



PRESIDENCY OF FINLAND  
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PRÉSIDENTE DE LA FINLANDE  
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This summary captures a two-day programme of presentations, panel discussions and interactive dialogue at the seminar *Education and training pathways of youth workers* as well as the rapporteurs' points of view on a range of issues that emerged.

### **Objective of the seminar**

The seminar *Education and training pathways of youth workers* was organised within the framework of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It took place in Helsinki on 20th–22nd February 2019. The aim of the seminar was to provide a forum for the local, regional and national authorities responsible for the development of youth work in their countries, professional/paid and voluntary youth workers, youth work educators and trainers, researchers, and young people and NGOs active in youth work education and training, and to contribute to the development of the competency-based framework. In this respect, the seminar contributed to the implementation of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on youth work that had been adopted in May 2017 (CM/Rec(2017)4). In that way, it supported the continuing work of the Council of Europe's High Level Task Force on youth work, which had met in Helsinki immediately before the seminar.

### **Agenda**

#### Wednesday, 20th February

##### **13:15 – 13:45 Opening addresses**

Sampo Terho, Minister for European Affairs, Culture and Sport of Finland

Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe

##### **13:45 – 14:00 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on Youth Work**

Antje Rothmund, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe

##### **14:00 – 14:20 Education and Training of Youth Workers in Europe**

Overview based on studies conducted by the CoE-EU Youth Partnership and the Finnish Youth

Research Network

Marta Medlinska, Coordinator, and Tanya Basarab, Research and Youth Policy Officer, Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe

**14:20 – 14:50 Break:** coffee with snacks

**14:50 – 15:15 Finnish Youth Work Model and Youth Work Education and Training**

Juha Nieminen, University Instructor, University of Tampere &

Tomi Kiilakoski, Senior Researcher, Finnish Youth Research Network

**15:15 Introduction to field visits in plenary**

**Field visits** present innovative practices of youth work organisations and educational institutions, which are providing education and training for people working and acting in the youth work field.

**Back to Marina Conference Centre**

**19:15 Outcomes from the Field Visits**

**19:30 – 19:45 Comments** by Miriam Teuma, Chairperson of the European Steering Committee for Youth, Council of Europe

**20:00 Buffet Dinner at Restaurant Marine**

Thursday, 21st February

**09:00 -09:45 The Challenges of Young People in Contemporary Europe -which challenges should youth work respond to?**

Panel discussion led by Anja Olin-Pape, Chairperson of the Joint Council on Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe

**09:45-10:00 Human Rights Education in Youth Work**

Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training Division, Youth Department, Council of Europe

**10:00 -10:15 Youth Worker's Digital Competences**

Suvi Tuominen, Manager, Verke – Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland

**10:15 – 10:45 Coffee Break**

**10:45 – 11:15 Examples Inspiring the Group Work Session:**

3 X 10 min Practical examples of Education and training of youth workers in Europe

Example of vocational training of youth workers

Vanja Kalaba, Centre for Youth Work, Serbia

Example of training for youth workers working on voluntary basis

Liva Vikmane, European Youth Forum

Example of higher education

Ursula Roslöf, Senior Lecturer, Humak University of Applied Sciences

**11:15 Introduction to the Working Groups** (in plenary)

**The Themes of the Working Groups** (Reflecting Experiences, Expectations, Good Practices)

**1. Higher Education in Youth Work**

**2. Vocational Education in Youth Work**

**3. Continuous education and validation of prior learning in youth work**

**4. Training for volunteer and recognition of learning in trainings**

**5. Mentoring**

## **6. Work based education on higher level**

## **7. Training for Trainers**

## **8. Implementing the Recommendation**

**13:00-14:00 Lunch**

**14:00-14:30 Working Groups will continue:** finalising the outcomes

**14:30-15:30 Outcomes of the Working Groups**

**15:30-16:15 Reflection of the Group Work Outcomes** by Dr. Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy, University of South Wales, United Kingdom

**16:15 -16:45 Coffee Break**

**16:45 -17:30 Introduction to some youth work education and training models in Europe – training for voluntary workers, training and education for professional youth workers**

Presentations by training and education providers from different countries and study levels.

**17:45 Departure to the Reception**

**18:00-19:00 Reception of the City of Helsinki, Old Court House, Aleksanterinkatu 20** hosted by Deputy Mayor Nasima Razmyar, City of Helsinki

**20:00 Dinner at Restaurant Marine**

Friday, 22nd February

**09:30-10:00 Education and Training Opportunities Provided by European Programmes**

Council of Europe

Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training Division, Youth Department, Council of Europe

Practical example of Erasmus+ Youth granted project: Youth Workers' eLearning Partnership

Eeva Sinisalo-Juha, Senior lecturer, Humak University of Applied Sciences

**10:00- 10:30 Summarising the Seminar: Coherent, but Flexible Framework for Youth Work Education and Training?**

Howard Williamson and Marko Kovacic

**10:30 –11:00 Comments by**

President Jaana Fedotoff, European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)

Christian Spatscheck, City University of Applied Sciences Bremen, Germany

Marko Kovacic, Institute of Social Research, Croatia

**11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

**11:30 Future Perspectives** by Antje Rothemund, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe

**Address by Germany – the host of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention 2020**

Axel Stammberger, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany

**12:00 Closing Words of the Seminar**

Henni Axelin, Director for Youth, Division of Youth Work and Youth Policy, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland

Family Photo

**12:30 Lunch**

Departure of the participants

## Summary of the contributions

The conference began with opening remarks by the Finnish Minister for European Affairs, Culture and Sport **Sampo Terho** who talked about the structure of Finnish youth policy and the influence of Council of Europe on it. After stating strong support for youth work in Finland, Mr. Terho pointed out that open and active civil society is crucial for building healthy democracy and youth participation being a vital part of it. He noted that the training of youth workers across Europe is very variable and that there is a need to invest in it. **Snežana Samardžić-Marković**, Council of Europe Director General of Democracy, in her address said that youth work is essential if we want to keep a sense of civic engagement alive in the young people of today and tomorrow. She emphasised that Europe needs its young people more than ever, so as to make sure our democratic values live on. By pointing out the roles of the Council of Europe in supporting youth development she declaimed that supporting youth work is a priority for the Council of Europe, for the European Union and for the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. **Antje Rothmund**, the Head of the Youth Department at the Council of Europe, reminded the audience of the relevance of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on youth work adopted in May 2017 (CM/Rec(2017)4) and stated that inclusive, participative, transparent and collaborative efforts have been made in order to draft the Recommendation and follow its implementation. She talked about the Council of Europe High-Level Task Force on Youth Work, composed of the relevant youth work stakeholders, that had been set up as part of a mid-term strategy for the knowledge-based development of European youth work and addressing the challenges facing youth work across Europe.

In the second session, run by **Marta Medlinska**, Coordinator, and **Tanya Basarab**, Research and Youth Policy Officer from the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, an overview was presented of on studies on the education and training pathways of youth workers, conducted by the Partnership in collaboration with a number of research institutions including the Finnish Youth Research Network. The original publication from the study was based on countries self-reporting on the state of their youth work. The main findings of the report covered issues around policy and legislation, formal and non-formal education and training (degree, vocational, voluntary sector), quality and competences (certification, evaluation, national standards, funding requirements), most common competences and skills for youth workers, associations and networking, employment, career paths and professionalisation, types of work conducted, and issues arising with regard to information and data. This work is ongoing and further reflection and analysis has been undertaken.

In the third session **Juha Nieminen**, a University Instructor at the University of Tampere and **Tomi Kiilakoski**, a senior researcher from the Finnish Youth Research Network, presented the structure, challenges and developments in Finnish youth work. They pointed out the Finnish idea of youth work being about growth, independence and social inclusion and emphasised resources, providers,

professionals, facilities, careers, different levels of education as important aspects for understanding youth work in Finland. They drew attention to the five principles of Finnish youth work:

1. Equity
2. no dead-ends,
3. lifelong learning,
4. importance of civil society,
5. no official or required qualifications for youth workers

They also identified six trends in Finnish youth work:

- 1) External differentiation of youth work
- 2) Internal segmentation of youth work
- 3) Professionalisation of youth work
- 4) Fragmentation of youth work
- 5) Flowing of youth work
- 6) Schoolisation of youth work (more curricula planning and evaluation)

The presentation ended with an overview of formal, vocational and adult education as it related to youth work education and training in Finland.

The seminar programme continued with the following field visits:

- Allianssi and the Finnish Youth Research Network/Society
- The Diakonia College of Finland
- The Centre of Expertise of the Guides and Scouts in Finland
- Youth activity centre Happi
- HUMAK University of Applied Sciences
- Vahvistamo - Centre of Expertise for Mental Health Promotion and Substance Abuse Prevention in Youth Work
- The University of Tampere

The first day ended with comments on the field visits from **Miriam Teuma**, Chair of the European Steering Committee for Youth (the CDEJ) in the Council of Europe, who considered strategies to help practitioners to reflect on their experience and develop their capacity to apply effective practice. She pointed out four issues relating to the impact of education and training on youth work: the education, training, learning and development dynamic, the youth work quandary, the professionalisation challenge, and quality assurance.

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The second day of the conference started with the panel ‘The Challenges of Young People in Contemporary Europe -which challenges should youth work respond to?’. This was facilitated by **Anja Olin-Pape**, Chairperson of the Council of Europe’s Joint Council on Youth and its Advisory Council on Youth. The panelists **Patricia Goncalves** (Erasmus Student Network/ Member of the Advisory Council on Youth), **Diana Yeghiazaryan** (Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia), **Sebastian Vogt** (Member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe / DNK Germany) and **Robert Nesirky** (National Youth Council of Ireland) raised several issues such as the importance of youth work experience for understanding and improving youth work. The panelists also debated the challenges of ‘extended’ youth, the problem of the instrumentation of youth work, and mental health as arguably a next big youth policy topic. The panel identified the self-recognition of youth workers as a prerequisite for the social and political recognition of youth work and the importance of co-management (between young people and public authorities) in the development of youth work.

**Rui Gomes**, Head of the Education and Training Division in Youth Department at the Council of Europe, talked on human rights in youth work education and pointed out the indivisibility of these two concepts when understanding contemporary youth work. His presentation was followed by **Suvi Tuominen**, Manager from Verke – Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland, who discussed digital skills and posed three questions which are important to understand this topic: why do youth workers need digital skills, what are the basic digital skills youth workers need and how to train youth workers to acquire digital skills?

In the following session **Vanja Kalaba** from the Centre for Youth Work, Serbia presented the vocational training of youth workers, **Liva Vikmane** from the European Youth Forum training talked about youth workers working on a voluntary basis, and **Ursula Roslöf** from the Humak University of Applied Sciences explained the structure of higher education of youth workers in Finland. These practical examples of education and training of youth workers in Europe conveyed the many forms that youth work education and training can have and deconstructed different contexts in which youth work as a profession is taking place. This was the introduction to a number of working groups. The goal of the working groups was to understand and explore in more depth different aspects of the educational and training – and learning – ‘career’ paths of youth workers in Europe, and to discuss and debate relevant themes together. The emphasis was both on considering any common ground while also spelling out different challenges in different practice architectures of youth work around Europe. Participants were divided into the following working groups:

- Higher Education in Youth Work
- Vocational Education in Youth Work
- Continuous education and validation of prior learning in youth work
- Training for volunteer and recognition of learning in training

- Mentoring
- Work based education on higher level
- Training for Trainers
- Implementing the Recommendation

The main conclusions from the working group discussions were as follows:

#### Higher education

- it is necessary to support a European network of higher education professionals and researchers involved in youth work
- There is more youth research than youth work research
- The legitimacy of youth work can be achieved throughout higher education
- An important aspect of youth work professionalisation is the validation of prior experience, skills and practice
- Researchers, academics and scholars should use common language and understanding to help standardise view of youth work
- It is recommended to undertake mapping of the higher education options for youth workers

#### Vocational education

- practical knowledge should be acquired through mandatory internship/apprenticeships
- It is necessary to stimulate a dialogue between theory and practice and use people from work life in teaching
- flexibility or ability to transfer from vocational to higher education and vice versa is important for youth work development
- The European dimension, political literacy, and study visits to different countries are missing from current vocational education options across Europe

#### Continuous education and validation of prior learning

- intercultural exchange, peer learning, peer grading, quality assurance are important elements of youth worker education
- There are certain needs: common ground for education and professionalisation of youth work, standardisation, and better developed life-long learning
- There are some good models concerning validation of continuous education (Finland, Estonia, Bulgaria) which should be examined in order to see if it is possible to transfer certain practices
- Conditions for achieving continuous education and validation of prior learning are: involvement of all stakeholders, networks of community youth workers, structures, systems and sustainable support, adequate human and financial resources to be secured, examples

of good practices have to be identified, proved, recognised and accredited, to have institutions, associations to provide support to youth workers

- The generational gap between youth workers and young people is identified as a possible threat in youth work development

#### Training of volunteer and recognition of learning in training

- European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) is seen as a great tool for recognition of learning in training. For instance, a national pool of trainers of National Youth Councils has learned how to use ECVET in order to use it in designing training courses
- Conditions that support good practice were identified, namely: time is needed, funding, training of leaders, clear structures, a competence-based approach which is evaluated, elaborated and a clear tool for self-evaluation, learning by experience, legal recognitions of youth work
- In terms of development and future perspectives it is concluded that the world outside of youth work should recognise social and personal competences of young people gained in youth work, internal recognition system, clear profiles, learning for young people in youth work should be open

#### Mentoring

- This working group was discussion on concepts and procedures: what do we mean by mentoring? How it is connected to other ways of helping new youth workers to develop professionally, such as coaching or coordinating? We need other ways of supporting youth workers in their daily work as well
- The limits of mentoring were identified: dealing with personal issues can be a tricky thing
- Different levels of mentoring (personal/professional/social) were discussed: mentoring for personal development is needed in order to have a proper professional mentoring, especially when working with young people in vulnerable situations. Guidance on how to behave professionally in difficult situations is necessary just as an ethical dimension
- As youth work can be demanding mentoring might help in organising workload

#### Work based education on higher level

- It is crucial to dedicate space in conferences, seminars for this topic
- Cooperation is required, a synergy between practice and theory
- Attention should be given to placements: different placements give students a wider perspective
- intercultural dialogue is of great importance in terms of work-based education at a higher level

#### Training for Trainers



- presentation skills are possibly the most relevant in training of trainers
- In addition, it is important to establish relation with audience
- Impact should be in focus
- The question was raised: do we need professional and learning pathways for trainers?

### Implementing the Recommendation

- Things that happened already were listed: translation into different languages, seminar on education, ad hoc High Level Task Force on Youth Work meeting, preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention, Quality Label supported. dissemination of the Recommendation by the European Youth Forum (YFJ), third pillar of the EU youth strategy
- Challenges were identified: The Recommendation not well known beyond the Ministry level, need time to explain the recommendations within the Recommendation, how to use it, target group unclear - who is in charge for implementation; image of the Council of Europe (compared to the European Commission); Recommendation is holistic and general and in different states youth work is seen more specific (e. g. as economic, educational, social tool); for some the message is too challenging, whereas for others too obvious
- Ideas for better usage of the Recommendation: translate the Recommendation into the national realities, invest in marketing - campaigning, promoting, use it in national policy documents, use it in youth work education

Based on insights from working groups **Howard Williamson** from University of South Wales, United Kingdom gave his reflection of the group work outcomes. Hence, he argued that youth work education in academia does not have a normal higher education character and that it is often not properly understood by higher education management. He noted, however, that there is now a growing 'spillover' effect – methodologies of learning and teaching that youth work lecturers have been doing for ages are now being used by other disciplines. Furthermore, he pointed out there is not enough of a body of knowledge from practitioners and proposed that perhaps some foundational principles of youth work should be subject to reflection and perhaps change in the light of societal changes. He argued that all youth workers should have experience in open placements and to use the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on youth work when writing youth work project and funding proposals.

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The last day of the seminar started with the education and training opportunities provided by European programmes. **Rui Gomes**, Head of Education and Training Division in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, presented the Council of Europe's mission in the field of youth, its activities and aspirations. **Eeva Sinisalo-Juha**, from the Humak University of Applied Sciences, then talked about the Erasmus+ Youth granted project: Youth Workers' eLearning Partnership.

After the rapporteurs' critical overview and reflection on the conference (the presentation is on the seminar's web page), **Jaana Fedotoff** of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), **Christian Spatscheck** from the City University of Applied Sciences Bremen, Germany, and **Marko Kovacic** from the Institute of Social Research, Croatia, offered their perspective on the conference, youth work in Europe and presented initiatives of their institutions in the field of youth work education and training.

The final two speakers were **Antje Rothmund**, Head of the Youth Department at the Council of Europe who conducted an interactive evaluation of the seminar with all participants by using Slido application and **Axel Stammberger** from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany, who announced 3rd European Youth Work Convention in 2020 which will be hosted by Germany.

Marko Kovacic and Howard Williamson  
April 2019