

Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2008 at the 1042nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers,

Having regard to the Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in May 2005, which, in particular, stated that, "The Council of Europe will further develop its unique position in the youth field ...", thus reaffirming the pan-European character of the Organisation;

Having regard to the Final Declaration adopted by the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Kyiv (Ukraine) on 10 and 11 October 2008;

Having regard to the Parliamentary Assembly's Recommendation 1844 (2008) on "Refreshing the youth agenda of the Council of Europe";

Underlining the specific contribution of the Council of Europe's youth sector, since 1972, to the objectives of the Organisation and its capacity to develop appropriate responses to new situations and challenges;

Bearing in mind that the aim of the Council of Europe's youth policy is to provide young people – girls and boys, young women and young men – with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society;

Bearing also in mind the cross-sectoral dimension of this policy and the importance of involving young people in its formulation, implementation and follow-up;

Considering the challenges young people face, both in terms of greater opportunities offered to them and an increased risk of precariousness, but convinced nevertheless of their considerable potential and therefore fundamental role in promoting the Council of Europe's core values;

Convinced of the need for a dynamic youth policy in the Council of Europe, which includes children as well as young people;

Stressing the importance of following up the Action Plan adopted in Warsaw in 2005, particularly the youth campaign for diversity, human rights and participation "All different – All equal", as well as the programme "Building a Europe for and with children",

1. Resolves that the following should be regarded as priorities of Council of Europe youth policy and action for the coming years:

a. Human rights and democracy, with special emphasis on:

- ensuring young people's full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity, and encouraging their commitment in this regard;

- promoting young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures;

- promoting equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives;
- effectively implementing gender equality and preventing all forms of gender-based violence;
- promoting awareness education and action among young people on environment and sustainable development;
- facilitating the access of all young people to information and counselling services.

b. Living together in diverse societies, with special emphasis on:

- empowering young people to promote, in their daily lives, cultural diversity as well as intercultural dialogue and co-operation;
- preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any ground;
- supporting initiatives of young people and their organisations with regard to conflict prevention and management, as well as post-conflict reconciliation by means of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension;
- supporting youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons;
- further encouraging the development of sub-regional youth co-operation in Europe and beyond;
- encouraging young people to promote global solidarity and co-operation.

c. Social inclusion of young people, with special emphasis on:

- supporting the integration of excluded young people;
- ensuring young people's access to education, training and working life, particularly through the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning;
- supporting young people's transition from education to the labour market, for example by strengthening possibilities to reconcile private and working life;
- supporting young people's autonomy and well-being, as well as their access to decent living conditions;
- ensuring young people's equal access to cultural, sporting and creative activities;
- encouraging intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

2. Resolves that the above priorities should be implemented through the following approaches, methods and instruments:

a. As regards youth policy development and co-operation:

- intergovernmental and international co-operation on the development of youth policy, with particular focus on setting standards and supporting their implementation;
- service to countries, in particular through international reviews of national youth policies and youth policy advisory missions;
- co-operation with the European Union;
- partnerships with other stakeholders and services involved in areas which are relevant to the Council of Europe youth policy;
- co-management, as a unique and valuable co-operation mechanism between governments and youth organisations.

b. As regards youth work, education and training:

- multilateral youth co-operation as an appropriate way of promoting international understanding in the spirit of the core values of the Council of Europe;
- working with multipliers and supporting the development of quality youth work and its recognition;
- intercultural learning as a non-formal educational method particularly relevant for promoting intercultural dialogue and combating racism and intolerance;
- the European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundation as unique instruments for developing European youth co-operation.

c. As regards youth research and knowledge of youth:

- youth research and co-operation between youth researchers and policy makers in order to promote evidence-based youth policies and support the work of practitioners in the youth field;
- the carrying out of studies and the production of publications and educational and training material in order to support youth work and policy;
- the further development of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

3. Underlining the important role of the Council of Europe youth sector within the Organisation, and in order to achieve greater transparency, flexibility and efficiency in the implementation of the Organisation's youth policy, resolves that:

- the relevant co-managed bodies of the Council of Europe's youth sector should develop programmes of activities based on the present resolution and, where appropriate, review the working methods of the youth sector and submit their proposals to the Committee of Ministers if necessary;
- co-ordination between child- and youth-related activities should be further enhanced;

- measures should be taken in order to encourage all sectors of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the youth sector, to take into account the youth dimension when defining and carrying out their programmes of activities;
- the development of youth mobility, voluntary activities and exchanges across Europe and beyond will be encouraged and supported;
- the partnership with the European Commission in the youth field should continue to be supported as an example of good co-operation between the two partners;
- the European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundation should continue to be supported in their role of developing and enhancing European youth co-operation based on the core values of the Council of Europe;
- a communication strategy should be developed in order to ensure the best possible visibility of the youth sector of the Council of Europe inside and outside the Organisation;
- coherent presentation and optimum use of human, financial and other resources should be ensured through programming based on specific objectives and clearly defined evaluation criteria; other sectors of the Council of Europe should be encouraged, when appropriate and feasible, to hold activities in the European Youth Centres;
- additional sources of financing, including from the non-governmental sector, should be sought.