



Renewed European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to propose a revision of the European Training Strategy (ETS) of the Youth in Action programme. This revision aims at optimising and further increasing the impact of the Youth in Action programme in the area of youth work development, capacity-building and recognition.

It aims at bringing the Youth in Action programme even further in line with the renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), as well as with the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020).

The ideas and content of this paper have been defined in cooperation with the Youth in Action National Agencies, on the basis of proposals put forward by the SALTO Training and Co-operation RC.

2. BACKGROUND

The current European Training Strategy in the area of youth and non-formal learning has been implemented under the framework of the former EU YOUTH and the current EU Youth in Action programmes since its launching in 2000.

The European Training Strategy aims to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field. This main objective is currently achieved through activities implemented within the five pillars of the Strategy:

1. Training and Networking projects supported under sub-Action 4.3 and 3.1 of the Youth in Action programme
2. Training and Cooperation Plans implemented by the each National Agency (NA) under sub-Action 4.3 of the Youth in Action programme
3. Trainings implemented by the SALTO Youth Resource Centres for the benefit of National Agencies, youth organisations and youth workers
4. Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST) organised by the network of NAs, the European Commission and SALTOs to promote competence-development among NA staff
5. Trainings supported under the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

Since its implementation, the ETS has led to thousands of non-formal learning activities with several hundred thousands of participants being active in youth work all over Europe, carried out successfully in various strands by a broad variety of different stakeholders.

The ETS had important positive impacts:

on individuals, by:

- improving the competence development of youth workers in Europe
- promoting constructive debates, content orientated thinking and creative initiatives
- developing tools for the recognition of youth workers' qualifications

on youth projects, by:

- stressing the importance of and raising the quality of YOUTH/Youth in Action projects
- emphasizing the need for training of youth workers and other project participants
- developing and disseminating concepts and methodologies in the area of non-formal learning
- ensuring familiarisation with key-features and priorities of the YOUTH/Youth in Action programme
- strengthening the European dimension of projects

on youth support systems, by:

- raising awareness about the YOUTH/Youth in Action programme and facilitating access to it
- guaranteeing the interplay of different institutional and key non-governmental stakeholders
- promoting capacity-building of organisations active in the youth field across Europe and beyond
- bringing youth issues on institutional agendas at national, regional and local levels
- inspiring and stimulating the development of a specific European dimension in youth work at Member State's level
- training European trainers and trainers for trainers. As a result, several pools of experienced and qualified trainers have been set up in Europe
- supporting the competence-building of institutional staff, such as staff of NAs and SALTOs implementing the Programme at European and national level

Ten years after its launching, the ETS needs to be revised in order to better respond to new challenges posed by the new EU Youth Strategy and to the evolutions in the area of youth work, as well as to take stock of lessons learned during the first years of implementation. This revision will aim at improving the existing framework, building on the results achieved in the past.

In order to do so, the Commission will pursue an action aimed at:

- identifying new fields of action of the ETS
- revising the implementing measures of the ETS and its tools
- improving the management system of the ETS

3. NEW FIELDS OF ACTION

The scope of the renewed ETS should be enlarged during the upcoming years and encompass in a more systematic way further fields of action. This will be done in a progressive way, taking into account the resources available and the dependencies between the planned developments. The following areas of intervention will be tackled within the ETS:

Defining European Generic Competences (EGC) for youth work

No matter where and in which specific field, youth workers and trainers need a certain set of generic competences in order to run European/international projects. The renewed European Strategy should aim at describing such competences in a standardised way and identifying categories of youth workers based on competence-profiles. Such a description, commonly agreed upon at European level, could lead to better recognition of the contributions of youth work to society and lead to appropriate capacity-building strategies.

Training individuals on European Generic Competences for youth work

The training on the competences needed for European youth projects has to be one of the core actions of the renewed European Training Strategy. The ETS should promote the acquisition and improvement of EGC in youth work by:

- defining training modules based on the identified competence-profiles and aimed at EGC development
- supporting accredited EGC trainings for multipliers (Trainings for Trainers)
- supporting EGC training courses for youth workers and youth leaders throughout Europe

Promoting new forms of learning mobility in youth work

In line with the EU Youth Strategy and the European Commission's Green Paper on Promoting the Learning Mobility of Young People, the ETS will seek to promote new forms of learning mobility among youth workers with the aim to fostering the acquisition of new skills and competences among youth workers and to helping them better adapt to the changing needs of young people, thus contributing to the increase of professionalism in youth work.

Strengthening actions aimed at recognition of youth work

Following the positive opinion expressed by the Youth in Action Programme Committee of May 2010 with regard to the state of play of Youthpass, the Commission will pursue its strategic implementation of Youthpass, inside and outside the programme, with a view to fostering recognition of non formal learning in Europe. In this context, the ETS will look at streamlining Youthpass tools and concepts in the area of youth work, and namely within its implementing measures.

Reinforcing links with research in the field of youth work

In order to increase its effectiveness and relevance to the needs of its beneficiaries, the ETS should improve its synergies with the area of research in the field of youth work. Key-studies, research analyses, or any major evidence-based information on the ways and achievements of youth work in Europe are to be taken into account and discussed within the management

bodies of the ETS; such theoretical and scientific-based inputs can contribute to improving ETS by adjusting its aims, measures and methods.

Reinforcing links formal education sector

Along the lines of cooperation with the research area, stronger links and information flows should be established with regard to University or post-University studies or other types of activities aiming at bridging the formal education and vocational training sectors to youth work and non-formal education. This interaction could bring in an additional component in the training strategy.

4. IMPLEMENTING MEASURES OF THE RENEWED ETS

Training and Networking projects

The aims, objectives and formats of Actions 4.3 and 3.1 Training and Networking could be better adapted to the new policy framework and a common ETS. This would help organisations active in the youth field to use 4.3 and 3.1 T&N as a tailor made tool for competence development within their own organisations and field of practice. The impact of the introduction of new forms of mobility for youth workers under the Youth in Action programme will be monitored and possibly adjusted to increase the relevance of such activities to the needs and expectations of youth workers.

Training and Cooperation Plans (TCP)

TCP has a great impact not only on the management of the Programme but also on the development of youth work in Europe and on the strengthening of the European cooperation in the youth field. Aims and objectives of the European and national TCP strategies should be more linked with the ETS. Types and formats of activities could be better defined and more clarified (set up of basic criteria) in order to pursue in a more effective way the objectives of ETS and of the EU Youth Strategy. These developments will be reflected in the organisation of the TCP yearly meeting which will be assessed in order to improve its implementation from a management and "priority-setting" point of view.

Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST)

The competence of institutional staff of the National Agencies and the SALTO-YOUTH RCs is crucial for the quality of the implementation of the ETS and the YiA Programme at European and national level. Since 2007, a "Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST) Strategy" has been the basis for all activities aimed at capacity and competence building of NA and SALTO staff.

In the upcoming years, the existing KMST strategy and activities will be evaluated against its relevance to the needs of the institutional staff as well as to the skills' requirements for the implementation of the Youth in Action programme. The results of this evaluation exercise could lead to higher-quality and more targeted activities with a stronger European dimension and more coherent offers for training and knowledge management. The redefinition of standards for KMST activities and review of existing formats would be part of the strategy.

SALTO RC training activities

The training activities of the SALTOs should be conceived in a more global and coordinated approach, taking into account mainly the needs in the area of KMST and TCP, as well as the priorities of the ETS. Such activities will also be integrated into a common planning instrument which could help to avoid overlaps in offers. The action of the regional SALTOs will be essential to extend the impact of the ETS beyond the Youth in Action Programme Countries. The work of the thematic SALTOs will provide substantial inputs in the definition of concepts and methods to be applied in trainings aimed at developing competences in their relevant thematic domain.

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

The Partnership between Commission and Council of Europe will be strategic for the development of the new ETS fields of action. The ETS will draw inputs from the Partnership in terms of elaborating and implementing conceptual models for trainings, increasing research and evidence-based knowledge of the youth work field (also through the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy), ensuring links with formal education sector developments. At the same time, the planning of Partnership's activities should better take into account the general orientations and priorities of the ETS.

5. ETS TOOLS

Common internal planning board

Projects inside the TCP, SALTO, KMST and Partnership should be planned at a common internal planning board. This would allow at an early stage transparency of planned activities and access of other actors to these projects and avoid doubling of offers at similar periods.

Common public Training Calendar

Training activities carried out or supported within ETS should be made more visible and accessible to youth workers. The SALTO Training Calendar plays already an important and central role in advertising international activities all over Europe. The Training Calendar should contain the international activities organised by the various stakeholders of the ETS which are relevant for youth workers. It could serve as a basis for further developments of complementary databases at national level.

Common pool of trainers

Several pools of trainers for European projects exist at national and European level. Further steps should be taken to create synergies and to better link those pools with each other in order to build a virtual common pool of qualified European trainers supporting the implementation of the various European projects. This should allow the different actors within the ETS to maintain and develop their pools of trainers for capacity building activities within a broader and European wide approach.

Youthpass

The introduction of Youthpass in all activities carried out under the ETS should be explored. This will contribute not only to the validation of learning outcomes of the ETS training activities; it will also increase the recognition of international youth work as such.

6. MANAGEMENT

Horizontal actions

In order to foster important principles for training in youth work the ETS - via its supporting structures - should develop horizontal actions to be implemented in all sectors of the ETS. For the upcoming years, these are mainly the exchange of information among the ETS support structures, the dissemination and exploitation of ETS results and its permanent monitoring.

Exchange of information

One of the essential factors which might determine the successful implementation of the ETS is the ability to ensure systematic and multi-directional information flows between the various support structures of the ETS. The management architecture of the ETS will be designed in such a way that the objectives and priorities of ETS are defined and implemented in a corporate way, taking in due account the political framework, evidence-based information, best practices and innovative developments.

Dissemination and exploitation of results

In order to maximise the impact of activities implemented by the ETS and achieve a broader effect on international youth work in general and youth work at national level further adequate approaches and methods to support the dissemination and exploitation of ETS project results should be developed and implemented.

Permanent monitoring

The monitoring on the effects of the ETS is needed to guarantee the sustainable development and qualitative impact of the strategy. An integrated approach to monitoring of measures, tools and procedures of ETS needs to be introduced to allow ETS to better achieving its objectives.

ETS Support Structures

The following structures will provide guidance and support to the European Commission in the development, implementation and evaluation of the ETS:

ETS Steering Group

This group will play a central role within the European Training Strategy. Its main tasks will be to:

- support the European Commission in defining the priorities and general orientations of the ETS
- endorse action plans, procedures and tools for the implementation of the ETS
- define the Common Internal Planning Board
- monitor the overall implementation of the ETS
- ensure coordination with and information transfer from and to the ETS Sectorial Working Groups
- develop strategies and measures for the overall dissemination and exploitation of ETS results

The Steering Group should meet at least twice a year; it will be chaired by the European Commission - DG EAC Youth in Action programme Unit - and composed of the following members:

- 1 representative for each of the five implementing measures
- representatives of the Youth Policy Unit in DG EAC
- 1 representative of the Co-ordination Group of National Agencies
- 1 representative of the EAC Executive Agency
- 1 representative of the Youthpass Advisory Group
- other experts in the field of field of youth work, youth policy and youth research, on ad hoc basis
- 1 representative of SALTO RC Training and Cooperation (Secretariat and support)

ETS Sectorial Working Groups

Different Sectorial Working Groups (SWG) will follow up the development of each of the five ETS implementing measures. As a general rule, these Working Groups will meet once a year within the broader context of already set up meetings/events. The following events will host the SWG meetings:

- Action 4.3 or 3.1 NA Staff Training/Meeting (SWG Training & Cooperation)
- TCP Seminar (SWG TCP)
- SALTO Annual meeting (SWG SALTO)
- KMST Group meetings – (SWG KMST)
- Partnership's Management Board – (SWG Partnership COM/CoE)

The main tasks of each Sectorial Working Group will be to:

- monitor the implementation of the ETS objectives within the measure concerned
- adopt action plans, procedures and tools for the implementation of the measure, in line with the orientations provided by the ETS Steering Group
- collect feedbacks and formulate recommendations to be provided to the ETS Steering Group
- develop strategies and measures for the overall dissemination and exploitation of results of the implementing measure concerned

Role of the SALTO RC Training & Cooperation

In order to ensure continuity and stability to the action of the ETS, and with a view to achieving better results, the cooperation within and between the different ETS support structures must go beyond the regular meetings and be based on an ongoing virtual exchange.

Without being considered as a structure of the ETS, the SALTO RC Training and Cooperation will provide essential support to the European Commission in the co-ordination and implementation of the European Training Strategy. In this respect, the SALTO RC T&C will perform a role of secretariat and support to the organisation of the ETS Steering Group meetings and will stimulate the exchange of information and virtual cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in ETS. The ETS Steering Group may propose to the European Commission the assignment of tasks to the SALTO RC T&C.

European Training Strategy

Management

- *ETS Support Structures*
 - *Steering Group*
 - *Sectorial Working Groups*

- *Horizontal actions*
 - *Exchange of information*
 - *Dissemination and exploitation of results*
 - *Permanent monitoring*



Implementing measures

- *Action 4.3/3.1 T&N*
- *TCP*
- *KMST*
- *SALTO*
- *Partnership COM/CoE*



Tools

- *Internal planning board*
- *Public Training Calendar*
- *Pool of trainers*
- *Youthpass*