



2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum

Innovative approaches to foster young people's employability

9 – 11 February 2015, Riga/Latvia

The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum

will showcase and further develop the Eastern Partnership and Erasmus+ Programme countries' joint youth cooperation at policy and project level.

The Forum will bring together about 200 participants from the youth field - such as young people, youth workers, and representatives of youth organisations, youth ministries and youth research - to discuss and recommend innovative approaches to foster **young people's employability**.

In this respect, the following elements will be specifically addressed:

- **Mobility and partnership programmes (by the European Union, Council of Europe, United Nations and others);**
- **Cross-sectorial cooperation;**
- **Exchange of good practices (innovative approaches);**
- **Youth policy development.**

The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum is an event of Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the EU. In the field of youth, the Presidency focuses on enhancing cross-sectorial cooperation to address socio-economic challenges of young people in the EU at national, regional and local levels. The Forum takes place within the framework of the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 'Contacts between people'.

The Forum is organised by the Agency of International Programs for Youth, which is the Latvian National Agency of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme, in cooperation with the European Commission, the Latvian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education and Science and other stakeholders.

The final conclusions of the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum will be communicated to the 4th Eastern Partnership Summit which takes place from 21 - 22 May 2015 in Riga/Latvia.



Context of the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum

The **Eastern Partnership** was launched in 2009 by the EU and its six Eastern European partners – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – to promote a broad range of political and economic reforms and assist the countries of the region move closer to the EU. The EU and Eastern Partnership countries share a common commitment to international law and fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to social market economy, sustainable development and good governance.

The EU and its partners have committed to further developing a multilateral dimension – involving all EU Member States and partner countries. This multilateral dimension is intended to strengthen and complement bilateral cooperation and facilitate the development of common approaches and joint activities.

The **4th Eastern Partnership Summit** of representatives of the European Union and Heads of State or Government of the European Union and Eastern Partnership countries will evaluate the progress achieved in the relations between the EU and the partners since the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius (28 - 29 November 2013) and identify a new strategic guidance on further steps to be taken. In the context of the 4th Eastern Partnership Summit, Latvia will host the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum and several side events almost back to back with the Summit such as the Media Conference on 20 May, the Eastern Partnership Business Forum meeting on 21 May and the Civil Society conference on 20-21 May. Several Eastern Partnership ministerial level meetings and multilateral cooperation and expert meetings are also envisaged to take place in the first half of 2015.

Eastern Partnership Platform 4

The Eastern Partnership multilateral cooperation is supported by four platforms, which consist of meetings, held at least twice a year at the level of senior officials, to structure and discuss cooperation in the Eastern Partnership's four areas of cooperation, namely:

- Eastern Partnership Platform 1: Democracy, good governance and stability;
- Eastern Partnership Platform 2: Economic integration and convergence with EU policies;
- Eastern Partnership Platform 3: Energy security and
- Eastern Partnership Platform 4: Contacts between people.

The platforms report to the annual meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Partnership.



Platform 4 "Contacts between people", which deals with education, research and innovation, youth, culture and the audio-visual sector, is coordinated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). It is accompanied by a Civil Society Forum, which holds a conference at least once a year, bringing together civil society representatives and officials of the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and governments of the EU and Eastern Partnership countries to discuss the progress made in the Eastern Partnership and ensure the involvement of civil society in it.

European Youth Policy

The European Commission promotes dialogue between youth and policy makers in order to increase active citizenship, foster social integration, and ensure inclusion of the young in EU policy development.

These priorities form a core part of the **EU Youth Strategy** for 2010-18, which has two overall objectives:

- To provide **more and equal opportunities for young people** in education and in the job market;
- To encourage young people to **actively participate in society**.

The Strategy proposes initiatives in **eight fields of action**:

- Education and training;
- Employment & entrepreneurship;
- Health & well-being;
- Participation;
- Voluntary activities;
- Social inclusion;
- Youth & the world;
- Creativity & culture.

The EU Youth Strategy's aims and objectives are put into practice through the framework for political cooperation and the Erasmus+ Programme, which provides opportunities for young people, youth



workers and other stakeholders in the field of youth to live, learn, and play an active role in society in other EU countries.

The Programme level: Erasmus+ - Youth in Action – Eastern Partnership Youth Window

Erasmus+ (2014 – 2020)

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the field of education, training, youth and sport. It contributes to tackle socio-economic changes and supports the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy of growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion.

10% of the total budget of 14.7 billion EUR of Erasmus+ are allocated to youth which means increased opportunities for youth cooperation within the EU and Erasmus+ Programme Countries but also with Partner Countries.

Erasmus+ can - among other issues – be used as a tool to strengthen young people's skills and competences fostering their participation in democratic life, the labour market and their involvement in intercultural dialogue.

This is achieved by offering young people, youth workers and others active in youth increased non-formal learning mobility opportunities. Mobility activities are complemented e.g. by capacity building for youth organisations or measures supporting policy reform. All youth and non-formal learning related activities funded by Erasmus+ are also open to international cooperation beyond the European Union/Erasmus+ Programme Countries.

Within the context of Erasmus+, young people and youth workers from Eastern Partnership countries are eligible to take part in two types of activities:

1. Learning mobility of individuals, which consists of

- 'Youth Exchanges', in which groups of young people from different countries work together on relevant topics while discovering new cultures, habits and lifestyles;
- The 'European Voluntary Service', which allows young people either individually or in groups to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service in another country in fields such as culture, social care, civil protection or environment;
- 'Mobility of youth workers', which enhances the professional development of youth workers through seminars, trainings, job shadowing and other mobility opportunities.



2. Support for policy reform, which contributes to

- Meetings between young people and decision makers in the field of youth, fostering active participation in democratic life and focusing on the priorities set by the Structured Dialogue between young people and decision makers.

Youth in Action (2007 – 2013)

As one of the predecessor programmes of Erasmus+, the **Youth in Action Programme** boosted active participation, intercultural learning and social inclusion of young people by means of non-formal learning and education and involved young participants and youth workers from Eastern Partnership countries.

Each year, the Youth in Action Programme involved about 200 000 participants, most of them young people, in international youth activities like youth exchanges and transnational voluntary service or youth workers who are mainly addressed by training and networking activities.

To allow for an even stronger focus on cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, the European Commission established the Eastern Partnership Youth Window.

Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2012 – 2013)

Based on a needs assessment by DG Development and Cooperation - Europeaid (DG DEVCO) in 2010 and 2011, a greater involvement of civil society actors and disadvantaged groups of young people within the youth population were identified as main challenges young people in Eastern Partnership countries face.

Against this background, DG DEVCO made an amount of 31.5 Mio EUR available through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the years 2012 and 2013 in form of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window to finance the participation of an additional 21 000 young people and youth workers in about 1 400 additional joint projects involving Youth in Action Programme countries and the six Eastern European Partner countries.

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window was successfully implemented and exceeded – in terms of the number of young people and youth workers involved – the set targets by far. Young people and youth organisations from all Eastern Partnership countries and all Youth in Action Programme countries participated in the projects funded under the Eastern Partnership Youth Window.

Importantly, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window allowed youth organisations from Eastern Partnership countries for the first time, to apply directly to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, giving them full ownership in the projects submitted. By being implemented, at



the same time, by Youth in Action National Agencies, the implementation of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window could count on the experience and competences of the network of Youth in Action National Agencies, which maximised the visibility and policy impact of the projects funded.

In 2015, DG DEVCO will decide about a possible continuation of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window, based on the Window's evaluation and on the availability of funds. The evaluators provide recommendations on the design of a future regional programme for disadvantaged young people with a focus on their social and economic needs, taking into account existing support for youth in the region provided by the international donor community.

Structures related to youth cooperation between Eastern Partnership and Erasmus+ Programme countries

DG DEVCO established the **Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit** (implementation period 2012 – 2015) with the aim to support the development of evidence-based youth policy within the Eastern Partnership countries. The Unit, based in Kiev, serves as a regional base for the provision of technical cooperation with both governmental and civil society stakeholders through analytical, capacity building and communication activities in the field of youth policy reform. It also acts as a catalyst for initiatives addressing the youth sphere in the Eastern Partnership region.

Synergies are being sought between the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit and other structures supporting youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries such as the **SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre**, which, as a structure of the Erasmus+ Programme, provides training and information support for the international youth cooperation within Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries. Its tasks include the accreditation of European Voluntary Service organisations.

Another entity, the **EU-Council of Europe youth partnership**, was established by the Council of Europe and the European Union to create synergies and facilitate cooperation on specific themes like participation and citizenship, social inclusion, recognition and quality of youth work through the two specific objectives of better knowledge and promotion of youth work. The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership is actively involved in youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries.

Some key expressions

(please see also Glossary of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide)

Cross-sectorial cooperation: Taking a cross-sectorial approach can mean that due account is taken of youth issues when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other (than



youth) policy fields which have a significant impact on the lives of young people, for example as regards employment, child and family policy, gender equality, housing, healthcare and culture. The EU Youth Report 2012 e.g. provides examples for policy fields in interdependence with youth policy. The Youth Guarantee is another example for cross-links between youth and employment policy.

Key competences: the basic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for their personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment, as described in Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council; the eight key competences for lifelong learning are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

Learning mobility: moving physically to a country other than the country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal or informal learning; it may take the form of traineeships, apprenticeships, youth exchanges, volunteering, teaching or participation in a professional development activity, and may include preparatory activities, such as training in the host language, as well as sending, receiving and follow-up activities.

Young people with fewer opportunities: e.g. young people with disabilities, educational difficulties, economic obstacles, cultural differences, health problems, social or geographical obstacles (please see Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Part A, Equity and Inclusion).

Structured Dialogue: dialogue with young people and youth organisations which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field.

Young people: In the context of the Erasmus+ Programme, individuals aged between 13 and 30.

Youth worker: A professional or a volunteer involved in non-formal learning who supports young people in their personal socio-educational and professional development.



Core documents:

Erasmus+ Programme Guide

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

Expert group report: "Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability"

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/peer_learning_en.htm

"Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union" (Study by ICF/GHK for the European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf

"Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in youth organisations on young people's employability" (Commissioned by the European Youth Forum, Authored by Bath University/GHK Consulting)

http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/reportnfe_print

Study "Participation of youth in civil society in promotion of reforms in the EaP countries"

Contracted by The National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM)

Conducted by The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, Lithuania

<http://lib.ampby.org/download/EaP%20youth%20participation%20Study.pdf>

"Youthpass Impact Study: Young people's personal development and employability and the recognition of youth work" (Commissioned by the European Commission; Authors: Marti Taru and Paul Kloostrman)

<https://www.youthpass.eu/da/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

"NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe" (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions)

<http://eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/labour-market-social-policies/neets-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-characteristics-costs-and-policy>

The report "Mapping youth transitions in Europe"

<http://eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/labour-market/mapping-youth-transitions-in-europe>



EACEA 2010/03 "Youth Participation in Democratic Life" (LSE Enterprise)

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/lse_study_on_youth_participation_2013.pdf

Short term high-quality studies to support activities under the Eastern Partnership (HiQSTEP): "Skills Needs Identification and Anticipation Policies and Practices in the Eastern Partnership Region – Cross-country Report"