity Strategy	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●	●●	●●
SALTO ESC Strategy	●●●	–	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●	●●	●●
Youthpass Strategy	●●	●	●●	●●●	●	●●	●	–	–
Revised European Charter	●●	●●	●●●	–	●●●	●●●	●	●●●	●●●

SECTION 4: Key observations: the most valuable links to explore

The following observations draw on the full mapping to identify not just patterns, but priorities: where the connections between youth work, Erasmus+/ESC and other European strategies are most worth developing, and why.

1. Youth work is named but not structurally integrated, and this distinction matters

In most 'Set 1 strategies', youth work is mentioned only 'in passing', if at all: a single sentence, one item in a list, or a general reference to 'non-formal learning'. It is rarely treated as a field with its own expertise, methods and professional infrastructure that could help these strategies reach their goals. The clearest exception is the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, which names youth workers (*note: from now on we will systematically add: persons of trust, top cover all types of projects under E+ and ESC*) as a professional group alongside teachers and trainers [p.9].

However, being named is not the same as being built in. The Preparedness Strategy names youth workers/persons of trust, but in Action 16 it still treats youth organisations as grant applicants. It does not treat the field as a partner in designing the work. Closing that gap means more than adding youth work to the text of a strategy. It means writing it into how the strategy is run: its delivery structures, its governance, and the mechanisms that hold it to account.

★ The most valuable link: the youth sector and the European Democracy Shield

The European Democracy Shield is the strategy that matters most to the youth sector in the near term, and also the one with the widest gap. Its Pillar 3, on societal resilience and citizens' engagement, could almost have been written around what the youth sector already does: non-formal citizenship education, media literacy, peer learning, youth participation in democratic life, dialogue across difference, volunteering and democratic engagement at community level. The European Youth Work Agenda already frames youth work as a contribution to democratic resilience, and both the Youth Participation Strategy and ESC volunteering line up directly with the Shield's resilience aims. Yet the Shield says nothing about young people as a group. It does not mention youth work, youth participation, youth organisations or youth workers/persons of trust. It refers to Erasmus+ once, in the funding section, without linking it to the youth strand, to non-formal learning or to participation.

This is the one most worth pursuing because it is being built right now. The Shield is creating new institutions (the European Centre for Democratic Resilience), revised and new funding (AgoraEU) and new partnerships with civil society. These are founding decisions. If the youth sector is not written in as a partner at this stage, it risks being shut out of the governance and delivery for the whole policy cycle. The route is already there: the EU Youth Dialogue, Erasmus+ Youth Participation Projects and ESC Solidarity Projects are ready-made tools for Pillar 3. One example is particularly concrete: Europeers, the peer network of Erasmus+ and ESC alumni, is almost exactly the voluntary network of messengers the Shield says it wants to build for democratic outreach, an existing, working instrument the Shield has not noticed.

★ The most actionable link: Youthpass and the Union of Skills

The Union of Skills, through its Skills Portability Initiative and its wider work on validation, opens a clear opening for Youthpass to win formal standing in the EU's recognition system. Youthpass already records learning for more than 2.2 million Erasmus+ and ESC participants. It draws on two competence frameworks: the EU Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which shares the learning-outcomes logic behind the European Qualifications Framework, and the European Training Strategy competence framework for youth workers/persons of trust. It is an existing, working, EU-funded tool that reaches across the whole youth sector within the programmes.

Neither the Union of Skills Communication nor the Skills Portability Initiative mentions Youthpass at all, which is a visibility problem. The Union of Skills was published in March 2025 and runs to 2030, and the Portability Initiative is still being developed, so there is a live process to feed into. The European Training Strategy's competence models for youth workers and for trainers fit exactly with the Union of Skills' aim of competence-based qualifications, and RAY provides the evidence to justify including Youthpass in the Initiative's scope. Making the link means going to DG Employment and DG EAC with one specific ask: integrate Youthpass into the Skills Portability Initiative, or into the guidance on validating non-formal and informal learning.

2. The underused bridge: Erasmus+/ESC and the New Democratic Pact

Of all the 'Set 1 strategies', the New Democratic Pact for Europe takes in the youth sector most fully. It names youth work directly, sets up a dedicated conference on youth work and democracy, folds in the 10th Ministerial Conference on Youth, and puts youth participation at its centre. But there is a structural catch. The Pact is a Council of Europe process, while Erasmus+ and ESC are EU instruments. The obvious bridge, the EU–CoE Youth Partnership, exists on paper but is not always switched on for joint delivery.

The link most worth building is to use Erasmus+ Youth Participation Projects and ESC Solidarity Projects as the delivery route for the Pact's Pillar 1 ('Learning and Practising Democracy') and Pillar 3 ('Innovating for Democracy'). The Democracy Hackathon held at the European Youth Centre in Budapest already shows how this works. Making this a standing arrangement would join the two frameworks without new legislation: Erasmus+ and ESC activities would count as part of the Pact's consultation and innovation work and be recognised as such. There is a second link worth developing. The Pact worries about the shrinking civic space for youth organisations [Roadmap, pp.7 & 9], and the EU Strategy for Civil Society works on the conditions civil society needs. Together they invite a joint CoE–EU position that names youth organisations as a constituency in both.

3. The prevention gap: Gender equality, anti-racism and the missing youth sector

Both the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030 and the EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026–2030 put attitudes, behaviour and change at community level at the heart of what they want to achieve. The Gender Equality Strategy highlights the growing split between young men and young women driven by online misogyny and anti-gender movements and announces a study on the online networks targeting young men and boys [Principle 7, p.16]. The Anti-Racism Strategy announces a JRC study on how social media shapes young people's attitudes to ethnic diversity [Chapter I, p.6].

Both name the problem in their data and research, then point their remedies almost entirely at schools, law enforcement and formal institutions. Yet, organisations in the youth field already work in exactly the places these strategies are trying to reach: with young men and boys in informal settings, in ethnically diverse communities, in peer-education formats that can tackle prejudice and misogyny without putting people on the defensive. The informal, voluntary, relational character of youth work is the reason why the 'work works', in settings where formal instruction tends to provoke resistance.

The way in, for both strategies, is through the EU Youth Coordinator, already listed as a working partner in the Anti-Racism Strategy [Chapter IV, p.12], and through the Erasmus+ youth strand, which funds this kind of work through Youth Exchanges, Mobility of youth workers, Youth Participation Projects and Capacity Building projects. Sport is a particularly concrete shared entry point. Both strategies name sport as a way to tackle gender stereotypes and hate speech, and youth work organisations active in sport already reach young men and boys in the informal settings where attitudes are most open
to change.

4. The civic resilience cluster: Democracy, preparedness and the youth sector as a package

Four of the 'Set 1 strategies' worry about the same thing. The Preparedness Union Strategy, the European Democracy Shield, the New Democratic Pact for Europe and the EU Strategy for Civil Society all start from the fear that European societies are less able to defend democracy under pressure. Each one tackles one side of it. The Preparedness Strategy deals with hybrid threats. The Democracy Shield deals with disinformation and democratic backsliding. The Democratic Pact is about rebuilding trust in democratic institutions. The Civil Society Strategy is about giving civil society room to work and even says it is meant to complement the Democracy Shield [p.2], so the four clearly belong together.

The youth sector could help with all four, and it is already doing so through Erasmus+ and ESC's funding. The problem is that no strategy seems to see this and each one treats the youth sector as relevant to itself alone, not as a single resource that serves all four at once.

However, the work is already happening: the Youth Participation projects build media literacy and resistance to disinformation. ESC Solidarity Projects strengthen community cohesion. Training activities prepare youth workers/persons of trust to run democratic and human-rights education. Young volunteers support civil society organisations working on democratic resilience. These are not proposals; they are projects and processes that Erasmus+ and ESC do fund now. What is missing is a way to present them together, as one response to a shared problem rather than four separate answers to four separate strategies. KA2 Cooperation Partnerships appear to be a useful tool for that, for it leaves youth organisations build, test and share methods for civic education across different countries, which is exactly the infrastructure these four strategies need, and what none of them mentions. Pulling it together would mean getting DG EAC, the European External Action Service (which runs the Democracy Shield) and the Council of Europe Secretariat (which runs the Democratic Pact) to work in step, with the EU-CoE Youth Partnership's support.

5. The intergenerational opportunity: ESC as the most visible existing link

The Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness carries the richest set of programme references of any Set 1 documents. It names Erasmus+ for promoting intergenerational fairness and learning, and it cites the ESC for supporting 'intergenerational teams of volunteers'. That makes it the only Set 1 document to name both sides of the youth sector explicitly, youth participation and youth volunteering.

This matters because it is the first major EU strategy to reference ESC substantively, on the theme itself rather than only in the budget. It gives the youth sector a strong base to build an intergenerational profile, making Erasmus+ and ESC instruments for solidarity and learning across generations. ESC Solidarity Projects at local and regional level, which often bring different age groups together on community work, are an obvious channel. The work of SALTO Inclusion and Diversity on intergenerational solidarity offers a ready-made base of training tools, methods and practitioner networks to draw on. The Strategy's 'Voices of the Future' initiative, which invites local and regional authorities to help shape their regions' future, is a further entry point, one where youth councils and local youth organisations are natural participants that the text does not yet name.

6. The governance gap: Youth Dialogue is missing from most strategies

One absence runs through the 'Set 1 strategies': the EU Youth Dialogue. It appears in the EU Youth Strategy, but not in the Preparedness Strategy, the Democracy Shield, the Union of Skills, the Strategic Agenda or the Anti-Racism Strategy, all of which set goals that bear directly on young people's lives and would gain from structured youth input. The European Youth Goals make the gap sharper still. They cover mental health, employment, media literacy, democratic participation and sustainable living,

and several of them speak straight to the aims of Set 1 strategies, even though none of those strategies refers to them. More broadly, youth participation - a core part of what the youth sector does - is almost entirely absent from how these strategies are governed and consulted on.

This is a gap in process and in legitimacy at once. These strategies are drawn up without any regular way of consulting the people their outcomes affect most, and fixing it needs no new mechanism. The EU Youth Dialogue already exists, is funded through Erasmus+, and has national structures in place. What is missing is the political will to make its findings feed into the drafting and review of strategies beyond the youth sector. That is what the Youth Check is meant to secure, but it seems that it is not yet working across all the major Commission initiatives.

7. The civil society funding opportunity: making the youth sector visible in the next MFF

The EU Strategy for Civil Society names Erasmus+ and the ESC as key funding programmes for civil society [Section 4, p.13], and points to the post-2027 Erasmus+, with ESC integrated in it, as promoting 'resilience, participation in democratic life and civic engagement, through formal, non-formal and informal learning paths' [p.14]. That makes the next generation of the programme not just as a youth or education programme but as an instrument for civil society, which gives the whole youth sector (youth work organisations, youth participation bodies, youth volunteering networks) a reason to place itself squarely within the civil society funding architecture.

But the Strategy does not treat the youth sector as a distinct part of civil society. Youth organisations sit inside the broad definition of a civil society organisation, while youth workers/persons of trust, youth centres, youth councils and youth work organisations are not marked out as a sector with its own competences, funding needs and policy weight, and that invisibility has consequences. The AgoraEU programme, the proposed National and Regional Partnership Plans, and the Mediterranean civic service (a new volunteering scheme announced under the Pact for the Mediterranean, closely modelled on ESC) are all post-2027 openings for youth civil society. The Youth Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean, also announced under that Pact, is a concrete youth governance initiative in EU external action that youth sector organisations could support. None of these names the youth sector outright. The most useful move is to make sure youth sector organisations are named explicitly in the scope of the Civil Society Platform, and in the Commission's guidance on who is eligible for AgoraEU, from the start.

Annex 1 - Glossary of terms and acronyms

The list below explains the terms and acronyms that appear in the document.

Term / acronym	Meaning
AgoraEU	The successor EU citizenship, equality, rights and values funding programme proposed for the 2028–2034 period, bringing together strands previously funded under CERV and related programmes.
CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme, the EU funding programme (2021–2027) supporting civil society, rights, equality, citizens' engagement and Union values.
CoE	Council of Europe: the pan-European human-rights organisation whose youth sector runs the Youth Sector Strategy 2030, the European Youth Foundation and the co-management system.
COM	Prefix used for a European Commission document, e.g. "COM(2026) 113 final"; identifies a formal Commission communication or proposal.
CSO / CSOs	Civil society organisation(s): non-governmental, not-for-profit bodies, including youth organisations, operating independently of the state.
DG	Directorate-General: a department of the European Commission (e.g. DG EAC for Education and Culture).
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency: the Commission agency that manages centralised parts of Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and related programmes.
EAC	Education and Culture: used here in reference to DG EAC, the Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service: the in-house research and analysis service of the European Parliament.
E+	Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. Its youth strand funds youth exchanges, youth participation activities and mobility for youth workers.
ESC	The European Solidarity Corps, the EU programme funding volunteering and community-driven solidarity projects for young people.
ESF / ESF+	European Social Fund (Plus): the EU's main instrument for investing in employment, skills, social inclusion and education.

Term / acronym	Meaning
ETS	Education and Training Strategy: its competence frameworks describe and develop the competences of youth workers and trainers in the Erasmus+ youth field.
EU	The European Union.
EUR	Euro (currency).
European Youth Goals	Eleven cross-sectoral policy goals developed through youth dialogue and annexed to the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027.
EYWC	European Youth Work Convention: the main cross-institutional forum (four held to date) where practitioners, researchers and policymakers take stock of youth work in Europe.
FIMI	Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference: the EU term for organised, often state-linked, attempts to manipulate the information environment.
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties: a mechanism allowing an EU grant beneficiary to redistribute funding onward to smaller organisations.
GBV	Gender-based violence: violence directed at a person because of their gender.
JRC	Joint Research Centre: the European Commission's in-house science and knowledge service.
KA2	Key Action 2 of Erasmus+: "Cooperation among organisations and institutions" (partnerships for cooperation and innovation).
KMST	Knowledge Management and Staff Training: planning of capacity-building and support spaces and tools for staff of National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres.
LBTQI+ / LGBTQI+	Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (and related identities); the "+" denotes further identities.
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework: the EU's multi-year budget plan (currently 2021–2027) that sets spending ceilings, including for Erasmus+.
National Agencies	Bodies designated in each Erasmus+ programme country to manage and implement the programme at national level.

Term / acronym	Meaning
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training describes young people who are disengaged from work and learning.
NGO / NGOs	Non-governmental organisation(s).
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment: the OECD's international study of 15-year-olds' skills and knowledge.
RAY	Research-based Analysis of Youth in Action / of Erasmus+ Youth: the transnational research network studying the Erasmus+ youth programmes and the European Solidarity Corps.
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities: the network of SALTO Resource Centres providing training, tools and support across the Erasmus+ youth field.
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation: abusive legal action used to intimidate journalists, activists or civil society.
SNACs	Strategic National Agencies Cooperation Projects: Strategic and long-term projects steered an implemented by a number of National Agencies.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
Structured Dialogue / EU Youth Dialogue	The governance mechanism through which young people formally contribute to EU youth policy, organised via trio presidencies and national working groups.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
VAW	Violence against women.
VET	Vocational Education and Training.
Youth	Young people as defined in the EU youth programmes (ages 13–30).
Youth Partnership	The European Commission–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, a joint body producing knowledge, policy guidance and professional-development resources for the youth field.
Youthpass	The EU tool for recognising and documenting non-formal and informal learning in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

Term / acronym	Meaning
YOCOMO	The competence model for youth workers developed within the European Training Strategy.