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# **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION...**

This publication, ***Youth Policy – Croatian and European Practice***, has originated as part of a one-year educational-research-and-advocacy project named Youth Policy – a Step Forward. The general goal of this project has been to promote the development of democratic citizenry through youth participation in social processes with a view to the enhancement of youth's life quality, by way of its contribution to the development of youth policies in Croatia and on the European level. Specifically, by empowering the youth in respect of the youth policy, there are created long-term advantages for: the youth's politic participation; creative exchanges of theoretical and practical experiences concerning youth-policy domain; networking processes; and common action platforms in Croatia and in Europe. The project was aimed at strengthening the youth's advocacy capacities, and at advancing the co-operation between government institutions and those of the civil society.

Three major activities of this project were **three educational modules**: one on the youth policy in Croatia, one on the youth policy in Europe and the challenges that it encounters, and the third one on the importance of the youth's role in processes of developing the youth policy. In step with the education, there has been work on: action research on Croatian policy towards the youth; the European youth policy; examples of good policy practice towards the youth; and examples of the inclusion of youth. The results of this modest research are laid down in this publication that you are holding in your hands. 15 young people of organisations from all over Croatia, whose elaborations we are presenting in this publication, participated in this project's educational and research activities. Attendees in the educational modules participated in the compilation of the Croatian Youth Network's first position paper on the co-operation between the civil and public sector, presented in this publication.

This publication is the first unique attempt to systemise and compare good examples of the Croatian and European practice in developing the youth policy. We hope it will contribute to further development of steps aimed at improving the youth's social status.

We thank all who contributed to the compilation of this publication.

Croatian Youth Network





# **YOUTH POLICY IN CROATIA'S OWN WAY**

Emina Bužinkić

*“The youth is a social group whose integration into society has always been characterised with specific issues where to it itself and the society have reacted differently in different socio-historical periods. At the same time, youth is that segment of population that represents an inherent resource for the survival and development of every society. With respect to the process of the youth’s integration into society, it is defined as one of the most dynamic social groups, wherefore it is always an intriguing subject of research. When the transformation process of the youth from childhood to adulthood is immanently placed in the context of significant social changes, such as globalisation, or in the context of transition, transformation, or consolidation of the social order, then such research becomes not only interesting but, from the social aspect, necessary as well;” (Ilišin, Radin; 2007:9).*

## **Youth - contestations between the present and the future**

“Theories about the youth as a specific social group have been developed for more than fifty years mainly in economically developed countries of the world. Those theories certainly confirm Croatia’s make-up as well in regard to the young population. The youth is an exquisitely heterogeneous social group unmarked by internal stratification, whose constituents on the other hand have lots of common aspirations like: completing a more profound educational process, entering the labour market and thus becoming independent, as well as other personal achievements. The most important characteristic of the youth is the age of its constituents, which in most countries of the world has been set as of the fifteenth year of age. In the case of Croa-

tia, analyses have already shown that it is sociologically appropriate to deem as young the population from the fifteenth to the thirtieth year of age because the oldest age cohort of the young (those 25 to 30) are more similar to the population younger than 25 than to that older than 30 years of age, when judging by their social characteristics;" (Ilišin/Mendeš/Potočnik; 2003:40). Nevertheless, there is no consensus on what the upper age threshold is, albeit it mainly ranges between the 25th and 35th year of age, and it primarily depends on the average age of the completion of education process, on the average age of finding a steady job, and that of starting a family.

In the circles of people who operate in the area of promoting the youth policy, there are frequent arguments on the contentious status of the youth, namely whether it is a **social resource** or a **social problem**. Quite certainly, it is both. Just by simple superficial comparison of the youth's status with statuses of older people, there's evident an inferior social position of the youth. This is a direct consequence of limiting the youth's possibilities to express its creative and innovative potentials. There are two traditional and mutually complementary approaches; one is based on the postulate that the youth is a resource, and the other is based on the postulate that the youth is a problem. "The approach by which the youth is viewed as a resource implies that it is the representative of the desirable future, the holder of dominant social values that are passed on from generation to generation, and a potential source of innovation as well. Hence, the youth is a vital social treasure, and therefore it must be provided with optimal conditions for its

own social development. The social importance of young people should be derived from their potentials that must be activated while they are young without putting them off to a future time. Besides, demographic facts such as the fact that in developed countries the proportion between the youth and the entire population is in constant decline necessitate that the youth should be treated as an exceptionally rare resource;" (Ilišin, Radin; 2007:9).

By the second traditional approach, the youth is perceived as the problem itself, and therefore its constituents as those with problems. Thus, the youth is viewed as a population whose constituents are in their vulnerable stage of life and consequently must be protected against behavioural deviations. The youth population is viewed as one that is not properly integrated, and therefore as one that has to be taught how to integrate itself properly. Such dim view about the youth is often accompanied by dim public opinion about the youth, and by society's distrust towards the youth. Consequences of such views are the creation of disadvantages for the youth, and of paternalistic attitudes towards it.

In the present times, both approaches are present, albeit in the Republic of Croatia prevails the one that views the youth as a vulnerable social group prone to unacceptable behaviour, as a group that has to undergo preparation in order to be able to adopt the existing social patterns, and as a group that cannot offer acceptable long-lasting social solutions and useful innovations.

**The essence of the youth policy is nothing else but integration of the youth so as to have it take over social responsibilities, but only through creating freedom for preferences, through choosing creative approaches, and through strengthening their active role.** The youth in the Republic of Croatia faces difficulties in accessing higher education, uncertainties in getting a steady job, a slower process of becoming financially independent, delays in establishing a family, and low political and social participation. The youth in the Republic of Croatia is faced with numerous risks such as prolonged youth, and delayed adulthood and independence, as well as with transition aches such as unequal opportunities for all, and poor processes of integration.

According to a number of researches carried out by the Institute for Social Research, the biggest problems for the youth in the Republic of Croatia are: low life-standard, absence of life perspectives, and unemployment. They are vexed mostly by problems such as gaining socio-economic independence, and thus achieving a satisfactory integration into the society. The responsibility of the youth policy is to minimize such problems and to ensure fair opportunities for education, chances for employment, and equal opportunities for all youth regardless of sub-social origin, and the like.

Not only time, but the results of the youth policy too will show whether or not youth is having a significant role in the society. And finally, the moment we all stop referring to youth in terms of the future and in terms of the future assets, and we all start emphasising its role in the present times, for it is a changing force here and now, from that

moment on, the youth policy will have a very significant effect for the entire social system.

## **Youth policy in Croatia's own way**

Every country has its youth policy. The level of importance of youth population to a certain country, the quality of the youth lives, the quality level of their contribution to social development in the country depends on how well the youth policy is defined. It is the responsibility of many social figures and many social structures respectively to create conditions that will make the youth period of life truly the most wonderful period of life; a period of life when the youth is taught how to become an active participant in society and how to take over social responsibilities, and a life period marked by intensive educational processes and processes of becoming socially and economically independent. **Youth policy is the basic path for: (a) solving the youth's collective problems in a country; (b) comprehensively improving its life quality; and (c) strengthening its social position.** It is directed towards clearly defining the youth's problems, and towards finding solutions, alternatives, and means for improving its position through understanding those very problems. Youth policy is a matter of decisions, and decisions are the very essence of the policy approach.

Youth's problems, its needs, and its position are a matter of public issue which requires policy analysis; according to Weimer and Vining, it requires an analysis of policy, that systemically compares and evaluates alternatives that stand before those whose duty is to settle

social matters. Such policy entails effective decisions. Youth policy requires real decisions made through the **content-driven approach** that addresses real problems, and which is designed to truly solve those problems.

Youth policy in the Republic of Croatia has started to develop seven years ago through three major discourses. The first discourse is connected with the so-called **vertical dimension** aimed at strengthening the process of democracy, and that of engaging the youth in decision-making processes, and generally at encouraging the youth to participate in social processes. The youth's political participation, the policy of informing the youth and of encouraging the young people to spend their free time qualitatively, as well as respect for the youth's interests lie at the core of this approach. It is precisely here, promoting the aforementioned areas, that the youth policy finds its narrow focus. In Croatian practice, these may be the most insufficiently developed spheres regarding the difference between intentions and the real steps taken, that is the real changes in youths' everyday lives, and especially regarding the results of research on the youth's political participation in local decision-making governmental bodies, which show an extremely low level of participation.

The second discourse is connected with the so-called **horizontal dimension** that emphasises socio-economic and legal equalisation of young citizens so as to promote equal opportunities for all youth despite the fact that its constituents live in different conditions. This is in reference to equal opportunities and chances in accessing education and finding a job, in reference to the right of being treated with respect

and without discrimination, and in reference to promoting solidarity behavioural patterns, and to promoting mutual respect for differences. This dimension includes key social principles on equality, that primarily depend on the synergy and co-operation in applying similar strategies, and also on co-operation between experts, local authorities, universities, non-governmental organisations, and other social actors. As far as the practice in the Republic of Croatia is concerned, vertical dimension has the greatest chance of success on account of three structural elements: (a) nominally a relatively strong consensus on political and social values between the government and the citizens, (b) a strong interest of community and individual participants to strengthen the capacity of democratic society and to accelerate democratic processes in the Croatian society, and (c) a growing sense for different types of co-operative action among the majority of social figures (albeit often not among the most important ones) engaged in youth policy with a view to the quest for better results.

The third discourse is connected with the so-called **reflexive dimension** which emphasises that the development of youth policy should be achieved through a growing sensibility towards the youth's preferences, through the adoption of examples of good practice carried on in other countries, and through more flexible institutional changes. Within the Croatian youth-policy system, this dimension is almost completely neglected on account of the fact that it requires stronger incentives for research on the youth and on specific groups within it, research on its problems and affinities, dissemination of results, comprehensive professionalisation on all levels, learning from



examples of good practice, and adopting valuable elements of comparable public policies. With regard to general-implementation ideas, the quality of youth policy implementation and implementation of its comparable points, and with regard to European policies, it is obvious that the Croatian youth policy is still deficient in: **policy transfer, learning from policy-effects, policy diffusion, policy convergence, and lesson-drawing from other policies.**

Youth policy in the Republic of Croatia can be characterised as **many-faced policy**. In somewhat more than five years of its existence, it has acquired the contours of European youth policies, and the contours of some youth policies in certain European countries. Croatian policy addressing the youth recognises important areas concerning the youth such as education, informatics application, employment, entrepreneurship, social and healthcare policies, culture and recreation, participation in politics, mobility, and access to information. For each of those areas, Croatian youth policy prescribes important regulatory-legislatorial, institutional, and social changes. However, it is also a chain with many weak links that often crack in many different ways like: disparity between the intentions and what is really done, exclusive vertical behaviours, ad hoc incentives for horizontal behaviour, and problems in financial, regulatory-legislatorial, and administrative affairs. Moreover, methodological approaches are seldom on the youth's side when the priorities of the government are in question, even though it often finds itself under frequent, but seldom synergic, pressure from the public.

The youth policy should be in compliance with Lasswell's famous definition of policy science, and hence it should be multidisciplinary, contextualised (directed at decision-making issues), and normative. Numerous experts have concluded that a big problem in Croatia is precisely the non-involvement of experts, both of those from within the bureaucracy and of those outside the bureaucracy, in suggesting alternatives, that is in finding solutions to the problems. The youth policy in Croatia often does not have multidisciplinary elements and clear contextualisation, as shown by the problem of youths' high unemployment and low employment.

**The youth policy in the Republic of Croatia, despite difficulties and shortcomings, nominally follows the so-called policy cycle as a mainstream agenda which consists of the following phases: (a) defining the problem, (b) suggesting a solution, (c) choosing a strategy/policy, (d) implementation, (e) evaluation, and (f) the decision on continuing, modifying, or terminating a certain policy (the so-called policy innovation).**

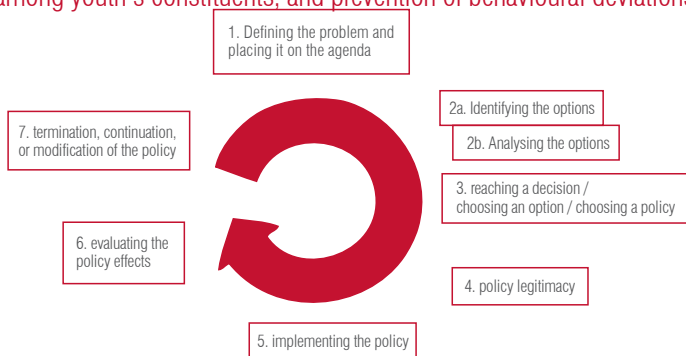
Nonetheless, anyone slightly conversant with the quality of the existing youth policy will notice the following aspects: non-involvement of experts in defining the problems and in suggesting alternatives; poor investments in research on the youth; decision-reaching exclusively within the circle of dominant 'political elite'; implementation dependent strictly on political will, political priorities, and thus on financial political priorities; absence of systematic evaluation; and the absence of reaching a declaratory decision on a modified and innovative continuation of implementation of the youth policy.

The fact that the aching problem of the Croatian youth policy lies in its implementation policy is obvious from continuous non-fulfilment of the conditions needed for an effective implementation. According to Sabatier and Muzmanian, conditions needed for an effective implementation are a reflection of: (a) clear and consistent goals; (b) the structure of implementation (funds, capacities); (c) the support from interested groups and political structures; and (d) the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches combined with the application of horizontal dimension so as to ensure the assent of interested parties, that is their participation.

The absence of a systematic evaluation makes it harder to understand the obtained results and their true effect. The importance of collecting these types of data is that it gives legitimacy to the implementation of the current and the future youth policies, it enables the evaluation of the politics' influence, and it leads to reaching key decisions on the continuation or modification of the youth policy. The evaluation process analyses the strengths and the weaknesses of the policy, and comprehensively oversees the implementation process wherein the participation of experts, interested groups, and the like, is again necessary.

In Croatia, youth policy has been developed through several levels. Primarily, the youth policy is a national policy co-ordinated by the administration structures. It is laid down in the wording of the National Youth Programme compiled in 2002, and its implementation is dispersed as a responsibility throughout a number of administrative bodies, that is ministries and government bureaus. Secondly, the

youth policy has a local character too. In the last seven years, the youth policy has become a matter of significance to municipalities, districts, and counties. It is found in general strategies for cultural and social development, and in specific strategic documents aimed at improving youth's life quality (through local youth (action) programmes), at engaging the youth in decision-making processes, and the like. In addition to the national and the local level, there are only a few other typologically characteristic youth policies, mainly those which, in addition to the general one, address prevention of violence among youth's constituents, and prevention of behavioural deviations.



## Public youth policy – participation as a basic feature

According to the definition of the European Commission, participation, in addition to openness, clarity, effectiveness, and coherence, is one of the five principles of good governance. Each of these principles is distinctly important for the democracy and transparency concerning the processes of good governance. Wide participation

is especially important in the policy process, all the way from the conceptual phase, through the implemental one, to the evaluative phase of the chain. It enables quality, relevance, and effectiveness. It contributes to coherence and transparency of the cycle, all the way from policy-shaping to rule-making. It is characterised by representativeness and effectiveness. It influences the final results, and within the very process it defines the liable subjects – participants (institutions, public administration, civil-society organisations). In great part, it depends on the readiness of the government and of the institutions designated for the co-ordination of public policies to enable that the very policy process is accompanied by an inclusive approach for overseeing the development and the implementation of the policy.

*“Comprehensive consultation among a wide variety of interested parties is an important means for ensuring that the Commission’s proposals are technically viable, practically workable, and acceptable to participants.” – White Paper on European Governance .*

Participation is an important feature of a public policy in all the stages of its development. The policy process requires different forms of inclusion of all relevant participants, and especially it requires the inclusion of those who are directly affected by the policy process. In connection with participation in the policy process, we need to take into consideration: forms of communication – vertical and horizontal; organisational cultures; and models of co-operation. The policy process emphasises the importance of participation, and of the manner in which the policy is formed.

Participation during the stage of defining the issues and the goals of the policy provides real indicators about the situation (capacities) of the social group addressed by the public policy, its needs (challenges), and its volition. Through representation of different perceptions in the orientation phase, the course of the cycle and the framework (institutional, communicational) for its action are predetermined to a great extent. In this phase, in addition to identifying the problem itself and the public policy's area of action, there are also detected and identified participants (subjects), as well as associates, and partners within the policy. In this manner, the scope of resources is widened, and a framework for **co-accountability** in carrying out the policy is created.

Participation in the stage of defining policy's guidelines and measures creates a sense of importance and usefulness among the group whom the policy concerns. On the other hand, in this way, public administration continues to build a transparent relationship with the participants, thus improving co-operation with them. Hence, participation in this stage would include: representation and pluralism regarding points of view; setting realistic frameworks for addressing the needs; and defining the priorities. In the evaluation phase, participation can be analysed based on: (a) the relevance of the issues; (b) effectuality of results; (c) engagement of relevant participants / institutions; and (d) accurate recognition of resources.

Participation in the implementation stage increases policy's success and effectiveness. Sabatier and Muzmanian quote that participation

– consent of all interested parties in the horizontal dimension of the policy process – is one of the elements for an effective implementation. In addition to having clear and consistent goals, implementation structures (funds, capacities), and the support of interested parties and political structures, participation is deemed as a key element in the bottom-up and top-down processes. In this stage of the policy cycle, there's a great potential for innovations and new ideas (policy tools), which can make the policy-making process more creative and diversified. The liability of the executers of the policy process is dispersed throughout a number of domains, and the control over the implementation process is distributed. This stage of the policy ensures a joint liability of state institutions and of civil society's legal entities.

Participation in the phase of monitoring and evaluating the policy – opinions of all interested parties in the policy should be collected through evaluation. Rossi defines evaluation as “an activity directed at gathering, analysing, and interpreting information on the need for a certain public policy, its implementation, and its effects.” According to Parsons, “evaluation must include comprehensive and full cooperation among all who are included in a certain program, such as state subjects (financiers and executers), those who are affected by the policy (targeted groups, potential beneficiaries), and those who have been excluded (“the victims”).” The purpose of evaluation is to indicate possible oversights and shortcomings of an implemented policy process, and to offer a sort of recommendation as to whether continue the policy, revise it, or terminate it. Evaluation is an indicator of success and effectiveness. By including the public and the par-

tners, evaluation becomes more objective and thorough, especially through representation of different views and experiences, and through representation of those directly affected by the policy process.

There are different forms of participation in the policy process that have already been mentioned in the aforementioned stages. We are talking about: **one-way informing** as a top-down approach whereat informing often is exclusively selective; **two-way informing** whereat vertical communication and horizontal communication are honoured; **consultation** whereat questions of transparency and effectiveness are opened, and other viewpoints are honoured; **participation in the implementation and in certain stages of the policy**; and **co-deciding on the policy itself and on its implementation**.

The last two approaches profess a significant dispersion of power, and a more significant participation of interested public participants. The first of the two aforementioned approaches is characterised by a huge concentration of power “in the hands” of one subject only, so in the normative sense we can talk about the exclusion of participation.

Participation is notably important. It contributes to pluralism, enriches the make-up of the policy-making process, and helps in upgrading transparency relations between all the required participants. Nonetheless, participation can be only **declaratory** and used in the true sense of the word propaganda to give legitimacy to a certain policy. Ostensible superficial involvement of a subject is manipulation which gives an appearance that the subject is involved in the very policy. In addition, a danger that we often encounter is co-optation – dissolution of a group’s interests into government’s policy. In this case, not



only the identity and the image of an interest group diminish, but the level and the quality of its demands fall away proportionately as the dissolution into government's policy becomes more and more intensive, or until the interest group desists from its demands.

Different forms and levels of participation can take place in different policy processes; thus the participation of the youth can take place in the process of defining, drafting, implementing, and evaluating the national youth policy, and through the effectuation of its goals, such as youth empowerment, and active and responsible citizenry, and it can also take place through co-operation and partnership with the most important participant in the policy process – the youth.

In January 2003, the first strategy concerning the youth was published under the heading **The National Youth Action Programme for 2003 to 2008** which was a result of a two-year-long deliberation on how to improve the youth's status in the Republic of Croatia. As early as 2001, the workgroup for drawing up the National Youth Action Programme was formed. The Croatian Parliament adopted the document in October 2002, and the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the document in January 2003. It was only in December 2005 that the Operational Plan on the National Youth Action Programme was adopted. In July 2009, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the second strategy concerning the youth, as a sequel to the first one, under the heading **The National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013**, after having worked on it together with other parties for almost two years. The strategy is actually deficient in view of the elements of targeted change,

inventive alternatives, and capital investments. It is especially deficient in areas such as the employment of the youth, its active participation in society, and stimulation of its political participation. There have been no significant public discussions about the strategy, and no parliamentary discussion has followed up.

The National Youth (Action) Programme is the only document that clearly defines the youth, the age span of its constituents, its needs, its problems, its social position, as well as types of youth organisation in the Republic of Croatia. It is a reflection of the tendency to implement the ideas of European public youth policies, and those of the White Paper on the European Youth, as well as to create wholesome and inclusive life conditions so as to improve youth's life quality in the country. Its implementation is different in different stages presented below. The implementation of this particular public policy is not characterised by consistency, co-ordination, and co-operation despite the permanent interest and initiatives expressed by the youth and by certain political structures. A step forward in the implementation and the quality of this strategy can be ensured by at least two structural changes: through a better functioning of the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, as an inter-sectoral body charged with monitoring the implementation of the National Youth Programme, and by appointing commissioners at the level of state secretaries, deputy ministers, as well as by appointing operative co-ordinators for the implementation of the National Youth Programme, who would be appointed at the level of public servants in all ministries and bureaus, and who would serve as executors of certain mea-

asures of the programme.

a) Defining the process and the goals of the policy

Exactly eight years ago, in 2001 precisely, the State Bureau for the Protection of Family, Maternity, and Youth formed the workgroup for drawing up the National Youth Action Programme. Members of this workgroup were 25 representatives from ministries, public-administration bodies, scientists, and, among them, 6 representatives from youth organisations. However, the incentive for drawing up the youth strategy in the Republic of Croatia came from the Youth Organisations' National Union which at that time was still non-politicised but later became less and less visible in the process of advocating and implementing the youth policy, whereupon came the government's formal decision on the importance of drawing up and implementing a strategy that directly meets the youth's needs and challenges in connection with it. In this phase of identifying the direction of the process itself, and its goals, the main operator was the State Bureau for the Protection of Family, Maternity, and Youth, today's Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity. The one-way system of providing information that was existent back then is exactly what actuated youth organisations to protect their interests by speaking out critically about non-transparency of the process, by demanding to participate in drawing up the document, and by refusing to let the state be the one to draw up the document that will concern them. Through this document, youth organisations wanted to meet the needs of the greatest part of the youth population in the country. It's interesting to note that at the time there were no significant research data on the youth – only out-of-date data were available.

Hence, the meeting – the Conference on the National Youth Action Programme (where the government, ministries, scientists and youth organisations were present) – created space for examining the youth's perceptions and needs, whereat the youth organisations had a very active role. As the process of defining the needs followed after defining the issue entries of the document, the government had to include a greater number of subjects from the youth population in order to be able to examine the needs, and the recommendations, and in order to obtain feed-back information from steps taken. We can conclude that in the end the youth was satisfied with: (a) its own participation in the process (what was also supported by the government's policy); (b) with the fact that its own requests were met (due to its own inventiveness and creativity); and (c) with the fact that it participated in drafting the strategy. Even back then, the participation of youth organisations was genuine. It is very interesting that this phase and the next phase of the policy cycle overlay one another in many parts.

The process of drawing up the latest National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013 started in autumn 2007 and continued till summer 2009, and it was co-ordinated by the Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity. The Commission for drawing up the programme was set up, and some of its members within the workgroups for each area of the programme were members of the Council for Youth. Representatives of youth organisations, as members of youth organisations, set forth four requests to the Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity: (1) to carry out a public campaign to introduce the youth with the National Youth Programme,

and to call on them to present their own viewpoints and suggestions; (2) to define clear entries in the state budget for financing the National Youth Programme; (3) to introduce a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the youth policy; and (4) to organise a wide public debate with the youth and its organisations in all parts of Croatia.

b) Defining the guidelines and measures

*As the process of drawing up the document gained ground, after defining the goals and the areas of the programme, almost 80 representatives from youth organisations in the Republic of Croatia were engaged in order to create a document that will represent the youth's true needs and expectations, and in order to make contacts with the greatest part of the population so as to collect feedback information. By continuing to truly participate, the youth organisations co-acted, co-decided, and were co-liable, in the process of drawing up the content of the National Youth Action Programme. The informal agreement on co-operation between the government and the non-governmental organisations in the process of promoting the youth policy in the public by means of a public campaign and by the website [www.ukljujuse.com](http://www.ukljujuse.com) ("uključi se" in Croatian means engage yourself) before adopting the policy in the Croatian Parliament is a crucial moment and a proof of the youth organisations' participation in the process of defining the guidelines. The creation of the new programme was based on a more veiled mode of work, whereat the workgroups were made up with the representatives from universities, institutes, and national youth organisations, without extensive consultations with the youth section of population, that is without a wide public campaign. However, based*

*on the results of scientific research carried out by universities and institutes, and based on the results of action research carried out by non-governmental organisations, developmental measures for seven areas were proposed to the Government of the Republic of Croatia: **(1) education and informatisation; (2) employment and entrepreneurship; (3) social policy; (4) healthcare and reproductive health; (5) active participation of the young people in society; (6) youth culture and leisure time; and (7) mobility, information availability, and counselling.***

- c) Promoting the policy in the public and in the political arena – adopting the policy

Through the public campaign Engage Yourself, information on drawing up the strategy were dispersed in schools, colleges, universities, public institutions, clubs and youth organisations, and through different systems of information. In addition to disseminating various useful information about the youth, the purpose of the website was also to collect the youth's viewpoints and commentaries on what has been done, and this was carried out through surveys and two types of questionnaires. The campaign went on for several months in the whole of Croatia. The executers of this campaign were: Centre for Peace Studies, Multimedia Institute, and the State Bureau for the Protection of Family, Maternity, and Youth. The campaign was carried on intensively, and its goal was to inform and expound the idea and the practical benefits of the campaign to those concerned, as well as to collect their reactions, in order to be able to enter possible changes, before adopting the document in the Croatian Parliament. Yet,

the Croatian Parliament adopted the document before the campaign was finished, whereupon the youth organisations were dissatisfied due to the imposed demi-success of the campaign. The very, almost unanimous, decision of the Croatian Parliament to pass the document seems problematic, because it was a declaratory decision, and there was no sufficient analysis addressing the document, what was shown later with the cessation of implementation, unclear entries in the government and local budgets, and with the lack of evaluation of policy's effectiveness. The National Youth Action Programme was adopted to the mutual satisfaction of the executers of the policy and the youth organisations that participated actively. Youth organisations devised a distinctively creative and original process of informing, and as a result of this campaign, there were direct benefits for the end-beneficiaries. In the process of adopting the new National Programme, the same sort of promotion was not repeated. In view of the global, as well as the local economic crisis, it was not possible to organise such extensive and expensive campaign of informing the public. Nonetheless, it was possible to organise extensive public discussions. The first public discussion was organised at the Fourth National Conference on the Youth, held in Bjelolasica in autumn 2008. The discussion was about the proposed wording of the National Youth Programme that was significantly impoverished in view of the measures suggested by the workgroups. With a view to the fact that at that public discussion only about 300 young people participated, the Croatian Youth Network proposed to organise meetings in the local centres as well. The Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity adopted the proposal and prompted the local

youth info-centres to organise local discussions with the youth and its organisations. Unfortunately, at the end of 2008, barely more than 5 discussions were organised, whereat the participation of the youth had been very low, and there were no representatives from the warranted ministry present. To the day that the National Youth Programme was adopted, July 2nd, 2009, there were no serious public discussions held. The Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, likewise, did not hold a discussion nor did it adopt the programme.

#### d) Implementation of the policy

The implementation of the new National Youth Programme started this year. It's important to observe how the implementation of the National Youth Action Programme for 2003 to 2008 was carried out. It's interesting that the youth policy in this phase lost its intensity, coherence, and became less inclusive. Even though, for instance, the Council for Youth was formed as early as 2003 as an inter-sectoral body made up with representatives from ministries and government administration, with scientists, experts, and for the first time, with outside subjects consisting of representatives of four youth organisations in their first and second assemblage: Clubture Network, Croatian Scouts' Union, Croatian Youth Hostel Association, and Croatian Youth Network, and even though some of the measures from the National Youth Action Programme were being carried on through ministries' regular activities, and despite the fact that a large number of youth organisations and youth wings of political parties from different regions were among executers of, and parts of the co-ordinative body for, the youth policy, and were included in the system of informing the public about the local youth policies (in great part on account of the suggestion from



the Croatian Youth Network as the future national umbrella youth organisation 1)<sup>1</sup>, we can say that the real inception of the implementation of the youth policy was only after the adoption of the Operational Plan in December 2005. For almost 3 years, youth policy had been nothing more than a declaratory need on a sheet of white paper. Only after adopting the Operational Plan for the Youth Strategy, we notice small changes in the content of certain measures with a view to previous times, and with regard to ministries' normal activities, defined executers of the measures, implementation timescales, implementation indicators, and the appointment of new partners – executers from the public administration and non-governmental organisations, between whom co-operation is recommended in the document itself. Youth organisations (and the Croatian Youth Network) were not satisfied with the engagement process, and above all they were disappointed with the government's "policy of stagnation," with the practice of exclusion from the decision-making process, and with often one-directional communication. Examples of occasional consultations and involvement (national and regional conferences of the youth) are very rare. This policy of professing the participation of all relevant subjects is in great part declaratory. Two processes are noticeable: the state youth policy that often is characterised by a culture of one-directional informing, and the youth policy advocated by the (networked) youth organisations whose goal is to promote the youth policy, its implementation, its evaluation, and to establish a partnership with the executers of the policy. Objections addressed to the Operational Plan are: (a) specifying certain partners (organisations) in certain measures instead of defining the suitable partners throughout the document;

<sup>1</sup>National Youth Council

(b) quite inexplicitly defined timescales for the implementation even though we know that the Operational Plan was to be carried on till the end of 2007; and (c) there is no cumulative and summary display of the financial claims to the state budget.

e) Monitoring and evaluating the policy

Speaking of the Council for Youth as a body whose duties are to monitor the process of implementation and to evaluate the results and the effects of the youth policy, one must notice that, due to lack of political will, it has waited a long time for its next assembly (now with propositions that its term should last for three years). The duty of the Council for Youth is to balance the horizontal communication between all the participants included in its work, and to ingrain permanent models of implementing and evaluating the national youth policy, guided by the principles of co-management and structured dialogue. The constitutive session of the last assembly of the Council for Youth was held on July 16th, 2008.

In connection with the implementation of the National Youth Action Programme, this part of the policy has been in great part declaratory on both levels: on the level of effectuated evaluation and monitoring, as well as on the participation level. Actually, if we analyse the youth policy, we'll see that the elements of monitoring and evaluation are constantly missing. Taking, anew, as an example the Operational Plan, we see that the indicators of implementation scantily measure the output, and don't measure the outcome at all. The new assembly of the Council for Youth is showing a more progressive work strategy in view of the conclusions in relation to mandatory yearly reports in writing to all bodies of executors of the measures of the youth policy, on

whom the Council shall have a meeting.

We notice that in the initial processes of creating the youth policy, that is in the stages of identifying the problem, and of defining the guidelines and objectives, the youth's participation has been broad and more coherent. In the case of the first programme, with entering the process more deeply, youth organisations lost their former identity and distinction towards the executors of the policy due to a number of reasons including the political environment. On the other hand, the implementers of the policy neglected the importance of engagement, consultation, and co-deciding, thus neglecting some of the principles of good and democratic governance. The stages of the youth policy can be characterised as, both, declaratory and real. As expected, the arena of youth organisations has never before been so engaged in the processes of advocating the needs of the youth, and in the processes of thematic networking and strengthening the youth sector. Despite significant steps in the public and political arena, the stagnancy period of the policy cycle played a crucial role and caused a reverse-proportionate process – a lack of state policy towards the youth on one hand, and on the other hand, networking of youth organisations with clearly defined claims in advocating the youth policy.

The case of participation in the youth policy, that is the case of the youth policy itself, is in great part specific. Nonetheless, this example shows a broader setting of the conditions and factors that contribute to, or obstruct participation in the Croatian frame of public policies. Due to the facts such as shortage of policy experts, and a traditional, closed, too-bureaucratized, and policy-model deficient governance,

the Republic of Croatia faces extensive enigmas in attaining a transparent and quality governance. If we recollect the European principles of management, and the minimum standards set for quality and effective management, it is clear that the youth policy is not the only example of a selectively co-ordinated, mostly intransparent, and at times vague public policy that does not foster the principles of participation.

However, the principle of participation has to be significant in a policy whereof the success depends in great part upon the feeling of integration, and the feeling of active and responsible contribution of all those whom the policy concerns. **The effectiveness of the policy process** is based upon that principle. Every public policy, at the very beginning, must: **(a) define the area of concern, as well as the participants who partake from conception to implementation; (b) include interested public entities; (c) have clear action and operational plans, as well as standards for implementing and monitoring the process; and (d) make independent evaluations of the results and effects. Likewise, every quality policy process includes: (a) establishing horizontal models of communication, as well as matrices of structural co-operation and partnership; and (b) active engagement in the decision-making process through establishing the model of co-liability and joint decision-making.**

## **Actors in the youth policy**

Every policy identifies 'the players' as an inseparable element, who (which) make the public policy complete, created by participation, focused on implementation, and supervised throughout many direc-

tions. The public policy makes the participants' existence mandatory, as well as their representation in all the elements of the policy. The representation of the participants has to satisfy the criterion of equal participation of all social spheres concerned by a particular public policy. According to Thomas **Birkland**, there are formal and informal participants. He describes them through the prism of neoinstitutionalism, by analysing participants' network, as well as institutions, and the rules that guide policy-making. Formal participants are an element that must be included in a public policy, and have obligatory character in terms of constitutive or legislative (pre)-determinacy, and in terms of the responsibilities that they have in creating, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of a particular public policy. Birkland cites those participants who have a crucial part in the public policy: the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary, as the three branches of governance.

On the other hand, informal participants are governed exclusively by their own interests and their desire to alter the status quo within a public policy. Informal participants are those participants that are engaged (partially or completely), but who have no formal obligations towards the law or the constitution. They gain an indirect right thanks to the natural component and by means of the political criterion that warrants participation in the policy, or in a particular domain of interest regulated by the policy. The informal participants are: individuals, interest groups, political parties, independent research organisations, and the media.

**Howlet and Ramesh** offer an analysis seemingly similar to Birkland's one. Namely, even though the authors abide by the same

pattern of governance division, they ascribe distinctive names and roles to participants. The authors cite the categories of responsibility that the functionaries (from the legislature and the executive), and the appointed public servants have within the definition of formal participants, while the informal participants are: voters, interest groups, research organisations, and the media. In this analysis we shall use a few terms introduced by these two authors, however, in the main course of interpretation, we shall abide by Birkland's classification.

It seems important to mention (albeit quite superficially) the analysis of professor **Grdešić** as well, more precisely, the part giving a detailed analysis of participants and their interest positions. Professor Grdešić speaks about potential opposition and potential allies throughout political analysis of the public policy. In this analysis, it is hard to support such interpretation in view of the policy's very nature and objectives. Notwithstanding, situations of alliance and opposition among the participants are frequent within the development of certain aspects of the policy of our concern, both on the programmatic level and on the implementation level.

Abiding by Birkland's interpretation of participants in a public policy, we shall get to know the following formal participants:

Legislature – the most significant body responsible for the development of the youth policy is the **Parliamentary Committee for Family, Youth, and Sports**. In the absence of an organic law dealing with the youth and its organisations, this body deals solely with

the strategy towards the youth. The members of this parliamentary committee are members of parliament. An aggravating circumstance with a view to this committee's functioning is insufficient dedication to the youth's problems, considering the range of issues that are dealt with by this committee. A special burden is the environment where the youth issue is placed (family and sports), thus reducing the full scope of the youth's problems, position, and needs in other wakes of life. This partaker is fairly invisible, and with no noticeable influence on the youth policy. Nevertheless, becoming an associate member of this committee would have great significance for youth organisations insofar as it would warrant a direct influence upon the decision-making process.

The executive – The Government of the Republic of Croatia, by means of its ministries, is entirely in charge of the matters concerning the youth, whereabout it has committed itself by adopting the National Youth (Action) Programme. However, the co-ordinative body for the entire youth policy is the **Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity**<sup>2</sup> wherein the Family Directorate operates. The structure is further subdivided towards the Department for Children and Youth, and ends with **the Youth Section**. The section deals in offering legislative outlines, and in upgrading inter-sectoral co-operation. It is authorised to allocate financial means to youth non-governmental organisations, to non-governmental organisations for the youth, and to youth centres and clubs. Its responsibility is to monitor and evaluate the youth policy, and to co-ordinate the processes in connection with the implemen-

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<sup>2</sup> [www.mobms.hr](http://www.mobms.hr)

tation of the National Youth (Action) Programme. The Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity at the end of 2005 adopted the Operative Plan for the National Youth Action Programme, and ensured the flow of information, championed joint meetings of the youth from the same area and from different areas, by organising the national conference<sup>3</sup> and local conferences<sup>4</sup> whereupon the development of local youth policies was incited. This body also co-ordinated the process of drawing up the new National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013. This ministry is by all means responsible and warranted for the youth policy.

The judiciary – just like Howlet and Ramesh omitted the judiciary in their review on policy participants, this domain shall be omitted in this policy analysis as well, due to the fact that its influence is practically unseen, and considering that it has been completely omitted in the National Youth Action Programme.

The inter-sectoral body – The inter-sectoral advisory body within the institutional framework for the youth is **the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia**. Its task is to co-ordinate the implementation and evaluation of the National Youth Programme. The Council for Youth holds meetings several times a year. It has seventeen representatives, who are from ministries, and experts for matters concerning the youth, plus four representatives from the following youth organisations: Croatian Scouts' Union, Croatian Youth Hostel Association, Croatian Academic Community, and

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<sup>3</sup> 'Youth and a Society in Transition - Conclusions of the Conference; at [www.mobms.hr](http://www.mobms.hr)

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem



Croatian Youth Network. It is strongly recommended that the Council for Youth should develop its structure in semblance to the Lithuanian model, or within the Croatian frame, in resemblance to the Council for the Development of Civil Society, whereat the representatives of non-governmental organisations (in this case the representatives of youth organisations and of organisations for the youth) would have the same number as the number of representatives of government institutions and scientist combined, and would work based on the principles of co-management. The Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity provides administrative and all other administrative-logistical support for the Council's functioning.

### **Informal participants:**

Individuals – more than **900,000 young** people live in the Republic of Croatia, making up 21% of the entire population. The youth is a highly heterogeneous group defined by **ages 15 to 30**. The young individuals in Croatia enjoy rights such as mandatory primary and secondary education, while at the same time lack some of the rights with regard to employment and the content of cultural activities. Even though the young individuals are not often the subject of analyses carried out by policy executers, it seems important to mention some data in order to determine the level of motivation on the part of interest groups on one hand, and on the part of state institutions on the other hand, as well as to establish the necessity to act in the direction of enhancing the young people's quality of life. Only a few percent of the youth is active through non-governmental organisations, and through initiatives of the civil sector. The youth in this country is often passive and apathetic. Nevertheless, a num-

ber of examples show that some places are more developed with regard to activities carried on by the youth sector, and with regard to the intensity of actions undertaken by them. The Central, Northern, and Eastern Croatia as well as Istria have a greater number of the young people interested in changes in their localities, and somewhat a lower percentage of those who are active on certain issues as well. The Lika-Senj County, for instance, has only one youth organisation. The youth is still a group that often refuses to take part in the elections, and the percentage of youth in local and national administrative structures is exceptionally low. It is regarded necessary to conduct a general survey on the youth's activism, which would help create public policies on the youth's integration, and on its participation in the youth-policy-related processes.

Interesne grupe – in the past few years, numerous non-governmental organisations have distinguished themselves in processes of advocating the youth policy and in networking youth organisations. These organisations are: Centre for Peace Studies (of Zagreb)<sup>5</sup>, Domaći (of Karlovac)<sup>6</sup>, KCM – Youth Cultural Centre (of Kutina)<sup>7</sup>, ACT – Autonomous Centre (of Čakovec)<sup>8</sup>, Clubture Network<sup>9</sup> and others. **The Croatian Youth Network (CYN)**<sup>10</sup>, as the national umbrella youth organisation, was created through upgraded processes of connecting youth organisations, clubs, and youth initiatives. The Croatian Youth Network was created in 2002, and since then it has actively participated in the processes of advocating: (a) a transparent and effective

<sup>5</sup> [www.cms.hr](http://www.cms.hr)

<sup>6</sup> [www.domachi.hr](http://www.domachi.hr)

<sup>7</sup> [www.kcm.hr](http://www.kcm.hr)

<sup>8</sup> [www.actnow.hr](http://www.actnow.hr)

<sup>9</sup> [www.clubture.org](http://www.clubture.org)

<sup>10</sup> [www.mmh.hr](http://www.mmh.hr)

implementation of the youth policy; (b) a complete oversight over the implementation; and (c) complete evaluations of policy's effects and influence. At the moment, the Croatian Youth Network has 58 member organisations that are associated for purposes of joint co-operation, and programmatic connexion. Through the process of connecting non-governmental organisations, a better and more stable financial support is gained, and an image of a strong supportive network whose goal is to improve the youth's life quality is created. The Croatian Youth Network can be called sort of a **policy network**, for in accordance with **Sabatier**, it meets the criteria of **advocacy coalition theory**. The Croatian Youth Network is strategically oriented towards acting on all levels of communication, thus creating partnerships with the bodies of government that co-ordinate and influence the development of the youth policy, as well as partnerships with international organisations that in Europe and worldwide set standards of coherent and transparent public policies towards the youth. Since 2008, the Croatian Youth Network is a member of the European Youth Forum



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<sup>11</sup> [www.youthforum.com](http://www.youthforum.com)

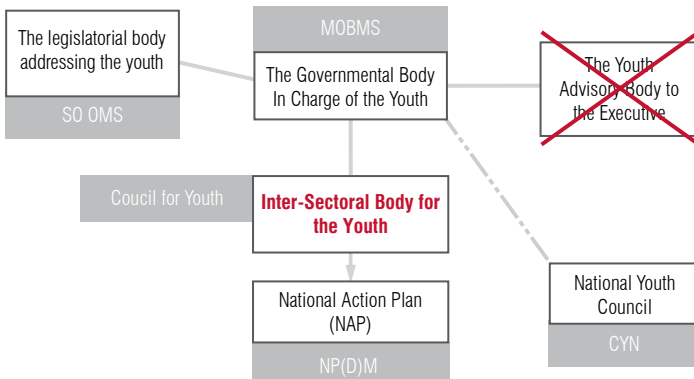
Political parties – in the last several years, **youth wings of political parties** have been showing an increased activity in the sphere of youth policy. For example, the young members of the Croatian People's Party for several months carried on a campaign in the entire country to inform as many young people as possible about: (a) the National Youth Action Programme; (b) the campaign that was going on in connection with it; (c) the relevance of the document; and (d) the importance of getting interested and acting in connection with it. The Youth Forum of the Social Democratic Party carried out a campaign called Change the Programme. Other political parties, that is their youth wings, did not carry out such intensive campaigns, however, there is a noticeable interest for co-operation among all forms of youth organisations and the youths of political parties, within the domain of youth policy. For instance, the youth wings of almost all political parties have signed the Agreement for Co-operation with the Croatian Youth Network in order to use joint efforts for attaining results in the development of youth policy, and for setting standards of the youth's life quality in Croatia. A second, very welcome example of co-operation is the process of networking local youth councils, that is of all forms of youth's organisation, including the youths of political parties of town and county levels. Through joint efforts of youth organisations, and as a result of the appeal addressed to regional and local governments, youth (action) programmes have been created in counties, towns, and districts; youth centres have been established; and a practice of consistent and focused campaigns has been taking place.

The media – in the Republic of Croatia, when the youth policy is concerned, the media are reluctant to write about, report on, or

comment the subject. The articles published in the daily newspapers depict scantily the subject of the youth policy; (usually, a news about a conference, an article on the employment of the youth, presented statistics). Newspapers rarely write about the youth's position, and almost entirely omit the subject of youth policy, for simply it is not interesting enough for the media. It is unclear how constructive reports on the current and expected situation of the youth do not find place in the media releases, while stereotypic presentations of the youth (as delinquents, as perpetrators of traffic accidents. . .) are still omnipresent, especially in newspapers. In view of the most widespread and most influential media, – the television – only one TV special, *Briljanteen* (broadcasted on Croatian Radio Television), is specifically dedicated to the youth, but not to the youth policy as well, and there are no systematic follow-ups regarding it. Speaking of the media, there is certain media space, however, where the youth finds its place and ways of sharing information. Internet connection and websites like [www.ukljuci-se.org](http://www.ukljuci-se.org) and [www.mmh.hr](http://www.mmh.hr), as well as the websites of info-centres for the youth have uplifted communication, activities and processes in connection with the youth policy, and the general level of the youth's participation and its interest.

In order to make the connectivity among the participants more intelligible, the structure of interactions and its mechanisms are shown on the illustration below. All shown participants are connected with the so-called institutional framework of the youth policy on the national level.

## The institutional framework of the youth policy on the national level



**Colebatch** says that the structural interaction among the participants generally belongs in the domain of **policy collectivity** – a community of participants in a certain area, with enduring programmes and ranks. By taking a glimpse at the given framework, it is clear that institutions, through models of co-operation and exchange of information, and through their influence on the development of different youth policies, create a recognisable and focused policy community wherein the distribution of power from executors of co-ordination, as most influential entities in the decision-making process, to non-governmental organisations guided by the desire to change the youth's current position is obvious.

Howlet and Ramesh , on the other hand, talk about the term policy subsystem, as a frequent occurrence in the process of youth policy development. Namely, participants in a certain phase of the policy process are determined through two aspects: (a) through the policy

network defined by common interests (Croatian Youth Network); and (b) through the policy community defined by joint knowledge about the issue (sometimes incidental to only a fraction of participants, sometimes incidental to all the participants, while sometimes incidental to one participant only). However, numerous are the situations where the participants make up a community that at the same time represents a network. Notwithstanding, the clearest seems to be **Birkland's** thesis on the existence of a policy community, that is on the involvement of participants active within the domain of a certain public policy. The aforesaid participants and the scope of their interactions certainly represent a community; a type of policy-making community that possesses knowledge, within which information and knowledge are exchanged, and which has a valuable part in the development of youth policy.

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# **YOUTH POLICY – EUROPEAN STANDARDS**

Nikola Buković

The second part of this publication is focused on the youth policy on the European level. More precisely, we shall present the three most significant public actors: the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the umbrella Pan-European youth organisation, the European Youth Forum. In addition, this chapter offers a new classification of national youth policies found in a range of European countries, and is specially focused on the relationship between the state and the organised youth sector that is usually, on the national level, presented through national youth councils. Further on follows a summary address on the youth policies of Spain, Lithuania, and Denmark, wherewith we will try to test the explanatory potency of the offered classification, to point up its good sides, and to draw attention against its potential inherent weaknesses.

## **European level: the key participants**

### *European Union: the basics*

The European Union is a specific form of regional integration, and this specificity derives from the fact that in more than 50 years of development and existence, through incremental processes of social evolution, it has surpassed its own initial framework many times over. Its beginning was the famed **European Community for Coal and Steel** founded in 1953 by six countries: Italy, France, Germany, and three Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). The basic idea was mutual integration of post-war coal-and-steel industries, with the intention of preventing future wars on the European continent. The next extraordinarily important year was 1957, when by the **Rome Treaties**, the **European Community**

**for Atomic Energy (EUROATOM)**, and the **European Economic Community** were founded, thereby establishing a customs union between six states founders of the European Community for Coal and Steel; (Brnčić/Dojčinović/Gotovac/Očurščak; 2005:28). Over the years, new member states joined the European Community, and 1993 must be pointed out as a crucial year when the Maastricht Treaty was signed, known also as the Treaty on the European Union. Thereby a new legal identity, the European Union, was created, which, in addition to **economic** dimension, openly accentuated the **political** dimension of integration as well, which was an event with deep implications due to the specific positions of national states within the European tradition; (Weidenfeld; 2005:12-40). Even though, by the last expansion in 2007, the number of member states reached 27, the policy of further integrations has been blocked by France's and the Netherlands' rejection of a referendum on new European constitution in 2005, and by Ireland's rejection of its slightly less ambitious version, the Lisbon Treaty, in 2008. However, the upholders of European integrations hope that the ratification of the above-mentioned treaty, that we witnessed in the beginning of October 2009, will provide new incentives to the process.

### *Institutional organisation*

The above-mentioned European Community for Coal and Steel is important not only because it represents the beginning of the project of European integrations, but also because it shaped the foundations of the European Union's institutional structure that we witness today. Namely, the decision-making structure of the European Community for Coal and Steel was made up with representatives of **High Authority** whose work was supervised by the **Judicial**

**Committee** and by the **Common Assembly**, and was made up with representatives from governments and parliaments of member states. The institutional make-up that we know today is derived from the above-mentioned bodies: the **European Commission** (created in 1967 by the merger of the Commission of the European Economic Community, and the High Authority of the European Community for Coal and Steel), the **Court of Justice of European Communities** based in Luxembourg, the **Council of Ministers** (or the **Council of the European Union**), and finally the **European Parliament**; (Weidenfeld, 2005:12).

The European Commission, often referred to as the European Government, is by no means a government in the true sense of the term that is ascribed to it. Namely, the European Commission is not a body made up with, and confirmed by, the delegates to the representative body of the political community (in this case, to the European Parliament). Namely, the European Parliament has to confirm the make-up of the European Commission (at this point, there are 26 commissioners from each member state, plus the president of the European Commission, as the 27th member); however, the make-up is proposed by the European Council, a body that we will address below. Even though the European Commission is the executive branch in the European Union's governance, it does not control the legislative process in the way the governments in national states do (through parliamentary majority). The European Commission exercises its influence through informational and administrative capacities that are available to it through **27 directorates**. These directorates, that are available to the commissioner of the European Commission, serve not only as an instrument for implementing the

European Union policies, but also as a source of expertise and legislative initiatives; (Diedrichs, 2005:72-74).

The Court of Justice of European Communities is responsible to make sure that the European Union's joint legal legacy is consistently carried on. This is a great challenge with a view to the fact that legal legacy is dispersed through numerous agreements, conventions, and decisions that have woven the European Union legislature in the past 50 years; (Brnčić/Dojčinović/Gotovac/Očurščak; 2005:68). The Council of Ministers or the Council of the European Union, (in accordance with the European legal legacy, and established by the Rome Treaties), is the legislative body of the European Union, made up with the ministers of member states, while the assemblage changes with regard to the sector that a decision concerns. So, if a decision concerning economic issues is to be made, we will find ministers of economy and finance in the Ministers' Council, while if a decision concerning agriculture subventions is to be made, then in the Minister's Council we will find ministers of agriculture. Depending upon the sector, the decisions are made unanimously or through the system of complex qualified majority that honours both the territorial principle and the principle of the numbers of European Union's citizens; (Hartwig/Umbach; 2005: 321-325).

The European Parliament is the only body within the institutional architecture of the European Union that is directly elected (since 1979). It is due to this fact precisely that the political powers and the influence of the European Parliament have been expanded over the past 10 years. While in the past the European Parliament has been primarily an advisory body, with the exception of having the right to veto proposed budgets and the make-up of the European Commission, by means of the last agreements, especially by the

Treaty of Nice of 2001, and by the Treaty of Lisbon (that is not ratified yet), the influence of the European Parliament is increasing significantly, because in a whole range of domains it is gaining the right to **co-decide** (Maurer, 2005).

Finally, the above-mentioned European Council is a body that probably has the greatest influence on the policies and legislatures of the European Union, even though it has no foundations in the Europe's justice systems. It is made up with the chiefs of member states, who at the meetings are joined by the president of the European Commission, as a member without the right to vote. Even though the European Council formally is not a body of the European Union, due to its own huge influence, often has the power to annul or change the decisions that have already passed in the European Union Council and in the European Parliament, and it is frequently a key actuator of numerous initiatives; (Wessels, 2005:114-117).

### **Where is the youth policy herein?**

In trying to find and identify the key hubs relevant to the youth policy in this highly complex and often confusing structure of the European Union, it is important to mention two important terms essential for understanding the positions and the processes in connexion with the youth policies in the European Union. First, the domain of youth policy has not been regulated by the aforementioned European legal legacy. Nonetheless, the European Union recognises the importance of dealing systematically in some domains in co-operation with member states, even though in those domains it has no defined authority, as opposed to its own policies that are defined within the framework of European law. One such



domain is the youth policy. In these situations, the European Union is led by the **method of open co-ordination**. More precisely, the European Commission sets standards, gives recommendations, and monitors to what degree member states honour these standards and recommendations. As a monitoring mechanism serve **yearly reports** that the ministries responsible for the youth must submit to the appropriate structures of the European Commission, therewith informing them about the carried out operations within the domain of the youth policy in the previous year.

A second important term is the **structured dialogue**. In fact, structured dialogue is a relatively new European Union strategy to overcome ever-increasing democratic deficit in relations between European Union citizens and its institutions. The idea is that the citizens with their conjoined interests attain the greatest possible influence on shaping the European Union youth policies, knowing that the European Union due to its own massive size and titanic administration cannot know what is going on in its entire territory at all given times, with respect to new problems and to the needs of its citizens. Therefore, groups that uphold organised interests, like unions and civil-society organisations (therefore youth organisations as well), are urged to participate as actively as possible in lobbying for, and shaping the policies that are deemed important.

The two above-mentioned terms are extremely relevant for understanding the forms of influence and the level thereof that can be exercised through European Union institutions in the domain of youth policy. In simple terms, the youth policy is not in the focus of the European Union, but nevertheless, knowing well the institutional framework and the concomitant discourse can open some niches for influence.

**Directorate General of Education and Culture (DGEAC)**

The most significant operator for the youth-policy domain, within European Union institutional architecture, is the **Directorate General of Education and Culture (DGEAC)** which, on one of its lower levels of functional differentiation, bifurcates into the **Youth Unit**. The most significant activity of this unit is to prepare key European Union documents for the domain concerning the youth. As the most significant such documents can be cited: White Paper – New Impetus for European Youth, of 2001, and An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, of 2009. The first one shapes the foundations of the youth policy in the European Union, while the second one revises the work that has been done in the past period, and accentuates the need to intensify the use of the method of open co-ordination among all the engaged participants (the European Commission, the European Parliament, the above-mentioned committees, the organised youth sector on the European level, that is represented by the European Youth Forum, national governments, . . .) so as to improve the results achieved by the youth policy. The above-mentioned documents shall be the new European Union strategy in the next 9-year period, for the validity of the institutional structure set in 2001 expires by the end of 2009. The Directorate General of Education and Culture carries out its policies and its administrative decisions through the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency which also manages the European Union's most significant programme and instrument in the domain of working with the youth – the Youth-in-Action Programme. By the aforementioned programme, 800 million euros have been allocated to the organised youth sector for the period 2007 to 2013 to uphold strategic goals such as youth's active participation, mobility, access to information, diversity, volunteering, non-formal education, and human rights. All users of the Youth-in-Action Programme have

their own national agencies which on the national level manage the aforementioned programme. **It is important to note that these agencies must previously be accredited by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency** . However, the credentials can be revoked if there is proof of irregularities, (such was the case in Bulgaria and Romania). In Croatia, the national agency entrusted with the Youth-in-Action Programme is the **Agency for Mobility and European Union's Programmes**, which, as yet, has not been accredited to manage the programme full-scale, so civil-society organisations that wish to carry on some projects outside the territory of the Republic of Croatia, still have to apply for an award to the Agency for Education, Audio-Visual Sector, and Culture in Brussels.<sup>1</sup>

## European Parliament

The European Parliament with headquarters in Strasbourg does not deal with the youth policy systematically on the European level, however, plenary or through certain work committees, it deals with individual matters that are relevant for the youth in Europe. In this sense, it is proper to highlight the big campaign GET VISABLE<sup>2</sup>, carried out by the European Youth Forum (YFJ), and aimed at

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<sup>1</sup>Youth-in-Action Programme, within a limited scope, can be carried on as well in other South-East and East-European countries, and in the Caucasus region, through SALTO (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) centres in Ljubljana (for South-East European countries) and in Warsaw (for East European and Caucasus-region countries). The SALTO Centre in Ljubljana was crucial in carrying out the Youth-in-Action Programme in Croatia before the Agency for Mobility and European Union's Programmes was established, and for carrying out the Youth Programme, which until 2007 was a precursor to the Youth-in-Action Programme. You can find more about the Youth-in-Action Programme at [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74_en.htm), and more about SALTO centres at <http://www.salto-youth.net>.

<sup>2</sup> Learn more at: <http://www.getvisable.org/index.php?section=1>

remitting the visa-régime limitations (imposed by the Schengen Agreement) for the youth engaged in youth work. During the campaign, a number of parliamentarians in the European Parliament strongly supported this incentive, and the European Youth Forum actualised an intensive co-operation with two European Parliament committees: the Security and Defence Committee (SEDE) and the Civil Liberties, Judiciary, and Internal Affairs Committee (LIBE). The campaign led to a reduction of visa constraints for the youth from the countries that are not within the Schengen zone. Visa constraints were reduced for students, plus for the youth engaged in sports, cultural, and civil-society activities.

### *Council of Europe*

The Council of Europe is the oldest existing inter-state organisation in the European territory. It was established in 1949, and today it has 47 member states. The main task of this body was to implement the European Charter on Human Rights signed that year, therefore it is not surprising that protection and enhancement of human rights generally, but also of the rights of particular disadvantaged sections of society, like women, Romas, and the youth, are within the focus of the Council of Europe's work.

### **The Institutional Set-Up**

The decision-making body of the Council of Europe is called the **Committee of Ministers**, made up with foreign ministers and deputy ministers (or their permanent representatives) of all member states. Foreign ministers meet once a year, but the continuity of work is maintained through their permanent representatives, who on daily basis work in creating the policies of the Committee of Ministers.

**Parliamentary Assembly** is a second important body within the Council of Europe's institutional make-up. It is made up with delegated representatives of member states' parliaments, and it convenes four times a year. Even though in great part it is an advisory body, it has a substantial influence within the Council of Europe, due to the fact that: (a) it votes on accepting new members, and on concluding all international agreements; (b) it appoints the judges of the European Court of Human Rights, the Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (on a suggestion from the Committee of Ministers); and (c) it is empowered to introduce initiatives; (thus often it is deemed to be "the motor" of the Council of Europe).

As other fairly significant bodies of the Council of Europe, we should mention the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**, the **Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations**, and the **European Court of Human Rights**, with headquarters in Strasbourg, which is often confused with the European Court of Justice – an institution of the European Union with headquarters in Luxemburg. The responsibility of the European Court of Human Rights is to oversee the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights; hence any person who lives or temporarily resides on the territory of any of member states of the Council of Europe has the right to present his/her case before this court if he/she claims that his/her rights defined by the European Declaration on Human Rights have been infringed, providing that he/she has exhausted all available legal options in the country where he/she lives. If the European Court of Human Rights resolves that such an infringement has taken place, it can demand of the member state to restore the claimant's legal and material position to the point before the infringement.

The executive and administrative body of the Council of Europe is the **Secretariat**, headed by the **Secretary General** who co-ordinates the activities of the Secretariat and also represents the Council of Europe before third parties. The Secretariat itself is divided into several levels; whereat for us the most significant section is the **Directorate for Youth and Sport**.

### **Council of Europe's Youth Policy**

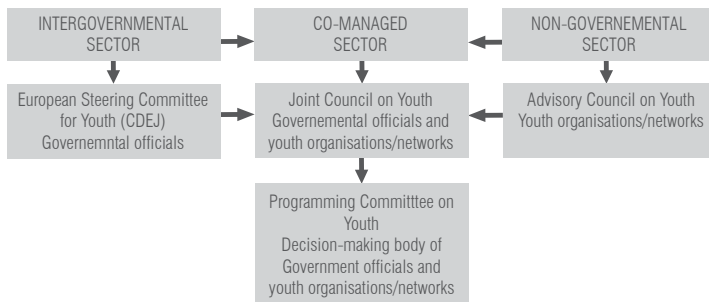
Many authors, young activists, and experts on youth work consider that the Council of Europe is the most committed body which most systematically deals with the youth on the European level. Not only has the Council of Europe given top political significance to the youth policy, but has also ensured that the representatives of the organised youth sector can (equally with the elected political representatives) make decisions pertaining to the Council of Europe's youth policy, through the **method of co-management**; and in addition, significant efforts have been made to attain scientific research about the problems and the needs of young people.

The body directly charged with the youth policy within the Council of Europe is the **Directorate for Youth and Sport**. What is specific for this body is the fact that, unlike other similar administrative-executive bodies, when it comes to the youth policy, it makes decisions together with the youth's representatives (equal ways) on how to manage the financial means designated for the youth, through the aforementioned method of co-management. Within the Directorate for Youth and Sports there is the so-named **Advisory Council for Youth**, made up with 30 representatives from international youth organisations. Of those representatives, 20 are appointed on recommendation from the European Youth Forum, while the

remaining 10 are appointed directly by the Directorate for Youth and Sport. What is specially significant is the fact that those youths not only advise the decision makers, but they also are decision makers on equal basis. Moreover, all 30 aforementioned representatives join a new body called the **Joint Council (JC)** where they sit together with the representatives from respective ministries charged with the youth policy of all 49 countries, co-signers of the European Charter on Culture, who are gathered in a body called the **European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)**. 8 representatives from the Advisory Council for Youth and 8 representatives from the European Steering Committee for Youth make up a new body known as the **Programme Committee** charged with managing, supervising, and evaluating the work of the **European Youth Centres** (one in Strasbourg and one in Budapest), and the work of the **European Youth Foundation (EYF)**.

The propositions of the Joint Council need the blessing of the Parliamentary Assembly, however, in most cases these propositions are adopted unanimously. This method of managing within the youth sector on the national level existed only in Lithuania, but was cancelled after only one term (see more on pages 79 - 83). Due to their logistic capacities, the aforementioned European Youth Centres in Strasbourg (founded in 1972) and Budapest (founded in 1995) serve as places where the youth can hold meetings and carry on larger activities like international conferences. The European Youth Foundation is a foundation for supporting different activities of the organised youth in Europe. With an annual budget of about 2.5 million euros, it is mainly used to finance activities like international youth meetings, campaigns, exhibitions, publications, production of audio-video materials, web sites, different pilot projects, and generally the development and administrative operations of international youth organisations and networks.

**Figure 1:** The Council of Europe’s system of co-management. Adopted from: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/co\\_management\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp)



## Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum

This partnership is established on three levels. The first form of co-operation - the institutional co-operation - is established by delegating 20 representatives from the European Youth Forum to the Council of Europe’s Advisory Council for Youth. On the second level, the European Youth Forum receives institutional support from the Council of Europe, albeit this support is much smaller than the support received from the European Union; which is not surprising considering the huge disparity in financial capacities of these two organisations. On the third level, the European Youth Forum and the Council of Europe co-operate in organising major European-youth events; the latest such event was organised in Kiev in 2008. Also, the co-operation is expanded with drawing up policy documents that are intended to improve the youth’s position in Europe (an example thereof is the White Paper on Youth Policy). Finally, the European Youth Forum and the Council of Europe co-operate in organising public campaigns; perhaps the best known such campaign is All Different – All Equal, launched in 2007, whose purpose was to combat homophobia, racism, and social exclusion throughout Europe.



## **Youth-policy partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission**

The deep co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of working with the youth began in 1998 and is established for three areas: (a) furthering and solidifying the work with the youth through the **European Youth-Worker and Youth-Leader Training** programme, (b) Mediterranean co-operation through the **Euro-Mediterranean Youth Co-operation** programme, and finally, (c) researching youth policies through the Youth Research partnership programme. In 2005, all three programmes have been unified into one joint partnership programme called **Youth Partnership**. The partnership is renewed every two years; the current one expires by the end of 2009. It is quite clear that this partnership shall continue to exist even after that time<sup>3</sup>.

*European Youth Forum (or YFJ – Youth Forum Jeunesse)*

**European Communities (YFEU)** and the **European Co-ordination Bureau of International Youth Organisations (ECB)**<sup>4</sup>. The European Youth Forum is the youth's Pan-European umbrella organisation which at this point has 98 members from all over Europe, and which represents the interests of several million youths from whole Europe. It rests on two basic pillars: the national youth councils representing the **youth's organised sector** in each country individually, and the **international youth organisations** representing the youth's interests that transcend national borders. The mission of

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<sup>3</sup> More about the Youth Partnership at: <http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> According to the writing Council of European Youth Committees published by the European University Institute and available in PDF format as of 01.08.2009 at <http://wwwarc.eui.eu/pdfinv/inv-cenyc.pdf>.

the European Youth Forum is: (a) to strengthen and to capacitate the youths so as to be able to participate actively in shaping Europe and the societies in which they live, and (b) to improve the living conditions of the youth that is part of the European citizenry in today's world.

## **Mechanisms of influence**

The European Youth Forum derives its influence from its numerosness and its representativeness, and as such it is a recognised partner to the two aforementioned operators in the field of youth policy. However, we should not forget that the European Youth Forum continually develops its expertise in respect of the youth policy.

The document which perhaps most clearly elaborates the European Youth Forum's standpoints and its upheld agenda is the 11 indicators of the (national) youth policy<sup>5</sup> document of 2002. The cited indicators are: (1) the position and quality of non-formal education; (2) youth training policy; (3) youth legislation; (4) youth budget; (5) youth information policy; (6) multi-level policy; (7) youth research; (8) participation (primarily on the national level through national youth councils); (9) inter-ministerial co-operation; (10) innovation; and (11) youth advisory bodies. These indicators not only offer a pretty clear view of the matters with which the European Youth Forum deals, and whereon it concentrates its public-advocacy initiatives, but also point out the basic methods of its work; by setting solid indicators, gradual and continual improvements of the youth policy on all levels are upheld.

With a view to the fact that we, as the European Youth Forum's main

<sup>5</sup> In translation, "11 indicators of the (national) youth policy." Even though this position paper in the first place was designed as an instrument for upholding the standards of national youth policies, by placing the word "national" in parentheses it is clearly pointed out that the same indicators can be used to evaluate the quality of youth policies on all levels, from the local level all the way to the European level.

sources of power, pointed up representativeness, numerousness, and expertise, then, as its most visible weakness, we should point out certain policy inconsistencies and generalisations, that fail to encompass specific national and local features. However, it seems that sometimes this is the price that has to be paid in order to achieve representativeness. As a matter of fact, the European Youth Forum is a large and heterogeneous network composed of different types of organisations, wherein the diversity of their interests is not a sole result of their different organisational cultures and of their ways of looking at youth issues - (with a view to national youth councils in relation to international youth organisations wherein again we find a wide spectrum, from religious youth organisations, through students organisations, to European political youth organisations) - but also a result of the geographical dimension which is quite conspicuous. Nor are rare vehement political contentions within the European Youth Forum, with organisations trying to put problems from their own region into the agenda, in view of the fact that, for example, the youth's problems in the Caucasus region often might be quite different from the youth's problems in, say, Central or Western Europe. Therefore, compromise is often an imperative recipe to attain sustainability, even at the cost of watering down policy standpoints and initiatives from time to time.

### **Institutional make-up of the European Youth Forum**

The European Youth Forum's highest decision-making body is the **General Assembly** which convenes every two years, and where the representatives of all member organisations participate; (each organisation with full membership status delegates two representatives, while other organisations, regardless whether they are candidate members or observers, delegate one representative). Voting is ba-

sed on the “one organisation – one vote” principle, however, it is important to mention that only organisations with full membership have the right to vote. In addition, the General Assembly, as the organisation’s highest representative body invested with comprehensive competencies, elects the **president, three vice-presidents**, and **8 members of the Bureau**, all on a two-year term. The Bureau is in fact the structure that governs the work of the European Youth Forum, and, during the two-year term, its members do their work voluntarily. During the period when the General Assembly has no meetings, democratic supervision of the Bureau’s work (and of the Secretariat’s work as well, about which there will be a mention soon) is ensured through the meetings of the **Council of Members**. It is a kind of a small-sized assembly that convenes in the years when the General Assembly does not convene twice, that is in the years when the General Assembly convenes only once. Each organisation delegates one representative to the **Council of Members**, and its most significant power is that it elects the **Secretary General** on a two-year term, who runs the **Secretariat** and, together with the president, represents the European Youth Forum. The Secretariat is an exceptionally important body which manages the current affairs of the European Youth Forum and which develops policy expertise in the area of youth policy. At the moment it has 25 employees divided into two groups: (a) policy officers who deal with the content and with the public-campaign initiatives, and (b) administrative personnel. The other two bodies within the European Youth Forum’s structure that is important to mention are the **Financial Control Commission** and the **Consultative Body for Membership Applications**. The former performs internal control over the financial affairs of the European Youth Forum, while the latter by its composition is a balanced body which offers its opinions to the

General Assembly about whether the status of a certain organisation should be revised, as well as opinions on the candidacies of prospective members.<sup>6</sup>

Also, the European Youth Forum sets up numerous work-groups for certain topics such as education, mobility, the youth's health, volunteering, etc. The European Youth Forum delegates its members to and actively advocates youth policies within a wide range of international organisations such as, for example, the Council of Europe (the explained mechanism of delegating to the Advisory Council for Youth), the European Union (especially the **Economic and Social Committee** and the **Regions Committee**), and the United Nations (where it enjoys a consultative status in the **Economic and Social Council**, and within the specialised agencies of the United Nations, like the **World Bank**).<sup>7</sup>

### *National youth policies in Europe*

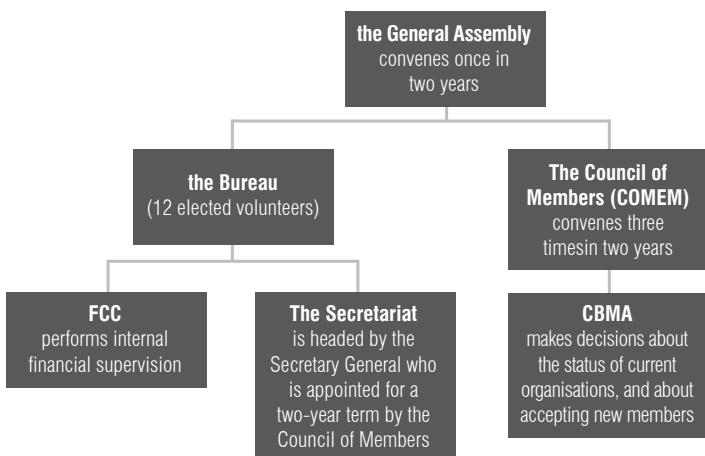
In the last part of this publication, we will devote a special attention to the ways in which different European states formulate and implement youth policies. We must point up that while compiling this publication we had great dilemmas whether to try and focus on passing on abundant information that we have gathered through our research and years-long co-operation between the Croatian Youth Network and the national youth councils of many European countries, or, at the slight expense of content abundancy, to try and give a meaning to that data through an analytical scheme, hoping that in the future this may provide an impetus for all potential researchers and practitioners who would be working in this field. The fact that the space

<sup>6</sup> About the functioning of the bodies of the European Youth Forum you can read in more detail in the Statute that is available at: <http://www.youthforum.org/en/node/65>

<sup>7</sup> More information about the European Youth Forum, modes of its work, its work bodies, and its influence you can find at: <http://www.youthforum.org>

for this publication had been limited, and the fact that the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the European Youth Forum as key topics of this publication have duly consumed a good part thereof helped us to opt for the latter option, under a compromise that we use summarised case-studies to present youth policies in a number of countries.

**Figure 2:** The make-up of the European Youth Forum



## **How to conceive youth policies - causes of differences and similarities**

Thomas Dye, in trying to define public policies, wrote long time ago: "Policy is everything that the government chooses to do and not to do" (Dye, 1972; according to Colebatch; 2004: 78). Such definition, emphasizing the paramount role of the state, later was strongly contested, and the most significant adversaries of such conception have been pluralists and theoreticians on policy networks. Both groups consider that public policies are built according to greatly decentralised models, and that the states don't hold all the power in devising, adopting, and implementing public policies. They seem to be right with a view to the tumultuous 1980s, when not only the private sector, but the civil sector as well, were getting stronger. However, even today no one disputes the state's superior role. On the other hand, each public policy is specific, and the processes in connection with it create a specific institutional landscape, just like rivers that with their power alter the relief, creating canyons, valleys, lakes, and other geographical structures and appearances. Our research has prompted us to conclude that the key element for understanding certain youth policies is the **relation between the state and the organised youth sector (usually represented through national youth councils)**. It appears that it is precisely the relation between the state, more precisely the state's institutions, and national youth councils that enables deeper understanding and creates possibilities for setting up analytical models that can deepen our knowledge on youth policy. However, a logical question is raised: "What is the essence of the syntagma, the relation between the state and the youth sector?"

We believe that the ways in which it has been answered to four basic questions inferred from the scope of particular national youth policies represent the key to understanding different models. Those four questions are:

- a) Is the youth's status on the national level regulated by a special law?
- b) Does the state include the representatives of the organised youth sector when making key decisions concerning the youth policy on the national level?
- c) To what extent the state supports the organised youth sector, especially the national youth council?
- d) To what extent is the national youth council included in implementing and monitoring government programmes designed to solve the youth's problems and satisfy its needs?

### *Three models and their sources*

In accordance with the above-mentioned Dye's definition, it can be concluded that each state has its youth policy. Even if the state does nothing to satisfy the needs of the youth as a specific social group, and even if it does not recognise the youth as a distinctive part of the society, we can still say (without getting into value implications of such statement) that such absence of youth policy is a kind of youth policy in itself. Notwithstanding, almost all European countries today recognise, in great or small part, the significance of the youth, and with greater or lesser proactive approaches try to effectuate its integration into the society, in order to ensure the release of its creative potential in a way useful for the entire fabric of society. In addition, the very the fact that the youth (as a specific social division of par-



ticipants, whose needs are usually articulated through distinctive discourse) exists in the society, generally forces governments to take actions. “The pressure from below”, regardless whether it is a demand to have space for cultural and artistic activities, or an aggressive protest due to massive unemployment that unproportionately pesters the youth, always forces governments to take actions. The reactions are often fundamentally different by their details and principles.

## 1) Model Y

All three models that shall be described here are marked out by letters that we believe summarise well the essence of the process that goes on within each model. The first national youth policy model, **model Y**, is characterised by facts that the youth’s needs and the demands are met by state institutions and the organised youth sector through **separate approaches**, with no **permeation** between them, and hence no **synergic effect**. When analysed by the four above-mentioned questions, we find the following about model Y: a) the legal status of the youth sector as a social group and the legal status of the organised youth sector on the national level are vaguely defined; there is no clear definition for, and no clear distinction between, youth organisations and organisations dealing with the youth; there are no criteria for organisations aspiring to attain the status of national, regional, or local youth councils; there are no set rules for the formation of the national youth council; there are no set channels on how the national youth council can influence state institutions; and there is no defined financial support that the national youth council is entitled to receive from state authorities; b) low level of participation of the representatives of the national youth councils; this participation essentially is only formal and symbolic,

and usually amounts to **sharing information about the assigned tasks**<sup>8</sup> (Marković/Vučković; 2007); “Sharing information about the assigned tasks” is the fourth level of the youth’s participation in the decision-making processes, in accordance with the influential classification of Roger Hart who recognises 8 such levels. The third level would be tokenism (speaking of the youth affirmatively, but not giving it any real power, and not offering it even the basic information), the second level would be deeming the youth only as a decoration, and the first level would be manipulation with the youth. It is worthy to notice that Hart holds that there is no participation on the first three levels. (c) the state does not systematically financially support the organised youth sector (which is otherwise dependent on project money) to maintain the sector’s basic activities; (d) the national councils are poorly included in the monitoring, and even less in the implementation of government programmes, albeit this does not necessarily mean that they lack in their own efforts to contribute to the implementation and to publically advocate better practices.

## 2) Model T

The main element by which model T differs from model Y is that in model T the state recognises the significance and the expertise of youth organisations with regard to certain issues concerning the youth (usually these issues include the youth’s health, volunteering, mobility, and informing), and in this respect the state recognises the youth’s role and influence, and often grants it substantial financial

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<sup>8</sup> Obavještanje o dodijeljenim zadacima je 4. razina uključivanja mladih u procese donošenja odluka sukladno utjecajnoj klasifikaciji Rogera Harta koji razlikuje 8 takvih razina. Razine koje su još niže su tokenizam (o mladim se afirmativno priča, ali im se na daje nikakva moć, čak niti elementarna informiranost), mladi kao ukras i manipulacija mladima. Valja naglasiti da Hart smatra da na najniže 3 razine participacija uopće ne postoji.

support. Symbolically this is represented by the vertical line on the letter T, signifying that the efforts of the state and those of the organised youth sector are unified, and that they permeate each other, at least when certain issues are in question. However, it is important to point out that in most cases these are parts of the “cake” that the state is willing to share, as in most cases they do not carry any potential for real social change. Youth policy here fails to meet the mark set by two indicators cited in the European Youth Forum’s position paper; these indicators include: **multi-level youth policy**, and above all, **inter-sectoral co-operation**. Only a wholesome and systematic approach that co-ordinates the efforts of all included participants, which is crucial in addressing all (or at least most of) the youth’s key problems and needs, has a chance of success. If we want to be eternal optimists, we can deem model T as a transitory phase towards model O, but the reality has shown that such complete transition almost never happens.

### 3) Model O

Letter O in this case signifies constant permeation of the efforts of the state and those of the youth sector in solving the youth’s problems and satisfying its needs. Also, symbolically this refers to a systematic approach, co-operation and co-ordination, and to the existence of a feed-back mechanism among the engaged participants, who thus more easily detect new needs and problems, and respond to them more effectively. In an “ideal model O world”, the relationship between the state and the organised youth sector is clearly defined; the youth enjoys the right to truly participate in state advisory structures, and sometimes in co-decision-making structures; the youth sector is sufficiently and transparently financed; and the state readily includes the representatives of the national council

and different youth organisations in the system of monitoring, and sometimes relegates to the national councils the implementation of particular elements of the national youth policy.

### **Where do we find each particular model?**

Before we move on to elaborate this issue in more detail, there are two methodological remarks that should be addressed. When we designed the aforementioned models, we did not try to avoid the normative dimension; more to the point, if to a particular reader it seems that that model Y is something that we consider bad, of low-quality, and undesirable, and that, on the other end of the spectrum, model O represents the framework within which the national youth policy can achieve best results, we can only say that such reader is not wrong. However, in the further text, we will try to retain the tone of criticism not only towards those systems that have evident shortcomings, but also towards those that undoubtedly we can consider examples of good practice. The second important remark is that we can rarely find any of the described models in their pure form. We won't try to avoid the weaknesses of this classification and its inability to capture the reality entirely, but we believe it can be a useful guidance in trying to study particular national youth policies. For example, from what is said before, it wouldn't be entirely wrong to conclude that in Croatia model Y is present in great part. Even though Croatia is the first country in South-Eastern Europe that has passed a law concerning the youth (Act on Youth Advisory Boards), many important issues from before have not been addressed satisfactorily; (such as the legal status of the youth sector, and of national and regional youth councils; inability of the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to deliver a true and quality participation; non-existence of a stable and transparent

system of financing; insufficient use of knowledge and influence of the national youth council in monitoring and implementing national strategic documents). Besides, it seems that certain systems are “floating” between models; therefore in order to give a precise estimate often it is necessary to take a good look at the essence. Thus, for example, in Iceland there is a law on the youth, and the national youth council there receives an institutional financial support that makes up 90% of the national youth council’s budget.

However, when taken into consideration the assessment of our colleagues that the youth policy there mostly includes programmes for children, and not what we could truly call youth policy which tends to engage young citizens in actively solving social problems, and when we add to that that the aforementioned institutional support is sufficient to employ one person only, and that at only 60% of full working hours, it is clear that beneath the shiny surface is hidden the stringency of model Y.

Interesting examples of what we’re prone to view as model T can be found in Great Britain and Estonia. The **British Youth Council (BYC)** was established within the British government after World War II as an instrument against communist ideology. Until 1963, it was receiving institutional support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what is an unprecedented case considering that generally other ministries are warranted for youth affairs. Even though the British Youth Council’s independence has undoubtedly grown since then, still the government has a significant influence on issues concerning the youth, especially through a committee named **All-Party Group for Policy Affairs**, whose members are the representatives from all parliamentary parties, and whose work is co-ordinated by the British Youth Council. In addition, the British Youth Council has a very good communication with individual parliamentarians

who have great influence over the parliament, however, from the aforesaid, it cannot be concluded that there is a systematic and well-thought youth policy and a synergy between the government and the British Youth Council, but rather an irregular co-operation with regard to certain issues. It appears that the example of the British Youth Council clearly shows that the history of an organisation in great part determines its future; more precisely, it can be said that the British Youth Council is still seeking a clear position in relations with the state. The **Estonian case** is quite different. The Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) was established only in 2002, following a strong bottom-up initiative that was started in the first place by students' organisations. Through a quality and arduous work of its employees and volunteers, it was recognised as a relevant partner by the Ministry of Education and Research and by the Ministry for Social Welfare. It also receives an institutional support that covers 75% of its yearly budget. However, as nasty problems the colleagues from the Estonian National Youth Council point out an unclearly defined status of youth organisations by the current Youth-Work Act, and insufficient inter-departmental co-operation and co-ordination between other ministries, thus limiting the volume of results in other areas. Finally, in the Swedish case, there is a powerful and influential national youth council which, according to the latest data, employs 13 people, and which from the warranted Ministry of Culture receives an institutional support that is never bigger than one-third of its annual budget. Namely, the colleagues from the **Swedish National Youth Council (LSU)** are reluctant to become more financially dependent upon the state, lest they might jeopardise their independence and lose the capacity to be watchdogs for the youth's interests. In addition, due to the same reason, LSU also refuses to participate in the work of the National Board for

Youth Affairs (one of the Swedish Government's advisory bodies), but all the same it has been finding very efficient mechanisms to influence public structures relevant for the youth policy. There are questions to be asked, "Is the Swedish National Youth Council consciously discarding model O, or perhaps it has already, in the normative sense, found its model O which, however, by its content differs from our description?"

### **THREE SHORT CASE-STUDIES**

#### **1) *The Spanish system – the national youth council as an autonomous part of the state administration***

Spain is known as a country with a very strong civil sector, and, within the sector traditionally, students and school-youth organisations with abounding memberships particularly stand out. However, the way in which the relationship between the state and the organised youth sector is regulated in Spain could seem controversial from the aspect of traditional theories that try to expound the relations between the civil sector and the state. Notwithstanding, long existence of that model speaks a lot about its sustainability, and thereby shows that it has certain advantages.

The Spanish case is specific in that the **Spanish National Youth Council (CJE; in Spanish, Consejo de la Juventud de España)** was established by a legal act of the state, and it is integrated in the state administration as a form of autonomous agency responsible for creating and, up to a point, for implementing the national youth policy, for indeed a substantial number of the council's recent projects in great part are based on providing various services for the youth. Thus, for example, the Spanish National Youth Council manages a significant number of quality web sites that help the youth in obta-

ining housing, or offer the youth information on prevention of risky sexual behaviour. Also, there is an interactive web site for helping youth organisations develop quality book-keeping systems, and for giving clear instructions on how to manage a youth organisation. Perhaps the most significant project of the Spanish National Youth Council is Observatorio Joven de Empleo en España (in free translation, Monitoring the Employment of the Youth in Spain), serving to actively monitor changes in trends of the youth workforce in Spain, thus developing a system of early warning and fast reaction to potential worrying trends.

The above-mentioned act dates back to 1983, and in free translation it is named **Establishing the National Youth Council as an Independent Organisation**. Unfortunately, the scope of our work does not allow us to analyse in detail this exceptionally interesting legal solution, hence we shall focus on a few details only. Before all, this act regulates in detail the specifics that in practice are to a great extent a matter of a youth council's statute; it regulates the number and the size of organisations that can become members of the council, and it regulates the structures of the bodies of the council (the Assembly, the Permanent Commission, Special Commissions, and the International-Relations Committee), the ways they are to function, and their mutual relations. It also clearly defines the participation of members of the state administration in the bodies of the council. Thus, for example, the representative of the ministry warranted for the council, (in 1983 it was the Ministry of Culture, while today, according to the colleagues from the Spanish National Youth Council, it is the Ministry for Equality), participates in the work of the council's bodies, without a right to vote. The act also prescribes that the Spanish National Youth Council must submit to the warranted ministry a proposition for the annual budget, together with a report on the activities carried out in



the previous year. The financial means allocated in this way make up the bulk of the Spanish National Youth Council's budget.<sup>9</sup> Highly active engagement of the state in setting up a national youth council is rare, however, there are interesting examples. In addition to the example of the British Youth Council that is already presented above, a specific practice comes from Malta where the national youth council was established on the initiative of one member of parliament, and it is based on the tradition of the Federation of Youth Organisations that was operative during the 1980s. Very strong ties between the national youth council and the state structures also exist in Russia, Armenia, as well as in the Scandinavian countries and Germany whose case we will elaborate some more, however, according to our insight, in no other country has such deep and so worked out relationship between the state and the national youth council been created as in Spain. Also, it is important to point up that the Spanish National Youth Council is not the only body within the Spanish administration that deals with the youth policy or with the youth's work. This is also the domain of the **Instituto de la Juventud** (in free translation, the Institute for Research on the Youth) which conducts scientific research on the position of the youth, as a specific social group, and of the youth sub-groups, as well as research on education, mobility, and on the influence

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of modern social changes in the youth's everyday life. Within the scope of all research, they publish yearly reports about the youth's position in Spain <sup>10</sup>, trying to show clearly the youth's current position and warning about any possible aching problems. The institute is also a publicly financed institution, whose director is appointed by the minister of the Ministry of Equality.

By rounding up the "Spanish story"<sup>11</sup> we can go back to the conclusion from the beginning of this passage and reiterate that it is highly specific, but obviously a very functional system. The very name of the law contains the word "independent", thereby describing the work of the Spanish National Youth Council, and its position, which is additionally strengthened by the fact that the programme, its mode of working, and the selection of people for the key managing positions remain completely in the hands of its institutional bodies. Furthermore, the influence of the representatives of the sanctioned ministry is obviously clearly defined, and in small part it serves as the ministry's and the state's control mechanism, while in great part it serves to represent the ministry's and the state's interests and positions within the bodies of the Spanish National Youth Council. Notwithstanding, it is undeniable that the independence of the Spanish National Youth Council is limited by exact legal provisions on

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<sup>10</sup> Personally I have had a chance to read the yearly report for 2008, and in hope that the readers won't mind if I make a somewhat subjective assessment, I have to say that it convincingly contains the most systematic, quality, and comprehensive researches in the sphere of youth policy and youth labour that I have ever encountered until now in my modest experience in researching the youth sector on the national and international level.

<sup>11</sup> It should be mentioned that the youth council that operates on the level of the Autonomous Province of Catalonia is also a member of the European Youth Forum. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, we didn't manage to establish a contact with the colleagues from the Catalonian Youth Council, thus, leaving us no choice but to owe the reader information concerning that "component of the Spanish story."

membership and on relations among its bodies, as well as by complete dependence on public funding. Therefore, we consider that the word “autonomous”, used in the title of this section, is more adequate. It is good to repeat one more time that such relationship can be functional (and obviously in Spain it is) because it allows financial stability for the entire sector, it has clearly defined rules of the game stipulated in the law, as the highest legal instrument, and offers opportunities to be at the source of information and influence when making decisions. Very often, the question of independence of the civil sector and state service alike comes down to the level of moral consistency among their employees and officials.

## ***2) Denmark – the system of organised youth sector to which some state powers are relegated***

The Danish system seems most interesting to us for reasons that despite the absence of clear legal regulations on relationship between the youth sector and the state, they have built a system that is based on exceptionally strong and quality co-operation between the **Danish National Youth Council (DUF)** and the public sector, which has not designated a ministry that is exclusively responsible for the youth and for the co-ordination of the youth policy, but has in great part divided these responsibilities between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education.

The Danish National Youth Council can rightfully be considered the advocate of the youth’s interests (and of children’s interests as well), being a powerful and influential national network that gathers around 70 organisations, it has 25 employees, and a yearly budget of 20 million Danish kroner (about 2,7 million euro). What is especially interesting is the fact that the state has empowered the Danish Nati-

onal Youth Council to manage the funds that are allocated for youth and children projects; these funds by the way are obtained from a part of the revenue from the state games of chance. More precisely, a part of the revenue from the state games of chance is directly allocated to the Danish National Youth Council, which then by a public bidding allocates these funds to the youth sector and the children's sector. The yearly sum in question is about 100 million kroner (more than 13,5 million euro), which is mostly obtained from the aforementioned games of chance and from the taxes on gambling, and in small part from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from EU structural funds. However, even with such exceptionally significant role in implementing important elements of the youth policy, the Danish National Youth Council retains a high level of autonomy, even independence from the state. Even though the field of their main sources of finance (revenue from state games of chance and gambling) is strictly legally regulated and overseen, the status of the Danish National Youth Council is not defined by a special legal act, as they operate like any other regular civil-society organisation. It appears that we can conclude that the relationship between the state and the organised youth sector which is represented mainly through the Danish National Youth Council is truly a relationship between partners, based on mutual trust. And again, it does not appear that due to this arrangement, the Danish National Youth Council is losing its role of a public advocate, with a view to the fact that their activities in the past two years have been primarily focused on two sets of goals: (1) striving to lower the age threshold for voting on the next parliamentary elections in 2012, from 18 to 16, and campaigning to raise the level of awareness towards the importance of recently held elections for the European Parliament; and (2) improving organisational conditions for the youth's activities, through a series of campaigns attempting to influence the level of society's

consciousness and that of public authorities regarding how the inclusion of the youth and the children in civil-society organisations can bring profit to public authorities, business sector, and to the whole society, through institutionalisation of certain values pertinent to the youth and children, and also through uplifting the level of their technical skills. The complete discourse on the youth policy in Denmark revolves around strengthening the participation based on a high level of informing. The colleagues from Denmark have not explicitly pointed out any advisory or co-decision-making structure that deals with the youth on the national level. Public campaigning activities for the interests of the youth and children obviously are articulated through other channels. It seems that in Denmark the Danish National Youth Council, wherefrom reports about excellent co-operation with public authorities and about possibilities to impose in the public sphere a spectrum of different issues that the youth sector at a given time considers important emanate, enjoys the status of a “privileged partner to authorities”, without a need for firm formal confirmation of its status. In such case, the key challenge to the Danish National Youth Council and to other national youth councils that find themselves in a similar position is to ensure internal democracy because from there the entire legitimacy of the organisation is derived. If the government accepts the national council as an equal partner without interfering in its work, then it is extremely important that the council remains open to the interests of all the youth in society. Finally, a careful reader can notice that in this passage many times the “interests of the youth and children” have been mentioned. This is very important because the Danish National Youth Council, like a number of other national youth councils <sup>12</sup>, represents not only the interests of the youth, but the in-

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<sup>12</sup> A significant example of such approach we find in Norway where the very national council bears the name, the Norwegian National Youth and Children’s Council (LNU) that endeavours to integrate the youth policy and children’s policy into one entirety,

terests of children as well. Thus, for example, on their web site (<http://www.duf.dk/forside/>) we can find a significant example of such approach we find in Norway where the very national council bears the name, the Norwegian National Youth and Children's Council (LNU) that endeavours to integrate the youth policy and children's policy into one entirety, therefore they receive as members children's organisations too. On the other hand, we have the example of Germany which on the federal level has integrated together the youth policy and the policy on working with children by The Law on Services for Children and the Youth (KJHG, the abbreviation in German); however, the German national youth council, that is the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR, the abbreviation in German), by its designation as well as by its activities clearly shows that it applies, and insists on, the distinction find a text on children's rights which among other things reveals that one of the strategic goals of the Danish National Youth Council is to uphold the full implementation of the Convention on Children's Rights in Denmark. What is interesting from the viewpoint of someone who works at the national youth council that operates in a country in transition is that in Denmark, and in a number of other developed countries as well, national youth councils gladly accept dealing with issues and problems concerning the children. The Croatian example, found in other countries in transition as well, shows that sometimes it can be very dangerous not to make a clear distinction between the youth policy and the policy concerning children, as this often results in a "very guardian" discourse of the state towards the very national youth

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therefore they receive as members children's organisations too. On the other hand, we have the example of Germany which on the federal level has integrated together the youth policy and the policy on working with children by The Law on Services for Children and the Youth (KJHG, the abbreviation in German); however, the German national youth council, that is the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR, the abbreviation in German), by its designation as well as by its activities clearly shows that it applies, and insists on, the distinction.

councils, and also towards those represented by the national youth councils, due to the state's custom to regard children and the youth alike as part of the population that must be "taken care of", and not as part of the population that per se can be an element of positive social change. It is possible that the key piece of the successful Danish jigsaw puzzle is also the Scandinavian tradition of high-quality youth work that is strongly supported by the state.<sup>13</sup> Most certainly, this as well is an important element in building the "insider" position that the Danish National Youth Council enjoys.

### **3) *Lithuania – a successful system in a country in transition, with great participation of the youth sector in advisory and co-decision-making structures***

As mentioned above, Lithuania is an example of a state in which the system of co-deciding was introduced, and which was based on the model that exists in the Council of Europe. Such system existed during the period from 2003 to 2006, however, it was abolished afterwards, but notwithstanding, Lithuania kept an institutional make-up that allows the organised youth sector to exercise a strong influence on the national youth policy.

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<sup>13</sup> Perhaps a clearer example of the influence of youth work can be found in Finland. The Finnish national youth council – ALLIANSSI – was created in 1992 by merging three national organizations: the national youth workers' association, a very influential national youth service-provision organization and the youth umbrella organization. Although ALLIANSSI has had an excellent cooperation with the state since its inception, a somewhat narrow youth policy framework (founded on the basis of the Youth Work Act of 1972, which came as a response to the low birth rate and other sociological changes in the lives of young people) made it difficult to create more coherent policies which would not be dominated exclusively by the youth work discourse. This is the reason why a new Youth Act was adopted, defining clear relations between the two regulatory pillars: youth work and youth policy.

The organised youth sector in Lithuania is represented through **the Lithuanian National Youth Council (LiJOT)** established in 1992. Today, the Lithuanian National Youth Council gathers 62 organisations, it has 10 employees, and it receives institutional support from the state that makes up about 30% of its budget. The Lithuanian National Youth Council has also played a key part in founding the Baltic Youth Forum and the Agency for International Youth Co-operation, responsible for administering the Youth-in-Action Programme in Lithuania. As of 2003, the scope of the youth policy in **Lithuania is regulated by The Law on Youth Policy Framework**. In its original version, this law created a framework that doubtlessly could be deemed as one setting co-management or co-decision-making rules, comparable to the one that regulates that segment within the Council of Europe. Namely, the key body for the youth policy in the period from 2003 to 2006 was **the Council for Youth Affairs** made up with 6 representatives from the Lithuanian National Youth Council and with 6 representatives from the state, whereabouts it's important to point out that the Council for Youth Affairs was not subject to any ministry exclusively in view of the fact that the representatives were delegated from different ministries, and were warranted to cover the youth policy through their scope of activities. In addition, the Council for Youth Affairs had been able to delegate representatives to managing structures of the executive Agency for International Youth Co-operation whose responsibility had been to administer the "financial cake" which was allocated for the youth sector. It's important to note that the make-up of the Council for Youth Affairs had had to be confirmed by the Government of Lithuania, but after that it had had complete **independence** in managing the youth policy on the national level, (which of course had been regulated by the framework set by the afore-mentioned law, and by other appro-

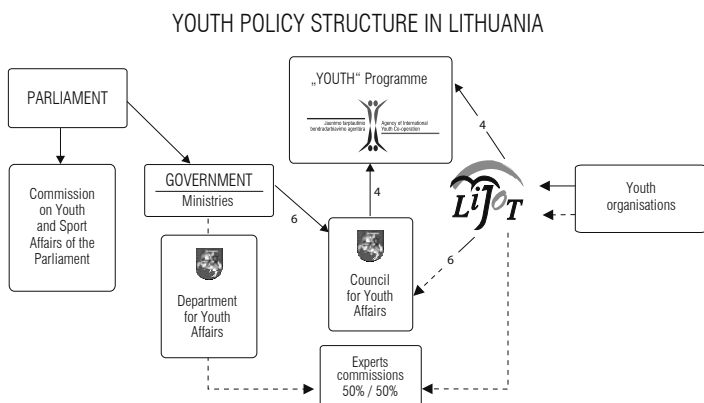


appropriate legal acts), and **it had had its own legal personality with its own system of co-deciding**, where the representatives of the youth sector and the representatives from ministries had been entitled to make decisions on perfectly equal basis.

Nonetheless, such system did not last long. By the amendments of The Law on Youth Policy Framework, as of January 1st, 2006, the **Youth Department**, as a governmental body responsible for designing, implementing, and co-ordinating the efforts of all participants in the national youth policy, was established. The Council for Youth Affairs became an advisory body whose make-up still retained the equality between the representatives of the state and the representatives of the Lithuanian National Youth Council. Even now, its make-up has to be approved by the Government of Lithuania, upon suggestion from the minister responsible for social security and labour.

The rest of the “crossword puzzle” remains more or less the same, whereat the complete presentation which includes the Lithuanian Parliamentary Commission for Youth and Sports, and experts’ commissions, that are also made up on equal basis, looks like this:

**Figure 3:** Adopted from Ribačiauskaite/Bombrych/Wysocka/Markowska/Dirma, 2008.



What were the reasons that prompted the state to make these structural changes? Unfortunately, we do not have a sufficient amount of information, therefore we can only speculate. Poor results definitively cannot be the cause, because the Council of Europe on many occasions had rated the Lithuanian system as an example of good practice and as the only arrangement that has honestly implemented the system of co-management in its full scope. And most certainly the official explanation that the government gave to the representatives of the Lithuanian National Youth Council does not reflect the real reason; the official explanation being that political accountability of the Council for Youth Affairs was not clearly defined due to the fact that on one hand it was not clear to which part of the state administration it belonged (what is totally irrelevant, considering that for its work, that was regulated by The Law on Youth Policy Framework, and other legal acts and regulations, the Council for Youth Affairs was directly accountable to the government), and on the other hand the apportionment of public money was decided by the representatives of the Lithuanian National Youth Council, whose appointment, according to government representatives' opinion, was not based on the principles of democracy. Here, we notice a very low level of democratic political culture that is characteristic to all countries in transition. Such vulgar perception of democracy, according to which only directly elected representatives (and we know that a lot of state officials and public servants have not been elected that way) have the right to decide about "legal matters," completely neglects the basic principles of good management, whereto, in addition to the principle of political responsibility, commonly the principles of transparency, coherence, and effectiveness appertain; principles that evidently in Lithuania were never dis-

putable at any given moment a<sup>14</sup>. Therefore it is hard to escape the impression that it was one of the clean arbitrary political decisions that usually are not based on rational arguments.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to be misled by this slightly critical tone and assume that the current make-up in Lithuania is bad or unfunctional, for it is quite the opposite. The colleagues from the Lithuanian National Youth Council point out a very good co-operation with the Youth Department, as well as the opportunity to effectuate their influence on a large number of issues and areas relevant for the youth in Lithuania. We can conclude that the tradition of interdepartmental co-operation, that existed during the period from 2003 to 2006, continues even today, thus Lithuania has a quality and coherent youth policy that is additionally developed through continuous work on strengthening the capacities of regional youth councils. In addition, the state has been making substantial efforts through the **Rural Areas Programme** wherein at the moment participate 55 of the 60 Lithuanian districts.

Each of them has: a) the official charged with the youth matters (it is a co-ordinator who maintains constant contacts with the Youth Department); b) a separate budget entry for youth initiatives; and c) the youth's representatives in experts commissions that evaluate the quality of the projects; (Ribačiauskaite/Bombrych/Wysocka/Markowska/Dirma; 2008: 48). On the level of each district, councils for youth affairs also exist and are formed on the same principles as that on the national level, with the difference that their representatives are delegated by the regional youth councils, which too are

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<sup>14</sup> Thus, for example, the European Commission in its document European Governance – White Paper of 2001, in addition to the four principles that are pointed up above (political liability, transparency, coherence, and effectiveness), mentions **participation** too, in the sense of as wide as possible inclusion of all interested participants in all the stages of the policy process.

members of the Lithuanian National Youth Council.

We should also point out that the last modifications of, and the addenda to, The Law on Youth Policy Framework more clearly formulate the definitions of, and the differences between, youth organisations and organisations for the youth, introducing important modifications necessary for the decentralisation of the system by clearly defining the scope of powers and functions of the regional youth councils as well as the functional relationship between the national and the lower levels of governance. Despite the abolishment of the principles of co-management, the “Lithuanian story” has been and has remained a “genuine story”.

### **In conclusion: four theses for further debate**

From these three presented case-studies, that also contain short reflections on some other national youth policy systems, it seems very hard to draw any clear conclusions that would serve as unambiguous “guiding thoughts” in deliberating about the desirable relations between the state and the organised youth sector. Therefore, we will present four theses only that, we consider, can be good grounds for further debate and potential deeper research that could deal with national youth policies:

- 1) Model O that we described above is not the starting-point but a process. Each of the three described systems can be considered an example of good practice that cannot be understood unless we know the history of the development of youth policy in a particular country. In Spain, the state, after recognising the significance of the young’s participa-

tion, decided to maximally institutionalise their participation so as it made the Spanish National Youth Council a part of its own administrative apparatus, thereat guaranteeing to the council a high level functional autonomy. In Denmark, years-long tradition of participative political culture enhanced the establishment of partnership relations between the state and the Danish National Youth Council so as the state, without a particular need to formally define the mutual relations, relegated to the council a great deal of the work in implementing the youth policy, which traditionally is considered “state work”. In Lithuania, a country in transition, the Lithuanian National Youth Council, under pressure “from below”, carved out a partner-with-the-state status, and tended to confirm this through participation in formal advisory and co-decision-making government bodies.

- 2) Hence, there is no clean and perfect model O in the form that we described on page 75. However, when we evaluate particular national youth policies, the above-mentioned 11 indicators of the European Youth Forum might be a useful instrument. They can in great part help us see how near or far away from model Y, T, or O each system is.
- 3) Achieving a high level of co-operation between the state and the national youth council in no way means that the work is finished. That relationship should be understood as a process subject to constant change. Thus in Spain the key challenge is to ensure the independence of the Spanish National Youth Council and to resist potential political

pressures, that perhaps at the moment are not present, but which could take place in the future. In Denmark, where the co-operation is obviously institutionalised at the level of social-political practices, the internal democracy and representativeness of the Danish National Youth Council has to be its central preoccupation. The other way round, a national youth council can, due to its privileged position, monopolise the “the youth’s voice” that the state bodies “auscultate”. In Lithuania, and in other countries in transition, (also through internal democracy and representativeness, challenges set before more or less all national youth councils), the influence on the political culture and ensuring that co-operation transcends formal frameworks set by joint advisory and co-decision-making bodies are becoming a key challenge. It is essential that the policy of a national youth council is comprehensive, continual, and independent from arbitrary political powers.

- 4) It appears that integrating youth work and organisations that deal with it into the corpus of the national youth council, as a rule, results in greater disposition of the state to relegate part of the implementation of the national youth policy to the national youth council. Thereat, it is most important that the national youth council retains its basic function – acting as a representative and resolute guardian of the youth’s interests on the national level.

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### **Author's note**

A great deal of data for writing this part of this publication we received as answers to half structured questionnaires that we had sent to e-mail addresses of all national youth councils that are members of the European Youth Forum. Even though, in this publication, it was not possible for us to refer directly to each national youth council, whose representatives filled in the questionnaires with their answers, and sent them back to us, we thank each of them most sincerely. Not only will this data be of most valuable avail when writing future publications, and for the education of the youth in Croatia about various national youth policies, but they also had a crucial role in developing a comparative perspective that brought about the formulation of models Y, T and O.

**ANALYSIS OF LOCAL  
YOUTH-POLICIES –  
THE PRACTICE OF  
INCLUDING THE YOUTH IN  
SOCIAL PROCESSES  
AND POLITICAL DECISIONS-  
MAKING PROCESSES**

Authorial writings of the participants in  
the Youth policy – a step forward project



**INSTITUTIONAL  
FRAMEWORK  
FOR THE YOUTH  
POLICY  
IN THE  
KOPRIVNICA-  
KRIŽEVCI COUNT**

# Nikola Pandurić

Geographically, the Koprivnica-Križevci County is in the north-west part of Croatia. This part of Croatia, along with the city of Zagreb and some other centres, has strongly developed its civil society by encouraging the establishment of citizens associations. Thus today, this area abounds in the number and diversity of associations that are engaged in most different activities, or so it is written in their statutes and acts of association. The increases in the number, diversity, and quality of associations have not been followed by greater competence and work quality on the part of officials and public servants within the regional and local self-governance which has for a long time remained trapped in old, well-known ways of functioning. Simply, consciously, and even more often unconsciously, the principles and rules inherent to civil-society operations, which are based on responsibility, participation, and transparency, and which are preconditions for community's normal and quality functioning, have been discarded. Such state of non-education, and the lack of enthusiasm to change the known ways of local communities' functioning are some of the reasons for the youth's widely-spread apathy today. They regard that each and every problem they encounter is not actually theirs, and that they have no liability whatsoever towards the state of affairs in which they are. Of course, managing, and unfortunately manipulating, such mass is rather easy.

**One who seeks nothing, should be given nothing.**

In the Koprivnica-Križevci County there is no **Office for the Youth**. Actually, no-one deals in activities that would include the youth. The youth and most of its activities are almost reduced to two managing departments. The first one is the Department for Education, Culture, Science, and Sports. In this department's job description there is no mention of the youth whatsoever. Thus, when anyone young gathers enough courage to appear at the county offices with a proposition or a question, in most cases that youth will be referred to this department because it is closest to social acting. They will open the door for you, they will listen to your proposition, and then the answer will be that the matter in question is not within their competence. When you then ask who is in charge to deal with the matter, there will be no answer. The second department that should be dealing with the youth is the Managing Department for Healthcare and Welfare. This department is the only one that within the scope of its activities mentions the youth. But, right here, the story of perceiving the youth as a problem is repeated again, for the only place where the youth is mentioned is under "fighting addiction", and the wording is, "taking measures and suggesting measures and programmes for fighting addiction among the young people". There is no **Youth Representative Body**, as well. Recently, many committees have been appointed: the committee for economic growth; for agriculture, forestry and waters management; for municipal services; for environmental protection and urban planning; for healthcare and welfare; for education and culture; for international co-operation and co-operation among counties; for the development of local self-governance; for citizens' applications; for awarding public recognitions; and for finances and budget. In this

big constellation of committees, not only don't we see a public space for a committee that deals with youth issues, but it also appears impossible to detect any public space for a committee that deals with civil society and associations in general. Again, the Managing Department for Education, Culture, Science, and Sports, and the Managing Department for Healthcare and Welfare remain closest to the youth.

The **Youth Advisory Board** exists, and it is set up in accordance with *The Act on Youth Advisory Boards*. In the beginning, there have been minor disputes about the form of proposing the candidates for the Advisory Board to the members of the County Assembly. Youth organisations had to propose the candidates by grouping them into several "pillars", but the criteria for that were not sufficiently defined, which led to a small mess-up. Despite that, the members of the County Assembly took into consideration territorial, gender, and age representativeness, which resulted in a quite heterogeneous Youth Advisory Board. It was a great a great pity that there were no candidates from the area of the town of Durđevac. The Youth Advisory Board holds its meetings in accordance with the dynamic stipulated in the law. The person who is appointed to monitor the work of the Youth Advisory Board and to support its work is Mrs Helena Matica who works at the county's professional-services department. All the decisions made by the Youth Advisory Board are sent to the County's secretary, Mr Zdravko Lovreković, who monitors the work of the Youth Advisory Board, and only after his approval, materials are forwarded. The initial attitude of the county towards the Youth Advisory Board was considerably rigid and formal; an attitude that started to change only recently. The Youth Advisory Board itself hol-

ds its meetings in accordance with the dynamic stipulated in *The Law on Youth Advisory Boards*, and its operations are in accordance with Article 10 of that law. Certain activities aimed at the convergence of, and at connecting, all established youth advisory boards in the county have been carried on, resulting in a number of joint meetings. Members of the Youth Advisory Board have participated in some national and international events that have greatly contributed in consolidating these young individuals' public engagement. The main topic at the meetings of the Youth Advisory Board has been the Local Youth Action Programme, and possible steps that could be taken for its adoption. Considering that the members of the Youth Advisory Board themselves do not have the means to carry out such large project, and in addition there is no point to write it by themselves, its effectuation remains only a wish of the Advisory Board's members awaiting some future time. However, it must be admitted that this Youth Advisory Board has achieved certain small successes in creating a better regional youth policy. The term of the Youth Advisory Board expires by the end of April 2010, whence it is dissolved, and a new Board is constituted. There is no **inter-departmental body** as well. In addition, no **local / regional youth programme** exists. The Youth Advisory Board during its term constantly debated on the ways and best possible steps to be taken in order to adopt the County Youth Programme, but in essence very little has been done. County authorities in all likelihood are not at all acquainted with the existence of the National Youth Programme, and, hence, with the need to apply it on the local and regional levels. At the meetings, the representatives of the county and town institutions who deal with the youth clearly pointed out that a clear strategy in



dealing with the youth would be of great help, and that in accordance with it they themselves would then be able to plan and co-ordinate their actions concerning the youth. At the moment, it is being planned to seek financial means from next year's county budget so as to enable all necessary activities in connection with the County Youth Programme; from the formation of the professional work-group, through public discussion, to the adoption of the programme.

The **Youth Council of the Koprivnica-Križevci County** was formed in the beginning of 2007. However, after the Croatian Youth Network's project for its foundation was put out, the motivation of member organisations of the council to participate in the Croatian Youth Network was lost as well. The council was never registered as a legal entity, thus losing a great deal of its scope of activities, while public campaigning and lobbying at that time were not in the interest of all member organisations. The council could again become operative if a number of young people willing to engage themselves in, and to work further on, these issues turn up. In Koprivnica-Križevci County there is no **Regional Youth Centre**. The town of Koprivnica and the town of Križevci have the premises for the youth, while the town of Durđevac does not have such premises. The town of Koprivnica has established an institution named "Youth House", in charge of which is a person appointed by municipal authorities of the town of Koprivnica, whose primary duty is to take care of the town's property, and to confer the usage of it to associations and citizens, that are interested to carry out projects and programmes. However, this model is not functioning well, because, in practice, not all youth organisations have been given equal rights to use those premises. The town of Križevci has ceded the premises to the

K.V.A.R.K. organisation to open a culture club (the Culture Club). However, there were no town funds to renovate that heavily damaged space. The organisation then gathered up the funds from international donors and renovated the space. The K.V.A.R.K. organisation still manages the space which has grown into a multimedia culture centre, open all-week and offering to the townies of Križevci free Internet use, space for exhibitions, public discussions, meetings, etc. From all the above-mentioned, we see that in the Koprivnica-Križevci County the institutional framework for the youth policy has not even closely been met. It is a great responsibility of the youth in local communities to campaign for upgrading the institutional framework that would ensure further development of the youth sector. The current development of the civil sector and in most part of the youth sector in this area relies on unlimited enthusiasm of a small number of young people who are dedicated to active participation in society, and focused on its overall development.

# **YOUTH POLICY IN THE ISTRIA COUNTY**

Ana Preveden

In the Istria County, the institutional framework necessary for ensuring quality implementation of the youth policy on the local level is practically non-existent. The bodies that actually exist within that framework have only been set up through the will and efforts of certain individuals. Once these individuals stop being active, due to any reason, the activities in advancing the institutional framework, and therefore the activities in implementing the youth policy on the local level, cease.

In order to find the source of the problem and the reasons for not solving these social issues, it is necessary to find the part of the mechanism that is failing. Is the youth the matter, or perhaps the authorities' representatives, or the truth was lost somewhere along the way when the communication between these two important participants vanished?

Certainly it would be good to have an **office for the youth** in our regional/local self-governing unit. However, even on the county level, there is no such body. I had a chance to participate in a number of workshops, discussions, and conferences that were organised by the representatives of local authorities, whereat we, the youth, were asked what would we actually need in order to become active in society, sensitive to important social issues, and the like. There were many different suggestions, but frequently we heard the suggestion that setting up an office for the youth within the Istria County Administration, or at least employing one person working a half of the regular working hours, who would be engaged in the issues such as the implementation of the youth policy, youth organisations and

organisations for the youth, youth advisory boards, youth councils, and the like, would be, if not the solution, at least a big step forward. Frequently, we were able to hear answers from those representatives like: they have no idea what would be the purpose of it; weekly they have maybe one or two persons addressing them; they cannot sort out the youth from other administrative departments (like sports department, cultural department, etc.) for they simply don't know which model to use to do so; and that they don't know what that employee should be doing during that time. They also added, "What about the days when no person comes to knock on the door!?" Their answers certainly show that this local self-governance has no idea what the youth policy means, what the national, and local youth programmes are, and what do they serve for. They themselves are not sure what types of activities they should perform, besides communicating with young people who address them, what are their legal responsibilities, and their moral and social responsibilities towards the youth as well. How can then the youths who want to participate and act actively in view of the social changes know what to do; who is going to teach the Youth Advisory Board what its job is and how to get it done; who is going to communicate with the councils, organisations, and initiatives; who should the youth choose as partners in campaigning for social changes, in working on the local youth programmes, and for establishing youth centres? There are questions to be raised: why is it that, notwithstanding the rest, most of the youth does not see an office for the youth as something suitable and something that it needs; and do the young people perchance deem that they are better off with a status of lost individuals scattered throughout all possible departments? Is it right to see the youth only in view of sports, formal education, and prevention of addiction? Does this perchance send a message to the young peo-

ple that all that is expected from them while they're young is to have loads of fun and to be problematic? Isn't this a strong argument in the young people's hands to become precisely suchlike?

**Youth advisory boards within the local self-governance** do exist in several towns and districts, and erstwhile the Youth Advisory Board of the Istria County was operative. We can take as an example members of the Youth Advisory Board of the town of Pula, who have held a meeting only once since it was established in February, 2008, whereat huge inactivity on the part of its members, and the Board's huge inefficiency are evident. This is by no means exclusively the "fault" of the members of the Youth Advisory Board, even though their disinterest is truly worrying, but it is also the "fault" of those who, under the law, were obliged to establish this Board, to educate its members, and to inform them about their rights, duties, functions, and obligations. The first wrong step was made during the formation of this Board; the wrong step being that before the announcement of the public call for potential candidates willing to apply for board-member positions, no one actually contacted any youth organisation, or organisation for the youth, nor any institution (for example, a school), nor anything else similar. In the same way, no one ever saw it fit to explain to young people what an advisory board is, and what it serves for, nor to explain to them in what ways they themselves can contribute to the development of the local community in order to create a better position for themselves in it by actively engaging themselves in the Board's work. The young members of the board do not have a single person in the town administration who would be available to them, advise them, and who would monitor their work, thus it is no wonder that this whole thing is not functioning. The responsibility has been bestowed upon them, which is by all means a commendable progress, however, no one has explained to them what sort of responsibility it is, how

to proceed, and how to make use of it. Before all, it is necessary to encourage human potential in these young people so as to ensure its growth, thus creating additional values for the entire society. The public call for board members was announced, however, it is illusionary to expect that an average young person, once having read it in a local newspaper, all of a sudden will start believing that it is exactly the thing that has been intended for him. Most young people consider that those public calls in the local newspapers are not intended for them, but for “others somewhere else”, who are engaged in politics or already employed in the local self-governing units. After the first public call was announced, no one applied, so after the second public call was announced, a certain number of youths applied, and everyone was accepted into the Youth Advisory Board without any priorly set criteria. Currently, the situation is nothing else but a reflection of the mistakes that were made in the very beginning, when the Board was formed, by those who are in power, a reflection of poor education of the young members of the Youth Advisory Board, and equally so, a reflection of general disinterest of the youth to engage in contributing to the development of local community and youth sector. They should, through their actions, propositions, and suggestions, influence the preparation, adoption, and implementation of decisions that are of interest for the youth, and which would improve its position in local communities, and they should campaign for solutions to the youth’s problems, however, they are not even trying to advocate their own rights. They should question certain decisions of the Town Council, consult with all relevant participants in the process, and finally ask for the help of others, however, they do not even ask what their responsibilities are, and they certainly do not ask themselves how right it is to be a member of the Youth Advisory Board and do nothing. Are the members of the Board “so carefully selected” that the local admini-

stration can, at least as far as that area is concerned, be sure that no one will annoy them?

Many youth advisory boards in the Istria County, due to their poor education, as well as the poor education of those who had been bound by law to set them up, and to instruct board members on their rights, obligations, possibilities, and so forth, have found themselves in a situation of doing nothing or doing other things that are not part of their job description. Do these board-members consider their position in the Board is only a small step that will satisfy their own particular interests later, like ensuring “bright futures” for themselves in one of the bodies of self-governance? Sadly, such situations and such reasoning are not rare.

The local **Youth Centre** in the town of Pula was established in 2006. It was established on the initiative of two organisations from Pula in partnership with the town administration, the Istria County, and the Ministry of Family, War-Veterans’ Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity.

The goals that the Youth Centre wishes to achieve through different activities are:

1. IMPROVING THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER POSITION OF THE YOUTH IN SOCIETY;
2. PROMOTING THE IDEA OF THE YOUTH’S LIFELONG LEARNING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT;
3. STIMULATING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUTH IN ALL SPHERES OF SOCIAL LIFE;
4. FINDING NEW WAYS TO HAVE THE YOUTH BETTER INFORMED.

The mission of the Youth Centre is to improve the youth’s social position in the Istria County area, through education, and through



offering advices and information availability. The vision of the centre is to become an international informative-educational youth centre. In order to achieve that mission and to effectuate that vision, the Youth Centre in Pula is carrying out its programme through four different spheres of activities: (a) informing the youth; (b) non-formal education of the youth; (c) youth's media-activism; and (d) policy activities.

The centre is functioning quite well considering the conditions under which it is carrying out its activities, and considering that there is no understanding for the importance of having a centre like this, or a department, a person, or persons, that will uphold exclusively their interests, and inform them about matters that are of extreme importance. It is essential for young individuals, youth organisations and organisations for the youth, clubs, formal and non-formal initiatives, and other forms of the youth associations to have at least one person within the city administration, who is responsible for them. The town has still not recognised this need, and therefore our public campaign to satisfy this need shall not cease. The Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity has stopped financing us, for it is no more announcing calls for project proposals for youth centres, but only for youth info-centres, which, of course, does not include us. The regional Youth Info-Centre in Rijeka does not see it suitable to have a two-way communication with us, or to inform the youth in the Istria County about anything, so this duty, which we gladly perform, still rests on us, without any support whatsoever from our regional info-centre or from the warranted ministry. The Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity a year ago notified us about their decision to stop financing youth centres, and about their plan to announce a tender for the youth during summer months of 2009;

which did not happen.

**The Local Youth Programme** should be the final result of the process and the meaning of the entire institutional framework that should uphold the implementation of the programme, and it should materialise the local policy towards the youth, thus meeting the youth's needs.

Drawing up the Local Youth Programme, or the Istria County Youth Programme, respectively, had started, work-groups were formed, the draft for the public discussion was composed and open to possible modifications to be made and adopted, and then the programme was to be promulgated, thus completing an extremely important process and moving to the next one – the implementation itself. However, due to disagreements and attempts to satisfy personal interests, the system fell apart, and the process of drawing up the programme was stopped. For a couple of years now, on the Istria County's official web site, there is the draft of the Local Youth Programme, and what's more, the old incorrect version that has not been replaced even after we have several times reminded them about the blunder. Only the will of all participants in this process is missing in order to complete the process of drawing up the Local Youth Programme, but in addition, the problem lies undoubtedly in the fact that the existing research on the youth's needs has become partially outdated. The definition says: "The Office for Youth within the regional self-governance is a body that is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the programme, while the Inter-Departmental Body oversees the implementation of the programme, and ensures inter-departmental co-ordination and co-operation." But, what happens when the institutional framework in the local community is almost a nonentity?

In the Istria County, there is no local youth council as a network of representatives of all formal and informal forms of associated youth groups that advocate the youth's right to attain that: (a) the local youth policy is implemented transparently and within the legal framework; (b) the youth sector's real needs in separate areas are continuously enhanced and monitored; and (c) the implementation of those policies is continuously monitored and properly evaluated. Unlike the youth advisory board, which is subject to limitations due to the fact that it operates within the local self-governance, the local youth council is the youth's legitimate representative before all the participants. In the Istria County, consolidation of the youth's capacities through trainings is in process, after what, the formation of the Istria County Youth Council will follow. The public call is addressed to everyone, however, it is evident that mostly members of the youth wings of political parties and the members of the Youth Advisory Board see themselves as factors in forming the youth council. This is an excellent indicator that shows how very little the youth actually knows about active participation in its own communities. Frequently we have received answers like, "Thank you for the invitation, however, I'm not interested in politics." They do not know what youth policy is; they do not discern their own rights; they don't know how and don't want to use the opportunities offered to them; and they are apathetically giving away their own right to speak for themselves to a group of people who see here an opportunity to satisfy their own particular interests and a chance to speak in the name of all of us

and instead of us, even though they are not our legitimate representatives, but in most cases the representatives and upholders of certain ideas (that is, ideologies) and interests of the political parties from which they come. Young people do not understand that they are actually represented by those individuals who were the first to show some will, thus appropriating the right to represent us and the interests of all of us, without valid rights, real knowledge, and abilities, and even without will and desire to represent the interests of absolutely all the youth in local communities.

We do not consider a ruling authority those who would help us and give us a chance to do something good for ourselves and for the youth sector. Therefore, often acting independently, or through activities in certain organisations, young people see only a chance to satisfy their own interests and needs. This is where their engagement and interest cease. Local youth organisations and organisations for the youth often appear before state representatives with ununified positions. Often they see each other as rivals, thus greatly weakening the very youth sector. The local student organisations are bodies where those planning a future political career in a political party are gathered, therefore the most part of student population can't be found in them. With school-students' councils, the question is how autonomous and acquainted with their own rights and duties are they, and to what extent are they actually only a form that is necessary to be met. Youth wings of political parties are places where young people who see their future in a political party are found. However, their potential is not used to the fullest, and often they wait to sit on a place that will be vacated after an elderly colleague retires, and in the meanwhile

they are used to propagate the party's ideology among their own coevals and in their social circles. It can't be said that most of the young people can be found in such forms of youth organisation. Youth clubs are mostly engaged in one-off actions directed at exclusively entertainment and occasional evening programmes. Youth initiatives are mostly closely related to some specific problem singled out from some bigger entirety / picture. Those initiatives are short-lived, they last while the society or a particular social group is focused on that problem, and they cease to exist when that problem is solved, when people engaged are fatigued, and the like. Problems are never approached to as part of some wider issue within the community that should be dealt with systematically.

The local youth policy in the Istria County is mentioned only occasionally, when individuals decide to take initiative. This goes on until that person or persons lose motivation; discouraged not only by the youth's disinterest and the divide among its ranks, but also by non-understanding and refusal of the representatives of local governance to accept and discern the importance of setting up an institutional framework that will ensure the implementation of the youth policy. In our particular case, the youth policy depends on, and is developed with the emergence of, the personal commitment of a particular individual or individuals.

The youth's engagement in the social life mostly depends on the willingness of elders to vacate part of the space in youth's favour. But this is not all, for it is their responsibility to impart more knowledge and skills on us, to open the way for us so we can carry

on our activity in this region unrestrictedly, and not to obstruct us by expecting from us to, always and without exceptions, accept the norms and behavioural patterns of the “grown-ups”, and to continue from where they’ll stop, but only when they’ll no longer be able. They should stop viewing the young people who question their policies and their decisions as people who pose a risk to them, and start viewing the youth as people who in that way can only contribute to the development of the community. There is a lack of quality, two-way communication among all participants; administration representatives do not inform the youth about youth policies and about its rights and options in an acceptable, interesting, accessible and comprehensible manner, while the youth is reluctant to start a communication with administration representatives due to deeply rooted scepticism towards them. The will of the local authorities, and the interest and readiness of both participants (the youth and the administration) to enter a partnership co-operation do not exist. Those who make a step or two in that direction are individuals who in that process are either stopped by, or lose interest due to, the administration’s common disinterest, but it also happens on account of poorly interconnected youth sector that tries / (does not try) to articulate its vaguely formulated messages addressed to the administration.

A transparent overview of the local administration’s work could be a step towards establishing partnership relations between the youth and the administration, based on mutual trust. Herein, the media could play an exceptionally significant part. But, the media’s part should be two-directional, that is they should also equally report

about positive examples that do not lack within the youth sector. Certainly it is necessary to offer proper answers to the youth's rights and needs. The "grown-ups" should stop viewing the youth exclusively within the boundaries of attributes and behavioural patterns ascribed to it, which would constitute a first step towards recognising the youth's capacities, which are indisputable and definitely exist, as this would open a wider space for the youth to act unrestrictedly, and not remain confined within the existing patterns.

For young people it is very hard to dedicate themselves to a higher goal, for they are neither encouraged by the community, nor by the society, school, and neither by their own families. It is expected of the young people to participate actively in society during this transient and stressful period of their lives, full of big changes and decisions, when they face real life problems and the world of "grown-ups", such as employment, education, housing, and family. They ask themselves why should they worry about the society, and problems in the community; society which has even failed to teach them and to prepare them to take care of themselves, which has not granted them even the basic rights, and which has often pushed them aside and excluded them from the processes of creating important social patterns.

Beside overall changes in the educational system, upbringing, and the system of social values, the will of the authorities' representatives is also most necessary. The authorities must not expect of the youth to submit to their decisions passively and without questioning, but instead they should stimulate the development of new so-

cial patterns and models, they should concede to possible adjustments and changes, and they should adopt the youth's views on (non-) implementation of the youth policy. The youth's basic role in society by no means is nor should be simply a preparation for integration into the grown-ups' world.

*"Of the youth I make legions and conquer unknown lands of the Gauls, and I use them as tools for my own goal to attain unlimited power. I wash their brains by giving them an opportunity to maltreat the subdued enemy." – Gaj Julius Caesar*



**LOKALNA  
POLITIKA  
ZA MLADE  
U VELIKOM  
TRGOVIŠĆU**

Srećko Puhek

Veliko Trgovišće is one of southernmost districts in the Krapina-Zagorje County, and geographically it is positioned exceptionally well at the intersections of important traffic ways. An expressway, two motorways, and the Zagreb-Zabok-Varaždin railway, which is soon to be electrified, pass through the place itself which is only 30 kilometres away from near-by Zagreb. We have a fairly solid industrial zone, one of the best in the county, since recently a kindergarten, and the interest to live here is constantly growing, so at the moment four big residential buildings are being built at the centre of the place which otherwise numbers about 1,200 inhabitants.

Stable political administration in this place has gradually enabled the bloom of cultural and social life in recent years. The District Days each year are richer and better organised, while (under the circumstances) a very good cultural-artistic band, football clubs, the Church, and other segments of social life that are in the focus of district authorities' interests are financed from the district's budget. Also, the retirees club in the district is very active, each year organising excursions throughout the county for its protégés and protégées, and the situation is similar with majorettes, brass bands, sports clubs, hunting clubs, as well as with the Catholic Parish, which traditionally each year sends its adult members to three different Virgin Mary Holy Sites throughout Croatia.

However, in all this, something seems to be missing. What about the young people between 15 and 30 who have other abilities, and, in addition, why those people have no political power whatsoever? This in the first place refers to the young girls who have far fewer oppor-

tunities than the boys to engage themselves in any of the existing organisations.

The youth advisory board has not been established, and there are no signs that there are plans to establish one in the near future. Within the district administration no-one is responsible for the youth, therefore there is no-one to receive the youths, no-one to answer to their questions, et cetera. The Youth Commission named The Youth for the Youth was established on April 22nd, 2005, numbering 15 members. The members were students, high-school students, and elementary-school students. This commission was meant to be a form of the youth's integration within the district's area, and not an advisory council for the district administration. Apart from that first session only one more session was held, and after that the work of the commission died away. The commission was never dissolved.

In the beginning, the commission planned to organise the Youth Week, during which different sports and cultural events were to be organised, followed by the Youth's Day. However, none of these plans was ever realised. Their work in the beginning was stimulated by 5,000 kunas from the district's budget, but that money was never used.

In Veliko Trgovišće there isn't a single youth organisation, and there are no premises that could be given over to the youth. The youth in this area of this district is integrated in the cultural-artistic band Slo-ga, in the football clubs Zagorec Veliko Trgovišće and Omladinac Dubrovčan, in the shooting club Kovina, in the martial arts club Hrvatski Vuk, in the majorettes band Dubrovčan, in the brass band, and in the

sports Catholic-organisation. The greatest support from the district budget, around 115,000 kunas a year, gets the football club Zagorec Veliko Trgovišće. Also the youth here is organised in political parties' youth wings such as Social-Democratic Party's Youth Forum and Croatian Democratic Community's Youths, while Croatian People's Party's Youths and Zagorje Democratic Party's Youths are no longer active.

All this is resulting in the youth's unenviable position in the district of Veliko Trgovišće. The youth itself is in part responsible for this situation, however, in great part the responsibility is that of the local self-governance that has been showing no interest whatsoever to deal more seriously with the youth issues. Forming a youth advisory board only as a matter of form is equal to not forming it at all, and in addition, the current district administration has failed to deal with this issue as well. However, it can be noticed a minimal progress with regard to the fact that some parties have listed a number of young people on the ballots for the local elections.

The youth can be criticised for not even trying to seriously integrate itself, despite the circumstances being that on one hand there is apathy and disinterest among the young people, and on the other hand everyone is aware of the huge disinterest on the part of both political encampments (the ruling party and the opposition, former and present) whose sets of politicoes have not been changed since the democratic changes in the beginning of the 1990s.

The Catholic Church as well “has found its place” in this youth-policy greyness by not showing the slightest real interest to gather around youths from its own ranks like most neighbouring parishes have done so since long ago in a high-quality way, offering them places to gather up and engage in different activities, and offering them possibilities to travel.

What are the solutions? In my opinion, the only proper solution is to establish one youth organisation for the area of the Veliko Trgovišće District, and then to organise the Catholic youth in the parish (there are no other religious communities in the district’s area) to lobby for the establishment of the youth advisory board as an advisory body and a partner to the District Council, and to renovate one of the existing community centres which have for years been out of use and turn it into a youth centre. Also, it is necessary to give over for use to the youth at least one part of the of the district administration’s premises which at the moment are being used way too uneconomically, where the youth could then register its organisations, have access to the Internet, hold meetings, and organise workshops.



# **CO-OPERATION OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

The position paper of the Croatian Youth Network on co-operation between the public sector and the civil sector in the sphere of developing the local and regional youth policies

We, the Croatian Youth Network, as the umbrella youth organisation, and a member of the European Youth Forum, in connection with the latest local elections, must point out the necessity for better co-operation between the public sector and the civil sector on the issues pertaining to the development of the youth's position, of communities, and of the society as a whole.

On the basis of long-term aspiration for applying a standardised practice, we must draw attention to the necessity for real, open, and quality co-operation in all the stages of designing, implementing, and evaluating the local and regional youth programmes. We deem this co-operation as most important because through it we create a more quality framework for: (1) developing the youth's position and its affirmation in local communities; (2) extending the tradition of educating the youth on its rights and responsibilities within the sphere of civic life, in order to strengthen it in participating more actively; (3) making possible to detect the creative potential of the youth as a part of population; and (4) representing the youth's opinions from a large number of communities in a proper way.

Finally, the co-operation among regional and local authorities and youth organisations is the basis for building fair social relations, and for recognising the young people as a potential of social development.

Key principles upon which that co-operation should be based are:

- **Transparency**, through which a clear overview of the process – roles, scope of activity, results, and influence of,



both, the bodies of local and regional self-governing units, and youth organisations and organisations for the youth – is ensured.

- **Accountability** that, on the basis of transparent co-operation among the bodies of local and regional self-governing units, and the engaged youth organisations and organisations for the youth, ensures a quality encouragement of those participants that contribute to improving the youth's position, and to the development of the youth sector, and which also ensures an effective functioning of mechanisms of political liability against those participants that do not act in accordance with the values, principles, and the content of agreed co-operation.
- **Partnership** that includes the youth's open and active participation in creating strategic documents which, on the level of local and regional self-governing units, define its rights and obligations, its participation in monitoring, implementing, and evaluating the documents, as well as its participation in constantly improving the entire process.
- **Information feed-back** according to which all participants engaged in the co-operation have the right and the duty to inform other interested parties about their standpoints on the issues that are significant for the youth. In addition, this principle assumes a quick response of all

the engaged parties concerning the issues that are of vital importance for the progress of the co-operation process.

- **Innovation** is the main instrument in mechanisms of positive social change. Especially, the bodies of the local and regional self-governing units are invited to be open towards new ideas that come from the youth sector, and whose aim is to improve either the youth's position or the co-operation.
- **Agility** is the principle of quick, resolute, and flexible response to changes, and it is a precondition for successful management in the youth sector and the public sector.
- **Sustainability** is the principle through which all engaged partners are encouraged to, upon choosing the proposals that they will support, take into account the viewpoints and values of others that are engaged in the process. This principle refers to the choosing of the methods and contents that create long-term, quality, and positive social changes.
- **Coherence**, in this particular case, means co-ordinated acting on the part of all engaged partners, resulting, as a rule, in more successful achievement of (jointly) set goals.

We deem that the co-operation between youth organisations, and the local and regional self-governing units should encompass all of the youth's life spheres, that more or less are recognised by the existing regional and local youth programmes, thus enabling the

local and regional self-governing units to direct the focus of caring for the youth towards the local youth's needs. The most significant basic areas of co-operation are: **improvement of the youth's life quality, and strengthening the mechanisms of the youth's active participation on all social levels**, starting with the education process, possibilities for employment, and housing, all the way to the youth's mobility, and the quality spending of spare time.

***Creating partnership relations between youth organisations and local/municipal and regional self-governing units, and providing financial stability and sustainability for the civil youth sector in local communities are the key to creating a transparent, widely open, programme-strengthened, and participative communication.***



**THE POSITION  
PAPER OF THE  
CROATIAN YOUTH  
NETWORK ON THE  
NATIONAL YOUTH  
PROGRAMME FOR  
2009 TO 2013**

The position paper of the Croatian Youth Network on the National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013 represents the standpoint and recommendations for the improvement of standards for designing and implementing the national youth policy. This document is a kind of guide-book to public institutions in developing the standards for implementing the National Youth Programme, thus affirming the youth's social position, and to youth organisations for improving their own work in advocating better life quality for young people, as well as for improving the standards for implementing the youth policy.

The National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013 is the basic document of the state youth policy addressing the youth, whose goal is to influence the process of improving life conditions in areas such as education, employment, social and health-care policy, the youth's active participation in society, culture, mobility, informing the youth, and in other areas. With regard to numerous life spheres wherein the youth is empowered, affirmed, and wherein it can exert influence, we believe that the role of the state youth policy has a key significance for enhancing the life quality of the young people in this country.

Primarily, the national youth policy should clearly respect and apply unambiguously defined principles. According to the definition of the European Commission<sup>15</sup>, the principles of public policies include: **participation, openness, clearness, effectiveness, and coherence**. These principles are set forth as the five principles of good governance. Each of these principles is distinctly important for the

<sup>15</sup> European Governance, White Paper, 2001.

democracy and transparency of the process of good governance. Compliance with these principles in great part depends upon the willingness of governments and of institutions for co-ordinating the public policies to make sure that the policy process itself is accompanied by an inclusive approach to the development and implementation. We consider that stimulating the development of these principles, and investment in the sustainability of principles for shaping and implementing the national youth policy are a minimal effort that should be undertaken if we want to build a fair and inclusive system for the citizens of the Republic of Croatia.

In connection with this, it is essential that young citizens are recognised as the society's **potential and an investment for the future**, as opposed to the traditional notion of considering them a social problem. In the political, economic, and generally social sense, the developed countries see the youth as the holder of the development, with capacity to strengthen the society's pillars of development. The recognition of the young population as one that in itself holds the potential for development, innovation, and creative social change aims at long-term results, and is based upon understanding of real problems and needs, as well as upon understanding the youth's social position.

True understanding of the youth's needs and problems, and the will to improve young people's individual and social position are manifested in the **development strategies and laws** of a particular country, and through the quality of their implementation and relevant achievements.

A qualitatively developed and fair legislative practice guarantees that the young people are recognised as equal in the sphere of: (1) stimulating the youth's active participation in advisory structures and in the decision-making processes, (2) organising and networking the youths on all levels, according to their own interests, and (3) creating a youth-organisations national umbrella network so as to build a durable partnership between the youth sector and the state structures. The development strategies and laws should be backed up by budgetary means that are sufficient for quality and regular investments in all of the youth's relevant life segments, prescribed in the National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013, and in other complementary strategies and laws, especially in the following segments: stimulating continuous education; creating opportunities for employment; provision of housing; social security and health-care; quality and extensive policy on informing the youth; development of youth mobility and culture; and investing in networking the youth on all levels. Budgetary means invested in the development of the youth's position should be (like all other investments): in proportion to the needs; justly allocated; and transparent to the citizens of the Republic of Croatia. A quality national youth policy should be directed towards **financially supporting the youth organisations** in the following way: (a) through providing institutional support for the national umbrella youth organisation and other national youth organisations, and (b) through providing programmatic support for youth organisations and organisations for the youth.

In connection with this, we advocate constructive steps in building



transparent and comprehensive **institutional mechanisms for the youth**, and we also uphold infrastructural changes. We consider important: (a) strengthening the youth's advisory role on all levels, especially the role represented in the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and (b) the development of the system of joint co-management with regard to relevant issues of the state youth policy. In addition, in order to achieve policy coherence and quality informing, and in order to strengthen implementation, we believe that processes of intensifying the communication and co-ordinating the work of state-administration bodies which are the executors of youth-policy measures, cannot be omitted. We believe it is necessary to establish a special independent administrative body of the executive power on the level of the Government Office for the Youth, which is responsible for implementing the National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013, and other strategies addressing the youth, in order to ensure high-quality implementation process and high-quality consultations with youth organisations.

Implementation of the National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013 should ensure **constant and transparent policy of sharing information** on the current activities of implementation, achieved results, and effects on day-to-day lives of the young people in the Republic of Croatia. In connection with this, it is necessary to establish a quality and regular system for monitoring the implementation, which will cultivate regular evaluations of the process and of its achievements. In this sense, it is necessary that all the bodies of state administration, responsible for implementing the measures of

the National Youth Programme for 2009 to 2013, submit detailed and regular written and oral reports to the co-ordinative body, which is the Ministry of Family, War-Veterans' Affairs, and Inter-Generational Solidarity, and which then publicly submits a conjoint yearly report to the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, to the Government of the Republic of Croatia, to the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, and to youth organisations. In this sense, it is necessary to consolidate the position of the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and to ensure the following activities: regular sessions of the Council for Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia; providing all members with all relevant government documents concerning the youth, thereby respecting the principles of participation, openness, transparency, and partnership; and transforming the Council's role into a space for exchanging information, for expanding the capacity for quality implementation, and for evaluating the achievements of the implementation process.

In order to ensure the desired quality based on understanding the youth and the specific aspects of the lives of young people, and in order to ensure the affirmation of their role and influence in society, it is equally important and necessary to invest in researching the youth's social position, problems, and needs. It is necessary to make regular investments in carrying out such researches which on one side create the necessary basis for building a quality national youth policy, and on the other side open a space for the youth and its organisations to build creative and constructive approaches for solving the problems.

We consider that the youth policy should be developed on **local levels**, while taking into consideration the youth's specific needs and its position in smaller local communities. We see this as an outstanding space for consolidating the role of district and local administration and self-administration in developing the youth's position as well as the position of youth organisations in local communities. Local and regional self-governing units and youth organisations, as well as their synergy in creating local youth policies play a great role in improving the youth's life quality.

Finally, we consider that it is the task of this National Youth Programme to effectuate changes in the young people's everyday lives in the Republic of Croatia, to contribute to real effects, and to raise young people's life quality.

