



The Federal Government's Position on a prospective EU Youth Programme as of 2014

I Preliminary Remarks

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, current EU programmes are being re-examined and recommendations are being drafted for realigning them as of 2014. This position paper represents the Federal Government's contribution to a substantial debate concerning the future programmatic orientation and structure of the next-generation EU youth programme; the position expressed in this paper does not prejudice the German position on planning the EU Financial Framework for 2014 – 2020.

II Effects of the EU Programme YOUTH IN ACTION 2007 – 2013

In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth commissioned a scientific study in Germany in order to provide an interim assessment of the current programme YOUTH IN ACTION 2007 – 2013. The findings of the study were summarized as follows:

“The results of the survey underline the fact that the programme is highly relevant for the implementation of European youth policy. It makes an important contribution towards supporting non-formal learning processes as well as promoting and developing key competencies.

The added social value of the programme results, on the one hand, from the sustainable biographical relevance of the programme for the participants, which is expressed in attitudes and changes in behaviour in favour of participation in civil society. The evaluation confirms the programme's high degree of effectiveness, both in relation to social and personal as well as intercultural competence. The enhancement of intercultural competence, in particular, should be emphasised.”

1. Results of the Interim Evaluation of the Programme's Implementation in Germany

The national results corresponded with other studies on the implementation of the programme¹. YOUTH IN ACTION promotes the development of abilities, knowledge and competencies on the part of young people that are of importance with regard to their personal development, their development as citizens and their development in relation to the labour market:

- _ acquisition of key competencies,
- _ personal development and the improvement of social skills,
- _ promotion of linguistic and intercultural competencies,
- _ encouragement of personal initiative, entrepreneurship and creativity,
- _ willingness to live, learn and work abroad,
- _ direction with regard to subsequent educational and professional development,
- _ improved employment opportunities,
- _ a sense of European citizenship as well as interest in and active support of the European idea,
- _ appreciation of cultural diversity, solidarity and tolerance,
- _ social and political engagement.

2. Information provided in statements by participating young people from Germany:

- _ An awareness of common European values increased among 85 % of the participants. Over 80 % have a greater interest in European topics than was previously the case. 60 % now feel more like Europeans than previously. The attitude towards the EU became more positive among 45 % of the participants.
- _ The number of 18 – 24-year-olds participating in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 was over twice as high (60 %) as the EU average (29 %).

¹ - EU Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture: Qualitative Impact of the YOUTH IN ACTION Programme - Report of the 2010 Survey, Brussels 2010.
I- IKAB e.V.; Forschungsgruppe Jugend und Europa am C.A.P: "Unter der Lupe" - Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung von JUGEND IN AKTION, Bericht 2009, Bonn 2010.
- Dipl.-Soz.Arb. Yasmine Chehata, M.A.; Dipl.-Päd. Katrin Riß; Prof. Dr. Andreas Thimmel: Vielfalt on tour - Internationale Jugendbegegnungen in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Bericht der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung des Modellprojekts "InterKulturell on Tour", Cologne 2009

- _ 90 % indicated that they now knew more about another country or other cultures and that they also learned to work together with people from different cultural backgrounds. 80 % are now more open to Europe's cultural diversity.
- _ Over 90 % feel that the project encouraged them to continue to be mobile in the future. Almost 80 % intend to go to a foreign country in order to study or work.
- _ Over 80 % are convinced that they have acquired various key competencies, such as foreign language skills, interpersonal, intercultural and social competence and competence as citizens as well as cultural and entrepreneurial skills.
- _ 90 % learned how to work better within a team. Roughly 80 % see themselves in a better position to develop and realise good ideas, and to plan and implement a project. 75 % are now better able to express their opinions and deal with conflicts. 65 % can express themselves better creatively and artistically.
- _ Two-thirds (66 %) were able to gain a clear idea regarding the education or training they wanted to pursue in the future. 65 % believe that their career opportunities had improved. Over 40 % were able to establish contacts that would benefit their careers.
- _ Nearly two thirds (62 %) report that they were more involved in social and political affairs. 40 % became involved in *new* voluntary activities after the project ended. 75 % are more active in combating discrimination, intolerance and racism.

3. Implementation of the EU programme YOUTH IN ACTION 2007 – 2013

Approximately 14 million euros, i.e. roughly 10 % of the overall decentral YOUTH IN ACTION budget are used by voluntary and public children's and youth services in Germany every year. In this manner, roughly 800 multilateral youth encounters, youth volunteer programmes, youth democracy projects and networking meetings involving roughly 22, 000 young people, as well as continuing and further education measures involving roughly 2,000 professionals working in children's and youth services, have been supported.

Over 70 % of all participating young people were between the ages of 15 and 25, nearly half of the participating young people came from small towns and communities, at least 1/3 of all participants were disadvantaged youths in need of additional support.

Since 2007 a total of roughly 1,050 organisations and institutions involved in children's and youth services in Germany have taken advantage of funding provided through YOUTH IN ACTION. The annual rejection rate for project applications is over 40 % due to budgetary constraints.

In 2009, roughly 237,000 young people and professionals working in children's and youth services in the 31 programme countries (EU, Lichtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Turkey) were able, with the aid of roughly 144 million euros in programme funds, to participate in over 7,800 European projects.

III Requirements for an EU Youth Programme as of 2014:

The results of the evaluations of the current EU Programme YOUTH IN ACTION 2007 - 2013 and the opinions submitted by organisations and individuals involved in children's and youth services in Germany have played an equally important role in the formulation of this position paper.²

1. Continuation of an independent youth programme as of 2014

A prospective EU youth programme should be independent and oriented on the specific needs of the EU youth field. The new generation EU youth programme should be built on the positive foundation established by the current YOUTH IN ACTION programme.

The EU programme YOUTH IN ACTION 2007 – 2013 and its predecessor have been a success story for over 20 years. A central factor contributing to this success was – and still is – the autonomy of the programme. It allows young people, as well as professionals and organisations involved in children's and youth services to be addressed specifically. It supports formats and methods directly related to this field of work and an orientation towards the needs and possibilities of youth services and youth policy, which thus makes an essential contribution to the positive effects of the programme. Combining it with other programmes in the area of education or the area of promoting a sense of European citizenship would endanger the continuation of this success.

2. Utilisation of the EU Youth Programme for the implementation of the EU youth strategy

A prospective EU youth programme should be the European instrument for implementing the youth strategy adopted by the European Commission.

The newly drafted framework for cooperation in youth policy in Europe (EU youth strategy 2010 – 2018)³ promotes young people's involvement in democratic life and is aimed at creating fair chances for participation in education and working life for all young people by means of youth services and youth policy.

² - Anforderungen an das künftige EU-Jugendprogramm ab 2014 Stellungnahme der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ, 28 October 2010.

- Positionen des Deutschen Bundesjugendring zur Weiterentwicklung des Programms "Jugend in Aktion" nach 2013, 26 August 2010.

- Eckpunktepapier des Nationalen Beirats für das EU-Programm JUGEND IN AKTION zur künftigen Generation des EU-Programms JUGEND IN AKTION 2014 bis 2020; 21 December 2010.

³ Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01)

The Federal government and the Länder⁴ are in agreement concerning the high priority of the implementation of the EU youth strategy in German youth policy. A prospective EU youth programme should support the implementation of the EU youth strategy in Germany in its transnational dimensions and, for example, promote youth mobility for learning purposes beyond formal educational institutions, exchanges between specific professional groups, and peer-learning processes in youth policy.

3. Fulfilling of the aims of the Treaty of Lisbon.⁵

A prospective EU youth programme should fulfil the aims of the Treaty of Lisbon by not only expanding youth exchanges and exchanges between those who work in youth services, but also by promoting increased participation on the part of young people in the democratic life of Europe.

When the new EU Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, the participation of young people in the democratic life of Europe became a goal of the EU. A prospective EU youth programme should become an instrument to help in the realisation of this goal and to promote the participation of young people as well as a structured dialogue between young people and policymakers⁶ in the tradition of cooperation found in European youth policy since 2002.⁷

4. A prospective EU youth programme should pursue three goals

- **Facilitating non-formal and informal learning**
- **Promote participation in civil society and a sense of European citizenship**
- **Improve the living conditions of young people in Europe through an independent youth policy**

- **Facilitating non-formal and informal learning**

A prospective EU youth programme should make sustainable biographical experiences that focus on learning key competencies possible for young people. Key competencies

⁴ Decision taken by the Conference of Youth and Family Ministers on 17/18 June 2010 on the implementation of the European Youth Strategy

⁵ Treaty on European Union Article 165

⁶ Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship.

⁷ Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 June 2002 establishing a framework for European cooperation in the youth field.

are the skills that everyone requires in order to achieve their full personal potential, social integration, a sense of citizenship and employment.⁸ These also include intercultural and international competencies in decision-making and performance that can be transmitted by Europe as a learning context. Positive learning experiences outside of formal educational institutions also offer young people who have had only limited success in formal educational institutions, learning success and promote their participation in society.

- Promoting participation in civil society and a sense of European citizenship

A prospective EU youth programme should promote social and political participation on the part of young people as well as their involvement in civil society in Europe. This also includes an increased awareness of being citizens of Europe and an appreciation of cultural diversity, solidarity and tolerance.

- Improving the living conditions of young people in Europe through an independent youth policy

A prospective EU youth programme should promote the cooperation between the Member States in the field of youth services and youth policy in order to improve the living conditions of young people in Europe. In the sense of the EU youth strategy, this also includes supporting the process of learning from each other as well as the development of a common understanding of youth policy for and with young people. In this conjunction, a holistic view of young people, their principle participation in a manner suited to their age, the promotion of their individual potential and fostering a sense of inclusion also play a decisive role.

5. Continuation of existing activities for and with young people.

A prospective EU youth programme should continue to promote and support mobility on the part of young people through youth encounters and European voluntary service. It should also support involvement in youth initiatives, in projects related to participatory democracy, including encounters between young people and those responsible for youth policy, and foresee the training and networking of opinion leaders. Programmes of specific cooperation between partner countries should also be continued. Beyond this, programme activities should include the exchange of practical experience and peer-learning

⁸ RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC).

processes in youth policy as well as measures to promote a common understanding of youth policy and the further development of common instruments (e.g. accreditation, Youthpass, European youth information services).

6. Maintenance of a special focus on disadvantaged youth

A prospective EU youth programme should focus more strongly on the aspect of fair chances and continue efforts to integrate disadvantaged and individually impaired youths in all areas of the programme. This also includes more flexible project formats, target-group specific access, appropriate offers of support and networking as well as the exchange of best practices. Furthermore, it seems advisable to support experimental projects that address the living situations of younger people as well as youth policy practices adopted by initiatives and organisations in order to test and develop various approaches to inclusion.

7. Facilitation of joint action

A prospective EU youth programme should facilitate connections between other programmes and policy areas within the framework of its independent execution. In this context, the orientation on the real needs of young people and the greatest possible effect on their actual living situations should be the essential consideration. On a local and regional level, the programme should support a sound and uniformly coordinated overall package of measures developed with and for young people.

8. Further decentralisation of the programme's execution and administrative simplification

A prospective EU youth programme should limit centralised programme management to model actions and just a few programme areas. Better advantage should be taken of the decentral implementation of the programme through national agencies in the field of youth policy/youth services with regard to addressing specific target groups and cooperating with those working in youth services on a local, regional and national level.

A prospective EU youth programme also requires more flexible programme administration, the oriented must be on the projects' goals and is implemented in a manner that adheres to the principles of participation and target-group suitability.