

# WHY YOUTH WORK IS GOOD

Research & analysis of frameworks for Youth Work and opportunities for youth in six EU countries

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# INTRODUCTION

The “Why Youth Work is Good” project aims to find answers to questions such as why it is good to work with youth, what kind of work is that, how it is supported or not supported, how, if at all, is it recognized and used, who is doing this work in different countries and how are they doing it, how young people are supported, and most importantly, what is the structure / framework in which they work or exist.

The following partners worked on developing this document and giving answers to the above questions:

CROATIA – Association for promotion of IT, culture and coexistence (IKS)

BULGARIA – Know and Can Association

GREECE – ALTER EGO NGO

POLAND – Fundacja Centrum Aktywności Twórczej

SLOVENIA – Socialna Akademija

SPAIN – Cazalla Intercultural

In order to find answers to our questions we have created questionnaires’ as a base for our research and analysis to discover frameworks for Youth Work in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. To support our research further, we created an additional short questionnaire to interview people who are active in Youth Work or were active at some point previously in their lives. Here we divided our respondents into three sub-groups:

1. Young person, activist, member or volunteer of different organisations
2. Youth Worker or youth leader currently working with young people
3. Former youth activist / leader who is now a stakeholder

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# The National Structures for Youth Work

This research was conducted on a national level by partners in 6 countries participating in this project. What we considered as a national structure had to include law's, strategies and policies which are or have a purpose to shape Youth Work as well as institutions (Ministries, agencies, counsels and similar bodies) that are working or have a purpose to work on the implementation of policies for Youth Work.

All of the analysed countries have some elements of a framework. Some countries more, some less but the main point is about how they are using it and what benefit, if any, young people and those who work with young people have from these individual structures. Following below, we provide a short insight for all of the participating countries.

## **Bulgaria:**

Bulgaria is the only participating country that has adopted a Youth Law. It has a National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020 and an updated National Youth Program (2016-2020) based on which the Ministry for Youth and Sport publishes calls for project proposals. This year (2020)<sup>1</sup>the Ministry has published a call for 3 different thematic topics including “Development and recognition of Youth Work”. The Youth Directorate under the Ministry for Youth and Sport is responsible for the implementation of youth policy and programs. Beside this body, there are several other inter-ministerial working groups established around different issues, including youth employment, professional qualifications, and the EU Structured Dialogue process.

A great innovation started two years ago when the Veliko Tarnovo University Pedagogy department started a study program for Youth Workers. Simultaneously, the job of a Youth Worker was recognised in the national registry of professions.

Alongside the governmental structure, there is also an NGO structure in the form of a “National Youth Forum” (further NYF). NYF is a youth umbrella organisation with 50 member youth organisations from all over Bulgaria, with the main aim to advocate for its member organisations and to cooperate with decision makers in order to develop quality youth policies.

On the local level, Youth Work is organised mainly through youth organisations and different Associations but there are Youth Councils in some local governments. We can say that the local Youth Councils are local structures that focus on local work with youth / Youth Work. On a regional level, there is an authority in the field of youth with the job to ensure implementation of the National Strategy for Youth and the Governor of the region is responsible for that implementation. Unfortunately, regional youth initiatives or the implementation of youth policies exist in rare situations.

Another regional / local structure under which Youth Work is active are 4 Youth centres, which have been established in the cities Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Vratsa and Dobrich. The same 4 Youth centres created a National network of youth centres in 2016. The main goal of the network is to advocate for the recognition of Youth Work at a national level and to work towards common quality standards.

**Short conclusion:** Based on the information given above we can conclude that national structures are established and functioning to some degree. More focus and thus support should perhaps be given to regional and especially local structures programs and people (professional Youth Workers) who will implement these structures and work with young people in the local community.

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<sup>1</sup><http://mpes.government.bg/Pages/Programmes/default.aspx>

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## **Croatia:**

The institutional side on a national structure level for Croatia includes the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (Croatian acronym and further in text MDOMSP) and its Department/sector for family, children and youth; Youth and volunteering service. Besides MDOMSP, Croatia has a “Youth Council for the Government of the Republic of Croatia”. The Council has 30 members, namely: 17 representatives of the competent state administration bodies and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, one representative of the Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Croatia, the Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Community of Counties, 3 representatives of scientific and educational institutions and 7 representatives of youth associations working for and with youth. Each member of the Council has a deputy who replaces him if/when necessary.

The Councils’ productivity and impact depends on the political climate at the time and the level of support in favour of change and improvement in the sector, which is usually motivated and driven by civil society. Therefore, the work of this body very rarely results in significant improvements in the field of Youth Work, youth policies or opportunities for youth.

The “Croatian Youth Network” (Mreža mladih Hrvatske, further: MMH) is an alliance of 59 NGO - member youth organisations working with and for youth. With advocacy being one of the main domains of work, MMH initiated to the Government of the Republic of Croatia the process of proposing and adopting the Youth Advisory Boards Act. After years of advocating for the Act, it was adopted by the Parliament in 2007 and remains to date the only Act that defines and regulates Youth Work and/or youth policies in Croatia. MMH has its representatives in the Council for Youth, Council for the Development of Civil Society, Parliamentary Committee on Human and National Minority Rights, National Board for the development of volunteering to the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Social Justice Council of the President of the Republic of Croatia. MMH is a full member of the European Youth Forum.

The Community of Youth Information Centres in Croatia is the umbrella organisation for youth information and counselling in Croatia, consisting of members who have active local youth information centres and regional youth information centres. They are also a member of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA).

Unfortunately, Croatia does not currently have a National Strategy or Programme for Youth nor has it had a National Strategy for the Development of Civil Society since 2017 which certainly doesn’t help. MDOMSP publish yearly a diverse public call for organisations and institutions working with youth (wide scope and different areas) based on the old strategy from 2014-2017. For many youth organisations or organisation working with youth, this funding is crucial for implementation of their youth programmes and activities. The challenge for beneficiaries of grants, in most cases NGO’s, often do not receive the amount of funds applied for, sometimes cut drastically, making it difficult to achieve project objectives and results, thus negatively impacting on progress in Youth Work. This affects the quality and quantity of services and opportunities for young people, especially in outreach Youth Work.

Last official data<sup>2</sup> given by MDOMSP from 2017, states that there are 576 local/regional self-governments in Croatia. Out of 576 self-governments, only 106 established Youth Councils, 86 of which are active, giving us an 18% rate of self-governments (legal representations of citizens within communities) who have used their right and legal obligation to establish Youth Councils.

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<sup>2</sup><https://mdomsp.gov.hr/mladi-i-volonterstvo/mladi-9015/savjeti-mladih-9021/izvjesca-o-savjetima-mladih-9022/izvjesce-za-2017-godinu/10622>

**Short conclusion:** On the surface, it appears that Croatia has an enviable framework for Youth Work and opportunities for young people. The challenge for Croatia is in enforcing and implementing change, motivated and driven by a small number of representatives from the public service and a somewhat significant number from the civil society sector, due to the disinterest, apathy and incompetence within the bureaucratic government structures. The very proactive civic sector continues to tackle many challenges in the field of Youth Work and make progress through many international alliances and partnerships, often as a result of Erasmus+ and other EU instruments but also funding from other international sources dedicated to this very important sector of Youth Work.

### **Spain:**

The structure and organisation in Spain is much different from other participating countries. In the highest structure/document, which is the Spanish Constitution, Article 48 declares that public authorities must develop youth policies and opportunities for youth and that has been done for the last forty years. No other partner country has taken this significant step. In addition, Spain has a current Youth Strategy and an Action Plan for the implementation of the Youth Strategy 2017-2020. On a national scale, the decision-taking structure is related to the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) and the Youth Inter-ministerial Commission also coordination of the authorities with the associative youth movement is made through the Spanish Youth Council.

Spain is a decentralised country with a strong regional culture/administration. It has 17 autonomous Regions and 2 autonomous Cities. It also has a third level structure consisting of local authorities and Provinces. Based on this, focus on development and implementation of Youth Work is on regional and local bodies who in reality deliver, more or less, the Youth Work and opportunities for youth. Currently 6 Autonomous regions have enforced Youth laws and the Murcia region also has an action plan for youth 2019-2023.

**Short conclusion:** The framework for working with youth in Spain was established a long time ago, focused on implementation at regional levels. The responsibility for support to youth and those who work with youth is given to autonomous regions and further to local authorities, however there is a lack of equality in the opportunities and support offered to Youth across the country. Some regions made big steps forward in making frameworks for Youth Work (by adapting strategies, programmes, funding, even laws for youth) while other regions lack some or many of these structures for Youth Work.

### **Greece:**

The top body that deals with youth policies and young people is the Ministry of Education and Religion. This Ministry has a “Department for youth” that is meant to work on youth programmes. At the same time, within this department is also one of 2 National Agencies for the ERASMUS + programme. This department is INEDIVIM<sup>3</sup> and it is focused on work with youth and lifelong learning projects. Focus of their work is on European programs while they lack a lot of national support for young people and organisations working with those young people. Unfortunately, this National Agency had some operational challenges in the past, which resulted in not creating and publishing calls for Erasmus+ and other programs in 2017-2018.

Furthermore, there is no law, active strategy or action plan, which could boost and give a frame for Youth Work on a national level. One of the biggest problems in Greece are the frequent changes of Ministers and their personnel and as a rule, every new Minister and his staff neglect the work done by former staff. In

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.inedivim.gr/en>

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the best-case scenario, the work starts from the beginning and it continues to go in circles, which, as result, has no concrete outputs (adopted strategy or similar document, recognized profession etc.).

Greece has a National Council of Youth (NCY), which is a member of the European Youth Council. NCY consists currently of 59 organisations gathering youth. Unfortunately, often this body is lead in majority by political parties and religious organisations or their young offspring's. Full participation in this council for smaller and local organisations is not participative, so a large majority of youth organisations stay out of this body.

As a result, the independent youth organisations who work with young people are trying to make their representative associations. One of them is "Consultant of Youth", an association of 20 youth organisations from different Greek regions that are working with youth mainly through the Erasmus+ programme. "Consultant of Youth" have the status of association for the rights and the recognition of Youth Work in Greece. "Consultant of Youth" has established communication with the Ministry of Education and Religion about the recognition and professionalization of Youth Work as well as the collaboration with institutions or Universities with the aim of development of a study programme for Youth Workers.

Due to the lack of structure on a national level in Greece but also at the local and regional level, Youth Workers and Civil Society representatives in general are left to their own devices. The only provider of Youth Work and opportunities for youth are organisations for youth (in cities where they exist) who are trying to provide at least some opportunities for young people. These services are ad hoc due to lack of support structure, finance and lack of personnel. They rely mostly on programmes such as Erasmus+ and volunteering engagements to be able to create some positive change.

**Short conclusion:** The situation in Greece seems to be worsening in relation to Youth Work, there is a significant lack of structure and support at any level. The government is focused on many other problems and even the problem of sustaining their own structure. Based on that, Greek Youth Workers and young people do not have sufficient channels for grievances, not to mention organised support for youth activities or recognition of Youth Work. The only positive sparks are organisations for youth who are offering different possibilities for young people and have some personnel to work with youth, unfortunately most often located in bigger cities.

## **Poland:**

Regarding structures, there are no regulations, which cover Youth Work, nor has been defined who is a young person. Poland does not have Ministry, department or any other state body that directly works with youth, develops youth policies and work on improvement of opportunities for youth. Instead of that different needs of young people, together with other citizens are met through diverse other Government and programs. Based on this policy in Poland is more focused on tackling separate issues (such as unemployment, prohibition, family support etc.) then to support different group of people (like young people or children). This is a general overview but not a rule, as there are some programs that are directly aiming at younger population like programs "CLUB", "Family 500+ or National Readership Development Programme".

In her democratic history, Poland had just one youth strategy ("State Strategy for Youth for 2003-2012") that was created for accession of Poland in EU. After 2012, there were no new strategies in force related to young people or Youth Work. In 2016, "Council of Children and Youth of the Republic of Poland" was appointed as an advisory and consultative body operating at national level by the Minister of National Education on the strength of an act.

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The Polish Council of Youth Organisations (*PROM*) was appointed as a union of associations in 2011. Although it operates under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education and receives targeted subsidies, it remains an independent non-governmental organisation from a legal viewpoint. The activity of municipal youth councils and communal youth councils is regulated by the Local Government Act whose Article 5 (b) states that the commune council may give consent to the establishment of a communal youth council of a consultative nature. Unfortunately, there are no similar provisions at the level of districts or provinces, which is why youth representations operating there often take the form of associations or bodies appointed as part of social consultation. As a result on 2018-19. They have worked on adaption of the old youth strategy 2003-2012, which should become a national youth strategy for 2020 – 2030, but the strategy is not yet adopted (March 2020).

It should be noted that the development of Poland's youth policy occurs at regional level<sup>4</sup>. Eleven provinces have established formal structures supporting and representing young people. Youth representations operating at regional level have various legitimacies, the most frequent form being a province marshal's consultation body. At regional and local level, the competences of Marshall's offices and local administrative units "gminy" (communes or regional administration) cover the field of education, culture, social welfare policy, sport and health. In same time, they are responsible to support youth initiatives with funds and other resources (legal framework, consultations, communication / connection with other stakeholders etc.)

The administrative organs set the structure at regional and local level and it can really differ from one regional administration to another. Mostly the department of education, culture and sport at local level is responsible to draw the legal frameworks regarding working with youth. This is good from angle of decentralization but challengeable when it comes to education or youth development as the frameworks and opportunities are different.

**Short conclusion** – Poland's lack national structure / framework for Youth Work and opportunities for youth both from institutional and program side. Which is positive in Poland is that sense of inclusion of youth, opportunities for youth and Youth Work exist dominantly on local and regional level, where structures, programs and funds are decentralized, and offered to young people and those who work with them. The weak point of this structure is that not every province has this support and this framework is "voluntary" for the administration – there is no obligation to uphold the structure so to regional government can stop, decrease support or significantly change framework and opportunities for young people and those who work with them.

## **Slovenia:**

The public authority responsible for the field of youth and realisation of the public interest in the youth sector at the national level is the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. Since 1991, it is an independent body within the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport.

The Office for Youth prepares regulations and measures for the youth sector. It develops suitable mechanisms for supporting youth organisations and organisations for youth.

In 2009, the Slovenian Government established their **Youth Council** as a consultative body that proposes measures and monitors the consideration of youth interests in various public policies at the national level. The Council is comprised of representatives from youth organisations and various ministries on an equal basis (10 NGO's + 10 Institutions). It is set that Council gathers at least 4 times a year but that is not the case in reality as they have even missed 3 years for now without meeting.

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<sup>4</sup><https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/14-youth-policy-decision-making-poland>

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There is also a **National Youth Council of Slovenia** is an umbrella association of youth organisations consisted of 12 full member organisations, operating at the national level and represents Slovenia in European Youth Forum. It is accountable to its member organisations and composed of an assembly, a supervisory board and a board. For the supervisory board and board positions, elections are held every two years.

The National Youth Council receives public funding. Its work is financed by Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, National Erasmus + Agency – Youth in Action and by European Youth foundation. Their work is regulated by **Youth Council Act**, adopted by the National Assembly on 19 July 2000 and amended in 18 May 2010.

In 2010, Slovenia accepted **Act on Public Interest in Youth Sector**. The Act also defines some commonly used terms, such as “youth policy” and “Youth Work”. It is the first law, which systematically regulates the youth sector. Further, serves as a basis for the adoption of the “National Programme for Youth” as the key strategic document comprehensively specifying the development of public policies intended for youth until 2022. It serves as strategic public document or action plan with 9 measures, that integrates the major directions to be followed in policy making on youth matters at the national level.

Regarding regional there is no specific structure but there is on local level. Possibility to make youth support structures on local level was given by **Act on Public Interest in Youth Sector**, but this is also “good will” options that local authorities can create but they are not obligatory to have it. As a result, just 14% of local authorities have local youth council.

As a good example, we must extract the City of Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital. They have made a structure within city administration that implements public tenders for youth programmes, networking NGO in youth sector, educational programmes and trainings for Youth Workers, empowerment of youth NGO structures and many other. In 2016, they came out with **strategy for youth** until 2025. With this purpose, they started a project **Mladi zmaji** (Young Dragons) and opened 4 youth centres in Ljubljana. To ensure that the strategy is progressing in the right direction the Office for Youth in Ljubljana meets yearly to review the work made in this programme. Another important body is “**The Youth Council of Local Communities**” is the umbrella association of youth organisations at the local level.

Very interesting support system which not existing in other analysed countries is “**Youth Friendly Municipality Certificate**”. This represents a recognition to local authorities that successfully implement measures in the field youth policies. The four-year Youth-Friendly Municipality Certificate is awarded annually to local communities recognized by the Expert Commission as youth-friendly because they successfully implement at least one measure in all priority areas of youth policies.

**Short conclusion:** Slovenia has developed many structures to develop Youth Work and to increase opportunities both on local and national level. Government structures are actively involved in dialogue with youth representatives and NGO’s are very active in work with youth. There are space for more improvement, especially regarding Government Youth Council but generally regarding all other included countries Youth Work and opportunities for youth in Slovenia are most developed *in manner of both framework and implementation of the opportunities for youth.*

# Financial and institutional support

## **Bulgaria:**

Ministry for Education, Youth and Science based on active Youth Strategy issues different public calls every year on which youth NGO's and others apply with their projects. Some regional and local authorities also issue public calls for youth NGO's project proposal based on their own action plan (authorities who have that) or based on National Youth Strategy.

Majors of local communities are responsible of making and implementing local action plans for youth in accordance with the National Youth Strategy. Moreover, they are bond between Ministry and needs of young people on local level, based on that local authority should make analyses of the position and needs of young people on specific local level and act in accordance.

Overall support are aiming next topics: Local communities, Youth welfare systems, Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field, Youth Councils and Youth Association & NGO's. From local to national level and to large extent, programs / opportunities for young people are free / not payable.

Based on this the system in Bulgaria is set on project based financing which lack sustainability both of opportunities for youth and Youth Workers position / scope of work. Exception from this rule will be sustainable funding and support to Youth Workers who will graduate on a study program for Youth Worker as the state will for them assure work place in local communities with more than 10.000 inhabitants!

## **Croatia:**

Directly for Youth Work there are no national financial or institutional instruments of support. Regardless, youth and/or organisations working with youth can apply for their activities to national, regional and local institutions/bodies:

1. Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDOMSP)
2. Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs
3. National Foundation for Civil Society Development

### **1. MDOMSP and local/regional level authorities:**

MDOMSP have every year public calls through which they partially finance Youth Work or project and activities that organisations for youth have applied for. These funds are not enough, neither for the organisations' sustainability (paying rent for premises, diverse bills or salary of at least 1 Youth Worker) nor for program activities throughout the year. The same system is used by local and regional authorities, but not every local/regional authority has a framework (active strategy, funds, staff etc.) for youth. This represents project based financing, which is in essence a very poor choice, as Youth Workers usually need to invest a lot of time and effort to focus on fundraising and less on work with youth. This system does not consider quality youth work and impact on the lives of the target groups or consistency in service provision, or sustainability.

### **2. Office for cooperation with NGOs:**

Is a body established by the national government. This body also publishes public calls for civil society organisations, including calls for co-financing projects. This body is not directly connected to Youth Work or youth generally but it is a good source of financial and state support, although the office could be more proactive in lobbying for institutional (running costs/overheads) support for NGOs.

### **3. National Foundation for Civil Society Development:**

This body was also created by national government but their function is somewhat different. The foundation gives institutional support and encourages capacity development of NGOs which are financed under their programmes. The Foundation has 3 levels of institutional support which are divided by the level/scope of work, number of employees, income etc. Based on that both “new” and “experienced” NGOs can receive funds for overhead costs (salaries, cost of premises, per Diems etc.). NGOs receive these funds for a period of 3 years, which then allows them to strengthen their capacities to increase focus on work with target groups and less on constant fundraising. The Foundation is partly funded from state lottery and gambling taxes which are then used for funding civil society. The challenge is the competition for this type of funding by a large number of Croatian NGOs.

In addition there is a state tax relief incentive for employees’ younger than 30 years and also the Youth Guarantee European programme as an incentive for employers to employ Youth.

Additional financial & institutional support may also be found in some local communities as some cities also support youth through giving them free or subsidised offices/premises and/or pay their running costs. In very rare cases some cities have renovated/created youth centres in which young people and organisations have basically all the infrastructure for work or gathering young people and implementing various activities.

### **Spain:**

The National Youth Institute (INJUVE), based on the Strategy 2020, once a year launches a call for grants for the maintenance, operation and equipment of youth associations, youth organizations and entities providing services to youth at the state level. Beside this, they are responsible for the youth unite / department inside Erasmus+ Programme and European Solidarity Corps Programme. On regional and local levels, depending on the region there are subventions for youth organisations. In some regions, it might be through open calls, in some it is just spreading between youth organisations based on the work and impact they have on the local level.

There are programs oriented on young people, funds from which are coming from the EU (for example Youth Guarantee), where there are no grants for youth organisations, but this funds support development of the employability opportunities for young people, through existing public Institutions.

Also, like in some other countries, on the local level, municipalities can grant or give for free to use some spaces for youth organisations, where they can run activities or some financing for specific activities and initiatives, but as it not systematic it is difficult to describe it as a financing mechanism.

Financial support derives from the assumption of the municipality that in turn receives funds from the autonomous community for the maintenance of the costs of the services offered to the public. The autonomous community in turn has access to funds at European and national level in the aim of various projects such as for example the one called Garantia Juvenil (Youth Guarantee) to promote training and working.

All the public youth services can be used free of charge by the young people. This aspect is in fact regulated by European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), which establishes, along with other things, the gratuitousness of information and orientation for youth.

Other activities related to idleness and free time can be to pay but still at moderate or symbolic prices in order to give them importance and more value.

For example, there are “Universidad Popular” which provide different artistic and free time educational activities, but not specifically for young people, but to all adults.

Most of the activities run by Youth NGOs are free of charge as well.

## **Greece:**

In Greece are turbulent years and many Governments are having problem with their own sustainability. That results with in some case total breakdown of the structure that should support young people, which then recult without any public calls or funding possibilities for Greek youngsters and organisations. That's why Greek NGO sector is turned to different EU programs and through them they are offering opportunities for young people. Beside that Greek youngsters and NGO's are focusing on two private foundations where they can get support or NIARCHOS (<https://www.snfcc.org/>) and Bodosaki (<https://www.bodossaki.gr/>), which it is positive as many activities happens in the field of youth through their economic and monitoring support.

Since 2014, the majority of the organisation and youth groups ask participation fee form young people for their activities / projects. This is a direct repercussion of lack of state support system, so in order to "have their heads above water" many Greek NGO's are basically exploits young people.

It is unfair and not legal according to the Greek law but they manage to find ways to legalize it. Based on this we can say that in Greece in many occasion participation in youth programs are payable / not free for young people.

## **Poland:**

In Poland, there are two main sources of funding of Youth Work: the state budget and local government expenditures. However, there are no official calculations concerning youth participation in the budget and it is difficult to estimate the amount of public funding dedicated to Youth Work. The categories in the budget allocating funds directly to youth are:

- Education and Care - 53 406 760 PLN
- Employment and preventing marginalization and social exclusion of youth - 62 330 PLN
- Health prevention programs directed towards youth: promoting healthy life style and physical activities - 54 888 PLN.

Other sources of funding include European funds (ESF's Human Capital OP, Erasmus+ etc.) and independent donors (small, symbolic share in Youth Work funding).

Additionally to these, there are grants aimed to grant directly young people. These grants / programs are mentioned above ("CLUB", "Family 500+ or National Readership Development Program).

The offer for young people in matter of activities and offer of events is diverse - it can be free, it can be paid or in some cases can take participative and symbolic amounts as payment.

That depends on which kind of organisations or institutions deliver the offer, for which purposes and for which target groups. For example, NGOs which receive grants to develop some sort of events (if the grant fully cover the event), then it might be free. In other cases, when the NGO needs their own source of founding a symbolic amount might be asked to be paid.

If a NGO or an institution works with NEET and fewer opportunities, then we can expect the offer to be free of charge. There is a specific national program that gives opportunities for youth which considers sport activities developed by youngsters thanks to the "orliki" (eaglets) program which aim is to create all over Poland common community sport fields to be used free of charge.

## **Slovenia:**

Since its beginnings, the **Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth** has been co-funding Youth Work and youth organisation programmes, typically providing between 10% and 30% of an NGOs budget. There is a two-year tender for Youth Work organisations and for youth centres. For youth organisations in public interest there is currently (2018 –19) available 500.000 euros annually, which is divided amongst 35

organisations. For youth centres, there is another 650.000 euros available annually which is divided amongst 28 youth centres.

Recently **Ministry of Public Administration** took some action toward professionalization of the NGO sector, which also includes majority of youth organisations. In April 2018, the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations entered into force and one of the novelties that it established is the fund for the development of NGOs.

Until now, it launched two calls for proposals (one in 2018 in one in 2019) to promote the development of NGOs and volunteering. The subject of the tender is co-financing of projects that will contribute to the development and professionalization of non-governmental organisations and volunteering in Slovenia. Within the selected projects, the Ministry is co-financing sustainable jobs in NGOs and sustainable jobs for volunteer mentors and volunteer coordinators.

It should be mentioned that even if we could say that this is a positive change in (co)financing the NGO sector, we need to state that the resources so far have not had a major impact on the youth sector. In the first tender in 2018 only 16 out of 100 co-financed workplaces were assigned to youth organisations.

As a rule in municipalities with youth centres the vast majority of funding for Youth Work goes to them, which leaves other youth organisations financially malnourished. Where the youth centres doesn't exist, the budget at the municipal level is usually very small or non-existent (often we are talking about few thousand euros for the whole municipality).

The programs that are financed by some national/international/regional project or by some other foundation are usually free for participants since tenderers often demand that services for young people should be free of charge. In some cases, the participants must pay reduced fee.

There are also some programs or events that function as commercial and require a fee, but it is usually lower than other programs on a market (language or other courses).

## **Definition of a Young Person**

Definitions of a "Young person" are in majority of structures/frameworks that exist in participating countries but notably in National Strategies for Youth, they are defined as persons from 15 to 29 years old. Poland had a slightly different approach in their last National Youth Strategy from 2003 -2012 where a young person was defined as 15 – 25 years old. That strategy is out of date, however, the new National Strategy for Youth 2020 – 2030 is in the process of adoption and there it is indicated that young persons are from 15 to 29 years old.

Poland has also an instrument of "Children and Youth Parliament" which includes young persons from 13 to 20 years old which is a project of the Polish government and by that does not represent formal or non-formal structure but from this information we have some data what (in form of age) they formally recognise as young persons.

## Recognition of Youth Work and Its Definitions

### Bulgaria:

From six countries that are participating in this analysis framework for Youth Work and recognition of the same Bulgaria is most developed at least on the formal side (legislatives, programs, recognition..). As this analysis is focusing on framework for Youth Work, we have not analysed other aspects. From a structure, framework and legislative side Bulgaria has set their framework appropriately.

Bulgaria have a long lasting **2010 - 2020 National Youth Strategy** that is reviewed every 5 years through **National Youth Program**. In this Strategy, Youth Workers are defined as a “necessary resource for implementation of the strategy”. In 2012 Bulgaria has put in force the **Youth Law**. Here is defined what are: youth organisations, youth activities, Youth Workers etc. Further, in chapter V, Article 32. is given a short definition of what is a Youth Worker, **“A Youth Worker is an adult, who has undertaken special training in work with youth and/or has acquired professional experience in Youth Work and the implementation of youth activities”** and in Article 33. Scope of Youth Workers work **“The Youth Worker supports the functioning of youth organisations by analysing, planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating youth activities, based on an individual approach and assessing the specific needs of young people”**.

The law has given a framework which can be worked on but still there was lot of work to be done in process of recognition and professionalization of Youth Work. Based on that in 2015 the Bulgarian Youth Forum has issued an official statement/position on Youth Work and Youth Workers which was a call for stakeholders to join for further recognition of Youth Work.

Since 2015, “Youth Worker” is **included in the Official List of the Professions** in Bulgaria. It is therefore recognized as an official profession and labour contracts for this position can be signed by employees.

Here is not the end of Framework for Youth Work as Bulgaria went further forward by creating and implementing a University level formal study program for Youth Workers! First generation of students started their studies on 2018.

With this one nice circle it is rounded, however, there are still many upgrades that can be made so that Bulgarians can achieve concrete results nation-wide in shaping their youngsters.

### Croatia:

Unfortunately, the terms **Youth Work or Youth Worker are not recognised** as a profession in Croatia. From that, it is clear that we do not have a formally recognised definition of Youth Work. Currently the MDOMSP has finished the draft version of the new youth strategy from 2020 – 2024 which contains a **chapter about Youth Work**. Plan of the MDOMSP is to work later on recognition of Youth Work and Youth Workers suggesting that **recognition of Youth Workers should be done in 4-5 years from now**<sup>5</sup>. Further, MDOMSP are currently implementing an ESF project in which they are conducting national research, after which they should have a base for competence development.

Based on this in 2021 we should have active National Strategy for Youth, relevant analysis and developed/described competences but still no formally defined Youth Work, Youth Workers or recognition nor professionalization.

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<sup>5</sup> Source is a member of expert working group working on current strategy

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### **Spain:**

Youth Work in Spain **is not recognized** as a profession. Usually it will be Social workers or social educators. However, in order to work with young people under 18 years old workers should have a title “monitor del ocio y tiempo libre” or free time animator. When it comes to youth institutions such as local youth council, youth office / centre, as this is a public service there is no need in this title / profession, but there is another procedure that are applying to all public employees (state exam). On other side state exam, has nothing to do usually with the experience in the youth field. When it comes to Youth Councilor – usually it’s a member of the political party that get this position after elections and usually it would be young person who has have experience in the youth field, but not necessary professional.

### **Greece:**

The Youth Work it **is not recognized** and the profession of Youth Worker still it is not established. There is an initiative in the last 2 years that started from an informal network of organisations that are working with youth projects in whole Greece. Aim of this initiative is to work on description and recognition the framework of Youth Worker in Greece with the collaboration of the ministry of Education (<https://youthwork.gr/>). The steps are very slow but it is positive that a dialogue is already started, as the need for Youth Workers exist and it is necessary to be defined and recognized in the close future.

According to Greek data until now **Youth Worker is** person that works with young people, organize activities for them and support them to raise skills via non-formal education, create workshops for their personal development and motivate them for active participation in their free time via a project or an activity.

### **Poland:**

In Poland and in Polish Legislation there is no such term as “Youth Work” or “Youth Worker”, that is recognized neither as a profession or occupation. This is rather a concept, which importance and awareness is still being developed and tried to be understood. Youth Work is mainly considered as the work that is done in practice for young people. Youth Work is therefore work that is connected with teachers’ work, who are theoretically responsible for delivering education. In practice, their duties also cover areas connected with youth problems and youth development.

Regarding legislation and governance, Youth Work is managed at national, regional and local level, by various ministries, regional and local authorities and consultative bodies.

In parallel with the fact that Youth Work is not an official concept yet, elements of Youth Work (such as didactic, upbringing and caring) are being addressed in various regulations. Some aspects of Youth Work are being carried out by different professional groups whose activities are regulated by law such as: Social workers, teachers, probation officers, career advisors, youth team coaches, people working in educational and cultural institutions (psychologists, pedagogues, socio-therapists, librarians, culture animators, etc.).

Youth Work is usually provided by: Education system employees, Employees of institutions (such as cultural centres), Employees of NGOs with work with and for youth, Religious institutions.

### **Slovenia:**

In 2017, Slovenia accepted **professional standard for Youth Worker** making it an official profession listed in “Catalogue of professional knowledge and skills”. Now you can become Youth Worker through national vocational qualifications system (NPK), either by presenting your previous experience before the commission or passing an exam.

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The important momentum for political recognition was the adoption of the **Act on the public interest in youth sector** in 2010. This Act describes Youth Work and areas of Youth Work, provides measures for public funding of Youth Work as well as awards for Youth Work projects and Youth Workers. Pursuant to this Act, the entire Youth Work sphere is in the public interest; **Youth Work is defined as** *“organised and target-oriented activities of and for young people, within which young people, based on their own efforts, contribute to their inclusion in society, strengthen their competences and contribute to the development of the community”*.

## **Existing models, Education system and providers of Youth Work**

### **Bulgaria:**

Non-governmental organisations are the main providers of Youth Work in Bulgaria. With the support of national and European funding, they organize different seminars, training programs and round tables for the implementation of Youth Work. Youth Work is complex work - it combines concepts such as structural dialogue, youth participation, democratic processes, youth initiatives and project thinking. All this, however is presented to young people through the non-formal education. Non-formal education makes Youth Work fun and attractive for young people because it meets their training needs adequately, quickly and interestingly.

The acquisition of skills for working as a Youth Worker till 2018, has been implemented just by Non-governmental organisations thanks to European and international programs and projects. In 2018 on three different University started delivering formal education for Youth Workers focused on specific fields. These formal study programs are:

- Master's degree program in socio-pedagogical work with youth, offered by the University of Veliko Tarnovo “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”;
- Bachelor and Master's degree programs in non-formal education offered by the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”;
- Master's degree program in youth activities and sport, offered by the National Sport Academy “Vasil Levski”.

Youth Work is included as a job classification in Bulgaria. There are working youth mediators at local level that provide information and opportunities for young people to find appropriate jobs in their region. However, most of the Youth Work in Bulgaria is voluntary and is provided by different organisations, NGOs and state institutions.

### **Croatia:**

The most usual model of working with youth is work of NGOs focused on youth topics. At the same time, these NGOs are almost solely providers of services or programmes for youth or conducting Youth Work. Some organisations are focused on specific topics like health issues or gender education but majority of organisations are working within any topic of interest to young people. The most usual topics that are in the focus of youth NGOs in Croatia are: active participation in society, unemployment issues, leisure time and education opportunities. Open Youth Work services are not so common in Croatia at the moment, however, given the increasing challenges young people are experiencing, there is an increasing need for



this type of work, as well as the need to up-skill NGO staff and redirect Social workers and other interested individuals to a career in Youth Work.

In Croatia, there are a lot of NGOs, so basically in every city there is at least one organisation that is working with youth (has programmes for youth) or there is a youth initiative (formal or non-formal). In Croatia, there are many training programmes for working with Youth, specific also to different topics as mentioned above. Any formal training should gather these stakeholders from the civil society and form focus groups to create a base for Youth Worker competencies but also a base of trainers who are specialised in their field. Given that Croatia has experts in the area of Youth Work (mainly NGOs), who are also well connected with international experts in the field, any initiative for formalising Youth Work in Croatia should start and end with these experts who will ensure the inclusion of quality stakeholders from different sectors and areas of Youth Work. This indicates enormous potential for education and training for Youth Work.

There was an admirable attempt at developing a sustainable formal education programme for Youth Workers at the University of Rijeka in cooperation with the Institute for Social Research from Zagreb. This program was a pilot program and started during the school year 2017/2018. The first 20 students completed the programme. Although planned, the program has not been continued so far.

To become a Youth Worker in Croatia you must stand out in a crowd of (usually) young people as a leader or active member/volunteer with the motivation and ambition to help other young people. Often then, organisations will focus on such individuals and invest time and effort in working with them and guiding them into the world of Youth Work. Besides that, a young person who is interested in youth activism/leadership or Youth Work can apply on their own to diverse training in the youth field offered by NGOs and in that way increase their capacities.

Both ways are correct and a good preparation but the main core is real work with other young people and this is a big advantage of youth NGOs or NGOs who work with youth. After a lot of practice, experience, a demonstrated passion for this type of work, good results with the target group and increased competences, a person becomes a Youth Worker, of-course in a non-formal way.

### **Spain:**

In the case of the southern European welfare states, there is no official term or underlying concept of Youth Work. In contrast to the countries in northern Europe, in Spain this concept is difficult to apply when referring to youth policies, since there is an institutional and conceptual void on the subject, which is reflected in a variety of youth programs. In many cases, Youth Work is understood as labour education or policies developed at a local level or activities implemented by NGO sector, which intended to promote the labour insertion of disadvantaged young people. The meaning of Youth Work in Spain is therefore fundamentally exemplified in youth policies intended to counteract the social exclusion and marginalization of young people.

Although most of the actions related to youth are carried out through the Autonomous Regions and local bodies, on a national scale the decision-taking structure is related to two bodies explained further down: the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) and the Youth Interministerial Commission.

On an Autonomous Region scale, these competences are stated in the different Autonomy Statutes. The Autonomy Statutes are the basic rules for the proper functioning of the Spanish Autonomous Regions adopted as Organic Laws. These laws establish competences and structures for decision-making in the Autonomous Regions.

On a national scale, decisions are made by the Government (Interministerial Commission) and enforced by the Youth Institute, in coordination with the Autonomous Regions and local entities (town halls and provincial councils), in this case through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces.

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The 2020 Strategy (Estrategia 2020) establishes six Axes of Action or:

AXIS 1 Education and training;

AXIS 2 Employment and entrepreneurship;

AXIS 3 Housing;

AXIS 4 Health, leisure and sports;

AXIS 5 Participation, voluntary work, inclusion and equality;

AXIS 6 Institutional Cooperation.

There are regional trainings course for managers of the leisure and free time. In Murcia, for example, there is the professional figure of the youth educator, or that one of director for the free time, but they do not correspond to actual university courses, but through the recognition of certain skills, these workers have competences as a specific profile of Youth Workers.

### **Greece:**

What we called in Greece Youth Works happens mainly via associations, institutions and organisations that deals with young people and doing activities for them. There are different topics that each one of them is focusing and majority is quite experienced and have experts in 3-4 topics. Of course there are smaller organisations and informal groups that doing Youth Work but with one specific topic or there are in village / their small community.

There is a lack of Youth Work in many places in Greece, especially in isolated and remote places as well as Greek islands. Unfortunately, the providers of Youth Work are in bigger cities and another problem is that some Greek islands in the last 5 years face big issues in every sector because of too much refugees.

Regarding education system, there is nothing legal or official established yet and will take time to be done. With the support of our NA there are 2 calls per year to be officially facilitator and trainer but that happens according to the needs of the Erasmus Plus frame. The frame of Youth Work is quite large and there are many people all around Greece that working with youngsters and doing Youth Work and support activities with youngsters.

Last time that was a plan for the whole sector of Youth was in 1999. The government of SYRIZA in 2016 create again the department of "New Generation" in the ministry of Education and Religion and organize a plan for the next 10 years. In 2017 they present their plan to EU and was approved as good example for other countries too and start to present it all around Greece in different municipalities. (<http://www.neagenia.gr/neolaia17-27/en/home-en/>).

Unfortunately, on 2019, we had new election and the first priority for the new government was to cancel the department of the "New Generation" and re-organize again the Youth Policy and Strategy in Greece.

### **Poland:**

The work done for and with youth has been carried out since 1989 until 2012 by youth organisations / institutions and centralized planning. In the very recent years, this work has been taken mainly by NGOs and self-governments (which often cooperate with the third sector-NGO).

Work done at:

- Personal development level: On formal education institutions& career counselling, by pedagogues and by the class coordinator teacher. At informal level: by psychologists, therapists, mentors and coaches.
- Employment: by career counselling, by trainers from the government and municipality offices.
- Education: by teachers in the schools, by governmental and EU projects. By job offers from unemployment offices, trainings offered by the Universities for youngster who finished studying.
- Gender Equality education: religion teachers, by educators and workers of NGOs in schools - delivering gender education workshops, facultative classes included in some areas of studies.

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Specialized trainings are available for Youth Work with particular type of youth group, such as unemployed youth, addicted youth, young offenders and other groups. There are also some projects devoted to improving the qualifications of those working with young people (for example within Erasmus+) where people/ institutions can apply for funds for activities, such as seminars, training courses, tools and techniques to work with youth, evaluation meetings.

As was set before Youth Work is a concept, which does not exist formally in Poland. As such, the education system for training covers training for educators, workers in NGOs, pedagogues, social workers, and all mentioned before.

There are no legal framework only dedicated to education systems for training.

In schools, there is “rada pedagogiczna” - help for pedagogues, which is a time in the year when the teachers and pedagogues can work on difficulties related to the class and learn through training.

There are also trainings, conferences and workshops developed by schools and institutions (in this case, the system is set by the school director per each year).

There are also NGOs delivering workshops and training for teachers, mainly based on Non-formal education methodology. Most of the training is done upon European grants (such as Erasmus+ Program) by NGOs, public institutions and schools.

### **Slovenia:**

Youth Work is mostly carried out by non-governmental organisations. It appears in many forms, from informing and advising young people, informal education and training, voluntary youth participation, participation and active citizenship and up to the promotion of equal opportunities and social inclusiveness (Gajič 2017, 15).

The Law on Public Interest in the Youth Sector (2010) talks about the following areas in youth sector:

- the independence of young people,
- the informal acquisition of knowledge and the increase of the competence of young people,
- the accessibility of the youth labour market,
- the development of entrepreneurship among young people,
- support for young people with fewer opportunities,
- volunteering, solidarity and intergenerational participation of young people
- international youth engagement,
- dependence and healthy life of young people,
- incentives for creativity and innovation,
- accessibility of cultural goods
- Participation in public social topics.

There is **no formal education in the Slovenian educational system** and Youth Workers are from different formal educational backgrounds.

Since Slovenia accepted **professional standard for Youth Worker** in 2017 someone can officially become Youth Worker through **National Vocational Qualifications System** (NPK – Nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija), either by presenting your previous experience before the commission or passing an exam. Going through this procedure is not required to work as a Youth Worker.

There are some informal courses that are carrying out a course for Youth Workers and they are also helping people to pass the qualification, but they do not have regular curriculum or way of financing.

A number of organisations in Slovenia offer regular training for their Youth Workers. For example, the **Slovenian Catholic Guides and Scouts Association** (Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov) has a long tradition of regular training since its establishment. Regular training ensures quality development based on the needs of scouts, scout leaders and the organisation.

The **Scout Association of Slovenia** (Zveza tabornikov Slovenije) has a similar training system. Its courses facilitate development of leadership and organisational skills and competences, expert knowledge in the scout's field, and knowledge and skills for implementation of supporting activities. **Network MaMa** combines and represents organisations that run youth centres or are active in Youth Work in Slovenia. They also provide some training programmes as well as **The Institute Voluntariat SCI Slovenia**.

## Challenges of Youth Work

There are many challenges in Youth Work. For this document, we will divide the analysis into 2 groups as one is combining the challenges of countries where Youth Work is not recognised and the second group where Youth Work is recognised at least at some level.

Group 1. (Croatia, Greece, Poland and Spain):

The biggest challenge is that Youth Work as well as Youth Workers as professionals are not recognised, not organised, not measured in a systematic or organised way. Further, policies, laws and action plans for increased quality in the youth sector are missing or outdated in the majority of participating countries. Then, the lack of financial support and stability, leads to a poor level of support for young people in their own country. Another big problem is a lack of understanding of what exactly this "Youth Work" is.

Many employees or even members of associations that work as Youth Workers need to declare themselves as personnel on specific project/programme tasks, or even as external expert on a project but not officially as a Youth Worker. As a consequence of this challenge comes the lack of support - professional, psychological and economical, as most of the time Youth Workers work with difficult youngsters, deal with much paperwork and bureaucracy and in that way become overloaded, without help or support.

An umbrella association of Youth Workers is missing, which could probably have a greater influence on state institutions to take urgent measures for the recognition of Youth Work.

Group 2. (Bulgaria and Slovenia):

In these two countries, Youth Work is recognised as a profession as already explained in above sections. One of the main differences of formal recognition of Youth Workers in these two countries is that Slovenia has a system of recognising Youth Work practitioners through Competences Quality System, so people who have experience in working with Youth or preparing themselves to become Youth Work practitioners (with or without formal education connected to Youth Work). This approach is strongly based on non-formal learning.

Bulgaria has developed a formal education system for Youth Workers and they will be more theory-based Youth Work structure. Both approaches are "very young" and more time flow is needed so the results of these approaches can be better assessed.

Based on experiences to date, we have extracted the biggest common challenges:

- A system of **insecure financing** that prevents the planning of better and continuous activities for young people.
- The Youth Work is often discontinued and project-based.
- There is no clear area to which Youth Work can contribute (there are no clearly defined effects that would be recognized outside the youth sector).
- The training system for Youth Workers is not continuous and structured enough.
- Young people often don't know it exists: They have individual experiences but are not familiar with the concept of Youth Work.
- Frequently Youth Work is perceived among young people as a space for relaxation, not as much as a space for active participation and creation.
- Local youth NGOs usually do not have professional staff and their organisational capacity is low.

## Support Systems for Inclusion of Young People

### **Bulgaria:**

Support system in Bulgaria is set through numerous national programs in the form of a policy, or a programme that is following some policy. Main support programmes or general support for young people are coming from:

- National Youth Programme (2010 – 2020);
- National Programme for the Implementation of Youth Activities;
- National Plan on the Implementation of the European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020.

In addition, there are many other policy programmes, which are largely focused on youth such as programmes that are supporting employment and entrepreneurship of young people, some of them are:

- ✓ National Programme "Activation of Inactive Persons";
- ✓ Programme "Career Start"
- ✓ Programme for training and long-term employment of unemployed persons.

In addition, important field are human and disability rights focusing on support for young people such as:

- National Programme "With Care for Every Student"
- National Programme "Together for Every Child"
- National Programme "Creating an Affordable Architectural Environment and Security in School"
- Programme "Sport for Children at Risk"
- National Programme for Prevention and Control of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections

System is set in the way that youth organisations, NGOs, schools and other non-profit actors in society apply to open calls that statebodies have published. These calls are published based on these programmes or for implementation/achieving goals of these programmes.

The non-profit sector organisations apply with their programmes for funds and if their project is approved they start with implementations.

The ministries responsible for the respective programme carry out inspections, analysis, prepare reports and statements based on direct relations and feedback between the persons and organisations concerned with the implementation of the programmes, monitor and control the implementation of the financial, content and organisational part of the beneficiaries' projects with regard to the lawful and expedient use of the funds.

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## **Croatia:**

There is no organised state structure or system for inclusion of young people nor national/institutional co-financing which could be the support system. When it comes to the local level the situation is different and depends a lot on local politics. In some cities there are many support systems for youth, among others youth clubs/centres (for example in cities: Karlovac, Pula, Sisak or Samobor). This is interesting because in these examples we have two different approaches. In Samobor youth centre was established by local politician's initiative (not youth NGOs) as the local government had a need to transform part of a military infrastructure into useful space. Now that is a modern place with lot of possibilities and support for children and young people led by local body not experienced/not having competencies in Youth Work.

The other approach is in Karlovac, Sisak and Pula where they have youth clubs/centres initiated and created by NGOs or youth initiatives. These centres are functioning now with the help of local government: paying bills for overhead costs co-finance or fully finance rent of office premises or periodically invest smaller amounts of funds in infrastructure of building as usually those building are in their ownership. Before establishment of these centres, there was a great initiative and lobbying by local NGO or youth, to push local government to work on systematic support for young people. Exception is Karlovac as they have more youth/culture centres due to the fact that both local government and local NGOs have created their own.

There is a small network of local and regional INFO centres – AYICC, which supports Youth Work and young people. There are 12 local and 4 regional INFO centres that are the leaders in this field. As well, there is a similar number of additional INFO centres in the process of development but they are not members of AYICC and some of them have just applied for funds from MDOMSP (which is aimed to support INFO centres), so not really prepared or aimed to work as a youth INFO centre.

When we are talking about youth HUBs, we can say that the closest thing to that is MMH (Croatian Youth Network). Besides MMH there are other HUBs such as "Culture HUB Croatia" that is focusing on education, creativity and development through culture or for example "Terra HUB Croatia" that is focusing on social innovations and sustainable development.

Additional state support system for youth is "Guarantee for youth". This is a European program that was before and even now implemented in many EU countries. Through this program unemployed youth can find easier job because program is for one year covering the cost of young person who starts to work so the employer does not have this cost. The idea is that young people gain their first experience in the real sector, so they can become skilled and sustain their employment, or be able to find other employment more easily.

## **Spain:**

There are many support systems as youth centres, youth offices, youth information centres, but the problem is that each of these works in an individualized way. For example, it is difficult for the municipal administration and non-profit entities to work in the same direction, not only when they are bound by funding constraints.

The biggest focus of support is an employment, there are such support mechanisms as: employment consultants especially for young people, Youth Guarantee Program, professional short term courses, special support for young entrepreneurs.

Special focus is also on Roma Youth, for them was created special structure called "Secretaria de Gitanos" this entity receives state support and provide support for young Roma in the area of education and employment.

### **Greece:**

In Greece, there are many different unofficial places that youth activities are happening every day. Some of them are more organised with a daily program and others are not having a specific schedule. In many local areas these social spaces exist for many different groups and many of the persons of these groups take care of an activity or in collaboration with other members. That means that these places do not have a specific structure but some kind of principles that you have to respect to enter and to be part of their community. In the majority of them, it is quite easy to enter, participate and be active. In few others, you should have some affinities to enter in the group such as ideology or philosophy that is in line with centre philosophy.

The majority of these places are based on a voluntary base and the administration / managing is among the volunteers, which represents a quite non-formal structure. There are also many local groups that are organizing and participating in multicultural and sports events that happen once per year especially in villages or in islands where the traditional customs still are quite strong and gather many people during these events.

In addition, many municipalities still support many youth activities via their installations as they give permission to use a cinema, a court, a theatre or other property of municipality to different kinds of youth groups that wish to organize and implement an activity.

### **Poland:**

In Poland the situation regarding this topic is similar as in Bulgaria the national government focuses its support system on different national programs and not decentralized services which can be used everyday by young persons. On national level in Poland there is overall lack of recognition of young people as a specific group that should be empowered and that is changed with overall strategies for all citizens and then in some of them or their parts there are some measures for young people.

These strategies we can put in group of Strategies for Social Inclusion of Young People in which belong next programs:

- "The National Programme for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2020;
- "Active Forms of Combating Social Exclusion – A New Dimension 2020";
- The 2020 National Development Strategy;
- The National Programme for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

In Poland, central authorities do not carry out campaigns or other activities to promote the fight against discrimination and racism or to support multiculturalism. These areas remain primarily the domain of non-governmental organisations and to a lesser extent, some local governments. In 2016, the Council for the Prevention of Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (established in 2013) was abolished by decision of the Prime Minister.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalization leading to violent extremism: Polish schools are not centrally initiating any efforts to fulfil the obligations arising from the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015 on the commitment of ministers of education to promote – through education – citizenship and common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Some good examples we can find in matter of access to housing, social services, health care, financial services. There are supports for young people to grant a new house; or financing rent of house. There are also health care grants and financial services dedicated only to young people, in some cases up to 35 years old.

## Slovenia:

Youth social inclusion is not separately defined in the Slovenian legislation and the approach encompasses the following elements:

- Adequate income support in combination with help to get a job.
- Inclusive labour markets (making it easier for people to join the workforce, tackling in-work poverty and avoiding poverty traps and disincentives to work).
- Access to quality services (this includes education, health and social protection, social insurance, social activation and social programs, affordable housing and participation in society).

The main government actor in the youth field, The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, oversees preparation of the National Programme for Youth, which also addresses poverty reduction and social inclusion of young people across a number of policy areas, including employment and the labour market, education, housing and health. Some other important public actors are: 62 Centres for Social Work, 10 Crisis Centres for Youth, The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Youth Home Jarše, Re-education Home Radeče, The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children Ljubljana and The Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund.

The implementation of certain services is being transferred from the public to the private sector. Some of these services can be delivered by non-governmental organisations, which often initiate provision of certain necessary services themselves. The following organisations are the main actors promoting the social inclusion of young people:

- **The National Youth Council of Slovenia** is promoting social inclusion of young people;
- **Youth Network MaMa** integrates and represents organisations engaged in youth centre activities;
- **Pohorski Bataljon Foundation** aims to encourage youth involvement in resolving social issues;
- **The Youth Council of Local Communities**;
- **The BOB Institute** is involved in non-formal education, youth street work, cultural activities, social entrepreneurship and promotion of young people's active participation in social events;
- **Association Centre for helping the young.**

Besides those, there are youth councils, national youth organisations, youth centres and some other youth organisations that are intended for youth. Unfortunately, the state funding for youth programs in Slovenia is relatively small and therefore youth programs don't get well promoted. Most youth that participates is already active in a youth centre or organisation and new participants are hard to find.

Alongside those there are also other organisations that are not mainly centred on youth yet are still inclusive for young people. Such are mountaineers' society, volunteer firefighters, Red Cross, Caritas, student organisations and so on.

Below two interesting but atypical examples of Youth Work are presented:

- Within the Employment Service of Slovenia is the **Centre for Information and Career Guidance** (CIPs) which is designed for young people and all others who are planning their educational or employment career and need the right information for their decision-making. Pupils, students and young adults – early school leavers are entitled to counselling services in the CIP. (Zupan 2016, 12)
- Project Learning for Young Adults (PUM-O: Projektno učenje mlajših odraslih) aims to encourage organisations to hire unemployed young people and other job seekers under the age of 26 years or make them return to education to increase their level of education, under the auspices of the **Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.**

Since 1999, it is an **officially recognised non-formal education programme** for unemployed young people aged 15–25 who have no occupational qualifications or competences and experience a social vacuum

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caused by a lack of support and help. The purpose of the programme is to help early school dropouts with no occupational qualifications to overcome social exclusion by encouraging them to re-enter and complete the educational process to acquire qualifications or the targeted level of education. The programme also equips young people with skills and competences for job seeking and entry to the labour market.

An evaluation study of the PUM programme (Andragoški centre slovenije, 2010) found that 83% of participants regarded their participation in programme as the reason for (positive) changes in their lives. More than 98% of participants described their experience of the PLYA programme as essentially different from formal education.

## **Places and opportunities for young people**

### **Bulgaria:**

The most comprehensive place where young people from Bulgaria can find opportunities for themselves is the “European Youth Portal”, which offers European and national information and opportunities of interest to young people who live, study and work in Europe. It provides information on eight major topics, covers 33 countries and is available in 27 languages.

Besides on line information young people can also come physically to Information Centre of the European Commission representation in Bulgaria. Here they can interact with the staff of the Information Centre and get explanations they need.

At the same time there are a lot of NGOs providing training, internships and volunteering opportunities for young people but in country and international mobilities. Dominantly these opportunities are shared through Social networks.

Another important place with information and opportunities is “Human Resources Development Centre”, that is a Bulgarian National Agency for Erasmus+ program. Here individual persons, formal and informal groups of young people can get information how to be included in an Erasmus + programs themselves. Some opportunities can also be found in major international companies that have different types of Corporate Social Responsibilities events and provide opportunities for Youth Work.

### **Croatia:**

In order to answer this question, we need to divide focus on very small local communities, then cities and big cities. In very small local communities, young people don't have many opportunities or even a place or organisation where they can find what is out there and abroad for young people. In that manner, young people tend to be included in sport clubs or culture/dance associations. In local communities that have high school and/or an NGO that is working with youth, the possible opportunities for youth are often organised in cooperation with schools. Their youth NGOs are visiting schools and have different programs for youth, such as mobility, activism or leisure time of young people as that is basically one of very few places where they can find groups of young people. Here the problem is to include or “catch” young people finishing high school but they are still young. Local youth councils are rare at this level as there is a small number of young people in community.

In smaller cities situation is better as every local community have at least one high school and some NGOs. Occasionally, communities also have a local youth council. Here also the focus on the Youth Work is again in the schools from where the NGOs or different bodies find young people to work with/include.

In the last 3 years, experienced regional NGOs / volunteer centres in cooperation with a wide range of mostly elementary schools have increasingly been promoting school volunteering and schools are creating more and more school volunteers' clubs. This is especially important in small municipalities or cities as in many of them there is no or very few initiatives in which young people could be included.

In big cities, young people can find the widest range of opportunities for themselves and as well have multiple options for informing themselves or participating in multiple organisations or initiatives. These cities also have at least some faculties and a number of high schools, so the youth NGOs as well as different bodies here can promote or gather "older" young people and include them in their activities. Here local communities also benefit from inclusion of this "older" young population as they have already some experiences and competences that are improving the quality of life in that local community. These cities have different youth/culture associations, bodies and youth clubs/centres or INFO centres as well as study programs, mobility programs, sport clubs etc.

### **Spain:**

In Spain, there are various places where young person can get information and opportunities. It is all up to the young person who must know how and where to direct his interest in the various areas and where to go for specifics information about the specifics fields, ex. mobility, activism, free time, sport etc. All this is hardly related and united together in one place.

Formal place for receiving information is Youth Information Centres, where young people can receive information on: employment; participation; activism, sport and cultural activities. These centres are usually one of the municipality public services but in usually some bigger cities, there are also NGO's that have their own youth centres / club that in which beside information for youth they are directly providers of Youth Work as well.

Network of Youth Information Centres developed by the "Youth Institute" and in collaboration with youth organisations of the Autonomous Communities, City Councils, and entities providing services to youth, Universities and teaching centres. INJUVE coordinates the network of youth information centres in Spain, which currently has more than two thousand centres, offices and youth information points located throughout the country.

In addition, Eurodesk points are a source of the information, but lately more and more young people are searching information online.

### **Greece:**

Young people in Greece are quite active and they are following their interest. Many of them since the age of 12 or 15 years are member of cultural, music and sport groups in their area. In the beginning, they get some basic information from their family or friends. Later on the use social media, which gives them more opportunities to be active in different fields, they are interested.

Unfortunately, in Greece until the age of the 18<sup>th</sup> years youngsters are quite blocked because of studies and their obligations to enter in universities. It is quite hard to enter in their "world" and for many of them is priority and main goal of their life to go to University, also there is a pressure from their families to first finish high school.

Youngster's starts to be more active and alternative after entering in the Universities and moving to campus area they realize that are many opportunities for them in local and European level. In big centres around Greece we have many occupied places that working as a HUB's, for activists in different fields of the society.

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Another negative issue in Greece is that the majority of informal groups and NGO's are based in big centres, cities with Universities where youngsters can have more easy access to motilities and different opportunities.

### **Poland:**

In each city in Poland, the municipality is responsible to develop strategies to empower and involve youngsters in activities at local level. In some cases, the municipality implements those events, in some other cases, it give grants to different NGOs to do that work and, in some cases; both scenarios can happen.

This way, there are a network of youth NGOs and institutions, Eurodesk, municipality events, NGOs' events which work with youngsters on developing youth centres, youth events and festivals. The youngsters can also be informed about opportunities for them in schools, online on social networks or in local media.

The "Orliki" Program, which is developing sport fields all over Poland, also aims to promote inclusion of young people through sport and free access to field to be able to play sports within any local community and peers.

Associations, organisations, foundations, scouts etc, are very active in carry out work with youth. For instance, NGOs are carrying out many activities voluntarily or thanks to outsourcing some of them by the central administration and local authorities (e.g. day-care centres, helping women working in prostitution, taking care of street children, addiction prevention). These NGOs also work in the schools promoting youth participation and delivering non-formal education in formal education context. There is also a strong engagement in social care on the side of church organisations (e.g. convents or church related associations) and parishes, which run community centres and shelters for children and youth.

### **Slovenia:**

Most young people find opportunities through information point at their school or university. One of the most efficient ways is talking with friend, especially if at least one of them is active participant in youth organisations.

Of-course, we cannot forget that nowadays most information reaches us through social media.

## **Diagnosing the Needs of Young People and Determining the Offer for Them**

### **Bulgaria:**

A growing majority of young people in Bulgaria would like to combine work and study by working on flexible working hours. Those without prior work experience (87% of them), say they would gladly choose this option. This was revealed in a national survey commissioned by the leading employer in the BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector in Bulgaria "TELUS International Europe". The results also show that 41% of young people surveyed assume that they will most likely be employed on a service job when they start their career, with low pay and prestige that will not contribute to the development of any important skills.

Less than 30% of young people and their parents are aware of the alternative provided by the BPO industry for a young person's first job, where they can practise the languages they speak, as well as develop a wide range of professional skills.

More than 70% of young people think that their means of living are sufficient, young people who are in a severe social situation are mainly from ethnic minorities. These are the findings of the annual youth report for 2017, submitted by the Council of Ministers and adopted by the National Assembly.

Graduates of secondary education who continue to study in Bulgaria are 51 per cent and 14 per cent are leaving for education abroad.

Unemployment among young people has dropped by almost 16 per cent. Over 50 percent of working young people declare that they have found jobs easier than expected. Young people with primary and secondary education tend to be more likely to go abroad.

In rural area, 63% of its residents and 59% in small settlements do not think they can get a good education there, according to a government report for 2016. In the capital, 79% are of the opinion that they can get a good education, and only 11% - that they cannot.

A positive trend was registered also in 2018 in reducing youth unemployment. As a negative, it is reported that 54% do not work in their specialty, and only 30% have been working in line with their education.

### **Croatia:**

In those local/regional communities where they have active local/regional strategy for youth and active local youth council's, needs of young people are diagnosed through research made for preparing local youth strategy. These strategies usually are made for a 3-4 year mandate, so the research is usually made for strategy purpose.

Regardless of this data, NGOs working with youth also implement their own off-line or on-line questionnaires based on which they are attempting to adjust to programmes/activities that they would like to offer to youngsters. In some local communities, young people are gathering (both formal and non-formal initiatives) together and diagnose what are their needs and how to reach them. Also youth NGOs often go "out of the office" or to places where they can find young people and use that to deliver some program and at the same time become acquainted with their needs.

All community organisations applying to Calls for funding must do research for this purpose, to be able to evidence the existence of certain problems or needs in the community and suggest solutions. Many networks in civil society often engage all of their members for the purpose of pinpointing specific needs and challenges of Youth in various communities across Croatia.

### **Spain:**

Through observation of young people with who we get in touch or objective studies and surveys for larger number of young people. By these means we are able to diagnose the needs of young people in an optimal way.

However, this does not happen often but the focus is depending on political decisions which are related to financial support. Lately we can find several research connected to Youth Employment as it is an issue for last 9 years and the main focus and priority of the Youth Work in Spain. Also after the financial crisis we can see decreasing of the number of services and studies on youth.

For activities run by Cazalla Intercultural we do needs assessment of the specific groups of young people related to project areas.

### **Greece:**

The majority of the organisations are doing projects that are focusing on the needs of the youngsters and according to the fields in which each organisation is active. In addition, during the activities with young people we listen to them as they often have new ideas. Then we open a dialogue with youngsters in order to discover their needs and to realize what they are missing or what activity can be interesting from them and then maximally and immediately try to act in accordance with resources.

From the other side the youth groups even non-formal or informal start their activities according to the need of the group and mainly including their members. There are many times that youth groups or associations start from these needs of their area or from their local society and become a main movement that works on a focused issue.

### **Poland:**

In order to diagnose the needs of young people we use tools as observation, interview and in-depth interview. We receive information about the needs of young people from school educators, teachers and Youth Workers from other institutions. We talk with young people, we have a youth club called "Action-Reaction", which gathers an active informal group of young volunteers and this club is a space to exchange information about the needs and exchange of skills.

The offer we prepare for young people is a response to their needs and adapted to the skills of young people and volunteers. We believe that in Fundacja CAT everything is possible.

### **Slovenia:**

Different national or regional researches are carried out. Every 10 years there is a big national research about youth. Last two researches were called Youth 2000 and Youth 2010.

Youth 2010 is also the basis for The National Youth Programme. It is a national research on the position of young people in Slovenia which was carried out in 2010 and published in 2011. It identifies young people as part of the society undergoing extensive changes in the last decade, which affect the quality of their life. It is expected that the next similar research will be carried out in 2020.

The most recent research is Slovenian Youth 2018/2019 founded by Friderich Ebert Stiftung and covers topics such as employment, politics, migrations and mobility, education, values and religion, family, spare time and lifestyle.

There are also other, more specific researches for a specific target group or researches on a smaller scale. For example, Youth Index 2016 published by Youth Council of Slovenia was a pilot project and it was carried out on a sample from 12 different municipalities.

Organisations also carry out their own researches, mostly as a part of project research activities.

## **Recognition of Competences Acquired by Non-formal Learning**

### **Bulgaria:**

If the acquired skills are within the scope of a European project, they shall be certified with a Europass / Youthpass certificate, or equivalent. In general, training organisations issue certificates for completed training, but they do not have the burden of a certificate obtained from formal education in Bulgaria. For example, employers in Bulgaria are not yet aware of the importance of the knowledge acquired through non-formal education.

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### **Croatia:**

In Croatia, the 8 Key competences of Lifelong Learning are more and more recognized and asked for in student programs, internships or job vacancies. Based on that gained non-formal competences are described in form of certificate that is not formally recognized but in real sector, it has certain value. For Erasmus+ program it is the YouthPass. In Croatia, we have a formally recognised form for competences gained through volunteering engagements.

### **Spain:**

The non-formal / informal learning competences are recognized at European level for example through volunteering and educational programs.

At national level, "InJuve" has recently developed the "Reconoces" program where volunteers can request to see their competences acquired by non-formal / informal learning process and education assessed by a special jury, then valued and used to acquire a job.

This program is still in the developing process in which is mostly focused on the recognition of the competences gained in the process of volunteering, but this program is not in force yet. Therefore, the only official tool for the recognition for the moment is a YouthPass certificate based on the 8 key competences of the lifelong learning.

In addition, "Cazalla Intercultural" use "Open badges" platform as a tool for recognition of the competences of young people obtained in the activities based on non-formal education methods.

### **Greece:**

In Greece, non-formal and informal learning process is not recognized. Mainly the Youth Workers / leaders need to present & get insight to young people how and what they can learned through their participation in different activities and how that can help them in their personal development in the future and how they can make changes in the society in the future.

Of course, that does not happen for all the activities, as many of them are informal. In few cases, there is just an acknowledgment certificate of participation on the event or the activity but without mention of any kind of competences gained officially.

The youngsters in Greece do not know so much about the structure of competences or even for Youthpass. When they participate in an Erasmus+ project and get a Youthpass certificate from the host organisation, the majority of them do not have knowledge about existence of the 8 key competences.

### **Poland:**

The competences acquired by non-formal learning and informal learning are mainly recognized through Lifelong learning education process, where young people develop their skills, abilities, competencies and behaviours with aim to better use it / implement it in the future.

In cases when there is a project in which participants receive Youthpasses, then they have the recognition structure that is provided by the tool. In other cases, the recognition is at personal level or, eventually, in some cases, through certificates of learning achievements created by the institutions, which deliver training or workshops.

## Slovenia:

There are two main legally acceptable ways for recognition of non-formal learning in Slovenia:

- recognition of non-formal knowledge, skills and competence **within the formal education system** – through continuing interrupted education, continuing on higher levels of education, changing direction/sector in education etc.
- **National Vocational Qualifications System** when non-formally acquired knowledge and skills are recognised by the labour market under the facilitation of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.

Last educational reform has also given voluntary work an important place in the educational system. Voluntary work is now part of the compulsory curricula in general secondary level schools and certain types of high schools. Pupils need to do voluntary work for a certain number of hours per year and they receive a certificate for it. These certificates however do not facilitate their entrance to further education courses.

**The Volunteering Act** imposes an obligation on organisations to keep a register of the performed voluntary work and acquired knowledge and skills for every volunteer. On a volunteer's request, a volunteer organisation must issue a certificate on acquired knowledge and skills upon the completion of the volunteering period. It is very important for young people that the non-formal knowledge and skills gained through Youth Work (volunteering or student work), are adequately recorded.

There are a series of examples of good practice:

- **Nefiks** – System of recording non-formally acquired knowledge,
- **My experiences** – a tool for validation and recognition of working experience, gained by student work,
- **Learning badges** – Use of open digital badges to value and recognize learning during non-formal learning activities.

In addition, **Youthpass** and **Youth Leader Portfolio** is often in use. Youthpass in particular is very important since the Erasmus+ program requires it.

[Example: Nefiks](#)

In promoting the recognition of the non-formal education of young people, Nefiks, a partner project of the Institute Nefiks and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is widely used.

The main aim is to establish a uniform system of validating knowledge and experience acquired in a non-formal manner by Slovenian young people working in Slovenia and abroad. For this reason, a record book of non-formal learning was introduced to collect the acquired knowledge and experience. It serves for recording knowledge from six different fields:

- knowledge acquired through engagement as active citizens and serious work on projects,
- knowledge acquired through work (student employment),
- knowledge acquired through organised forms of education,
- knowledge acquired in camps,
- knowledge acquired through voluntary work,
- other ways of acquiring knowledge.

## Gathering Places for Young People

### **Bulgaria:**

Young people in Bulgaria get together according to the interests they have, where the variety of interests is enormous – from computer gaming clubs, music clubs, skiing, rafting, hiking, bike, roller and skateboard clubs. Young people are often seen in parks when it is warm, many young people, especially in big cities practise inside and outside sports, as well as gyms and fitness centres are places where young people gather and can exchange information.

Events organised by a youth forum, for example, remain on the side-lines because they include young people who are already interested in Youth Work, volunteering or similar programs.

### **Croatia:**

The easiest way to include young people in various programmes and projects is through partnerships with secondary schools or universities. In this case, organisations in Croatia are using a direct approach. Another option are sport clubs as they also gather larger numbers of young people and what is different than in the schools is that in sport clubs there are more generations (older or younger young people) which can be very beneficial for certain activities.

In addition, all organisations are trying to find and connect with young people through social networks. Another method is Outreach Youth Work as in many local communities, young people are gathering in specific and different places. Usually they can be found on weekends when they gather to socialise and often consume alcohol, somewhere in the city/village centre, in the park or riverbank, this all depends on the local culture.

Youth Centres and Clubs are a crucial choice for Youth free time. The biggest problem in Croatia is the lack of Youth Centres, or rather, government support with strategies and action plans for opening Youth Centres in each local community where the youth population is big enough to justify such an expense. Youth Centres are open Youth Work spaces where all young people are always welcome, the facilities are attractive with content and environment, which appeals to young people, it is not threatening, it's comfortable, always open during youth free time, it's a safe place for youth to gather. The Youth Workers in this space are skilled in assessing youth needs, know how to build rapport with youth, know when to provide various content and include the young people in different activities which can benefit their personal and skills development.

### **Spain:**

Most time of their free time young people who are students dedicated to studies and after school activities. In Spain young people most time after school spend in so called "Academia's" place where professionals help them to prepare their homework's and exams.

In addition, sport activities - football and basketball are very popular. The biggest youth movement in Spain are scouts.

Due to lack of money, many young people do parties in the parks, even though it's prohibited by law to drink on the street. Young people after 18 spend quite a lot of time in the bars, but also it is generally very common for the Spanish culture to go to the bars for coffee or beer.

In addition, young people like outdoor activities and many of them do them in the weekends. However, when it comes to young people from the minority group due to low economical income they only can take

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part in activities that are free of charge, so most likely they spend their time on the street and some of them in the youth organisations and in youth clubs.

### **Greece:**

The youth places in Greece are too many and are different from place to place. In cities with sea, young people mostly gather in the port or the seaside road is a main meeting point. In Greece, there are many music festivals, sports events as many youth organisations are organizing activities for society such as marathons or annual meetings.

## **Mobility of young people**

### **Bulgaria:**

Nowadays about 900 000 Bulgarians live in Europe and about 500 000 in other continents. This is the number quoted by the Eurostat director Mariana Kotseva. Out of these numbers **about 70% are young people** and the average age of them is around 26.

In the last twelve years, since Bulgarians have the right to move freely in the EU, the percentage of citizens who have benefited from living and working in another country has doubled. Hence, in 2018 about 13.3% of the working age population of our country (20-64 years) is mobile.

Taking into account the critical context in Europe - and considering the fact that Youth Work, non-formal learning activities can significantly contribute to address the needs of young people within local communities – particular attention is given to support youth mobility.

The number of young people participating in various types of organised mobility is increasing every year. The quality and quantity of information on opportunities for such mobility is reaching more and more young people. The foundations of mobility are laid in school. More and more schools are participating in student exchange projects, internships in other countries, where students have the opportunity to learn on-site and in-person about the country's conditions, economic situation and culture.

However, the question is why, on the basis of the growing number of young students, the figures for the post-school period remain consistently low?

Unfortunately, **volunteering in Bulgaria is more of a phenomenon than a tradition**, which is why the number of young people up to 30 years participating in EVS-supported projects in different form and duration, or the new ESC form remains at a low level, in contrast to the European average in this segment. It is a fact that young people prefer temporary, often turning into long-term and even permanent labor migration, both within the EU and in the US and Canada.

Nowadays young people move from their families and hometowns at average age of 16, going to study or live abroad or in big towns where there are better opportunities for personal and professional development. On the other hand there are a lot of young people who continue living with their families. These are young people with lower education, unemployed or facing some economical or social disadvantages.

### **Some main characteristics of mobility:**

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- A significant part of young people are potential internal migrants as a result of the continuing and growing inequality in the socioeconomic development of the different regions and settlements in Bulgaria.
- The emigration boom of the 1990s remains a phenomenon of the transition period. Now there are post-transition emigration flows. The emigration wave was caused by the sudden mass impoverishment. The factors at play now are the stagnation of poverty and low living standards, the job losses due to Bulgaria's de-industrialization.
- Ethnic motives have lost validity as a result of the normalization of ethnic relations. The emigration motives of the Roma are not ethnic, they are economic and social. The main emigration flow is towards the countries of the European Union. Interest in North America has declined, but it has not disappeared.
- The risks of potential emigration to Bulgaria's development are less quantitative than qualitative: emigration of specialists with higher education.
- Sociological portrait of the potential emigrant: male/female; university graduate; Sofia resident; unmarried; feels European more than the others; is more sensitive to the low living standards in Bulgaria; is oriented towards private business; prefers to be employed in management.

### **Croatia:**

When we are talking about mobility of young people, we can separate it into two groups, one is domestic/national mobility and other is international mobility.

Young citizens of Croatia are partially mobile in their country thanks to their specific habits. In early young age, (end of elementary school and whole high school) young people visit same dedicated parts of Croatia that are part of school's program and/or visit cities on the Adriatic coast or monuments connected to WW II or The Homeland war. In their early 20's young people are massively migrating on the coast in summer period in search for season work or holidays. While Croatians know well the coastal part of their country, we can't say the same for the continental part, so mobility of young Croatians is partial and it is mainly focused towards the sea side.

In addition, there is no data or national research for inland mobility of Croatian citizens nor has this type of mobility in any way been supported in the past. The new European Solidarity Corps programme of the EU supports volunteering engagements on a national level. We find that it is important for every citizen and especially a young person to get to know as much as possible their own country so that they can better connect with it.

Regarding international mobility, the situation is different. There is much data on mobility of both general population as well as young people. From the data that we got from the Croatian National Agency for Mobility and EU programs (<http://mobilnost.hr/>) we can note that young Croatians love to go abroad and be mobile.

We have compared data just for young people mobility from 2014 to 2017, which are showing that:

- In 2014: was 2531 mobility's,
- In 2015: was 2220 mobility's,
- In 2016: was 2191 mobility's,
- In 2017: was 1876 mobility's.

We have also compared data of mobility's of people who are leading or working with youth as in many occasions they are also young people and the trend is same as in mobility of young people, its decreasing. In 2014, there was 1150 Youth Work staff mobility's and in 2017, there were 696 mobility's. Decrease was measured every year that is in the focus and the **total decrease in a 4-year period is 39.47%**, which is very high.

If we compare data connected to Erasmus+ higher education, we can see an opposite picture. The data shows that number of outgoing students and trainees from school year 2009/2010 has grown from 235 to 1778 in the years 2016/2017, which is an **increase of 750%**. Regarding incoming students and trainee's data shows same pattern, so the number of mobility's in 2010/2011 was 13 and in 2016/2017 was 2097, which is **increase of 16130%**!

Mobility of higher education staff also increased every year but not significantly as students and trainee's mobility.

The data of young people and students/trainee's mobility at first sight shows opposite "movements" which is then, for someone who is not living in Croatia, hard to understand. **In order to reveal this mystery**, we must see the bigger picture and data behind it. The big picture data shows that enormous Croatians strive to leave Croatia mostly because of unjustness, lack of job/decent life or will to learn and upgrade themselves<sup>6</sup>. Statistical data of Croatian central bureau for statistic<sup>7</sup> as well as Eurostat shows that more than 50.000 Croatians every year migrate to other EU countries (mostly Germany and Ireland), so they could have a better life. The research that prof.doc. Tado Jurić has conducted among other things shows that just from 2010 to 2015 the percentage of Croatian migrants to Germany was **increased by more than 1000%**! (in 2010, 4.836 Croatians migrated and in 2015, 50.646 Croatians migrated to Germany). Data also shows and compares the migration of citizens of Eastern European countries after they joined EU and Croatia. Data shows that on average around 10.000 Eastern Europeans migrate to EU per year and in Croatia's case that is 50.000 per year, which is on average **5 times more than other Eastern European countries**.

All this data shows that Croatians like to be mobile and that they easily leave their home country. This is also a part of reason why Croatian young people like to go for example on youth exchanges but there is less and less of them every year. Why is that?<sup>8</sup> Because their families move to live in other, more developed countries and then we have less Youth Workers/leaders and youngsters on mobility's.

### **Spain:**

There is a type of mobility established with a goal where we find interchanges between young people, solidarity projects and work camps and then another type of mobility based on free time and leisure for example like activities related to the Scout movement.

Then there is internal mobility, such as from a rural area to a city or from a city to a capital to look for very specific types of training. Lastly there is mobility to other countries for work reasons where young people always aim to return to their country of origin.

There is no official statistic data from the Youth Institute since 2017 about mobility of young people, only some studies for exact regions can be found. The last data is from 2017, but we can find some data from the statistic institute of Spain: For example, about **250,000 young workers** (aged 16-34) have moved from Spain during 2018, while **another 588,700** have packed their suitcases during 2015 and 2017. Thus, 16% of young workers have recently changed residence.

The lower level of foreign population explains their more frequent movements. **There are 2.3 million employed people** born outside our borders in the labor market, that means that they are foreigners or used to be foreigners but now are in the process of receiving Spanish nationality. Of this percentage, 8% have changed their municipality of residence in the last year, quadrupling the data for the native population. If we look at the period from 2015 to 2017, these same percentages are 19% and 5%, respectively.

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<sup>6</sup><https://iseljavanje-hrvata.jimdo.com/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.24sata.hr/news/podaci-dzs-a-iz-hrvatske-je-lani-odselilo-39-5-tisuca-ljudi-641156>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.24sata.hr/news/zastrasujuci-razmjer-egzodusa-mladi-odlaze-iz-svih-zupanija-639584>

### **Greece:**

In Greece we have around **50% of youngsters** that participate in a project or in mobility. We face the **problem that over 15%** that are participating very often in different projects. The majority of them we call them “active” youth but there are also many travelers and tourist too.

About the EVS or ESC it is quite difficult for Greeks to take part as the majority of the Greek youngsters have a season job during the summer and prefer to work instead to take the opportunity in long term projects. Last years are more popular to raise participation in short term projects.

According to our data from our NA (INEDIVIM):

In 2014 we had 113 approved projects with 147 activities and total number of participants was 3115.

In 2015 we unfortunately our NA were under a control and did not receive any applications.

In 2016 we had 126 approved projects with 166 activities and total number of participants was 3536.

In 2017 we had 146 approved projects with 216 activities and total number of participants was 3519.

In 2018 we had 129 approved projects and 190 activities and total number of participants was 3783.

In 2019 we had 98 approved projects and 118 activities and total number of participants was 3783.

Since 2018 we have also the European Solidarity Corps project:

In 2018 we had 30 projects approved with 264 participants.

In 2019 we had 128 projects approved with 1781 participants.

As we can see from these data that are more or less stable in the mobility's of Erasmus+ and quite interesting the raise of ESC projects that almost were **4 times more application** form 2018 to 2019 and almost **8 times more** participants comparing the last 2 years.

### **Poland:**

After contacting the Polish NA, we have reviewed the latest NA report, which present youth mobility (from 2017). The information is not very concrete; however, we can conclude from it that in 2017, 51161 participants in 1 202 Polish projects benefited from mobility in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth for a total grant amount of €92.11 million.

€11 955 11 was distributed in grants for youth, and 11 280 took part in European projects. In 2009/2010, there were 14 021 outgoing students and trainees. This number has increased to 15453 in 2016/2017, and has constantly increased year by year. The **top three sending institutions** are:

1. University of Warsaw;
2. Jagiellonian University of Kraków;
3. University of Wrocław.

More info in: file:///C:/Users/MADR/Downloads/erasmus-plus-factsheet-2017-poland\_en.pdf  
and [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en)

### **Slovenia:**

In pursuit of an education, young people migrate daily from the countryside to the city. This can be difficult because the fact is that the countryside has no proper public transportation system. Having a car is a definite must to go almost anywhere.

The problem is also the emigration of young people from rural areas into cities or into the outskirts of cities. They usually move during their student years for the time of studying. Young people also often leave the country to find better opportunities elsewhere. Some of the most common reasons for international youth mobility are youth exchanges and study exchange programmes through Erasmus+.

#### Main cross-border mobility programmes

Mobility of students in Slovenia is mainly enabled within the framework of the **Erasmus+ program**. This is coordinated and performed by the **national agency CMEPIUS**. **CMEPIUS** is responsible for mobility's and programs in field of education and training. The framework of the programme coordinates pupils, students and staff of education institutions in a variety of sub-programme activity.

The Erasmus+ also offers financial support for **non-formal learning and mobility** of young people (from 13 to 30 years) which contributes to the goals of European cooperation. The **national agency in field of youth - MOVIT** implements the Programme in Slovenia.

Bilateral cooperation between Slovenia and European and non-European countries is defined in bilateral agreements, programmes and protocols on cooperation in education, science and culture. Four programmes are available for young people to consider when pursuing cross-border mobility in formal education:

- **Co-shaping the European Higher Education Area** (aims to finance CEEPUS and bilateral agreement exchanges; supports mobility of Higher Education staff and students),
- **Public tender for financing mobility of students from socially weaker backgrounds** (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport),
- **Ad Futura programmes** for international mobility (Štipendije Ad Futura za izobraževanje),
- **Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults** (TLN Mobility).

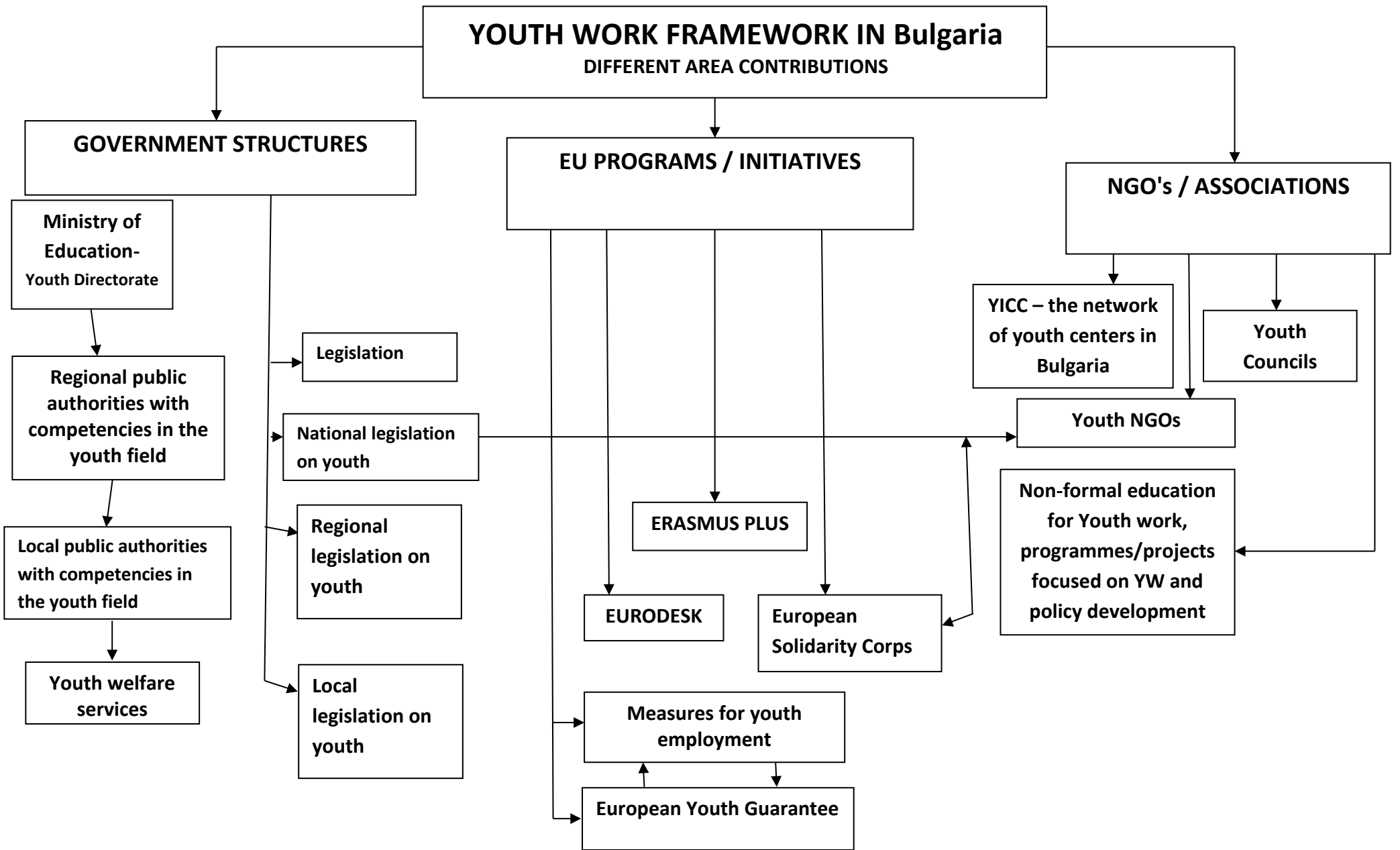
In the context of non-formal learning, there are no incentives or actions by top level authorities to support cross-border mobility. However, in the field of Youth Work, Action Plan of a Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 has this specific aim in the field: Promoting inclusion in international Youth Work and learning mobility in Youth Work and strengthening them.

## **Scheme of framework for Youth Work in 6 participating countries**

Down below you can find schematic presentation of the Framework in which Youth Work exist in some country, the institutions, bodies and other stakeholders that are connected to the world of Youth Work. Schemes are presented in next country order:

1. Bulgaria
2. Croatia
3. Greece
4. Poland
5. Slovenia
6. Spain

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# YOUTH WORK FRAMEWORK IN CROATIA

DIFFERENT AREA CONTRIBUTIONS

## CONTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

National Youth Council

Regional youth councils

Of the 21 regional governments only 14 have active RYC

Local youth councils

Of the 576 local governments only 72 have active LYC

National/Regional/Local youth program

National YP expired 2017.

UZUVRH

MDOMP

Budget for programs / projects focused on youth

Youth clubs

Local/Regional Youth Info Centres

Overall youth projects

Youth centres

Youth employment and social inclusion projects

NZRCD

## CONTRIBUTION OF EU PROGRAMS / INITIATIVES

ERASMUS PLUS

EURODESK

ERYICA

Measures for youth employment

European Youth Guarantee

## CONTRIBUTION OF NGO'S / ASSOCIATIONS

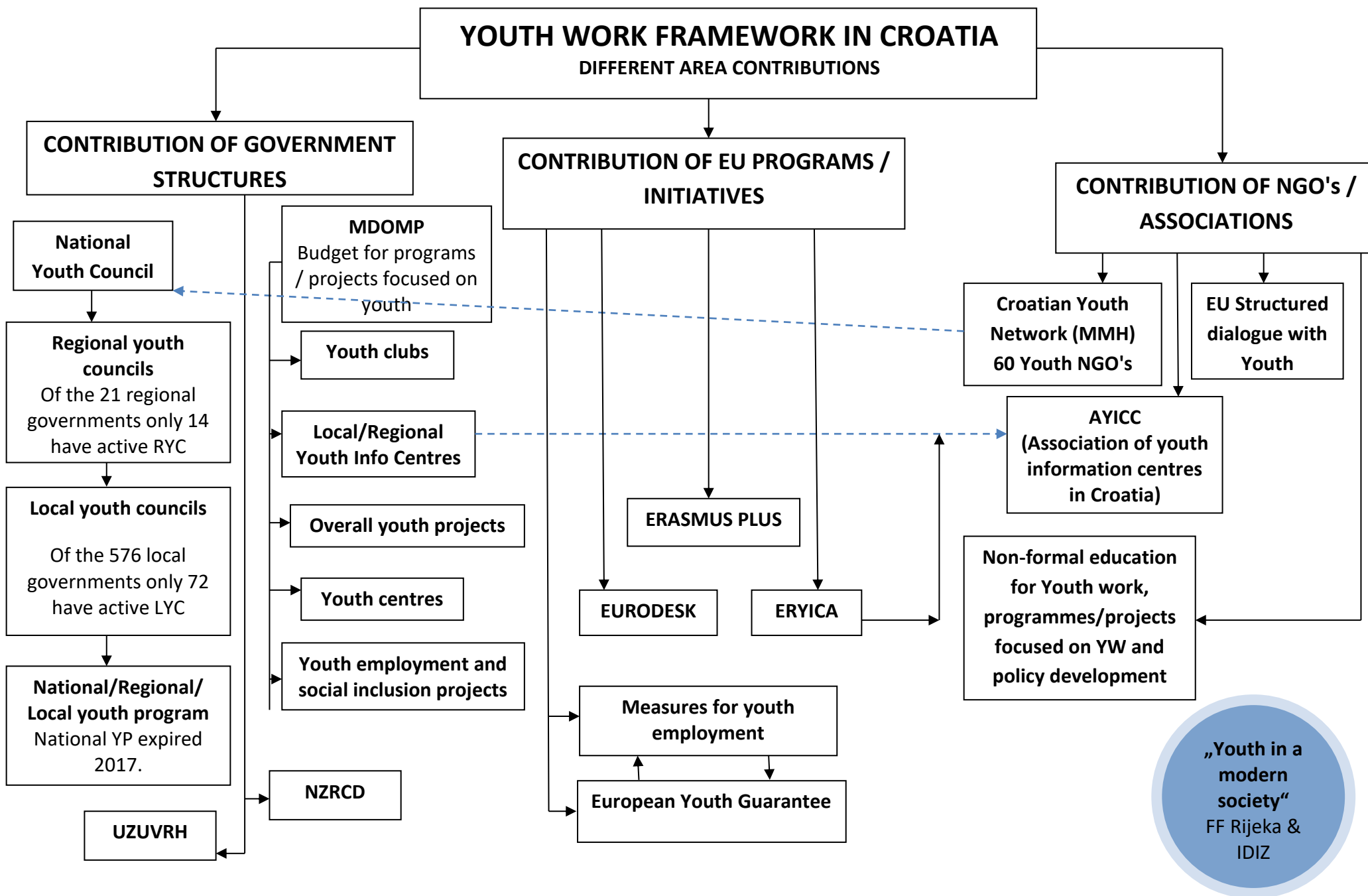
Croatian Youth Network (MMH)  
60 Youth NGO's

EU Structured dialogue with Youth

AYICC  
(Association of youth information centres in Croatia)

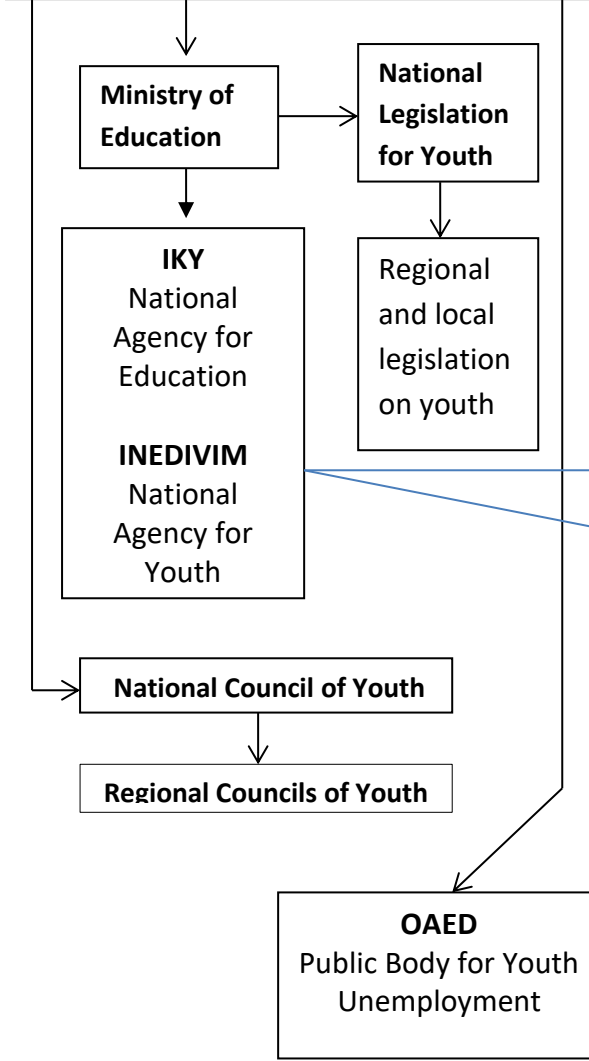
Non-formal education for Youth work, programmes/projects focused on YW and policy development

„Youth in a modern society“  
FF Rijeka & IDIZ

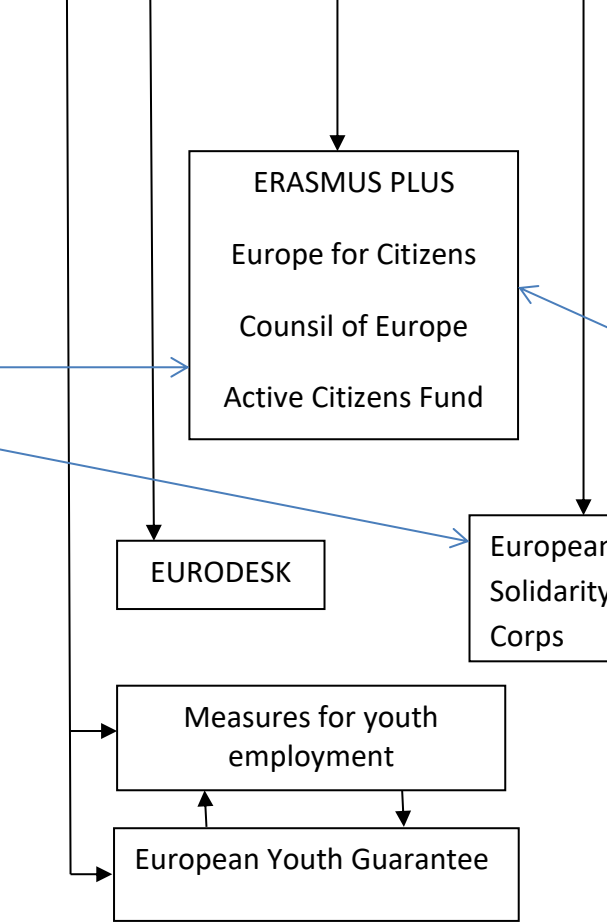


**YOUTH WORK FRAMEWORK IN GREECE**  
DIFFERENT AREA CONTRIBUTIONS

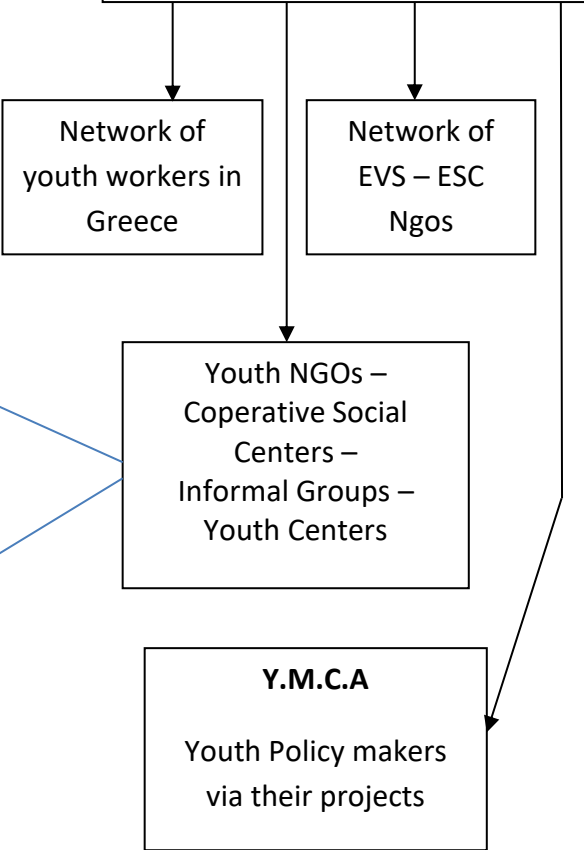
**GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES**



**EU PROGRAMS / INITIATIVES**



**NGO's / ASSOCIATIONS**





**European  
Commission**

**The Council of Europe**

**EUROPEAN LEVEL**

**European Policy**

**European Programmes**

**Parliament's Commission of Education, Science and Youth ((and sub-commission on youth issues)**

**NATIONAL LEVEL**

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of National Education

Ministry of Health

National Bureau for Drug Prevention

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Children's Ombudsman

Ministry of Sport and Tourism

Ministry of Science and Higher Education

The State Agency for the Prevention  
of Alcohol-Related Problems

local administrative  
units "gminy"

Marshall's offices

regional volunteering centres

**REGIONAL LEVEL**

Universities

cultural centers

NGOs

Schools (over primary school)

sports clubs

private institutions

OHP (Voluntary Labour Corps)

youth clubs

sociotherapeutic community centers

**LOCAL LEVEL**

# NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT  
MINISTRY FOR WORK, FAMILY, SOCIAL MATTERS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**URSM**

= OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FOR YOUTH

INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYEMENT

# NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

REGIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS

REGIONAL YOUTH ORG.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR YOUTH

YOUTH CENTERS

OTHER NATIONAL ORG.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**MOVIT**

= NATIONAL AGENCY FOR E+ YOUTH IN ACTION

ERASMUS +

**CMEPIUS**

= NATIONAL AGENCY FOR FORMAL EDUCATION

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUNDS

**EU**

**NGO**

**SECTOR**

